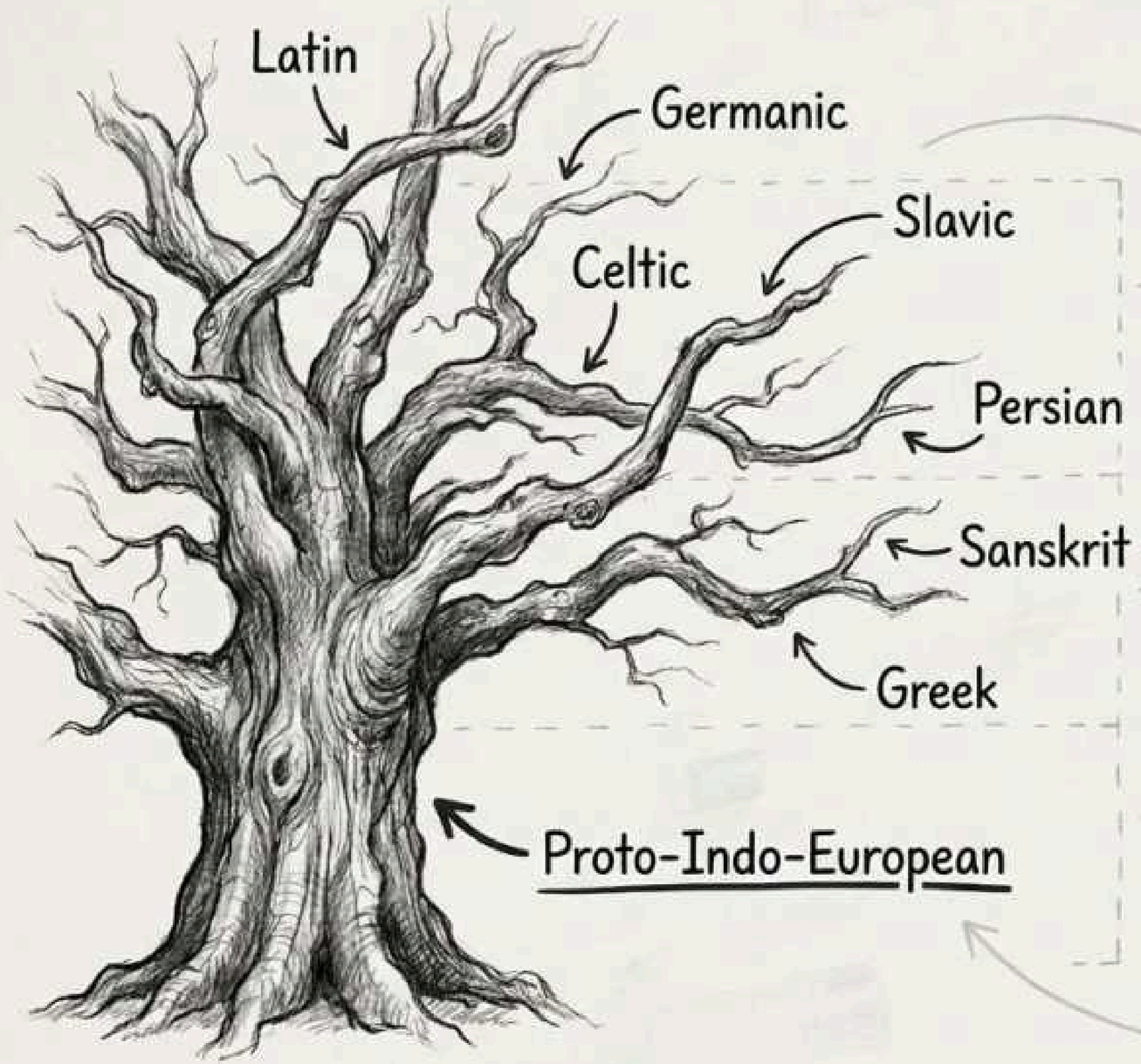
¶ 1.1



The Indo-European Family

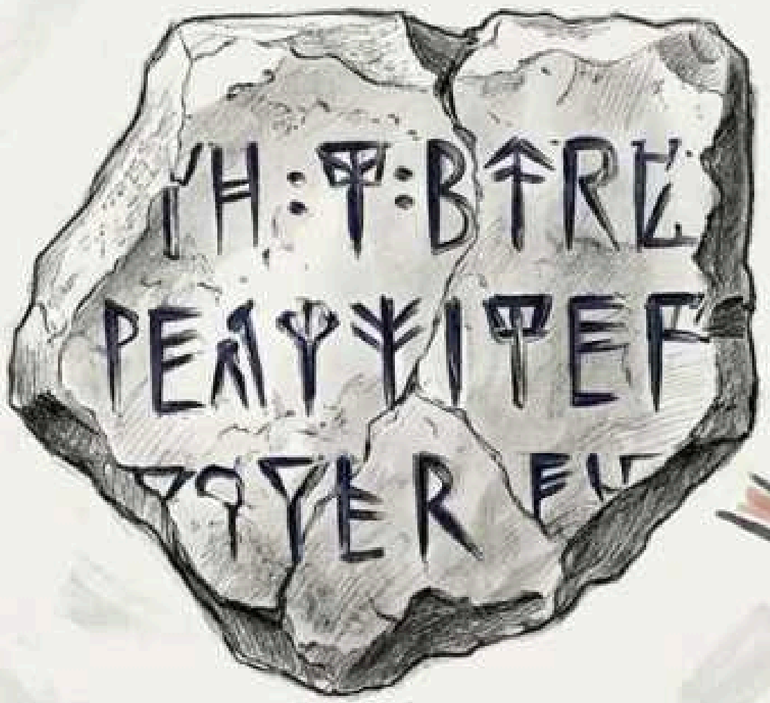
pater ≈ pater ≈ father
(Greek) (Latin) (English)

- Spoken without a break for >3,000 years.
- Features the longest written span of almost any living language.

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Mycenaean Greek & Linear B

¶ 1.2



1



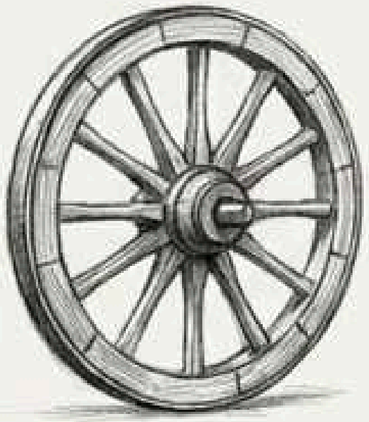
Grain

2



Sheep

3



Chariot

- Date: ~1400 BC.
- Usage: Palace inventories — not poetry or laws.
- The Decipherment (1952): Architect Michael Ventris + Classicist John Chadwick.
- Impact: Pushed the history of the readable language back several centuries at a stroke.

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The Alphabet Revolution

¶ 1.3

Σ Phoenician Script (Consonants Only)

\+ Unused Signs (Repurposed as Vowels)

= The First True Alphabet (Consonants + Vowels in full)

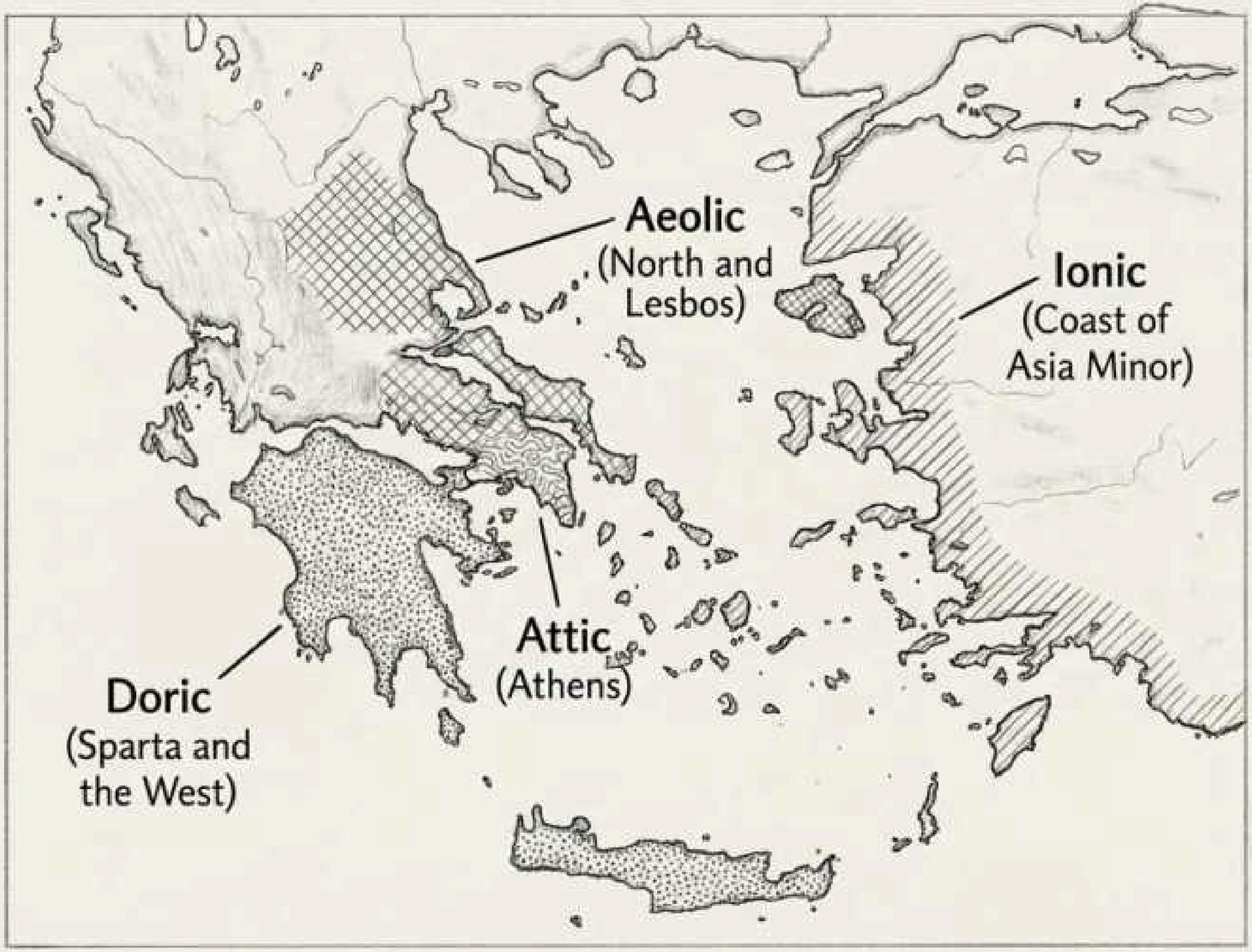


Timeline: Emerged in the 8th century BC after a centuries-long dark age of lost literacy.

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A Tapestry of Dialects

¶ 1.4



Core Concept:

Ancient Greek was never a single spoken form.

Homer's Epics (8th/7th c. BC):

The Iliad and Odyssey use a mixed literary dialect (mainly Ionic).

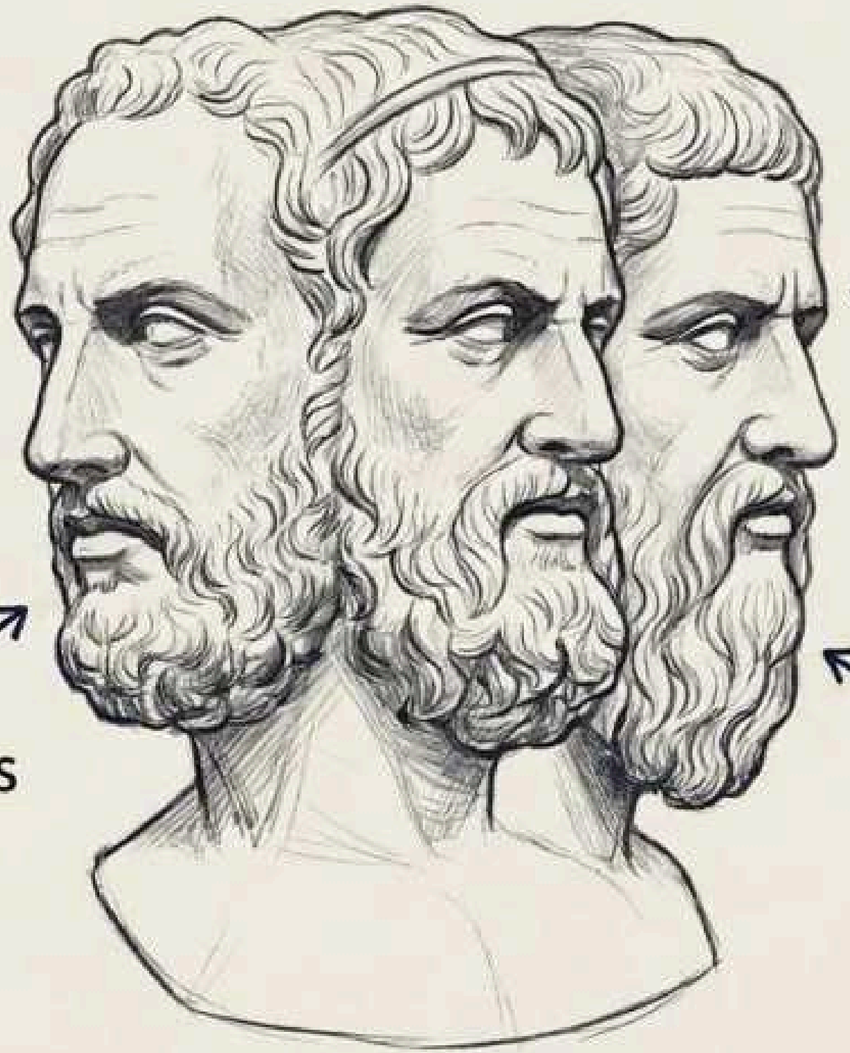
Rule of Thumb:

Homeric Greek ≠ Attic Greek (even when sharing vocabulary)

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The Classical Standard: Attic Greek

¶ 1.5



Sophocles
(Drama)

Plato
(Philosophy)

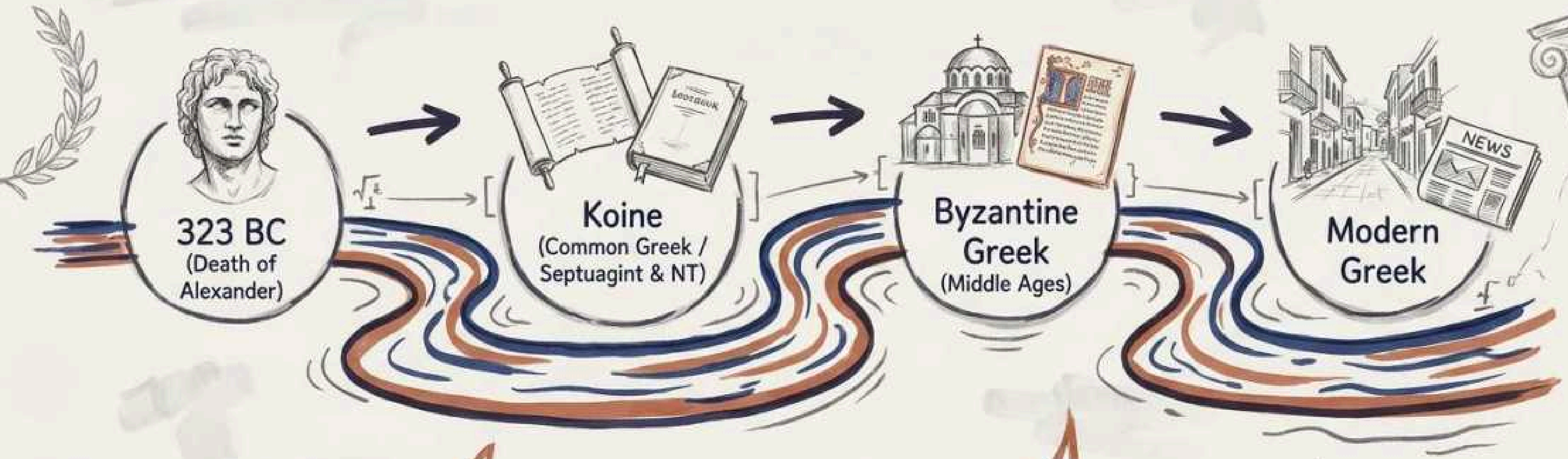
Thucydides
(History)

- **Era:** 5th & 4th centuries BC.
- **Why Attic?** It is the classical standard taught in most university courses.
- Mastering it first provides the foundational forms a beginner will meet most often.

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Three Millennia of Continuous Speech

¶ 1.6

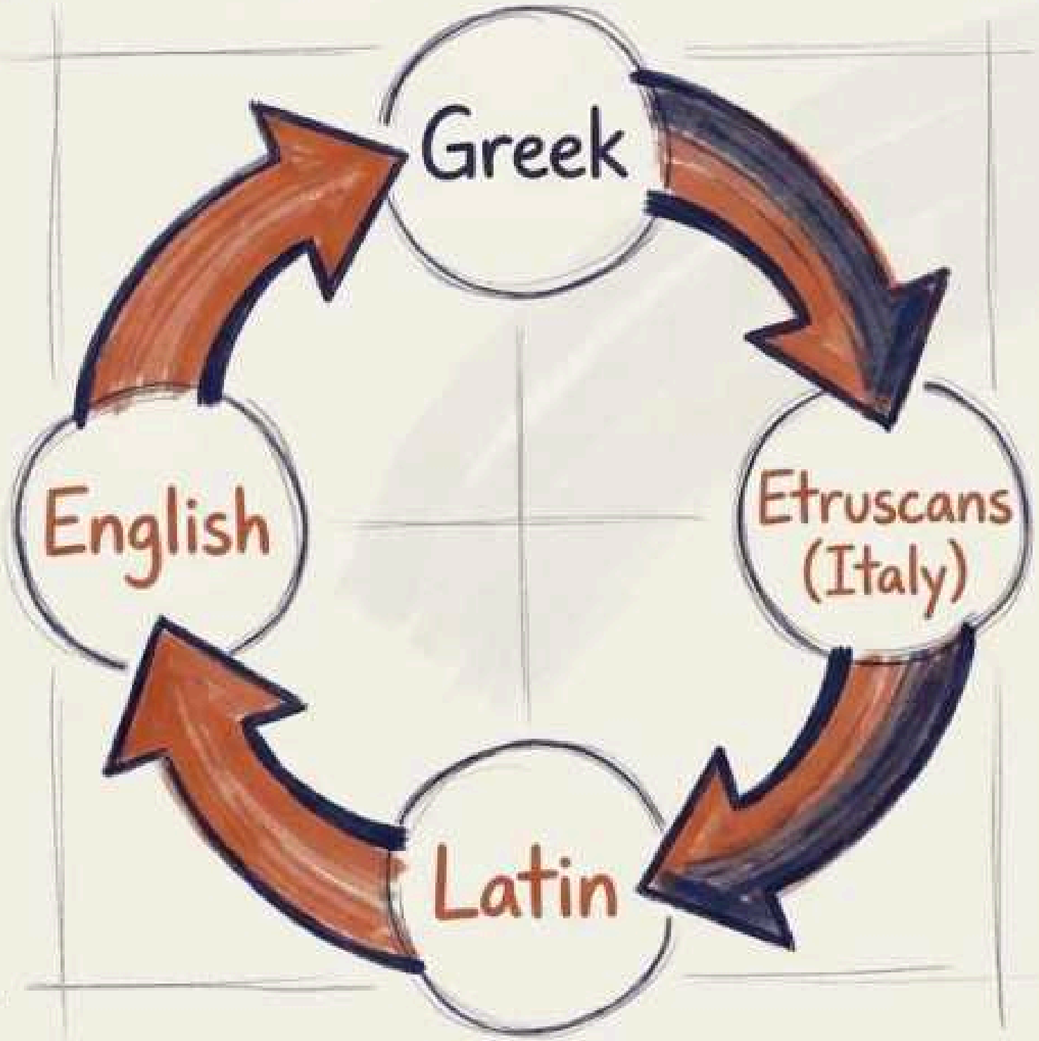


Insight: The language shifted and changed, but it never broke off and started again.

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Recognizing Cousins You Already Know

¶ 1.7



Alpha + Beta = Alphabet

Alpha to Omega = The beginning and the end

The Task: You aren't inventing a new script; you are just adding the handful of letters that English never borrowed.

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The First Eight

¶ 1.8

Α / α (Alpha, a)	Β / β (Beta, b)
Γ / γ (Gamma, g as in go)	Δ / δ (Delta, d)
Ε / ε (Epsilon, short e)	Ζ / ζ (Zeta, zd → z)
Η / η (Eta, long ē)	Θ / θ (Theta, aspirated t → th of thin)

Goal: The goal is not speed, but a steady link between shape, name, and sound.

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The Middle Eight

¶ 1.9

Ι / ι (Iota, i)	Κ / κ (Kappa, k)
Λ / λ (Lambda, l)	Μ / μ (Mu, m)
Ν / ν (Nu, n)	Ξ / ξ (Xi, x sounded as ks)
Ο / ο (Omicron, short/little o)	Π / π (Pi, p)

→ Transliteration Note: Kappa is strictly k (though English turns it to c, as in cosmos).

→ Efficiency Note: Ξ (Xi) is a single letter, making words like praxis noticeably shorter in Greek.

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The Final Eight

¶1.10

Ρ / ρ (Rho, r)	Σ / σ / ς (Sigma, s – special final form ς)
Τ / τ (Tau, t)	Υ / υ (Upsilon, u or y)
Φ / φ (Phi, ph)	Χ / χ (Chi, ch as in Scottish loch)
Ψ / ψ (Psi, ps)	Ω / ω (Omega, long/big ō)

Φ, Χ, and Ψ are single letters. Once mastered, words like philosophia and psychē stop looking crowded on the page.

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Vowel Mechanics

¶ 1.11

Lengths:
- Always Short: ε, ο
- Always Long: η, ω
- Variable: α, ι, υ

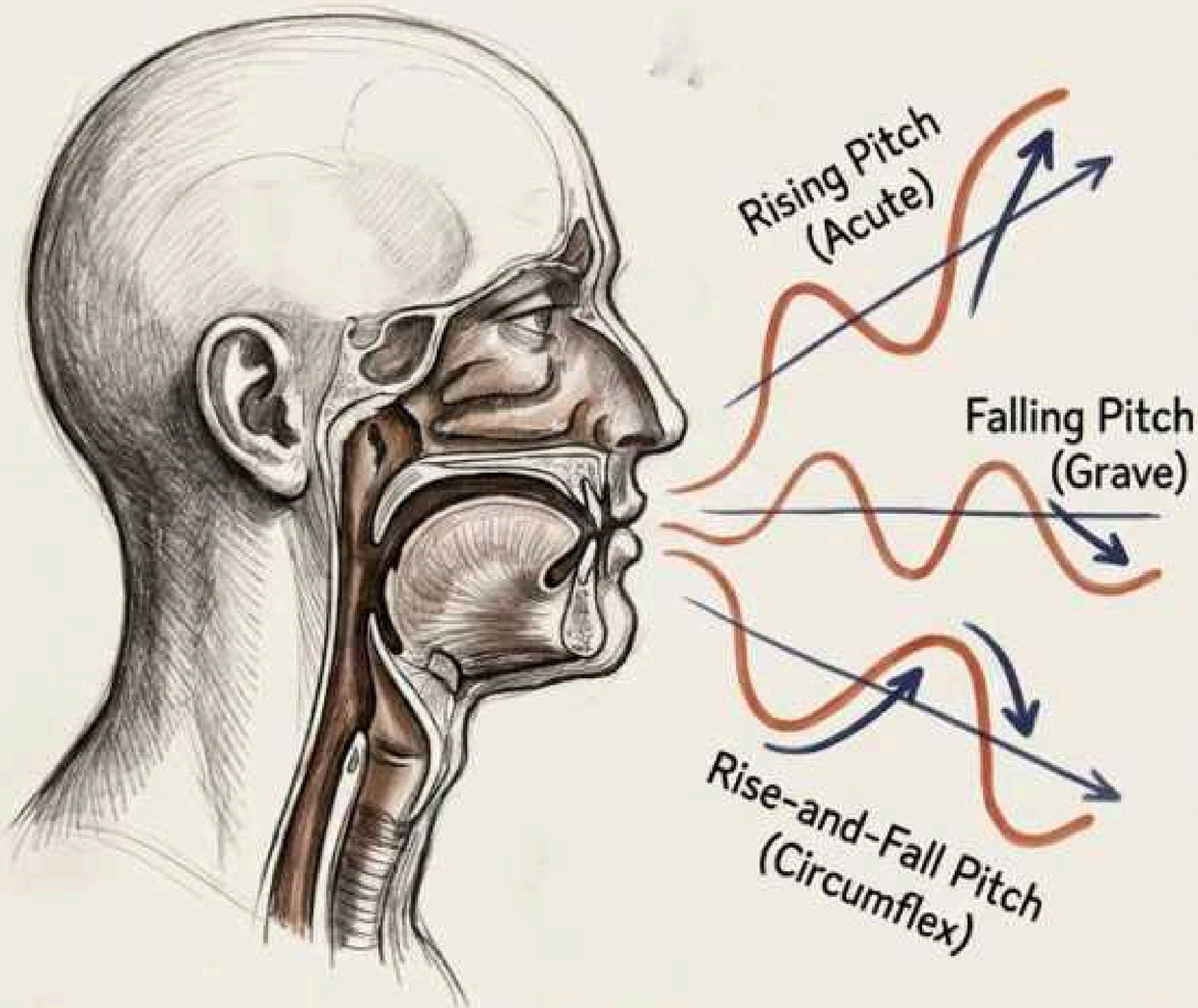
- α + ι = eye
- ε + ι = say
- ο + ι = boy
- ο + υ = food
- α + υ = cow

Iota Subscript: Long vowels can carry a small iota underneath (ᾠ, ῃ), read as ōi or ēi (e.g., dative logōi). Distinction matters for both meaning and metre.

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Breathings & Musical Accents

¶ 1.12



Breathings (on starting vowels):

- Rough (‘) = h sound (e.g., ho / the)
- Smooth (’) = no h (e.g., en / in)

Accents:

- Acute, Grave, Circumflex.
- Added ~200 BC in Alexandria by scholars.
- History vs Practice: Originally recorded musical pitch, not stress. Today, their most practical use for beginners is telling identically spelled words apart.

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Pronunciation, Metre, & Structure

¶ 1.13

Scholarly Pronunciation: Stresses the accented syllable, substituting for lost ancient pitch.

Structural Rule: Greek words must end in a vowel, **ν**, **ρ**, or **ς** (minor exceptions: ek, ouk).

English Roots:
logos (logic)
theos (theology)
anthrōpos (anthropology)
kosmos (cosmic)



Metre Insight: The dactylic hexameter (Homer's line) is music built on long/short syllables. Learning vowel length now unlocks that rhythm later.

(–UU|–UU|–UU|–UU|–UU|– –)

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The Path Forward: Daily Drill

¶ 1.14



Action Plan: Short daily drills beat long single sittings.

Exercise: Spell your name and Greek-derived English words. Listen for the long vowels.

The Milestone: Most students can read the alphabet comfortably in one week. Reach this ease before grammar thickens.

Note on Modern Greek: It is the living heir, but scholarly sounds are a teaching convention used here to explicitly separate η/ι and ω/ο.

Up Next: Letters to Nouns (and their jobs in a sentence).

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