

# ***The history of writing and printing***

Katsaiti Alexandra Πάτρα 2012

<http://users.sch.gr/adkat>

## THE BEGINNING OF WRITING

**H**istory begins with writing. It is this invention which allowed man to advance at a rate that would have been unthinkable in prehistoric times! The oldest known writing in the world are carvings and marks on a limestone tablet which was found in Mesopotamia and is estimated to be about 5,500 years old. Sumerian scribes slowly developed these symbols into a kind of writing which is known as cuneiform. This writing spread widely in the Near East, while the ancient Egyptians developed a type of picture-writing: the hieroglyphic script. The first writing, however, to be written consistently in horizontal lines, were two forms of syllabic script used by the Minoans on the Greek isle of Crete in 1500 BC. Because of this, these two forms are known as Linear A and Linear B. Another important early syllabic script was that used in the Phoenician city of Byblos – from which comes the word ‘Bible’, meaning ‘book’!

# THE EVOLUTION OF WRITING

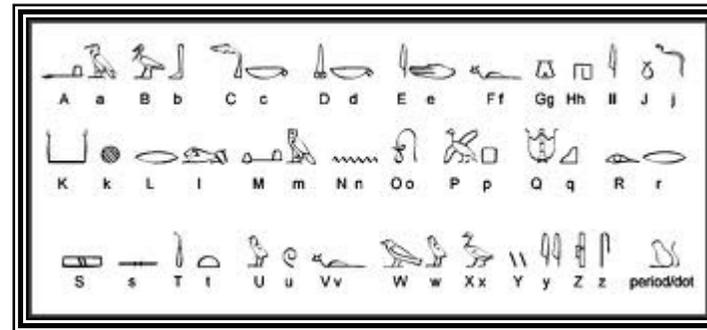
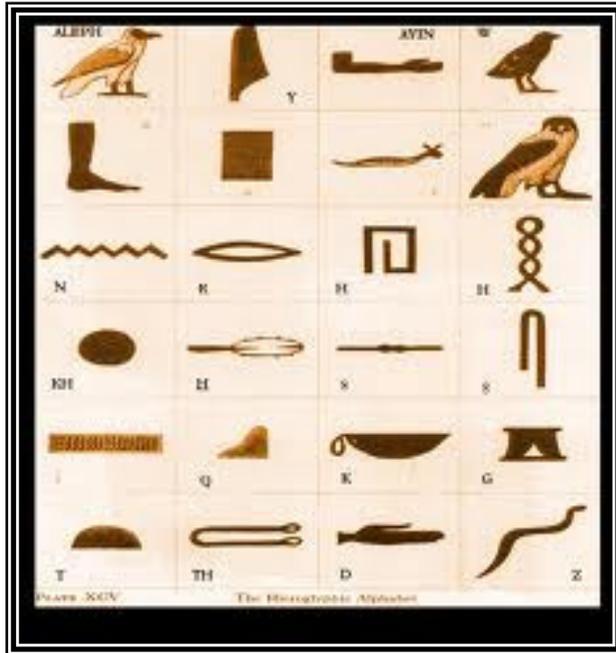
➤ **MESOPOTAMIA** : Carvings and marks on a limestone tablet, about 5.500years old.  
**Sumerian** scribes developed these symbols into **CUNEIFORM** writing.



### SYMBOLS

Name	Earliest Outline Characters		Archaic Cuneiform		Less Pictorial
	Pictograph	4000 BC	3300 BC	3100 BC	300 BC
God, heaven					
Day					
Head					
Water					
Far					

- **ANCIENT EGYPT** : A type of picture – writing : **the hieroglyphic script**.



**This chart shows the matching of hieroglyphic forms to the letters of the English alphabet.**

- **CRETE** : a) First writing system : a type of **hieroglyphic script**, around 1.700 BC.  
Representative sample : **Phaistos Disc**. It has **not been deciphered yet**.
- b) A second writing system : **Linear A**, around 1.700 BC : Writing in horizontal lines, form of syllabic script. It has **not been deciphered yet**. It was the basis for **Mycenaean** script.

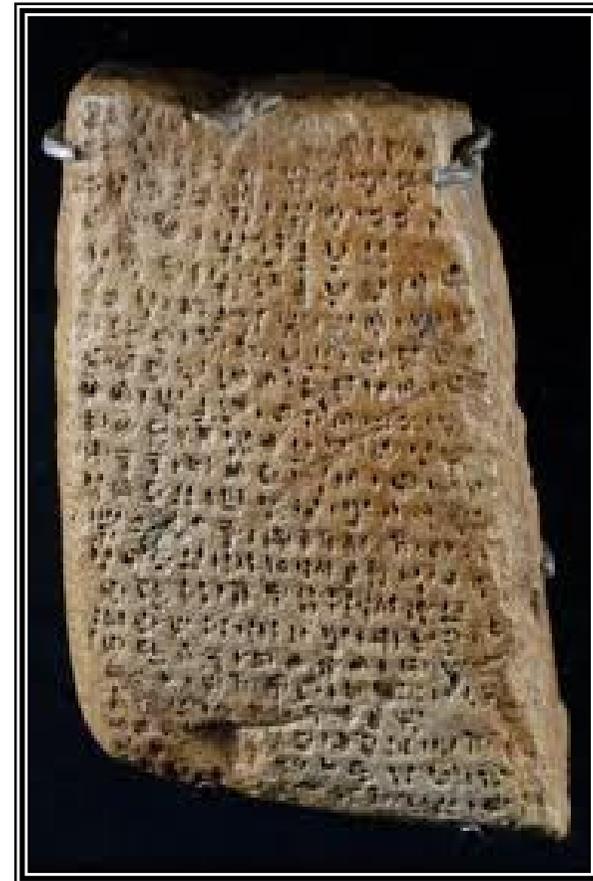
PHAISTOS DISC – LINEAR A

PHAISTOS DISC



Not having been deciphered yet

LINEAR A



Not having been deciphered yet

## MYCENAEAN CIVILISATION

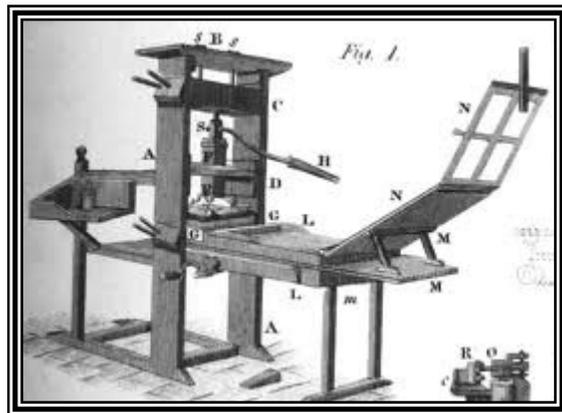
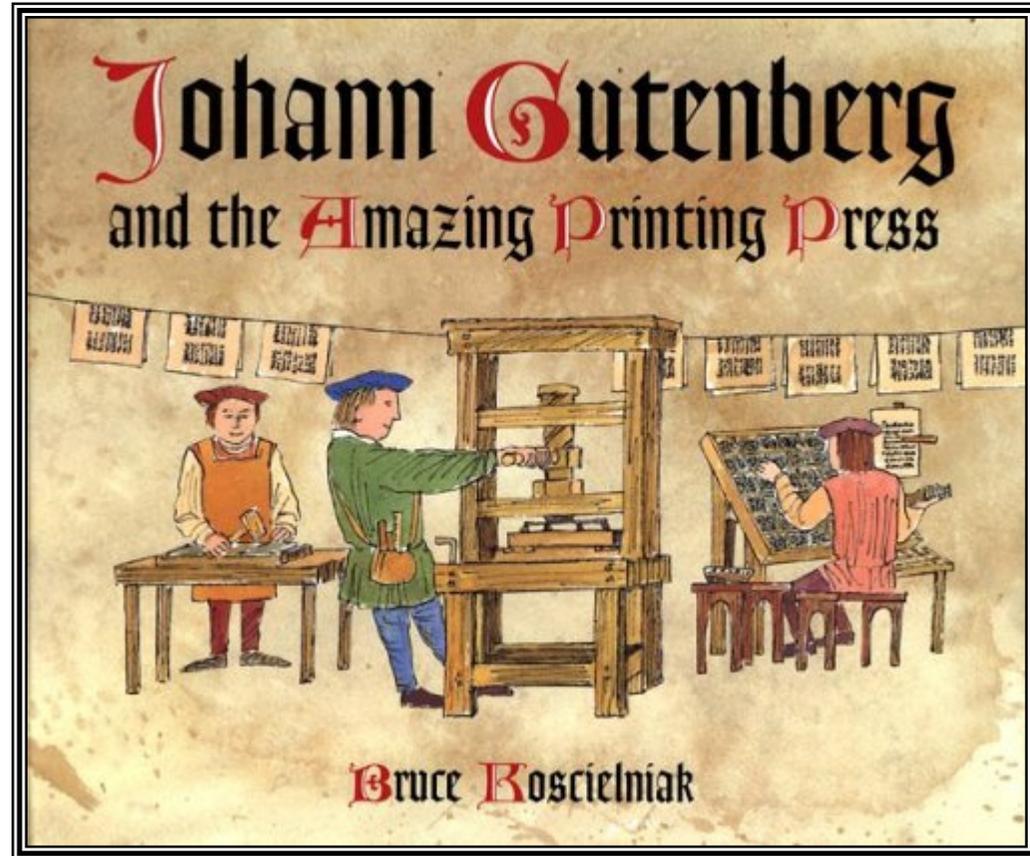
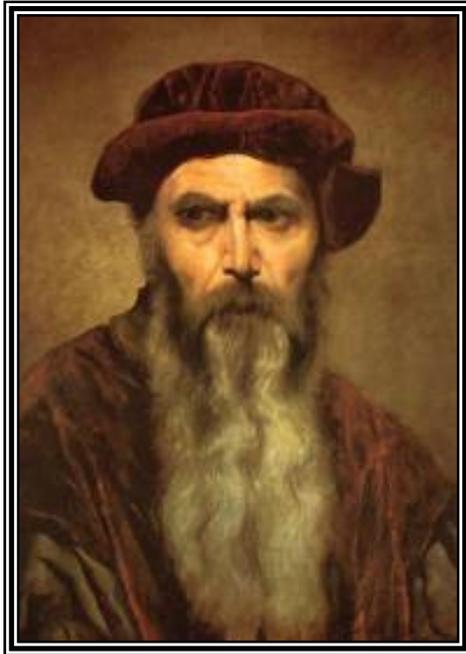
- **MYCENAE** : development of **LINEAR B** : around 1.400/1.200 BC, a syllabic script (each symbol stands for a syllable), perfected form of **LINEAR A**.

**JOHN CHADWICK** (an English linguist and classical scholar) and **MICHAEL GEORGE FRANCIS VENTRIS** (an English architect and classical scholar) : responsible for the **decipherment** of **LINEAR B** in 1952.



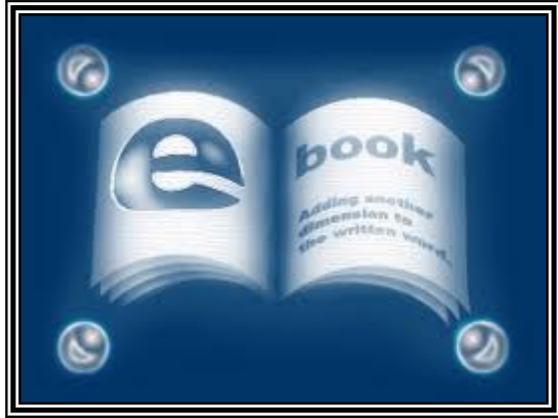
## THE INVENTION OF PRINTING

The most important invention of the Middle Ages was printing. Until the 15th century, all European books were either copied by hand or printed from wooden blocks that had been carved with the text of an entire page. Both these methods were extremely time-consuming and books were very expensive. Johann Gutenberg, who was a German goldsmith, was the first European to produce movable, metal letters, which could be used again and again. He converted a wine press into the first printing press and found a durable metal to make the letters from. Gutenberg's invention turned out to be revolutionary: books could now be printed cheaply and in great numbers. Mankind began to rush forwards

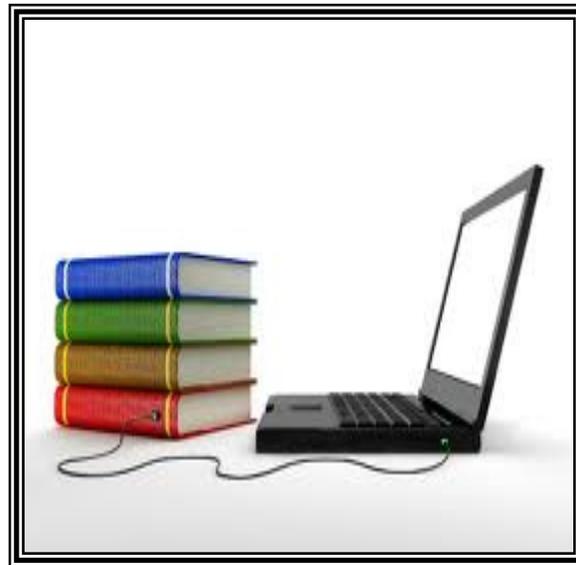


## E -BOOKS

In our days, electronic books, better known as e-books, have begun to revolutionise the way people read. What are e-books? They are books in digital format, meaning that they can be viewed on a computer screen, or even the latest cell phones! Like traditional books, they have titles, pages, chapters, and illustrations. Unlike traditional books, they can be ordered on-line and they are delivered electronically to your computer. They are more convenient than books, since it is much easier to carry around a laptop rather than dozens of heavy books... They are also cheaper than conventional books, which makes them an attractive alternative to consumers. As we sail towards a society that will surely be based on electronic information, e-books will undoubtedly take on a more important role in our lives.



# E - BOOKS



## COMMON ROOTS

We can often understand the meaning of various words used in languages that we do not speak. This is due to the fact that many words appear to have common “roots”, that is there is a part of a word that appears, either in written or in oral speech, to be the same or at least similar in languages that belong to the same family such as the Indo European family in our case.

Here are some examples demonstrating this phenomenon:

<b>ENGLISH</b>	<b>GREEK</b>	<b>FRENCH</b>	<b>GERMAN</b>	<b>ITALIAN</b>
Prehistoric				
symbol				
hieroglyphics				
horizontal				
syllabic				

ENGLISH

GREEK

FRENCH

GERMAN

ITALIAN

<b>Prehistoric</b>				
<b>Symbol</b>				
<b>Hieroglyphics</b>				
<b>Horizontal</b>				
<b>Syllabic</b>				

