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Cuneiform Studies

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time there were a people that came there called the Sumerians. These people -- nobody knows where they came from. They may have been a rather small group of people. Some have said they came from the south seas. Some have said they came from India. Some have said they came from some place in Europe. There have been hundreds of theories. Nobody knows where the Sumerians came from. But they were a comparatively small group, but a very skillful group. They were p very practical. They invented the dome and the arch which were unknown in Europe until Alexander the Great's soldier's took them back to Europe, 2000 years after the Sumerians had been making domes and arches in Mesopotamia. They were a very practical people. Not an extremely large number of people probably. These Sumerians were the inventors of writing. They invented a system of writing, and they began writing it on these clay tablets. Probably writing was invented originally only to show ownership -- putting your designation of ownership on something, particularly used in trade. Then used for keeping records and that sort of thing. When the Sumerians invented writing it consisted of pictures. These pictures traveled ~~on~~ overland to China and they developed into the Chinese system of writing which is entirely different but started from the Sumerian writing. They also traveled in the other direction by trade to Egypt. The Egyptians took these Sumerian pictures and they developed a system of writing. To the Egyptians with their writing on monuments, or with colored pictures, these pictures remained a pictorial thing right to the end of the Egyptian history. They were pictures, and were so vivid to the Egyptians that on the monuments in Egypt, when you see the letter f the letter F is a picture of the snake, and they are very vivid pictures of this snake. But about the middle of the snake's body they have a little space, as if it is broken there so that it cannot hurt you. The snake is always cut in two. It shows how vivid the pictures