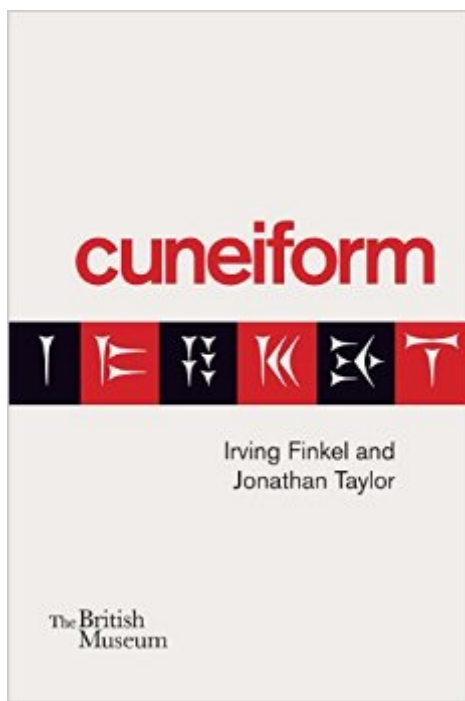


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Cuneiform



Synopsis

Cuneiform script on tablets of clay is, as far as we know, the oldest form of writing in the world. The choice of clay as writing medium in ancient Mesopotamia meant that records of all kinds could survive down to modern times, preserving fascinating documents from ancient civilization, written by a variety of people and societies. From reading these tablets we can understand not only the history and economics of the time but also the beliefs, ideas and superstitions. This new book will bring the world in which the cuneiform was written to life for the non-expert reader, revealing how ancient inscriptions can lead to a new way of thinking about the past. It will explain how this pre-alphabetic writing really worked and how it was possible to use cuneiform signs to record so many different languages so long ago. Richly illustrated with a wealth of fresh examples ranging from elementary school exercises to revealing private letters or beautifully calligraphic literature for the royal library, we will meet people that aren't so very different from ourselves. We will read the work of many scribes from mundane record keepers to state fortune tellers, using tricks from puns to cryptography. For the first time cuneiform tablets and their messages are not remote and inaccessible, but wonderfully human documents that resonate today.

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Finkel is one of the very few people on this planet who can share his love of cuneiform to the general public. He has a great sense of humor and his knowledge of the subject is a wonder. Curious about cuneiform? Read this book.

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