

The Greek language and its History

Erasmus+ “Where do I come from; Roots and roads to our common history”
Greek delegation, European Week in VIGO, SPAIN 19/9/2022

History of the language

Greek /Ελληνικά (Elliniká)

is an independent branch of the Indo-European family of languages, native to Greece, Cyprus, southern Albania, and other regions of the Balkans, the Black Sea coast, Asia Minor, and the Eastern Mediterranean.

It has the longest documented history of any Indo-European language, spanning at least 3,400 years of written records.



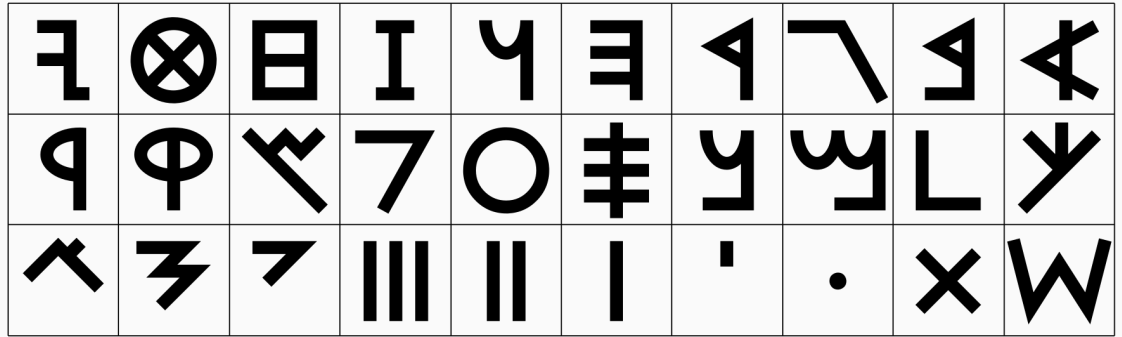
Terracotta tablet with a Greek inscription in Cypriot syllabic script, perhaps a commercial document

About 600-500 BC

Said to be from near Akanthou

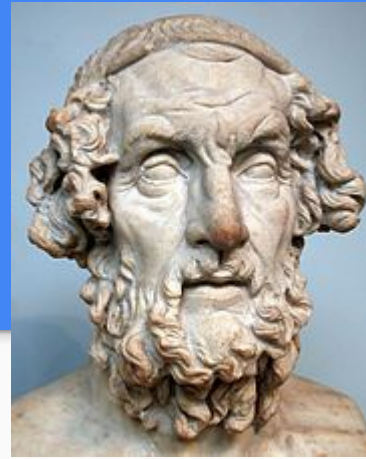
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The alphabet arose from the Phoenician script and was in turn the basis of the Latin, Cyrillic, Armenian, Coptic, Gothic, and many other writing systems.



The Phoenician Alphabet

Importance



Homer

- ❖ The Greek language holds a very important place in the history of the Western world. Beginning with the epics of Homer, ancient Greek literature is very important.
- ❖ Greek is also the language in which many of the foundational texts in science and philosophy were originally composed.
- ❖ The New Testament of the Christian Bible was also originally written in Greek

Continuity

- During antiquity, Greek was by far the most widely spoken language in the Mediterranean world.
- It eventually became the official language of the Byzantine Empire and developed into Medieval Greek.
- In its modern form, Greek is the official language of Greece and Cyprus and one of the 24 official languages of the European Union.

The Greek alphabet

upper case																								
Α	Β	Γ	Δ	Ε	Ζ	Η	Θ	Ι	Κ	Λ	Μ	Ν	Ξ	Ο	Π	Ρ	Σ	Τ	Υ	Φ	Χ	Ψ	Ω	
lower case																								
α	β	γ	δ	ε	ζ	η	θ	ι	κ	λ	μ	ν	ξ	ο	π	ρ	σ	ς	τ	υ	φ	χ	ψ	ω

In classical Greek, as in classical Latin, only upper-case letters existed. The lower-case Greek letters were developed much later by medieval scribes to permit a faster, more convenient cursive writing style with the use of ink and quill.

The Greek alphabet consists of 24 letters, each with an uppercase (majuscule) and lowercase (minuscule) form. The letter sigma has an additional lowercase form (ς) used in the final position of a word:

The speech of Xenophon Zolotas

Xenophon Zolotas was a Greek economist and served as a non-party Prime Minister of Greece. During his speech at the global Bank forum he spoke in English but with greek words like that:

→ Kyrie, It is Zeus' anathema on our epoch for the dynamism of our economies and the heresy of our economic methods and policies that we should agonize the Scylla of numismatic plethora and the Charybdis of economic anaemia. It is not my idiosyncrasy to be ironic or sarcastic, but my diagnosis would be that politicians are rather cryptoplethorists. Although they emphatically stigmatize numismatic plethora, they energize it through their tactics and practices. Our policies have to be based more on economic and less on political criteria. Our gnomon has to be a metron between political, strategic and philanthropic scopes. Political magic has always been anti-economic. In an epoch characterized by monopolies, oligopolies, monophonies, monopolistic antagonism and polymorphous inelasticities, our policies have to be more orthological. But this should not be metamorphosed into plethorophobia

etc.....

And last but not least, a chart that shows the continuity of the Greek language from the antiquity until nowadays

Euboea	Ionia	Athens	Corinth	modern
A	AA	AA	AA	A
B	B	B	Π	B
<<	Γ	Λ	<<	Γ
ΔΔ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
EE	EE	EE	Β	E
F	-	F	F	(F)
I	I	I	I	Z
BH	BH	BH	BH	H
⊗⊕⊙	⊗⊕⊙	⊗⊕⊙	⊗⊕⊙	Θ
I	I	I	I	I
K	K	K	K	K
L	Λ	L	Λ	Λ
ΓM	ΓM	ΓM	ΓM	M
FN	FN	FN	FN	N
X	Ξ	(Xς)	Ξ	Ξ
O	O	O	O	O
ΓΓ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Π
M	-	-	M	(M)
Q	Q	Q	Q	(Q)
P	PD	PR	PR	P
ς	ε	ς	-	ς
T	T	T	T	T
ΓYV	YV	ΓYV	ΓYV	Y
ΦΦ	Φ	ΦΦ	ΦΦ	Φ
ΥV	X	X	X	X
(Φς)	ΥV	(Φς)	ΥV	Ψ
-	Ω	-	-	Ω



Thank you!