

# **(digital) writing as action**

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**what is writing? and some  
curious writing technologies**

English *write* < Proto-Germanic \**wrītaną* 'carve, tear'  
(cognate: German *ritzen* 'scratch')

Spanish *escribir* 'write' < Latin *scribo* 'I write'  
(< PIE (s)*kreyb*<sup>h</sup>- 'scratch, tear')

Greek γράφω <grapho> 'to write' < PIE \**gerb*<sup>h</sup>- 'carve'  
(cognate: English *carve*)

btw *typo-* in *typography* comes from PIE (s)*tewp-*, which is cognate with English *step-* (as in step-daughter), so another way to say typography is "step-carving"





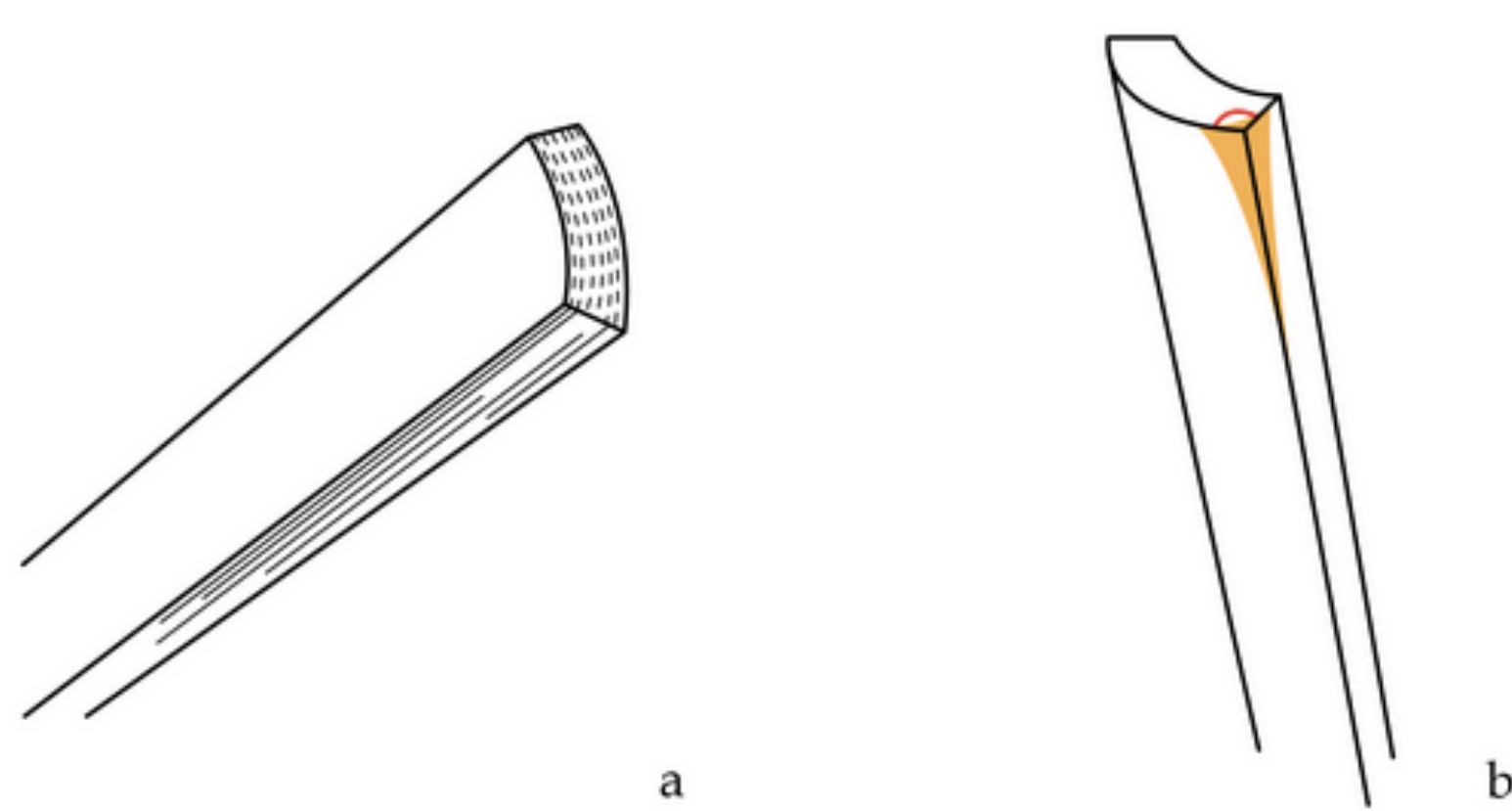


Fig. 12: schematic representation of the reed segment constituting the stylus (a); edge preferably used to write (area of contact with the clay marked in color), its angle (in red) is always between  $60^\circ$  and  $90^\circ$  (b).

# cuneiform stylus

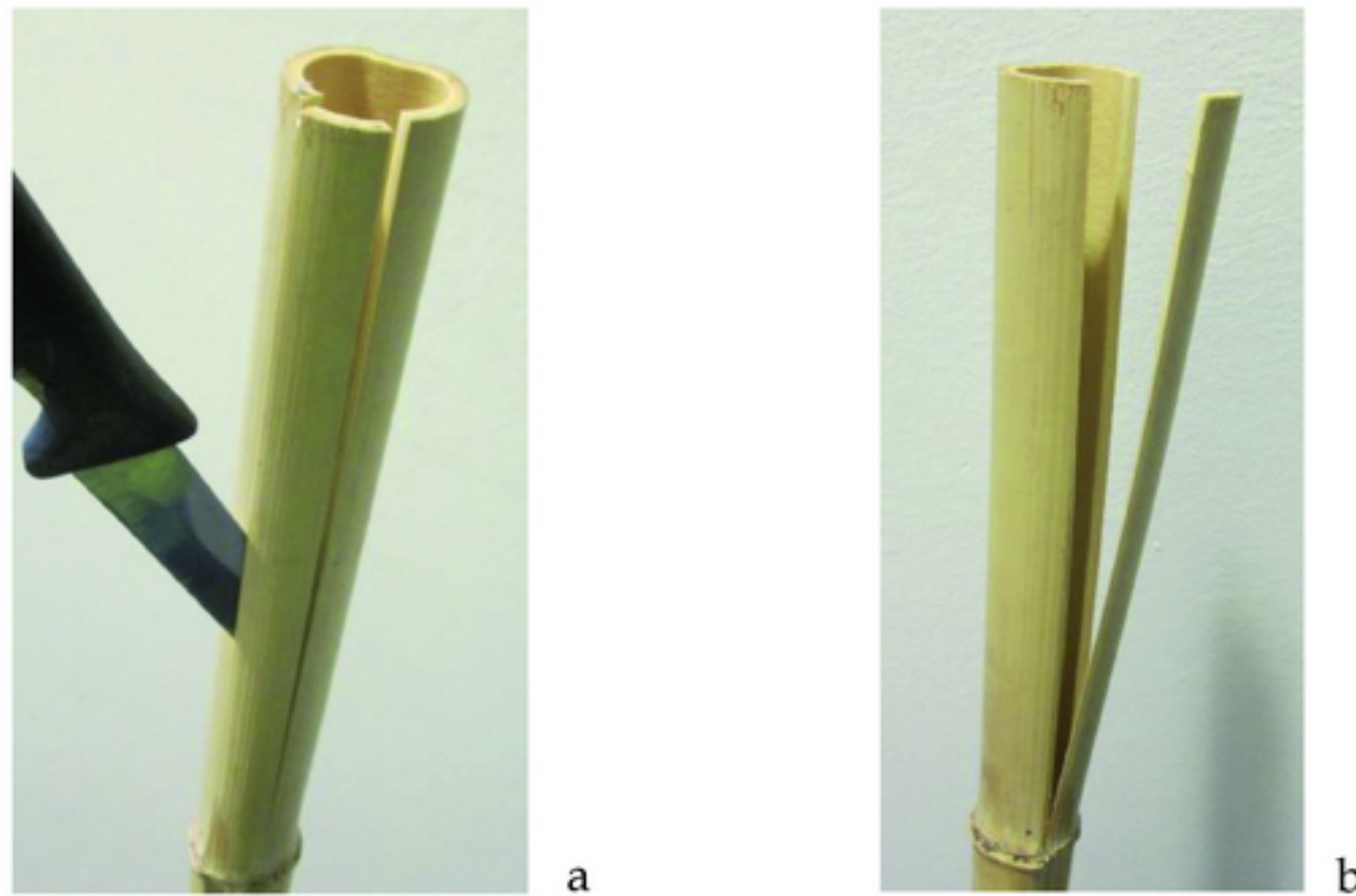


Fig. 13: Manufacture of the reed stylus: incision of the cane with a knife (a); detaching of the segment (b)

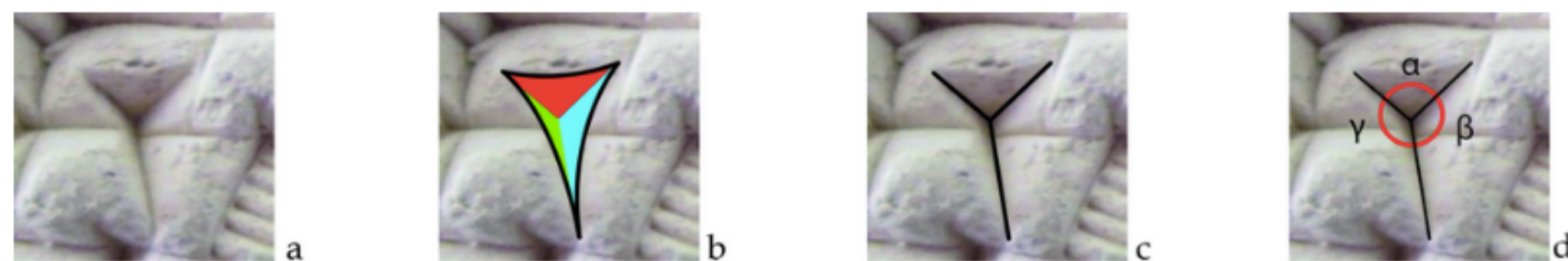
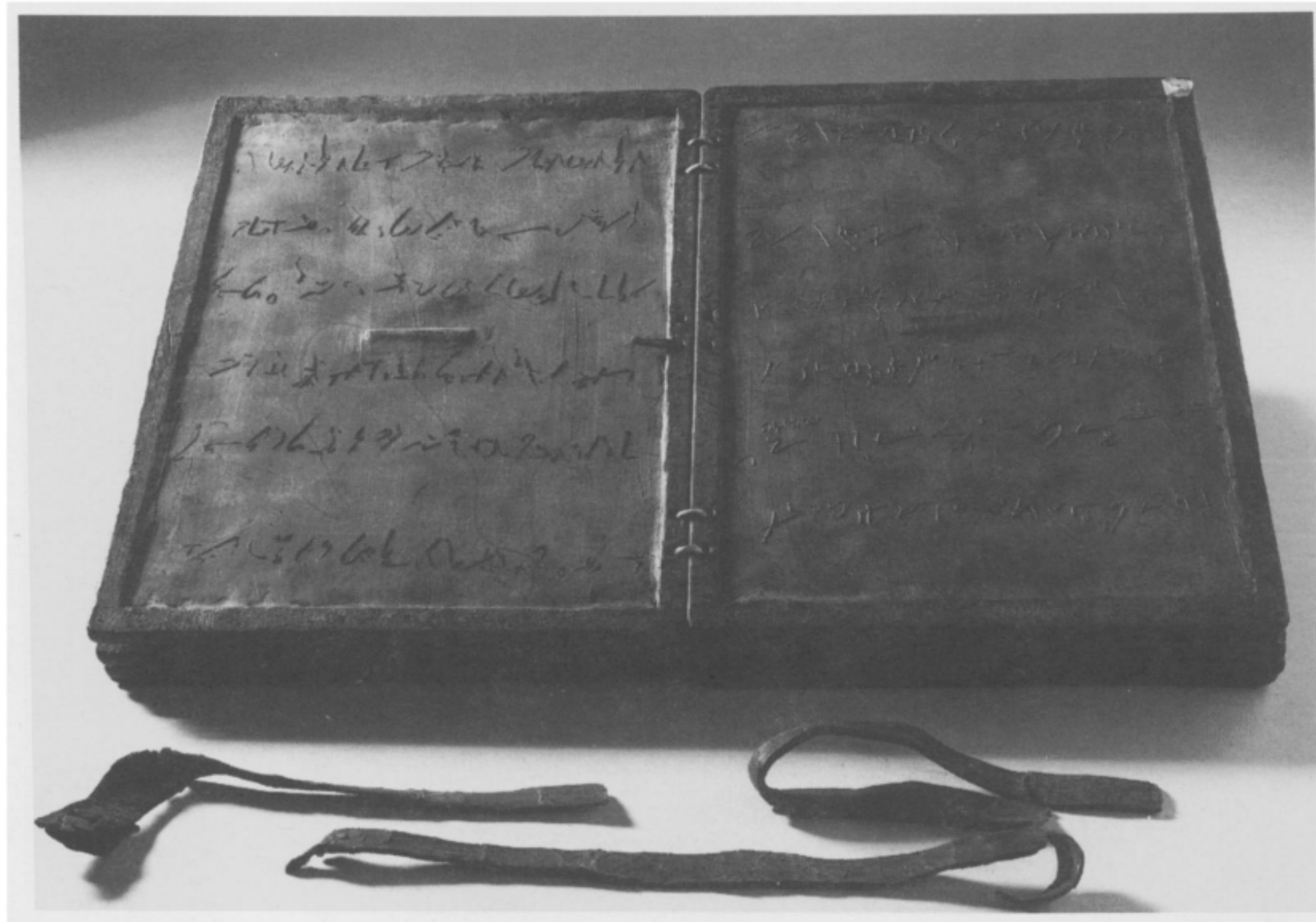


Fig. 3: A 7554 obv. iv 14 (a); faces of the wedge (top, right, left) (b); inner edges (right, left, spine) (c); inner angles ( $\alpha$ : top=apertural angle;  $\beta$ : right;  $\gamma$ : left) (d).

Bramanti, Armando. "The Cuneiform Stylus. Some Addenda." *Cuneiform Digital Library Notes*, vol. 12, 2015, <https://cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdln/php/single.php?id=65>.

# wax tablets



*Fig. 3. Wax tablets with tachygraphic symbols and memoranda in Greek concerning haulage, Third Century A.D. BL, Add. MS. 33270*

*Brown, Michelle P. "The Role of the Wax Tablet in Medieval Literacy: A Reconsideration in Light of a Recent Find from York." The British Library Journal, vol. 20, no. 1, 1994, pp. 1–16.*

# writing systems

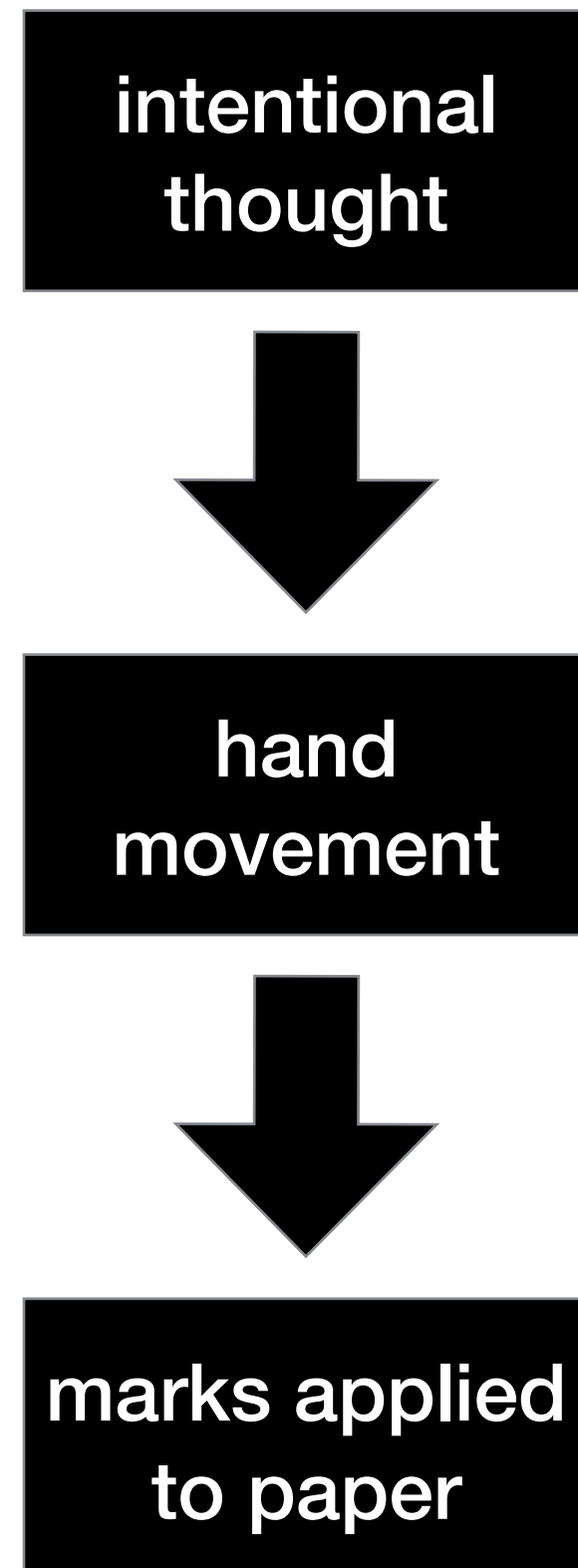
- Hanzi 汉字/漢字: logographic ("one symbol per word" but obvs actually way more complicated than that)
- Devanagari देवनागरी: abugida (symbols for consonants, vowels are indicated with diacritics)
- Arabic alphabet الأَبْجَدِيَّةُ الْعَرَبِيَّةُ: abjad (symbols for consonants, indicating [some] vowels is optional)
- hirigana/katakana ひらがな/カタカナ: syllabary (distinct symbols for each syllable)
- alphabets: distinct symbols for each phoneme (or that's the ideal at least)



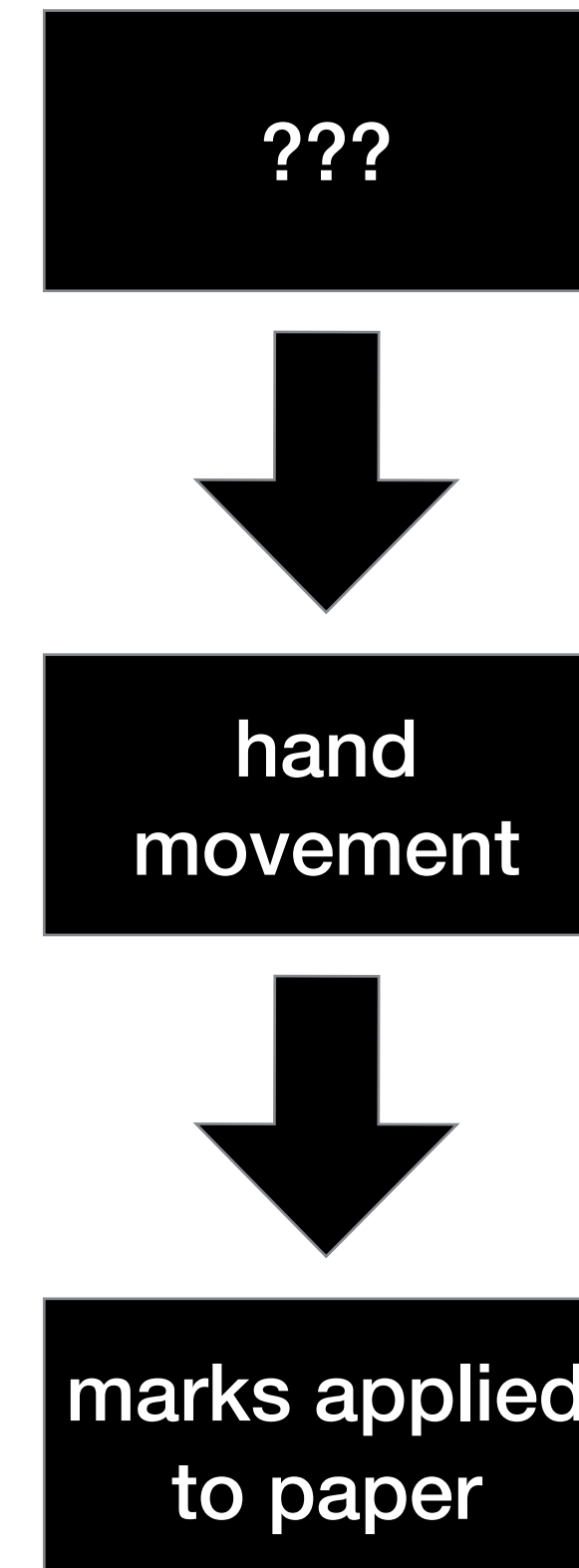


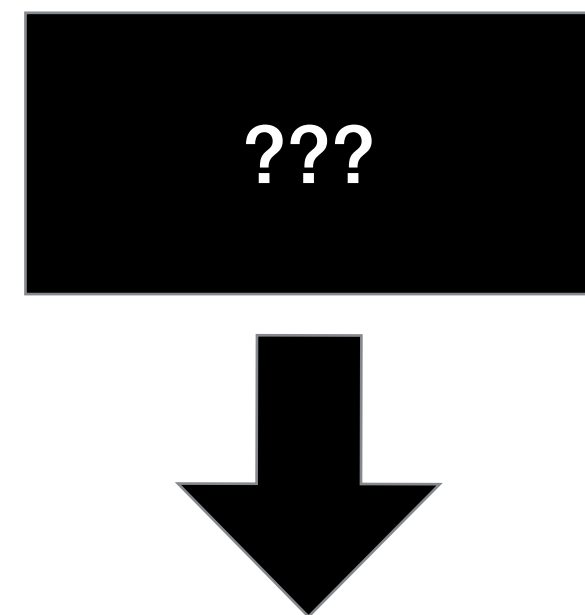
**"automatic" writing**

## typical writing



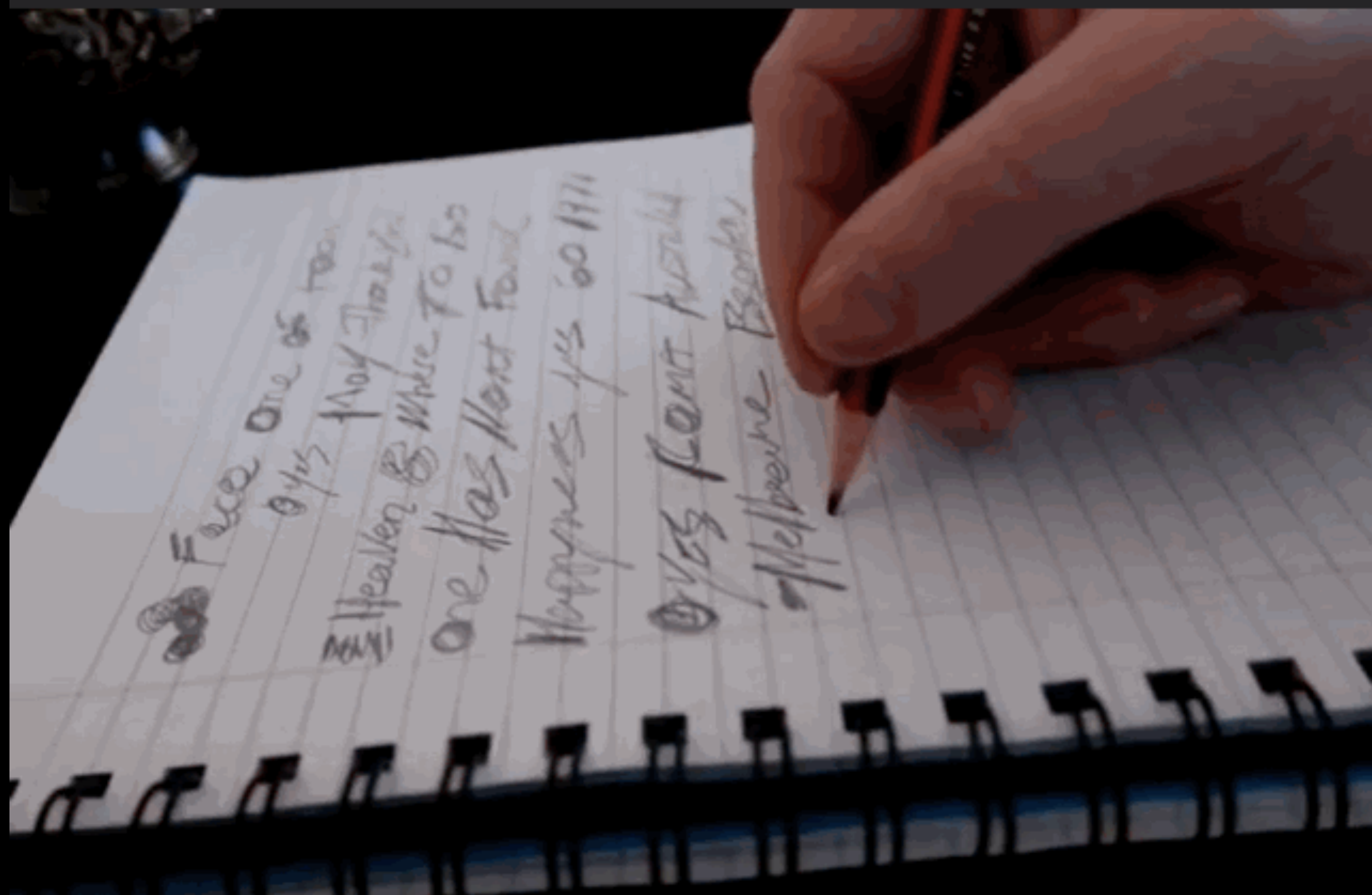
## automatic writing





- spirits
- ideomotor effect ("normal motor automatism")
- dissociation
- subconscious/unconscious/psyche
- brain hemispheres

**what does it look like?**

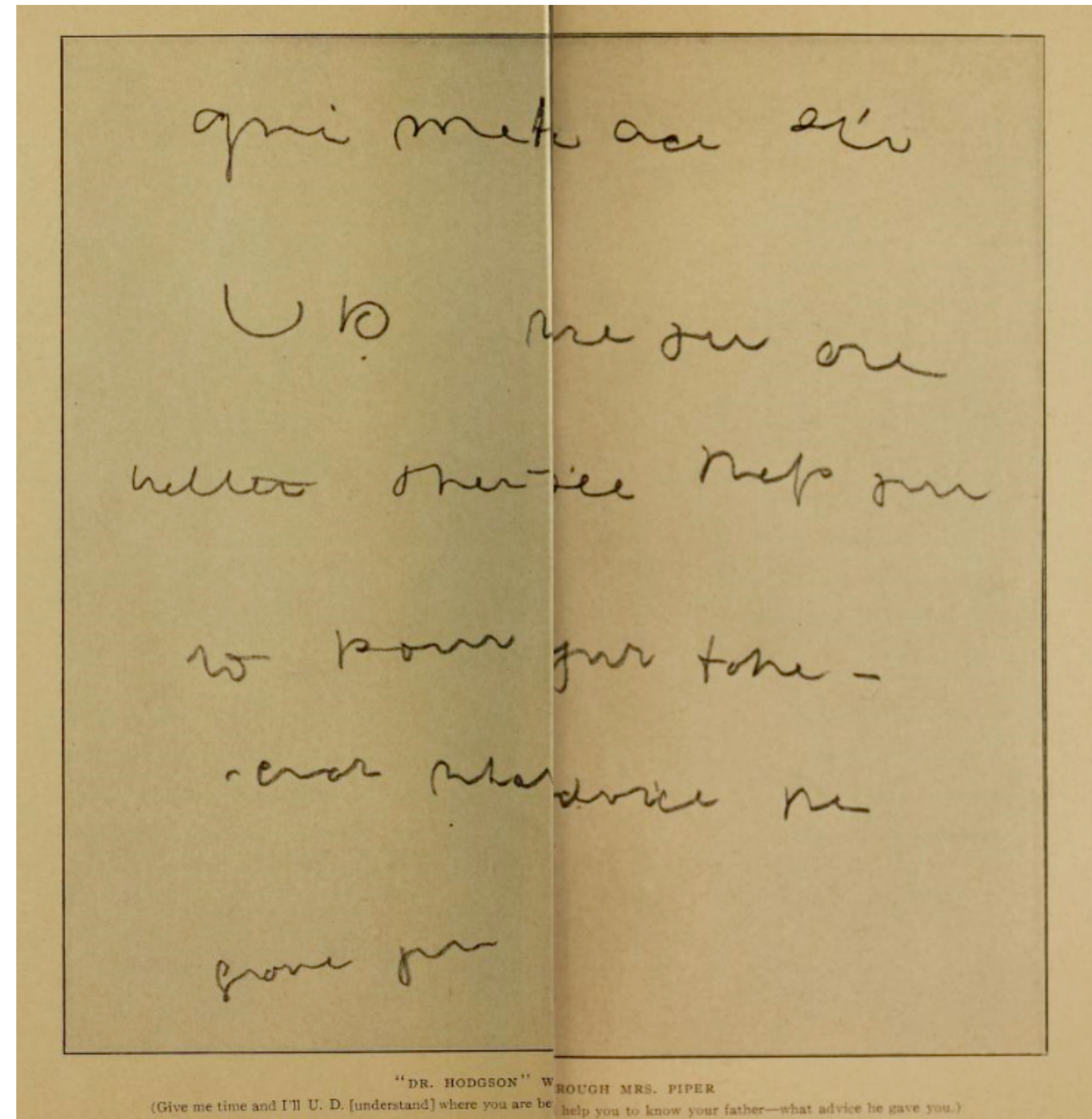


from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaNWyQvbMLU>

And behold it came to pass that as He haste walked  
through the fields of Paradise - He saw there a woman  
She sat alone, yet on her head was a crown with many  
jewels - signifying a triumphant life of love & the  
jewels emblematical of the souls she had led  
into the Pates of Truth.

A specimen of automatic writing. This is a mere fragment, taken from a long allegory, written in rather archaic language. There is a veritable library of works of this kind in existence, many of them printed and published in book form. Their writers claim that they are communications from the spirit-world: all their internal evidence, however, goes to prove that they are produced entirely in the subconscious mind of the human writer.

# Leonora Piper





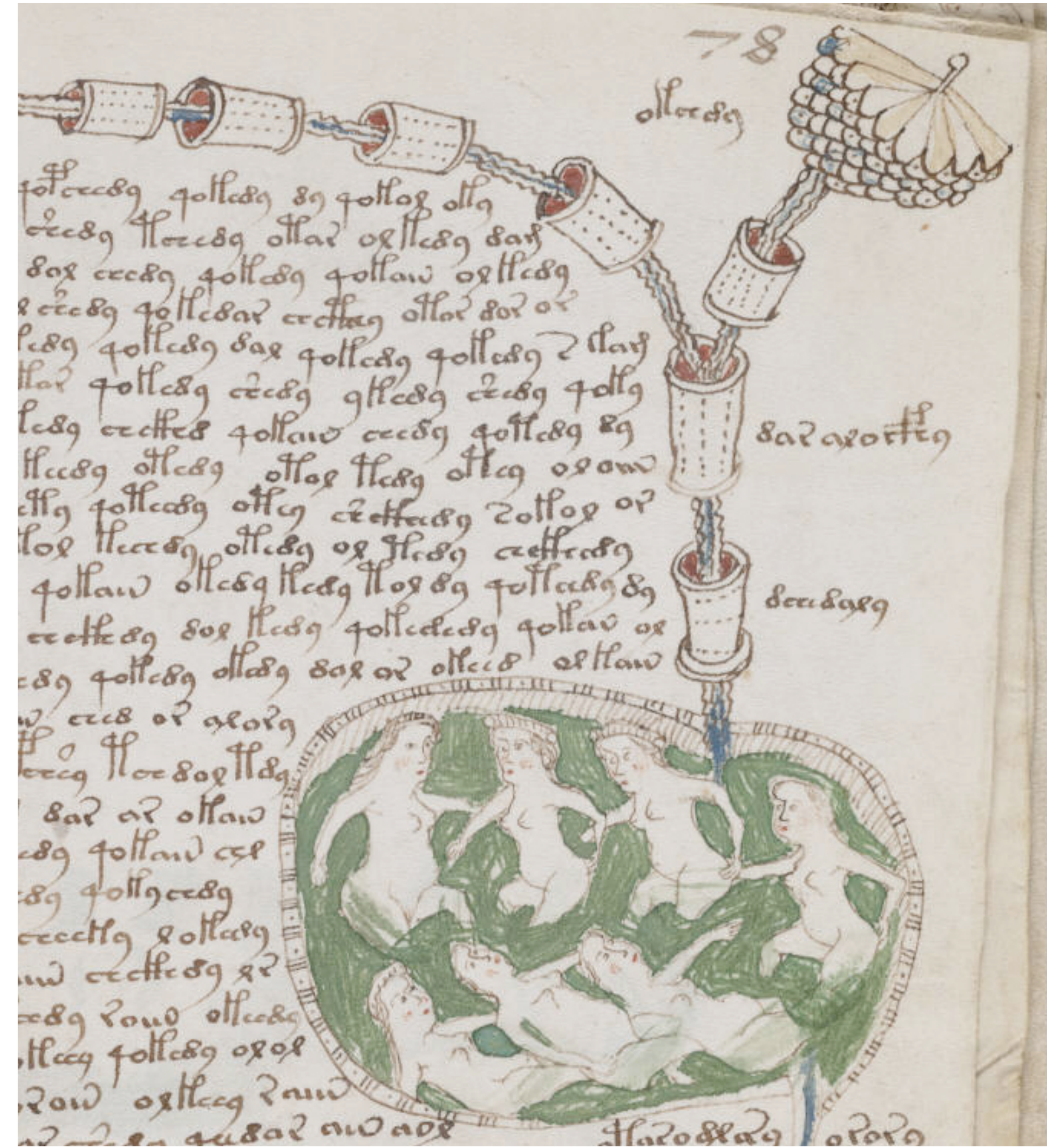
# Hélène Smith

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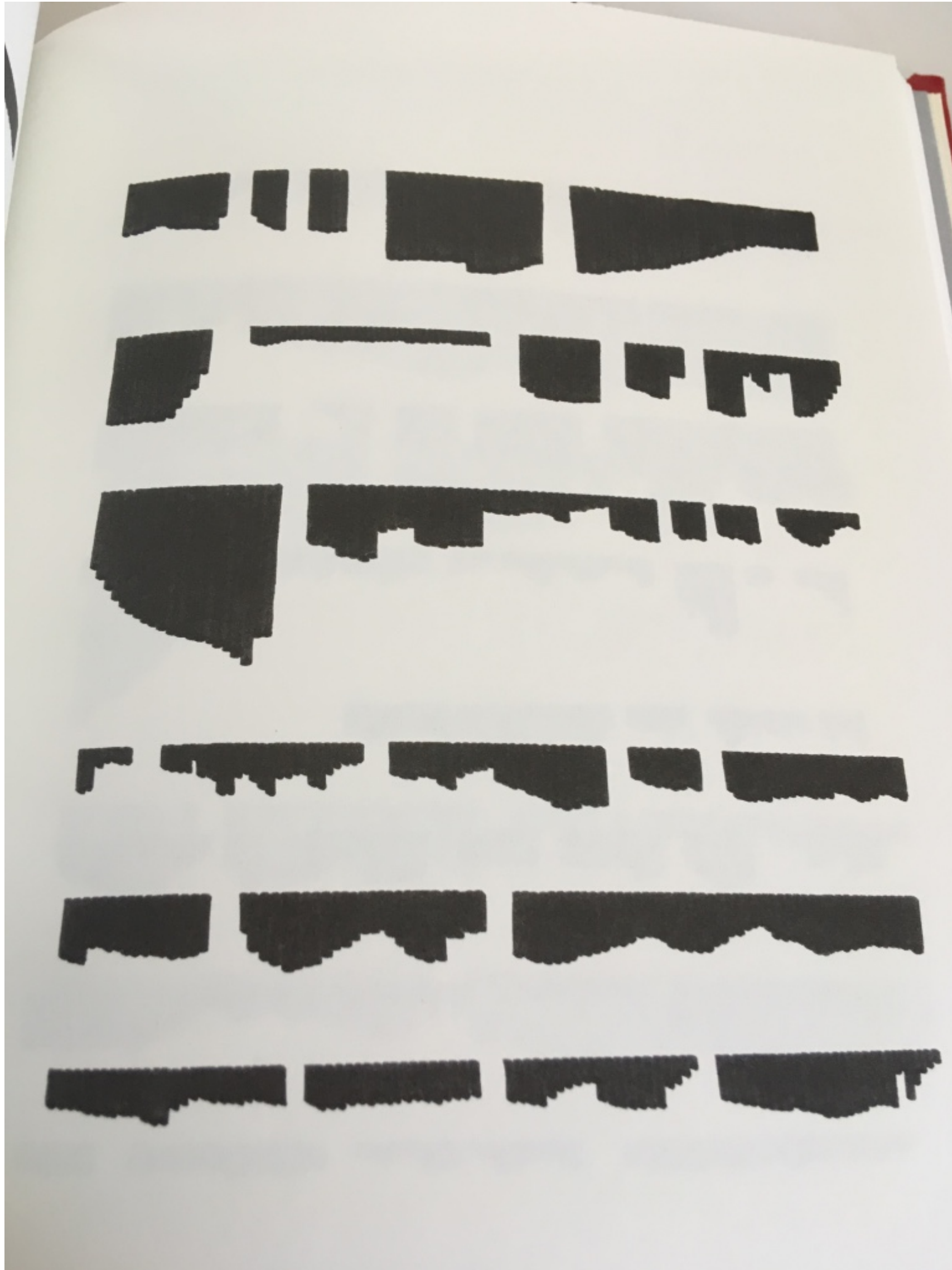
**asemic writing**

# Voynich Manuscript (15th c.?)





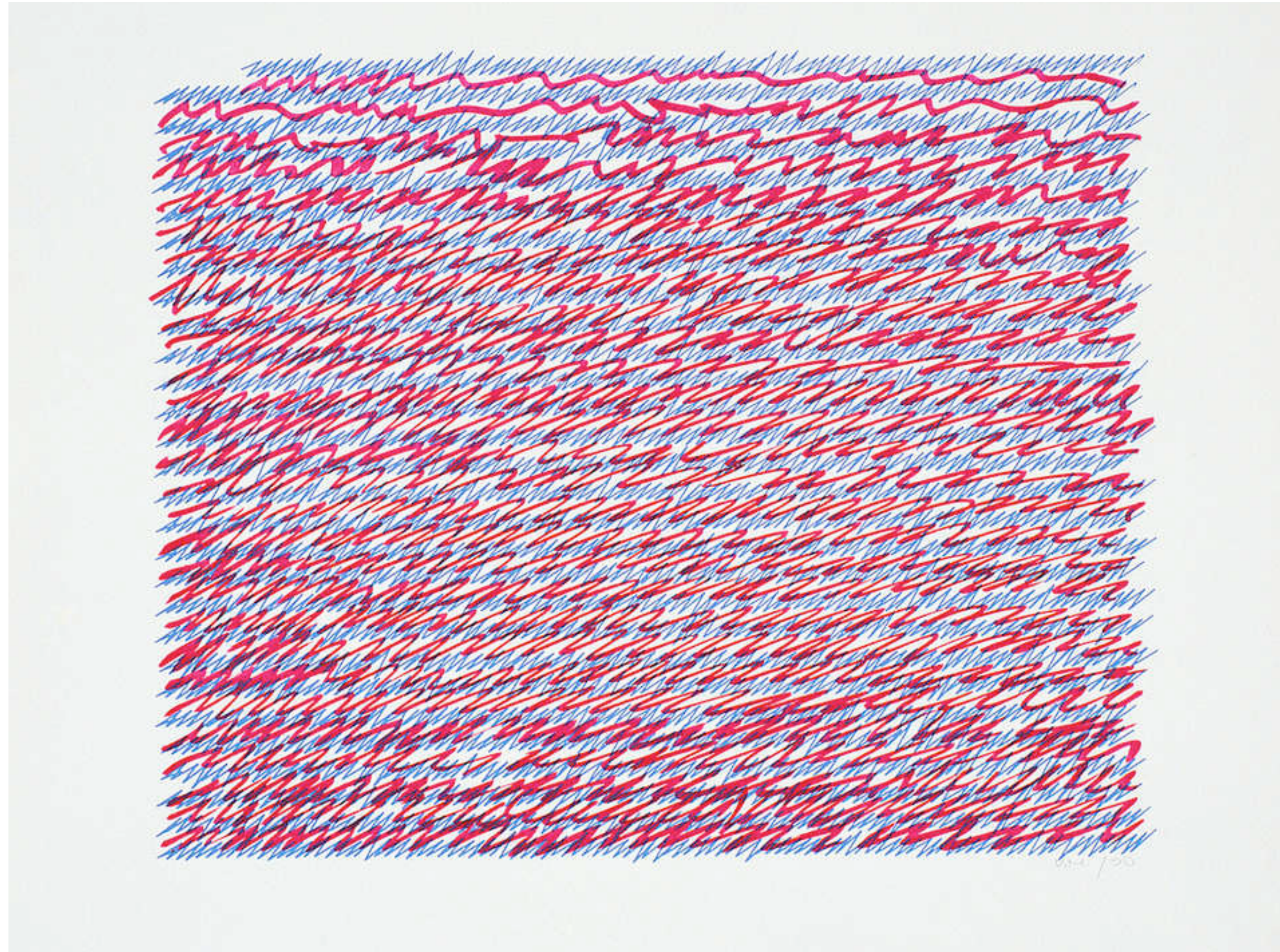
# Mirtha Dermisache (1940-2012)



# Xu Bing, 天书 (*Book from the Sky*), 1987



# Vera Molnar, *Lettres de ma mère*, 1987



<https://digitalartmuseum.org/molnar/lettersfrommother.html>

# David Ha, *Handwriting Generation Demo*, 2015

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ef 1 fhil is rati shent Moodri

neonda cinerre fe A, MrsVil uWVn



# David Ha, *Fake Chinese Characters*, 2015

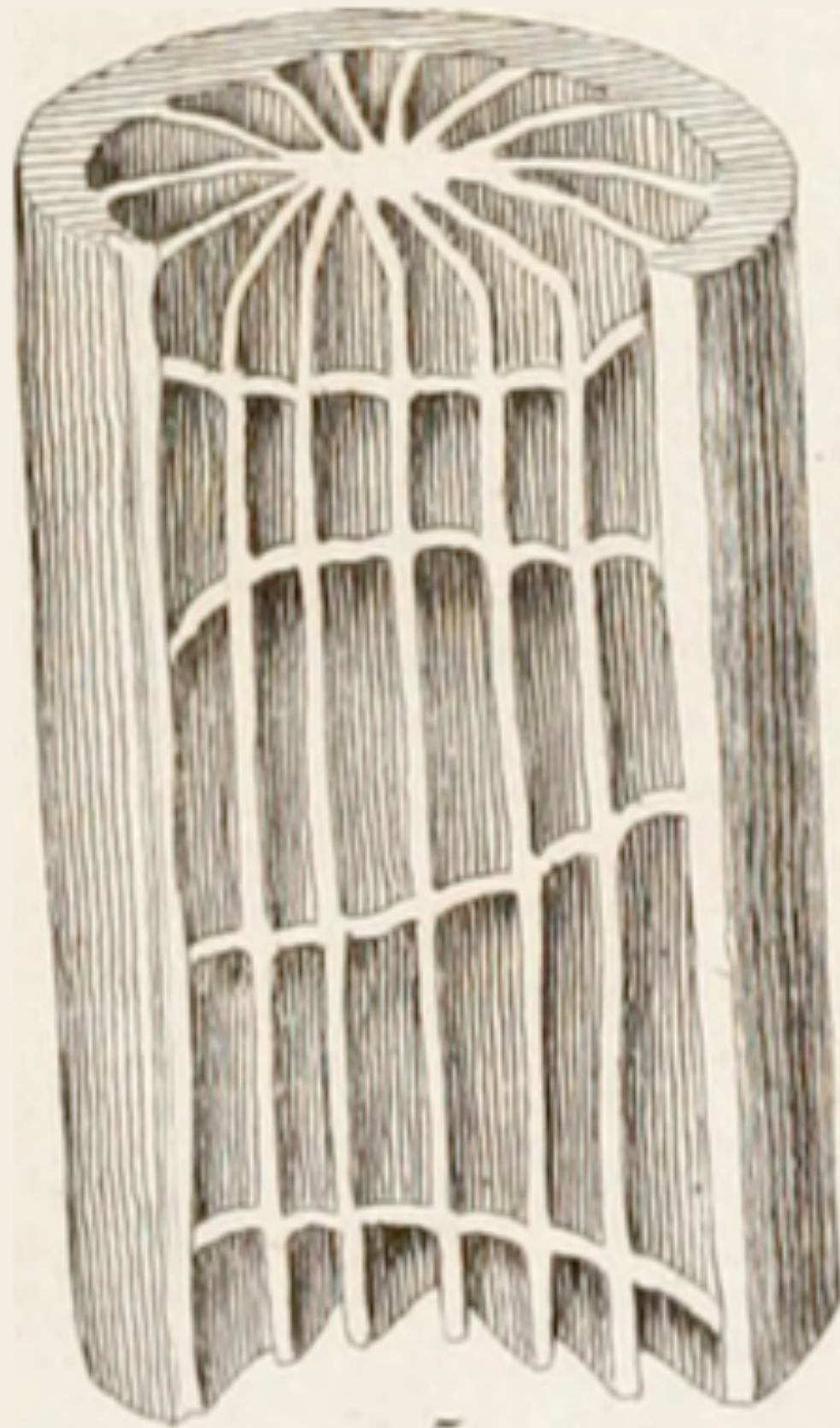
雙 贅 鶻 聯 誼 措 盥 榴  
楷 搥 埃 鴿 措 櫟 欵 搵  
搭 頤 盪 擲 蝨 聒 輓 嬰  
兵 埤 搥 鬼 還 擲 狸 覘  
搗 鴉 曉 埤 窳 遺 礪 揆

# Anders Hoff, *Spline Script* (2017)

Handwritten text in blue ink, demonstrating the Spline Script. The text is a dense block of cursive writing, appearing to be a sample of the script. The characters are fluid and connected, with a consistent slant and a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters. The writing is on a light-colored background.

11. 4c80cca AH-17

# Liza Daly, *Seraphs* (2015)



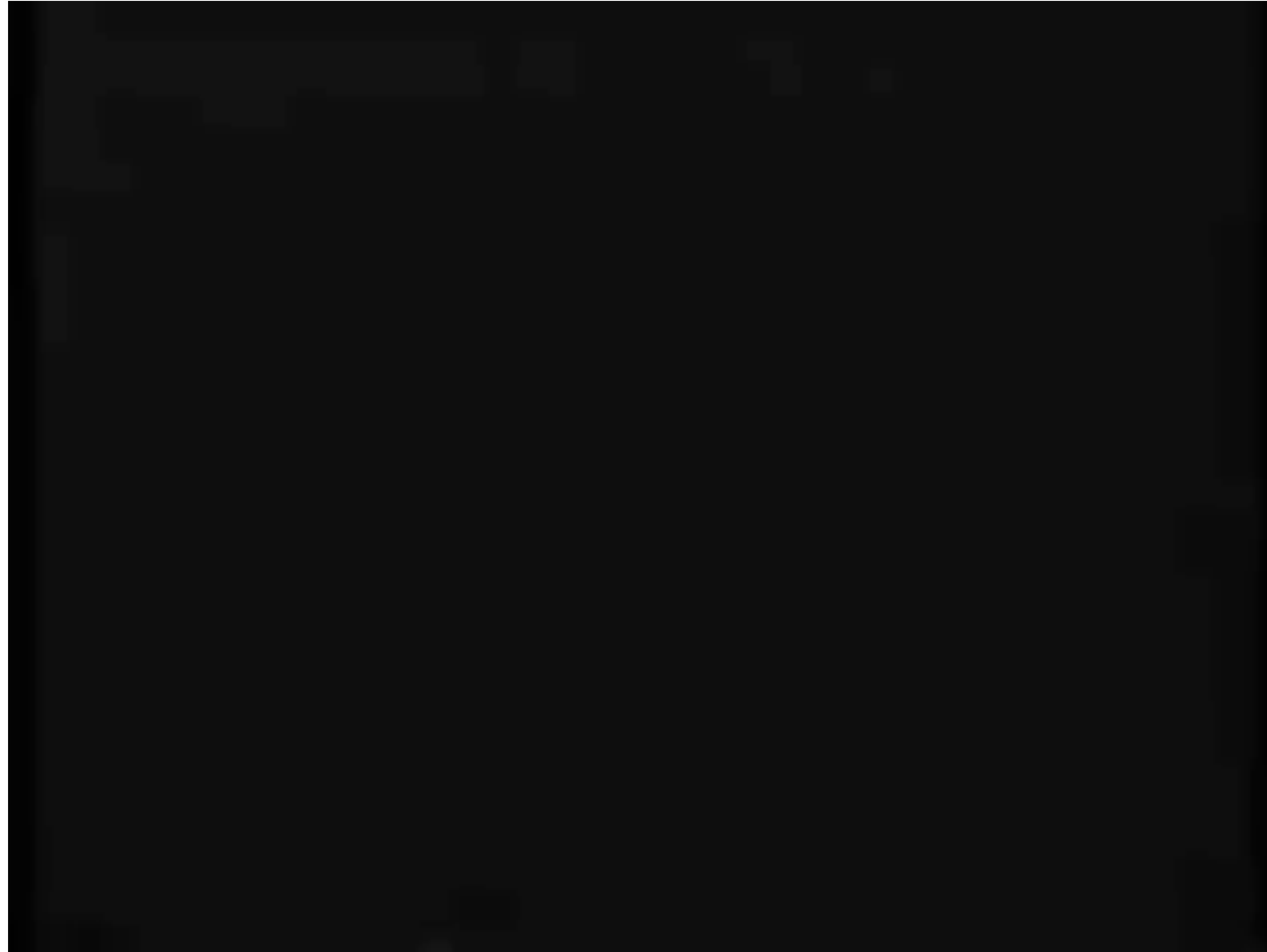
Þrogoð ofleos oflar oflesg þollreðg ðglaw ar ðaw þollceg  
ð oflecg cecodag 2 þdard ofleollaw ðreug rragar  
cecofthar ar ðaw þollceðg þleoð oðarð cecogor ðag ofg oflar  
þoccg reug oflaw þllreðg oðaw þllreug ðawðg oflecoðg  
oflaw þollceg gllaw þllceðg cecg oflecg cec oflecg  
oflecar þollceðg ðar þllceðg cecg oflaw þollceg oflar reuðg  
reðg þollceðg cecfðg ðg cecg ðaw oflecg reug ðaw ofleodaw  
ofleceug þllcg oðreccfðg þollaw of cecofthar ðawðg reug

þllreug oflar reug cecog þllreðg þollg þollceðg awaðar þollorðar  
þollcg þgceorðg ðaw ofleceðg þollceðg þllreðg þollceð reuðg  
gllreðg reuðg ofleðg of reo cecar þlag þllreug ofleceug

Þreðg þollceðg gllreðorð oflar reuðg ar ofleceðg þollceug þollcg  
gllceðg þo oflarðg reoð gllag reo 2g þollceðg ofleceðg þollceðar  
oflecg ðaw þollreðg ofleceðg of þlag ofleollg reoð oflecar  
aw cecarðg gllreðar gllcg ofg þollreco

**making marks with computers,  
an anthology of technologies**

# Charactron (a curiosity, 1954)



*from <http://www.chilton-computing.org.uk/acl/technology/sc4020/p002.htm>*

# plotters

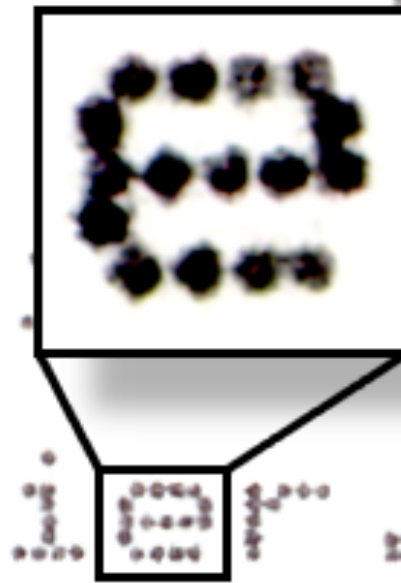
<https://youtu.be/dSEvVxdJNlw?t=73>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calcomp\\_plotter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calcomp_plotter)  
(from 1959!)

# dot-matrix printers



ystem where a  
ld allow us t  
mercial supplier.



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dot\\_matrix\\_example\\_text.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dot_matrix_example_text.png)

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:9\\_nadel\\_druckkopf-star\\_nl10--hinnerk\\_ruemenapf\\_vs01-p50.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:9_nadel_druckkopf-star_nl10--hinnerk_ruemenapf_vs01-p50.jpg)

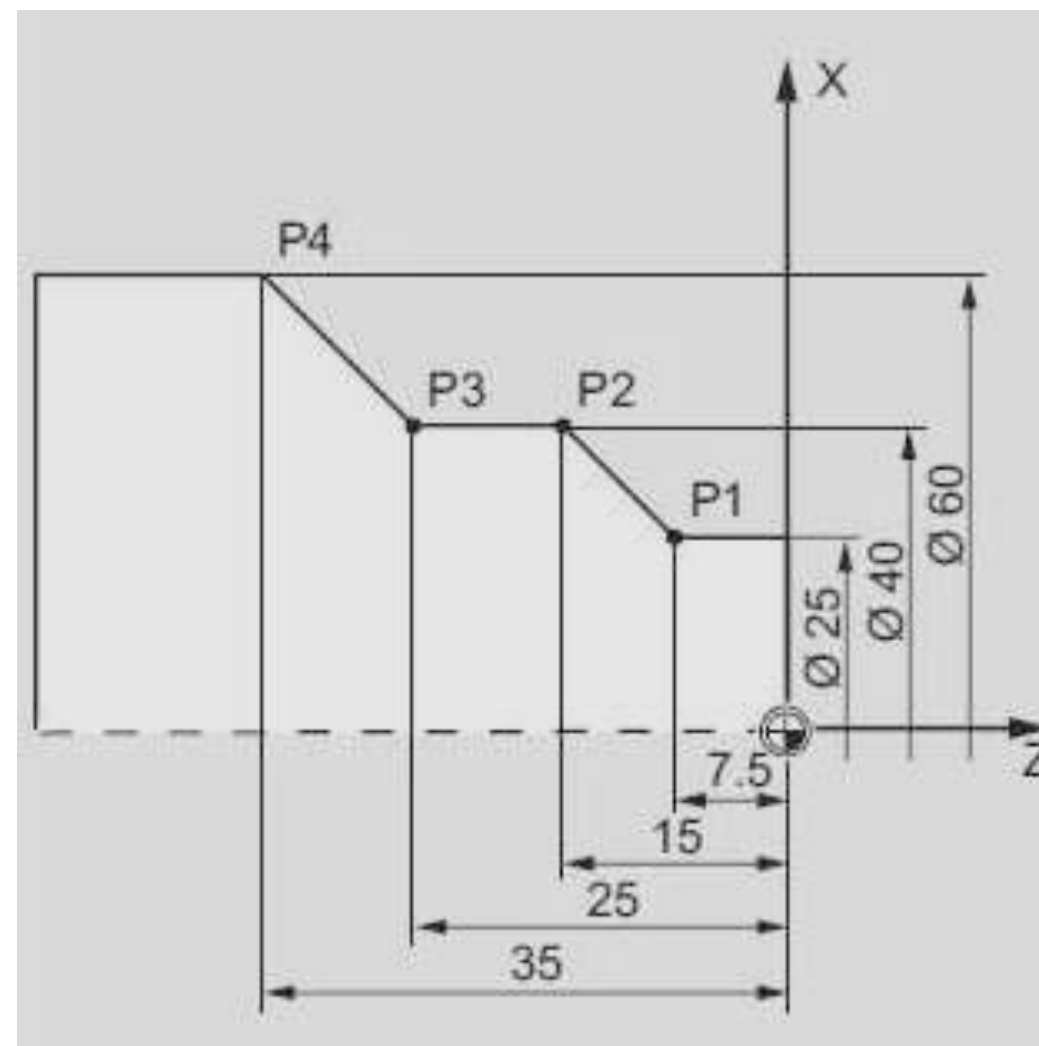
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Epson\\_MX-80.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Epson_MX-80.jpg)

**encoding "writing"**



# g-code

```
N1 T0101 ; Tool no 1 with offset no 1 FANUC Control
N2 G97 S500 M03 ; Spindle rotation clockwise with 500 RPM
N3 G42 G00 X0 Z0 ; P0 tool nose radius compensation active
N4 G01 X25 G95 F0.3 ;
N5 G01 Z-7.5 ; P1
N6 G01 X40 Z-15 ; P2
N7 G01 Z-25 ; P3
N8 G01 X60 Z-35 ; P4
N9 G40 G00 X200 Z100 ; Tool nose radius compensation cancel
```



G-Code example from <https://www.helmancnc.com/cnc-programming-for-beginners-a-simple-cnc-programming-example/>

# svg

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" ?>
<svg xmlns="http://www.w3.org/2000/svg" version="1.1">
  <rect x="25" y="25" width="200" height="200" fill="lime" stroke-
width="4" stroke="pink" />
  <circle cx="125" cy="125" r="75" fill="orange" />
  <polyline points="50,150 50,200 200,200 200,100" stroke="red"
stroke-width="4" fill="none" />
  <line x1="50" y1="50" x2="200" y2="200" stroke="blue" stroke-
width="4" />
</svg>
```

