# Contents

List of Illustrations vii  
Preface xi  

1 The First IT Revolution 1  
2 Cuneiform: Forgotten Legacy of a Forgotten People 13  
3 Egyptian Hieroglyphs and the Quest for Eternity 33  
4 Chinese: A Love of Paperwork 56  
5 Maya Glyphs: Calendars of Kings 79  
6 Linear B: The Clerks of Agamemnon 95  
7 Japanese: Three Scripts are Better than One 113  
8 Cherokee: Sequoyah Reverse-Engineers 133  
9 The Semitic Alphabet: Egypt to Manchuria in 3,400 Years 143  
10 The Empire of Sanskrit 169  
11 King Sejong’s One-Man Renaissance 191  
12 Greek Serendipity 208  
13 The Age of Latin 229  
14 The Alphabet Meets the Machine 249  

Appendix: Figures A.1–A.7 273  
Further Reading 281  
Index 297