

CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS



---

The Pronunciation of Greek in Christian Egypt

Author(s): S. Gaselee

Source: *The Classical Review*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Feb., 1916), pp. 6-7

Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Classical Association

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/699200>

Accessed: 24/01/2010 15:08

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=cup>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



Cambridge University Press and The Classical Association are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Classical Review*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

the meaning is 'he gave them one and all a shake-up.' If anyone wishes to know more precisely what happened to the venturesome sailors who approached the dolphin, let him read what befel Bill, the lizard, in *Alice in Wonderland*. The voyage they made through the air to rejoin their comrades was probably shorter than Bill's, who says very movingly, 'I'm better now . . . all I know is, something comes at me like a Jack-in-the-box, and up I goes like a sky-rocket.' The consternation caused by their landing was even greater than that created by Bill's. In the words of the poet (404-7):

οἱ δ' ἄνεφ ἐνὶ νηὶ καθήατο δειμαίνοντες,  
οὐδ' οἳ γ' ὄπλ' ἄλεγον κοίλην ἀνὰ νῆα  
μέλαιναν,  
οὐδ' ἔλυσον λαΐφος νηὸς κυανοπρόροιο·  
ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ πρόωπιστα κατεστήσαντο  
βοεῦσιν,  
ὡς ἔπλεον·

In these lines I have made three alterations ἄνεφ for ἀκέων for which see *Homericæ*, § 193 ff., ἄλεγον (405) 'they bothered about,' 'attended to,' for ἔλυσον and τό *i.e.* λαΐφος for τὰ (407) which I may leave to defend themselves.

T. L. AGAR.

### THE PRONUNCIATION OF GREEK IN CHRISTIAN EGYPT.

It is well known that Coptic incorporated in itself a large number of Greek words with little or no change; and some conclusions as to their pronunciation in Egypt in Christian times may be drawn from the way these are written in our earliest Coptic MSS. Classical scholars may easily overlook matters of interest to them if it is hidden in the works of Orientalists, and I therefore make no apology for calling attention to some recent publications in which there are allusions to this subject.

Professor A. Rahlfs, of Göttingen, has taken<sup>1</sup> some of the Greek words occurring in the Coptic Biblical texts published by the British Museum in 1912, of which the papyrus seems to have been written as early as the fourth century, and has come to the following conclusions: (a) κ before ι, ε, η, or ει (not before other vowels) is often written not with the Coptic letter *k*, but with the *ēima*: although this letter now has the sound of *sh* or (English) *ch*, we know that its value in earlier times was that of a palatal *k'*; from which we may conclude that this, by the fourth century, had begun to be the value of κ in such a position.<sup>2</sup> (b) In Νεφθαλείμ a π is

substituted for the φ, showing that the power of pronouncing the first of two aspirated consonants was beginning to be lost. (c) Ἰακώβ is spelt in Coptic with a single *k*, Ἰακωβος with a doubled *k*, indicating that the Greek accent had by now begun to be expiratory: so θάλασσα is spelt with a doubled *l*. (d) The opening consonants of δοκεῖ and ζώνη are represented by *nd* and *ns* respectively, showing the beginning of the process which makes it necessary in modern Greek to represent dominoes and billiards by *ντόμιννο* and *μπιλιάρδο*.

I do not know whether the Greek loan-words in Coptic will ever receive systematic treatment: there is much to be learned from them. It is to be hoped that Signor Michael Angelo Guidi, who has done much work on the subject, will some day compose a dictionary of them, more especially as they will not be included either in the Coptic Lexicon now being made by Mr. W. E. Crum, nor in the Lexicon of Patristic Greek which is also in preparation in England. A single Coptic work has been ex-

transliteration of Greek proper names into Arabic. In the *Synaxarium* and in the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria* (both now in course of publication in the Paris *Patrologia Orientalis*) we find the χ of Chariton and Zacharias rendered by the strongly guttural *kha*, while that of Achilles and Archelaus is represented by the letter *shin*.

<sup>1</sup> Sitzungsber. der Kön. Preuss. Akad. der Wissenschaften (*Phil.-hist. Klasse*), 1912, xlv.

<sup>2</sup> I would add that parallel indications may be found in the case of χ in the method of

haustively treated<sup>1</sup> by Doctor K. Wessely, who has made analytical lists of all the Greek words occurring in the Coptic Psalms in both dialects: his accounts of the vowel and consonant changes show how much might be expected from a close investigation of the subject. Quite recently Mr. Crum has published<sup>2</sup> a papyrus in the Phillipps collection, probably written late in the sixth century, which exhibits the peculiarity (perhaps shared only by one other known Coptic MS.) that a considerable number of the Greek words occurring in it are accented. There are about seventy such words, and the accentuation is remarkably correct,<sup>3</sup> even

to changes when a word is inflected (e.g. Ἀγαθόνικος Ἀγαθονίκου): almost the only exceptions are εὐεργέτει, φρόνει (not imperatives), ἀνοήτος, and πρόελθε. Mr. Crum doubts whether we are to ascribe this peculiarity to a scribe, not wholly unlearned in Greek, who followed his local pronunciation (somewhere near Thebes), or to a translator with an accented Greek original before him. In one word Mr. Crum has made an addition to Greek lexicography if he is right in supposing that the puzzling βερέτως is really βερήδως 'post-haste,' which makes very good sense in its context. We know βερήδος = *veredus* from Procopius.

S. GASELEE.

<sup>1</sup> Denkschriften der Kaiserl. Akad. der Wissenschaften in Wien (*Phil.-hist. Klasse*), 1910, liv.

<sup>2</sup> Der Papyruscodex saec. vi-vii der Phillippsbibliothek in Cheltenham (*Schriften der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft in Strassburg*, 18 Heft), K. J. Trübner, 1915.

<sup>3</sup> The circumflex is not employed, perispomenon and properispomenon words being

written oxytone and paroxytone respectively: the distinction between the use of the grave and acute accents is rightly observed. Indeed, the accentuation is more correct than the aspiration, for we find such forms as ὁμοίως, ἰδιῶν.

#### EPIGRAPHIC NOTES.

MR. M. U. TOD has an interesting article in the February *Classical Review* on the use of πρεσβύτερος in the sense of older or senior. The general principle that this use did occur, and must always be taken into account in interpreting a passage where the Greek word occurs in an inscription and where the context permits, was and is fully admitted. Examples of it are known to all. Mr. Tod argues, as I think rightly, that several other cases of it should be admitted; but about two cases he has, as I think, not justified his claim and interpretation.

(1) The inscription of Antioch Pisid. which he quotes, where Mr. Calder restores [πρε]σβ., requires a different restoration. Mr. Calder remarks that there is not room for πρ unless it was written in ligature (*J. R. S.*, 1912, p. 97). The inscription is cut in large sprawling letters, not very deeply incised. I have seen it often, both in company with Mr. Calder and alone. At first I accepted the restoration as printed, but in 1914,

before seeing Mr. Tod's article, I came to the conclusion that the reading is [C]EB', i.e., σεβ(αστοῦ) ἀπελευθερος. I had not the opportunity of verifying this hypothesis on the stone; but it carries conviction. In such sprawling and poorly preserved writing, the distinction between E and C is extremely difficult, and is frequently confused by the very best copyists and by the engravers. We have in many cases had not the slightest hesitation in assuming that C and E were interchanged in carelessly-written epitaphs.

In the present case, though the letters are unusually large for an epitaph, no one would hesitate to call the writing careless, or at least coarse in character. The only difficulty lies in the small ω engraved above ἀπελευθερ. The stone here is broken in surface, but we felt little doubt, after careful examination, that the scribe wrote ω, not OC. This was an error on his part, made in inserting an omitted letter (or letters) between the lines. There can be no doubt