

Logos 7: 14 June 2006
The Origins of Writing, Poetry, Drama, Fiction
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The Origins of Writing, Poetry, Drama, Fiction

The origin of language and languages

The origin of writing and literature

Poetry and fiction in the ancient Near East

Shang China

The beginning of Indo-European literature and the Vedic language

The alphabet: Phoenician, Aramaic, Hebrew

Poetry and theater in ancient Greece

Sanskrit literature

Han China



Bibliography

- **Bernard Comrie: The Atlas Of Languages (1996)**
- **Steven Pinker: The Language Instinct (1994)**
- **Robin Dunbar: Grooming, Gossip And The Evolution Of Language (1996)**
- **Terrence Deacon: The Symbolic Species (1997)**
- **Derek Bickerton: Language And Species (1992)**

The Origin of Language



The Origin of Language

- **Who invented the heartbeat?**

The Origin of Language

- **Who invented language?**

The Origin of Language

- **Noam Chomsky: children learn language because their brains are programmed to learn languages**

The Origin of Language

- **Terrence Deacon**
 - **Language and the brain evolved together influencing each other step by step.**
 - **Language originated from symbolic thinking**
 - **that arose when humans became hunters**
 - **because of the need to overcome the sexual bonding**
 - » **in favor of group cooperation**

The Origin of Language

- **Derek Bickerton**
 - **Human language is not primarily a means to communicate but a means to represent the world**
 - **Human language did not evolve from animal communication but from older representation systems (the first cells capable of representing the world)**

The Origin of Language

- **Why don't we all speak the same language?**

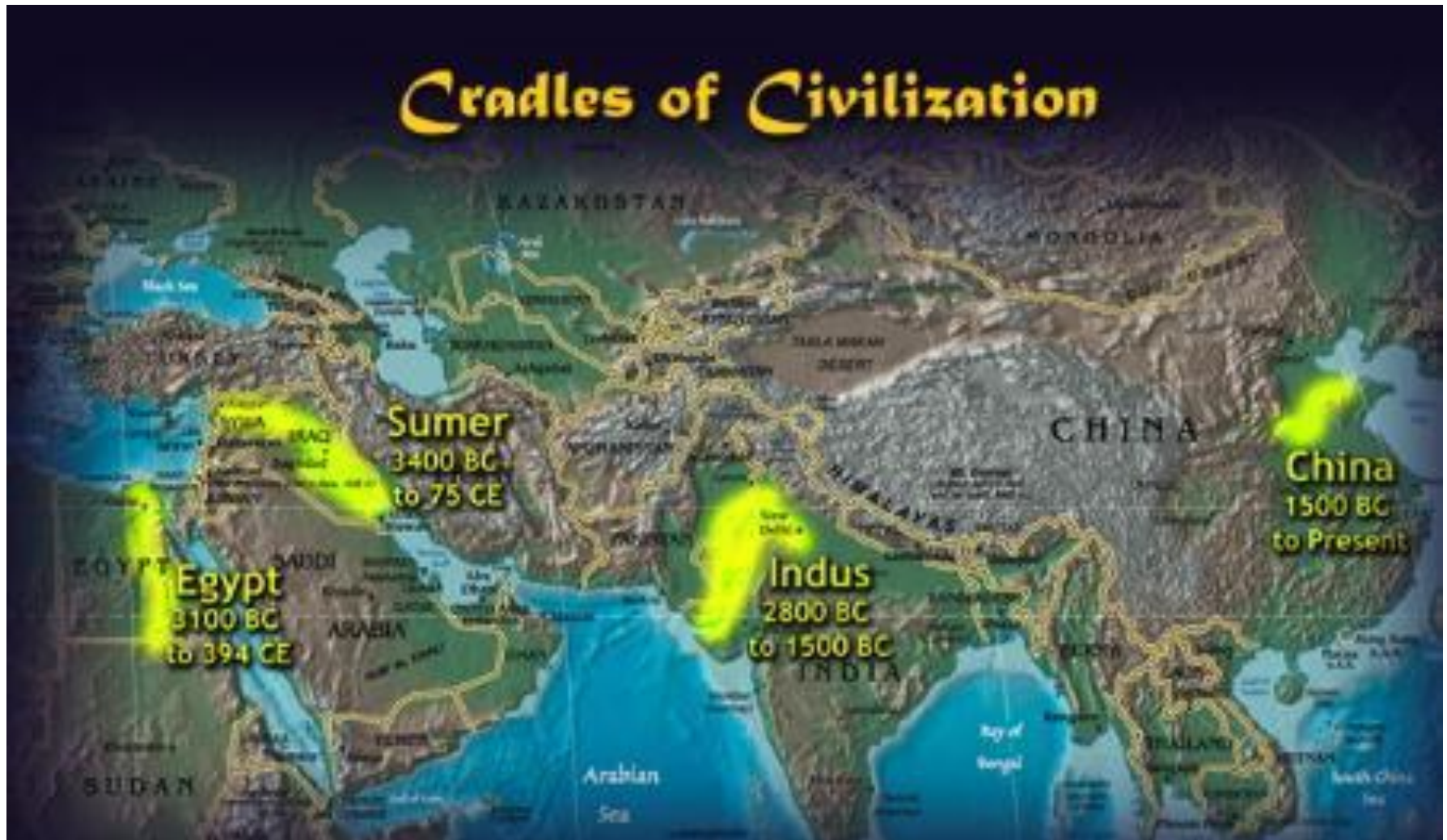
The Origin of Language

- **Robin Dunbar**
 - **The function of language was not to communicate information, but to cement society.**
 - **It is difficult to imitate a dialect**
 - **A dialect allows a member of a group to recognize members of the same group**

The Origin of Language

- **Language families**
 - **Semitic: Akkadian, Phoenician, Aramaic, Hebrew, Arabic, Amharic (Ethiopic)**
 - **Egyptian**
 - **Indo-European (Italic, German, Indian, English...)**
 - **Dravidian (South Indian)**
 - **Sino-tibetan languages: Mandarin, Cantonese, Tibetan, Burmese)**
 - **Altaic (Turkish, Mongolian, Central Asian, Japanese, Korean)**
 - **Austic (Thai, Malay, Khmer, Vietnamese)**
 - **Niger-Congo**
 - **...**

The Origin of Writing



The Origin of Writing

- **At least three independent origins of writing**
 - **Mesopotamia**
 - **China**
 - **Mesoamerica**

Sumerian

- **Writing**
 - **An evolution of record keeping**
 - **The original symbols of record keeping were clay tokens**
 - **From envelopes containing three-dimensional representations (clay tokens) of the objects to the surface of the envelop displaying a two-dimensional representation (the imprint) of the three-dimensional representations to cuneiform writing**

Sumerian

- **Writing**
 - **Original function: business activities of temple and palace**
 - **Capitalism led to the invention and diffusion of writing, the alphabet and (later) of coins.**
 - **Traders needed a way to keep track of their business**
 - **Traders traveled and thus spread their inventions**

Sumerian

- Writing



Administrative tablet of Uruk 3000 BC
(wheat and barley)

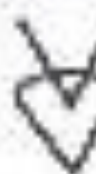


Administrative tablet of Uruk 3000 BC
(grant of land to temple official)

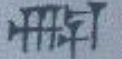
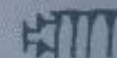
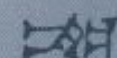
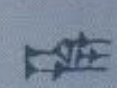
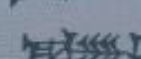
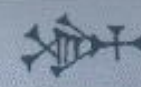
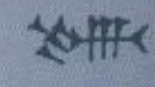
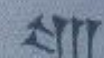
Sumerian

- **Writing**
 - **Earliest tablets: 3,400 BC**
 - **Scribes evolved pictures of objects into stylized representations of the objects, and eventually pure symbols**
 - **Cuneiform language: 800 symbols, one per syllable**
 - **3,000 BC: Curved lines replaced by linear strokes and wedges**
 - **Written from right to left**
 - **Cuneiform used to render Sumerian, Akkadian, Elamite (neither Semitic nor Indo-European), Hurrian, Hittite (Indo-European)**
 - **Decline of cuneiform in 1000 BC with Aramaic's alphabetical system (easier to learn)**

Sumerian

	Original pictograph	Sumerian cuneiform	Early babylonian	Babylonian cuneiform
Bird				
Fish				
Ox				
Sun/day				

CUNEIFORM SIGNS

Sumerian transliteration	Sumerian meaning	Sumerian	Old Babylonian	Neo-Assyrian
DINGIR	god			
NAG	drink			
TUR	animal pen			
DUB	tablet			
IZI	fire			
ANŠE	donkey			
GU	ox			
ŠUR	angry			
GIŠIMMAR	date palm			
KUR	mountain			
MUŠ	serpent			
ŠA	heart			
GE	black			
KI	land			
KU	fish			

Sumerian

- Literature

- Poetry, music and dance originated as collective expression of religious themes during rituals
- The dance rhythm (clapping, stomping, chanting) evolved into rhythmic songs and rhymed poetry
- Religious narratives (creation myths) evolved into epic poetry
- The meaning became more important than the sound/rhythm
- Epic of Gilgamesh (2,600 BC): vain quest for immortality
- Kings' List (2,125 BC)
- Enheduanna (2,300 BC): lyrical poetry

Sumerian

- **Enheduanna (2300 BC)**
 - **Daughter of king Sargon of Akkad**
 - **High priestess of the Moon-God temple of Ur**
 - **First known female poet in history**

"I, Enheduanna, the highest priestess. I carried the ritual basket, I chanted your praise.

Now I have been cast out to the place of lepers.

Day comes and the brightness is hidden around me.

Shadows cover the light, drape it in sandstorms.

My beautiful mouth knows only confusion.

Even my sex is dust."

Soldiers leading
prisoners of war
to their king

WAR

Wheeled
vechicles

Banquet: the king
(seated at the left),
servants, harpist ,
singers

Commoners bringing
gifts to the king

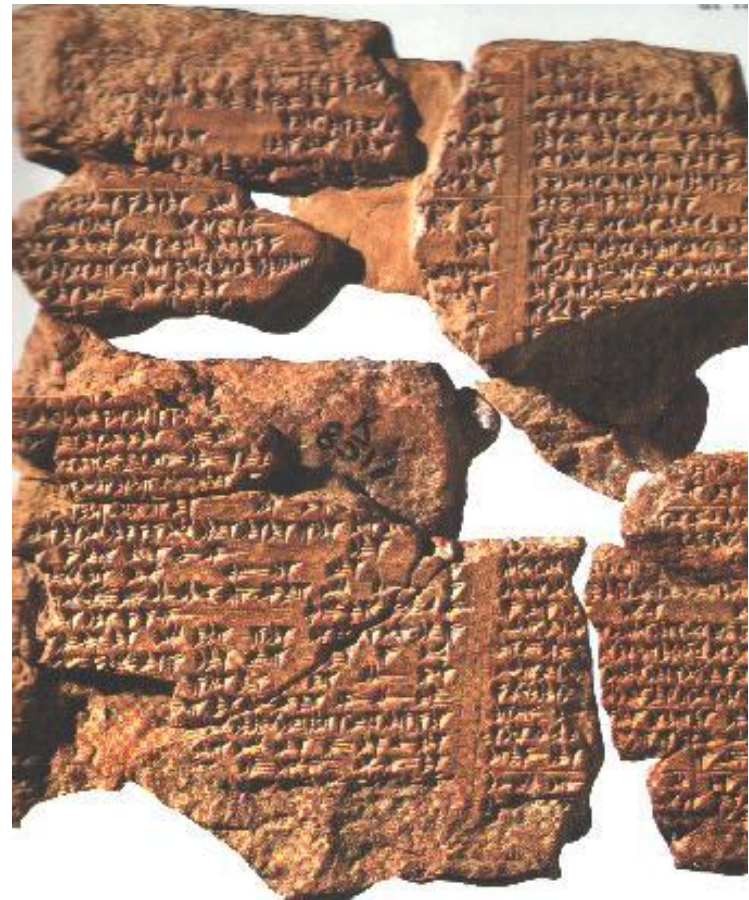
PEACE



Standard of Ur, 2700 BC (British Museum)

Gilgamesh

- King of Uruk (2300BC)
- Leads a military expedition to a distant place to find cedar wood
- Quest for immortality



Gilgamesh

- Tablet 1

"The one who saw all ...

He saw the great Mystery, he knew the Hidden:

He recovered the knowledge of all the times before the Flood.

He journeyed beyond the distant, he journeyed beyond exhaustion..."

Gilgamesh is two-thirds god and one-third human.

He is the most powerful king that ever existed, but is a brutal dictator.

The people of Uruk ask god Anu for help.

Anu sends a powerful savage, Enkidu,

He has sex with one of the sacred prostitutes of the temple and suddenly becomes civilized and knowledgeable.

Gilgamesh dreams that a meteor falls to Earth which is so great that not even Gilgamesh can lift it.

Gilgamesh

- Tablet 2

Enkidu moves to the city. Enkidu briefly fights Gilgamesh over a woman but then they become friends. When Gilgamesh decides to leave on a journey and confront the demon Humbaba, Enkidu follows him to protect him.

- Tablet 4

Gilgamesh has several dreams, including a dream of the apocalypse:

"The skies roared with thunder and the earth heaved,
Then came darkness and a stillness like death.

Lightening smashed the ground and fires blazed out;
Death flooded from the skies.

When the heat died and the fires went out,
The plains had turned to ash."

Gilgamesh

- Tablet 5

Gilgamesh and Enkidu find and kill the demon.

- Tablet 6

The goddess Ishtar hears of the event and offers herself to Gilgamesh, but Gilgamesh despises her as a slut and a jinx. Ishtar then begs her father Anu to wreak vengeance on Gilgamesh and Uruk, threatening to

"...pull down the Gates of Hell itself,
Crush the doorposts and flatten the door,
And I will let the dead leave
And let the dead roam the earth
And they shall eat the living.
The dead will overwhelm all the living"

Gilgamesh

- Tablet 7

The gods condemn Enkidu to hell for helping G. kill Humbaba:

"The house where the dead dwell in total darkness,
Where they drink dirt and eat stone,
Where they wear feathers like birds,
Where no light ever invades their everlasting darkness,
Where the door and the lock of Hell is coated with thick dust.
When I entered the House of Dust,
On every side the crowns of kings were heaped,
On every side the voices of the kings who wore those crowns,
Who now only served food to the gods Anu and Enlil,
Candy, meat, and water poured from skins.
I saw sitting in this House of Dust a priest and a servant...
There sat Etana and Sumukan,
There sat Ereshkigal, the queen of Hell,
Beletseri, the scribe of Hell, sitting before her."

Gilgamesh

- Tablet 9
- Gilgamesh fears that the gods will now come after him, and decides to set out on a journey to find out the secret of immortality.
- Utnapishtim and his wife are the only humans who are immortal: they are the only humans who survived the Flood and now live at the mouth of all rivers.
- Tablet 11
- After many encounters (everybody telling him that his quest is futile), Gilgamesh meets Utnapishtim, who tells him the story of the Flood.
- The Flood

Gilgamesh

- Tablet 11/ The Flood
 - When the gods followed the suggestion of one of them (Enlil) and decided to punish the humans with the Flood, the goddess Ea warned Utnapishtim in time so that he could build an ark, gather all living beings and survive the Flood.
 - The Flood lasted for seven days and seven nights, and destroyed everything, but the gods felt remorse. The gods found Utnapishtim's ark on top of Mount Nimush, and Enlil in person granted him immortality and the right to live at the source of all the rivers.

Gilgamesh

- Tablet 11/ The End
- Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh that he will become immortal if he too can stay awake for six days and seven nights, but Gilgamesh falls asleep and sleeps the whole time and when he wakes up he is condemned:
 "What do I do now, where do I go now?
 Death has devoured my body,
 Death dwells in my body,
 Wherever I go, wherever I look, there stands Death"
- Utnapishtim grants Gilgamesh only the secret to become young again. Gilgamesh does not trust him and brings back to Uruk the magic plant, but a snake eats the magic plant. Gilgamesh returns to Uruk and contemplates the city's splendour.

Kings List

- "After kingship had descended from heaven, Eridu became the seat of kingship. In Eridu Aululim reigned 28,800 years as king. Alagar reigned 36,000 years. Two kings, reigned 64,800 years. Eridu was abandoned and its kingship was carried off to Bad-tabira. . . .
- Total: Five Cities, eight kings, reigned 241,200 years.
- The flood then swept over. After the Flood had swept over, and kingship had descended from heaven, Kish became the seat of Kingship. In Kish Total: twenty-three kings, reigned 24,510 years, 3 months, 3 1/2 days. Kish was defeated; its kingship was carried off to Eanna.

Kings List

- "In Eanna, Meskiaggasher, the son of (the sun god) Utu reigned as En (Priest) and Lugal (King) 324 years-- Meskiaggasher entered the sea, ascended the mountains. Enmerkar, the son of Meskiaggasher, the king of erech who had built Erech, reigned 420 years as king. Lugalbanda, the shepherd, reigned 1,200 years. Dumuzi the fisherman, whose city was Kua, reigned 100 years. Gilgamesh, whose father was a nomad (?) reigned 126 years. Urnungal, the son of Gilgamesh, reigned 30 years. Labasher reigned 9 years. Ennundaranna reigned 8 years. Meshede reigned 36 years. Melamanna reigned 6 years. Lugalkidul reigned 36 years.
- Total: twelve kings, reigned 2,130 years. Erech was defeated, its kingship was carried off to Ur...."

King List

- **Kings After the Flood**
 - **Dynasty of Kish: 23 kings ruled for 24,510 years (the first three all ruled 1,200 years, the second three ruled 960 years, the third three ruled 900 years)**
 - **Dynasty of Uruk: 12 kings ruled for 2,310 years**
 - **Dynasty of Ur: 4 kings ruled 171 years**
 - **Dynasty of Awan: 3 kings for 356 years**
 - **Kish 2: 8 kings for 3,195 years**
 - **Hamazi: 1 king for 360 years**
 - **Uruk 2: 3 kings for 187 years**
 - **Ur 2: 4 kings for 108 years**
 - **etc etc**

Egyptian



Rosetta stone (Ptolemaic decree of 196 BC)
(British Museum)

Egyptian

- Writing

- Hieroglyphic system: 700 signs expressing different phonetic combinations
- Hieroglyphs can be written from top to bottom, left to right, and right to left: the direction is determined by the orientation of faces or animals
- A hieroglyphic sign can indicate either an object, an idea or a sound
- Ambiguity of signs led to additional symbol to indicate the sound: pseudo-alphabet of 24 consonants



Egyptian

- **Writing**
 - **Mainly used for official and monumental purposes**
 - **Abbreviated scripts for business and literary purposes: Hieratic, Demotic, Coptic**

Egyptian

- **Theater**
 - **“Memphite Drama”** (inscribed on a a black basalt stela of 8th c BC at the Temple of Ptah at Memphis that copied a papyrus of 3,000 BC): Ptah creates the world
 - **Texts of the pyramids of 2800 - 2400 BC** that include dialogue and prescribe a “play” to be performed periodically by priests to insure the well-being of the dead pharaoh
 - **Abydos Passion Play** (inscribed on the tomb of a court official in 1849 BC): reenacts the legend of Osiris and his sister/wife Isis

Egyptian

– Osiris

- Set kills his brother Osiris and scatters his body parts
- Isis wife/sister of Osiris reassembles his body
- Horus, son of Osiris and Isis, avenges Osiris' death by killing Set (good vs evil)
- Osiris king of the underworld, Horus king of the living, and Set god of evil

Egyptian

- **Fiction**

- **"The Shipwrecked Sailor" (1990 BC): fairy tale of a castaway on an island with a talkative serpent**
- **"The Tale of Sinuhe" (1875 BC): epic novel about the picaresque and exotic adventures of a servant who flees Egypt, becomes powerful and then returns to die in his homeland**
- **"The Plea of the Eloquent Peasant" (1875 BC): fiction (story of a peasant who is robbed by an official) + didactic (moral duties of the state official)**

Egyptian

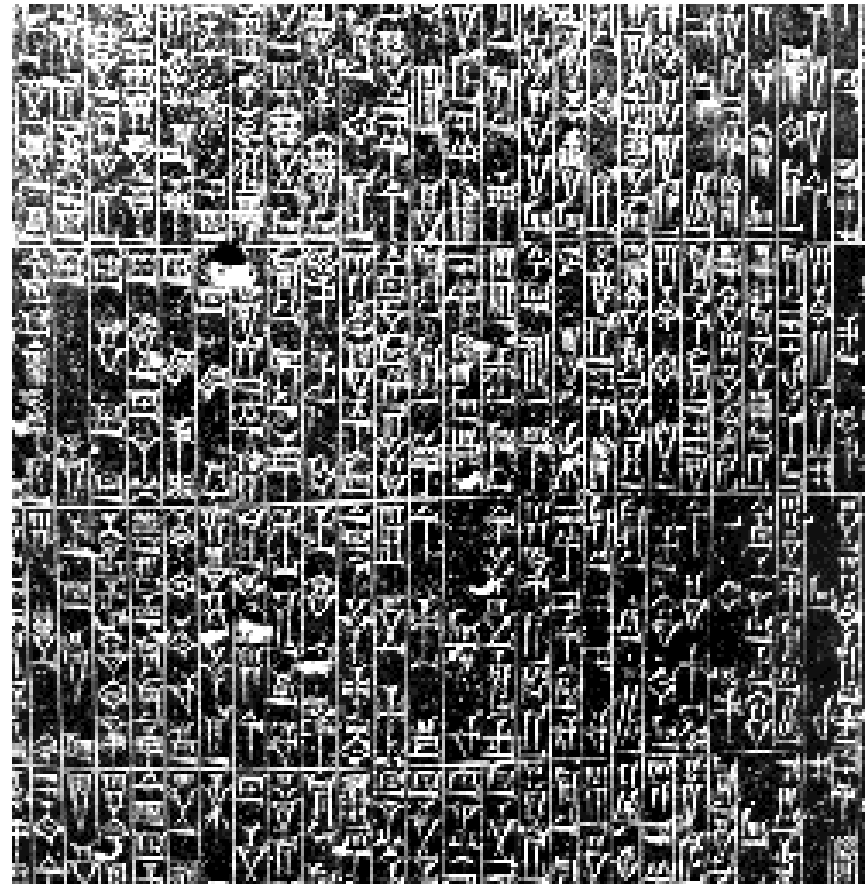
- **Non-fiction**
 - **"Maxims of Ptahhotep" (25## BC, Egypt) [h]**
 - **"Song of the Harp Player" (2100 BC, Egypt) [h]**
 - **"Dialogue of a Misanthrope and his Soul" (20## BC, Egypt) [h]**
 - **Khekheperre-sonbu: "The Admonitions" (18## BC, Egypt) [h]**
 - **Ipuwer: "The Admonitions" (1780 BC, Egypt) [h]**

Egyptian

- **Scribes: archivists, librarians, record-keepers, not writers**
- **Who were the authors?**

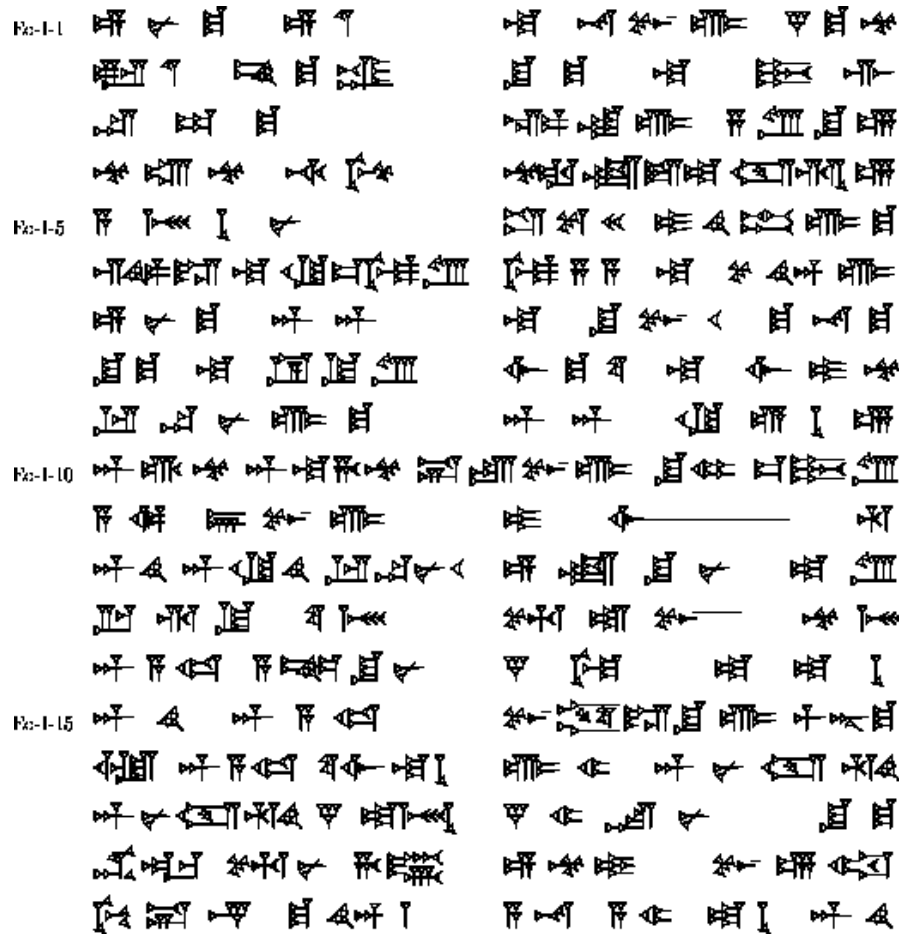
Babylonian

- Hammurabi law code (18th c BC)



Babylonian

- “Enuma Elish” (1700 BC)
 - Tablet 1 of the Enuma Elish in Akkadian



Babylonian

- **“Enuma Elish” (1700 BC):**
 - **Marduk, the supreme god (a third-generation god), and Ishtar (his wife), goddess of the Earth**
 - **The male freshwater ocean (Apsu) and the female saltwater ocean (Tiamat) created the elohim (gods) that created the world**
 - **Conflict between the gods (Apsu gets killed, Tiamat leads persecution of the gods)**
 - **Gods are tired of their tough life**
 - **Marduk creates humanity to be the servants of the gods**
 - **Grateful, the gods declare Marduk the supreme god**
 - **Struggle between order and chaos (Marduk's battle with Tiamat)**

Enuma Elish

TABLET I

**When on High the Heavens had not been named,
Firm ground below had not been called by name,
Nothing but ‘Primordial Apsu’ [Fresh Water], the Begetter,
and ‘Mummu Tiamat’ [Salt Water], She Who Bore them All,
—their waters commingling as a single body—**

**No reed hut had been matted, no marsh land had appeared,
Uncalled by name, their destinies undetermined—**

Then it was that the Gods were formed within Them.

Enuma Elish

TABLET II

The Assembly of the Gods gathers:

**“No god can go to battle and
Facing Tiamat, escape with his life.”**

**Lord Anshar, Father of the Gods, arose in grandeur,
And, having pondered in his heart, said to the Gods:**

**“He whose strength is potent shall be our Avenger,
He who is keen in battle, Marduk, the Hero!”**

Marduk replies:

**“Creator of the Gods, destiny of the Great Gods,
If I indeed, as your Avenger,**

Am to vanquish Tiamat and save your lives,

Set up the Assembly, proclaim supreme my destiny!

When you have sat down together rejoicing in Ubshukinna

Let my word, instead of you, determine the fates.

Unalterable shall be what I may bring into being;

Neither recalled nor changed shall be the command of my lips.”

Enuma Elish

TABLET IV

Having defeated Tiamat, the embodiment of chaos, Marduk proceeds to produce an ordered world, first by splitting her body into two parts and raising one to form the sky, leaving the other half as the earth's surface.

He bad them to allow not her waters to escape.

He crossed the heavens and surveyed the regions.

He squared Apsu's quarter, the abode of Nudimmud,

As the lord measured the dimensions of Apsu.

TABLET V

He constructed stations for the great gods,

Fixing their astral likenesses as constellations.

TABLET VI

The gods cease their labors and enjoy a banquet.

Marduk's status as king of the gods is solemnized by his father Anu.

Babylonian

- **Divination**
 - **Summa alu**
 - **Compendium of omens related to the Earth**
 - **Enuma Anu Enlil**
 - **Compendium of omens related to the Cosmos**

Chinese



Chinese

- **Shang (1766 BC - 1122 BC)**
 - **Anyang: Oldest known form of Chinese writing**
 - **Emphasis on predicting the future (divination bones to ask ancestors questions)**

Shang Oracle Bones



Will it rain
tomorrow?



Will the eastern land
enjoy a good harvest?



King Hsin' prayers for victory
as he undertakes a punitive
expedition against the Yu

Chinese

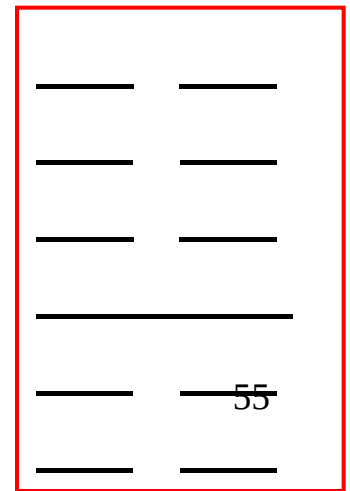
- **Shang (1766 BC - 1122 BC)**
 - **Evolution of Chinese writing**
 - **Pictographs for words referring to objects**
 - **Ideographs (combination of pictographs to express a concept)**
 - **Phonetic signs (pictographs “borrowed” in other words because of the sound they represented)**
 - **Disambiguation signs**
 - **More than 2,000 characters**
 - **Top to bottom, right to left**

Chinese

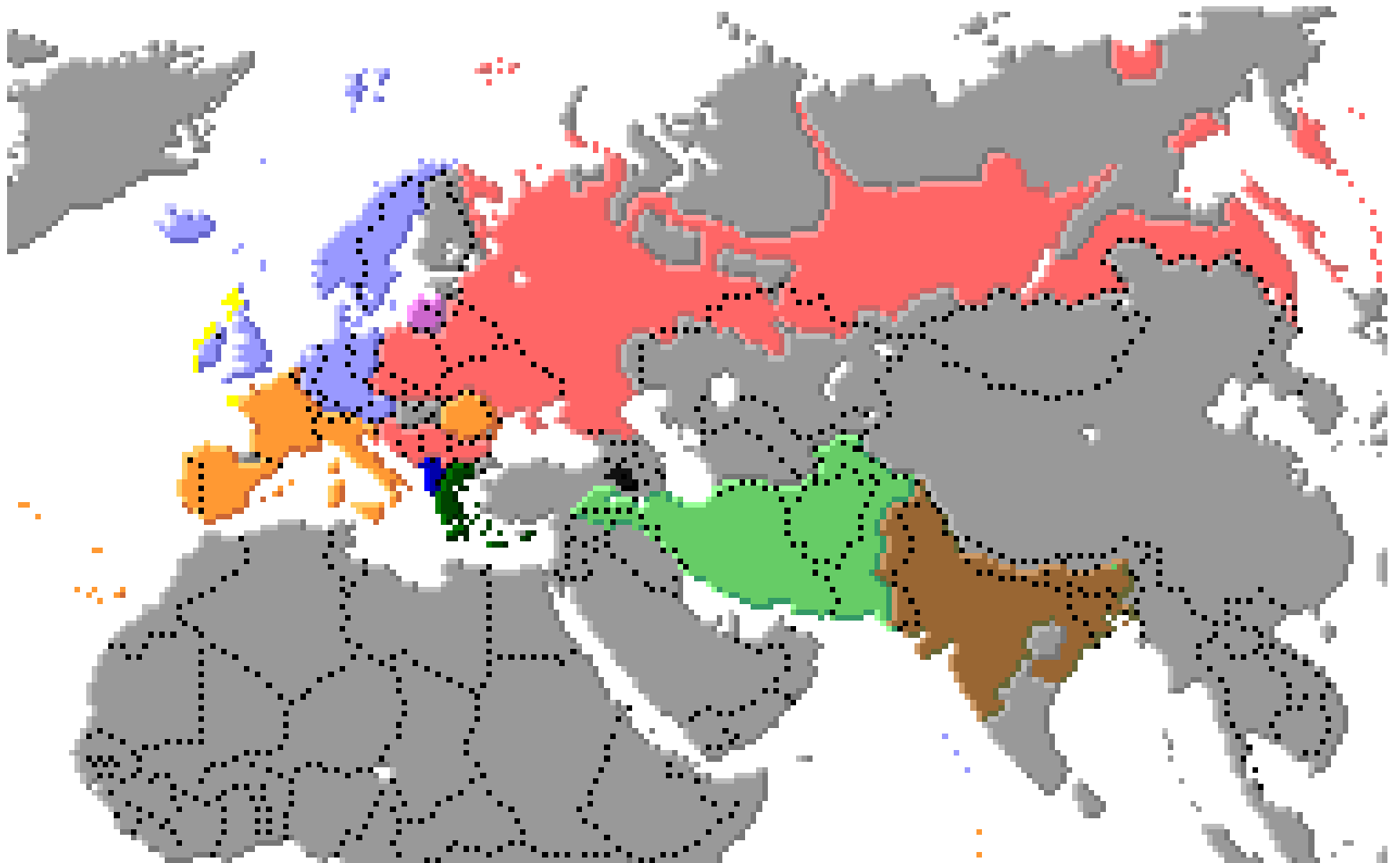
- **Shang (1766 BC - 1122 BC)**
 - **Mystery of Chinese alphabet: it is easier for a Chinese child to learn Chinese using pinyin (the phonetic romanization) than the Chinese characters**

Chinese

- **/I Ching/Yi Jing Book of Changes (900 BC)**
 - 64 symbolic hexagrams, each hexagram consisting of a pair of trigrams chosen from a family of eight basic trigrams, each named for a natural phenomenon
 - The eight trigrams represent the possible combinations of Yang and Yin, or unbroken and broken lines
 - Divination and numerology
 - Commentaries on change
 - "Yin" (quiescence)
 - "Yang" (movement)



Indo-European



Indo-European Language Tree

Part 2: Satem Languages

Languages marked with a dagger (†) are extinct

Centum Languages
(part 1)

Proto-Indo-European

Slavic

Armenian

South Slavic

West Slavic

East Slavic

Baltic

Albanian

Bulgarian

Slovenian

Serbian

Croatian

Bosnian

Macedonian

Polish

Czech

Slovak

Sorbian

Russian

Belarusian

Ukrainian

†Old Prussian

Latvian

Lithuanian

Gheg

Tosk

INDO-IRANIAN

DARDIC

INDIC

IRANIAN

Languages of the Kashmir
Region and the
Upper Indus
valley

Sanskrit

Assamese

Bengali

Gujarati

Hindi

Marathi

Punjabi

Romany

Sindhi

Singhalese

Urdu

†Old Persian

Persian

†Avestan

†Sogdian

Baluchi

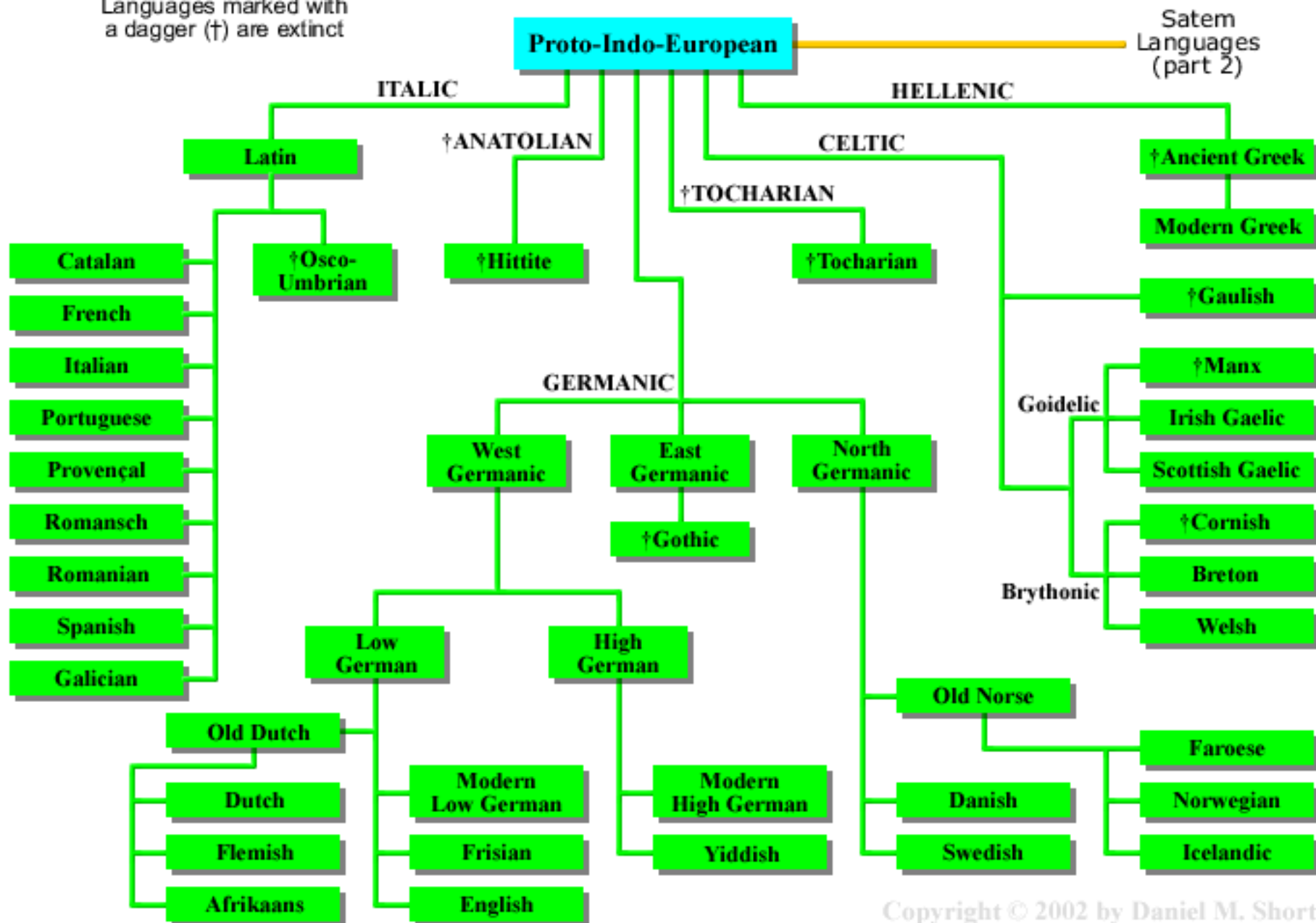
Kurdish

Pashto

Indo-European Language Tree

Part 1: Centum Languages

Languages marked with a dagger (†) are extinct

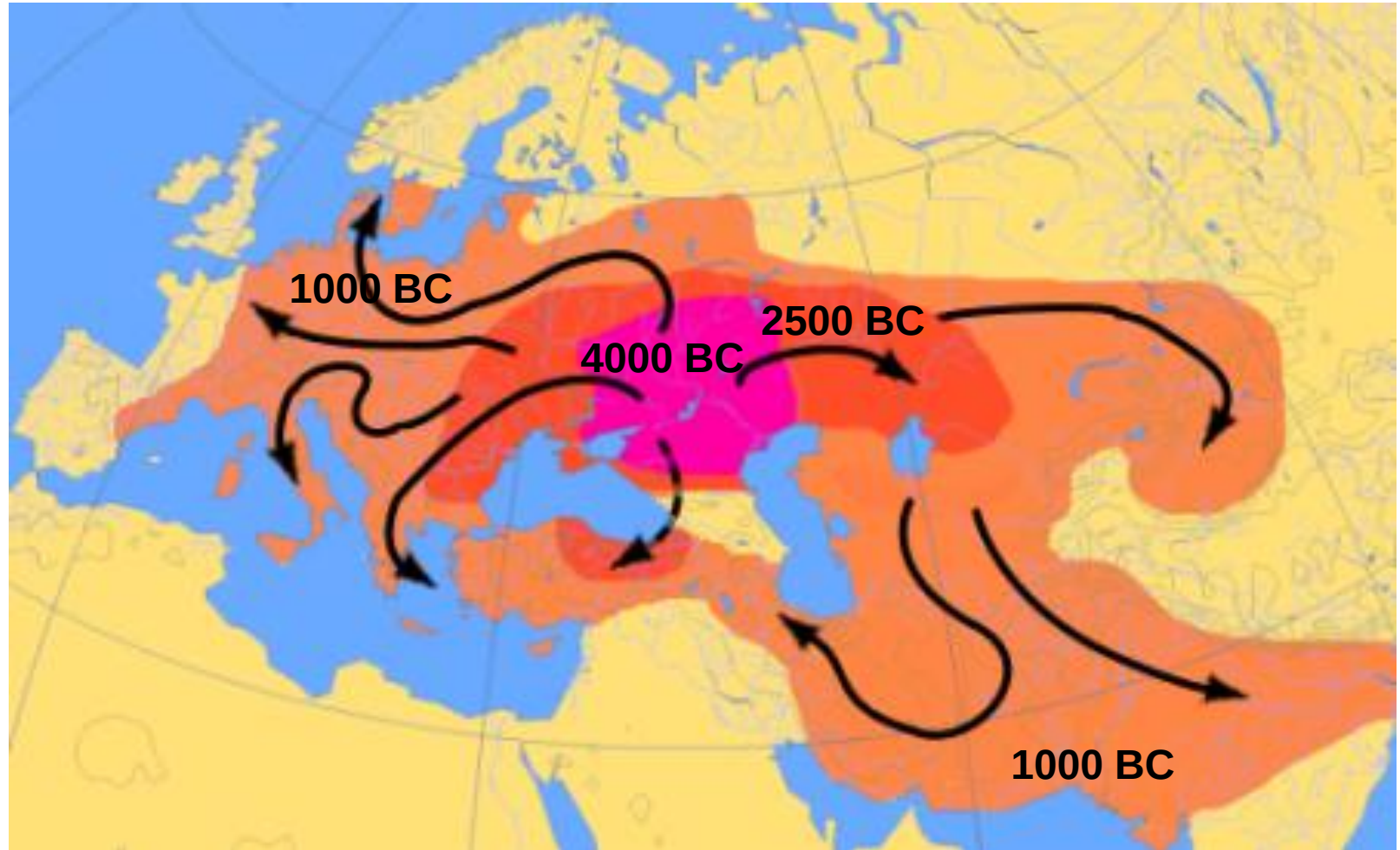


Indo-European Languages

- **Indo-European or “Aryan” languages: Indo-Iranian, Italic, Slavic, Germanic, Greek, Baltic, Celtic, Albanian, Armenian**
 - **5000 BC: the Kurgan (“tumuli”) culture in the steppes west of the Ural Mountains (Indo-Europeans)**
 - **3000 BC: Dravidian speaking people develop the civilization of the Indus Valley**
 - **3000 BC: the proto-indo-european language develops in Central Asia**
 - **2000 BC: the Kurgan culture spreads to eastern Europe and northern Iran**

Indo-European Languages

- **Indo-European migration**



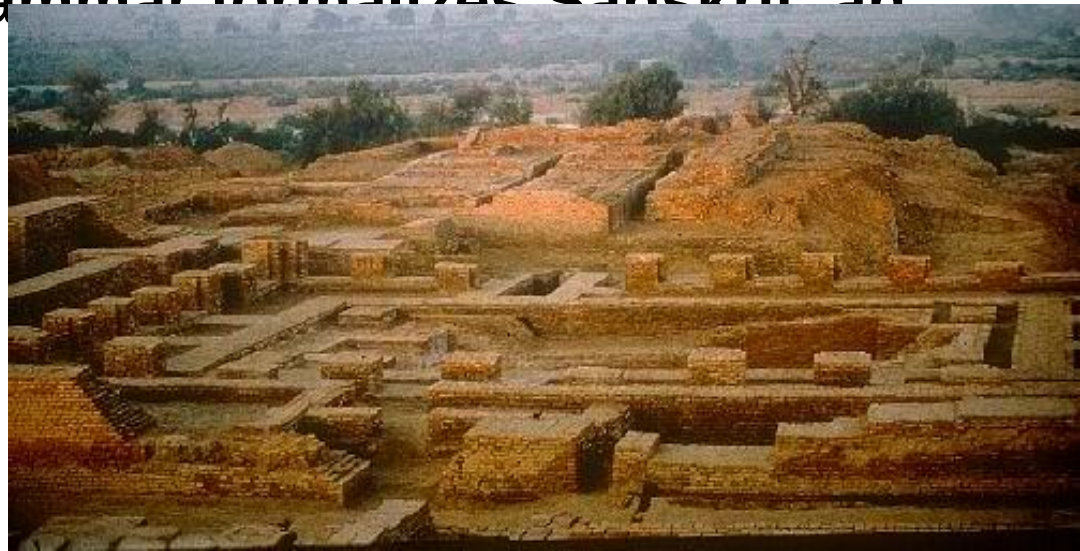
Indo-European Languages

- **The Indo-European migrations**
 - **2200 BC: Mycenae (Greece)**
 - **2100 BC: the Hurrians in northern Mesopotamia**
 - **1720 BC: the Hittites in Turkey**
 - **1700 BC: Indo-Iranians**
 - **1600 BC: Indo-Europeans in the Indus valley**
 - **1480 BC: the Mitannis in Mesopotamia**

Indo-European Languages

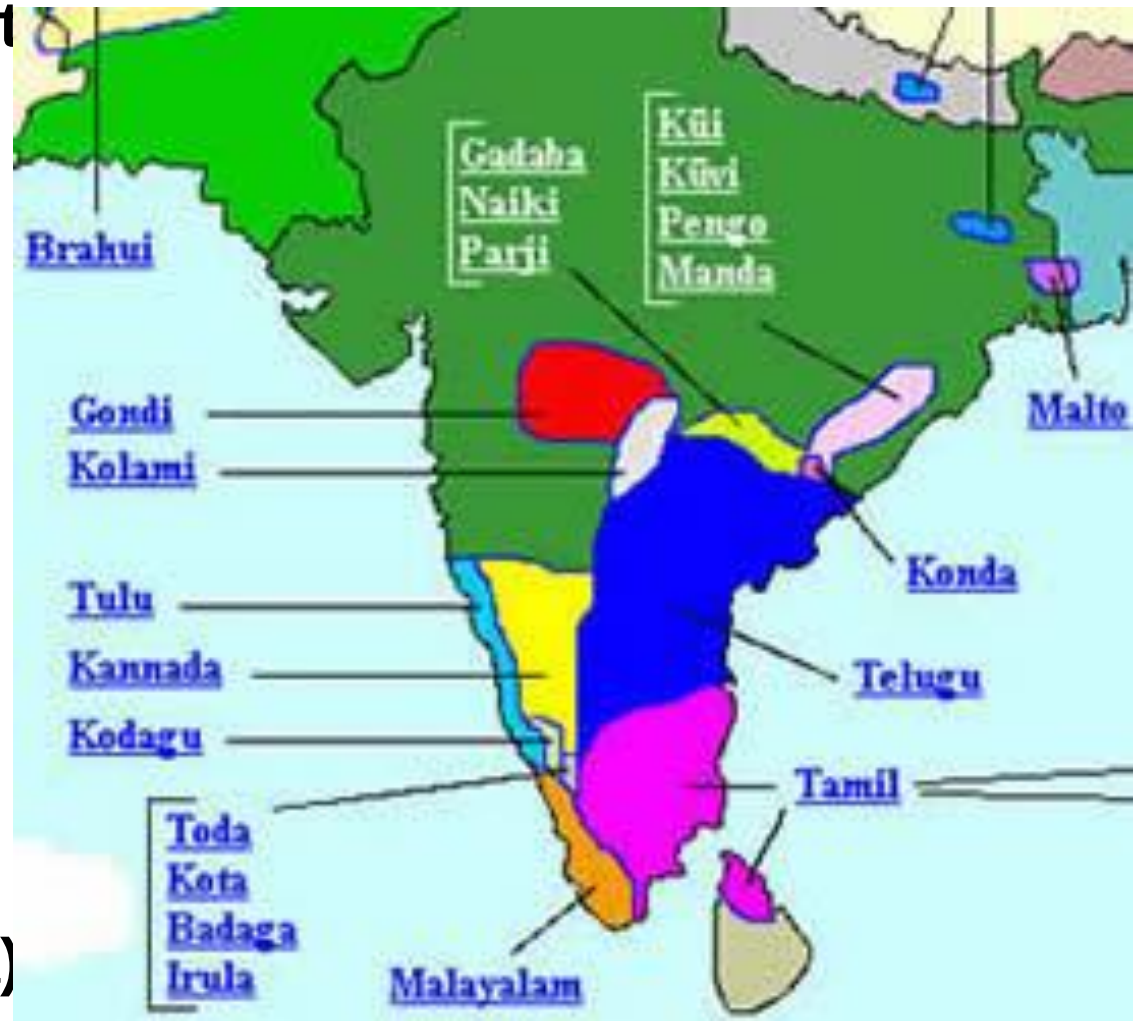
- **1700 BC: Indo-Europeans migrate eastward, away from the other Indo-European peoples, and settle in Iran**
- **1600 BC: Indo-Europeans invade India from the west and expel the Dravidians**
- **1500 BC: Religious texts are written in Vedic, an Indo-European language**
- **400 BC: Panini's grammar formalizes Sanskrit, an evolution of Vedic**

Mohenjo-Daro,
Indus Valley
(Dravidian)



Indo-European Languages

- Today:
 - India has 112 mother tongues with at least 10,000 speakers
 - 23 Dravidian (non-Indoeuropean) languages are spoken by 180 million people, mainly in the south (Tamil in Tamil Nadu, Telugu in Andhra Pradesh, Kannada in Mysore, Malayalam in Kerala)



Mohenjo-Daro

- Steatite seals
 - Dravidian language?
 - No Horses!



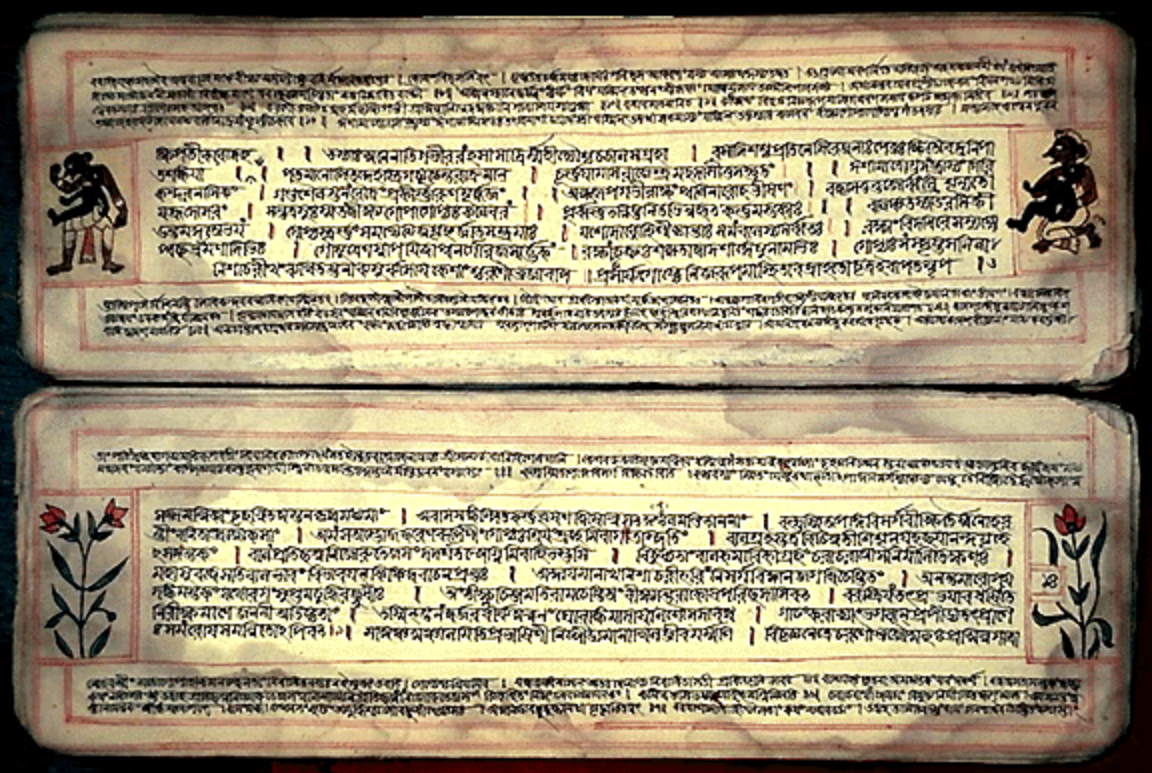
Metropolitan Museum, New York



Mohenjo-Daro

- Steatite seals
 - Oldest writing in the world?





Vedic (Indo-European)

Vedas



Vedic

- **Vedas were written in Vedic or proto-Sanskrit**
- **Sanskrit does not have a unique script (purely oral language until well into India's classical age)**
- **Indus Valley script was written from right to left**
- **Sanskrit was written left-to-right**

Vedic

- **Rig-veda (1500 BC)**
 - **Beliefs of the Indo-Europeans**
 - **1028 hymns to a pantheon of gods**
 - **Not written down but handed down orally from father to son (jealously guarded secrets)**
 - **Veda means “knowledge/wisdom” in ancient Vedic**
 - **Yajur-Veda (1000 BC): rites of sacrifice**
 - **Sama-Veda: religious hymns**
 - **Atharva-Veda (900 BC): magic spells**
 - **Brahmanas (900 BC): priestly rites in prose**

Creation Hymn from the Rig Veda (Translation by V. V. Raman, University of Rochester)

*Not even nothing existed then
No air yet, nor a heaven.
Who encased and kept it where?
Was water in the darkness there?
Neither deathlessness nor decay
No, nor the rhythm of night and day:
The self-existent, with breath sans
air:
That, and that alone was there.
Darkness was in darkness found
Like light-less water all around.
One emerged, with nothing on
It was from heat that this was born.
Into it, Desire, its way did find:
The primordial seed born of mind.
Sages know deep in the heart:
What exists is kin to what does not.*

*Across the void the cord was
thrown,
The place of every thing was
known.
Seed-sowers and powers now
came by,
Impulse below and force on high.
Who really knows, and who can
swear,
How creation came, when or
where!
Even gods came after creation's
day,
Who really knows, who can truly
say
When and how did creation start?
Did He do it? Or did He not?
[continues on next page]*

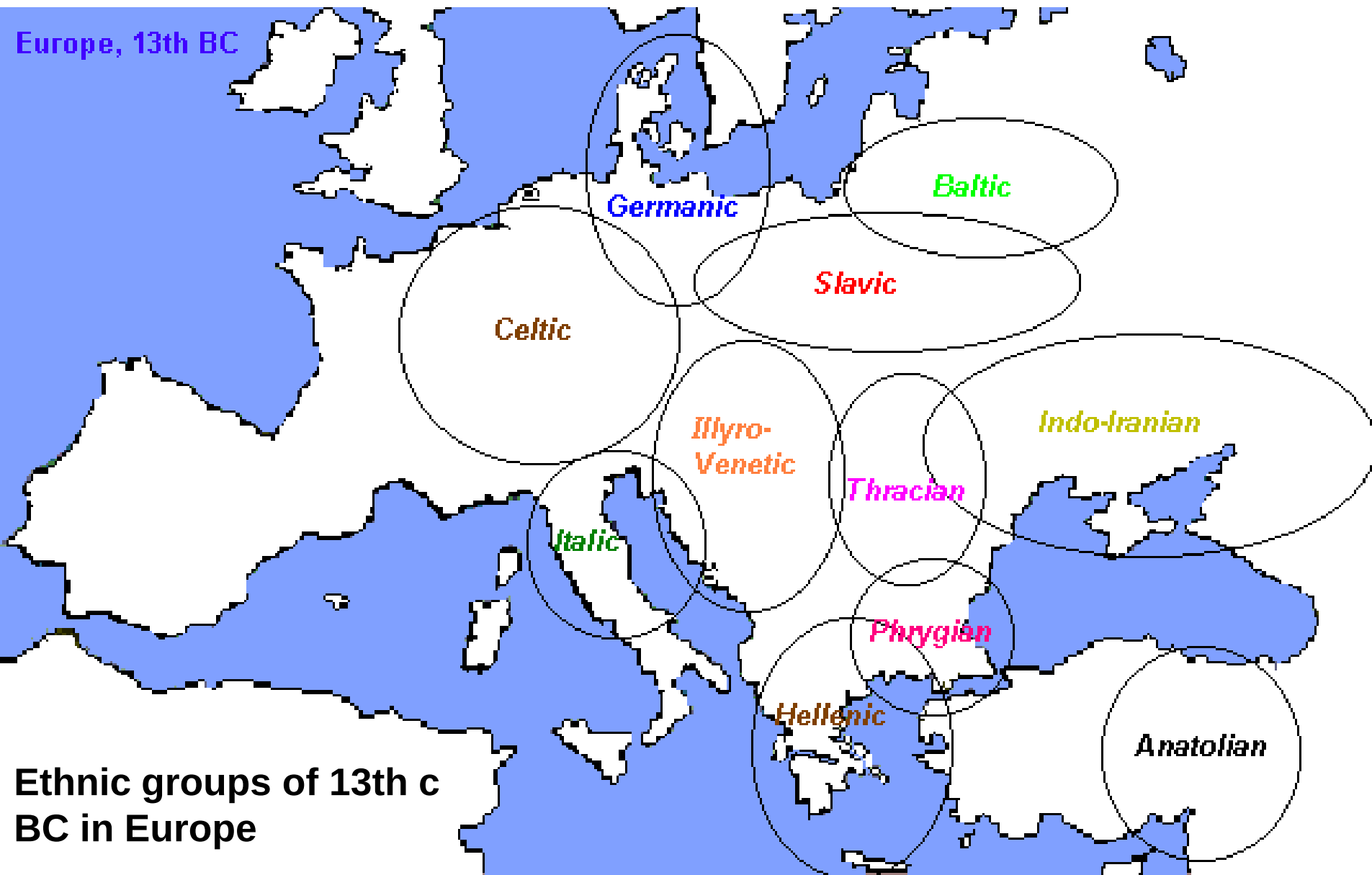
Creation Hymn from the Rig Veda (Translation by V. V. Raman, University of Rochester)

*Only He, up there, knows, maybe;
Or perhaps, not even He.*

Vedic

- **Sources of the Vedas**
 - **Indo-European elements**
 - **Indo-Iranian elements (eg, Vedic god Varuna similar to Zoroastrian god Ahura Mazda)**
 - **Dravidian elements**

Indo-European Languages



Hittite



Hittite

- Oldest recorded **Indo-European** language
- Fiction
 - "The Disappeared God" (Hittite, 16## BC)
 - "Kumarbi-ullikummi" (Hittite, 16## BC)
 - "The Dragon Illujanka" (Hittite, 16## BC)



Crete

- **What language is this?**

Phaistos Disc
The earliest printed document
in the world
(characters punched into clay
by stamps)
Crete, 1700 BC

(Heraklion Museum, Crete)



Phoenician

- **Canaanites: Semitic people, ancestors of both Phoenicians and Hebrews, 2500 BC - 1000 BC**



Phoenician

- **Language**
 - **1500 - 1000 BC: Canaanites develop an alphabet of 24 symbols by removing the vowels from the old Semitic cuneiform alphabet**
 - **1000 BC: Byblos condenses original 30 signs to 22**

Phoenician

Oldest alphabetical inscription

Sarcophagus of king Ahiram of Byblos, 1000 BC

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840.



Phoenician

Phoenician:

𐤀 𐤁 𐤂 𐤃 𐤄 𐤅 𐤆 𐤇 𐤈 𐤉 𐤊 𐤋 𐤌 𐤍 𐤎 𐤏 𐤐 𐤑 𐤒 𐤓 𐤔 𐤕 𐤖 𐤗 𐤘

Greek: →

Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω

Hebrew: ←

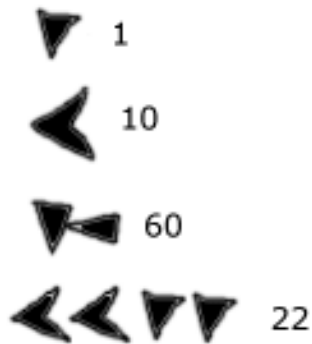
א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ ק ר ש ת

| | |
|---|---|
| Phoenician -- c. 900 B.C. | 𐤀 𐤁 𐤂 𐤃 𐤄 𐤅 𐤆 𐤇 𐤈 𐤉 𐤊 𐤋 𐤌 𐤍 𐤎 𐤏 𐤐 𐤑 𐤒 𐤓 𐤔 𐤕 𐤖 𐤗 𐤘 |
| ←
Earliest Greek -- c. 750 B.C.
(Western Variant) | Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ |
| ←
Etruscan -- c. 650 B.C. | Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ |
| ←
Latin -- c. 500 B.C. | A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S T V X |
| →
C to G -- 3rd cent. B.C. | A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S T V X Y Z |
| →
Latin -- 1st cent. B.C. | A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S T V X Y Z |
| →
Latin -- Middle Ages | A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z |

Phoenician

Sumerian

cuneiform



Old Persian Numbers



| | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | | | ⌒ | ⌒ | ⌒ | ⌒ | ⌒ | △ |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 1 - 10 in Greek acrophonic numbers | | | | | | | | | |

Phoenicians use their letters
to mean numbers.

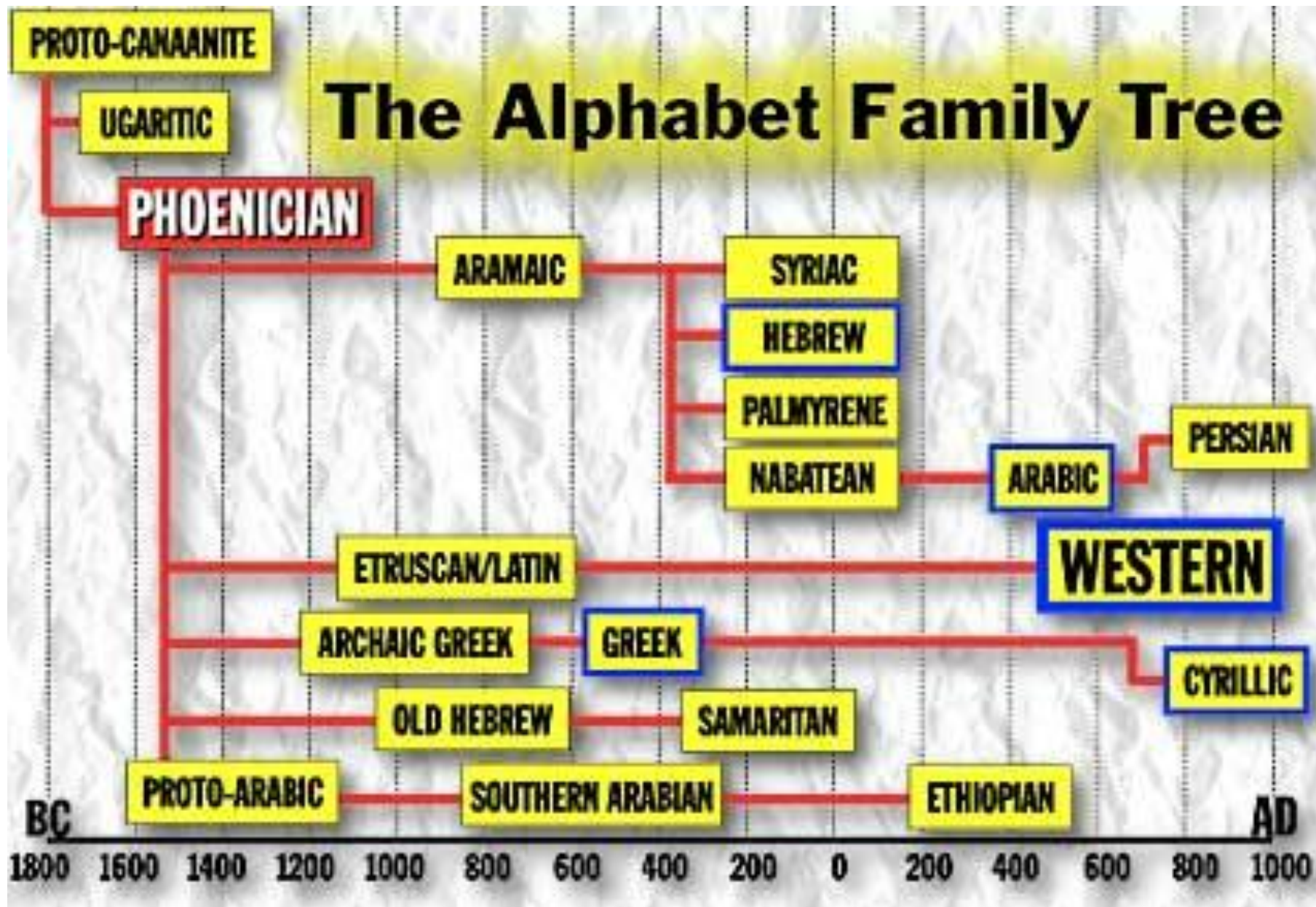
Hebrew

Greek Attic system

Ionic system (after 100BC,
from Phoenician numbers)

1 = Α
2 = Β
3 = Γ
4 = Δ
5 = Ε
6 = Ϛ
7 = Ζ
8 = Η
9 = Θ

| Value | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Value x 1 | א Alef 05D0 | ב Bet 05D1 | ג Gimel 05D2 | ד Dalet 05D3 | ה He 05D4 | ו Vav 05D5 | ז Zayon 05D6 | ח Het 05D7 | ט Tet 05D8 |
| Value x 10 | י Yod 05D9 | כ Kaf 05DB | ל Lamed 05DC | מ Mem 05DE | נ Nun 05E0 | ס Samekh 05E1 | ע Ayin 05E2 | פ Pe 05E4 | צ Tzadi 05E6 |
| Value x 100 | ק Qof 05E7 | ר Resh 05E8 | ש Shin 05E9 | ת Tav 05EA | | | | | |



Phoenician

- Ugarit
 - Independent city-state between 1500-1200 BC
 - Cosmopolitan center with palaces, temples, vaulted tombs, archives in several languages
 - Trade with Egypt, Mesopotamia, Aegean islands and the Hittites (Anatolia)
 - 1,500 BC: alphabet



First alphabet, 1400 BC
(Damascus museum)

Phoenician

- **Fiction**
 - **"Tale of Aghat" (14## BC, Ugarit)**
 - **A wicked Danel makes ablations to false gods, becomes drunk, consumes his funerary offering in Baal's house**
 - **"Baal & Anat" (Ugarit, 14## BC)**

Aramaic

- **Arameans or Syriacs**
 - Semitic, nomadic people of Mesopotamia
 - Settled in Syria in the 14th century BC
 - Small tribes that never unified in an empire



Aramaic

- **Language and alphabet**
 - **Aramaic language (originally a dialect of Akkadian) written with the Phoenician alphabet**
 - **International trade language of the Middle East between 1000 and 600 BCE**
 - **Official language of the Persian Empire (539-337 BC)**
 - **Aramaic used as far as Egypt and China**
 - **Aramaic becomes the language of the Jews in Palestine (Jesus preaches in Aramaic)**
 - **Aramaic evolves into Christian Aramaic, Syriac (4th to 7th c. AD)**
 - **Aramaic declines with the Arab conquest (7th c. AD)**

Aramaic

- Aramaic

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 𐤀 | 𐤁 | 𐤂 | 𐤃 | 𐤄 | 𐤅 |
| , | b | g | d | h | w |
| 𐤆 | 𐤇 | 𐤈 | 𐤉 | 𐤊 | 𐤋 |
| z | ḥ | ṭ | y | k | l |
| 𐤌 | 𐤍 | 𐤎 | 𐤏 | 𐤐 | 𐤑 |
| m | n | s | ‘ | p | š |
| 𐤒 | 𐤓 | 𐤔 | 𐤕 | | |
| q | r | š | t | | |

Basalt stele in Aramaic (750 BC) from Sfire (Syria), a treaty between two kings, one of the oldest Aramaic inscriptions (Damascus Museum)



Hebrew

- **Tanakh (Hebrew Bible, Old Testament)**
 - All books in Hebrew except one in Aramaic (Daniel's) divided in three sections
 - **Torah/Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)**
 - **Nevim/Prophets (Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisa, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc)**
 - **Ketuvim/Writings (Psalms, Proverbs, the Book of Job, Daniel, the Song of Songs, etc)**
 - Book of Daniel (composed about 164 BC, accepted about 90 AD)
 - Psalms of David and Proverbs of Solomon inspired by “Amenemope’s Wisdom” (Egypt)

Hebrew

- **Torah/Pentateuch**
 - **The first five books of the Hebrew Bible:**
 - **Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy**
 - **Traditionally attributed to Moses**
 - **A multitude of different writing styles**
 - **Two different versions of the creation of the world**
 - **Two different versions of the covenant**
 - **At least four authors**
 - **A Yahwist narrative (950 BC)**
 - **An Elohist source (850 BC)**
 - **Deuteronomy (650 BC)**
 - **A priestly document (500 BC)**

Greek

- **The Greeks (700 BC)**
 - **No literature from Mycenae (1600 BC to 1100 BC) but legends about Mycenae throughout Greek literature**
 - **Earliest example of Greek alphabet: 740 BC (a line of poetry about dancing: writing used for artistic purposes, not just for accounting)**
 - **Greek was originally written right-to-left, then boustrophedon, and finally (5th c) left-to-right**

Greek

- The Greeks (700 BC)

Letter →

Number →

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Α Α | Β Β | Γ Γ | Δ Δ | Ε Ε | Ζ Ζ | Η Η | Θ Θ |
| Alpha | Beta | Gamma | Delta | Epsilon | Zeta | Eta | Theta |
| 30-30
1 | 29-28
2 | 28-27
3 | 27-26
4 | 26-25
5 | 24-24
7 | 23-23
8 | 22-22
9 |
| Ι Ι | Κ Κ | Λ Λ | Μ Μ | Ν Ν | Ξ Ξ | Ο Ο | Π Π |
| Iota | Kappa | Lambda | Mu | Nu | Xi | Omicron | Pi |
| 21-21
10 | 20-20
20 | 19-19
30 | 18-18
40 | 17-17
50 | 16-16
60 | 15-15
70 | 14-14
80 |
| Ρ Ρ | Σ Σ | Τ Τ | Υ Υ | Φ Φ | Χ Χ | Ψ Ψ | Ω Ω |
| Rho | Sigma | Tau | Upsilon | Phi | Chi | Psi | Omega |
| 12-13
100 | 11-12
200 | 10-11
300 | 9-10
400 | 8-9
500 | 7-8
600 | 6-7
700 | 5-5
800 |

Greek

- **The Homeric poems (1000BC-800BC)**
 - **Homer/Homeros**
 - **A Greek from Ionia (Asia Minor), perhaps from the island of Chios**
 - **Lived between 850 BC and 750 BC.**
 - **Blind wandering minstrel reciting poems from a very old oral tradition**
 - **Homer lived in the Iron Age but told his stories about the Bronze Age**

Greek

- **The Homeric poems (1000BC-800BC)**
 - **Iliad**
 - **Poem of 15,693 verses in dactylic hexameter (as in “Canada Canada”)**
 - **Earliest extant copy of Iliad: 400 BC**
 - **Tenth year of the war between the Achaeans and Troy, a war caused by Paris' abduction of Helen from King Menelaus of Mycenae**
 - **Achilles' wrath (withdraws from battle because of his anger at Greek chief Agamemnon, returns to avenge the death of his friend Patroklos, kills Trojan hero Hector)**
 - **Odysseus of Ithaca reluctantly joins the Greeks in the siege of Troy**

Greek

- **The Homeric poems (1000BC-800BC)**
 - **Iliad**
 - **Gods, oracles and heroes drive the action**
 - **Gods witness, root, plot and participate**
 - **Zeus also foresees the events and makes sure that Fate is respected**
 - **Ends with the funerals of the opposing heroes, Hector and Patroklos**
 - **Gods are not necessarily good, heroes are good**

Greek

- **The Homeric poems (1000BC-800BC)**
 - **Odyssey**
 - **Odysseus/Ulysses' adventures and ultimate return home ten years after the fall of Troy**
 - **Cyclopes, nymphae, witches, sirens, monsters**
 - **Ulysses recovers his kingdom**
 - **Fantasy not chronicle**

Greek

- The Homeric poems (1000BC-800BC)
 - Odyssey
 - The poem begins with Odysseus/Ulysses' refusal of immortality (the opposite of the Gilgamesh, which begins with a quest for immortality)
 - Paradise is a prison: Ulysses does not want immortality with the goddess Calypso; the immortality granted to him by Calypso prevents him from fulfilling his duty
 - Ulysses travels to Hades (the underworld/afterlife) and meets famous deceased (including Achilles)
 - Dead Achilles envies the living

Greek

- **The Homeric poems (1000BC-800BC)**
 - **Heroic virtues**
 - **Fate (the best do not always win)**
 - **Life as a continuous titanic struggle**
 - **Separation of art and religion (the poet as a vehicle for the gods but not as a priest)**
 - **Unity of design**
 - **No unity of soul: psyche (vital spirit?), thymos (consciousness?), nous (intellect?)**
 - **At death, psyche wanders in Hades, thymos leaves the body**

Greek

- **Other epics**
 - **Achilles' victories over Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons, and Memnon, king of Ethiopia,**
 - **Death of Achilles at the hands of Paris**
 - **Aeneas escaped the massacre and led the Trojan survivors to Italy**
 - **Hesiod (750BC)**

Greek

- **Collapse of mythopoetic thought**
- **Emergence of the poet as an individual, not a collective bard: the soul of the individual not the soul of the community**
- **Lyric poem**
 - **Archilochus (650 BC)**
 - **Sappho (600 BC)**
 - **Pindar (b 518BC)**

Greek

Poikilo' Thron' Athanat' Aphrodita
Pai Dios Doloploka, Lissomai Se
Me M'asaisi Med' Oniaisi Damna
Potnia Thumon.

Alla Tuid' Elth' Ai Pota Katerota
Tas Emas Audos Aioisa Ploi
Eklues, Patros De Domon Lipoisa
Chrusion Elthes

Arm' Updeuxaisa. Kaloi De S'agon
Okees Strouthoi Peri Gas Melainas
Pukna Dinnentes Pter' Ap Oranothe-
-Ros Dia Messo

Aipsa D'exikonto, Su De O Makaira
Meidiaisas' Athanato Prosopoi
Ere' Otti Deute Popontha Kotti
Deute Kalemme

Kotti Moi Malista Thelo Genesthai
Mainolai Thumoi. Tina Deute Peitho
.....Agen Es San Philotata? Tis S' O
Psapph' Adikeei?

Kai Gar Ai Pheugei, Taxeos Dioxei
Ai De Dora Me Deket', Alla Dosei
Ai De Me Philei, Tacheos Philesei
Kouk Etheloisa.

Elthe Moi Kai Nun, Chalepon De Luson
Ek Merimnan, Ossa De Moi Telessai
Thumos Imerrei, Teleson, Su D'auta
Summachos Ezzo.

Greek

- Sappho
 - *"...If you forget me, think*
 - *of our gifts to Aphrodite*
 - *and all the loveliness that we shared*
 - *"all the violet tiaras,*
 - *braided rosebuds, dill and*
 - *crocus twined around your young neck*
 - *"myrrh poured on your head*
 - *and on soft mats girls with*
 - *all that they most wished for beside them*
 - *"while no voices chanted*
 - *choruses without ours,*
 - *no woodlot bloomed in spring without song..."*
 - *(Translated by Mary Barnard)*

Greek

- Sappho
 - *... There hovers forever around you delight:*
 - *A beauty desired.*
 - *Even your garment plunders my eyes.*
 - *I am enchanted: I who once*
 - *Complained to the Cyprus-born goddess,*
 - *Whom I now beseech*
 - *Never to let this lose me grace*
 - *But rather bring you back to me...*
 - *(Translated by Paul Roche)*

Greek

- Sappho

- *...She saw you as a goddess*
- *and above all your dancing gave her deep joy.*
- *Now she shines among Lydian women like*
- *the rose-fingered moon*
- *rising after sundown, erasing all*
- *stars around her, and pouring light equally*
- *across the salt sea*
- *and over densely flowered fields*
- *lucent under dew. Her light spreads*
- *on roses and tender thyme*
- *and the blooming honey-lotus....*
- *(Translated by Willis Barnstone)*

Greek

- Theater (550BC)
 - "Theatron" = "seeing place", the place where the audience sat
 - "Tragedia" = "goat-song" (goat skins of the chorus)
 - "Chorus" = "dance"

Greek

- **Theater (550BC)**
 - Theater began as a religious ceremony
 - The Athenian theatre focused on Dionysus, god of fertility, wine, sexuality, agriculture
 - Yearly fertility festival in March, including
 - one week of public wine drinking
 - phallus-worshiping orgy
 - dithyrambos (dance and chant to the god)

Greek

- **Theater (550BC)**
 - The first plays were transcriptions in verse form of these religious rites
 - The first playwrights were poets and the first plays were mostly recited (or sung) and danced by the chorus
 - The first actors were characters addressing the leader of the chorus during intervals
 - Second actor added by Aeschylus. Third actor added by Sophocles.
 - Scenery introduced by Sophocles
 - Machinery to impersonate a god ("deus ex machina") introduced by Euripides

Greek

- **Theater (550BC)**
 - The chorus' part was gradually reduced, the actors' dialogue gradually increased
 - The chorus danced in front of the stages ("orchestra")
 - A play included loud music, bright colors, spectacular dancing
 - A play consisted of: 1. prologue (a simple speech), 2. introduction of the chorus, 3. the acts/scenes
 - The chorus commented on the action AND guided the audience's reactions
 - All the actors were male, and they all played multiple roles (and wore masks to identify the character)
 - The performance took place in an open-air theater
 - The audience was 15-17,000 people

Greek

- **Theater**
 - **Tragedy as narrative of the gods and heroes**
 - **The plot is already known to the audience (ancestral legends)**

Greek

- **Theater**
 - **Aeschylus (525 BC): "Oresteia", humans instead of gods**
 - **the return of Agamemnon from the Trojan War and his assassination by his wife Clytemnestra to avenge the killing of their daughter Iphigenia**
 - **the reunion of Agamemnon's children, Electra and Orestes, and their revenge on their mother**
 - **Orestes narrowly escapes the revenge of the Furies**

Greek

- **Theater**
 - **Sophokles/Sophocles (496 BC): "Oedipus Rex", horror of human condition**
 - **Oedipus goes on a journey to escape his fate (to wed his mother and kill his father) but his actions bring about precisely that fate**
 - **Euripides (485 BC): "Medea", madness rather than accept the human condition; ordinary men**
 - **In order to take revenge over her husband Jason's betrayal, Medea kills her own children**

Greek

- **Comedy (400BC)**
 - **Aristophanes (450 BC): “Lysistrata” (411 BC)**
 - **the women force the men to make peace by refusing them sex**
 - **Menander (b342 BC): Comedies**

Etruscan



Etruscan

- Alphabet**

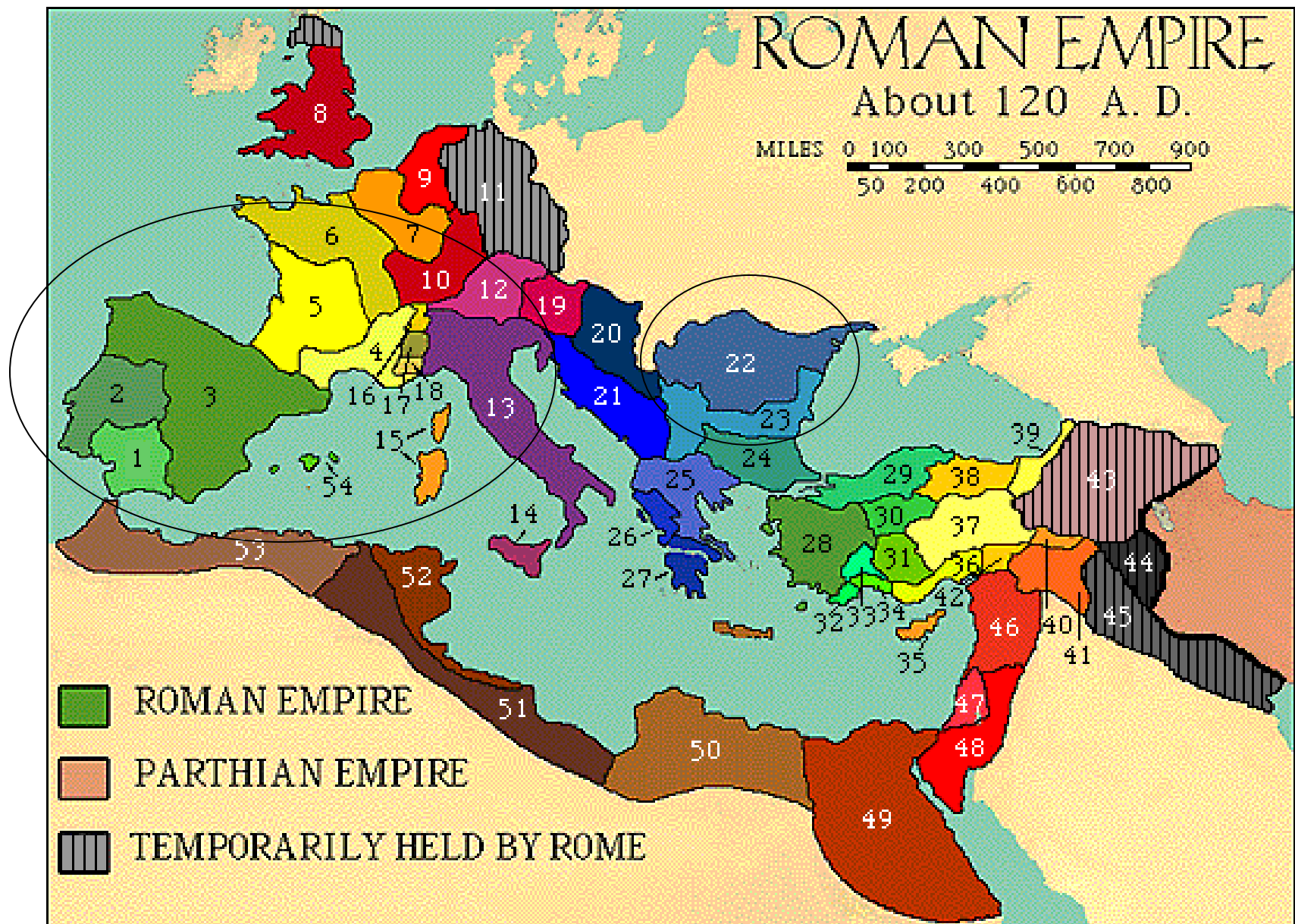
Archaic Etruscan alphabet (7th-5th centuries BC)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|------|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|-----|
| A | C | E | F | I | ⊞ | ⊗ | | ƚ | L | ʷ | ʸ | ʀ | M | Q | P | ΣΣΣ |
| a | g | e | v, f | dz | ch | th | i | k | l | m | n | p | sh | q | r | s |
| T | V | X | ⊙ | Υ | ⊞F | 8 | | | | | | | | | | |
| t | u | ks | ph | kh | f | | | | | | | | | | | |

Neo-Etruscan alphabet (4th-3rd centuries BC)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|------|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|
| A | C | E | F | I | ⊞ | ⊗ | ⊙ | ⊙ | | ƚ | L | ʷ | ʸ | ʸ | ʸ | ʸ | ʀ | M | ⊞ |
| a | g | e | v, f | dz | ch | th | | | i | k | l | m | | n | | p | | sh | |
| P | D | Σ | Σ | T | V | ⊙ | ⊙ | Υ | Υ | 8 | | | | | | | | | |
| r | s | t | u | ph | kh | f | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Latin



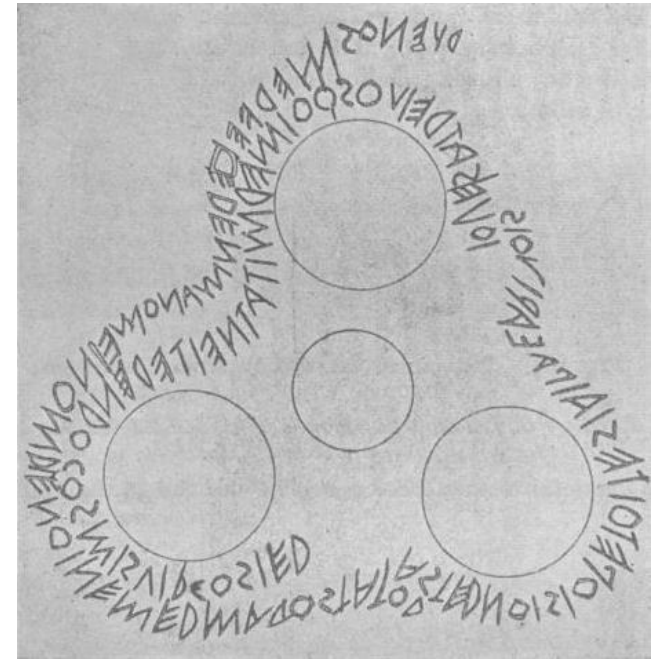
Latin

- **Latin alphabet**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <u>A</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>C</u> | <u>D</u> | <u>E</u> | <u>F</u> | <u>I</u> | <u>H</u> | <u>I</u> | <u>K</u> | <u>L</u> |
| <u>M</u> | <u>N</u> | <u>O</u> | <u>P</u> | <u>Q</u> | <u>R</u> | <u>S</u> | <u>T</u> | <u>V</u> | <u>X</u> | |

- C stood for both *g* and *k*.
- The first I (between *F* and *H*) is the Greek *zeta*.
- The second I stood for both *i* and *j*.
- For a long time, R was written *P*.
- V stood for *u*, *v*, and *w*.

Duenos inscription of 6th c,
oldest Latin inscription



Latin

- **Archaic period**
 - **Theater: Plautus (254BC), first major Latin literature (imitation of Greek comedies)**
- **Ciceronian period (70 - 43 BC)**
 - **Poetry: Catullus (87 BC), Lucretius (99 BC)**
- **Augustan period (43 BC - 14 AD)**
 - **Poetry:**
 - **Horatius/Horace (65 BC): pleasure, condition of the poet**
 - **Ovidius/Ovid (43 BC): eros, satire**
 - **Theater: Seneca (4 BC)**

Latin

- **Augustan period (43 BC - 14 AD)**
 - **Poetry:**
 - **Vergilius/Virgil (70 BC): epic glorification of Rome's greatness**
 - Modeled after Homer
 - Aeneas goes to Hades
 - Moral poem: the dead are divided by ethical category
 - Civic poem: Aeneas comes back to see the glory of Rome
 - Arcadia: golden age of simple country pleasures, dream of rural tranquility

Latin

- **Fiction:**
 - **Petronius Arbiter's "Satyricon" (60 AD)**
 - **Satire, but not moralistic**
 - **Small-town life and ordinary people**
 - **A mixture of prose and poetry**
 - **Misadventures of the narrator, Encolpius, his friend Ascyltus, and their slave boy Giton, their love object**
 - **Tales of Trimalchio's guests**
 - **Lucius Apuleius' "Metamorphoses or The Golden Ass" (170)**

Latin

- **Satire:**
 - **Marcus Valerius Martialis: Epigrams (103 AD)**
 - **Decimus Iunius Iuvenalis: Satires (1## AD)**

Avestan

- **Avesta**
 - Holy book of Mazdaism
 - Gathas written in Gathic Avestan, hymns composed by Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) around 1000 BC
 - Yasht (648–330 BC)
 - Vendidad (141 BC-224 BC)
 - Visperad (226-651 AD).

Avestan

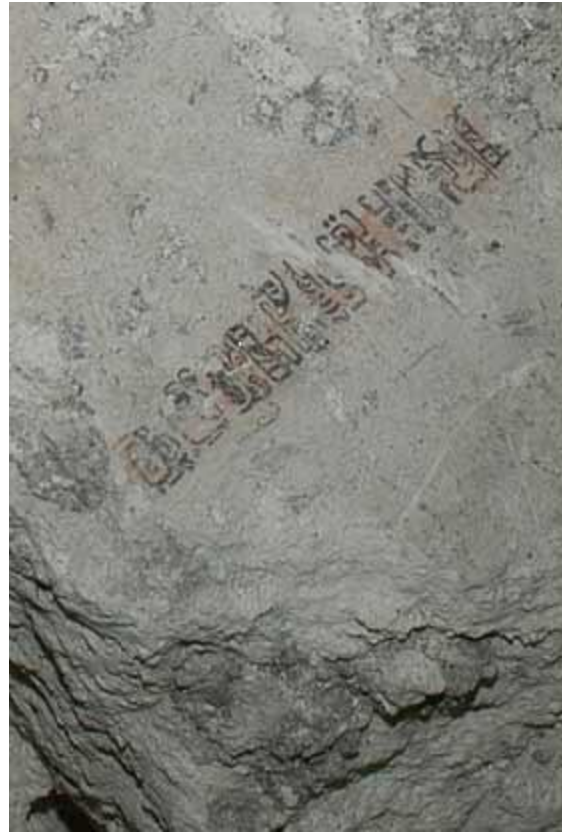
- **Avestan**
 - **Indo-European language**
 - **Remained a spoken language until the 3rd or 4th century when the Din Dabireh alphabet (an evolution of the Pahlavi script) was designed**
 - **The Pahlavi script was derived from Aramaic**
 - **Pahlavi script and Din Dabireh are written right-to-left**

Direction of writing

- **Semitic languages were written from right to left**
- **Hieroglyphs were written both left to right and right to left**
- **Chinese was written from right to left**
- **Phoenician was written from right to left**
- **Aramaic was written from right to left**
- **Greek was originally written right-to-left, then boustrophedon, and finally (5th c) left-to-right**
- **Etruscan was written from right to left**
- **Latin was written left-to-right**
- **Indus Valley script was written from right to left**
- **Sanskrit was written left-to-right**
- **Pahlavi was written right-to-left**
- **Arabic was written right-to-left**

Meso-American

- Early Maya writing:



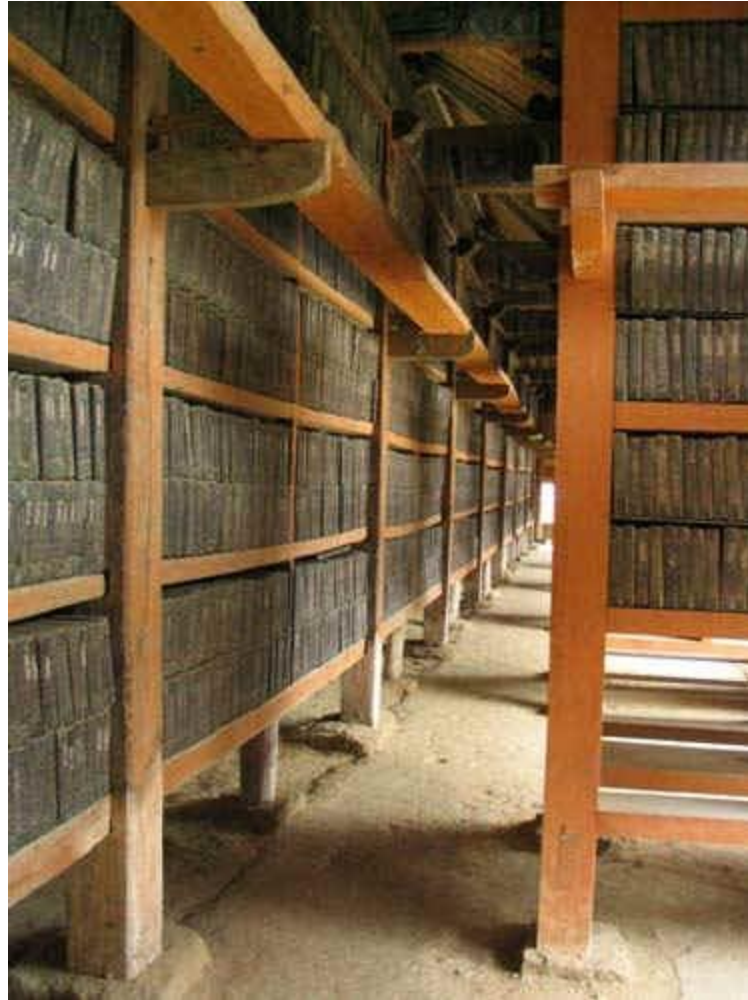
Ruins at San Bartolo, Guatemala
300 BC, oldest known Maya writing

1st C BC?

Meso-American

- **Zapotec writing by 600 BC (one of the three inventors of writing with Mesopotamia and China)**
- **Earliest Maya writing: 292 AD (also claims of 4th c BC findings)**
- **Similar to the principles of Sumerian writing (combination of non-phonetic logograms and phonetic signs)**
- **Derived from Olmec writing**

Sanskrit



Tripitaka engraved on 80000 woodblocks between 1237 and 1248 124
(Haeinsa Temple in Kayasan park, South Korea)

Sanskrit

- **Upanishads (600 BC)**
 - The metaphysical counterpart of the Veda (eg, the Brihadaranyaka is contained in the Yajurveda)
 - Philosophical meditation on the meaning of life and the nature of the universe, rather than mythology of gods
 - Pessimistic vision of the human condition: life is evil/sorrow

Sanskrit

- **Theravada/Hinayana Buddhist scriptures ("Tipitaka" or "Pali canon", 247 BC):**
 - **Codified in the second half of the 1st century BC in the Pali dialect of the Prakrit language**
 - **Transmitted orally by Buddha's disciples**
 - **Ananda (Buddha's servant): Buddha's sutras/sermons (Sutra pitaka): over 5,000 sutras**
 - **Vinaya "basket" (pitaka) of monastic rules: 227 rules for monks and 311 for nuns**
 - **Abhidharma pitaka of philosophical speculation (300BC -100 AD): five treatises due to scholars (not by the Buddha)**
 - **Suttas: pitaka of stories and sayings (including the Jatakas, parables of Buddha's previous lives)**

Sanskrit

- **Sanskrit Literature**
 - **“Kautiliya Arthasastra” (4## BC, India) [h]**
 - **Bhasa (3## BC, India): "Svapnavasavadatta/ The Vision of Vasavadatta" (3##) [t]**
 - **Gunadhya (1## BC, India): "Baddakaha/ Brhatkatha” (1##), written in prakrit, the spoken language of ordinary people**
 - **"Hala Satavahana" (1## BC, India):
“Gathasaptashathi” (1##) [p], prakrit anthology of poems**
 - **Sanskrit epics**
 - **Mahabharata**
 - **Ramayana**

Sanskrit

- **Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa (4th c BC): Mahabharata (6th c BC - 4th c AD)**
 - **90,000 verses (longest poem in world literature)**
 - **Tale of the rivalry between the Kauravas and the Pandavas for control of the kingdom, culminating in the battle of the Bhagavad Gita. The winner Yudhistira retires in the Himalayas and then ascends to heaven.**
 - **The whole war was Brahma's own idea. He sent demons to the Earth to cause massive destruction because the human population was getting out of control.**
 - **Hundreds of side stories and meditations**

Sanskrit

- **Mahabharata**
 - **Spiritual synthesis of the main Sanskrit philosophical schools**
 - **The world and human life are full of ambiguities**
 - **No precise definition of good and evil**
 - **An ethical life is important, but there is no definition of what is “ethical”**
 - **Humans must look into themselves to find that definition**

Sanskrit

- **Bhagavad-Gita/ Song of the Lord (book VI of Mahabharata, 100 BC)**
 - 700 verse
 - Dialogue between Krishna (God incarnate) and a human hero before the battle
 - Attempt at reconciling worldly view of the Veda and metaphysical view of the Upanishad.
 - Three paths to religious realization
 - path of deeds (karma yoga)
 - path of knowledge (jnana yoga)
 - path of devotion (bhakti yoga)

Sanskrit

- **Bhagavad-Gita/ Song of the Lord (book VI of Mahabharata, 100 BC)**
 - **Gunash are born from Prakriti**
 - **They cause the division of reality and unreality**
 - **Gunash create the illusion of the material world**
 - **The illusion keeps living beings under the control of Prakriti, i.e. of desire and attachment**
 - **The relative strength and combination of gunash determine the nature/behavior of beings**
 - **Sattva (purity) is pure knowledge**
 - **Rajas (change) is passion caused by desire and attachment and causing greed**
 - **Tamas (inertia) is darkness caused by ignorance and delusion and causing inaction**
 - **Each one tries to annihilate the others**

Sanskrit

- **Maharshi Valmiki: "Ramayana" (100 BC, India) [p]**
 - **King Rama's wife is kidnapped by the demon Ravana**
 - **Rama recovers his wife with the help of the monkey Hanuman**



Bharat during Ramayan times.

Sanskrit

- **Tamil literature**
 - **Tiruvalluvar (India, 1##): "Thirukkural" (1##) [p]**
 - **Ethical poem**
 - **1330 chapters, each chapter being a couplet**
 - **three parts: Aram (Virtue), Porul (Wealth), Kamam (Love)**

Sanskrit

- **Nagarjuna (15#, India): "Mulamadhyamakakarika/
Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way" (2##) [p]**
 - **Philosophical treatise on Buddhism**
 - **Written in Sanskrit instead of Pali**
 - **Evoke emptiness through the play of language**
 - *Neither from itself nor from another,*
 - *Nor from both,*
 - *Nor without a cause,*
 - *Does anything whatever, anywhere arise.*

Zhou China

- **The “Six Classics”**
 - **Four books of Confucianism/ Shih Shu**
 - **Lun Yü (Analects)**
 - **Daxue (Great Learning)**
 - **Zhongyong (Doctrine of the Mean)**
 - **Mengzi (Mencius)**
 - **Two books of Daoism**
 - **Dao-te Ching (The Virtue of the Way)**
 - **Zuangzi/ Chuang Tzu**

Zhou China

- **Civil war/ Warring states (403 BC - 256 BC)**
 - **Poetry**
 - **Chu Yuan (332 BC): lush and verbose poems (chu-tzu style)**
 - **Shih style (folk songs)**

The God of the River

*With you I wander the Nine Rivers.
The whirlwind and the waves arise.
Riding the water chariot with the roof of lotus leaves,
I am drawn by two dragons and a hornless serpent.
Climbing on K'un-lun Mountains I look in the four
directions.
My spirit wanders over the face of the deep.
The day is waning. Bemused, I forget my home.
I am dreaming of a distant shore.
In a fish-scale house, in a hall of dragons,
Under a purple-shell gateway, in a palace of pearl,
O spirit, why do you dwell in the waters?
Riding the white tortoise, chasing the spotted fishes,
I wander with you among the small islets.
The swift-flowing freshet comes swirling down-river.
With a gentle bow you turn towards the East.
So I escort the beautiful one to the south anchorage.
Wave after wave comes to welcome me;
Multitudes of fishes bid me farewell*



Chu Yuan (332 BC)

Han China

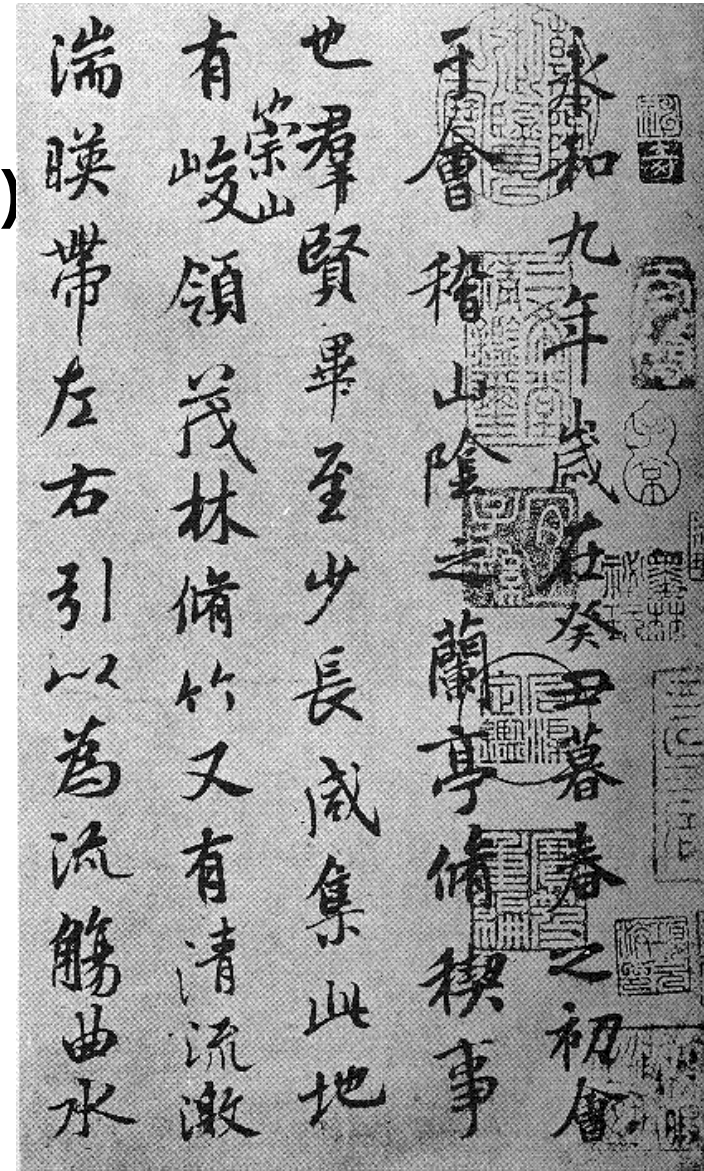
- **Han (206 BC - 220 AD)**
 - **Poetry**
 - **The fu (baroque mixture of verse and prose, an evolution of the chu-tzu style)**
 - **Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju (179 BC): "Shang-lin Fu"**
 - **The shih style (the style of the folk songs)**

Post-Han China

- **Six Dynasties (220 AD - 589 AD)**
 - **Poetry**
 - **The yueh-fu (free-form shih)**
 - **The lu-shih (shih with tonal rules besides formal rules)**
 - **Tao Chien/Qian (365): landscape poet**
 - **"T'ao-hua-yuan t'u/ Peach Blossom Spring"**
 - **A fisherman of a mountainous region of discovers a hidden valley in which people live in peace and know nothing of the outside world. After a pleasant stay the fisherman goes home. But when he tries to find it again he cannot.**

Post-Han China

- Six Dynasties (220 AD - 589 AD)
 - Calligraphy: Wang Hsi-chih (321)



Post-Han China

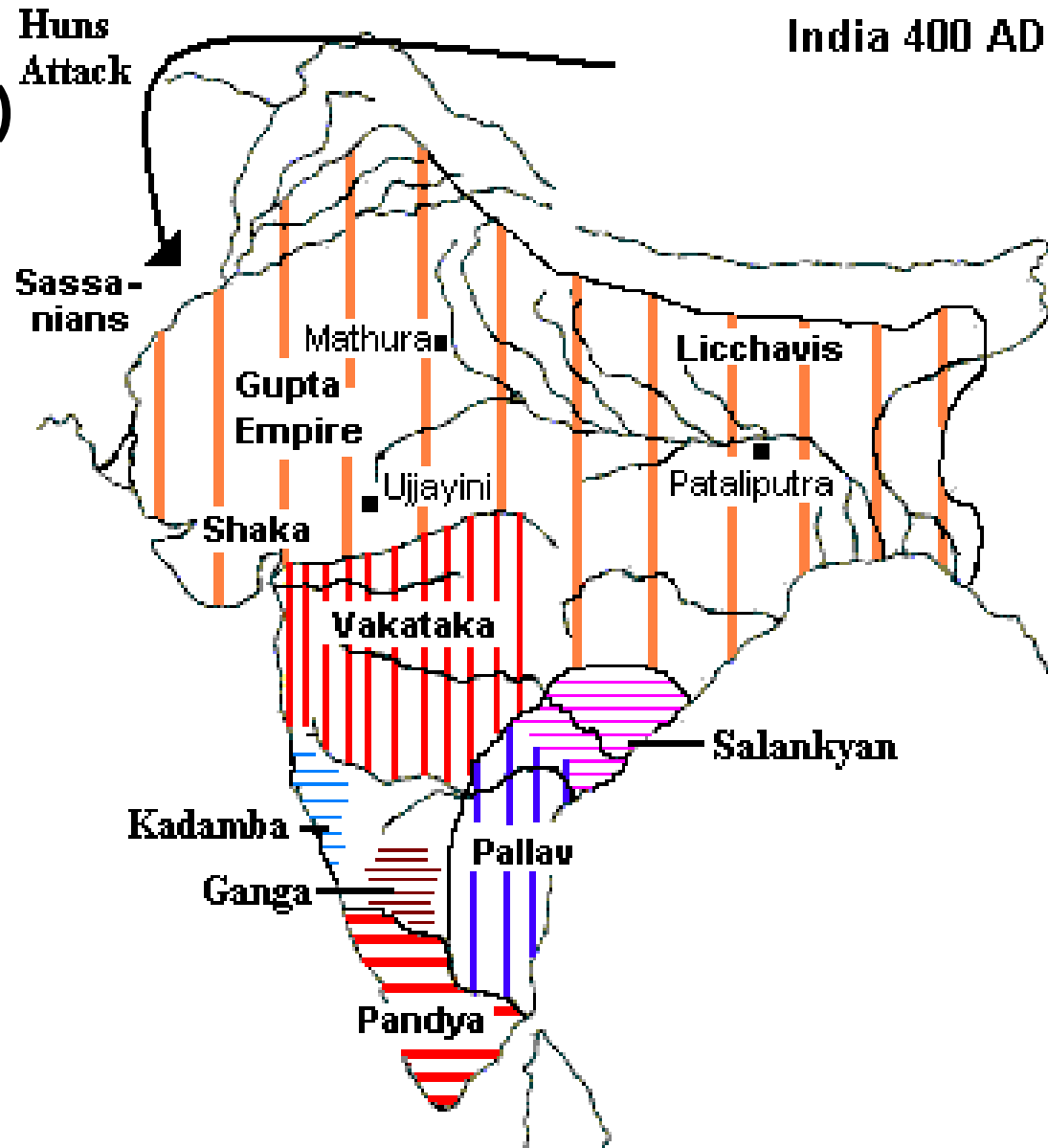
- **Painting**
 - **Gu Kaizhi/ Ku Kai-chih (345-406): "The Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies" (6th-8th c AD)**
 - **Handscroll**
 - **It illustrates a political parody written by Zhang Hua (232-300)**
 - **A court instructress guides the ladies of the imperial harem on correct behaviour**
 - **A series of courtyard scenes depicting young ladies**



Gu Kaizhi (345-406): "The Admonitions Scroll", 8th c copy
<http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass/ixbin/goto?id=OBJ2100>

Sanskrit

- Gupta India (318-550)



Sanskrit

- **Gupta India (318-550)**
 - **India's classical age**
 - **Revival of Sanskrit**
 - **University of Nalanda (students from China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Tibet, Nepal, Sri Lanka)**
 - **Poetry**
 - **Kalidasa (353)**
 - **Drama (Nataka, derived from dance)**
 - **Six darshana (schools) of philosophy**

Sanskrit

- **Kalidasa (353)**
 - "Shakuntala" [t] ++
 - "Vikramorvasi" [t] +
 - "Malavikagnimitra" [t] +
 - Romantic love

Sanskrit

- **Kalidasa (353)**
 - "Raghuwamsa" [p] +
 - "Kumarasambhava" [p] +
 - "Meghadhuta" [p] ++
 - Epic and lyrical poetry

Sanskrit

- **Kalidasa (353)**
 - The autumn comes, a maiden fair
 - In slenderness and grace,
 - With nodding rice-stems in her hair
 - And lilies in her face.
 - In flowers of grasses she is clad;
 - And as she moves along,
 - Birds greet her with their cooing glad
 - Like bracelets' tinkling song.

Sanskrit

- **Gupta India (318-550)**
 - **Sanskrit Puranas (5th c): Vedic textbooks for women and lower-caste men**
 - **18 lengthy poems in Sanskrit**
 - **Encyclopedias of folk tales, mostly taken from the Mahabharata**
 - **Stories of the gods fighting the demons**
 - **Mythology of Vishnu (several incarnations and parables, including Rama and Krishna)**
 - **Mythology of Shiva (sex and violence, ambiguous qualities, pre-Aryan themes)**
 - **Bhagavata-Purana (18,000 verses)**

Sanskrit

- **Gupta India (318-550)**
 - **"Pancatantra" (4##), fairy tales**
 - **Shudraka (3##): "Mrcchakatika/ The Little Clay Cart)" (40#) [t]**
 - **Dandin (6##): "Dasa-Kumara-Charita/ Tale of the Ten Princes" (6##), adventure story**
 - **Banabhatta (59#): "Kadambari" (6##), romantic love story**
 - **"Jataka" (500) tales**
 - **Bhavabhuti (India, 6##): "Uttararamacarita/ The Later Deeds of Rama" (7##) [t]**