14. — THE TRANSLITERATION

OF

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN NAMES

OF TOWNS, VILLAGES, ETC. INTO ARABIC

BY

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In this contribution I do not intend, in the least, to formulate any rules or propound any new dogmas with regard to the subject I am investigating. I shall mention the facts as they stand and shall enumerate examples as they exist, without trying to influence the reader. My own belief which I give here, whatever may be its value, is purely an individual and a personal one. In fact it can be stated right out in a few words.

The Ancient Egyptian language did not possess any strict rules of pronunciation, and that hearing was the only guide to the right pronunciation of words. My dictum applies naturally more to the Coptic or later 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 reader will see down below the examples I give of the pronunciation of words before I actually touch on the names of towns, etc.

It is only natural to believe, that when the Arabs conquered Egypt, and started carrying on its government, the question of levying taxes on the inhabitants was the most urgent one. For this reason, it is easy to understand, that lists of the different towns and villages and provinces, were made first in Coptic or in Greek, and afterwards put into Arabic for the benefit of the new Rulers. It naturally depended on the persons who wrote those lists, for both languages were in general use.

If they were Greeks, they must have first transliterated from Egyptian into Greek and then into Arabic; if they were Copts, the transliteration must have been made directly into Arabic. There is no doubt, whatever that this above mentioned fact, explains the differences and particularly the profound ones, in the mode of transcribing certain names of towns.

As we see in our own days, all proper names are transliterated according to hearing and not according to rules of orthography, and that different hearers may write the same name differently in the same language.

A modern Egyptian writes the name of the British Capital in Arabic either ميدان، if he heard it from a Frenchman, or ميدان if he heard it, uttered from the mouth of an Englishman. Before I go into details, I give here a list of the Coptic alphabet and its corresponding values in Arabic and Greek. These values are very carefully based on numerous documents in which transliterations of Egyptian names were written in Greek, such as the numerous mummy labels and various other bilingual inscriptions; and secondly from documents in which Arabic was first written in Coptic characters as the two folios of a book early found by Tischendorff in the Natron Monasteries, and the rest of which book, was lately found in the same place and was edited by me in the publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New-York; and second from other documents in which Coptic was written in Arabic characters as the psalmody of the French Institute of Archaeology in Cairo. This latter manuscript, though very late in its dating, yet it serves our purpose here.

Except for the letters ω, η, ζ, and ι, ο, τ, ι, μ, — and their combinations, and in demotic the letters ι, τ, ς, and ι, there
was an equivalent in the Greek language, for every other sound in the Egyptian phonemes. For the above letters, however, the Greeks devised certain combinations which will be given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EGYPTIAN</th>
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<td>π, β</td>
<td>π, β</td>
<td>س ت د ط</td>
<td>π, β</td>
<td>π, β</td>
<td>ح</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


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NOTES.

Λ and Β are and were pronounced alike everywhere as an Λ = † e. g. ΓΕΩΡΚ ἀράκ, ΧΡΗΜΑΤΟΣ ΑΧΑΙΩΝΙΤΙ, etc.

κ is pronounced at beginning of syllables at end of them. But often in the names of towns it was transliterated ḫ in Arabic which may presuppose an original pronunciation similar or near to ι, ΚΕΡΚΟΥΡΑ became خرشو in Arabic.

r often ḫ but just as often ḫ hard we have ῇΡΑΡ γάρ, ἈΡΑΟΧΣ ἁγάνως; but we have ιΤΤ for ιΤΤ, etc., ΑΡΑΟΧΣ ἁγάνως.

α. Everywhere s = δ.

ξ — ξ = ζ.

ς either ϯ or Ϫ. We have ἱςΗΤ οἰηθάτ and ζηπτι and in one word ἱποπονήςις οἰηθάτ = νάκασ and ΑΜΗΙΙ without any reasonable explanation.

ο = Ϝ and θ never θ or δ.

λ = ι. The letter κ was probably the equal of the ancient ι = ι and it had come to acquire all its characteristic values. We know that since the Roman period probably earlier, the letters ι, κ, η were confused and each of them had the values of κ and ι and ι. In Upper Egypt today, and in certain parts of Lower Egypt, the ϯ is everywhere pronounced as a hard ι, a phenomenon characteristic of Egypt amongst all other Arabic speaking countries. We have all sorts of proofs that both in Coptic Κ and in Egyptian ι the hard sound ι was covered.

λ η = ι η respectively.

κ = κ or κσ or κ + c.

ο ιντι. p was probably pronounced originally as p but in Roman hieroglyphic and in demotic, already confusion between ι and l had taken place. Notice ι = αυτις, ι = αυτις and other examples. The influence of Arabic not possessing the p naturally intensified the confusion.

ρ ι = ς respectively.
The page contains a text discussing the transcription of Arabic and Greek words into Coptic. It describes the use of certain symbols and letters, and notes that in some cases, the transcription of words was influenced by the customs and practices of the time. The text also discusses the pronunciation of certain letters and the use of symbols in both Arabic and Greek, and how these were translated into Coptic. The overall content is focused on the linguistic and transcriptional aspects of the two languages.
Before giving the examples of the names of towns that exist in Arabic and of which we know the origin in Egyptian, I should like to draw the attention of the reader that the Arabs had often translated Egyptian names into Arabic, in a literal way, that they often confused an Egyptian name with an Arabic word and have come to treat the word as an entirely Arabic one. Last of all that the idiom of Cairo being the official koμυ of the Government, it has been adopted all over the country in the names of station, towns, etc. Notice for example the name of the town Keneh = "as originally Καινος (καίνος) is never pronounced Keneh by the people of the town but (γνα) whereas in Cairo it is pronounced 'Enah َb and the official name is Kena = "ن.

Also Girga is pronounced حرجة in Cairo, Ġerga with a hard G; whereas the people of Girgeh say Jerjah or even ( får).”

Examples of names of towns of which we know the origin in Ancient Egyptian or in Coptic and their modern transliteration in Arabic.

**LOWER EGYPT.**

Διάθὴς εἰς Αγίων, Ἐλληνος, Μακρός, ἔνεντες. Though the actual name ἔνεντες is not used now, yet the site of the town is pretty well-known; and certain quarters of the ancient Capital still retain their old names, e.g. Saqqara = "Σακρα "undoubtedly derived from the god’s name Διάθ. There the 마다 was transliterated " which is actually pronounced ِل= hard G.

The part of the ancient town lying on the eastern bank of the river was later called Ἡλνος, and the name is still retained in the appellation of the Coptic Monasteries there "دير بالعون. Whether the name Ἡλνος comes from outside Egypt or as Sethe thought was a corruption of a word Ἰπνον = "Πασσον, coming in turn from an original  "κπανα, we cannot tell.

One of the most curious confusions of Coptic names during their transliteration into Arabic, with Arabic words, is what happened in the name of the actual village lying to the south of Old Cairo and which is called in Arabic اثر البابي Athar el Naby i.e. “The traces of the Prophets. There is no doubt whatever that the origin of this name was the ancient  "κπανα.
Ilī ḫn nb = ζαυριπὶοὐγκ = Λοάμεναυς or «the Golden Hathor» owing to the existence of some sanctuary to the goddess on the site.

ṣ = (ṣār); c = (ṣ).

χίονος = Χώις; Ἐ = c = (ṣ).

πούς = βουσιτίς = (πύς) صور = (ṣūr); c = (ṣ); ʿ = k = (أبوي) = father in Arabic.

The prosthetic ʿ was added later by confusion with أبو (أبو). There is no doubt whatever, that the original transliteration of the name into Arabic was made from the Greek form, in which the 2 was lost in the beginning and in the middle.

χιονοῦ = Σεβαντός, Σεβαντός. The same remark mentioned above, applied here with greater certitude for the Σ to be transliterated س in Arabic. The κ here = μ as the first Coptic form.

φαλως = φαλων = (φαλων), Ἐλαμών = λ = J.

καγ = (καγ) = Λούκας = Λούκας (λα).  base (لین)

καχεξικ = καχεξικ = زئاق، Arabic transcription direct from Greek Χ = ـ = ج.

(؟) φαλως = φαλωντα = (فلاوس) = (فلاوس); Δ = k = ـ، actually pronounced by the inhabitants Faggous.

Δ = Δ = ظ = ظ [cf. Δ = ـ = ظ and ـ = ـ], (ظ) = ظ = (الظاربة) always ـ = (to the south of Birket El-Sirgeh); Δ = k = ـ، pronounced ج (hard), ـ = p = J.


بالدبي = (پالدا) the field of locusts, another example of literal translation. It lies near to Inshas انسخ. South-west of Bilbeis.

Δάκιει = The camp of Jezekiel = ـ = transliterated direct from the Greek; ـ = ـ = ـ.

of the Rosetta Stone = (روستا) = of the
Greek version = ? a little to the N. of Mehallet Rob. If identification is true, then Ἡ = س; ج = غ; which would be abit difficult to understand.

אָרְסִיִּים direct from the Greek, 10 kilometres N.-E. of Naukratis.

לְּאַבִּל a little to the north of Damahour = J; = in = ق.

תֵּמִיתֵּוְּר = ΤΜΙΝΙΩΡ = دمئور; = ז = ΕΡΩΠΟΛΙΣ.

יוֹמָה = يوام, Nome II = (پر), in the Markaz of Embabeh.

The Bath. Literal and exact transliteration. The meaning of the word is often added in Arabic.

πάλαιος = παλαιος = Phile = بليس, φ = ب.

Ἡλλαννος = Ηλλαννος = Ηλλαννος = بنانون, = ت = ت.

パス = بلانک = Bulac; = κ = ق.

παράλγας = بارالغاس; = ب.

κάρβος = ج، دجوی; κ = ج hard; χ = جو; = د.

οξύς = خ، فاصله;

σέληνος = ش، خ، خ؛ = د and all. خبز، passim, always شابرا.

γιάννης = = نوی; = ش or ج ( j).

τούγλανας = تونغلانوئ = طماضوب; = ج in = ج = "j."

σαφαγγ = ص breve = خ.

σεξάρας = جوجرز; خ = ش and ج = ج.

σεισομογονις = فتحاطه، خ = ح.

Ἀπονύμερος = أيبر الهرس, entirely arabicised.

Μέγινος = م، خ، خان, similarly.

τοῦνχα = تنخا = ت. ط.
UPPER EGYPT.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{γαλαξ} &= \text{τωνε} = \text{τονε}; \Rightarrow T = \text{τ}. \\
\text{μαγιτ} &= \text{μοτ}; \ T = \text{τ}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{εαγω} &= \text{αξωνη} = \text{αληων}; \ \Rightarrow \ \lambda = \text{λ}; \ z = \text{ζ}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{τακκων} &= \text{τακκαν} = \text{τακκαν}; \ T = \text{τ}; \ \kappa = \text{κ}, \text{actually pronounced \ θ hard.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{πελεγυ} &= \text{πελεγυ} = \text{πελεγυ}; \ \Rightarrow T = \text{τ}; \ \Rightarrow T = \text{τ}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{εκωδ} &= \text{κωδ} = \text{κωδ}; \ \Rightarrow T = \text{τ}; \ \Rightarrow T = \text{τ}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{κουδ} &= \text{kouy} = \text{κωδ}, \text{pronounced} \ \text{καυ} \ (\text{Gau}) \ \kappa = \text{κ} \ \text{or} \ \text{κ}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{πανκη} &= \text{πανκη} = \text{πανκη}; \ \kappa = \text{κ}, \text{thoroughly arabicised.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ξεστ} &= \text{ξεστ}; \ c = \text{ς}; \ \kappa = \text{κ}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ετφω} &= \text{ετφω} = \text{ετφω}; \ \Rightarrow T = \text{τ}; \ z = \text{ζ}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{κωυ} &= \text{κωυ} = \text{κωυ}, \text{actually pronounced} \ \text{κωυ}; \ \kappa = \text{κ} \ (\text{κ}); \ c = \text{ς}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ετψω} &= \text{ετψω} = \text{ετψω}; \ T = \text{τ}; \ \Rightarrow \ \phi = \text{φ}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{κου} &= \text{κου} = \text{κου}; \ \Rightarrow \ \kappa = \text{κ}; \ \Rightarrow \ \kappa = \text{κ}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ερημι} &= \text{ερημι} = \text{ερημι}; \ \Rightarrow \ \text{ερημι} = \text{ερημι}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ερης} &= \text{ερης} = \text{ερης}; \ \Rightarrow \ \text{ερης} = \text{ερης}.
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\begin{align*}
\text{ερης} &= \text{ερης} = \text{ερης}; \ \Rightarrow \ \text{ερης} = \text{ερης}.
\end{align*}
\]
\[ \begin{aligned} \text{In } \chi \text{min, } \varphi = \kappa = \gamma \text{ or } \alpha = \text{ in } \chi \text{min.} \\
\text{1. } \varphi = \pi \text{ in } \chi \text{irin.} \\
\text{2. } \chi = \pi \text{ in } \chi \text{in.} \end{aligned} \]

\[ \begin{aligned} \text{by confusion with the Arabic article } \text{Al.} \\
\text{The } \| \text{ disappeared after } \alpha \text{ in Coptic and Arabic, and also the } \|'. \\
\text{The } \chi \text{ disappeared after } \alpha \text{ in Coptic and Arabic.} \end{aligned} \]

\[ \begin{aligned} \text{I cannot tell how the Arabic form is to be explained.} \\
\varphi \text{ entirely omitted.} \\
\text{Kaim's pronunciation by inhabitants of } ' \gamma \text{nah}. \\
\text{Malaxot } = \text{ Malakot; } \varphi = \gamma; \text{ t = } \text{ t.} \\
\text{Malak = Malak, } \nu \nu \text{ dropped.} \end{aligned} \]


The above lists and their transliteration in Arabic as they actually exist in our own days are I hope quite sufficient to prove that these names of the towns were not pronounced according to rules at all. It was entirely a question of usage and hearing.