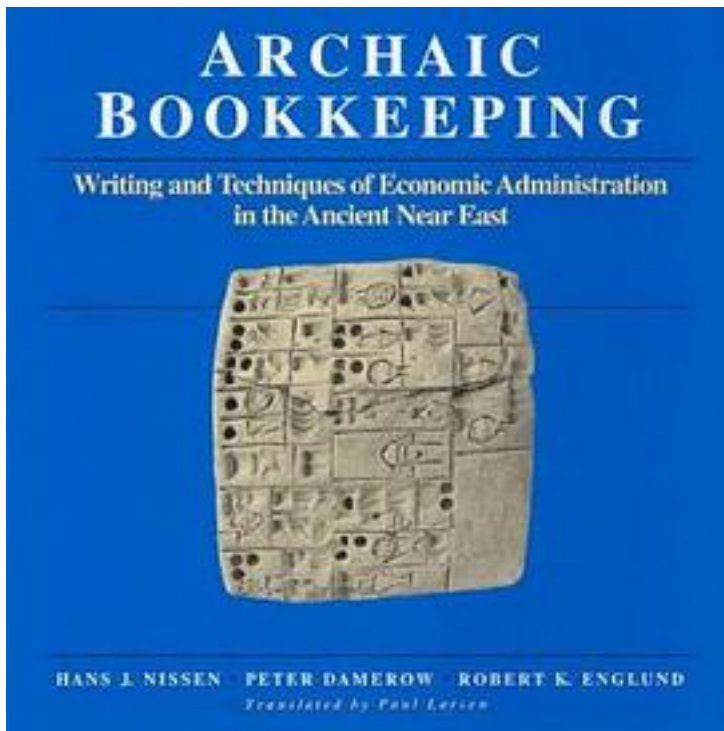


Archaic Bookkeeping



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Archaic Bookkeeping brings together the most current scholarship on the earliest true writing system in human history. Invented by the Babylonians at the end of the fourth millennium B.C., this script, called proto-cuneiform, survives in the form of clay tablets that have until now

posed formidable barriers to interpretation. Many tablets, excavated in fragments from ancient dump sites, lack a clear context. In addition, the purpose of the earliest tablets was not to record language but to monitor the administration of local economies by means of a numerical system. Using the latest philological research and new methods of computer analysis, the authors have for the first time deciphered much of the numerical information. In reconstructing both the social context and the function of the notation, they consider how the development of our earliest written records affected patterns of thought, the concept of number, and the administration of household economies. Complete with computer-generated graphics keyed to the discussion and reproductions of all documents referred to in the text, Archaic Bookkeeping will interest specialists in Near Eastern civilizations, ancient history, the history of science and mathematics, and cognitive psychology.

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