

were to the Egyptians. In ordinary Egyptian writing they did not write these pictures they had a hieratic writing, which is a == almost like a shorthand, a condensed way of writing on the papyrus. But nobody has to worry much about hieratic today because we have a few experts in hieratic and there is very little question how to translate it into the hieroglyphics, these pictures, and that is what we use in the Egyptian. In Mesopotamia where they did not have any papyri they made akk on clay tables, and when you make marks on clay tablets it is ! pretty hard to keep them from looking like pictures.

For instances here is a crude picture of a fish. See the fins in back. Very crude picture. It probably was better than that when they originally made these pictures, but soon with the marks on the clay it soon developed into just a == just 6 lines like that. Then as time went on, they came to straighten it up this way. Here's the way the fish sign is in most of the period of cuneiform writing. This is originally the picture of the fish. You can see how it developed from that into that, but you'd never dream it now when you see that, that that was the picture of the fish. We have very early writing and we have writing from many different periods and we can trace the development and in some of these we can see how they developed. But the Sumerian writings very soon lost all similarities to the original pictures. That is a big problem in learning this cuneiform, that is you can't recognize pictures in most cases. It simply is combinations of these marks, and if you have a photographic memory you may be able to learn them fairly quickly. Dr. Albright said he worked solidly through 3 days and had learned the basic cuneiform marks. I think most people take a lot longer than that. I work on it a little every day along with all the other languages I was studying. I worked a little every day on this for months before I had the basic points memorized. After I got it all done, I saw how I could have done it in half the time.