

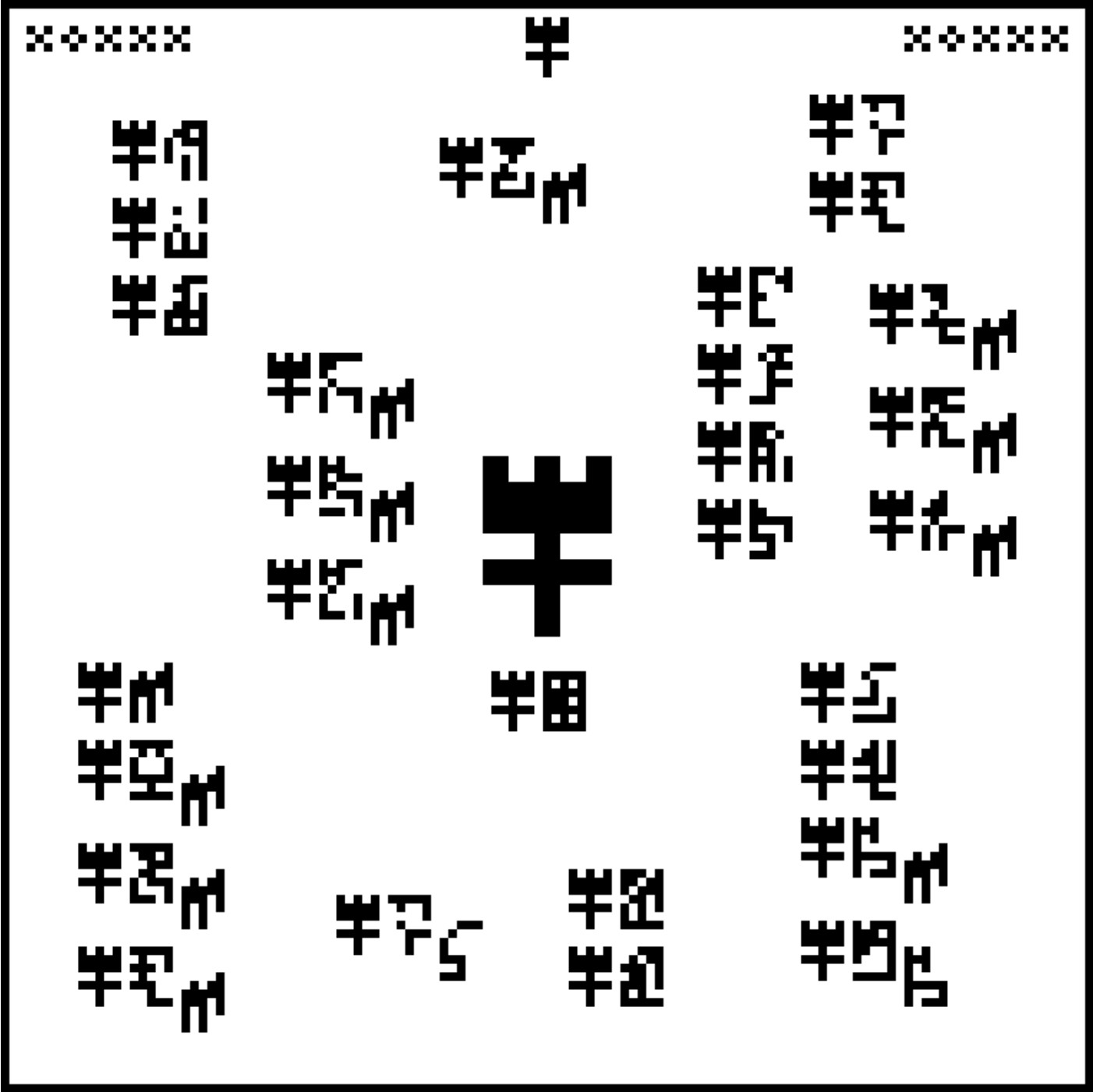
The Universe of Discourse


Mon, 21 Dec 2015

A message to the aliens, part 23/23 (wat)


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This is page 23 (the last) of the [Cosmic Call](#) message. An explanation follows.

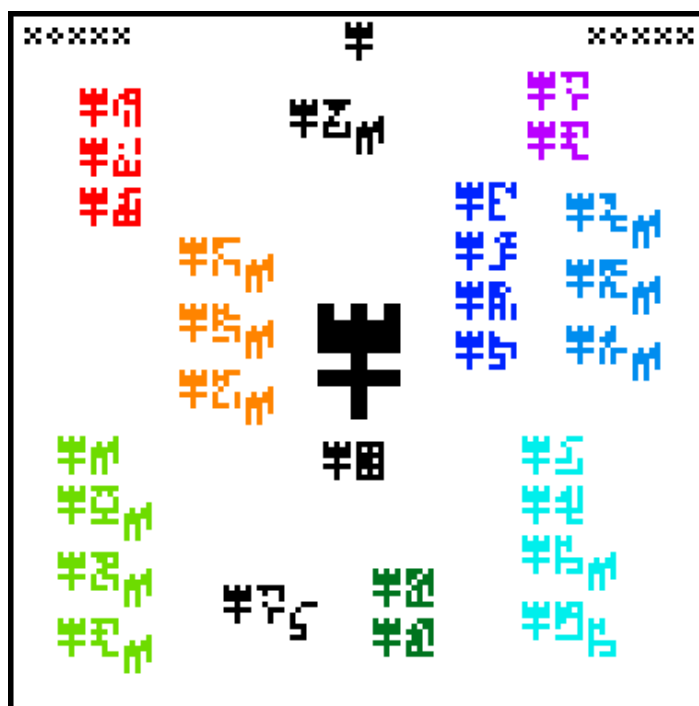


This page is a series of questions for the recipients of the message. It is labeled with the glyph , which heretofore appeared only on [page 4](#) in the context of solving of algebraic equations. So we might interpret it as meaning a solution or a desire to solve or understand. I have chosen to translate it as “wat”.



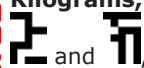
I find this page irritating in its vagueness and confusion. Its layout is disorganized. Glyphs are used inconsistent with their


uses elsewhere on the page and elsewhere in the message. For example, the mysterious glyph , which has something to do with the recipients of the message, and which appeared only on [page 21](#) is used here to ask about both the recipients themselves and also about their planet.




The questions are arranged in groups. For easy identification, I have color-coded the groups.




Starting from the upper-left corner, and proceeding counterclockwise, we have:


 **Kilograms, meters, and seconds, wat.** I would have used the glyphs for abstract mass, distance, and time, , and , since that seems to be closer to the intended meaning.



 **Alien mathematics, physics, and biology, wat.** Note that this asks specifically about the *recipients'* version of the sciences. None of these three glyphs has been subscripted before. Will the meaning be clear to the recipients? One also wonders why the message doesn't express a desire to understand human science, or science generally. One might argue that it does not make sense to ask the recipients about the human versions of mathematics and physics. But a later group expresses a desire to understand males and females, and the recipients don't know anything about that either.

 **Aliens wat. Alien [planet] mass, radius, acceleration wat.** The meaning of  shifts here from meaning the recipients themselves to the recipients' planet. "Acceleration"  is intended to refer to the planet's gravitational acceleration as on [page 14](#). What if the recipients don't live on a planet? I suppose they will be familiar with planets generally and with the fact that we live on a planet, which explained back on pages 11–13, and will get the idea.

 **Fucking speed of light, how does it work?**

 **Planck's constant, wat. Universal gravitation constant, wat?**

 **Males and females, wat. Alien people, wat. Age of people, wat.** This group seems to be about our desire to understand ourselves, except that the third item relates to the aliens. I'm not quite sure what is going on. Perhaps "males and females" is intended to refer to the recipients? But the glyphs are not subscripted, and there is no strong reason to believe that the aliens have the same sexuality.

 The glyph , already used both to mean the age of the Earth and the typical human lifespan, is even less clear here. Does it mean we want to understand the reasons for human life expectancy? Or is it intended to continue the inquiry from the previous line and is asking about the recipients' history or lifespan?



Land, water, and atmosphere of the recipients' planet, wat.



Energy, force, pressure, power, wat. The usage here is inconsistent from the first group, which asked not about mass, distance, and time but about kilograms, meters, and seconds specifically.



Velocity and acceleration, wat. I wonder why these are in a separate group, instead of being clustered with the previous group or the first group. I also worry about the equivocation in acceleration, which is sometimes used to mean the Earth's gravitational acceleration and sometimes acceleration generally. We already said we want to

understand mass m , G , and the size of the Earth. The Earth's surface gravity can be straightforwardly calculated from these, so there's nothing else to understand about that.



Alien planet, wat. The glyph has heretofore been used only to refer to the planet Earth. It does not mean

planets generally, because it was not used in connection with Jupiter. Here, however, it seems to refer to the recipients' planet.



The universe, wat. HUH???

That was the last page. Thanks for your kind attention.

[Many thanks to Anna Gundlach, without whose timely email I might not have found the motivation to finish this series.]

[\[Other articles in category /aliens/dd\]](#) [permanent link](#)
