

**Chapter 1 : On Passages in the Life of Shakspere - [PDF Document]**

*On Phonetic Hieroglyphics Author(s): Dr. Hincks Source: Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy (), Vol. 3 ( - ), pp. Published by: Royal Irish Academy Log In Register Most Popular.*

Their meaning can depend on the TA. The term "conjugation prefix" simply alludes to the fact that a finite verb in the indicative mood must always contain one of them. The starting point of most analyses are the obvious facts that the 1st person dative always requires mu-, and that the verb in a "passive" clause without an overt agent tends to have ba-. Proposed explanations usually revolve around the subtleties of spatial grammar, information structure focus [56] , verb valency , and, most recently, voice. Pronominal and dimensional prefixes[ edit ] The dimensional prefixes of the verb chain basically correspond to, and often repeat, the case markers of the noun phrase. Like the latter, they are attached to a "head" â€” a pronominal prefix. The other place where a pronominal prefix can be placed is immediately before the stem, where it can have a different allomorph and expresses the absolutive or the ergative participant the transitive subject, the intransitive subject or the direct object , depending on the TA and other factors, as explained below. However, this neat system is obscured by the tendency to drop or merge many of the prefixes in writing and possibly in pronunciation as well. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd plural infixes are -me-, -re? A major exception from this generalization are the plural forms â€” in them, not only the prefix as in the singular , but also the suffix expresses the transitive subject. Stem[ edit ] The verbal stem itself can also express grammatical distinctions. The plurality of the absolutive participant [59] can be expressed by complete reduplication of the stem or by a suppletive stem. Reduplication can also express "plurality of the action itself", [59] intensity or iterativity. The stems of the 1st type, regular verbs, do not express TA at all according to most scholars, or, according to M. Thus, as many as four different suppletive stems can exist, as in the admittedly extreme case of the verb "to go": On the other hand, adding a locative-terminative? The moving of a constituent towards the beginning of the phrase may be a way to highlight it, [64] as may the addition of the copula to it. Subordinating conjunctions such as ud-da "when, if", tukum-bi "if" are also used, though the coordinating conjunction u3 "and", a Semitic adoption, is rarely used. A specific problem of Sumerian syntax is posed by the numerous so-called compound verbs , which usually involve a noun immediately before the verb, forming a lexical or idiomatic unit [65] e. Some of them are claimed to have a special agreement pattern that they share with causative constructions:

Chapter 2 : German addresses are blocked - calendrierdelascience.com

*On Persepolitan Writing (Continued) Author(s): Dr. Hincks Source: Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy (), Vol. 3 (-), pp. Published by: Royal Log In Register Most Popular.*

Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy , Vol. JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. Deo gratias quod ego perfecti opus meum. Graves insists much upon the importance of determining, with precision, the date of a manuscript so ancient, and of so much interest, as the Book of Armagh. By effecting this, a great advance is made towards the establishment of principles of palaeography, by which we may estimate the age of Irish manuscripts in general; and we are furnished with the means of refuting the assertion, still repeated, that Ireland has no manuscripts of a date more ancient than the close of the ninth century. The Secretary of Council read the abstract of a paper by the Rev. I considered it, however, an approximation, and probably as near a one as could be attained by means of the data in my possession; and I looked forward to its being amended by those who had the command of more numerous inscriptions. There were some circumstances which left no doubt on my mind that error existed somewhere in it, though I could not discover where. All these for tu or du; the name in N Ru, answering to Harautish, and difficulties, and others connected with the first inscription of the East India Company, have been removed by an important rectification, or series of rectifications, which I have made during the past fortnight; and the language has, moreover, been brought to exhibit a much greater similarity to the other Semitic ones than I had at first supposed. I have, therefore, to request leave to substitute the alphabet which I now send for that in my last paper. As the correspondence between the cursive and lapidary characters in the plate to that paper is correctly given, though the values of many of the characters are erroneous, and as the plate is, I believe, partly engraved, I propose to let it stand, with so much of the paper as is necessary for understanding it; but the transcriptions of Babylonian words into Roman characters, and the catalogue of Babylonian words, will be superseded by those which follow, which are much more correct. In the plate which I now send I give no lapidary characters, but instead thereof I give many additional Persepolitan ones; and at the foot of it I give a series of numbers from the rock inscription at Van, exhibiting the mode of expressing numbers in Cuneatic characters on to , These are so arranged as to require no comment; but it may be proper to state that the large numbers are those of men belonging to different nations which are named; and I presume they refer to the deportation of these nations, according to the Assyrian practice. The historic character of these inscriptions, of which I received a copy very recently, is obvious. Hincks in these investigations. The President presented to the Academy a set of coloured drawings of celts and other antiquities, found in Cornwall, which he had procured through the kindness of a friend residing in that country. It appeared from a comparison of them with the corresponding objects in the Museum of the Academy, that there was an exact resemblance of form. The Cornish antiquities of this kind are, however, comparatively rare. Runamo og Braavalleslaget, med fem lithographeerde Taoler, af J. Presented by the Author. Tilleg til cR Runamo og Braavalleslaget. Istituto Lombardo di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti. Istituto Lombardo di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti. Elogio di Bonaventura Cavalieri da Gabrio Piola. Presented by the Institute. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London for Parts 1, 2, and 3. Proceedings of the Royal Society. Presented by the Society. The Transactions of the Microscopical Society of London. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Oversigt over det Kongelige danske Videnskabernes Selskabs This content downloaded from Hamilton, on Retiring from the Presidency [pp. Called the Book of Armagh [pp. Called the Book of Armagh Continued [pp. On the External Anatomy of Chelurus, Phil. Relating to Ireland in the Burgundian Library at Brussels [pp. Meteorological Journal, from 1st January to 31st December, [pp. Illustrations from Geometry of the Theory of Algebraic Quaternions [pp. On the Peculiarities of the Anatomy of the Emu [pp. Abstract of the Account of the Academy [pp. Bernardinus Clery and Fr.

**Chapter 3 : On Phonetic Hieroglyphics - [PDF Document]**

*Hincks, Edward. a. "An Attempt to Ascertain the Number, Names, and Powers, of the Letters of the Hieroglyphic, or Ancient Egyptian Alphabet; Grounded on the Establishment of a New Principle in the Use of Phonetic Characters," Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy 21, Hincks, Edward. b.*

Until recently, there were no satisfactory accounts of the decipherment of Akkadian and the cuneiform script in which it is written. Publications on decipherment are generally very good on the deciphering of Old Persian Friedrich ; Gordon ; Pope but they are wholly inadequate for Mesopotamian cuneiform cf. There is an informed account of the decipherment of Akkadian in R. Rogers, History of Babylonia and Assyria , but inevitably it is dated and we have had to wait for the recent contributions of Peter T. Daniels , and Mogens Trolle Larsen , for fuller and more precise details. Strange as it may seem, it is a popular book on the discoveries at Tell Mardikh ancient Ebla by C. Weitzman that presents a useful, though imperfect, account to a wider readership. It is to their credit that the authors went to the trouble of examining the relevant A. Layard-Rawlinson correspondence in the British Library. I introduce this discussion of early contributions to cuneiform decipherment with a passage from the introduction to The Literature of Ancient Sumer, edited by Jeremy Black and colleagues The Rosetta stone of cuneiform writing is the Bisutun, or Behistun, inscription, an enormous trilingual rock relief carved inaccessibly high up a mountainside in modern Iran near the border with Iraq. The first serious attempt to examine it was made in by a British diplomat, Henry Rawlinson who was in Persia as military adviser to the governor of Kurdistan. Within two weeks, and with the help of work that the German scholar Georg Friedrich Grotefend had done on inscriptions from the Persian capital Persepolis, Rawlinson was able to establish that one of the three inscriptions used a letter cuneiform alphabet and started with a description of the Persian king Darius which was almost identical to that given by the ancient historian Herodotus in his Histories. Using this copy, and working on the assumption that all three inscriptions told essentially the same story, Nils Westergaard and Edwin Norris managed to decipher the second. Its script used characters and the language, Elamite, turned out to be an isolate, related to no other known. But the third version of the inscription, which was by far the most complex, remained a mysteryâ€”Its decipherment became an international enterprise to which many scholars contributed. This account is not accurate in a number of ways and my remarks here are simply a way of showing that accuracy is of the essence in accounts of decipherment. The inscriptions which Rawlinson copied in were the trilingual inscriptions at Mount Elwand near Hamadan. He had to re-write more than once the report he sent to London in Daniels In September he recopied the Old Persian inscription at Behistun and made paper-casts of the Elamite text and some of the Babylonian. So it was really the decipherment of Old Persian that was an international enterprise. Norris graciously acknowledged that about half of the characters in his list had already been deciphered by Westergaard or Hincks Norris A more thorough study of Elamite was published by A. The main Babylonian text at Behistun was copied by Rawlinson in but it was not published till the end of Therefore, contrary to widespread belief, it played no role in the crucial first phase of the decipherment of Akkadian Daniels He puts it this way: He knew that Grotefend and Hincks had used the Persepolis and Naksh-i-Rustam inscriptions and he quickly realized that the Behistun inscription was not the key that he had hoped for. If the Behistun inscription had been recovered in as perfect a state as the less celebrated record at Naksh-i-Rustam, all the essential difficulties of decipherment would have been at once overcomeâ€”Unfortunately, however, the left half, or perhaps a larger portion even, of the tablet is entirely destroyed, and we have thus the mere endings of the lines throughout the entire length of the inscription; the fragments which in several of the most interesting passages are alone legible, being not only insufficient to resolve difficulties, but sometimes actually affording of themselves fresh enigmas for solution. So Cyrus Gordon When Rawlinson published the first part of his impressive work, The Persian Cuneiform Inscription at Behistun, Decyphered and Translated, with a Memoir in , the semi-syllabic nature of the script was not yet

known to him. However, in August he sent a note from Baghdad announcing that he had discovered it. However, it is not surprising to find that he was trying to decipher cuneiform, because he would have relished the challenge. It is generally accepted that Rawlinson made a remarkable contribution to our understanding of the language and he has rightly received high praise for his edition and translation of the Old Persian inscription at Behistun. It is time to turn to what is sometimes called Mesopotamian Cuneiform, the writing system used for Akkadian, Elamite and Urartian as distinct from the cuneiform writing system used for Old Persian. Old Persian has 43 signs 36 phonetic signs and 7 logograms. The first decipherers quickly noticed that the cuneiform script used to write Elamite Median or Scythic as they called it had more than characters and the one to write Babylonian had many more. This important statement reads as follows: Having as yet a very scanty supply of data, I have not been able to prepare alphabets of either of these modes of writing. I have, however, ascertained that they both agree in principle with the second Persepolitan. In both, some of the characters represent elementary sounds and some combinations. In both, two or more characters are used to represent the same sounds. In both, no vowel is omitted, but vowels and consonants are repeated in two consecutive characters. The number of elementary characters is greater in both these modes of writing than in the second Persepolitan. In the latter, a single vowel was rarely expressed after a syllable terminating with the same vowel, but this was commonly done in the Babylonian and Assyrian, in which, of course, the simple vowels were of much more frequent occurrence. In the second Persepolitan, m was written by w, but in the Babylonian by b, which accounts for the same name being written Berodach in the Second Book of Kings, and Merodach in Isaiah. I have found the name of Babylon in the inscription on a piece of baked clay, shaped like a barrel, brought from the ruins, and in those on a few of the bricks. I have also found the name of Nineveh on the bricks brought from that place. Both the Assyrian and Babylonian languages appear to have much in common with the Semitic languages; but some of their roots are common to them with the language of the second Persepolitan inscriptions, with which also they have many characters in common. I have found it to be a general rule, though it admits of some exceptions, that where a character occurred in two or more alphabets, it had the same value, or nearly so, in all of them. Thus, the pa of the second Persepolitan is pa in Assyrian, and ba in Babylonian; and so in other instances. The first Persepolitan alphabet, on the contrary, had nothing in common with any of the others. Although this statement, written at the beginning of June, was not published until December, there is similar information in the letters which Hincks wrote to learned societies and to the editor of the Literary Gazette in June and July Cathcart Letters reporting his progress in decipherment were read out at the meeting of the Royal Society of Literature on 11 June. In one of them Hincks wrote: I feel confident of having mastered the great difficulty of making a commencement in each of these. In the beginning, the values of the Babylonian and Assyrian signs could only be worked out by comparing the way proper names were written but Hincks quickly recognised how the signs were used. Consonant-vowel and vowel-consonant signs could be combined to represent a consonant-vowel-consonant syllable. In a letter to the Literary Gazette he showed that he had not been merely conjecturing, as his predecessors had done, but had proceeded on the surest grounds Cathcart Hincks provided a plate with these signs, showing the equivalences he had worked out. He and other scholars now had access to a much larger corpus of texts. With regard to the language of the texts, we saw in the extract above that Hincks stated without hesitation that it was Semitic. In these early days he regarded the writing system as partly consonantal and partly syllabic and he had already discovered that some characters had more than one value. He was confident that he was on the right track and would make great progress. Rawlinson, however, told Renouard: He wrote in a similar vein in February Hincks was soon aware that some of his values were either wrong or only partly correct and he submitted another paper to the Royal Irish Academy a month later, that is, in January. This paper contained a revised list of values Hincks c: It also included the first-ever table of cuneiform numerals. I have recently acquired an unpublished letter by Hincks, dated 1st January and probably addressed to Humphrey Lloyd, the President of the Royal Irish Academy. I publish the letter here. Dear Sir, I fear you will think me beyond measure troublesome in reference to this Babylonian alphabet. Part of the last

paper" viz. This, however, I shall not be able to accomplish till next week; but will have it in Dublin in time for the 11th. I hope you received the copy of my papers which I sent to Mr. With many thanks for your kindness, believe me to remain Yours very faithfully Edw. Hincks elaborates on the contents of this letter in the introductory pages of the published article with the rectifications c: He gave the value ra for a sign which should be read ri, nu for ni and so forth. Anyone interested in the present order of the ancient Egyptian alphabet in the Egyptian grammars we use today and the relationship between the Semitic languages and ancient Egyptian should read this article see Ray Schulz was murdered by a local chieftain in , but his copies of the inscriptions were retrieved later and published in Journal Asiatique Schulz This is the publication that Hincks worked from. Thirty-nine of the inscriptions are in Urtian and three are trilingual like those at Persepolis. Hincks called the language Assyrian, as distinct from Assyrio-Babylonian and Babylonian. The characters in the Van inscriptions are clearly derived from the Babylonian ones; but I have ascertained that in the mode of using them there is a very material difference. While the generality of the Babylonian characters are used, like the Hebrew and other Semitic ones, to express consonants in which no particular vowels inhere, the Van characters present a complete syllabary, its vowels being all expressed either by separate characters or by syllabic signs, in which they inhere. The mode of reading the language of these inscriptions is consequently much more definite than in the case of any other species of cuneatic writing, with the exception of the first Persepolitan; and, what surprised me not a little, the language of the inscriptions agrees with that of the last-named inscriptions in being Indo-Persianic. Its resemblance to the Sanskrit is, indeed, in some respects, closer than that of the ancient Persian; though it is curious that some of its grammatical forms are more akin to the Greek. To all who are engaged in philological and ethnological pursuits it must be of the highest interest, as the oldest member" of the eastern branch at least" of this widely-diffused family of languages. On the 19 October , Norris wrote Cathcart Publication followed quickly in Hincks seems to have promised another paper on the Van inscriptions in November , because on 9 January Norris wrote Cathcart I have been for some time impatiently looking for your promised paper in continuation of your labours on the Van monuments. I hope you will let us have it soon. Our next meeting is on the 17th when I should like much to read it to the Society. I hope you have not given up the intention of writing on the subject, for if you do not do any thing with these Van Inscriptions, nobody will, for half a century, I am sure. Two of them were written in and the third was written in , but Hincks did not publish anything more on the Van inscriptions. The insights that Hincks obtained from his study of the Van inscriptions helped him to arrive more rapidly at a clear understanding of the system used in writing Mesopotamian cuneiform. By the end of Hincks realized that full syllabic writing was also found in Assyrian and Babylonian texts. Every character that was not a logogram or determinative stood for a full syllable, never for one consonant alone. He has also worked out the principle of homophony, explaining to his readers that in some cases two or more outwardly distinct signs expressed the same syllable.

Chapter 4 : Decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs | Revolv

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Chapter 5 : Thomas Hincks | Revolv

*By Rev. Thomas Laarie, formerly Missioary of the A. B. C. F. M. at Mosoi. STANDING on the highest part of Mosul, and looking across the Tigris, the eye rests on a long range of ancient mounds. At the southern end is the irregular platform on which stands the village of Nebby Yoonas, with its spacious mosque and populous cemetery.*

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Chapter 6 : Sumerian language - Wikipedia

*Archives of natural history 36 (2): # The Society for the History of Natural History DOI: /E The Reverend Thomas Hincks FRS (): taxonomist of Bryozoa and Hydrozoa DALE R. CALDER Department of Natural History, Royal Ontario Museum, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2C6 (e-mail: dalec@calendrierdelascience.com).*

Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy , Vol. JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. He exhibited two perfectly developed young, which he had taken from the mother on the 30th of November last; in these the spines were each covered at the point with a small knob of cartilage, fastened by straps of the same material, passing down one on each of the three sides of each spine, in such a manner as evidently to become easily detached at birth, thus allowing the little animal to commence life effectively armed. He mentioned that the female in question contained a large number of eggs, in various states of development, in addition to the two fully-formed young; and he took occasion to remark, that this fish is so destructive to herrings that fishermen look on it with abhorrence: Fishermen, however, destroy the dog-fish whenever it falls into their power, as they did the specimen which gave occasion to this notice. Allman mentioned an analogous fact in the ova of *Cristatella mucedo*. Halpin commenced the reading of a paper on some passages in the life of Shakspeare. Drummond presented to the Museum an ancient Ogham inscription, on the part of Francis W. Robert Mallet presented a drawing of a silver antique ring found in Ireland, and presented to the British Museum by Lord Enniskillen, containing an inscription in characters resembling Chinese. Proceedings connected with the magnetical and meteorological Conference, held at Cambridge, in June, This content downloaded from Hamilton, on Retiring from the Presidency [pp. Called the Book of Armagh [pp. Called the Book of Armagh Continued [pp. On the External Anatomy of Chelurus, Phil. Relating to Ireland in the Burgundian Library at Brussels [pp. Meteorological Journal, from 1st January to 31st December, [pp. Illustrations from Geometry of the Theory of Algebraic Quaternions [pp. On the Peculiarities of the Anatomy of the Emu [pp. Abstract of the Account of the Academy [pp. Bernardinus Clery and Fr.

**Chapter 7 : Appendix I: Account of the Year Ending 31st March, - [PDF Document]**

*Thomas Hincks ( - 25 January ) was a British Unitarian minister and a naturalist known for his work on zoophytes and bryozoa. He was born the son of the William Hincks in Exeter, Devon.*

Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy , Vol. JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. This paper commences with a review of the progress made in Egyptian learning, from the first discoveries of Drs. Young and Champollion to the present day. It was alleged, that very little progress had been made since the death of Champollion, the only point established since that event being the principle of peculiar letters and their complements, discovered by Dr. The causes of the want of progress since this discovery were affirmed to be two: This consideration was postponed till the second part of the paper: The present part was devoted to the establishment of the new principle above referred to. The principle is this: If, then, a phonoglyph belonging to the alphabet be followed by the expletive character which appertains to it, that expletive may be, and, for the most part, should be, altogether neglected. In order to establish this principle, it was first shewn that it was adopted in transcribing foreign words, when written in Egyptian characters, in the papyri published in fac-simile by the Trustees of the British Museum, and mostly dated in the reign of Rameses the Great, and his grandson. A number of such transcripts were produced. Some of them were shewn not to represent the words that corresponded to them, which were preserved in Hebrew characters in the Old Testament, unless a quantity of, apparently, superfluous characters were removed; such were Ma-ru-ka-bu-ta for both singular and plural of the name of a chariot, Mirkeveth; I-u-ma for Yam, a sea; and Pu-ha-ru-ta for Pbrat, the river Euphrates. Others were shewn to be written at times with those, apparently, superfluous characters, and at other times without them, as Astaruta and Astart, the name of the Syrian goddess; K-sb, Kash and Kshi, varieties of the name of a country which we know was Kush, the supplied vowel being us and not a. It was observed, as an essential point in the proof, that the vowel which was introduced in this seemingly unnecessary manner, was always the same after each letter; some letters, however, take for their expletives ideographic signs, which determine their pronunciation, and are thus equivalent to vowels. It was remarked that the letter may, in such cases, have for its expletive either the ideographic character, or the letter which it suggests or implies. This is an apparent but not a real exception to the law proposed. It was shewn, secondly, that this principle was not confined to foreign words, though applied to them more systematically; but that several pure Egyptian words were written with superfluous characters. In order to meet the cavils which it was anticipated would be raised against this position, Instances were also adduced, in which an ideographic character, or a consonant, appeared as an expletive in a pure Egyptian word; and also, an instance of two homophonous letters, which took different expletives, being interchanged, namely Tu and Ta, as formatives of the past participle, both of which, it was affirmed, should be read without the final vowel. The principle having been thus established in the age of the papyri, it was shewn, in the third place, that it was not confined to that age, but was recognised in the time of the twelfth dynasty, and even previously thereto. This was shewn by a collation of texts, which were repeated in different steles, or in different parts of the same slab. It was shewn, in a variety of instances, that the same word was written sometimes with, and sometimes without, a vowel; which vowel was, according to the practice of the age of the papyri, the known expletive of the preceding consonant. It was argued that, if a vowel so circumstanced should be rejected as an expletive in the age of the papyri, it should be so also in the early ages to which the monuments now under consideration belonged. In order to explain the origin of this practice, it was affirmed that all the Egyptian phonoglyphs originally represented syllables; and that, when a limited number of them was selected to represent the initial sounds in the respective syllables, they still retained their old names, as the sounds now appropriated to them could not be uttered alone. This additional character

is the expletive of the letter, and for it, as has been already noticed, an idea graph, determining the pronunciation of the syllable, and thus equivalent to the first letter, may be obtained. These letters had always different expletives, and a distinction was thus established between them, which would not exist if the expletives were omitted. The hieroglyphic texts in which expletives are chiefly found, were stated to be those which were copied from Hieratic, or, as they are called here, hieroglyphic originals. Huband Smith read a paper descriptive of an ancient Wayside Cross, situate in the townland of Nevinstown, on the northern bank of the river Blackwater, about two miles from the town of Navan, in the county of Meath. One side bears an inscription; the opposite has a shield, with armorial bearings, party per pale, nearly effaced. Beneath the dexter side are the initial letters M. The height of the shaft is at present three feet six inches above the slab, in which a socket is cut to receive the tenon upon the lower end of the shaft. This slab stands on a low grassy hillock, the remains, doubtless, of an ascent of three or four stone steps, which, when complete, the cross surmounted. Smith exhibited to the Academy a "rubbing," taken from the shaft, which shewed the present state of the inscription on the front, the shield on the back, and an ornamental pattern on each of the sides. He also produced a restoration

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**Chapter 8 : On Persepolitan Writing (Continued) - [PDF Document]**

*The first idea of certain hieroglyphics being intended to represent sounds was suggested by Dr. Young, who, from the names of Ptolemy and Berenice, had pointed out nine, which have since proved to be correct; the former taken from the Rosetta inscription, and the latter deduced with singular ingenuity from the enchorial of the same monument.*

History[ edit ] Early writing tablet recording the allocation of beer in southern Iraq , 3500 BC The cuneiform writing system was in use for more than three millennia, through several stages of development, from the 31st century BC down to the second century AD. It had to be deciphered as a completely unknown writing system in 19th-century Assyriology. Successful completion of its deciphering is dated to 1802. The cuneiform script underwent considerable changes over a period of more than two millennia. Kish tablet Sumerian inscription in monumental archaic style, c. 3200. These tokens were in use from the 9th millennium BC and remained in occasional use even late in the 2nd millennium BC. Originally, pictographs were either drawn on clay tablets in vertical columns with a sharpened reed stylus or incised in stone. This early style lacked the characteristic wedge shape of the strokes. Certain signs to indicate names of gods, countries, cities, vessels, birds, trees, etc. Proper names continued to be usually written in purely "logographic" fashion. The earliest known Sumerian king whose name appears on contemporary cuneiform tablets is Enmebaragesi of Kish. Surviving records only very gradually become less fragmentary and more complete for the following reigns, but by the end of the pre-Sargonic period, it had become standard practice for each major city-state to date documents by year-names commemorating the exploits of its lugal king. From about 2600 BC, many pictographs began to lose their original function, and a given sign could have various meanings depending on context. The sign inventory was reduced from some 1,500 signs to some 600 signs, and writing became increasingly phonological. Determinative signs were re-introduced to avoid ambiguity. Cuneiform writing proper thus arises from the more primitive system of pictographs at about that time Early Bronze Age II. By adjusting the relative position of the tablet to the stylus, the writer could use a single tool to make a variety of impressions. Cuneiform inscriptions, Stela of Iddi-Sin, king of Simurru Cuneiform tablets could be fired in kilns to bake them hard, and so provide a permanent record, or they could be left moist and recycled, if permanence was not needed. Many of the clay tablets found by archaeologists have been preserved by chance, baked when attacking armies burned the buildings in which they were kept. The spoken language included many homophones and near-homophones, and in the beginning similar-sounding words such as "life" [til] and "arrow" [ti] were written with the same symbol. After the Semites conquered Southern Mesopotamia, some signs gradually changed from being pictograms to syllabograms, most likely to make things clearer in writing. In that way the sign for the word "arrow" would become the sign for the sound "ti". Words that sounded alike would have different signs; for instance the syllable "gu" had fourteen different symbols. When the words had similar meaning but very different sounds they were written with the same symbol. For instance "tooth" [zu], "mouth" [ka] and "voice" [gu] were all written with the symbol for "voice". To be more accurate, scribes started adding to signs or combining two signs to define the meaning. They used either geometrical patterns or another cuneiform sign. As time went by, the cuneiform got very complex and the distinction between a pictogram and syllabogram became vague. Several symbols had too many meanings to permit clarity. Therefore, symbols were put together to indicate both the sound and the meaning of a compound. Two phonetic complements were used to define the word [u] in front of the symbol and [gu] behind. The spoken language died out around the 18th century BC. Akkadian cuneiform[ edit ] The archaic cuneiform script was adopted by the Akkadian Empire from the 23rd century BC short chronology , and by the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age 20th century BC , it had evolved into Old Assyrian cuneiform, with many modifications to Sumerian orthography. The Semitic languages employed equivalents for many signs that were distorted or abbreviated to represent new values because the syllabic nature of the script as refined by the Sumerians was not intuitive to Semitic speakers. At this stage, the former pictograms were reduced to a high level of abstraction, and were composed

of only five basic wedge shapes: Most later adaptations of Sumerian cuneiform preserved at least some aspects of the Sumerian script. Written Akkadian included phonetic symbols from the Sumerian syllabary , together with logograms that were read as whole words. Many signs in the script were polyvalent, having both a syllabic and logographic meaning. The complexity of the system bears a resemblance to Old Japanese , written in a Chinese-derived script, where some of these Sinograms were used as logograms and others as phonetic characters. Assyrian cuneiform[ edit ] This "mixed" method of writing continued through the end of the Babylonian and Assyrian empires, although there were periods when "purism" was in fashion and there was a more marked tendency to spell out the words laboriously, in preference to using signs with a phonetic complement. Yet even in those days, the Babylonian syllabary remained a mixture of logographic and phonemic writing. Hittite cuneiform is an adaptation of the Old Assyrian cuneiform of c. When the cuneiform script was adapted to writing Hittite, a layer of Akkadian logographic spellings was added to the script, thus the pronunciations of many Hittite words which were conventionally written by logograms are now unknown. In the Iron Age c. From the 6th century, the Akkadian language was marginalized by Aramaic , written in the Aramaean alphabet , but Neo-Assyrian cuneiform remained in use in literary tradition well into times of Parthian Empire BC – AD The last known cuneiform inscription, an astronomical text, was written in 75 AD. Old Persian was written in a subset of simplified cuneiform characters known today as Old Persian cuneiform. It formed a semi-alphabetic syllabary, using far fewer wedge strokes than Assyrian used, together with a handful of logograms for frequently occurring words like "god" and "king". Ugaritic was written using the Ugaritic alphabet , a standard Semitic style alphabet an abjad written using the cuneiform method. Decipherment[ edit ] For centuries, travellers to Persepolis , in modern-day Iran , had noticed carved cuneiform inscriptions and were intrigued. Antonio de Gouvea , a professor of theology, noted in the strange writing he had had occasion to observe during his travels a year earlier in Persia which took in visits to ruins. He also guessed, correctly, that they represented not letters or hieroglyphics but words and syllables, and were to be read from left to right. Carsten Niebuhr brought the first reasonably complete and accurate copies of the inscriptions at Persepolis to Europe in One word, which occurs without any variation towards the beginning of each inscription, he correctly inferred to signify "king". With this clue in his hand, he identified and published an alphabet of thirty letters, most of which he had correctly deciphered. He succeeded in fixing the true values of nearly all the letters in the Persian alphabet, in translating the texts, and in proving that the language of them was not Zend , but stood to both Zend and Sanskrit in the relation of a sister. Carved in the reign of King Darius of Persia – BC , they consisted of identical texts in the three official languages of the empire: Old Persian , Assyrian and Elamite. The Behistun inscription was to the decipherment of cuneiform what the Rosetta Stone was to the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs. In he finished his copy of the Behistun inscription, and sent a translation of its opening paragraphs to the Royal Asiatic Society. Before his article could be published, however, the works of Lassen and Burnouf reached him, necessitating a revision of his article and the postponement of its publication. Then came other causes of delay. The actual techniques used to decipher the Akkadian language have never been fully published; Hincks described how he sought the proper names already legible in the deciphered Persian while Rawlinson never said anything at all, leading some to speculate that he was secretly copying Hincks. Among the treasures uncovered by Layard and his successor Hormuzd Rassam were, in and , the remains of two libraries, now mixed up, usually called the Library of Ashurbanipal , a royal archive containing tens of thousands of baked clay tablets covered with cuneiform inscriptions. By , Hincks and Rawlinson could read Babylonian signs. They were soon joined by two other decipherers: In the four men met in London and took part in a famous experiment to test the accuracy of their decipherments. Edwin Norris , the secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society , gave each of them a copy of a recently discovered inscription from the reign of the Assyrian emperor Tiglath-Pileser I. A jury of experts was empanelled to examine the resulting translations and assess their accuracy. In all essential points the translations produced by the four scholars were found to be in close agreement with one another. There were of course some slight discrepancies. The jury declared itself satisfied, and the decipherment of Akkadian

cuneiform was adjudged a *fait accompli*. However, there is now a better understanding of the principles behind the formation and the pronunciation of the thousands of names found in historical records, business documents, votive inscriptions, literary productions and legal documents. The primary challenge was posed by the characteristic use of old Sumerian non-phonetic logograms in other languages that had different pronunciations for the same symbols. Until the exact phonetic reading of many names was determined through parallel passages or explanatory lists, scholars remained in doubt, or had recourse to conjectural or provisional readings. However, in many cases, there are variant readings, the same name being written phonetically in whole or in part in one instance and logographically in another. Transliteration[ edit ] Extract from the Cyrus Cylinder lines 15â€”21 , giving the genealogy of Cyrus the Great and an account of his capture of Babylon in BC Cuneiform has a specific format for transliteration. In transliteration, a different rendition of the same glyph is chosen depending on its role in the present context. This is still easier to read than the original cuneiform, but now the reader is able to trace the sounds back to the original signs and determine if the correct decision was made on how to read them. A transliterated document thus presents the reading preferred by the transliterating scholar as well as an opportunity to reconstruct the original text. There are differing conventions for transliterating Sumerian, Akkadian Babylonian and Hittite and Luwian cuneiform texts. One convention that sees wide use across the different fields is the use of acute and grave accents as an abbreviation for homophone disambiguation. Thus, u is equivalent to u1, the first glyph expressing phonetic u. As shown above, signs as such are represented in capital letters , while the specific reading selected in the transliteration is represented in small letters. Thus, capital letters can be used to indicate a so-called Diri compound â€” a sign sequence that has, in combination, a reading different from the sum of the individual constituent signs for example, the compound IGI. In a Diri compound, the individual signs are separated with dots in transliteration. BABBAR â€” Sumerian for "silver" â€” being used with the intended Akkadian reading *kaspum*, "silver" , an Akkadogram, or simply a sign sequence of whose reading the editor is uncertain. Naturally, the "real" reading, if it is clear, will be presented in small letters in the transliteration: A will be rendered as *imhur*<sup>4</sup>. Since the Sumerian language has only been widely known and studied by scholars for approximately a century, changes in the accepted reading of Sumerian names have occurred from time to time. Thus the name of a king of Ur , read Ur-Bau at one time, was later read as Ur-Engur, and is now read as Ur-Nammu or Ur-Namma; for Lugal-zage-si , a king of Uruk , some scholars continued to read Ungal-zaggisi; and so forth. Also, with some names of the older period, there was often uncertainty whether their bearers were Sumerians or Semites. If the former, then their names could be assumed to be read as Sumerian, while, if they were Semites, the signs for writing their names were probably to be read according to their Semitic equivalents, though occasionally Semites might be encountered bearing genuine Sumerian names.

## Chapter 9 : Full text of "Front Matter"

*The decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs was gradually achieved during the early 19th century. The most helpful clue was supplied by the discovery in of the Rosetta Stone, an inscription in three scripts.*

External Related Links The decipherment of cuneiform The decipherment of Mesopotamian cuneiform begins with the discovery of the cuneiform inscriptions at Persepolis. The site was visited by Europeans from the Renaissance on, but it was not until the late eighteenth century that the first accurate copies of the inscriptions were made by a Danish adventurer, Carsten Niebuhr. A number of people had attempted to decipher these texts since they had been discovered, and the most important of these is arguably the German schoolteacher Georg Grotefend , who, in , noticed a recurring pattern in the signs. Due to his familiarity with the later Sassanian inscriptions and with the works of Herodotus, Grotefend correctly deduced that these patterns likely read "Xerxes, great king, king of kings, son of Darius, king of kings" and "Darius, great king, king of kings, son of Hystaspes. Hincks continued to make progress in deciphering the Old Persian cuneiform script for the next few years and also began examining cuneiform inscriptions from elsewhere in the ancient Near East, particularly Mesopotamia. Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, a British army officer stationed in Baghdad, made the first accurate copies of this inscription, which are engraved on a nearly inaccessible high cliff overlooking a valley in Bisitun, Iran. The fact that this inscription included three versions of the same text written in Old Persian, already satisfactorily deciphered Elamite, and Babylonian was arguably the most significant factor in the decipherment of Mesopotamian cuneiform. On 19 January, , Rawlinson presented a preliminary translation, though without a copy of the text or a transliteration of what is now referred to as the Black Obelisk , recently brought back to England from Nimrud by Layard. The identification of the Biblical king Jehu in this text was made by Hincks, who published his own translation of the text in December . By the end of the s, Hincks and Rawlinson had successfully provided a working decipherment of Mesopotamian cuneiform. The Correspondence of Edward Hincks. University College Dublin Press. Cuneiform Digital Library Journal, 1, Oxford University Press, pp. The Story of their Decipherment. See also Literary Gazette, No. A Letter to the Editor, Monthly Review 1, A Letter to Professor Renouf from Rev. Die altpersischen Keil-Inschriften von Persepolis. Trustees of the British Museum. Wellhausen, Julius Schulz, Friedrich E.