obliged to depend on themselves to seek their own cultural independence and, because they had to struggle for the things they knew they wanted, they were all the better for it, whereas their Moslem compatriots depended too much on the efforts of the government to found schools for them. With the Copts, their thirst for knowledge was cultural, with the Moslems, it was vocational. Thirdly, the Copts were capable of displaying a better public spirit than the rest of their compatriots and could be relied upon to get the maximum amount of benefit out of the capital and efforts used in the creation of schools. Fourthly, a large number of Copts depended on employment in private enterprises where competition was keener and where good qualifications counted a great deal. Fifthly, they had far less restrictions on the education of women thus bringing about a fairer cultural balance between the sexes which helped to eliminate to a great extent the undertow of the old school.

The rapid cultural progress made by the Coptic community between 1850 and 1880 laid an excellent foundation for the subsequent deals and helped the Copts to play a very effective role in the struggle for national independence.

J. Hely-Hunter

THE

TRADITIONAL PRONUNCIATION OF COPTIC

IN THE CHURCH OF EGYPT

(with two plates)

BY

PROF. GEORGY SOBHY BEY.

In 1916, I wrote in the Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, vol. II, pt. 1, p. 15, the following statement:

"I do not wish to be dogmatic in the least, but I base my personal opinions on deductions which I shall explain hereafter. My two guiding criteria are the way the present Copts pronounce their own language and also the Arabic Language—for they do not pronounce the latter as the Arabs do—and the second is the actual variations in the spelling of words as found in different MSS."

"Modern books written on Coptic in Egypt and by Egyptian authors adopt more or less a mutilated form of Greek pronunciation and apply it entirely to their language. None...can realise the outstanding mistakes he is trying to form into rules applicable to the Egyptian language."

"I believe that an ordinary uneducated priest in reciting any Coptic prayer in Church, pronounces the Language much more correctly and naturally too than if he followed these erroneous rules set down in the Modern Coptic books." And at the end of the same article I said:...in my opinion its unbroken use in the Church has undoubtedly preserved its pronunciation, for it has been thus handed down from one generation of priests to another until our day," and in my own belief a priest who has learnt to pronounce this language from his predecessor without the use of the modern sophisticated rules exhibited by Coptic Authors in their writings does inherently pronounce it more rightly than any other man."
In 1898, three years later, I wrote in the Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Archéologie orientale, t. XIV, p. 52:

"Je voudrais montrer aujourd'hui que cette prononciation devait être identique à celle des tems anciens. Je puis alléguer deux preuves pour justifier que cette prononciation était usitée par les anciens Coptes."

"La première est donnée par les mots copistes qui ont passé dans la langue arabe vulgaire et qui ont gardé leur prononciation originale" a the names of towns, months and ordinary words. "La deuxième preuve consiste dans la variabilité et les erreurs apparentes qu'on rencontre dans l'orthographe des mots des anciens manuscrits, causées par des ressemblances dans les sons de différentes lettres que le scribe ne pouvait pas distinguer pendant la dictée."

In 1925 having already found the MS. of Abu Makar whose language was Arabic but written in Coptic characters and before its appearance in print, I had already written in volume V of the Compte rendu du Congrès International de Géographie, Le Caire, p. 115 the following:

"The Ancient Egyptian Language did not possess any strict rules of pronunciation and that bearing was the only right guide to the pronunciation of words. My dictum applies naturally more to the Coptic form of Egyptian."

"The same letter was uttered differently in different words without any reasonable explanation to give. After studying this question for some years now and referring to all that was written about it by different authors, I have come to the conclusion that the Copts pronounced their language according to custom and use, very much like Modern English in which a vowel may have different values in different words or even in the same word."

The rest of the article draws its proofs from the names of the towns, villages, etc. in Egypt that have kept their ancient names until to-day and which forms of ancient names we know from the texts.

In 1921 the late H. G. Evelyn White was commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to study "sur place" the Monasteries of Wady el-Natroun from every point of view and to collect as many MSS as he could for publication.

Little did I hope that the future presented for me the most incontrovertible proof of my theses.

Amongst the Collection of MSS that he found, there was a book written in Coptic characters but the language was Arabic.

This was not an entirely new find for we had already known of the existence of two leaves of the self same MS. which were found by Tschendorf and studied and published by Casanova.

This book is published in volume II of the Monasteries of Wady el-Natroun of the Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New-York, p. 531. In the short preambule to the chapter I wrote the following:

"The Importance of these leaves is paramount. They teach first of all how Arabic was pronounced in the period when the MS. was written...... They also teach us that until the period at which the MS. was written, Coptic was still the language spoken by the Monks and the Coptic Church at least in the Monasteries. Last of all, the most important result of studying these leaves is the knowledge we gain of the values of the different letters in the Coptic alphabet and their equivalents in Arabic. It corresponds most closely with the actual pronunciation of Coptic in the Church", etc. for which we see.

Now H. E. Morse Pacha Sameika with his customary grace and generosity puts in my hands a most interesting MS. which he bought for the Library of the Coptic Museum (registered under 4091, serial 510 Ritual). This MS. is so interesting that a detailed description of it is worth while.

Beginning from the right side as Arabic books usually begin we read fourteen leaves, not numerated, but at the lower margin of each leaf and on the verso is written the word which begins the first line of the following leaf in the recto. This device replaces the numbering of the leaves and shows that there are no missing folios.

The first page begins with:

益م الاب والابن وبالروح القدس الواحد له أجمع

and follow three lines in red:

هذا ما يحبنا تواهه (sic) من القطع العربي في البيعة المقدسة مدينه الله

Tتال في شر كهت بعده الاصالة في عشبة الحدود (sic)

"In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God

Glory to him."

This is what ought to be read from the Arabic sections in the Holy
Church. A hymn to the Virgin to be chanted in the month of Khâk after the Pasûa, on the Eve of Saturdays.

Then follows the hymn which is arranged in stanzas of three verses and a chorus (refrain): Blessed art thou O Virgin. Each stanza begins with a word starting with a letter of the alphabet in its order. In other words it is an acrostic.

Apparently one leaf is missing here, for the fifth page begins in the middle of another hymn which is divided into different sections. Each one to be sung according to a different Coptic air such as כס נא נא "Thou art (The Virgin) and כס נא נא the dome which they, etc.

The following hymn is for the glorious Feast of the Nativity (Christmas). It is arranged in two Arabic verses and two Coptic ones that rhyme with the following Coptic ones thus:

"In the Name of God is how I begin and by His power I will do my best."?

"Verily verily I believe in the Name of Jesus the Christ" and so forth.

Then comes a hymn for Lenten to be chanted after כס נא נא, "The Mercies":[It is composed of stanzas of eight double verses. The first line beginning with a letter of the Arabic alphabet in their order again an acrostic. The alphabetic letter is written in red in the margin next to the beginning of each stanza.

Again another hymn for the Eve of Palm Sunday; each stanza ending in a Coptic phrase and all Coptic phrases rhyming together. The hymn is concluded with a Coptic verse written in red thus:

" Hosannah in the Highest. This is the King of Israel. Blessed is He Who cometh in the Name of the Lord of Powers."

The next hymn is to be said in the Fast of our Fathers the Apostles while communion is being administered.

Again another hymn for the Virgin. It begins with the Name of Mariam written in separate letters with the intention of pronouncing each letter with its name separately; thus כס נא נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס

The person who has taken care in doing it, may he be benefited with the prayers of Mary the daughter of Joachim and Anna! Notice that the word "daughter of" is written in Coptic language but in Arabic Lettering.

Another sign of pedantry on the part of the writer. Last of all in red, "Colophon" collated as for as possible.

The other section of the Book is the most interesting. It begins from the left side. The first leaf is misplaced and is numbered כס נא 204. The lower half of the page contains a dated Colophon in Arabic. The first and last line of which are in red ink. Thus:

"This completes the Book and the Colophon is written in red Arabic enclosed in a triangle כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס נא כס

The writer the poor Abraam son of Simeon."
"Completed and concluded the Theotokia of Friday in the peace of the Lord; on the day of Wednesday the feast of the Entrance of the Master into the Land of Egypt, the twenty-fourth of Pachons 1438 A.M. = 1721 A.D. Collated with two MSS Coptic and Arabic-Psalms."

The leaves then follow in order and numbered on the recto except the first leaf which is numbered on both verso and recto π 151 and in the left corner of the upper margin there is the number μ 16 the number of the last quire although this section of the Book runs from left to right certain parts of it read from right to left.

The pages are divided into two columns. The left one contains the text of the Theotokia in Coptic and the right column contains the transliteration or more strictly the pronunciation of the Coptic text in Arab letters. Except for the titles which are written in the Arabic Language in red ink the whole section of the Book which contains 333 leaves does not contain any Arabic at all. Here lies the value of the Book which shows us how Coptic was universally pronounced in Egypt in the Early XVIIth Century A.D.; and when we compare it with the earlier MS. and with the MS. of Macarius which was Arabic in language but Coptic in lettering we can hardly detect any difference whatever in the phonetic values of the letters or in the way they were pronounced. Going back still further in time we can from the documents we have prove the stability of the pronunciation through the ages.

Even the glosses written over the demotic words in Greek letters in the demotic magical papyrus of London and Leiden show that the pronunciation in our book is practically the same as the demotic of the above MS., which brings us back to the IIrd Century A.D.

This book is illuminated in blue, red and black and gold at the beginning of each chapter. There are geometrical decorations in colours at the beginning of each section which are called in Arabic dikkeh  ❝เหมาะสม. Figures of birds either conventionalized or natural appear here and in the margins.

On page 122 μ 18 there is a picture (Pl. II, b) of Moses standing with a big staff in his hand opposite some sort of a plant to represent the burning bush. Round his head there is a golden aureole. In the left corner of the plate is written the tree or the bush, and above the left shoulder of Moses is written Moses the prophet. In the lower right-hand corner, there is the figure of a table on which stand upright ten plates. Inside the left hand is written μ 15, in the beginning and in the right hand plate is written in Arabic: "In the beginning God created"; above the two plates is written: "The two plates of the Commandments."

On the opposite page π 19 recto, there is a very fine and beautiful panel of interlaced figures (dikkeh) in gold, blue, red and black colours that tops the page. On the right margin there is a figure of a kind of bird with conventionalized rosettes in dark red attached by means of green and blue stalks. Under the panel is written the title in red, in Coptic and in Arabic in the right side thus:

The Theotokia of the Day of Thursday: (Air of) Batos. I shall reproduce here the first two sections as they are written in two columns as an example of the pronunciation used (Pl. I, a and b; Pl. II, a).

διά Βατος

| μαι αμπού | μαι αμπού | μαι αμπού | μαι αμπού |
| Αι Κρήσας | Αι Κρήσας | Αι Κρήσας | Αι Κρήσας |
| μαι αρφ αούλ | μαι αρφ αούλ | μαι αρφ αούλ | μαι αρφ αούλ |
| Ακαθάρτον | Ακαθάρτον | Ακαθάρτον | Ακαθάρτον |
| Αμ Μαρίας | Αμ Μαρίας | Αμ Μαρίας | Αμ Μαρίας |
| Αμ Μαρίας | Αμ Μαρίας | Αμ Μαρίας | Αμ Μαρίας |

The bush which Moses saw in the Desert burning in it without burning its branches. It was a type (symbol) of Mary the Virgin the un-
The above hymn contains all the letters of the Coptic alphabet with their different values in different words. In value we do not see any difference between ē and a both being transcribed with an ḫ or a. The ē is always ẖ. The a is always ḫ = a. Except in certain words, e.g. ḫa, it ḫ and ḫat- i. The ẖ = ḫ, but we cannot tell whether a soft ḫ = j or hard g. The Greek γ figures as (γ) ordinary k = ḫ as in p. 155, l. 12 or kh = ḫ as in p. 183, l. 6 et passim or ch = ẖ in p. 205, l. 9. Apparently the letter γ remains equal to ḫ in all words of a Coptic origin.

The letter τ equals always δ = d. In some positions however