

# The Emergence of Protocuneiform Writing: From administrative officers to pioneers of literacy

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## *Abstract*

*In Southern Mesopotamia, writing emerged at the end of the 4th millennium BCE as a sophisticated communicative system responding to the needs of the growing urbanization. The creators of the protocuneiform system were “simple” administrators, who created a tool capable of generating outstanding developments far beyond their initial intentions. Soon, writing transcended the field of accounting as its tools, the lexical texts, inaugurated a new path, fostering the social identity of an emerging cultural elite.*

**Keywords:** emergence of writing; earliest scribes; earliest schools; bookkeeping; ancient Mesopotamia.

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