Full Structure of the Elian Script

by

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The Elian Script

*An Alternative Writing System Whose Properties
Combine the Linearity of Spelling with the
Free-Form Nature [of Drawing](#)*

Developed by C. C. Elian

Return of the Recycled Relatives Series-

One machine repairs another

The configuration of the *Elian script* consists of a formal structure and three basic structural principles Part II.

PART I

FORMAL STRUCTURE

The formal basis of the *Elian script* is derived from positioning the 26 letters of the English alphabet within a nine-square grid.

3	6	9
2	5	8
1	4	7

C	F	I
B	E	H
A	D	G

| L	O	R
K	N	Q
J	M	P

| U	X	
T	W	Z
S	V	Y

The letters of the alphabet are placed successively, starting at the bottom left corner of the grid at Box **1** with the letter "**A**", upward to Box **3**, down to Box **4**, up to Box **6** then down to Box **7**, ending at the top right corner at Box **9**. Similarly a second cycle begins at Box **1** with the letter "**J**," ending at Box **9** with the letter "**I**", and finally a third cycle begins at Box **1** with the letter "**S**," ending at Box **8** with the 26th letter "**Z**."

C, L U	F, O X	I, R
B, K T	E, N W	H, Q Z
A, J S	D, M V	G, P Y

Each box of the grid has a specific linear configuration. One can describe the center Box **5**, as a room with a ceiling, floor, and two side walls. Box **1** then has a right wall and a ceiling; Box **2** has a floor, ceiling, and right wall; Box **3** has a floor and right wall, and so on.
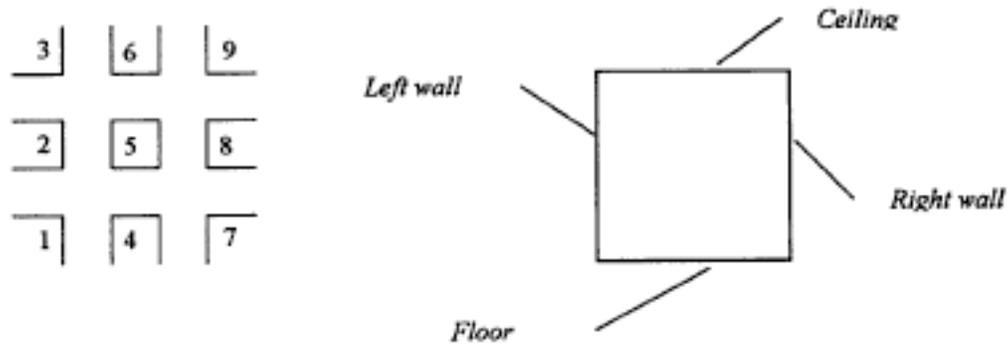
If the alphabet only had nine letters, the form of each box could stand for a single letter.
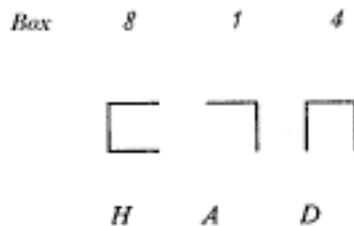
Fitting the 26 letters of the English alphabet within the nine-box grid results in assigning three letters to each box (as in a telephone "dial"), except for Box **9**, with only two. In order to use the form of a given box for three letters, we need a system to distinguish between them.

The different letters within each box are indicated by a change in the length of the boxe's lines. The diagram below shows **Box 1** with its linear configuration in two different states: both lines equal, and the lines unequal.

4

Box 1

Regardless of the length of each box's line(s) in relation to any of the other line(s), their relationship relative to each other remains constant. That is, Box **1** always consists of two lines, one horizontal - the ceiling - and another vertical - the right wall- meeting at the upper right corner.

When a box's line lengths are equal we obtain the following correspondences for the first sequence cycle of nine letters (**A** through **I**):

Box 1 =		A
Box 2 =		B
Box 3 =		C
Box 4 =		D
Box 5 =		E
Box 6 =		F
Box 7 =		G
Box 8 =		H
Box 9 =		I

PART I — TABLE 1 - FIRST CYCLE LETTERS

The letters of the second cycle of letters (**J** through **R,**) are indicated by changing the length of, at least ,one of the lines such that a box's lines are of unequal length. Apart from the aesthetic implications, the choice of which line to lengthen is immaterial.

Although for aesthetic reasons more than one line can be lengthened for boxes with three lines (**2**, **4**, **6**, and **8,**) only one of the lines needs to be lengthened to satisfy this structural rule; the overall structure will still consist of lines of unequal lengths. Box **5** is unique in having four lines but the lengthening method is equally applicable, as shown below:

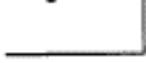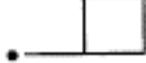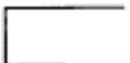| Box 1 | | J |
Box 2		K
Box 3		L
Box 4		M
Box 5		N
Box 6		O
Box 7		P
Box 8		Q
Box 9		R

6

Now it is possible to distinguish between the letters of a box's first cycle from those of its second. All that's left is to represent the letters of the third cycle (**S** through **Z**). These are indicated by adding a simple mark (dot, dash, etc.) to the set of unequal lines characteristic of the second cycle.

Each letter now has a unique encoded form:
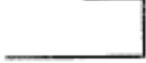
8

Except for the image at the *Introduction*, all of the examples so far display the rigid form with 90º right angles. This is simply for the sake of illustrating the structural principles. In practice the forms are not fixed but flexible so as to permit maximum aesthetic freedom. This writing system has no rules concerning the types of lines used (straight, curved, mixed) or the type of angles connecting them. Variations in either case will not affect the basic relationships between the lines of a given letter or set of letters.

A fluid form is especially appropriate for Box **5**, the central box, which consists of a square in its rigid form. The main feature here is not squareness, but closure. Giving it a circular form maintains closure while offering a more graceful appearance. A round shape lends itself easily to the addition of a tail for the second cycle letter, and a tail plus a mark for those of the third, as shown in the diagram below.

E   N   W
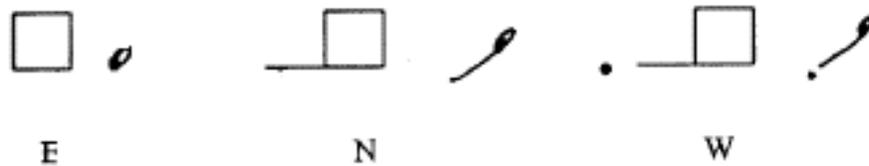
PART I - TABLE 5 - LETTERS IN BOX 5

Any word can be spelled with this system of lines and dashes (or dots). Below is an illustration of the word "spelling" in both the rigid and flexible forms. So far we are still dealing with a linear arrangement of the letter sequence; the actual practice of the *Elian script* allows for stacking each word into as many baselines as number of letters comprising it. Please see *The Three Basic Structural Principles* below in **Part II**.

S   P   E   L   L   I   N   G

PART I - TABLE 6 - FROM RIGID TO FLUID FORM

Below is an example of the entire alphabet in one of the many possible fluid forms:

A	�	J	⟩	S	⟍
B	⌐	K	⤴	T	⟨
C	⌐	L	⟋	U	⟋
D	⊓	M	⟩	V	?
E	0	N	⟋	W	⟋
F	⌐	O	⟋	X	⟍
G	⌐	P	⌐	Y	⌐
H	⌐	Q	⌐	Z	⌐
I	⌐	R	⟋		

END OF PART I

THE THREE BASIC STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES

In addition to the formal elements outlined in Part I, there are three basic principles to observe in the practice of the *Elian script*.

1: Clarity of Line Length (for 1st and 2nd cycles)

If the lines refer to a letter of the first cycle, then they must appear to be of equal length whether they are 1/4" or infinitely long. Similarly, it is just as essential for lines of different lengths to appear unequal. The actual measurable length is not the point, but rather the visual impression created by the linear relationships, throughout the compositions. The main consideration is to avoid ambiguity or doubt.

2: Clarity of Dash Placement (for 3rd cycle)

As mentioned in **Part I**, the location of the dash or dot for letters of the third cycle is a matter of choice, again guided by the wish to avoid visual ambiguity. This emphasis on the avoidance of ambiguity is crucial because the *Elian script* is composed only of lines and dashes. Making a line a little too long or too short, a dash a little too close or too far, could result in a misspelling, e.g., a different letter than the one intended. At the same time, there is a great deal of freedom in the design, sequence, and placement of the formal elements. The need for a certain degree of precision, by way of the traditional sequence of letters that spell a word, on the one hand, and the potential for free expression on the other, gives the practice of this writing system its own dynamism and creative tension.

It is this aspect of the *Elian script* that offers a genuine element of drawing. There is no rule or principle beyond these three structural principles that determines the angles between the line coordinates, the length of the lines, or the appearance of new baselines. Each word can have many appearances to it, the more letters the more possible combinations, sometimes in the thousands. This is where the *Elian script* differs from ideogrammes, where the ratio of lines to one another and their sequence is fixed.

The issue of dash placement is especially crucial when two or more letters of the second and third cycles stand in close proximity in a word, as in the example below:

Ambiguous dash association:
"s" or "y"

Clear dash association:
"space"

I have been using the word "dash" for the sake of simplicity. In practice, the "dash" could just as well be a dot or, for that matter, any mark that is clearly not a line.
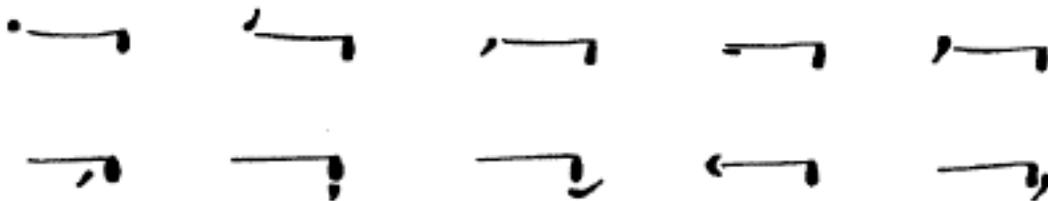
3: **The Compositional Direction of Letter Sequences:**

Left before Right,
Top before Bottom

English is an alphabetic language and conventionally written from left to right along a horizontal line. However, the writing of the *Elian script* is not restricted to a single baseline. The coded letters of a word can be stacked vertically to a greater or lesser degree, all the while maintaining a left to right course. Whether they are disposed horizontally then vertically or, alternatively, horizontally then vertically, the eye can easily follow the letters forming a word. This sequence can be exemplified in its simplest form with words of two letters.

as (glyph sequence)

by (glyph sequence)

to (glyph sequence)
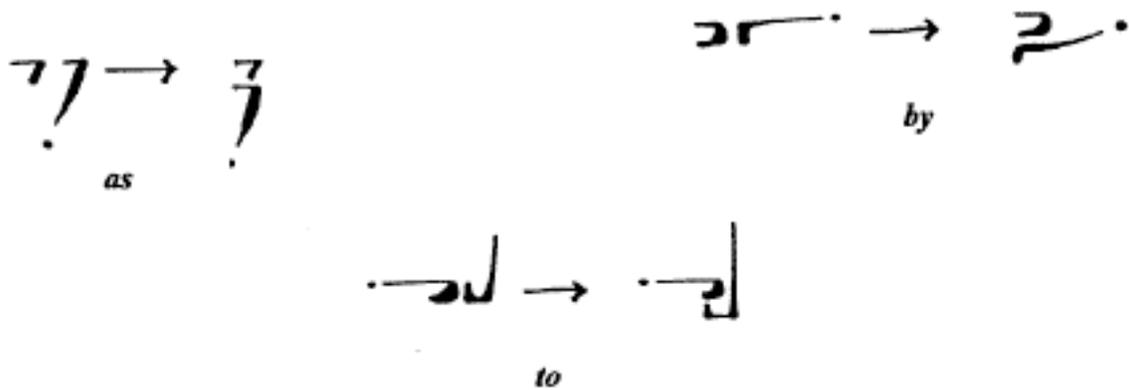
PART II - TABLE 3 - COMPOSITIONAL SEQUENCE — WORDS OF TWO LETTERS

With words of more than two letters, the same procedure applies, as shown below:

time (glyph sequence)

level (glyph sequence)

contemplation (glyph sequence)
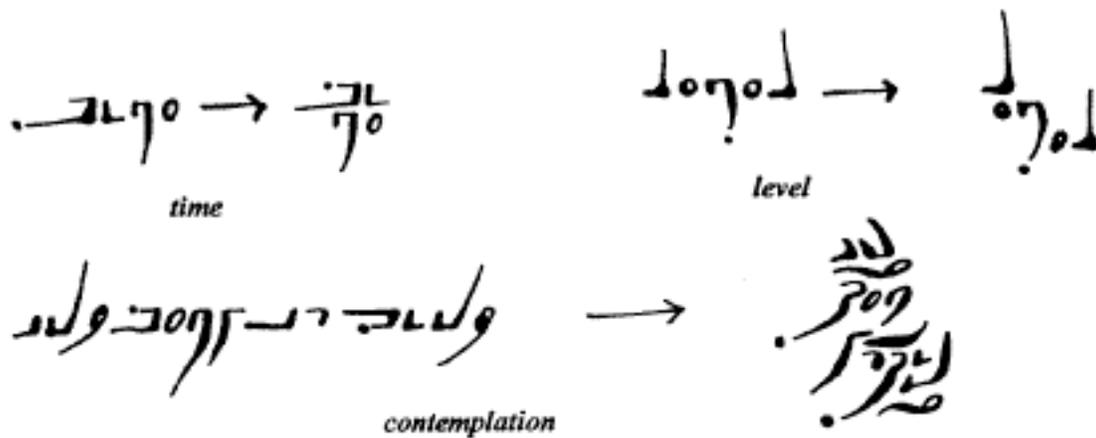
**PART II - TABLE 4 - COMPOSITIONAL SEQUENCE:
WORDS OF MORE THAN TWO LETTERS**

In each case, the eye moves across the topmost level from left to right until there is no further sign, then down to the next level, again starting from the left, and so on. As with line length and dash placement, there should be no ambiguity as to the position of a group of letters in relation to each other. It should be clear that a letter stands to the left or right of another, or that a set of "letters" is above or below.

Depending on their lengths, lines will often cross the levels above or below; but it is the visual center of gravity that will define their position at a given level. This center of gravity is typically the natural baseline of a set of letters. An effective method for evaluating the clarity of a word's composition is to put it aside for some time, then return to it later with fresh eyes. Whatever you perceive then will either confirm the viability of the composition or reveal its weaknesses.

END OF PART II

Appendix I

Ceiling

Left wall □ Right wall

Floor

Box 1	⌐	Ceiling, right wall
Box 2	⌐	Ceiling, right wall, floor
Box 3	⌐	Right wall, floor
Box 4	⌐	Ceiling, right wall, left wall
Box 5	□	Ceiling, right wall, floor, left wall
Box 6	⌐	Right wall, floor, left wall
Box 7	⌐	Ceiling, left wall
Box 8	⌐	Ceiling, floor, left wall
Box 9	└	Floor, left wall

Appendix I - Table 1 -- Unique configuration of each box

01. Latin letter accents often occur in either first-cycle (a, e, i, c), or third-cycle letters (u) and can readily be accommodated. As long as any ambiguity with third-cycle letters is avoided that involves a third cycle letter, those accents particular to a specific language will be apparent in context, as for example, with the Spanish "ñ," a second-cycle letter.

Spanish: España

French: Français   *French:* mére

German: über

French: été   âme   âme
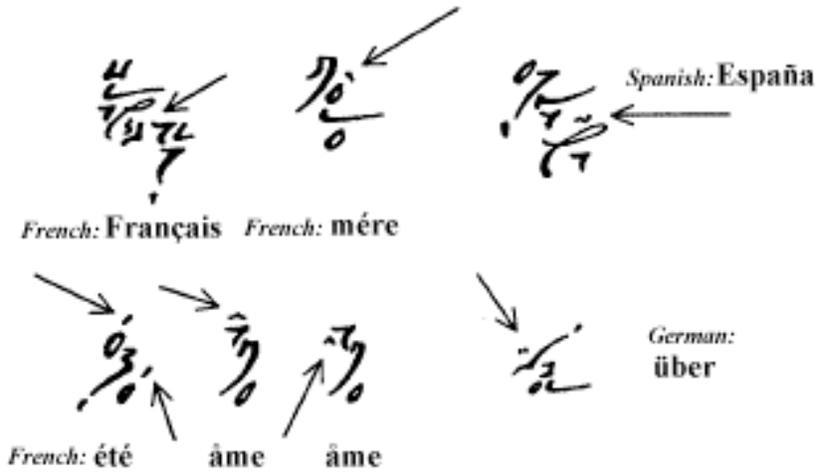
(Above) Appendix 1 - Table 2 - Treatment of accents

02. In the case of an apostrophe, skill is required in associating it with the corresponding letter(s). When the possessive form involves a word with a final "s," the apostrophe can be added to the "s" in its third-cycle form.

possessor's
3 variations

The dash's placement near the line coordinates of the second cycle in box 9 (which has no third cycle) and near the possessive indicator "s", which already has its own dash, avoids ambiguity.

love's passion's kiss

The dash (apostrophe) associated with "love's" remains unambiguous because it is near either a first cycle letter "e", or a third cycle one "s", which already has its dash.

The dash associated with the "n" in "passion's" needs to be somewhat inferred since "n" is a second cycle letter. However, all of the third cycle letters in this word have their dash below the longer line coordinate, the consistency of which facilitates the inference of an apostrophe placed between two other letters at the end of the word, all the more so since the last letter is an "s" — a classic indicator of the possessive.

Appendix 1 - Table 3 - Treatment of apostrophes

16

Evolution of the *Elian Script*'s Structure
For the material below in PDF format, with higher resolution illustrations and additional material on compositional variations please link here: Variations and Evolution of the *Elian Script*

Originally, the *Elian script* was intended to be a code by which I could, at a glance, differentiate writings in my notebooks that were still in finished form from those still in the works. Prior to the development of this code I used the letters of the Cyrillic alphabet as sheer phonetic elements; "Tuscany" would thus be written ТСКАНИ. However, the more I wrote phonetically in Cyrillic, the more my spelling in English deteriorated; ТСКАНИ . back to English would be written "Tskani".

While seeking a new and simple encoding method, I came across an illustration of the numbered nine-square grid. It occurred to me that each of the nine boxes had a unique configuration, and that with the addition of a numeral, be it "1", "2", or "3", it was possible to have a coded form for each of the 26 letters of the alphabet. I started to use this grid functionally, as a code, without considering any calligraphic aspects.

I periodically edited my writings and transferred them to new notebooks, using the code/calligraphy in whatever state it was at the time, and kept early examples as interesting reminders of how it all began. Most dates below are approximations.

Below is the code when I first formed it, and beneath it a sample of the calligraphy into which it has developed. Following is a series of illustrations showing the gradual evolution from one to the other.
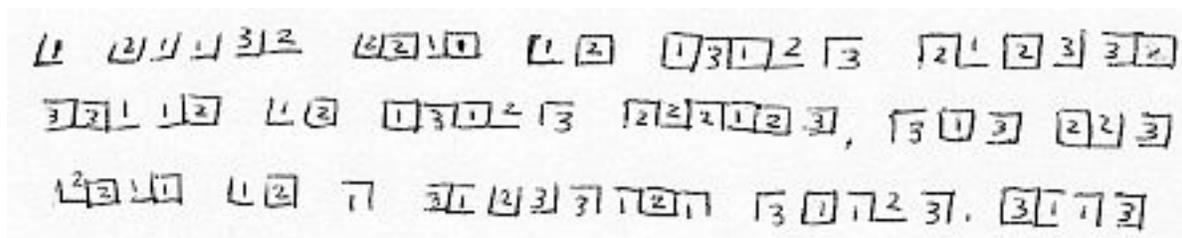
(ABOVE) - 1 - EARLIEST FORM AS CODE

I have since learned that codes that use box lines in various configurations
have a long history, however they stay in their original box format. *(Ca. 1980)*
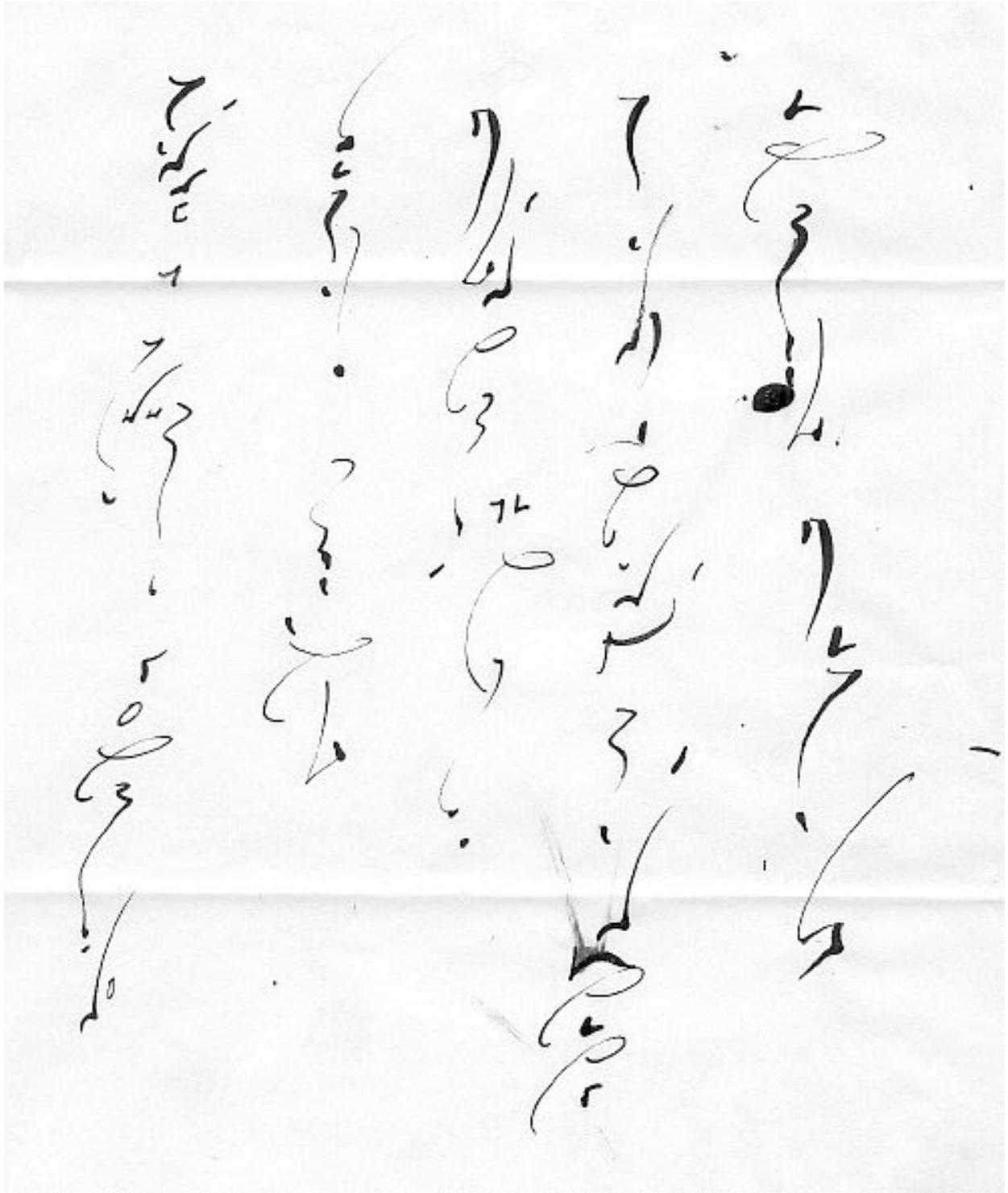
(Above) - 2 - Later Form as code and calligraphy - *(Ca. 2000)*

I occur once in every minute, twice in every moment, yet not once in a thousand years, what am I?
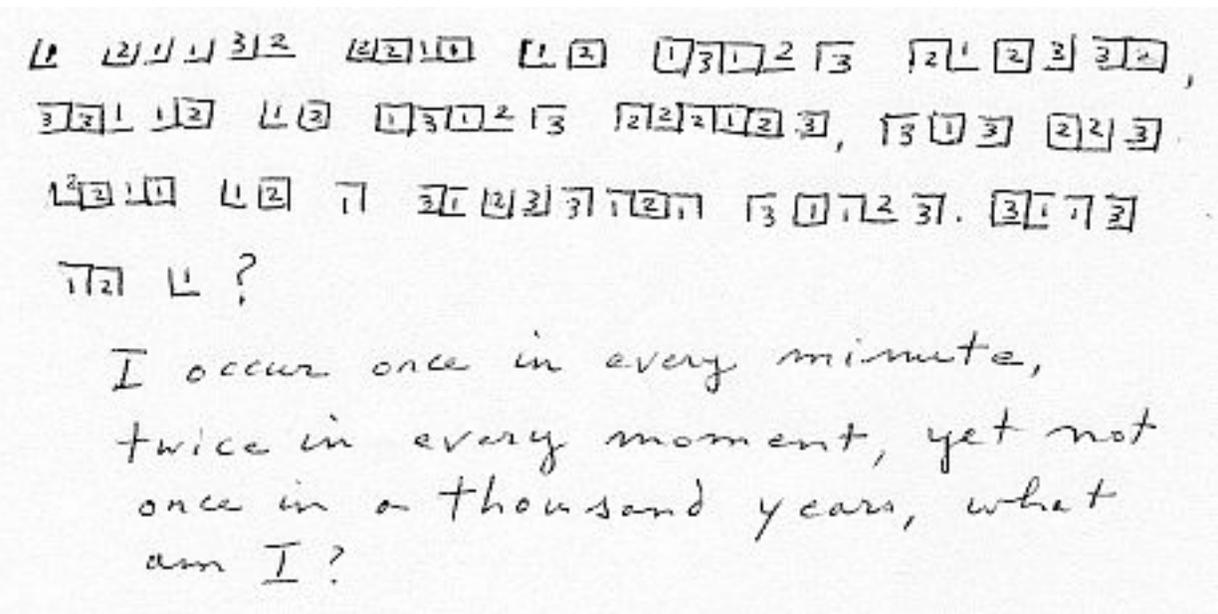
(Above) **- 3 - Earliest Version**
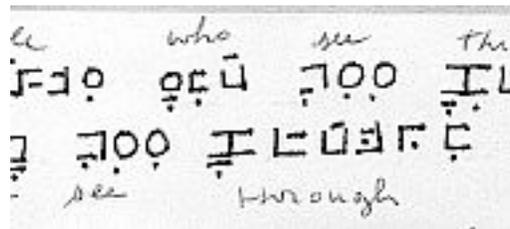Numbers are placed in boxes; use of common walls. *Ca. 1980)*
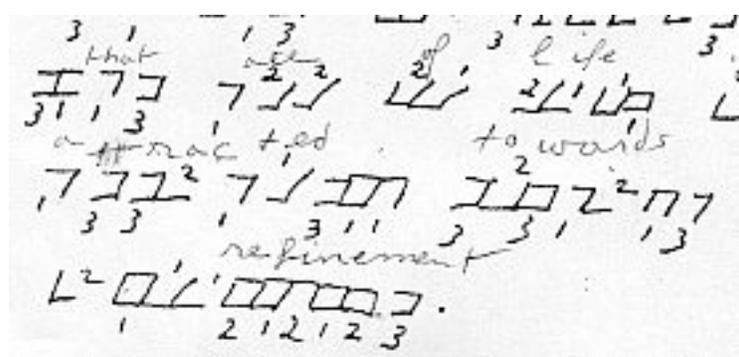
(Above) **- 4 - Numbers appear outside of boxes -**
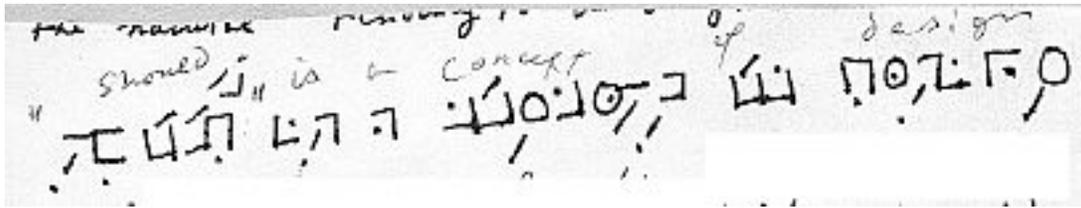There is still an effort to keep to the square form. (*Early 1980s)*
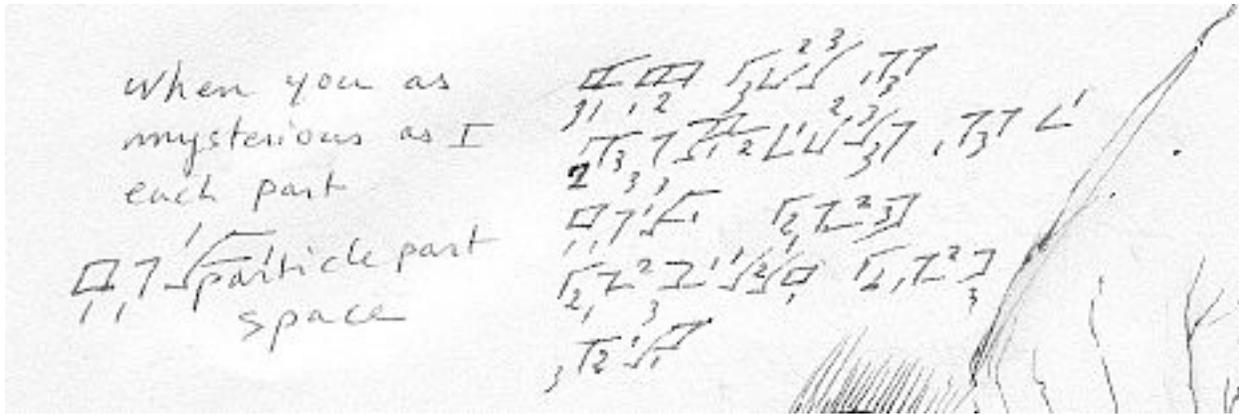
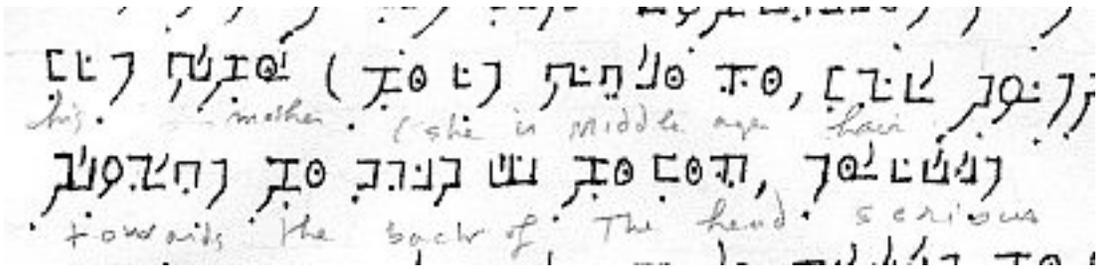*(ABOVE)* **- 5 - LINES LENGTHEN TO INCREASE SPEED OF WRITING.** *(CA. 1983)*
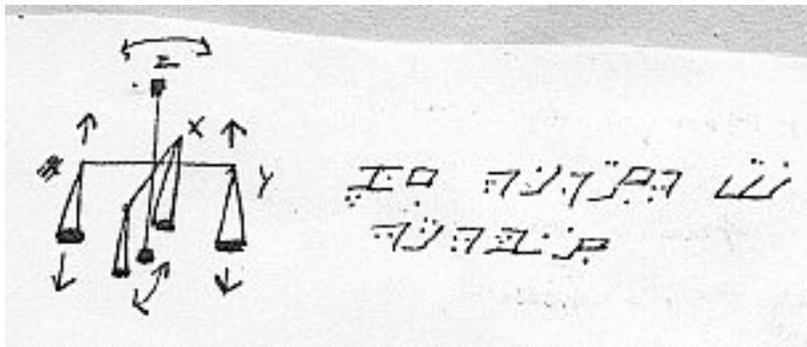
(ABOVE) **- 6 - NUMBERS REPLACED BY NUMBER OF DOTS -** *(BEFORE 1984)*

(ABOVE) **- 7 - TWO DOTS FOR 2ND CYCLE ARE COMBINED INTO A DASH**
Dash with dot represents 3rd cycle. **Box 5** goes from square to circle. *(1984)*

(Above) - 8 - **Dashes become slanted** — *(Ca. 1984)*

(Above) - 9 - **Dashes connect to boxes for 2nd cycle** - *(1985)*
Two dots here now means doubling of a letter instead of a 2nd cycle letter.
(Note the double "d" of the word "middle" in the top line.) This abbreviation was soon discarded.

(Above) — 12 — **Common walls no longer used** - *(Ca. 1987)*

- 13 - Letter sequence stacks more readily with discard of common walls - *(Ca.1987-1988)*
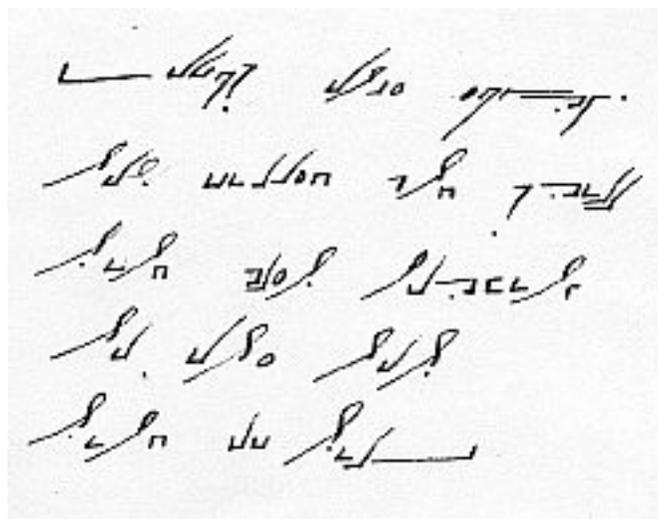
- 14 - Calligraphic element appears -——*(Ca.1989)*

(Above) - **15** - **Calligraphic element becomes deliberate -**
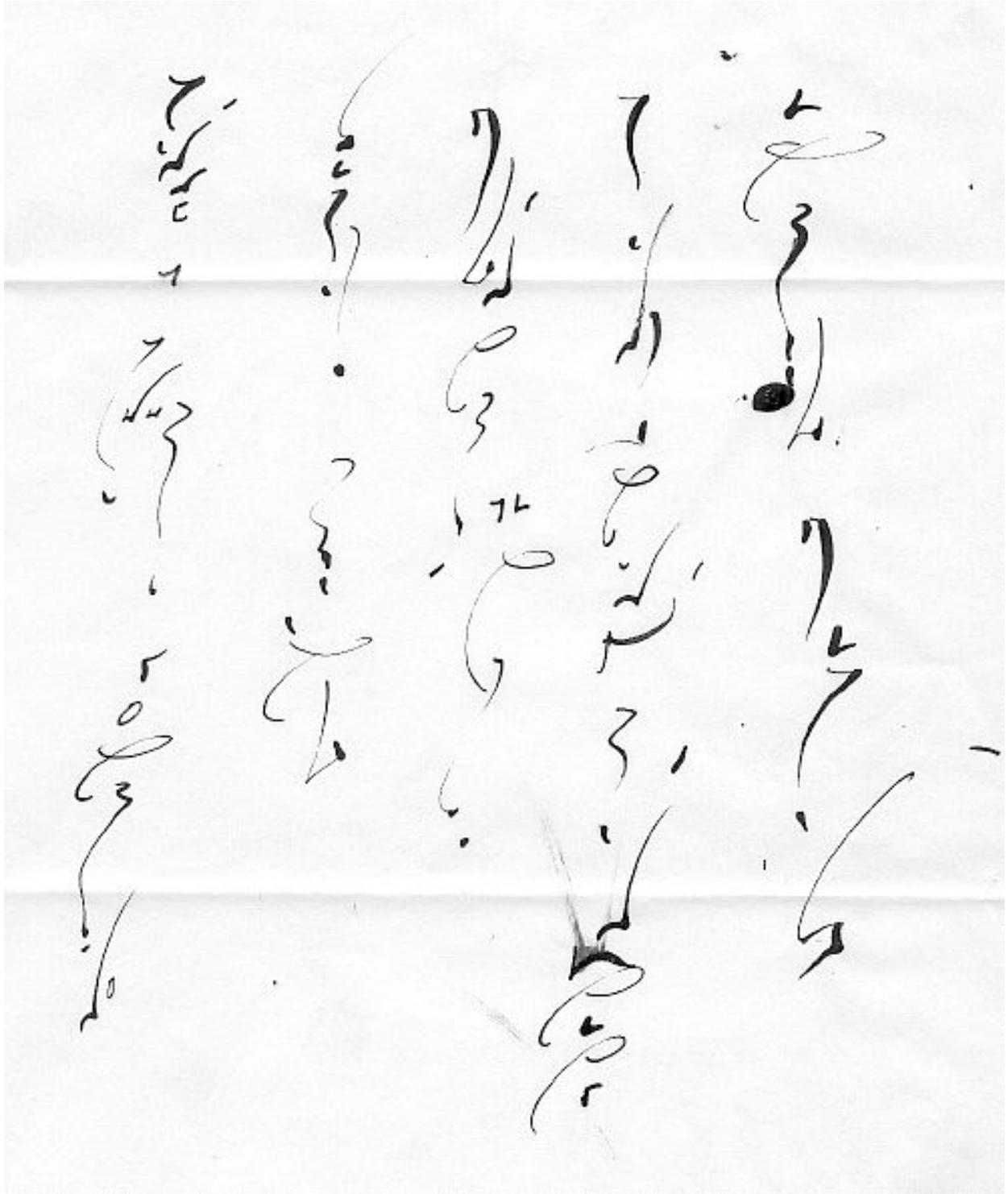*(Ca. 1991)*

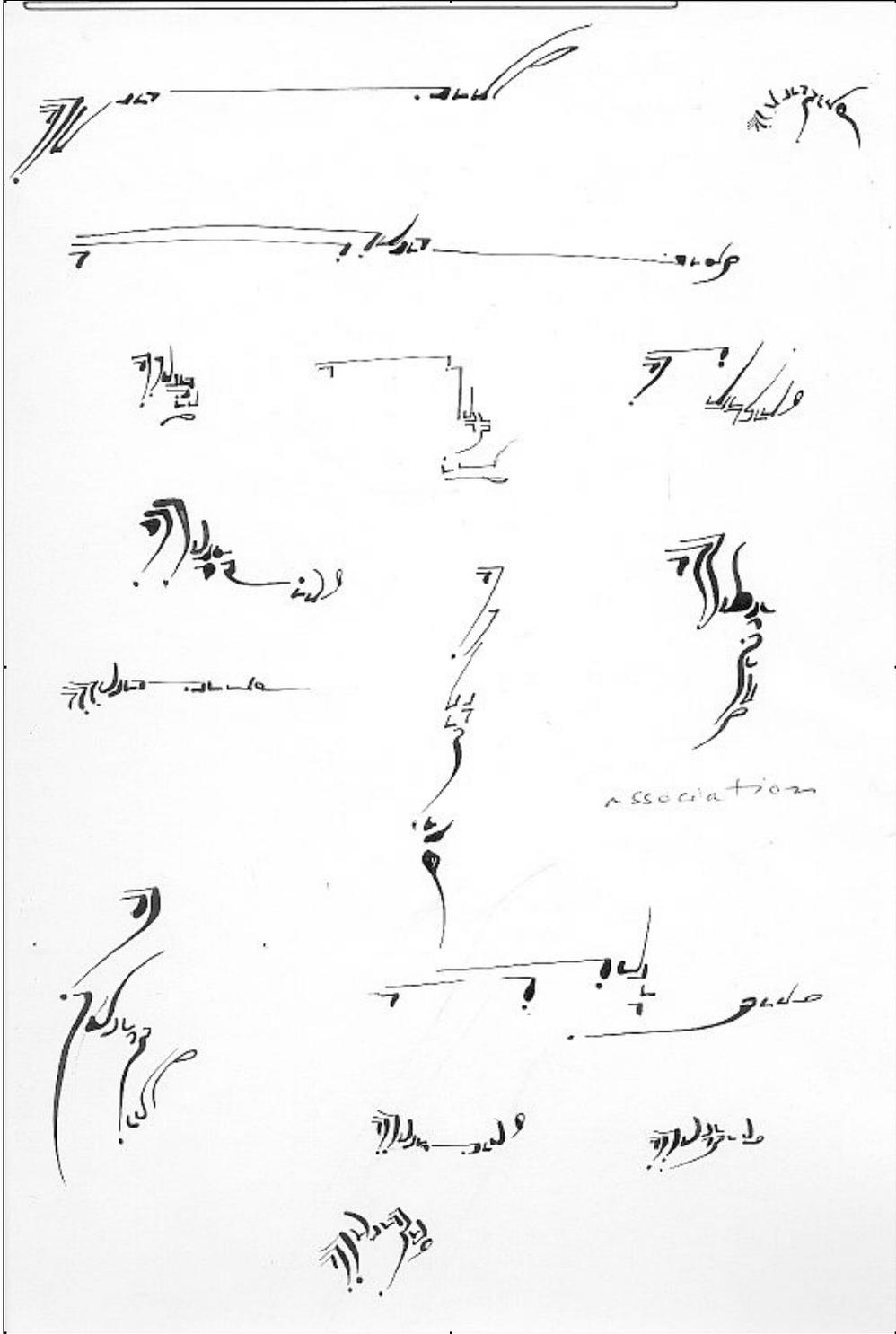**(Above) - 16 - Stacking of letters becomes preferred composition - (Ca. 1993)** —— *Text describes algebraic formulae*
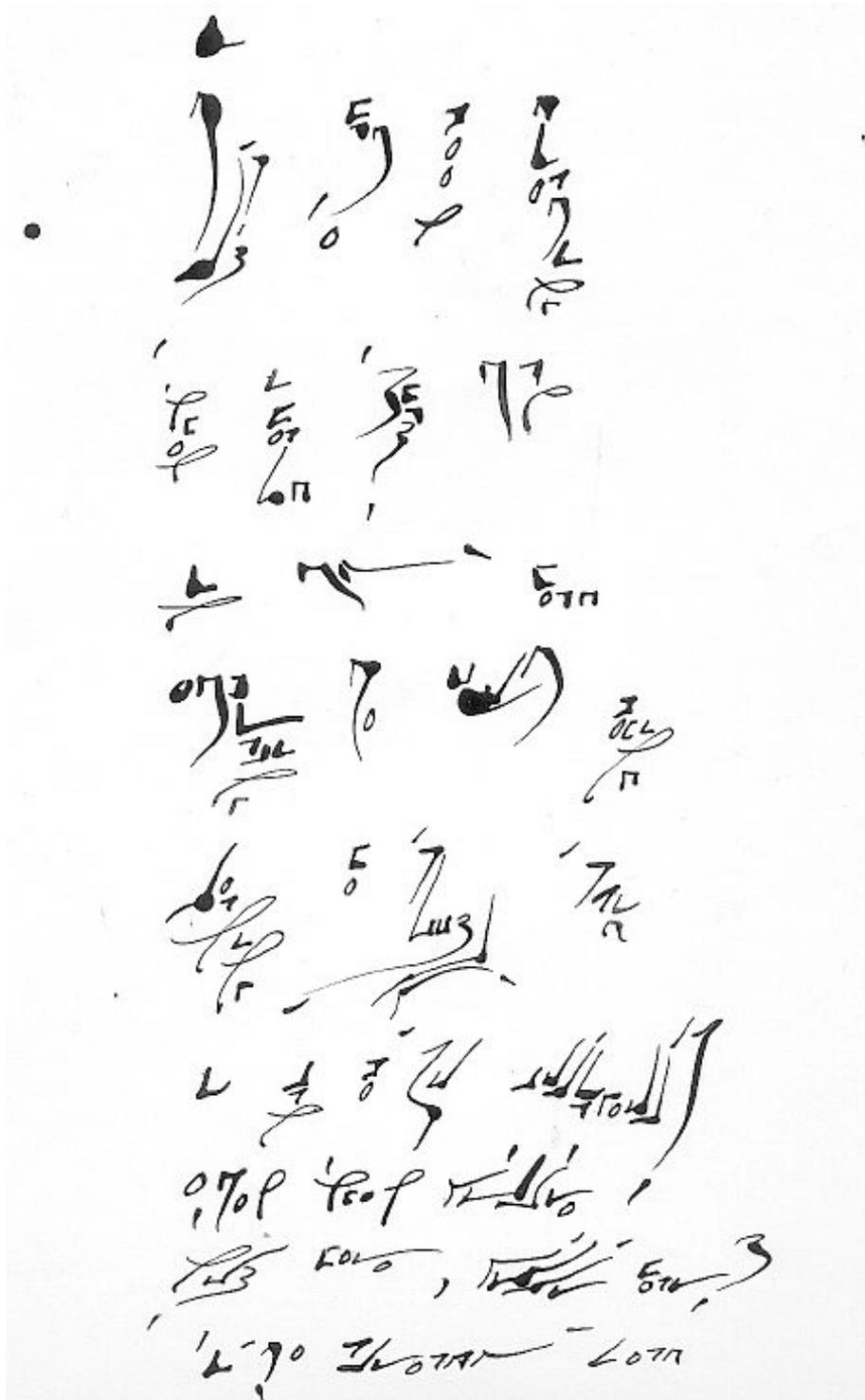
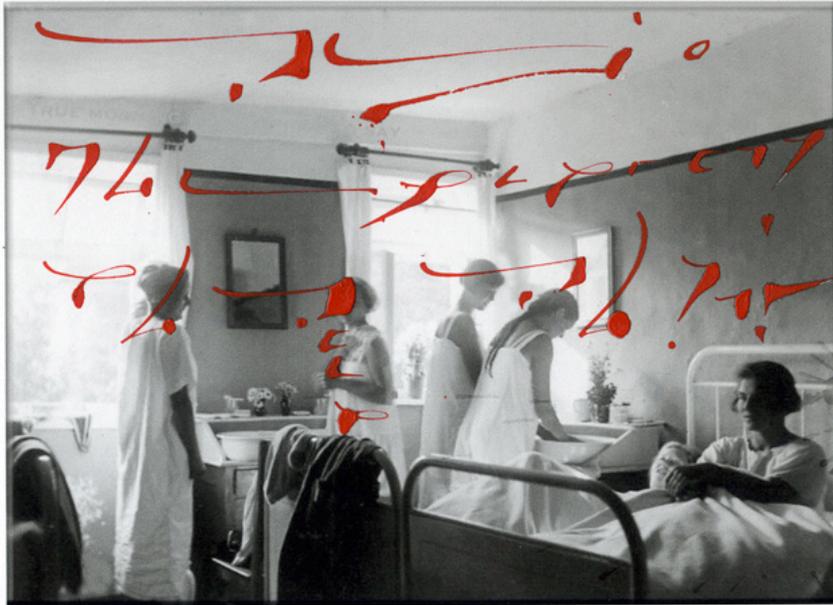*(Above)* - 17 - Stacking, with word direction from left to right - *(Ca. 1994)*
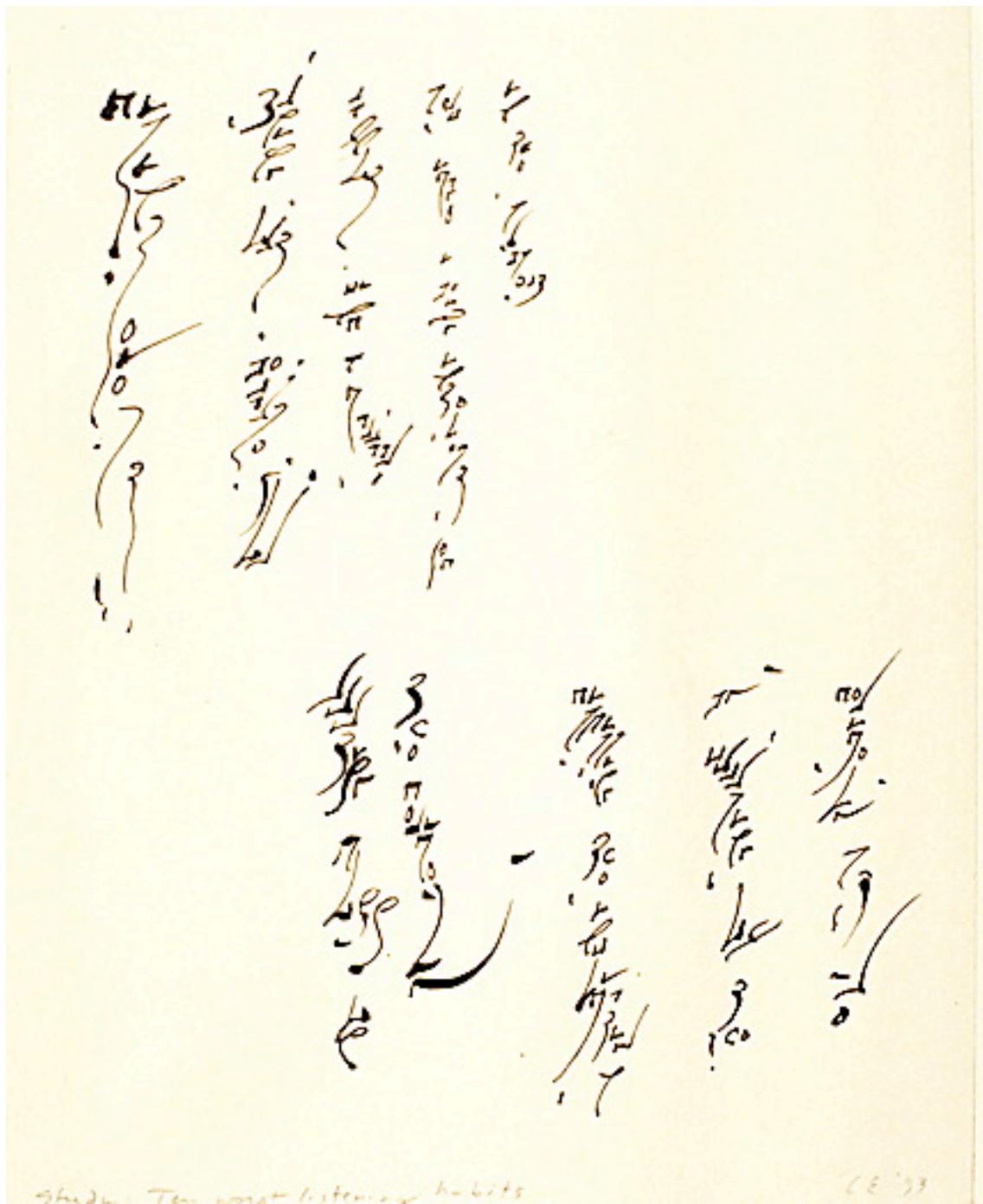
(Above — 18 — Stacking with words moving top to bottom - (Ca. 1993)

(Above) - **19** - **Stacking with words top to bottom** - *(2000)*

(Above) - **20** - **Variations of the word "association"** - *(Ca. 1994)*

Return of the Recycled Relatives Series-
TRUE MORNING, NOTHING TO SAY

Document's End