

# Writing and Cognition in Interdisciplinary Perspective

Writing is one of the key early markers of human civilization, and it has been around for more than 5,000 years. This 5-day international conference will bring together neuroscientists and experts on ancient writing systems with the goal of adding a historical dimension to neuroscience and, for ancient world studies, opening up objective criteria for measuring the efficiency of writing. The conference aims to foster exchange between scholars active in different fields. To facilitate this dialogue, the conference will combine traditional talks with discussion panels. We have invited talks on topics related to: (1) aspects of script usage from different perspectives; (2) neuroanatomical networks and writing-related pathologies; (3) relationship between writing and language; (4) visual form and eye coordination in reading as constituent factors of writing; (5) cognitive load and the role of behaviors in reading; (6) materiality and spatial arrangement of writing; (7) interaction between mind, body and the material technologies of writing; and (8) role of the visual system and object recognition in writing. The conference proceedings will be published.

#### Invited Keynote Speakers

**Laurent Cohen**, Paris  
**Haleli Harel**, Jerusalem  
**Olivier Morin**, CNRS / ENS-PSL  
**Lambros Malafouris**, Oxford  
**Gordon Whittaker**, Göttingen

#### Invited Workshop Leaders

**Aleksandra Eberhard-Moscicka**, Bern

#### Special Feature

Experiment: eye movement behavior  
(saccades) in reading ancient texts

#### Organization

**Annick Payne**, Bern and Venice  
**René Müri**, Bern  
**Karenleigh A. Overmann**, Colorado

Funded by the European Union (ERC-2022-COG, CAnCAn, G.A. 101088363). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Council Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



International conference

# Writing and Cognition in Interdisciplinary Perspective

25 – 30 August 2024

Monte Verità, Ascona, Switzerland

## SUNDAY 25 AUGUST

15.00-17.00 Arrival & Registration

17.00-17.30 Welcome Apéro

17.30-19.00 **Keynote lecture** Gianmaria Potenza: *Elaborating New Codes. Presented by Valeria Loddo*

19.00-20.30 Dinner

## MONDAY 26 AUGUST

7.00-8.00 Breakfast

8.00-10.00 Welcome

**Keynote lecture** Haleli Harel, Orly Goldwasser and Dmitry Nikolaev: *Concepts and categories: A data-driven network approach with iClassifier*

10.00-10.30 Coffee Break

10.30-12.30 **Presentations** Chair: Karenleigh Overmann

**Annick Payne:** *Phonetic Classifiers in the Anatolian Hieroglyphic Script*

**Nathan Lovejoy:** *Listening, interpreting, and (mis) understanding personal names in the multilingual ancient Near East*

**Šárka Velhartická:** *Thoughts on bilingualism in ancient Near Eastern texts*

12.30-14.00 Lunch

14.00-16.00 **Presentations** Chair: Nicolò Bordoni

**Paul Saenger:** *Verbal numbers and numerals: The Christian metamorphosis of Medieval Latin and its linguistic and neuroscientific implications*

**Michela Galli:** *Read and transcribe. Cartular copyists in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Paris*

**Arthur P.-É. Coppée:** *Hylography: A cognitive archaeology of writing in the Aegean Bronze Age*

16.00-16.30 Coffee Break

16.00-18.00 **Keynote lecture** Laurent Cohen: *The reading brain*

18.00-19.00 **Eberhard-Moscicka and Müri:** *Methodology Workshop Neuroscience*

19.00-20.30 Dinner

## TUESDAY 27 AUGUST

7.30-8.30 Breakfast

8.30-10.00 **Keynote lecture** Gordon Whittaker: *Exploring the complex relationship of sign sequences to language*

10.00-10.30 Coffee Break

10.30-12.30 **Presentations** Chair: Nathan Lovejoy  
**Rachel Garton:** *Eye movements while reading Hakha Lai: Exploring literacy processing in Tibeto-Burman languages*

**Benjamin K. Tsou:** *On dating the origins of the Chinese writing system: A sociolinguistic perspective*

**Jeremy J. Purcell and Robert W. Wiley:** *Insights into the sublexical system in written English*

12.30-14.00 Lunch

14.00-16.00 **Presentations** Chair: Šárka Velhartická  
**Martin Kupky:** *Competing notations in a system, or “how do I express the same thing in three different ways?” The Deutsche Bahn signaling system*

**Karenleigh A. Overmann:** *Writing as visible language*  
**Yannis Haralambous and Sveva Elti di Rodeano:** *Compounding and computing: Grapholinguistics and its application to ancient writing systems*

16.00-16.30 Coffee Break

16.30-19.00 **Reading Experiment**

19.00-20.30 Dinner

## WEDNESDAY 28 AUGUST

7.30-8.30 Breakfast

8.30-10.00 **Keynote lecture** Olivier Morin: *Solving the puzzle of ideography*

10.00-10.30 Coffee Break

10.30-12.30 **Presentations** Chair: Gabriele Biancalani  
**Jean-Jacques Glassner:** *L'écriture, les mots et les images*  
**Emily Zeran:** *The state of phonograms in cuneiform c. 2550 BCE*

**Colton Siegmund:** *Seeing signs in Mesopotamia*

12.30-14.00 Lunch

15.30-21.30 Excursion & Conference Dinner

## THURSDAY 29 AUGUST

7.30-8.30 Breakfast

8.30-10.00 **Keynote lecture** Lambros Malafouris: *Writing as ‘thinging’: A material engagement perspective*

10.00-10.30 Coffee Break

10.30-12.30 **Presentations** Chair: René Müri  
**Christian Prager:** *Writing, speaking, thinking: Maya hieroglyphic writing revisited*

**Gordon Berthin:** *A study of analogous glyph forms and their possible roles in Rongorongo*

**Janusz Krukowski:** *Semasiographic writing from 13,000 years ago*

12.30-14.00 Lunch

14.00-16.00 **Presentations** Chair: Sveva Elti di Rodeano

**Valérie Angenot:** *Language and writing in a tropological perspective.*

**Elisabeth Birk:** *A typology of typologies: Recent developments in writing systems typology*

**Alexey Koshevoy:** *Zipf’s Law of Abbreviation holds for individual characters across a broad range of writing systems*

**David L. Share:** *What makes a writing system efficient for the reader?*

16.00-16.30 Coffee Break

16.30-19.00 **Reading Experiment**

19.00-20.30 Dinner

## FRIDAY 30 AUGUST

7.30-8.30 Breakfast

8.30-10.00 **Panel Müri, Overmann and Payne:** *Research Outlook and Network*

10.00-10.30 Coffee Break

10.30-12.30 **Reading Experiment**

12.30-14.00 Lunch