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# The Alphabet: Phoenician or Greek Invention?

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## Abstract

The origins of the alphabet have long been a subject of scholarly debate, with two principal contenders: the Phoenicians and the Greeks. The prevailing consensus holds that the Phoenicians provided a consonantal script that the Greeks adapted and expanded with vowels. However, a re-examination of numerical, phonetic, and cosmological evidence—particularly the correlation between the one-digit sums of the letter-values of the Greek names of the seven celestial bodies with their rank/order from the sun being first (1st)—suggests that the Greek alphabet represents an **indigenous system** of symbolic and phonetic coherence rather than a mere adaptation. The study argues that the Greek alphabet reflects an autonomous development grounded in earlier Minoan 25 alphabetiform symbols (Fig. 1) and Linear B vowels (Fig. 5) and the individualization of the Linear B syllabes into consonants + vowels, (Fig. 7).

**Keywords:** Linear B, Palamedes, Greek alphanumeric system, Phoenician abjad, cosmological order, vowel symbolism.

## 1. The Generation and Succession of Five Greek Vowels in Linear B (ca. 1450 BC)

The Minoans in artifacts named kernoi and Mycenaeans (and other prehistoric) peoples sought stability in the endless flow of time by dividing it into lunar months and, more

specifically, into the **five phases of the moon**. The pre-historic Minoans/Myceneans used these phases to correspond symbolically the **five Greek vowels**; each derived from the acronym of the word describing the corresponding phase of the moon, in Greek.

1. *Αρχή* (Beginning, rising of the moon) → A
2. *Ολοκλήρωση* (Fulfilment, waxing) → O
3. *Ύμέναιος* (Fullness, marriage of light) → Y
4. *Ελάττωση* (Decline, waning) → E
5. *Ιαύει* (The moon rests/dies, disappearance) → I

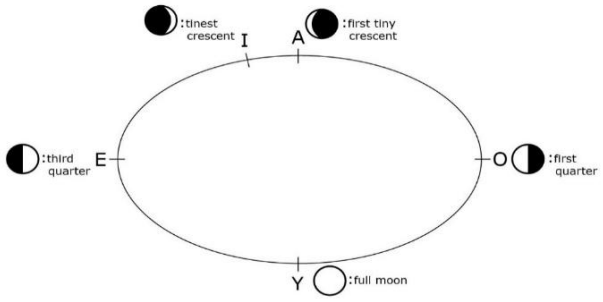



Figure 1. The five phases of the moon clockwise.

These vowels may thus be understood as an **acronymic sequence** encoding lunar periodicity and renewal, a pattern that arguably reflects the symbolic logic of Linear B inscriptions, 1450-1200 BC, deciphered by Ventris & Chadwick (1953).

The ancient historian Herodotus (5th ce BC) and contemporary scientists Carpenter (1935), Powell (1991) et als., claimed that the Greeks borrowed five consonants from the Phoenicians—*ʾālep*, *hē*, *yōd*, *ʿayin*, and *wau*—, and transformed them into the five Greek vowels A, E, I, O, Y - in the Latin order of vowels - plus digamma F. Letter F is left without any justification. Yet, as the Linear B evidence suggests Ventris & Chadwick (1953), these vowels were already in use in the second millennium BC, 1450-1200 BC. Thus, the hypothesis of an eighth century "borrowing" appears historically and conceptually ambiguous and problematic. The Phoenicists in order to keep their theory alive introduced – 3.200 years later, Procrustean method - the argument that the above vowels were not vowels but syllabes (syllabogrammata !), from which the first consonant was not written! The question is: which consonant of the 12 of the Linear B syllabes, pairs with the above phonientikous phthoggous (φωνηεντικούς φθόγγους)? is it the same or changes according to the kind of vowel? No answer whatsoever.

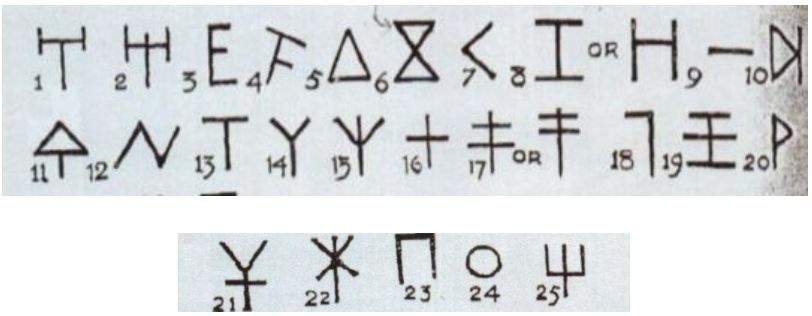


Figure 2**.** The 25 alphabetiform symbols of unknown phonetic values, discovered by Sir Arthur Evans (published in 1930) in the Minoan Palace, remain a subject of scholarly investigation. Letters $_{3}$E, $_{4}$F, $_{5}\Delta$, $_{8}$I, $_{8}$H, $_{12}$N, $_{13}$T, $_{14}$Y, reversed $_{18}\Gamma$, $_{19}\Xi$, $_{20}$Pω, $_{23}\Pi$, $_{24}$O, $_{25}\Psi$ are the same as in classical (403 BC) and modern Greek script!

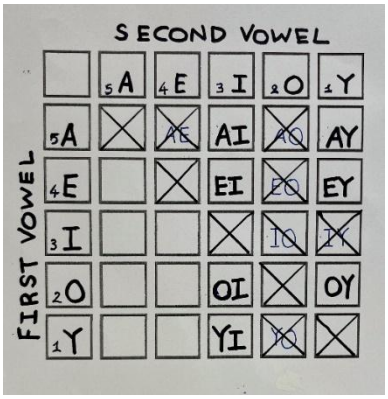
## 1.1 A Compositional Principle: The Matrix of Diphthongs

If the sequence of the initial Greek vowels adhered to a unified creative principle—A, O, Y (= U), E, I—then the diphthongs in the Linear B could have arisen through an **arithmetical or combinatory pairing** of these five vowels, as illustrated in a five-by-five matrix (see Fig. 3b). Within this grid, each permissible combination yields one of the canonical diphthongs (AY, AI, OI, EI, YI, EY, OY), while non-existent or phonotactically implausible pairings occupy the vacant cells. Such a schematic distribution implies that the formation of diphthongs was not arbitrary, - as in Fig. 2a - , and have not produced from the Latin sequence A, E, I, O, Y, but followed a **systematic and intentional framework**, reflecting a deeper linguistic and conceptual logic within the script.

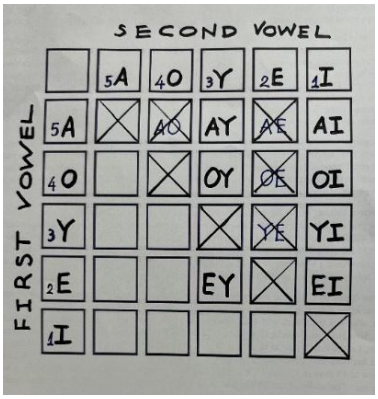
The resulting arrangement, shown schematically in Figure 2b, presents the possible vowel pairings in a five-by-five matrix. Each pairing of these diphthongs is generated by combining one letter from the vertical series (A, O, Y, E) with either the third (Ὑψιλον) or fifth (Ιώτα) position only, in the horizontal sequence, producing a pattern that resembles a formal rule. Each attested diphthong occupies a cell generated by the ordered intersection of two vowels, while empty or barred cells mark unattested combinations. This pattern thus reveals a consistent structural principle linking phonetic articulation with a formal sense of combinatorial balance.

## 1.2 Interpretation of the Greek Diphthongs

Beyond their phonetic function, the **Greek diphthongs** appear to encode a symbolic or metaphorical dimension consistent with the broader cosmological and anthropological imagination of early Greek thought. If the five vowels—A, O, Y, E, I—represent successive **phases of the lunar cycle**, they may also be read as stages in the **human life cycle**: *A* signifying **genesis or infancy** (0–2 years), *O* **youth and growth** (2–20), *Y* **maturity and union** (20–50), *E* **decline and aging** (50–80), and *I* **completion or disappearance/death** (80+). Within this scheme, the **diphthongs ending in I** (AI, OI, YI, EI) can be interpreted as linguistic reflections of the natural law that **mortality operates at every stage of life**—that from any phase of the life, the passage to the final "I" (disappearance/death) is possible.




a




b

Figure 3. Combinatory matrix of Greek vowels generating the canonical diphthongs (AY, AI, OI, EI, YI, EY, OY), as in 3b. The arrangement illustrates how the seven attested diphthongs of the linear B may derive from systematic pairings within a five-vowel sequence (A, O, Y, E, I), reflecting a potential conceptual order underlying early Greek phonology. If the arrangement of vowels had been (A,E,I,O,Y), the pairing of the above diphthongs would not have generated a systematic pairing, as in 3a.

Among these diphthongs, the exceptional one **EY** occupies a singular position. Unlike the I-final combinations in four diphthongs, **EY** expresses not termination/death but **reversal/renewal**: a symbolic return from *E* (aging) to *Y* (maturity) age. This inversion, rare in both sound and sense, corresponds to a *hyperphysical* principle—renewal, restoration, or transcendence of the ordinary temporal order. The persistence of this association in language is remarkable: Greek compounds beginning with **EY-** (approximately 300 attested forms) consistently convey a **super positive or beneficent quality** in the second element—e.g. *εὐ-τυχία* ("good fortune"), *εὐ-αγγέλιον* ("good message, gospel"), *εὐ-φημία* ("good repute") etc. The diphthong thus functions not only as a phonetic unit but as a **semantic emblem(*) of auspicious**

(*) For symbolic associations between vowels and cosmic or biological cycles, cf. Plato, **Cratylus** 393a–d; Aristides Quintilianus, **De musica** I.7; Nicomachus of Gerasa, **Manual of Harmonics**, ed. Jan, pp. 16–18.)

**transformation**, encapsulating the Greek intuition that sound, form, and meaning of every Greek letter (e.g., Fig. 8) partakes in the same ordered harmony of nature and spirit.

## 2. The Evolution of the Greek Alphabet and Its Cosmic Order

Ancient testimony attributes the invention of the alphabet to **Palamedes**, who, according to Pliny (1st ce. BC) and Stageiritis (1815), devised sixteen letters out of the twenty-four of the Greek alphabet during the Trojan War(**). Stageiritis (1815) referred to a) the shape of the first Ypsilon, as V, - letter finally formed as probably and the other twenty three - and b) the order of the following sixteen letters: Α, Γ, Δ, Ε, Η, Ι, Λ, Μ, Ν, Ο, Ρ, Σ, Τ, Υ, Φ, Ω. This tradition, though mythological(***), preserves the notion of **systematic creation** rather than random adoption. The alphabet's structure, when examined through its numerical assignments (Α=1, Γ=3, Δ=4, Ε=5, …, Ω=800), reveals a consistent arithmetic progression - an **organizing principle,** Petrie (1912) - that unites phonetic, mathematical, and cosmological order. The first 27-letter system was needed to facilitate trade and warehousing for the thalassocrats Minoans at least

from 1900 BC, and later Myceneans, Fig. 5. The 16 letter-values and their positions in the Greek alphabet have been produced by the solution of the (pseudo)system of unknown letter-values accepting the correlation between the one digit sum of the letter-values of the names of the Greek names of the seven near celestial bodies with their rank/order from the sun, Sun~1, etc., Fig. 4. For example:

(**) The date of the Trojan War has been estimated by archaeologist Blegen to be in the late 13th century BC. Hellanikos of Lesvos dated its commencement to 1229 BC. Papamarinopoulos, Preka, and others placed it between 1227 and 1218 BC. Their datings were based on the *Iliad*—specifically, the death of Patroclus (Π 786-792)—and on the *Odyssey*, referencing Theoklumenos' prophecy (υ 350-357). Both events are documented to have coincided with a solar eclipse.

(***) In this broader context, myth itself may preserve coded reflections of astronomical and calendrical knowledge. For example, the myth of the chariot race of 990 stadia (99 × 10) between Pelops and Hippodamia on the one hand, and her father Oenomaus on the other — from Olympia to the temple of Poseidon at Corinth — has been decoded by the author as symbolizing the transition from the lunar calendar (Oenomaus) to the eight-year (or 99-month) lunisolar cycle (Pelops representing the Sun and Hippodamia the Moon, in the same chariot). If one mythological event can thus be demonstrated through consistent mathematical and astronomical reasoning, does it remain merely mythological, or are we obliged to recognize in it the memory of a real, measurable event? According to Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.9.2 (ed. Frazer), Atalanta challenged all suitors to a deadly footrace, trusting her unmatched speed. Melanion, aided by Aphrodite's three golden apples (the three lunar months bridging the duration of 99 lunar months – 1920.5 days - with three solar years – 1920 days; the myth hides a lunisolar calendar), slowed her with cunning distractions by throwing the three golden apples. Using this stratagem, he outran Atalanta, won the contest, and claimed her hand thereafter.

| Name | The Dorian names of celestial bodies and the one-digit sum | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| Sun | Α+Ε+Λ+Ι+Ο+Σ= 1+5+30+10+70+200=316, 3+1+6=10, 1+0=1 | 1 |
| Hermes | Ε+Ρ+Μ+Η+Σ=5+100+40+8+200=353, 3+5+3=11, 1+1=2 | 2 |
| Venus | Α+Φ+Ρ+Ο+Δ+Ι+Τ+Η=1+500+100+70+4+10+300+8=993, 21 | 3 |
| Earth | Γ+Α= 3+1=4 | 4 |
| March | Α+Ρ+Ε+Ε+Σ=1+100+5+5+200=311, 3+1+1=5 | 5 |
| Jupiter | Δ+Ε+Υ+Σ=4+5+400+200=609, 6+0+9=15, 1+5=6 | 6 |
| Saturnus | Φ+Α+Ι+Ν+Ω+Ν=500+1+10+50+800+50=1411, 1+4+1+1=7 | 7 |

Figure 4. The solution of the above correlation.

## 2.1 The documented order of the sixteen letters in the alphabet

A occupies the 1st position, and equals 1 (A = 1);
B=2;
Γ is the third (Γ = 3);
Δ is the fourth (Δ = 4);
E is the fifth (E = 5);

F=6; Z=7;
H is eight (H=8);
Θ=9;
I is the tenth (I = 10);
K=20;
Λ is the twelfth (Λ = 30);
M is the thirteenth (M=40);
N is the fourteenth (N=50);
Ξ=60;
O is the sixteenth (O=70); Π=80; Q=90;
Pho is the nineteenth (P = 100);
Σ is the twentieth (Σ = 200);
T is the twenty first (T = 300);
Y is the twenty second (Y=400);
Φ is the twenty third (Φ=500);
X=600; Ψ=700;
Ω is the twenty sixth (Ω = 800); and finally, the letter sampi **(ϡ)** is the 27th.

Figure 5. The 27 alphanumerical numbers and 16 Greek letters, as Plinius B (1st ce CE), and Stageiritis (1815) have written. The author has documented order them.

## 3. The Limitations of the Phoenician System

Modern scholarship generally acknowledges that the Greek alphabet emerged from contact with the **Phoenician consonantal script** in the late ninth or early eighth century BC. Yet the precise nature of that transmission remains debated and not based on convincing arguments. The **Phoenician abjad**, designed for a Semitic language with stable two or three consonantal roots and predictable (?), by the reader, vocalic patterns, provided no means of notating vowels independently. Its efficiency lay precisely in its economy: a limited inventory of signs sufficed to represent lexical consonantal skeletons, with readers supplying the vocalic content contextually. The Phoenician script, being a consonantal abjad, inherently produced semantic ambiguity: the same written sequence could represent several distinct meanings depending on unwritten vowel sounds. For instance, the triliteral root **q-t-l** may be read as *qatala* ("he killed") or *qutila* ("he was killed"), demonstrating that without vocalic notation, grammatical and semantic distinctions remained uncertain and context-dependent, Powell (1996).

The supporters of the Phoenician origin of the Greek alphabet argued that the Phoenician structural principle, however, proved ill-suited to the **phonological character of Greek**, whose morphology and syntax depend on vocalic alternations for inflection and meaning. The adoption of the Phoenician signs without modification would therefore have produced ambiguity and phonetic distortion. The Phoenicists argued that the decisive Greek innovation lay in **reinterpreting** certain Phoenician consonant symbols—particularly those representing sounds absent in Greek (such as ʾālep, hē, ʿayin, yōd, wau)—as **vowels**. Even in this act of reinterpretation, the Greeks did not merely borrow a script but transformed its logic.

In this case, the resulting Greek alphabet thus reflects a **conceptual shift**: writing was no longer an economical shorthand for consonantal sequences but a full phonographic

system capable of capturing the entire syllabic spectrum of speech. By assigning phonetic value to vowels, the Greeks created the first script in which every spoken syllable could, in principle, be rendered graphically without loss. This development aligns with what we have seen in the Linear B syllabary, Hooker (1980) —an earlier awareness of vowel identity, Fig. 6—and suggests a cultural continuity in the treatment of phonological completeness of the Greek script.

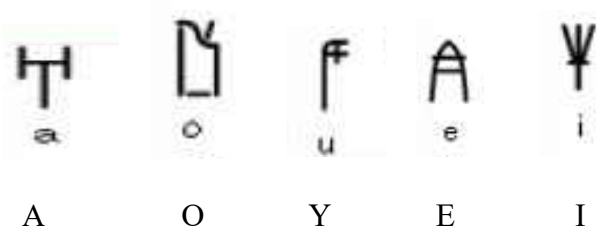
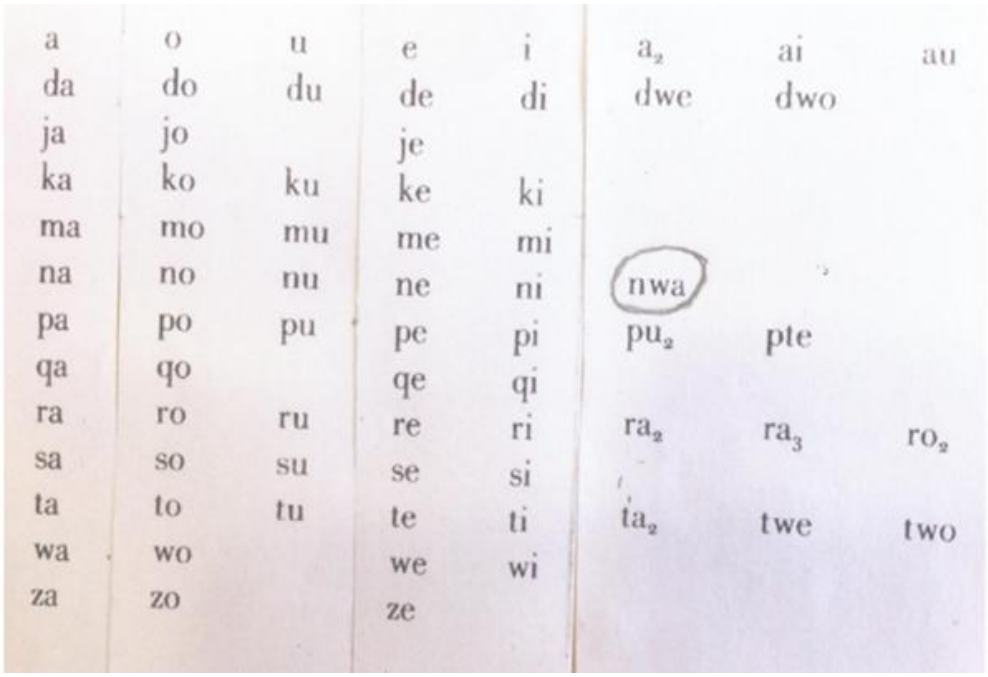



Figure 6. The vowels A, O, Y, E, and I of Linear B, 1450–1200 BC, derive from the five phases of the moon, rather than from the five Phoenician consonants proposed to a date around 1000 BC. The Linear B is 400 years older.

From a comparative standpoint, the Phoenician abjad exhibits **structural limitation** rather than deficiency: it was perfectly adapted to its linguistic environment but inherently resistant to transposition into a language whose morphology relied on vocalic differentiation. The Greek invention, therefore, represents not an act of imitation but a process of **intellectual translation**—the reconfiguration of a writing system to reflect a different conception of language. In this sense, the alphabetic reform embodies a philosophical principle as much as a linguistic one: the aspiration to make sound, form, and meaning **coextensive and transparent**, see Greek letter delta (Δ) below, Fig. 8. If that holds for the 24 letters of the Greek alphabet, then according to Sir Petrie (1912), the Greek alphabet will be the only phonetic alphabet.

Later Greek authors were fully aware of this achievement. Herodotus (5$^{th}$ ce. BC) attributes the letters to the Phoenicians but immediately notes that the Greeks "changed their shapes and sounds," implying a conscious process of transformation. The Phoenicist Powell (1996) rejected Herodotus's account, because Powell dated the arrival of Kadmos in Thebes to around 1600 BCE. The Greek Academian Mylonas (1959), drawing on the succession of the Theban kings, placed this event between 1450 and 1400 BCE. Both scholars, however, dismissed the possibility of a Greek or Phoenician alphabets transferred in Thebes at such an early date.



| a | o | u | e | i | $a_2$ | ai | au |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| da | do | du | de | di | dwe | dwo | |
| ja | jo | | je | | | | |
| ka | ko | ku | ke | ki | | | |
| ma | mo | mu | me | mi | | | |
| na | no | nu | ne | ni | nwa | | |
| pa | po | pu | pe | pi | $pu_2$ | pte | |
| qa | qo | | qe | qi | | | |
| ra | ro | ru | re | ri | $ra_2$ | $ra_3$ | $ro_2$ |
| sa | so | su | se | si | | | |
| ta | to | tu | te | ti | $ta_2$ | twe | two |
| wa | wo | | we | wi | | | |
| za | zo | | ze | | | | |

Figure 7. The second and third columns of Linear B syllabes have been reorganized to align the sequence of the five vowels with the unified organizing principle outlined above, which corresponds to the five phases of the moon, A, O, Y, E, I, as documented by the author.

## 3.1 Popular and linguistic etymology

The knowers of the Greek language have a question to make to the Phoenicists. How, according to the ancient Greek tradition, an eight days newborn boy was named by his father Agenor, Kadmos, meaning the one coming from the east, as linguists interpreted according to the Phoenician tri-consonantal q-d-m. Did his father know, that after 20-25 years, his son will go to Thebes, Greece, for searching for his sister Europe? Certainly no. Therefore, the Phoenicists' argument about the meaning of the name Kadmos is obsolete. At that time, people understood the meanings of words based on their resemblance to one or two familiar ideas/meanings or on how they sounded, not through any historical or comparative method. Linguistics, as a discipline, did not exist 3,500 years ago. Therefore, it is logical to interpret through popular etymology the names of the Kadmos family: Agenor, Telephassa, Kadmos, Phoenix, Thassos, Europe but in Greek:

Let's try the popular etymology of the Kadmos family:

ΑΓ-ΗΝΩΡ < ΑΓ-ΑΝ=very + ΗΝΩΡ= man, very strong mam, Il. Π, 801. The nominative and genitive of the word mam in Greek is ΑΝΗΡ, ΑΝΔΡΟΣ or ΑΝΕΡΟΣ or ΑΝΗΡΟΣ, Chantraine, P., 1968-1980, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (s.v. ἀνήρ= man): put down the genitives *ἀνδρός*, *ἀνέρος*, *ἀνήρος*.

ΤΗΛΕ-ΦΑΣΣΑ < η από ΤΗΛΕ= μακριά + ΦΑΣΣΩ= βλέπω, Apollodorus, 3.1.1.

ΚΑ-ΔΜΟΣ< ΚΑ-ΤΩ=χαμηλός/ short + ΔΟΜΟΣ (στη γραμμική Β προφέρεται ΔΜΟΣ)= in stature. Thus, Kadmos probably was a) short in stature and b) his family lived during the linear B period.

ΦΟΙΝΙΞ< someone having a reddish skin color.

ΘΑΣΣΟΣ< from the comparative adjective quick, quicker, quickest, ΤΑΧΥΣ, ΘΑΤΤΩΝ ή ΘΑΣΣΩΝ, ΤΑΧΙΣΤΟΣ. He gave his name to the Greek island of Thassos, northern Aegean Sea.

ΕΥΡ-ΩΠΗ < ΕΥΡ- = wide, big + ΩΠΗ=phase or eyes.

## 4. From Phonetic System to Cosmological Symbol: The Greek Alphabet as Harmony

The Greek alphabet, as it emerges from the interplay of phonetic necessity and intellectual invention exhibits an order that transcends the purely linguistic. From an early stage, its sequence and numerical correspondences suggest the operation of an organizing principle, Sir Petrie (1912) - a concern for symmetry, proportion, and correlation between sound, number, and cosmic order. Such correlations, whether historical or retrospective, illustrate the Greek tendency to treat linguistic form as a reflection of cosmos.

Ancient testimony frequently ascribes the creation or reform of the alphabet to Palamedes, the semi-legendary inventor of letters during the Trojan War. Pliny the Elder (1st ce. BC) and later great scholar such as Stageiritis (1815) attribute to him the introduction of sixteen letters, out of twenty-four, see above. This attribution, though mythological(**) in tone, preserves a cultural memory of alphabetic **systematization** rather than mere invention or both. Palamedes, in this context, represents not only the historical discoverer of phonetic signs but the archetype of rational design, the intellect that perceives order where others see accident.

In numerical terms, the **Greek alphanumeric system** (first standardized as twenty-seven letters, including the twenty six from the enrichment of the vowels and individualized consonants of the Linear B, and the last letter *sampi* ϡ=900) manifests a coherent arithmetic progression, where each letter generated from the Linear B phonemes (five vowels + Heta and Omega; plus, twelve individualized consonants enriched to eighteen + F + sampi ϡ) holds a fixed numeric value of the sixteen above letters, from 1 to 900, Fig. 5. The alphabet thus became a symbolic instrument: a means of encoding both speech and number, integrating practical computation with metaphysical speculation.

Within this framework, the correlation between the **one-digit sums** of letter-values in the Greek names of the seven celestial bodies with their order from the Sun to Saturn, i.e., Helios~1, Hermes~2, Aphrodite ~3, Ga~4, Ares~5, Zeus~6, Kronos~7) offers a striking example. Whether regarded as a product of deliberate design or of later numerological reflection, which is rather impossible, the coherence of these correspondences exemplifies the Greek conviction that language, mathematics, and cosmology are interwoven domains of the same rational structure.

In order to confirm the validity of the solution derived from the Greek alphanumeric system, attention is directed to the final one-digit sum associated with the satellite of the fourth celestial body—namely **ΓΑ -**, corresponding to the **ΣΕΛΗΝΗ** (“Moon”). Within the framework of the Greek alphanumeric (isopsephic) tradition, each letter

carries a numerical value, and their one-digit summation of the letters of their names yields a characteristic arithmetical signature, i.e. its rank from the sun. Accordingly, **Σ+Ε+Λ+Η+Ν+Η**=? or from which the one digit-sum **3 + 0 + 1 = 4** is derived. Thus, the resultant value of **ΣΕΛΗΝΗ** reduces to **4**, thereby reconfirming the internal coherence and consistency of the entire system.

**Σ (200) + Ε (5) + Λ (30) + Η (8) + Ν (50) + Η (8) = 301**,

From a structural perspective, the progression from Linear B's twelve consonants (D, J, K, M, N, P, Q, R, S, T, W, Z) + F, and five vowels (A, O, Y, E, I) to the later twenty-four-letter alphabet may be seen not as an expansion driven by external (Phoenician) influence but as the **completion of an internally coherent system**. The addition of new symbols, particularly the long vowels *η/H* and *ω/Ω*—refined phonetic precision while preserving arithmetic regularity. The exclusion of digamma (F, due to the existence of Phi, Φ, in Greek), koppa (Ϙ, Q due to K, kappa), and sampi (Ϡ pronounced TS or SS due to the Greek ΤΣ or ΣΣ) from the practical alphabet reflects a conscious effort to reconcile phonetic utility with numerical order.

This integration of phonetic, mathematical, and cosmic principles aligns with the intellectual climate of the late Bronze period. The alphabet did not merely record speech; it expressed a **philosophy of form** in which the parts of language mirrored the structure of reality. A probable example is the form of letter Δ easily for everyone to understand. If this characteristic applies to all Greek alphabetic letters (it would be the subject for another article)—namely, a discernible interrelation among shape, sound, and meaning—then the Greek alphabet may be regarded as the only truly phonetic alphabet, in the sense defined by Sir Petrie (1912).

Figure 8. The shape of Delta (Δ), rising like the flame of a torch – sounding ΔΔΔΔΔ from the sound of pinewood burning - signifies force or energy, i.e., the words dynamic, dynamo, dynasty etc. The sound, form, and meaning coexist. Its shape coincides with $_5$Δ one of the Minoan alphabetiforms, Fig.1.

The later Pythagorean interpretation of letters as numerical and harmonic entities thus represents not an anachronism but a natural continuation of an earlier conception—one in which writing itself served as a visible analogue of cosmic proportion.

Consequently, the Greek alphabet stands not only as a linguistic instrument but as a **metaphysical artifact**, embodying the Greek drive toward total coherence between the seen and the spoken, number and sound, thought and order. The testimony of Palamedes captures the essence of this transformation: the elevation of writing from a utilitarian record to an expression of the world's intelligible harmony. Such a transformation could likely have been accomplished only by a highly educated and inventive figure such as Palamedes, presumably with the assistance of scholars deeply familiar with the Linear B script.

If the Greek alphabet were of Phoenician origin, it would be highly improbable to assume that, within only a few decades of the ninth or eighth century BC—and despite its attestation in thirty-three regions, Waal (2018)—the Greeks could have accomplished all of the following transformations and innovations.

a) The Greeks converted the five Phoenician consonants into vowels +F.
b)They probably correlated these five vowels with the acronyms of the five lunar phases.
c) They expanded these into a full system of seven vowels (H = E + E, Ω = O + O).
d) They probably generated those diphthongs according to a formal rule based on a five-by-five matrix of vowel pairings.
e) They preserved the seven diphthongs of the Linear B script through the so-called Dark Ages (1200–900 BC) into the eighth century BCE.
f) They extended the twelve consonants plus F to eighteen plus F by recognizing six double articulations/ pronunciations – γ and χ from K, φ from Π, β from Q, λ from R, and Θ from T.
g) They established a total of twenty-seven letters (7 vowels + 18 consonants + F + sampi), sufficient to form a complete though unordered Greek alphanumerical system; and
h) They finally, ordered sixteen of these twenty-seven letters according to an organizing principle, Sir Petrie (1912), that correlated the final one-digit sums of the numerical values of the names of the seven classical celestial bodies with their sequence from the Sun being the first, 1st.

Therefore, the question of a Phoenician origin for the Greek alphabet requires re-examination.

## 5. The Diringer' Arguments on the Phoenician theory and Contra Arguments

The distinguished linguist Diringer (1948), 451, proposes three arguments:

(1) The shapes of nearly all the early Greek letters and the early Etruscan letters (the Etruscan alphabet being a derivation from the Greek) clearly recall their Semitic origin.

The reader/scientist can parabolize the two series of letters the Greek/ the Phoenician below, Fig. 9, and draw his conclusion. Nevertheless, the above argument can be reversed. "The Phoenician letters clearly recall their Greek origin" in the case the Greek alphabet was invented before the Phoenicia abjad.

(2) The order of the Greek letters corresponds with a few understandable exceptions, to the Semitic letters.

The reader/scientist is convinced that the order of 16 out of the 27/24 letters of the Greek alphanumerical/alphabet systems, have been generated by the explained correlation, Fig. 9. Diringer's effort to find a correlation to base the order of the abjad letters was unsuccessful as Moran , Kelly, 1969, have written.

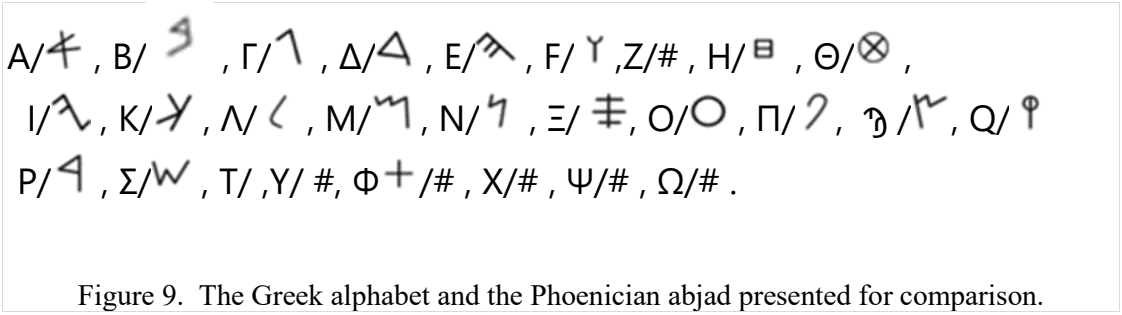



Figure 9. The Greek alphabet and the Phoenician abjad presented for comparison.

According to some proponents of the Phoenician-origin theory, the sequence of the Phoenician abjad was not arbitrary but derived either from a traditional ordering transmitted through scribal practice or from a culturally inherited succession of pictorial signs, each letter name originally referring to a concrete object whose place in the series followed a conventional mnemonic or symbolic logic.

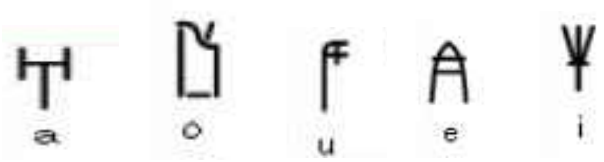
The counterargument is that no proponent of this view has ever provided a complete or demonstrable explanation of these claims—whether in terms of a traditional ordering, a culturally inherited sequence, a conventional mnemonic system, or a symbolic logic. The repeated use of the indefinite article -a- in their descriptions underscores the indeterminacy and vagueness of these proposals. By contrast, a genuine mnemonic ordering can be illustrated clearly; in contrast, an English mnemonic system is presented: *"Silly Monkeys Very Easily Jumpy Small Unusual Noises'* encodes the sequence of the planets: Sun, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune."

(3) The phoenician names of the letters: whereas the Greek names are meaningless in Greek, the Semitic names of the letters are, words of the Semetic languages.

A simple illustration may clarify the point: pupils in elementary school learn addition concretely—*2 apples + 3 apples = 5 apples*—because they are not yet capable of abstract reasoning. Only later, once they develop abstract thinking, can they employ algebraic notation, in which all additions take the general form $X + V = W$. In this sense, the third argument advanced by Diringer conceals a Phoenician limitation rather than demonstrating any advantage, confirming Rawlinson's (1889) observation that the Phoenicians excelled in practical craftsmanship but not in theoretical or abstract intellectual work. Therefore, the question of a Phoenician origin for the Greek alphabet requires re-examination.

(4) Powell, 1996, wrote: In all varieties of the Greek alphabet the west Semitic consonantal signs 'aleph, he(th), yod, ''ain, have been converted to the Greek vowel signs alpha, epsilon, iota, and omicron, while Semitic wau Y appears in the Greek system as two letters : consonantal wau - reversed F – (later called digamma from the shape).

Ventris and Chadwick deciphered linear B, 1450-1200 BC, and found the Greek five vowel symbols and seven diphthongs (presented individually), Fig. 10.




A O Y E I

The diphthongs: A-Y, A-I, O-Y, O-I, Y-I, E-I, E-Y

Figure 10. The symbols of five vowels and the seven diphthongs in linear B script.

Therefore, Powel's argument for the transformation of the five Phoenician consonants into five Greek vowels + F requires re-examination.

## Conclusion

Evidence from the enrichment of the **Linear B syllabary:** a) the 12 consonants + F to 18+F and b) the five vowels to seven (+ H and Ω), suggests that this sensitivity to vocalic differentiation was already present in Minoan literacy (the 25 alphabetiform letters found by Sir Evans dated ~ 1520 BC, Fig. 1, and the Linear B script) centuries before the first attested Greek inscriptions. The subsequent integration of letters into a **numerical and cosmological order**, and their order in the Greek alphabet probably were innovated and arranged by Palamedes and scholars-scribers of the linear B. The alphabet thus became not merely a technical tool but a **theoretical construct**, in which linguistic, mathematical, and metaphysical dimensions converge. Do the defenders of the Phoenician origin of the Greek alphabet have anything equivalent to the above to present?

Later Greek reflection—from Pythagoras to Plato—perceived this convergence as the visible signature of *logos* within *cosmos*: the written sign embodying the rational structure of the universe. In this perspective, the alphabet is not probably a borrowed instrument but a **Greek synthesis or invention**, articulating a worldview in which a) sound, number, and order, and b) shape, sound and meaning of a Greek letter are expressions of the same intelligible letter harmony, see Fig. 8. To reconsider the origins of the alphabet, therefore, is to reconsider the intellectual origins of Greek thought itself.

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