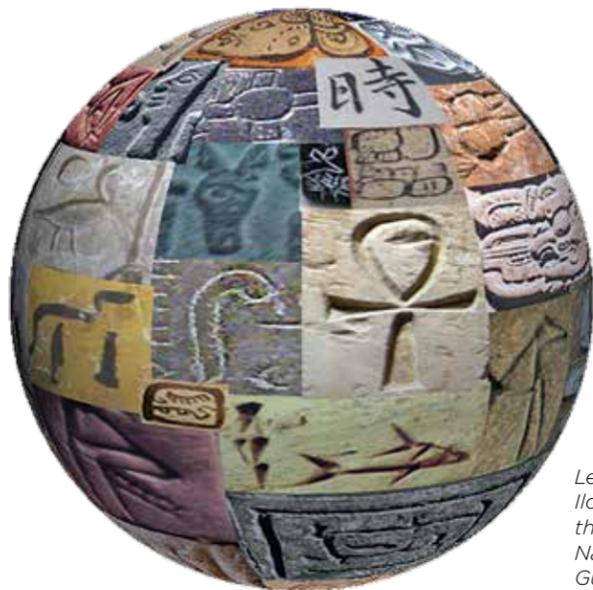


# SEEN NOT HEARD

## COMPOSITION, ICONICITY, AND THE CLASSIFIER SYSTEMS OF LOGOSYLLABIC SCRIPTS



Left: Composite of logograms, by Ilona Zsolnay. Right: Detail from the Princeton Vase, AD 670-750. Nakbé region, Mirador Basin, Petén, Guatemala.

March 2-3, 2017

The Oriental Institute,  
University of Chicago

Organized by Ilona Zsolnay,  
Postdoctoral Fellow



### THURSDAY, MARCH 2

#### INTRODUCTION | 9:00-9:30 AM

Opening remarks by Gil Stein, Director of the Oriental Institute  
Introduction by Ilona Zsolnay

#### 1 | EXPERIENCING TEXT | 9:30-11:50 AM

**CLAUDIA BRITTENHAM** "Text in Context: Hierarchies of Relief in Maya Sculptural Inscriptions"  
**DAVID STUART** "Intersections of Text, Image and Object in Ancient Maya Art"

BREAK (10:30-10:50 AM)

**JOSHUA ROBERSON** "The Iconicity of the Vertical in Egyptian Cosmological (Con-)Texts"  
**ELISABETH RIEKEN & ILYA YAKUBOVICH** "Contacts between Scripts in Bronze Age Asia Minor"

LUNCH (12:00-1:30 PM)

#### 2 | FORM & MEANING | 1:30-3:00 PM

**CHRISTOPHER WOODS** "The Semantic Basis of Sumerian Writing"  
**GEBHARD J. SELZ** "The Obvious and the Hidden: Advantages and Disadvantages of Iconicity in the Early Mesopotamian System"

**ANDRÉAS STAUDER** "Writing To Be Seen: Expressive Dimensions of Writing in Ancient Egypt"

BREAK (3:00-3:20 PM)

#### 3 | CLASSIFIERS & CLASSIFICATION | 3:20-4:50 PM

**ORLY GOLDWASSER** "Animal Classification in the Ancient Near East"  
**ZEV HANDEL** "The Cognitive Role of Semantic Classifiers in Modern Chinese Writing as Reflected in Neogram Creation"  
**GUOLONG LAI** "Reexamining the Roles of the So-called Semantic Classifiers in the Warring States Chu Script"

RECEPTION | 5:00-6:00 PM

Writing is typically viewed from the perspective of speech — as a mode of communication that strives to accurately and unambiguously capture the spoken word in visible form. From this standpoint, however, writing can only be but a pale reflection of speech as it fails to express much of the information of the speech act — intonation, gesture, and facial expression, for example, are not generally notated in writing. Yet from a different perspective — one more compelling but less commonly considered — writing, by virtue of visibility, materiality, and permanence, is capable of expressing meaning beyond speech. Color, size, style, and format, for instance, are often recruited as vehicles of meaning by writing systems of all kinds. Logographic scripts, which employ word signs, not only make use of these same means, but can also graphically express complex semantic associations that are conditioned by culture and worldview. Seen Not Heard explores the various ways in which the earliest writing systems — Egyptian, Anatolian, and Maya hieroglyphic systems, Mesopotamian cuneiform, and Chinese writing — exploited visible language to express meaning beyond the spoken word.

### FRIDAY, MARCH 3

#### 4 | ORGANIZATION | 9:00-10:30 AM

**ILONA ZSOLNAY** "Graphic Classification in the Uruk IV and III Corpus"  
**HOLLY PITTMAN** "Iconicity, Syntax, and Semantics: A Structural Investigation of Pictures in an Early Writing Environment"  
**PIOTR MICHALOWSKI** "The Semiotics of Form: Observations on Shape and Layout of Early Cuneiform Tablets"

BREAK (10:30-10:45 AM)

#### RESPONSES | 10:45-11:15 AM

**JERRY COOPER**      **HAICHENG WANG**

#### DISCUSSION | 11:15-11:45 AM

### OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

For complete program details, contact Ilona Zsolnay:  
izsolnay@uchicago.edu

Seminar website: [oi.uchicago.edu/research/symposia/2017.html](http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/symposia/2017.html)

The Oriental Institute is handicapped accessible.  
Persons with disabilities who need assistance  
should contact Ilona Zsolnay at (773) 702-7497.