

before the Assyrian empire rose its language was widely used in the Near East. Among the various cities that used this language before the Assyrian Empire rose, once was called Attah. So today all scholars of the language call it Akkadian. Any university in the world where they have courses in it, they call it courses in Akkadian.

But if you say Akkadian, practically nobody in the world unless they are studying in this field has the slightest idea what you're talking about. And maybe its a good thing to have the rest of the world not know what you are talking about -- what you are studying, but I think there is more value in the meaning of it understood by people in other lines of study.

Personally I wish they'd go back to the word Babylonian which I think is everybit as good a word for the language as to use the term Akkadian after one of the various cities at which this language was spoken way back almost at 3000 B.C.

It is a language which has had a use over a very long period of time. We have inscriptions which nearly back to 3000 B.C. in these --this Akkadian language, the language that was later spoken at Babylon. And we have some inscriptions in the language perhaps as late as 300 B.C. At least nearly that late. So for a period of nearly 3000 years, we have literature written in this language. There is hardly another language---very very few other languages in the world's history that have had materials written in them over so long a period as that.

How old is our English language? You take English written 500 years ago, you'd have great difficulty understanding it. You take English written 700 or 800 years ago, they would not even call it English. They would call it Anglo-Saxon, and you probably wouldn't understand a word of it.

But here is a language which was used for written materials for nearly 3000 years. Of course it went through great changes through the course of that time, but its principle features remained the same so if you learned to read it from any one of these periods, you could learn to do something with it in any one of the other periods. So in world history, Babylonia has been one of the languages which has been very widely used and it is also one of those in which perhaps, I think we can say this, that from a period back of 1000 B.C. we have probably a dozen times as much material written in Babylonian written before 1000 B.C. as we have in any other language in the world anywhere.

So from the viewpoint of any ancient language in which ancient material has been preserved, it is the most important. There are some oracle bones from a very early period found in China which have inscriptions of a few words on them that go back nearly as far. But that you'd hardly call literature. Chinese literature while it goes way back does not go back anyway near as far as Babylonian does. As a matter of fact, the system of writing in China as it originated was probably derived from the system