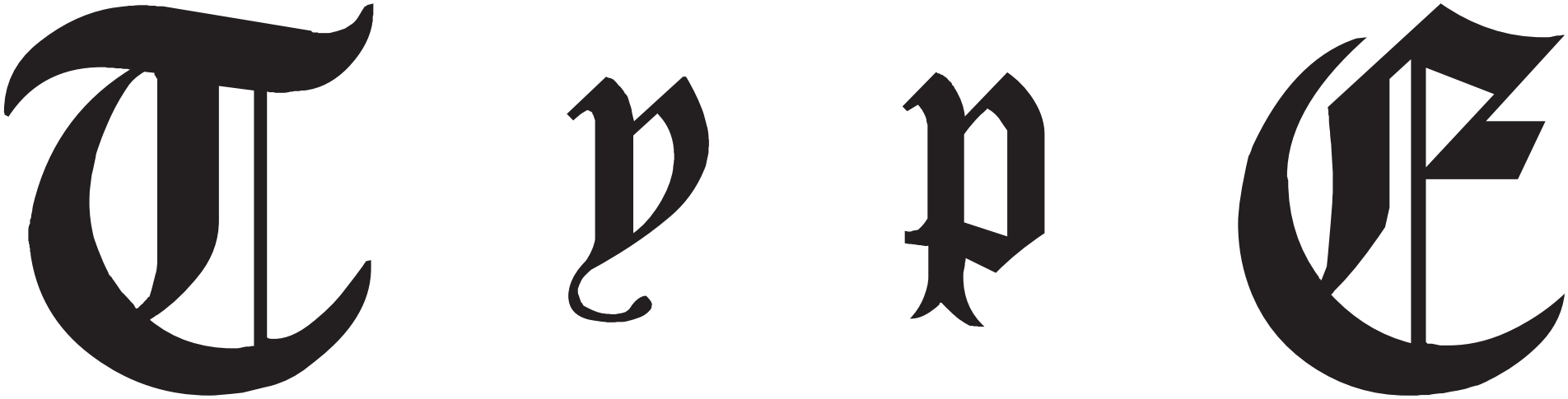
History of



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Introduction to Typography

CST 204
Fall, 2019

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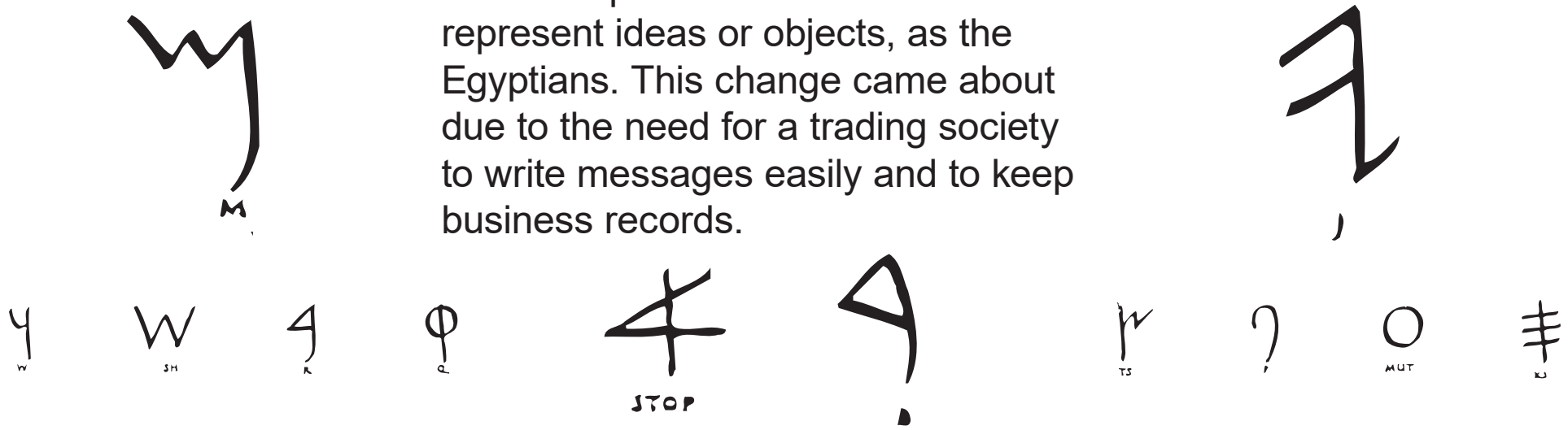
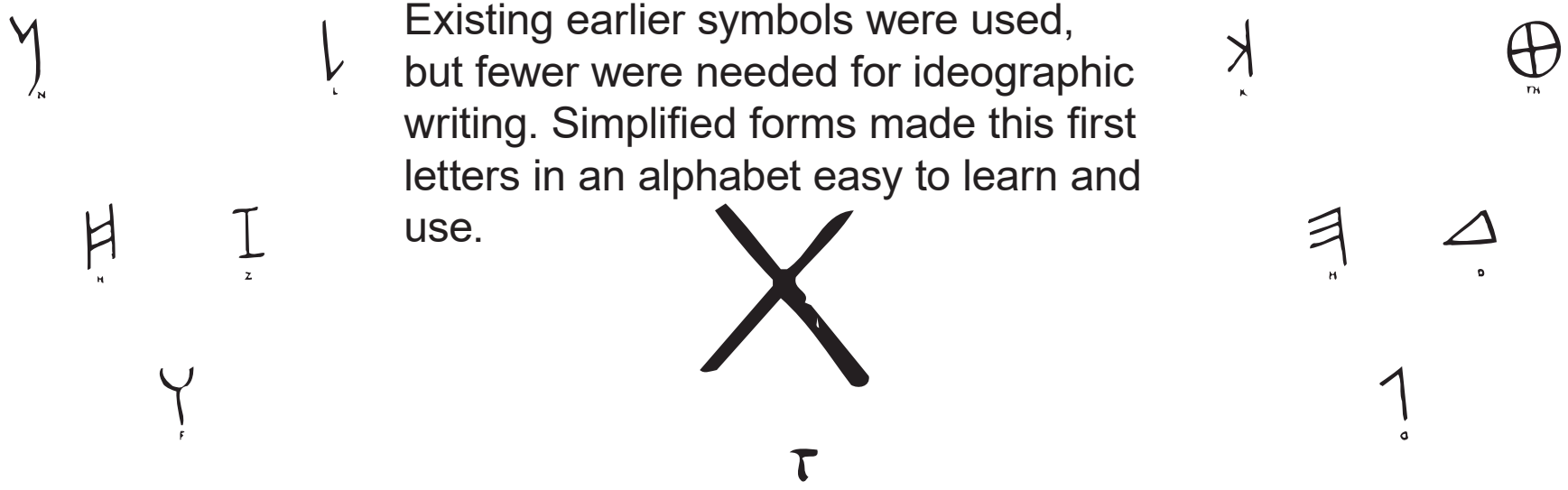
Phoenician

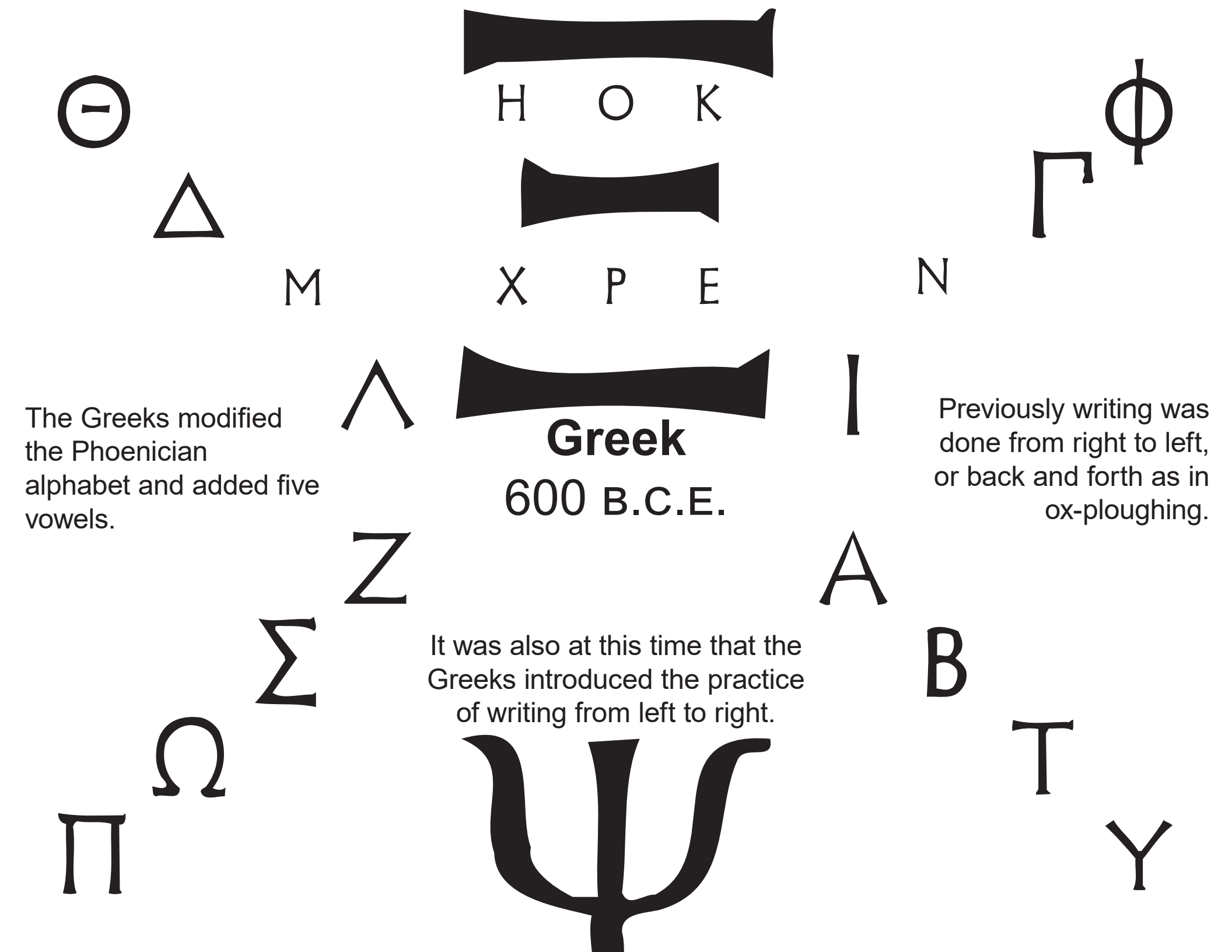
Phoenicians scribes were the first to use **symbols** to represent the sounds made in speech rather than to represent ideas or objects, as the Egyptians. This change came about due to the need for a trading society to write messages easily and to keep business records.

1500 B.C.E.



Existing earlier symbols were used, but fewer were needed for ideographic writing. Simplified forms made this first letters in an alphabet easy to learn and use.




H O K
M X P E N
Greek
600 B.C.E.
The Greeks modified the Phoenician alphabet and added five vowels.
Previously writing was done from right to left, or back and forth as in ox-ploughing.
It was also at this time that the Greeks introduced the practice of writing from left to right.

Times Roman is the digital type rendition of the original metal font called Times created for the “Times” newspaper in London.

Roman

G

Just as the Greeks had modified the Phoenician alphabet; the Romans modified the Greek alphabet. They also added two letters for a total of twenty-three.

H M
S T
Y Z
I K
V X
D F
Q R
A C
B O
N P

L

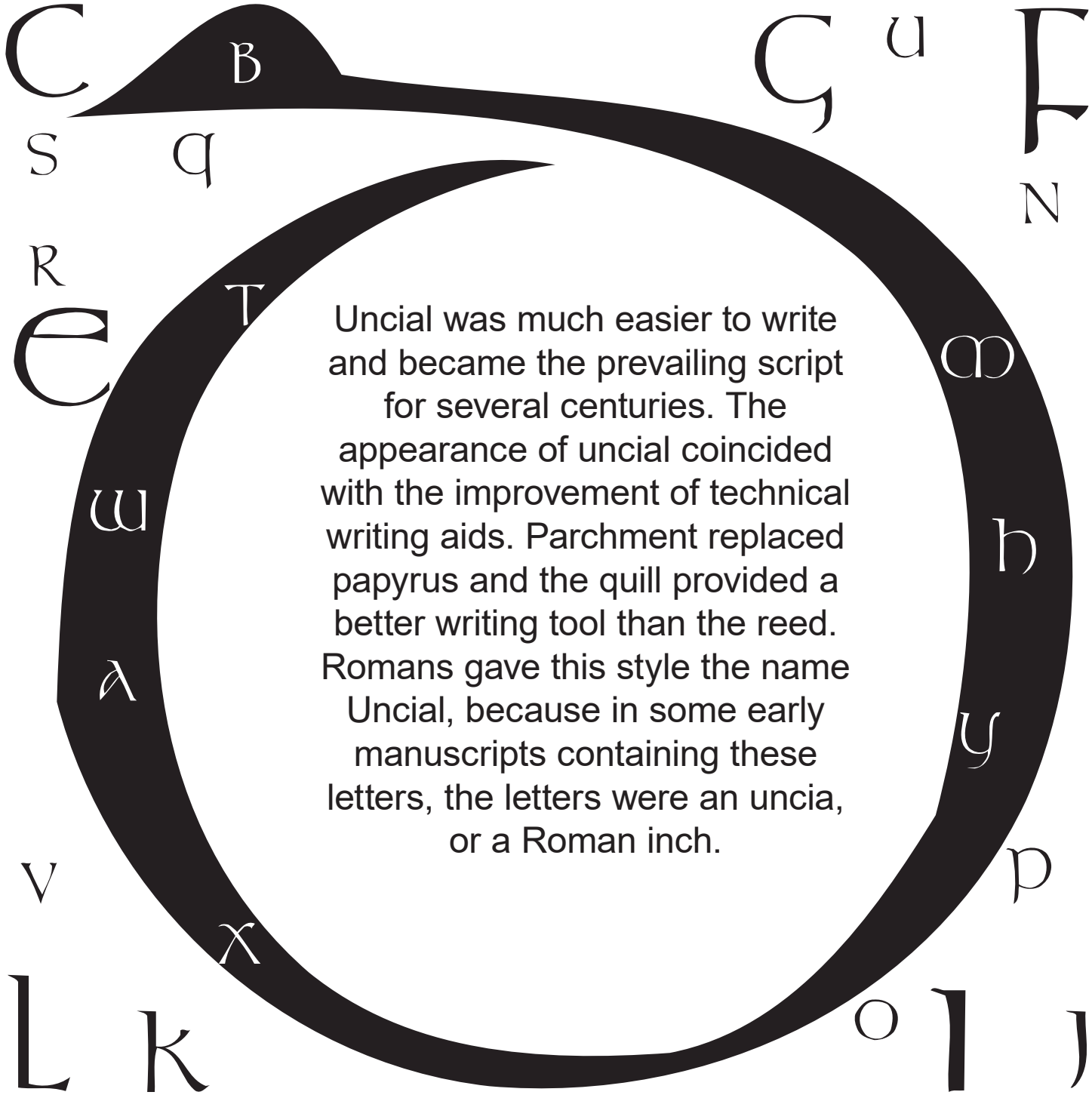
The Romans developed the majuscule letterforms (Capitals), notable for their exceptional beauty and clarity of form. These letters were often used on monuments, triumphal arches and tombstones.

E

300 B.C.E.

500

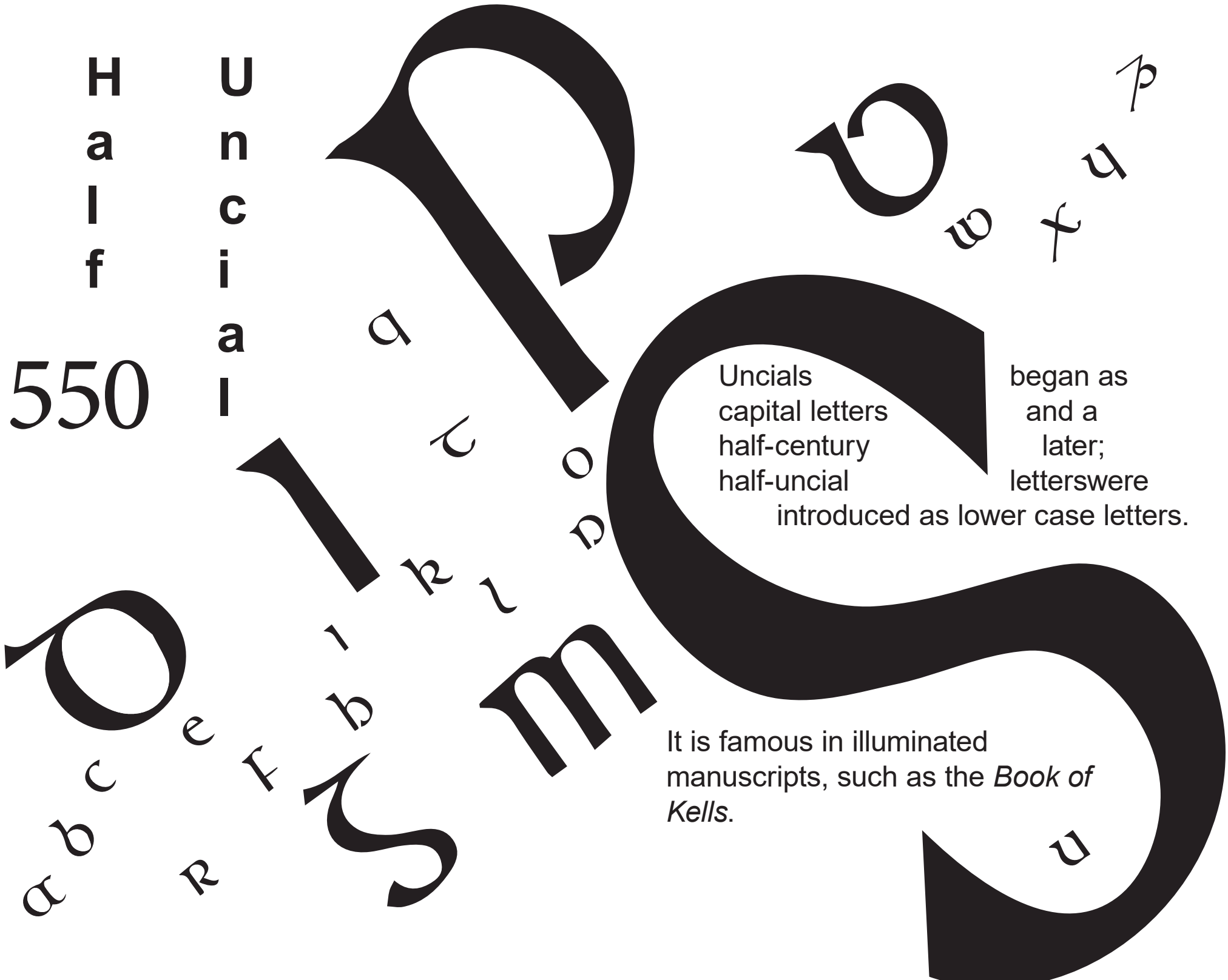
Uncial



Uncial was much easier to write and became the prevailing script for several centuries. The appearance of uncial coincided with the improvement of technical writing aids. Parchment replaced papyrus and the quill provided a better writing tool than the reed. Romans gave this style the name Uncial, because in some early manuscripts containing these letters, the letters were an uncia, or a Roman inch.

Half Uncial

550



Uncials began as capital letters and a half-century later; half-uncial letterswere introduced as lower case letters.

It is famous in illuminated manuscripts, such as the *Book of Kells*.

Gothic Blackletter 1000

Here the writing becomes more confined—the style reflects the aesthetics from the Goths of northern Europe during medieval history.

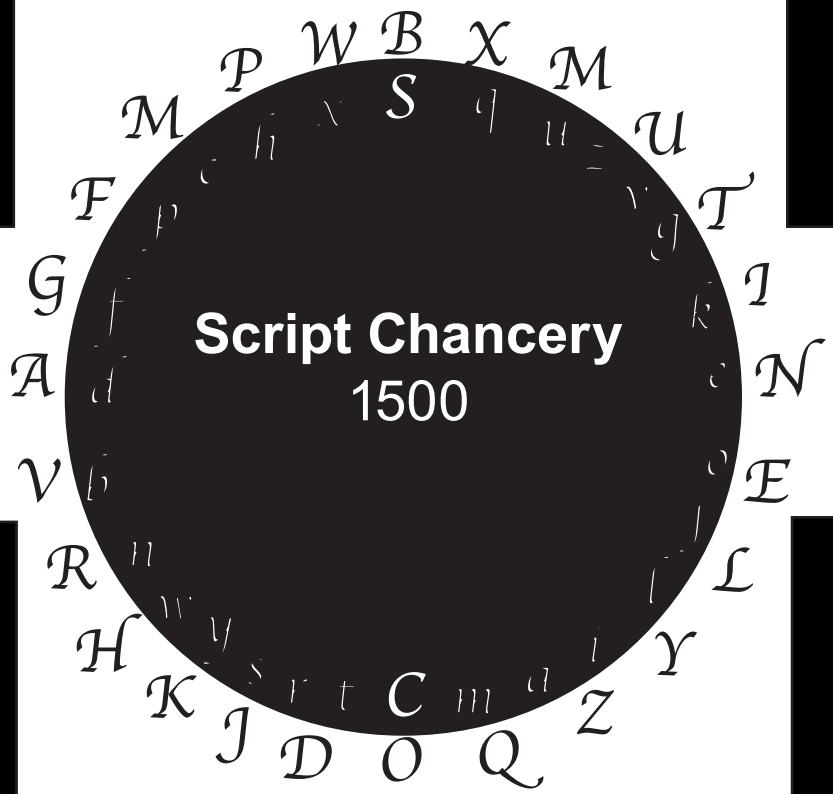
The writing reminds us of a textile pattern.

The strictly religious medieval conception of life can be seen in the broken tall arcades of Gothic writing, which mirrored in the architecture of the period.

It is the type style associated with one of the first books printed in Europe, the Gutenberg Bible, printed by Johannes Gutenberg, in Germany in the 1450s.

This hand, a sloping and considerably narrow style, fulfilled the need for a more rapid form of writing.

This cursive was adopted as the official script in the papal chanceries and occupied a place in printing.



It is the precursor for the italic style, named after Italy.

Today it is popular with invitations because it is elegant and suggests a unique hand-made quality. Chancery is an example of a script font.

Old Style Garmaond

Old Style fonts are a product of the Renaissance period of European history when aesthetics in architecture and type were copied and revised from the Romans. However, now there were 26 letters and miniscule (lower case) letters in the alphabet. Garamond is an example of Old Style faces. Characteristics include little contrast between the weight of the thick and thin strokes of a letter and has a greater diagonal stress. The brackets and serifs are heavy. Usually the ascender is taller than a capital letter and the x-height can be low compared to later type fonts.

Transitional

1650s

Baskerville and Palatino are examples of Transitional type fonts. Palatino is a popular modern computer counterpart. Transitional type has greater contrast between thick and thin strokes and the serifs and more refined. The stress is less oblique and the x-height is larger than Old Style.

Modern type was developed in Italy.

Bodoni and Didot are extremely popular Modern typefaces.

The difference between the hairline serifs and the bold vertical line weight is extreme.

Linear serifs are straight, fine, with no brackets.

Letters are narrower and the stress is completely vertical.

It has an extremely low x-height making long texts more difficult to real.

1700s

A a
B b
C c
D d
E e
F f
G g
H h
I i
J j
K k
L l
M m

Slab serifs are the key characteristic of this style along with the uniform weight in the stroke.
The style is associated with “broadsheets” which were the first mass printed posters for the public.
Wanted posters in the American west featured this typestyle in the headlines.

Egyptian

1800s

The headline letters were so large they were cut from wood
Courier may be the most famous Egyptian typeface known in modern times because it was used on typewriters and later, on the computers.
Universities often use an Egyptian capital letter as a logo.

n N
o O
p P
q Q
r R
s S
t T
u U
v V
w W
x X
y Y
z Z

ABC abc

ONW mno pqr PQR

JKL ikl

S

Sans Serif

Futura

1900s

f

"Sans" means "without" in French, and "serif" is the name of the little foot on classic letterforms. The serif is gone and there is almost no difference between thick and thins in stroke weight and no stress.

Futura is a classic Sans Serif created during the Bauhaus design period in Germany that mandated that form follows function—void of unnecessary decorative elements. Helvetica is the most popular sans serif font.

DEY dey

VWX vwx ztu ZTU

GHI ghi