

meanings of distinct ideas. These pictures were chiseled on the walls of temples and palaces and were used in much the same form from the very earliest periods of Egyptian history until the days of the Romans.

The Egyptians developed the use of papyrus on which to write or paint. Very soon they came not to write out the full hieroglyphics, but to use them in an abbreviated form and soon these abbreviated representations of the hieroglyphic became so much abbreviated, that it is almost impossible to tell what hieroglyphic the various signs represent. This flowing writing of the papyrus is called the hieratic writing. It changed its form considerably during the various periods of Egyptian history and naturally it differs as between different writers just as our hand writing of today differs greatly as written by various people. But the hieratic writing always kept the picture writing in mind and was simply a shorthand form of making the hieroglyphics.

In Babylonia, papyri were not used to the extent that they were used in Egypt. An entirely different system of writing developed there, and it is very fortunate for our knowledge that it did. Because the papyri which have been preserved in Egypt would hardly have been preserved under the less dry conditions of Mesopotamia. In Mesopotamia there were comparatively few stones and such a system of chiselling out pictures as developed in Egypt could not easily have been used there, but the clay which is found near the River Euphrates hardens very easily so that it is possible to make buildings of sun dried or baked bricks quite easily. The people of Mesopotamia developed a system of writing on small clay tablets. They would take the clay and write on it while wet. Then it would be baked in the sun or in an oven and the writing would become permanent. These tablets were preserved very well in the climate of Mesopotamia, especially after they were buried. On these tablets