

## Handout I.1

### Outline for Unit I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION Lecture 1: GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF WRITING

#### I. The nature and definition of writing

##### A. Problem of definition of writing

##### B. Linguistic versus non-linguistic “writing”: glottography and semasiography/pictography

#### II. Origin and development of world writing: introductory sketch

##### A. Monogenesis vs. polygenesis

##### B. Transmission of writing

1. Via direct borrowing or adaptation
2. Via stimulus diffusion

##### C. The origin(s) of writing

##### D. Phonetization: the critical stage in the development of writing

##### E. Abstraction of originally pictographic signs

##### F. Systemic changes arising in course of borrowing of scripts

##### G. Ultimate sources of most modern scripts of the world today:

1. Chinese as source of “Sinitic” scripts
2. Egyptian as *indirect* source (via proto-Sinaitic, Phoenician, and Aramaic) of European and Middle Eastern scripts (compare Handout I.2)