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Denise Schmandt-Besserat is Professor of Art and Middle Eastern Studies. Her field is the art and archaeology of the ancient Near East. She graduated from the Ecole du Louvre, Paris.

Schmandt-Besserat's present interest is the socioeconomic significance of early symbolism. She conducts research on Neolithic symbols at the site of Ain Ghazal, near Amman, Jordan.

Previously, she has worked on the origin of writing and mathematics. Her publications include [How Writing Came About](#), University of Texas Press 1996; [Before Writing](#) (2 vols), University of Texas Press 1992 and numerous articles in major scholarly journals (among which [Science](#), [Scientific American](#), [Archaeology](#) and [American Journal of Archaeology](#)).

In 1997 and 1995 D. Schmandt-Besserat was a Fellow at the American Center of Oriental Research, Amman, Jordan. She was Visiting Professor at the University of California at Berkeley, 1987; Guest Scholar at the German Archaeological Institute, Berlin, 1987; Fellow at the Institute for Research in the Humanities, The University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1984-85. She served on the governing board of the Archaeological Institute of America 1984-1990; as advisory editor of *Technology and Culture*; *Visible Language* and *Written Communication*.

D. Schmandt-Besserat has received grants from the American Center of Oriental Research; the Near and Middle Eastern Research and Training Act; USIA; the German Academic Exchange Service; The American Council of Learned Societies; The National Endowment for the Humanities, The National Endowment for the Arts; The Radcliffe Institute and the Wenner Gren Foundation.

Schmandt-Besserat has been cited Outstanding Woman in the Humanities by the American Association of University Women. She received the Holloway teaching award; the Eugene Kayden Press Book Award. She is listed in Who's Who in America.

In 1997 she lectured in various institutions including in the US: the Smithsonian, Washington D.C.; in Israel: the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, and Tell Aviv University; in Palestine: the Sakakini Cultural Center, Ramallah; in Saudi Arabia: the Jeddah Science and Technology Center and the Nasseef Cultural Center, Jeddah .

The seminars she recently taught focus on art and communication in Mesopotamia and Persia: "Symbols and the Origins of Writing," "Art of Kings," "Art as Power," and "The Interface between Writing and Art."



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