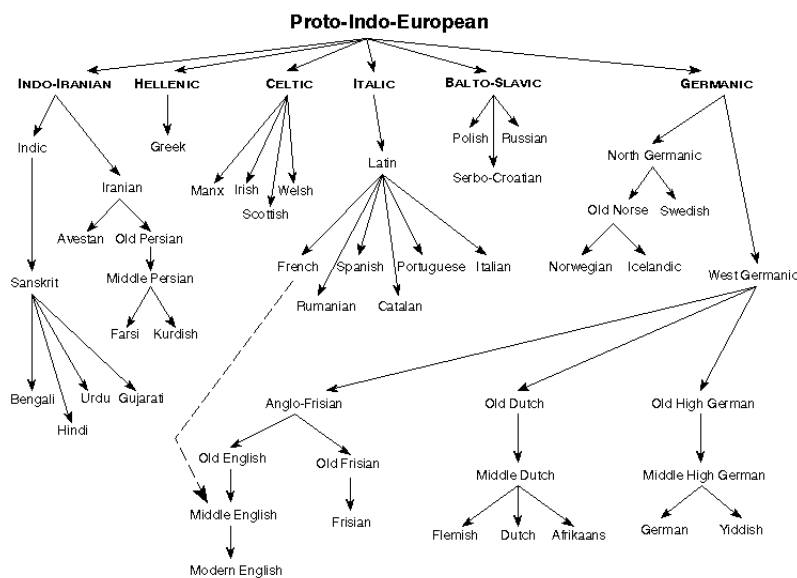


History of the Greek Language

1. Overview

~14th-12 th century BC	Linear B/Mycenaean Greek
early 8 th century BC	adoption of Phoenecian alphabet - earliest evidence for Greek dialects from inscriptions
(~7 th century BC	Homer)
7 th -5 th century BC	Archaic dialects
5th-4th century BC	The Rise of Attic
3 rd -1 st century BC	Koine and the Hellenistic age
~31 BC (defeat of Antony by Augustus)— ~330AD (founding of Constantinople)	Roman Empire
(1 st century AD	New Testament Greek)
4 th century AD-15 th century AD	Byzantine Empire
1453 (sack of Constantinople)-18 th century	Ottoman Empire
~19 th century	Rise of the Greek State
(1880s	Rise of <i>Καθαρεύουσα</i>)
1986	'Demotic' adopted as official language

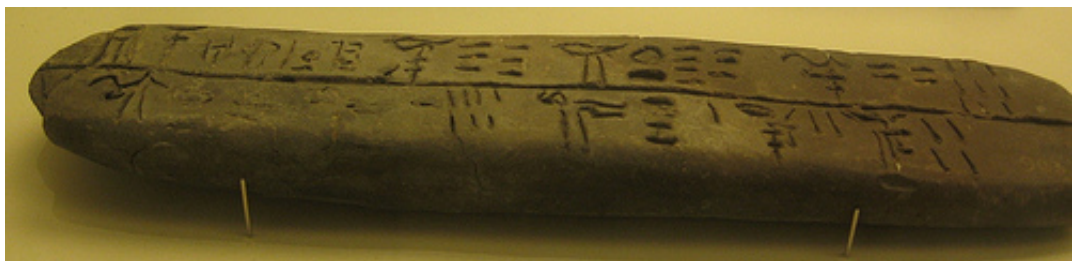
2. Prehistory



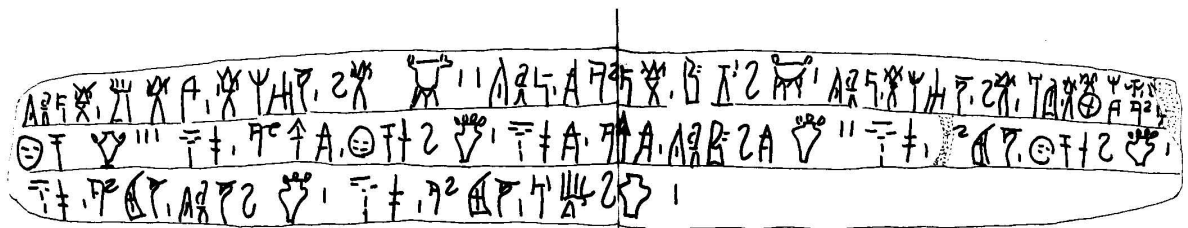
- Greek a descendant of *Proto-Indo-European*, a sister branch to Latin
- *Proto-Greek* the assumed ancestor of all Greek dialects – no direct evidence

3. First evidence - Linear B

- Tablets found in late 19th century: Arthur Evans
- Mycenaean palaces of the third millennium BC
- e.g. Knossos, Mycenae, Pylos
- Deciphered as Greek in 1952 by Ventris and Chadwick
- Clay tablets – ‘accounts’ of the palaces
- Survived by accident – fired in destruction
- Pictographic and syllabic writing system – doesn’t capture phonology of Greek well



wa-to (place-name in Western Crete), a-ko-ra-jo (ἀγορα-ιος = ‘of the collection?’), 60 male sheep, 60 female sheep, 49 male goats, 130 female goats (damaged), 17 pigs, 41 female pigs, 2 male oxen, 4 female oxen (*pers. comm.* JPT Killen)



6 Pylos tablet Ta 641, showing tripod-cauldrons

- PY Ta 722 (Horrocks, 2010, p. 2)

Ta-ra-nu	a-ja-me-no	e-re-pa-te-jo	a-to-ro-qo	i-qo-qe	
<i>thrâ:nus</i>	<i>aia:ménos</i>	<i>elephanteío:i</i>	<i>anthró:kwo:i</i>	<i>híkkwo:i-</i>	<i>kwe</i>
stool (nom)	inlaid (nom)	of-ivory (dat)	man (dat)	horse (dat)-	and

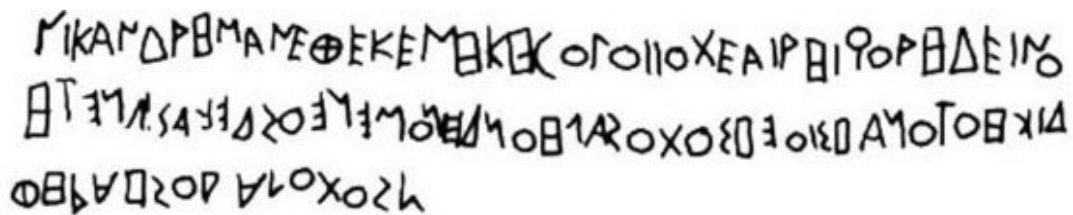
po-ru-po-de-qe		po-ni-ke-qe		FOOTSTOOL 1
<i>polupódei-</i>		<i>kwe</i>	<i>phoiní:kei</i>	<i>kwe</i>
manyfoot, <i>octopus</i> (dat)-		and	griffin (dat)	and

‘One footstool inlaid with a man and a horse and an octopus and a griffin in ivory’

4. Alphabetic writing – dialects of Archaic Greece



Nikandre inscription (Delos, c. 650 BC)



Νικάνδρη	μ'	ἀνέθεκεν	ἐκηβόλοι	ἰοχεαίρηι,	
Nikandre	me	dedicated	to-Far-shooting	Showerer-of-arrows	
φύρη	Δεινοδίκου	το	Ναξίδ,	ἔξσοξος	ἀλήιον
daughter	of-Deinodikes	the	Naxian	exalted	of-other-women
Δεινομένεος	δὲ	κασιγνῆτη	Φηράξου	δ'	ἄλοχος <υυ>
of-Deinomenes	and	sister	of-Phraxos	and	wife now

φ = koppa – alternative form of κ; θ = eta = h ; ⊕ =

standard capital letters: Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω

5. The evidence for Classical texts

- Most from manuscripts – earliest 10th century, more from 14th century onwards
- Some evidence from papyri preserved in Egypt

6. New Testament Greek

Ἀνέβη δὲ καὶ Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἐκ πόλεως Ναζαρέτ εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν εἰς πόλιν Δαυεὶδ ἣτις καλεῖται Βηθλεέμ, διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐξ οἴκου καὶ πατριᾶς Δαυεὶδ, ἀπογράψασθαι σὺν Μαριὰμ τῇ ἐμνηστευμένῃ αὐτῷ, οὓση ἐνκύω...

Καὶ ποιμένες ἦσαν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ τῇ αὐτῇ ἀγραυλοῦντες καὶ φυλάσσοντες φυλακὰς τῆς νυκτὸς ἐπὶ τὴν ποίμνην αὐτῶν. καὶ ἄγγελος Κυρίου ἐπέστη αὐτοῖς καὶ δόξα Κυρίου περιέλαμψεν αὐτούς, καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν·

7. Greek in the Roman Empire

- Widely spoken in Eastern Empire
- Many bilingual texts survive eg *Res Gestae* discovered in Turkey
- *Monumentum Ancyranum* the best preserved: Latin + Greek
- Latin only at Antioch, Greek version also found at Apollonia
- Clear influence from Latin to Greek and vice versa

8. Modern Greek

- Essentially two languages for centuries – spoken (demotic) and written (katharevousa) = Atticising
- Only in 1982 was ‘demotic’ Greek allowed to be used as the official language
- Many ancient features remain, pronunciation obscures the similarities (*pers.comm.* I Sitaridou).

-Τί θέλεις, ἄνθρωπε;

-Θέλω τὴν ψήφο σου.

-Γιατί;

-Διότι δὲν κρύβω τὴν ἀλήθεια.

9. Romyka

- Villagers in modern-day Turkey speak a variety of Greek, known as Pontic or Romyka
- Ancient features like infinitive have survived here much longer

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Romyka: <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/features/against-all-odds-archaic-greek-in-a-modern-world/>

Recent BBC programme on Linear B: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01jz1cb>

