

**THE  
PRONUNCIATION OF GREEK;  
ACCENT AND QUANTITY.**

A PHILOLOGICAL INQUIRY.

BY  
JOHN STUART BLACKIE,

**Genel Yayın Yönetmeni / Editor in Chief • C. Cansın Selin Temana**

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**Türkiye Adres / Turkey Address:** Kızılay Mah. Fevzi Çakmak 1. Sokak

Ümit Apt No: 22/A Çankaya/ANKARA

**Telefon / Phone:** 05437675765

**web:** www.serüvenyayınevi.com

**e-mail:** serüvenyayınevi@gmail.com

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*“Sit omnibus rebus suum senium, sua juvenus; et ut verba verbis, sic etiam sonis sonos succedere permittamus.”*—BISHOP GARDINER.

*“This new pronunciation hath since prevailed, whereby we Englishmen speak Greek, and are able to understand one another, which nobody else can.”*—THOMAS FULLER.

*“Maxime cupio ut in omnibus Academiis nostris hodierna Græcorum pronuntiatio recipiatur.”*—BOISSONADE.

*“Neque dubitamus quin ERASMUS, si in tantam Græcæ pronuntiationis discrepantiam incidisset, vulgarem usum intactum et salvum reliquisset.”*—SEYFFARTH.

*“Ich gebe der neugriechischen Aus-sprache im Ganzen bei weitem den Vorzug.”*—THIERSCH.

*“Neque enim de cælo dilapsa ad nos pervenit Græcorum lingua, sed e patria sua una cum omnibus quæ habemus subsidiis, suo vestita cultu prodiit, quem tollere aut immutare velle esset imperium in linguam liberam exercere.”*—WETSTEN.

*“Die sogenannte Erasmische Aus-sprache, wie es in Deutschland erscheint, ist völlig grundlos, ein Gebilde man weiss nicht von wannen es kam, ein Gemische welches jeder sich zuzutzt nach eigener Lust und Willkühr.”*—LISCOV.

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## THE PRONUNCIATION OF GREEK, &c.

It is purely as a practical man, and with a direct practical result in view, that I venture to put forth a few words on the vexed question of the PRONUNCIATION OF GREEK. He were a frigid pedant, indeed, who, with the whole glorious literature of Hellas before him, and the rich vein of Hellenic Archæology, scarcely yet opened in Scotland, should, for the mere gratification of a subtle speculative restlessness, walk direct into this region of philological thorns. So far as my personal curiosity was concerned, Sir John Cheke, wrapt in his many folded mantle of Ciceronian verbosity, and the Right Reverend Stephen Gardiner's prætorian edicts in favour of Greek sounds,<sup>[1]</sup> and the βή ῥή of the old comedian's Attic sheep, might have been [Pg 6]allowed to sleep undisturbed on the library shelves. I had settled the question long ago in my own mind on broad grounds of common sense, rather than on any nice results that seemed obtainable from the investigations of the learned; but the nature of the public duties now imposed on me does not allow me to take my own course in such matters, merely because I think it right. I must shew to the satisfaction of my fellow-teachers and of my students, that I am not seeking after an ephemeral notoriety by the public galvanisation of a dead crotchet; that any innovations which I may propose are in reality, as so often happens in the political world also, and in the ecclesiastical, a mere recurrence to the ancient and established practice of centuries, and that whatever opinions I may entertain on points confessedly open to debate, I entertain not for myself alone, but in company with some of the ripest scholars and profoundest philologists of modern times. I have reason also for thinking with a recent writer, that the present time is peculiarly favourable for the reconsideration of the [Pg 7]question;<sup>[2]</sup> for, although Sir John Cheke might have said with some show of truth in his day, "*Græca jam lingua nemini patria est,*"<sup>[3]</sup> none but a prophetic partisan of universal Russian domination in the Mediterranean will now assert, that the living Greeks are not a nation and a

people who have a right to be heard on the question, how their own language is to be pronounced. Taking the Greek language as it appears in the works of the learned commentator Corais, in the poetry of the Soutzos and Rangabe, in the history of Perrhæbus, so highly spoken of by Niebuhr, and in the publications of the daily press at Athens; and taking the new kingdom for no greater thing than the intrigues of meddling diplomatists, its own wretched cabals, and the guns of Admiral Parker will allow it to be; it is plain that to disregard the witness of such a speaking fact, standing as it does upon the unbroken tradition and catholic philological succession of eighteen centuries, would be, much more manifestly now than in the days of the learned WETSTEN, to “exercise a despotism over a free language,” such as no man has a right to claim.<sup>[4]</sup> Besides, in Scotland we have already had our orthodox hereditary [Pg 8]routine in this matter disturbed by the invasion of English teachers of the Greek language; an invasion, no doubt, which our strong national feeling may look on with jealousy, but which we brought on ourselves by the shameful condition of prostration in which we allowed the philological classes in our higher schools and colleges to lie for two centuries; and it was not to be expected that these English teachers, being placed in a position which enabled them to give the law within a certain influential circle, should sacrifice their own traditional pronunciation of the Greek language, however arbitrary, to ours, in favour of which, in some points, there was little but the mere conservatism of an equally arbitrary usage to plead. Finding matters in this condition, I feel it impossible for me to waive the discussion of a matter already fermenting with all the elements of uncertainty. I have therefore taken the trouble of working my way through Havercamp’s two volumes, and comparing the arguments used in the famous old Cantabrigian controversy with those advanced by a well-informed modern member of the same learned corporation. I have taken the learned Germans, too, as in duty bound, on such

a question, into my counsels; I [Pg 9]have devoted not a little time and attention to the language and literature of modern Greece; and above all, I have carefully examined those places of the ancient rhetoricians and grammarians that touch upon the various branches of the subject. With all these precautions, if I shall not succeed in making converts to my views, I hope, at least with reasonable men, to escape the imputation of rashness and superficiality.

The exact history of our present pronunciation of Greek, both in England and Scotland, I have not learning enough curiously to trace; but one thing seems to me plain, that all the great scholars in this country, and on the continent generally, in the fifteenth, and the early part of the sixteenth century, could have known nothing of our present arbitrary method of pronouncing,<sup>[5]</sup> for they could pronounce Greek no other way than as they received it from Chrysoloras, Gaza, Lascaris, Musurus, and the other native Greeks who were their masters. Erasmus was, if not absolutely the first,<sup>[6]</sup> certainly the first scholar of extensive European influence and popularity who ventured to disturb the tradition of the Byzantine elders in this matter; but his famous dialogue, *De recta Latini Græcique sermonis* [Pg 10]*pronuntiatione*, did not appear till the year 1528, by which time so strong a prescription had already run in favour of the received method, that it seems strange how even his learning and wit should have prevailed to overturn it. But there are periods in the history of the world when the minds of men are naturally disposed to receive all sorts of novelties; and the era of the Reformation was one of them. Erasmus, though a conservative in religion, (as many persons are who are conservative in nothing else,) pleased his free speculative whim with all sorts of imaginations; and among other things fell—though, [Pg 11]if what Wetsten tells be true, in a very strange way<sup>[7]</sup>—on the notion of purging the pronunciation of the classical languages of all those defects which belonged to it, whether by degenerate

tradition or perverse provincialism, and erecting in its stead an ideal pronunciation, made up of erudite conjecture and philosophical argumentation. Nothing was more easy than to prove that in the course of two thousand years the orthoepy of the language of the Greeks had declined considerably from the perfection in which its musical fulness had rolled like a river of gold from the mouth of Plato, or had been dashed like a thunderbolt of Jove from the indignant lips of Demosthenes; yet more easy was it, and admirable game for such a fine spirit as Erasmus, to evoke the shades of Cicero and Quintilian, and make mirth to them out of a Latin oration delivered before the Emperor Maximilian, by a twittering French courtier and a splay-mouthed Westphalian baron.<sup>[8]</sup> It is certain also that there are in that dialogue many admirable observations on the blundering practices of the schoolmasters, and even [Pg 12]the learned professors, his contemporaries, which very many of them in that day, and the great majority even now have wanted either sense or courage to attend to; observations which, I doubt not, will yet bear fruit in the present age, if education is to be advanced in the only way possible, viz., by those whose profession it is to teach others, learning in the first place to teach themselves. But in one great point of his rich and various discourse, the learned Dutchman was more witty than wise, and achieved a success where he was altogether wrong, or only half-right, that has been denied to him where he is altogether right. While his admirable observations on accent and quantity, and many of his precepts on the practical art of teaching languages, have been totally lost sight of by the great mass of our classical teachers, his strictures on the pronunciation of the Greek vowels and diphthongs have been received more or less by pedagogic men in all parts of Europe; or at least prevailed so far as to shake the faith of scholars in the pronunciation of the native Greek, and lead them to invent a new and arbitrary Hellenic utterance for each country, an altogether barbarous conglomerate, made up of modern national

peculiarities and scraps of Erasmian philology. This is a sorry state of matters; but as [Pg 13]European scholarship then stood, innovators could look for no more satisfactory result. Neither Erasmus nor the scholars who followed his “divisive courses” in England and other countries, were in possession of philological materials sufficiently comprehensive for settling so nice a point. Much less could they use the materials in their hands with that spirit of calm philosophic survey, and that touch of fine critical sagacity which the ripe scholars of Germany now exhibit. It was one thing to quarrel learnedly with the pronunciation of Chrysoloras, and to chuckle with academic pride over the tautophonic tenuity of σὺ δ’ εἶπέ μοι μὴ μῆκος, and other such ingeniously gathered scraps of Atticism in the mouth of a modern Turkish serf; another, and a far more serious thing, to draw out a complete table of elocutionary sounds, such as they existed at any given period in Greek literature; say at the successive epochs of Homer, Æschylus, Plato, Callimachus, Strabo, Chrysostom. Bishop Gardiner, therefore, was right to press this point hard against the Erasmians,—“*Quod vero difficillimum dicebam neque statuis neque potes, ut tanquam ad punctum constituas sonorum modum. Ab usu præsentis manifeste recedis: sed an ad veterum sonorum formam omnino accedas, nihil expeditum est.*” Here, as in more serious matters, the good Bishop saw that it was easier to destroy than [Pg 14]to build up; and therefore he interposed his interdict despotically in the Roman style, *ne quid detrimenti respublica capiat*. But these maxims of old Roman aristocracy do not apply to the democracy of letters. So the Bishop’s philological thunderbolt started more heretics than it laid. The love of liberty was now conjoined with the love of originality; to speak Greek with Erasmus became now the sign of academic patriotism and the watchword of philological progress. FORCE being the chief apparent power on the one side, it was naturally felt by those against whom it was exercised, that REASON was altogether on their side. The matter was therefore



practically settled on the side of persecuted innovation; the subtlety of a few academic doctors triumphed proudly over the long tradition of Byzantine centuries, and the living protest of millions of men, with Greek blood in their veins and Greek words in their mouths; and they who were once the few despised Nazarenes of the scholastic world, are now a sort of philological Scribes and Pharisees, sitting in the seat of Aristarchus, whose dictum it is dangerous to dispute.

Nevertheless, Erasmus, Wetsten distinctly asserts, (pp. 15, 115,) did not himself adopt in his practice the perfect theory of Hellenic vocalization which he sketched out. So much the less cause is there for [Pg 15]our having any hesitation in considering the whole question as now open, and treating it exactly as if Professor John Cheke, and Professor Thomas Smith of Cambridge University, and Adolphus Mekerchus, knight and perpetual senator of Bruges, and the other Havercampian hoplites had never existed. Let us inquire, therefore, in the first place, whether any certain data exist on which such a matter can be settled scientifically. We shall give only the grand outlines of the question, referring the special student to the English work of PENNINGTON already quoted, the German work of LISKOV, and the Latin of SEYFFARTH.<sup>[9]</sup>

Now, there are five ways by which the method of pronunciation used by any gone generation of “articulate-speaking men” may be ascertained, if not with a curious exactness in every point, at least with such an amount of approximation as will be esteemed satisfactory by a reasonable inquirer. FIRST, we have the imitation in articulate letters of natural sounds and of the cries of animals. There is nothing more certain in the philosophy of language than that whole classes of words expressive of sound were formed on the [Pg 16]principle of a direct dramatic imitation of the sound signified. Thus the words DASH, HASH, SMASH, in our most significant Saxon tongue, evidently express an action producing sound, in

which the strong vowel sound of A is combined with a sharp sound to which the aspirated S was considered the nearest approximation by the original framer of the word. So, in the names expressive of flowing water, the liquids L and R are observed to preponderate in all languages, these being the sounds which are actually given forth by the natural objects so signified: thus *river*, ῥέω, *strom*, *flumen*, *purl*, the Hebrew *nahar* and *nahal*, &c. And in the same manner, if the bird which we call CUCKOO was called by the Latins *cuculus*, by the Greeks κόκκυξ, and by the Germans *kukuk*, no person can doubt that the vowel sounds at least, in these words, were intended to be a more or less exact echo of the cry of the bird so designated. In arguing, however, from such words, care must be taken not to press the argument too closely; for two things are manifest—that the original framer of the words might have given, and in all likelihood did give only a loose, and not a curiously exact imitation of the sound or cry he meant to express; and then that in the course of centuries the word may have deviated so far from its original pronunciation, as to be no [Pg 17]longer a very striking likeness of the natural sound it is intended to imitate. These considerations explain the fact how the very simple and obvious cry made by sheep, which no child will mistake, is expressed by three very different vowels, in three of the most notable European languages,—our own *bleat*, the Latin *balare*, and the Greek βληχή, pronounced like A in *mate*, according to the practice of the Greeks in the classical age. From such words, therefore, no safe conclusion can be drawn as to the pronunciation of any particular word at any particular period of a highly advanced civilization. It is different, however, with words not forming any part of the spoken system of articulate speech, but invented expressly for the occasion, in order to represent by way of echo certain natural sounds. In this way, should we find in an old Athenian spelling-book this sentence, “*the sheep cries* Βή,” we should be most justly entitled to conclude, if not that the Greek *B* was

pronounced exactly like the corresponding letter in our alphabet, (for the consonants are less easily fixed down in such imitations of inarticulate cries,) certainly that *H* had the sound of our *Ai*; and this conclusion would be irresistible if other arguments were at hand, such as will presently be mentioned, leading plainly to the same conclusion. Here, however, [Pg 18]also, care must be taken not to generalize too largely; for, strictly speaking, the inference from such a fact as the one supposed, is only that at the particular time and place where the said book was composed, a particular vowel sounded to the ear of the writer in a particular way; the proof remaining perfectly open that at some other place during the same period, or at the same place fifty years later, the same vowel may have been pronounced in a perfectly different way.<sup>[10]</sup> Those who are at all acquainted with the style of reasoning on such points, exemplified in almost every page of Havercamp's Collection, will see the necessity of applying at every step of their progress the rein of a strictly logical restraint.

Another and a most scientific way by which we may recover the traces of a lost orthoepy, is from the physiological description of the action of the organs of speech in producing the sounds belonging to certain letters, as preserved in the works of grammatical or rhetorical [Pg 19]writers. This method of proof, taken by itself, may, no doubt, fail of giving complete satisfaction in delicate cases; for it is extremely difficult to give such an exact description of the action of the organs of speech as will enable a student of an unknown language to reproduce the sound, without the assistance of the living voice. But, taken along with other circumstances, the proof from this source may be so strong as absolutely to force conviction; or at all events imperatively to exclude certain suppositions, which, without the existence of such a description, would have been admissible. Now, it happens most fortunately for our present inquiry, that a very

satisfactory scale of the Greek vowel-sounds is extant in the works of the well-known historian and critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who lived in the time of Augustus Cæsar. This we shall quote at length immediately; and as the author was a professional rhetorician, no higher authority on such a point, for the epoch to which he belongs, can be wished for.<sup>[11]</sup>

Again, a very large and various field of proof lies in those instances of the direct transference of the sounds of one language into those of [Pg 20]another, which literary composition sometimes requires, and which are sure to occur very frequently in an extensive literature like the Greek. Examples of this are most common in the case of proper names, and occur especially in translations, as in the ancient translations of the Hebrew Bible and of the New Testament, which have been admirably used for the illustration of Greek orthoepy in the work of Seyffarth. When Strabo, for instance, (p. 213,) in the case given by Pennington, (p. 73,) says of the inhabitants of the newly colonized town of Como in Upper Italy,—Νεο κομίται ἐκλήθησαν ἅπαντες· τοῦτο δὲ μεθερμηνευθὲν Νο δουμκόμουμ λέγεται, we learn that the diphthong ου was considered by an intelligent scientific man in the time of Augustus, as being either the exact equipollent of the Latin U, or the nearest approximation to it within the compass of Hellenic vocalization; and when we are told further that the modern Greeks and the modern Italians pronounce the same vowels the same way even now, we cannot for a moment doubt that the method of pronouncing that Greek diphthong now practised in Scotland (as in *boom*) is the correct one. From the same passage we may legitimately draw the inference, with regard to the second letter in the Greek alphabet, that it was in all probability pronounced [Pg 21]softly like our V; for our B is no representative whatever of the Latin V, whether we suppose that letter to have been pronounced like the corresponding letter with us, or like our W. The modern

Germans, in the same way, who have not our sound of W, substitute for it in their language the sound of V regularly, as in WASSER, which they pronounce VASSER, and many such words. If, therefore, an ancient Greek wished to express the letter V, and does so by his own *B*, the inference is irresistible, either that his *B* was pronounced like our V, and was viewed as the exact expression of the Latin letter so pronounced, or as an approximation to it, if pronounced like our W; or, on the other hand, that the Greek organ being utterly incapable of pronouncing the soft sound of the Latin V, and having no letter or combination of letters capable of expressing it, gave up the attempt in despair, and wrote the soft Latin V with a hard Greek *B*. But this supposition is improbable, for three reasons: FIRST, because the general character of the Greek language, as contrasted with the Roman, was not that of blunt hardness but of liquid softness, (see QUINCTĪLIAN and CĪCERO, *passim*;) SECONDLY, the ancient Greeks, in fact, had a combination of letters by which they could express in an approximate way the Latin V, namely, *ov*, and by which they actually did so express it on [Pg 22] many occasions; THIRDLY, the modern Greeks likewise do pronounce the second letter of the alphabet like the Latin V; and the burden of proof lies on those who assert that the ancients pronounced it otherwise.

A fourth method of proof lies in the remarks made on the identical or cognate sounds of syllables, either incidentally by general writers, or specially by grammarians in treating orthography and orthoepy; and in the accidental interchange of letters in inscriptions and coins. Of the strictly grammatical kind of evidence a very valuable fragment has been preserved in the Ἐπιμερισμοί of Herodian, the Priscian of the Greek grammarians, published by Boissonnade in 1817. In this work are alphabetically arranged large classes of words, which, while they are pronounced with the same vowel to the ear,

are differently spelt to the eye; as if I should say in English that the vowel-sounds in the words FAIR, FARE, HEÏR, THERE, have the same or a similar orthoepy, but a very different orthography. Of the other, or incidental kind, may be mentioned those plays of sound with which epigrammatic writers sometimes amuse themselves, and of which the echo-poems found in some of the collections of modern Latin, are the most notable example. Thus, Erasmus, in ridicule of the Ciceronians, [Pg 23]wrote two lines, of which the first, a hexameter, ends with *Cicerone*, the ablative case of the great orator's Latin name, while the second line, a pentameter, striking the ear as a sort of echo of the first, ends with the Greek word ὄνε, *O you ass!* from which significant jingle the inference is ready enough, that the penultimate syllable of both these words, in the classical pronunciation of Erasmus, was accented, and that the sound of the vowel in both was the same. The proof, of course, in such a case would have been equally complete if the word in the second line had been spelt with a different vowel instead of with the same.

*Fifthly*, In determining the pronunciation of any language at any past period of its history, its presently existing pronunciation, though furnishing no absolute proof, is entitled to be taken into account along with other circumstances, and in the absence of any distinct evidence to the contrary, must be taken as conclusive. Erasmus appealed with great success to the vanity of academic men, when he said, with reference to the common Greek pronunciation in his day, "*Pronuntiationem, quam nunc habent eruditi, non aliunde petunt quam a vulgo, scis quali magistro;*" but to this a learned advocate of the existing Itacism very wisely replies, that even supposing it were [Pg 24]true that the vulgar pronunciation of Greek comes to us only from the VULGAR, the common people, as is well known, are generally far more tenacious of hereditary national accent than the upper classes of

society,<sup>[12]</sup> of which we have a familiar English example in the case of the stout Yorkshiremen, who have preserved for two thousand years the deep hollow sound of *u*, (saying *Ool*, for *Hull*, &c.) which is the normal sound of that vowel in all the European languages. In this view it is passing strange to note, that the slender sound of the first syllable of ἡμέρα, as if written *heeméra*, which is the rule with the modern Greeks, is the precise sound, that in a passage of Plato is noted as the ancient sound, compared with the fuller sound, *haiméra*, fashionable in his day;<sup>[13]</sup> while Aristophanes<sup>[14]</sup> in one of his plays, introduces a conservative old Spartan lady saying ἔκει, instead of ἦκει; a distinct proof both that η was not considered identical with ι in his day, and that it was then sounded as it is now, by one of the most ancient people in the Pelasgic peninsula.

Such appear to me to be the methods of proof that lie open to an [Pg 25]inquirer into the orthoepy of any language, living or dead, at any given period of its history. With these, of course, the student must combine such general rules on the philosophy of language, and on the habits of human speech, as a little experience of practical philology will readily supply. I now proceed to state the results to which I have arrived, by a thorough study of the existing evidences. After that we shall make our practical inference, and answer a few natural objections.

In the shape of results, therefore, all that my present purely practical purpose requires me to lay down, with regard to ancient Greek vocalization, may be combined in the following two propositions—

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[Pg 26]

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Both these propositions, so far as the vowels are concerned, are proved by a single glance at the passage of Dionysius (*περὶ συντάξεως*) already referred to, and which I shall now translate:—

“There are seven vowels; two long, η and ω, and two short, ε and ο; three both long and short, α, ι, υ. All these are pronounced by the wind-pipe acting on the breath, while the mouth remains in its simple natural state, and the tongue remaining at rest takes no part in the utterance.

Now, the long vowels, and those which may be either long or short, when they are used as long, are pronounced with the stream of breath, extended and continuous; but the short vowels, and those used as short, are uttered by a stroke of the mouth cut off immediately on [Pg 27]emission, the wind-pipe exerting its power only for the shortest time. Of all these, the most agreeable sounds are produced by the long vowels, and those which are used as long, because their sound continues for a considerable time, and they do not suddenly break off the energy of the breath. Of an inferior value are the short vowels, and those used as short, because the volume of sound in them is small and broken. Of the long again, the most sonorous is the  $\alpha$ , when it is used as long, for it is pronounced by opening the mouth to the fullest, while the breath strikes the palate. The next is  $\eta$ , because in its formation, while the mouth is moderately open, the sound is driven out from below at the mouth of the tongue, and keeping in that quarter does not strike upwards. Next comes the  $\omega$ , for in it the mouth is rounded, and contracts the lips, and the stroke of the mouth is sent against the extreme end of the mouth, ( $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\rho\sigma\tau\acute{o}\mu\iota\omicron\nu$ , the lips, I presume.) Inferior to this is the  $\upsilon$ , for in this vowel an observable contraction takes place in the extreme region of the lips, so that the sonorous breath comes out attenuated and compressed. Last of all comes  $\iota$ , for here the stroke of the breath takes place about the teeth, while the opening of the mouth is small, and the lips contribute nothing towards giving the sound more dignity as it passes through. Of the short vowels, neither is sonorous; but  $o$  is the least agreeable, for it parts the mouth more than the other, and receives the stroke nearer the wind-pipe.”[Pg 28]

Now, while every point of this physiological description may not be curiously accurate,<sup>[15]</sup> there is enough of obvious certainty in it to settle some of the most important points of Greek orthoepy, so far as the rhetorician of Halicarnassus is concerned; and his

authority in this matter is that of a man of the highest skill, which, as the daily practice of our law courts shows, is worth that of a thousand persons taken at random. That the ITACISM of the modern Greeks did not exist, or was not allowed by good speakers<sup>[16]</sup> in the time of this writer, so far as the single vowels are concerned, is abundantly manifest; for not only do η, ι, υ, which the modern Greeks identify, mean different sounds, but the sound of the η in particular is removed as far from the ι as it could well be in any scale of vocalization, which sets out with the supremacy of the broad A. And if these sounds were distinguished [Pg 29]by polished ears in the days of Augustus Cæsar, it is contrary to all analogy of language to suppose that in the days of Alexander the Great, Plato, or Pericles, they should have been confounded. Provincialisms, indeed, and certain itacizing peculiarities, such as that noticed by Plato, ([page 24 above](#)), there might have been; but that any language should confound its vowel-sounds in its best days, and distinguish them in its days of commencing feebleness, is contrary to all that succession of things which we daily witness. Different letters were originally invented to express different sounds, and did so naturally for a long time, till fashion and freak combined with habit, either overran the phonetic rule of speech by a rank growth of exceptive oddities, (as has happened in English,) or fixed upon the organs of articulation some strong tendency towards the predominance of a particular sound, which in process of time became a marked idiosyncrasy, from which centuries of supervening usage could not shake the language free. This is what has taken place in Greece with regard to certain vowel-sounds. But before pursuing these observations further, let us see distinctly what the special points are, that this remarkable passage of the Halicarnassian distinctly brings out. The ascertained points are these,—[Pg 30]

1. The long or slender sound of the English A, (as in *lane*.) is not acknowledged by Dionysius, nor is its existence possible under his description. It is altogether an anomaly and a monstrosity—like so many things in this island—and should never have been tolerated for a moment in the pronunciation of Latin or Greek.<sup>[17]</sup>

2. The slender sound of η used by the English and the modern Greeks, is an attenuation the farthest possible removed from the conception of Dionysius. About ε there is no dispute anywhere.

3. The sound of υ described is manifestly the French *u*, or German *ü* heard in *Brüder*, *Bühne*: a very delicate and elegant sound bordering closely on the slender sound of *i*, (*ee*, English,) into which it is sometimes attenuated by the Germans, and with which, by a poetical license, it is allowed to rhyme, (as *Brüder*—*nieder*.) but having no connection with the [Pg 31]English sound of *oo*, (as in *boom*.) with which, in Scotland, it is confounded. This with us is the more unpardonable, as our Doric dialect in the south possesses a similar sound in such words as *guid*, *bluid*, attenuated by the Northerners into the slender sound of *gued*, and *bleed*. The English sound of long *u* is, as Walker has pointed out, a compound sound, of which one element is a sort of consonant—Y. It is, besides, altogether a piece of English idiosyncrasy, that we have no reason to suppose ever existed anywhere, either amongst Greeks or Romans.<sup>[18]</sup>

4. The English sound of *i* is another of John Bull's phonetic crotchets, and must be utterly discarded. It is, in fact, a compound sound, of which the deep vowel α is the predominant element—an element which, we have seen, stands at the very opposite end of the Halicarnassian's scale!

So far as we see, therefore, the English, Scotch, and modern Greek methods of pronouncing the five vowels all depart in some point from [Pg 32]the highest authority that



can be produced on the subject; in fact, the single vowel  $\omega$  alone has preserved its full rounded purity uncorrupted by any party. But with regard to the other four vowels, there is a marked difference in the degree of deflection from the classical norm; for, while the Scotch err only in one point,  $\upsilon$ , the modern Greeks err in two,  $\eta$  and  $\upsilon$ , (though their error is but a very nice one in the case of  $\upsilon$ , and has, in both cases, long centuries of undeviating usage to stand on,) and the English err in all the four points,  $\alpha$ ,  $\eta$ ,  $\iota$ , and  $\upsilon$ , and that in the most paradoxical and abnormal fashion that could have been invented, had it been the direct purpose of our Oxonian and Etonian doctors to put all classical propriety at defiance. In such lawless anarchy has ended the restoration of the divine speech of Plato, so loftily promised by Sir John Cheke; and so true in this small matter also, is that wise parable of the New Testament, which advises reformers to beware of putting new patches on old vestments. Instead of the robe of genuine Melibeian purple which Erasmus wished to throw round the shoulders of the old Greek gods, our English scholars, following in his track of conjectural innovation, have produced an English clown's motley jacket, which the Zeus of Olympus never saw, and even Momus would disdain. But let us proceed to the diphthongs.[Pg 33]

Unhappily Dionysius, by a very unaccountable omission, has given us no information on this head; so we are left to pursue our inquiries over a wide field of stray inquiry, and conclude from a greater mass of materials with much less appearance of scientific certainty. The following results, however, to any man that will fairly weigh the cumulative power of the evidence brought together with such laborious conscientiousness by Liscov and Seyffarth, must appear unquestionable:—

1. It is proved by evidence reaching as far back as the time of the first Ptolemies, that the diphthong  $\text{Ai}$  was pronounced like the same diphthong in our English word *gain*.<sup>[19]</sup> So the diphthong is pronounced by the

living Greek nation. There is, therefore, the evidence of more than 2000 years in its favour, and against the prevalent pronunciation, which gives it the broad sound of *ai* in the German word KAISER, rhyming pretty nearly with our English word WISER.[Pg 34]

2. The diphthong *Ei* was pronounced in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus like the English *ee* in *seen*, or *ea* in *beam*.<sup>[20]</sup> This pronunciation it retains at the present day. In this, as in the preceding case, we have a striking proof of the tenacity with which a great nation clings to elocutional peculiarities. What likelihood is there that a people, so constant to itself for 2000 years under the most adverse circumstances, should, in the 200 years previous to that period, have known nothing of what was afterwards one of its most marked characteristics?

3. The evidence for the pronunciation of the diphthong *OI* is more scanty. Unfortunately the Septuagint translators use this diphthong only once for expressing a Hebrew name in the whole compass of the Old Testament. From other evidence, and by a train of deduction that appears somewhat slippery, Seyffarth comes to the conclusion that its original pronunciation was probably that of the German *oe*, from which it was by degrees softened into the French *u*, and lastly into the slender sound of *i* (*ee*), which it now has. But as I am dealing with certainties in this paper, and not with probabilities, it will be enough to say that LISCOV [Pg 35] has produced evidence to shew that it was confounded with *i* so early as the time of Julius Cæsar, **ΙΩΝΙΣΤΗΣ** being found on a coin of the great dictator for οἰωνιστής. So in the coins of Emperors of the second century, **ΟΙΚΟΣΤΟΥ** frequently occurs for εἰκοστοῦ.<sup>[21]</sup> That λοιμός was not pronounced exactly like λιμός in the time of Thucydides, has been concluded from a well-known passage in his second book, (c. 54;) but the passage is of doubtful interpretation,<sup>[22]</sup> and no man can tell at this time of day what the exact, perhaps a very small shade of, difference, was between the two sounds.

4. In the above three examples, the Scotch and the English have equally conspired to overthrow the living tradition of two centuries, by an act of arbitrary academical conceit or pedagogic carelessness. In the case [Pg 36]of OU, we Northerners have again been happy; while the English, with their fatal facility of blundering in such matters, have invented a pronunciation of this diphthong which seems more natural to a growling Saxon mastiff than to the smooth fulness of ancient Greek eloquence. The Greek writers, with great uniformity, agree in expressing by this diphthong the sound of the Latin *u*; while the modern Greeks, with equal uniformity, agree in pronouncing their *ou* as the Italians pronounce *u*; that is to say, like the English *oo* in *boom*. Seyffarth classes this diphthong with *a* and *i*, *o* and *e*, as a sound about which there is no controversy.

5. The diphthongs AU and EU follow; and in their case the contrast between the pronunciation of the living Greeks, and that of those who are taught only out of dead grammars and dictionaries, is so striking, that the contest has been peculiarly keen. Here, however, as is wont to be the case in more important matters, it may be that after much dusty discussion, erudite wrangling, and inky hostility, it shall turn out that both parties are in the right. On the first blush of the matter, it seems plain that such words as βασιλεύς, ναῦν, καλεῦνται, sound extremely harsh, and not [Pg 37]according to the famous euphony of the Attic ear, if in them the second letter of the diphthong receive the consonantal sound of *v* or *f* given by the modern Greeks. VASÍLEFS, NAFN, CALEFNTAE—these are sounds which no chaste classic ear can tolerate, and which, among the phenomena of human articulation, are more naturally classed with such harsh Germanisms as *Pfingst*, *Probst*, &c., than with any sound that can be imagined to have been wedded euphionously to Apollo's lute. All this is very true; and yet, as modern German is not all harsh, so ancient Greek, it may be, was not all mellow;

and no mere general talk about euphony or cacophony can, in so freakish a thing as human speech, be allowed to settle any question of orthoepy. Now, when we look into the matter an inch beyond the film of such shallow scholastic declamation, we find that so early as the time of Crassus, that is, in the first half of the first century before the Christian era, the diphthong *au*, which we pronounce *ou*, (as in *bound*,) and the English like the same vowel in their own language, (as in *vault*,) was actually enunciated consonantly like *av* or *af*. For Cicero (*Divinat.* ii. 40) tells the anecdote how, when that unfortunate soldier was on his way to the East, and about embarking in a ship at Brundisium, he happened to meet a Greek on the quay calling out CAUNÍAS! by which call the basket [Pg 38]slung over his shoulder might have plainly indicated that he meant FIGS! figs of the best quality (worthy of a triumvir) from Caunus, in the south-west corner of Asia Minor; but the triumvir's ear—dark destiny brooding in his soul—caught up the syllables separately, as *Cav' ne eas*—**BEWARE HOW YOU GO!** Now, as no person pretends that the *v* in *caveo* was pronounced like the *u* in *causa*, or could be so scanned in existing Latin poetry, it follows that the *au* in Caunias was pronounced by a Greek of those times as a *v* or *f*, exactly as the living Greeks pronounce it now. This is one example, among the many that we have adduced, shewing in a particularly striking way how impossible it is for modern schoolmasters, judging from mere abstract considerations, and bad scholastic habits, to say how the ancient Greeks might or might not have pronounced any particular combination of sounds. No doubt this Calabrian fig-merchant might not have pronounced that combination of letters exactly in the same way that Pericles did 400 years earlier, when, from the tribunal on the Athenian Pnyx, with the ominous roar of a thirty years' war in his ear, "he lightened and thundered and confounded Greece;" but there is no reason, on the other hand, why a Greek fig-merchant and a Greek statesman should not have [Pg 39]pronounced certain

rough syllables in the same way, (for a great orator requires rough as well as smooth syllables;) and this much at least is certain, the anecdote proves that the modern pronunciation of ἀντός, *aftos*, is ancient as well as modern; and the talk of those who will have it that this, and other most characteristic sounds of the living orthoepy, were introduced by the Turks and the Venetians, or the Greeks themselves under their perverse influence, is mere talk—talk of that kind in which scholastic men are fond of indulging, when, knowing nothing, they wish to have it appear that they know everything. What was the real state of the pronunciation with regard to this and the other diphthong εῦ in the days of Pericles or Plato, we have no means of knowing. Meanwhile the result which Seyffarth, after a long and learned investigation, brings out, that they were pronounced before a vowel as *v*, or the German *w*, and before a consonant as a real diphthong, seems probable enough. This agrees both with the natural laws of elocutional physiology, and explains how the imperial name FLAVIUS in Roman coins (*Liscov*, p. 51) came to be written sometimes ΦΛΑΥΙΟΣ and sometimes ΦΛΑΒΙΟΣ. However this be, there is no doubt that the consonantal [Pg 40]pronunciation of these letters has for more than 1800 years been known among the Greeks. It has therefore all the claims that belong to a venerable conservatism; whereas, if we reject its title, we throw ourselves loose into an element of mere conjecture; as no person can tell us whether Demosthenes pronounced αῦ in the Scotch or English way, (supposing one of the two to be right;) and as for εῦ, what extraordinary feats the human tongue can play with it, we may learn from the Germans, who pronounce it like *oy* in our *boy*—a rare lesson to the restorers of a lost pronunciation how much is to be learnt in such a field from mere argument and analogy!

Let us now collect the different points of this inquiry under a single glance. In the days of the first Emperors,

and, in a majority of cases, as early as the first Ptolemies, the scale of Greek vocalization, according to the best evidence now obtainable, was as follows:—

Letter.	Power.	
Long A	= a,	as in <i>father</i> .
Short A	= a,	” <i>hat</i> .
H	= ai,	” <i>pain</i> .
E	= e,	” <i>get</i> .
Ω	= o,	” <i>pore</i> .
O	= o,	” <i>got</i> .
Long Y	= ü,	” <i>Bühne</i> . [Pg 41]
Short Y	=	the same shortened.
Long I	= ee,	as in <i>green</i> .
Short I	=	the same shortened.
AI	= ai,	as in <i>pain</i> .
EI	= ee,	” <i>green</i> .
OI	= ee,	” <i>green</i> .
OU	= oo,	” <i>boom</i> .
AU	= av, af	or?
EU	= ev, ef,	or?

Now, in stating the results thus, I wish it to be observed in the first place, that I throw no sort of doubt on the possibility that in the days of Herodotus and Pericles some of the diphthongal sounds here declared normal in the days of the Ptolemies and the Cæsars might have been pronounced otherwise. The theory of Pennington, also, (p. 51), that there might have co-existed in ancient times a system of orthoepy for reciting the old poets, considerably different from that used in common conversation, may be entertained by whosoever pleases, and is not without its uses; but in the present purely practical inquiry we must leave all mere theory out of view. It is also perfectly open to Liscov, or any philologist, working out a suggestion of the great Herman, to prove from the internal analogy of the

language, and especially from a comparison of the most ancient dialects,<sup>[23]</sup> that *originally* the diphthongs were pronounced differently from what [Pg 42]they are now, and were in the days of Ptolemy Philadelphus, (Homer unquestionably said, *παις*—*païs*, and not *pace*. II. Z, 467;) but in the present investigation, as a practical man, I want something better than general probabilities and philosophical negations, or even isolated correct assertions; I want a complete scheme of Greek pronunciation, for some particular age, congruous within itself, and standing on something like historical evidence. This I find only in the pronunciation of the modern Greeks, or in that of the Ptolemies and Cæsars, which differs from the other only in a very few points. What then, we may ask, should hinder us from at once adopting this pronunciation? Nothing, I imagine, but the dull inertness of mere conservatism, (which in such matters is very potent,) the conceit of academical men, proud of their own clumsy invention, and the dread of ITACISM. Is it not monstrous, we hear it said, that half a dozen different vowels, or combinations of vowels, should be pronounced in the same way, and that in such a fashion as only curs yelp, and mice squeak, and tenuous shades with feeble whine flit through the airy paths that lead to Pluto's unsubstantial hall? Now, I at once admit that the prevalence of the [Pg 43]slender sound of *i* (*ee*), is a corruption from the original purity of Hellenic vocalization, from which I have no doubt the Pelasgi, and the venerable patriarchs who put up the lions, now seen on the gates of Mycenæ, were free; but no language spoken by a polished people is free from some corruption of this kind; and this particular corruption, like the defects observable in men of great original genius, is characteristic. In such strongly marked men as Beethoven, Samuel Johnson, and John Hunter the physiologist, nothing is more easy than for the nice moralist to point out half a dozen points of character that he could have wished otherwise. So it is with language. Who, for instance, would

not wish to reform the capriciousness of our English systemless system of spelling and pronunciation? Who can say that we have not too much of the sibilant sound of *s* and *th* in our language? who will not lament the want of body in our vocalization, and the tendency to the ineffective tribrachic and even proceleusmatic accent in the termination of our polysyllables? In German, again, who does not indulge in a spurt of indignation against “*Wenn Ich mich nicht,*” and other such common collocations of gutturals? and in Italian are we not so cloyed with *ōnes* and *āres*, and other broad [Pg 44]trochaic modulations, that we long for the resurrection of some Gothic Quinctilian to inoculate the luscious “*lingua Toscana in bocca Romana,*” with a few harsh solecisms; while the French, who for cleverness and refinement, (and some other things also,) are a sort of Greeks, do so clip and mince the stout old Roman lingo, which they have adopted, that except in the mouth of flower girls and ballet dancers, their dialect is altogether intolerable to many a masculine ear. All these things are true; but no sane man thinks of rebelling against such hereditary characteristics of a human language, any more than he would against the ingrained peculiarities of human character. We take these things as we find them; just as we must make the best of a snub nose, or a set of bad teeth in an otherwise pretty face. So also we must even attune our ears to the Itacism of the Greeks; otherwise we shall assuredly sin against a notable characteristic of the language, much more intimately connected with the genius of that singular people, than many a clipper of new Greek grammars and filcher of notes to old Attic plays imagines. What says QUINCTILIAN? *Non possumus esse tam GRACILES; simus FORTIORES,* (xii. 10.) Now, I ask the defenders of our modern system of pronouncing Greek in this country, which some of them perhaps call classical and Erasmian, [Pg 45]but which is in fact, as has been proved, an incoherent jabber of barbarisms, what if the so much decried *Itacism* were part of this *gracilitas*, this



slenderness or tenuity of ancient Hellenic speech, by which it was to the ear of the greatest of Latin rhetoricians so strikingly distinguished from the Roman? Certain it is, that the rude Teutonic sounds of *ou* and *i*, (English *i* and *ai* in *Kaiser*), that we hear so often in English Greek, do not answer to Quintilian's description. In fact, both English and Scotch, instead of preserving this natural contrast between Greek and Roman enunciation, have in this, and in other matters, (as we shall see presently, when we come to talk of accents,) done everything in their power to sweep it away; and of nothing am I more firmly convinced than of this, that a living conception of what the spoken Greek language really was in its best days, will never be attained by any scholar who has not the courage to kick all the Erasmian academic gear aside for a season, and take a free amble with some living Christopoulos, or Papadopoulos, on the banks of the Ilissus, or round the base of Lycabettus. This living experience of the language is indeed the only efficient way to argue against the learned prejudices of academic men; for, as THIERSCH well observes, every one laughs at that pronunciation to which he has not been [Pg 46]accustomed, (*Sprachlehre*, sect. xvii. 3;) and no man can live at Athens for any time, without having his ears reconciled to a slight deviation from perfect euphony, or even coming to admire it, as one sometimes does the lisp of a pretty woman, or the squint of an arch humorist.<sup>[24]</sup>

So much for the vowel-sounds. I say nothing of the consonants, because they are of less consequence in the controversy. I have already spoken incidentally about  $\beta$ , ([p. 21 above](#)), and I have no wish to write a [Pg 47]complete treatise. Detailed information on minute points of neo-Hellenic pronunciation may be found in Pennington's work already quoted, and in a recent work by Corpe.<sup>[25]</sup> I now proceed to the matter of ACCENT, which we shall find to be no less important, but happily much more easily settled.

“In the pronunciation of a Greek word,” says JELF,<sup>[26]</sup> “regard ought to be had both to accent and quantity;” a most significant power lying in that word OUGHT, as we know well that many teachers in this country pay a very irregular regard to quantity in reading, and very few, if any, pay any regard to accent.<sup>[27]</sup> But that the proposition laid down by Mr. JELF is true, no scholar can doubt for a moment, though Mr. PENNINGTON, in the year 1844, most evidently anticipated a great amount of stolidity, obstinacy, and scepticism, among his academic friends on this point; with such minute and scrupulous care, and breadth of philological preparation does he [Pg 48]set himself to prove, what no man that had ever dipped into an ancient Greek grammar, or a common Latin work on rhetoric, would ever dream of denying. However, I gave myself some trouble to set forth this matter learnedly some years ago,<sup>[28]</sup> knowing that I might have to do with persons not always open to reason, and utterly impervious to nature and common sense; and the Fellow of King’s also might have had occasion to know that it is one thing to prick soft flesh with a pin, another to drive nails into a stone wall. The fact is, that the living Greek language having come down to us with most audible accentuation, and the signs of these accents being contained in all printed Greek books, and not only so, but commented on by a long series of grammarians, from Herodian and Arcadius, down through the Homeric bishop of Thessalonica, to Gaza and Lascaris; in this state of the case, if any man does not pronounce Greek according to accents, while I do, the burden of proof lies with him who throws off all established authority in the matter, not with me who acknowledge it. If there is no authority for accent in the ancient grammarians, then as little is there for quantity. The fact of the existence of the one as a living characteristic of the spoken [Pg 49]and written language of ancient Greece, stands exactly on the same foundation as the other. So many ancient grammars, and comments on grammars have been published within the last fifty years

by Bekker and other library-excavators, that the teacher who now requires to be taught formally that the ancients really used accents in their public elocution, is more worthy of a good flogging than the greatest dunce in his drill. But what were accents? Accents are an *intension* and *remission* (ἐπίτασις and ἄνεσις) of the voice in articulate speech, whereby one syllable receives a marked predominance over the others, this predominance manifesting itself principally in a higher note or intonation given to the accented syllable.<sup>[29]</sup> This definition occurs fifty times if it occurs once in the works of the ancient grammarians and rhetoricians; so I need not trouble myself here by an array of erudite citations to prove it; and that such an accent is both possible and easy to bring out in the case of any Greek word, may be experienced by anybody who will pronounce κεφαλή with a marked rise of the voice on the last syllable, or νεφέλη with a similar [Pg 50]intension of vocal utterance on the penult. That the living Greeks give a distinct prominence to these very syllables, any man may learn by seeking them out in Manchester or London, in both which places they have a chapel. Why then should Etonian schoolmasters, and Oxonian lecturers not do the same? Do they not teach the doctrine of accents? Have they not translated GOETTLING? Do they not print all their books with those very marks which Aristophanes of Byzantium, two thousand years ago, with provident cunning, devised even for this purpose, that we, studious academic men, in the then ULTIMA THULE of civilisation, should now have the pleasure of intoning a philosophic period as the divine Plato did, or a blast of patriotic indignation as Demosthenes? They say there are no accents properly so called in the French language. This I never could exactly understand; but do our academic men actually realize this peculiar form of levelled human enunciation, (the ὁμαλισμὸς of the old grammarians,) without intension or remission, by pronouncing Greek altogether unaccented? Believe it not. As if determined to produce a scholastic

impersonation of every possible monstrosity with regard to the finest language in the world, they neglect the written accents which lie before their nose, and read according to those accents which [Pg 51]they have borrowed from the Latin! and this directly in the teeth of the public declaration of CÍCERO and QUÍNCÍLIAN, that Latin had one monotonous law of accentuation, Greek another and a much more rich and various one.<sup>[30]</sup> And, as if to place the top-stone on the pyramid of absurdities which they pile, after reading Greek with this Latin accent (which sounds to a Greek ear exactly as a rude Frenchman's first attempts at English sound to an Englishman) for some half dozen years, they set seriously to cram their brain-chambers with rules how Greek accents should be placed, and exercise their memory and their eye, with a most villainous abuse of function, in doing that work which should have been done from the beginning by the ear! If consistency could have been looked for from men involved in such a labyrinth of bungling, there would have been something heroic in throwing away the marks altogether from their books and from their brains, as well as from their tongue; certainly this procedure would have saved many a peeping editor a great deal of trouble, and many a brisk young gentleman riding up in a Cambridge "coach" right into the possession of a snug tutorship in Trinity, would have travelled on a smoother road, and felt less seriously how the [Pg 52]flowers of ancient literature are scarce to be enjoyed amid the thorns of modern grammar that besiege a man's fingers and eyes from all sides.<sup>[31]</sup> But intellectual consistency is not to be expected from persons once involved in a gross error, any more than moral consistency is from thieves; and it is well for all parties that it is so; for by this wise arrangement of nature, as a thief's story often discovers the theft it would conceal, so a philologer's nonsense is most readily refuted by the remnants of incoherent sense that he had not wit or courage enough to eliminate. Besides, the dictum of PORSON stood mighty over their heads;<sup>[32]</sup> and as for the young men, the more

time that was wasted on a reasonless method of teaching Greek, the less danger would there be of that rude invasion of BOTANY, GEOLOGY, HISTORY, and all the array of modern sciences which has long been [Pg 53]the special terror of English academic men. So they went on, and so they go on now, teaching that people ought to accent κεφαλή on the last syllable, and yet actually accenting it on the first! The consequence of which perverse proceeding is not only that accents are one of the most difficult things to learn in Greek, and seldom thoroughly mastered even by those who are excellent scholars otherwise, (*see* JELF, page 52, *note*), but an accomplished English scholar, when he makes his continental tour, as is common enough in these days, even with men who have not much money, finds that his perverse enunciation of the Greek vowels, combined with his utter neglect of accents, has put him in possession of a language of which he can make no use except in soliloquy, and which any person can understand sooner than a native of the country to which it belongs.<sup>[33]</sup> He then comes home belike and tells his English friends that the modern [Pg 54]Greeks are a set of barbarians, who speak a “swallow’s jabber,” so corrupt that no scholar can understand a word they say! So true is the record which honest Thomas Fuller has left of the issue of the notable Hellenic controversy raised by Sir John Cheke—“Here Bishop Gardiner, chancellor of the university, interposed his power, affirming Cheke’s pronunciation, pretended to be ancient, to be antiquated. He imposed a penalty on all such as used this new pronunciation, which, notwithstanding, since hath prevailed, and whereby we Englishmen speak Greek and are able to understand one another, *which nobody else can.*”<sup>[34]</sup>

Let us now ask in a single sentence how all this mass of absurdity came about; for we may depend upon it a whole array of brave philologic hoplites cannot have stumbled on their way suddenly without the apparition of

some real or imaginary ghost. The ghost that frightened them on the present occasion, and caused them to forswear SPOKEN ACCENT (for as we have seen they stuck to it on PAPER) was QUANTITY; concerning which, therefore, we must now inquire, whether it be a real ghost or only a white sheet. Quantity, [Pg 55]they say, cannot stand before Accent, or rather is swallowed up by it. Like hostile religious sects, or belligerent medical corporations, they cannot meet without quarrelling; so the public peace is consulted by getting rid of one of them, not in the way of violent murder, (for the law does not allow that,) but by what certain philosophical Chartist-Reformers used to call “painless extinction.” Therefore they who speak according to accent, are wont to remove quantity out of the way noiselessly; and they who speak according to quantity must treat accent in the same way. This is an old story. The BEAR in Erasmus’ dialogue, (Havercamp, ii. 95,) speaking rare wisdom in a gruff Johnsonian sort of style, says, “*Sunt quidam adeo CRASSI ut non distinguant accentum a quantitate, quum sit longe diversa ratio. ALIUD EST ENIM ACUTUM ALIUD DIU TINNIRE: ALIUD INTENDI, ALIUD EXTENDI.* At eruditos novi qui, quum pronunciarent illud ἀνέχου καὶ ἀπέχου, mediam syllabam, quoniam tonum habet acutum, quantum possent producerent, quum sit natura brevis vel brevissima potius.” Certain learned men, it appears, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, could not accent the word ἀνέχου on the penult, as it ought to be accented, without in the same breath making that syllable long, which it is not. To avoid [Pg 56]this blunder, the Etonians, Oxonians, and other famous modern teachers, omit the accent altogether on that syllable and on every syllable—of which the name is legion—similarly situated in the Greek language, and thus, by removing the cause, are sure of annihilating the effect. A very obvious, but surely a very clumsy expedient, and hardly worthy of the subtlety of the academic mind. A man by running too hard sometimes breaks his legs; and you forthwith vow to avoid his fate by sitting in your chair

constantly and taking no exercise! Let us see how the case stands here. The accent, you say, lengthens the syllable. Take any English word in the first place, (as nonsense is not so transparent in a learned tongue,) and make the experiment. If a Scotsman says *véesible*, you will allow, I suppose, that the first syllable of that word is both long and accented: if an Englishman says *visible*, 'tis equally clear that the same syllable is still accented, but it is not now long. Accent, therefore, in English has no necessary power to lengthen the sound of the vowel of the syllable on which it is placed; and if some learned men on the banks of the Rhine, in the days of Erasmus, or on the banks of the Isis, in our day, cannot accent a syllable without at the same time lengthening it, this happens merely because, as the Bear says, they are “ADEO CRASSI;” [Pg 57]their ears are gross, and have lost—by the dust of the libraries, perhaps—the healthy power of discerning differences of modulation in the living human voice. Not a few persons have I met with among those who are, or would be scholars, in this country, who in this way assert that it is impossible to put the accent on the penult of a Greek word, and at the same time, as the law of the language requires, make the last syllable long. But these persons had got their ears confounded by the traditionary jargon of teachers inculcating from dead books a doctrine of which they had no living apprehension; and this, along with the utter neglect of musical and elocutionary culture so common among our classical devotees, had rendered them incapable of perceiving, without an act of special attention, the commonest phenomena of spoken language appealing to the ear. In the English words *echo*, *primrose*, and many other of the same description, the accent and quantity stand in that exact relation which is so characteristic of Greek, as in ἔχω, λόγῳ; while in the English words *clódpated*, *hoúsekeeper*, we have that precise disposal of accent and quantity which occurs in the word ἄνθρωπος, and which has been so often quoted as a proof that it is impossible to give effect to accent [Pg 58]without

violating quantity.<sup>[35]</sup> A very slight elocutionary culture would put a stop to such vain talk; but we have, unfortunately, too many scholars who gather their crude notions on such subjects from a few phrases current in the schools, without ever questioning their own ears, the only proper witness of what is right or wrong in the matter of enunciation. Hence the cumbrous mass of erudite nonsense on accent and quantity under which our library shelves groan; hence the host of imaginary difficulties and impossibilities that birch-bearing men will raise when you tell them to perform the simplest act of perception of which an unsophisticated human ear is capable. “*Vel ab ASINIS licebat hoc discrimen discere,*” continues the learned Bear, “*qui rudentes corripunt acutam vocem, imam producunt.*” Very true; a really wise man may learn much from an ass; but they who conceit themselves to be wise, when they are not, will learn from nobody. And so I conclude with regard to this whole matter of QUANTITY, that it is only an imaginary ghost after all; a white sheet which a single touch of the finger will turn aside, [Pg 59] or only a white mist, perhaps, which, if a brave man will only march up to, he shall not know that it is there.

One thing, however, I will admit—by way of palliation for the enormous blunders that have been committed in this matter—that in words of two, three, or more syllables, where the accent is on a syllable naturally short, while the long syllable is unaccented, a careless speaker may readily slur over the long syllable so as to make it short, thus converting an anapæst accented on the first syllable, as

- 
- *cělāndīne*, into a tribrach with the same accent
- 
- *cělāndīn*,



a very common vulgarism, as we all know. The unaccented syllable, indeed, is, in the very nature of things, placed in a position where it is not so likely to get its fair mass of sound as its accented neighbour. Thus, except in solemn speaking, the first syllable of **ŌBĒDĪĔNT** seldom gets full weight, though it is equally long with its accented sequent; and the second syllable of EDUCATION is vulgarized into *edication*, purely from the want of the accent. But that such vulgarisms should form any bar in the way of academical men doing proper justice to the correct elocution of the Greeks is really too bad. The modern Greeks, indeed, we know, go a step [Pg 60]farther;<sup>[36]</sup> they not only in their common conversation fail to give the due prolongation to their long syllables, when unaccented—making no distinction between *ω* and *ο*—but they actually give *extension* as well as *intension* to all their accented syllables, and thus fall into the same sin as respects quantity that our academicians daily commit against accent. But there is not the slightest reason why we should imagine it necessary to imitate them in this idiosyncrasy. To do so would be for the sake of a superfluous compliment to the living, to cut off one great necessary organ, whereby the beautiful wisdom of the dead being made alive again becomes ours. The laws of accent are a most important element of the oratory of Pericles and Demosthenes; but without quantity the harmony of Homer's numbers is unintelligible. There is no reason why we should sacrifice either the one or the other of these two great modulating principles of ancient Hellenic speech. The one, so far from destroying, does, in fact, regulate to a certain extent,<sup>[37]</sup> and beautifully vary the other. Quantity without accent were [Pg 61]a monotonous level of dreary sing-song; accent without quantity can be likened only to a series of sharp parallel ridges, with steep narrow ravines interposed, but without the amplitude of grassy slope, flowering mead, and far-stretching fields of yellow-waving corn.

But some one will still press the question, *How am I to read Homer? how Sophocles?* Is it not manifest, that if I read according to the spoken accent, and not according to the quantitative metre, though I may preserve myself, by decent care, from grossly violating quantity, I shall certainly fail to bring out anything that the ear of the most harshly-modulated Hottentot or Cherokee could recognise as rhythm? Now what has been said hitherto of the compatibility of accent and quantity relates only to words taken separately, or as they occur in the loose succession of unfettered speech—a purely elocutional matter: of the musical element of rhythm nothing has been said. That this must modify the singing or recitation of measured verses to a considerable extent, so as to make it different from the oratorical declamation of prose, is evident; but that there is no such incomprehensible mystery in the matter, as some people imagine, I hope I shall be able to make plain in [Pg 62]a very few words. The poetry of the ancients differed from the mass of that now written in nothing more than in this, that it was considered as a living element of the existing music, and exercised in subjection to the laws of that divine art. Now the singing of words in music has the effect of bringing out more prominently the mass of vocal sound in the words, or what the prosodians in their technical style call quantity, while the spoken accent—unless it be identified with the musical accent or rhythmical beat—is apt to be overwhelmed altogether and superseded. That this must be the case the very nature of the thing shows; but we have a distinct testimony of an ancient musical writer to this effect, which will be useful to those who in all matters are constitutionally apt to depend more on authority than on reason.<sup>[38]</sup> This explains why, in the ancient treatises on poetical measures, we find not a word said about the spoken accent. If the full musical value of each foot, (or bar, as we call it,) in point of vowel-fulness, according to an established sequence be given, the poet is considered to have done his duty to the musician; the rhythmical beat, or musical accent, accompanies the

measured succession of bars, as with us, but the [Pg 63]spoken accent is disregarded. Of all this in our elocutional poetry we do, and must, in the nature of things, do the very reverse. Poetry composed primarily for recitation must follow the laws of spoken speech; and the spoken accent being the most prominent element in that speech, becomes of course the great regulator of poetical rhythm. Quantity, as the secondary element of spoken speech, though the principal thing in music, is not indeed neglected altogether, but left to the free disposal of the poet, so that the technical structure of his verse is in no wise bound by it. The musician then comes in, and finding that he has no liberty in the matter of the spoken accent, (the public ear being altogether formed on that,) exercises his large discretion in the matter of quantity, drawing out, without ceremony, a spoken quaver into a sung minim, or cutting short a spoken minim into a sung quaver. Now this license, familiar as it is to us, would have strangely startled, and appeared almost ludicrous to a Greek ear; and by the same effect of mere custom, we have to explain the fact, that the practice of composing poetry, without any reference to the spoken accent, practised by the ancients, appears to us so extraordinary. In our attempts to explain it, we have sometimes altogether lost out of [Pg 64]view the fact, that music and conversational speech, though kindred arts, and arts in the ancient practice of poetry indissolubly wedded, have each their own distinctive tendencies and laws, to which full effect cannot easily be given while they act together; and every such case of joint action must accordingly be, to a certain extent—like the harmonious practice of connubial life—a compromise. My conclusion, therefore, with regard to the reading of Homer and Sophocles is, in the first place, that they were never intended to be read in our sense of the word, that they are not constructed on reading principles, and that, when we do recite them—as the ancients themselves no doubt likewise did—we must read them in a manner that makes as near an approach as possible to the musical principles

on which they were constructed. With regard to the strictly lyrical parts of poetry, as Pindar and the tragic choruses, I have no hesitation in saying, that the only proper way to obtain a full perception of their rhythmical beauty, is to sing or chant them to any extemporized melody, (which would be much more readily done were not music so unworthily neglected in our higher schools;) while with regard to the dialogic parts of the drama, which were declaimed and not sung by the ancients themselves, [Pg 65]the teacher must take care to accustom his pupils to a deep and mellow fulness of vocalization, and a deliberate stateliness of verbal procession, as much as possible the reverse of that hasty trip with which we are accustomed to read the dialogue of our dramatic poetry. The musical accent, or rhythmical beat, will, of course, in such a method of recitation, receive a marked prominence; the long quantity will never be slurred; and with regard to the spoken accent, what I say is this, the ear of the student must first be trained in reading prose never to omit the accent, and accustomed to feel, by the living iteration of the ear, that both accent and quantity are an essential part of the word. This many schoolmasters will not do, because it requires science, and will take a little trouble; but let such pass. Those who do so train the young classical ear, will find that in turning to poetry, and keeping time with their foot as they read any metre, the attentive scholar will not only readily follow the given rhythm, and appreciate the position of the musical accent, (very few human beings being altogether destitute of the rhythmical principle,) but will be able also to preserve the spoken accent in those places where the flow of the rhythm does not altogether overpower it. What I mean is this. In the line, for instance,

**οὐλομένην ἢ μὲν Ἀχαιοὺς ἄλγε' ἔθηκεν,**

[Pg 66]the second of the Iliad, the boy who has been properly trained to put the accent on the penult of οὐλομένην, preserving the long quantity of the final syllable, will, even though he retains that accent in the

rhythmical declamation of the line, find no impediment to the rhythmical progress of the verse, but rather an agreeable variety, and an antidote against monotony; and though, on account of the strong effect which the rhythm always exercises on the closing word of the line, it will be difficult to give the full effect to the spoken accent on the antepenultimate of ἔθηκεν, while the closing musical accent lies on the penult, nevertheless, a person who has been accustomed always to pronounce this word in prose with its proper accent and quantity, will bring out the first syllable of the word much more distinctly than is done in the sing-song of a merely rhythmical recitation, and will not spoil the verse, but rather improve it. And if any person asks me how I prove that the ancients read Homer this way, I might content myself by giving a Scotch answer, and asking, *How do you prove that they read it your way?* But, in fact, there is no possibility of their having read it otherwise; for having once introduced the habit of reading compositions, constructed originally on musical, not elocutional [Pg 67]principles, with that habit they could not but bring in as much of the element of their spoken language as was consistent with the musical principle on which the very existence of the composition, as a rhythmical work of art, depended; that is to say, they allowed the musical principle of quantitative rhythm to prevail over the elocutional principle of accent, so far only as to produce harmony, not so far as to fatigue with monotony.

The reader will observe that I am not theorizing in all this, but speaking from experience; and therefore I speak with confidence. For ten years I read the Latin poets in Aberdeen, and I found no difficulty in reading them so as to combine the living effect of both accent and quantity, and teaching the student both by the ear alone. The first line of Virgil, to take an example, in respect of accent and quantity, may be read three ways. Either

*Árma virúmque cānō Trōjæ qui primus ab óris*

Or,

. . . *cānō Trōjæ* . . .

Or,

. . . *cān-ō Trōjæ* . . .

I take notice of these two words CANO and TROJÆ, only because they are the only two in which the musical accent of this line [Pg 68]clashes with the spoken accent, the rules of which, though not marked in Latin books as in Greek, were preserved by the living tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, and the accentual Latin poetry of their Service, and are observed by our schoolmasters as faithfully (without knowing it, many of them) as they violate the accent of the Greek. Now, of these three ways of reading a Latin hexameter, the second is the only one which proceeds upon the principle of the quantitative rhythm exclusively, observing the spoken accent only where it happens to coincide with it, (as happens here in four bars of the six;) while the first, which is the vulgar English way, asserts the dominancy of the spoken accent in all the six cases; and yet, as the clash only takes place in two cases, preserves, without effort, (as I have just said with regard to Homer,) the flow of the musical rhythm. With that grossness of ear, however, which Erasmus and his learned Bear noticed in the learned of his day, they fall with respect to Latin, plump into the extreme error practised by the modern Greeks, and cannot accentuate the first syllable of CANO, without lengthening it, while the final syllable of the same word is generally deprived of its natural amount of sound, a strange error for a people to

make with whom Latin [Pg 69]verse making (I shall not say with what propriety) forms so prominent a part of school-discipline; but there is no end to their absurdities, no limit to their contradictions; the fact being, as one of themselves has distinctly stated,<sup>[39]</sup> that the “composition of classical verses with them is almost entirely MECHANICAL;” and yet they have the assurance to hold up this scholastic abortion to the admiration of the public as one of the indispensable elements in the training of that improved edition of the ancient Roman—John Bull. But to finish. The [Pg 70]third method of recitation is, I think, the correct one. It violates neither quantity nor accent, but makes the one play with an agreeable variety over the other, as we see the iridescent colours in a gown of shot silk. I think I have now answered the question satisfactorily—*How is Homer to be read?* If anything remains unclear, I shall be happy to communicate personally with any person who has an ear.

Before concluding these observations, I have one or two remarks to make on MODERN GREEK, which have a vital connexion with the state of the argument. The reader will observe that I have from the beginning spoken of Greek as a living language, having had a continuous uninterrupted existence, though under various and well-marked modifications, from the days of Cadmus and his earth-sown brood to the present hour. Now the vulgar notion is, that Romaic, as it used to be called, though the present Greeks have with a just pride, I understand, rejected the epithet, is not only a different dialect of the Greek, from that spoken by Plato and Demosthenes, but a different language altogether, in the same way that Italian and Spanish are languages formed on Latin indeed, but with an organic type altogether their own. In this view Greek becomes a dead language; and the mass of scholastic and academical men who teach it habitually as such, without any regard [Pg 71]to its existing state, will receive a justification of which they are not slow to make

use. But this vulgar notion, like many others, has grown out of pedantic prejudice, and is supported by sheer ignorance. How such a notion should have got abroad is easy enough to explain. I mentioned already, that the English scholars—who have been allowed to give the law on such subjects—have so completely disfigured the classical features of Greek speech, that when they happen to meet Greeks, or to travel in Greece and attempt conversation, they can make no more of the answer they receive, than they can of the twitter of swallows, or the language of any other bird. Again, at Oxford and Cambridge, as is well known, the majority confine themselves to a very limited range even of strictly classical Greek, so that a man may well have received high honours for working up his Æschylus and his Aristotle, and yet be quite unfit to make out the meaning of a plain modern Greek book when he sees it; but the fact is, I have good reason to believe, there is not one among a hundred of their scholars that ever saw such a thing. Thirdly, we must consider under what a system of prim classical prudery these gentlemen are often brought up. They are taught to believe, and have been taught here also in Scotland publicly, [Pg 72]that after a certain golden age of Attic or Atticizing purity, the limits of which are very arbitrarily fixed, a race of Greek writers succeeded who “increased immensely the vocabulary of the language, while they injured its simplicity and debased its beauty;” and under the influence of this salutary fear they regard with a strong jealousy whole centuries of the most interesting and instructive authors who do not come under their arbitrary definition of “classical.” Men who think that the vocabulary of the Hellenic language should have been finally closed at the time of Polybius, and who pass a philologic interdict against any phrase or idiom introduced after that period, will not be very likely to look with peculiar favour on the prose of Perrhæbus, or the poetry of Soutzos. But by a large-minded philologist all this prudery is disregarded. He knows that grammarians can as little



cause a language to be corrupted and to die, by any dainty squeamishness of theirs, as they with their meagre art can create a single word, or manufacture one verse of a poem. Looking at the language of Homer and Plato as a real historical phenomenon, and not as a mere record in grammatical books, he sees that it went on growing and putting forth fresh buds and blossoms long after nice lexicographers had declared that it ceased to possess vitality. A language lives as long as a people [Pg 73]lives—a distinct and tangible social totality—speaking it, nor has it the power to die at any point, where grammarians may choose to draw a line, and say that its authors are no longer classical. What “classical” means is hard to say; but as a matter of fact many persons will read the Byzantine historians with much more pleasure than Xenophon’s Hellenics, and not be able to explain intelligibly why the Greek of the one should not be considered as good as the Greek of the other. Greek certainly was not a dead language in any sense at the taking of Constantinople in the year 1453. If it is dead, it has died since that date; but the facts to those who will examine them, prove that it is not dead. No doubt, under the oppressive atmosphere of Turkish and Venetian domination, the stout old tree began to droop visibly, and became encrusted with leprous scabs, and to shew livid blotches, which were not pleasant to behold; but such a strong central vitality had God planted in that noble organism, that, with the returning breeze of freedom, and the spread of intelligence since the great year 1789, the inward power of healthy life began again to act powerfully, and the Turkish and Venetian disfigurement dropt off speedily like a mere skin-disease as it was; and smooth Greek sounded [Pg 74]glibly again, not only in the pulpit, which was the strong refuge of its prolonged vitality, but in the forum and from the throne. Those who doubt what I say in this matter, had best go to Athens and see; meanwhile, for the sake of those to whom the subject may be altogether new,—and from the general pedantic

narrowness of our academical Greek I fear there may be many such—I shall set down a passage from Perrhæbus, and another from a common Greek newspaper, from which the fact will be abundantly evident that the language of Homer is not dead, but lives, and that in a state of purity, to which, considering the extraordinary duration of its literary existence—2500 years at least,—there is no parallel perhaps on the face of the globe, in Europe certainly not.

“Κατὰ τὸ 1820 διατρίβων εἰς τὴν Σπάρτην ὁ Περρραιβὸς ἐπὶ ἡγεμονίας τοῦ Πέτρου Μαυρομιχάλη, διέβη εἰς Κωνσταντινούπολιν, κάκειθεν εἰς Δακίαν, Βασσαραβίαν καὶ Ὀδησσὸν, ὅπου εὔρε τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον Ὑψηλάντην καὶ Γεώργιον Καντακοζηνὸν, φέροντας τὰ πρῶτα τῆς Ἐταιρείας, καὶ μὲ ἀπερίγραφτον ἔνθουσιασμὸν ἐτοιμαζομένους διὰ νὰ κινηθῶσι κατὰ τοῦ Σουλτάνου. Τὸν αὐτὸν σχεδὸν ἐνθουσιασμὸν ἔβλεπέ τις οὐ μόνον κατ’ ἐκεῖνα τὰ μέρη, ἀλλὰ καθ’ ὅλην τὴν Ἑλλάδα, τόσον εἰς σημαντικούς, ὅσον καὶ παντὸς ἐπαγγέλματος Ἕλληνας κατοικοῦντας εἰς πόλεις, χώρας καὶ χωρία. Δὲν συστέλλομαι νὰ ὁμολογήσω, ὅτι ἤμην ἐναντίος τοῦ τοιούτου κινήματος κατὰ τοῦ Σουλτάνου· ὄχι διότι δὲν ἐπεθύμουν τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τοῦ Ἔθνους μου, ἀλλὰ διότι μ’ ἐφαίνετο ἄωρον τὸ κίνημα, μὲ τὸ νὰ ἦσαν ἀπειροπόλεμοι οἱ Ἕλληνες, καὶ οἱ πλείστοι ἄοπλοι, ὁ δὲ κίνδυνος μέγας.”<sup>401</sup>

[Pg 75]

### Ο ΚΟΣΣΟΥΤ ΕΝ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗ.

“Τὴν 6 Δεκεμβρίου εἰσῆλθεν ὁ ἀρχηγὸς τῆς Οὐγγαρικῆς δημοκρατίας εἰς τὴν πρωτεύουσαν πόλιν τῶν ἠνωμένων Πολιτειῶν. Ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης στιγμῆς τῆς ἀφίξεως του ὅλοι οἱ ζωγράφοι παρουσιάσθησαν διὰ νὰ λάβωσι τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ διὰ τῆς ἡλιοτυπίας, ἀλλ’ ὁ

Κοσσοῦθ κατ' οὐδένα πρόπον δὲν ἠθέλησε νὰ δεχθῆ τοῦτο. Ἄλλος τις εὐφυέστερος καλλιτέχνης ἐφεῦρε τὸ μέσον νὰ τὴν λάβῃ ἄκοντος αὐτοῦ. Ἔθεσε τὴν μηχανὴν του εἰς τι παράθυρον κατα τὴν διάβασίν του καὶ ἐπροκάλεσε μίαν ἔριν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ διὰ νὰ σταματήσῃ τὴν τέθριππόν του. Τοιοῦτοτρόπως δὲ κατάρθωσε νὰ λάβῃ λάθρα οὐχὶ μόνον τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ Μαγυάρου Ἡρωος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄλλων τεσσάρων εὐρισκομένων μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ἀμάξει. Ὁ Κοσσοῦθ εὕρισκετο ἐντὸς ἀμάξης ὑπὸ ἑξ καστανοχρόων ἵππων συρομένης ἐφόρει δὲ στολὴν Οὐγγρικὴν, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ πύλου τοῦ μέλαν πτερόν.”<sup>[41]</sup>

[Pg 76]These are as fair specimens of the current dialect of Greece as I can produce. For it is manifest that while it would be quite easy on the one hand to select a specimen of the living dialect written by mere men of learning, (as from the works of *ECONOMUS*,) which should make a much nearer approach to the idiom of Xenophon, it would be equally open on the other to produce a brigand's song from the mountains of Acarnania containing a great deal more of the elements of what the admirers of unmixed Atticism would be entitled to call corruption. But it is evident that a specimen of the first kind would be no more a fair specimen of the average Greek now spoken, than the polished style of George Buchanan was of the average Latin current in his day; and a brigand's song were just as fair a specimen of the Greek spoken by people of education in modern Athens, as a ballad in the Cumberland or the Craven dialect is of the English of Macaulay's History, or Wordsworth's White Doe. With this remark, by way of explanation, let any person who can read common classical Greek without a dictionary, tell me with what face it can be asserted that the above is a specimen of a new language, in the same sense that Italian is a different language from Latin, and Dutch from German. I find nothing in [Pg 77]the extracts given, but such slight variations in verbal form, and in the use of one or two prepositions and pronouns, as the reader

of Xenophon will find in far greater abundance when he turns to Homer. The principal syntactic difference observable is the use of *và* (for *ἵνα*), with the subjunctive mood, instead of the infinitive, which the modern Greeks have allowed to drop; but this is a usage, borrowed from the Latin I have often thought, of which very frequent examples occur in the New Testament; and besides, a mere new fashion in the syntactical form of a sentence was never dreamt of by any sane grammarian, as the sufficient sign of a new language. In English, for instance, we say, *I beg you will accept this*, and, *I beg you to accept this*. Now suppose one of these forms of expression to become obsolete, by a change which mere fashion may effect any day, and the other to become all dominant, could, I ask, any such change as this, or a whole score of such changes, be said to corrupt the English language in such a degree as to constitute a new tongue? Much less could the introduction of a few new words, formed according to the analogy of the language, be said to achieve such a transformation, though an academic purist might indeed refuse to put such words as *ἡλιοτυπία* (photography), and *ἄτμοπλοῖον* (a steam-boat), into his lexicon. As [Pg 78] little could a philosophical classical scholar be offended by the loss of the optative mood, (used in the New Testament so sparingly,) and the substitution for it of the auxiliary verb *θέλω*, which, though it is of comparatively rare occurrence, is just as much according to the genius of the Greek language, as the frequent use of the other auxiliary verb *to be*, both in classical Greek and Latin. Instead of fastening upon such insignificant peculiarities, a catholic-minded scholar will rather be astonished to find that *in three columns of a Greek newspaper of the year 1852, there do not certainly occur three words that are not pure native Greek*. In fact the language, so far from being corrupt, as its ignorant detractors assert, is the most uncorrupt language in Europe, perhaps in the world, at the present moment. The Germans boast of their linguistic purity, and sing songs to

Hermann who sent the legions of Varus with their lingo so bravely out of the Westphalian swamps; but let any man compare a column of a German newspaper with a column from the ΑΘΗΝΑ, or any other ἑφημερίς issued within the girth of King Otho's dominions, and he will understand that while the Greek language even now is as a perfectly pure vestment, the German in its familiar use is defaced by the ingrained blots of many ages, which no philologic sponge of Adelung or [Pg 79]Jacob Grimm will ever prevail to wash out. There are reasons for this remarkable phenomenon in the history of language, which to a thoughtful student of the history of the Greek people will readily suggest themselves. I content myself with stating the fact.

These things being so, the natural observation that will occur to every one, as bearing on our present inquiry, is, that as the Greek is manifestly a living language, and never was dead, but only suffering for a season under a cutaneous disease now thrown off, those who speak that language are entitled to a decisive voice in the question how their language is to be pronounced, *and this on the mere ground that they are alive and speak it*; and to their decision we must bow on the sole ground of living authority and possessory right. For every living language exercises this despotic authority over those who learn it; and it is not in the nature of things that one should escape from such a sovereignty. No doubt there may be certain exceptions to which, for certain special philological purposes, this general rule of obedience is liable; but the rule remains. Such an exception, for instance, in the literature of our existing English language, is the peculiar accentuation of many words that occur in Shakspeare, and even [Pg 80]in Milton, different from that now used, whereby their rhythm limps to our ear in the places where such words occur. Such exceptions, also, are the dissyllabic words in Chaucer, that are now shortened into monosyllables, and yet must be read as dissyllables by all

those who will enjoy the original harmony of the poet's rhythm. In Greek, as I have already observed, the whole quantitative value of the language has had its poles inverted; in which practice we cannot possibly follow the living users of the tongue, because we learn the language not to speak with them, as a main object, (though this also has its uses seldom thought of by schoolmasters,<sup>[42]</sup>) but to read the works of their ancient poets, the rhythmical value of whose works their living speech disowns. This is a sweeping exception [Pg 81] to that dominancy of usage which Horace recognises as supreme in language; but philological necessity compels; and the modern Athenians must even submit in such points to receive laws from learned foreigners. But with all this large exceptive liberty, we dare not disown the rule. We must follow the authority of their living dictation, so far as the object we have in view allows; and if we are philosophical students of the language, our object never can be resolutely to ignore all knowledge of the elocutional genius and habits of the living people who speak it. It must be borne in mind also, with how much greater ease a living language can be acquired than a dead one; so that were it only for the sake of the speedy mastery of the ancient dialect, a thorough practical familiarity with the spoken tongue ought first to be cultivated. The present practice, indeed, of teaching Greek in our schools and colleges, altogether as a dead language, can be regarded only as a great scholastic mistake; and it may be confidently affirmed by any person who has reflected on the method of nature in teaching languages, that more Greek will be learned by three months' well-directed study at Athens, where it is spoken, than by three years' devotion to the language under the influence of our common scholastic and academic appliances in this country.[Pg 82]

I am now led, in the last place, to observe, that whatever may be thought of Itacism and of accents, as the dominant norm for the teaching of Greek in this country,

one thing is plain, that no scholar of large and catholic views can, after what has been said and proved in this paper, content himself with teaching Greek according to the present arbitrary and anti-classical fashion *only*. The living dialect also must be taught with all its peculiarities, not only because the heroic exploits of a modern Admiral Miaulis are as well worthy of the attention of a Hellenic student as those of an ancient Phormion; but for strictly philological uses also, and that of more kinds than one. The transcribers of the MSS., for one thing, in the Middle Ages, all wrote with their ear under the habitual influence of the pronunciation which now prevails; and were accordingly constantly liable to make mistakes that reveal themselves at once to those who are acquainted with that pronunciation, but will only slowly be gathered by those whose ears have not been trained in the same way. But what is of more consequence for Hellenic philologers to note accurately is, that the spoken dialect of the Greek tongue, though modern in name and form, is nowise altogether modern in substance: but like the conglomerate [Pg 83]strata of the geologists, contains imbedded very valuable fragments of the oldest language of the country. Of this it were easy to adduce proofs from so common a book as Passow's Greek-German Dictionary, where occasional reference is made to the modern dialect in illustration of the ancient; from which source, I presume, with much else that is of first-rate excellence in lexicography, such references have passed into the English work of Liddell and Scott. But on this head I shall content myself with simply directing the student's attention to the fact, and appending below the testimony of Professor Ross of Halle—a man who has travelled much in Greece, can write the language with perfect fluency, and is entitled, if any man in Europe is, to speak with the voice of authority on such a point.<sup>[431]</sup>

[Pg 84]I have now finished all that I had to say on this subject, which has proved perhaps more fertile of

speculative suggestion and of practical direction than the title at first promised. What I have said will at least serve the purpose for which it was immediately intended, that of justifying my conduct should I find it expedient to introduce any decided innovations in the practice of teaching Greek in our metropolitan University. And if it should further have the effect of inducing any thoughtful teacher to inquire into a curious branch of philology which he may have hitherto overlooked, and to question the soundness of the established routine of classical inculcation in some points, whatever disagreeable labour I may have gone through in clearing the learned rubbish from so perplexed a path will not have been without its reward. Any sympathizing reader who may communicate with me, wishing that I should explain, reconsider, or modify any statement here made, will find me, I hope, as willing to listen as to speak, and not more zealous for victory than for truth.

EDINBURGH: T. CONSTABLE,  
PRINTER TO HER MAJESTY.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] *Ego sonorum causam tueor ex edicto possessorio, et ut prætor, interdixi de possessione.*

[2] *An Essay on the Pronunciation of the Greek Language.* By G. T. PENNINGTON, M.A., late Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. London: Murray. 1844. This is the work that I recommend to the English student who wishes to understand the subject in detail, without wading through the confounding mass of pertinent and impertinent matter



that the learned eloquence of more than three centuries has heaped up.

[3] *Sylloge scriptorum qui de linguæ Græcæ vera et recta pronuntiatione Commentarios reliquerunt; edidit HAVERCAMPUS. Ludg. Bat., 1740. Vol. ii. p. 220*

[4] JOH. RUDOLFI WETSTENII: *pro Græca et genuina linguæ Græcæ pronuntiatione Orationes Apologeticæ.* Basil; 1686, p. 27. The whole passage is quoted in the prefixed mottoes.

[5] See the opinions of SCALIGER, SALMASIUS, and some others, quoted by WETSTEN.

[6] WETSTEN refers to a work by ALDUS MANUTIUS *de potestate literarum*, which I have not seen.

[7] “*Audici M. Rutgerum Reschium professorem Linguæ Græcæ in collegio Baslidiano apud Lovanienses, meum piæ memoriæ præceptorem, narrantem, se habitasse in Liliensi pædagogo una cum Erasmo, eo superius, se inferius cubiculum obtinente. Henricum autem Glareanum Parisiis Lovanium venisse, atque ab Erasmo in collegium vocatum fuisse ad prandium: quo cum venisset, quid novi adferret interrogatum dixisse (quod in itinere commentus erat, quod sciret Erasmus plus satis rerum novarum studiosum ac mire credulum) quosdam in Græcia natos Lutetiam venisse, viros ad miraculum doctos; qui longe aliam Græci sermonis pronuntiationem usurparent, quam quæ vulgo in hisce partibus recepta esset: Eos nempe sonare pro Vita Beta, pro ïi ita Eta, pro Ai, ai, pro Oi, oi, et sic in cæteris. Quo audito Erasmus paulo post conscripsisse dialogum de recta Latini Græcique sermonis pronuntiatione, ut videretur hujus rei ipse incentor, et obtulisse Petro Alostensi Typographo imprimendum: Qui cum forte aliis occupatus renueret, aut certe se tam cito excudere quam volebat non posse diceret, misisse libellum Basileam ad Frobenium, a quo max impressus in lucem prodiit. Verum Erasmus cognita fraude, nunquam ea*

*pronunciandi ratione postea usum, nec amicis, quibuscum familiariter vivebat, ut eam observarent, præcepisse. In ejus rei fidem exhibuit Rutgerus ipsius Erasmi manu scriptam in gratiam Damiani a Gæs Hispani pronunciationis formulam, in nullo diversam ab ea, qua passim docti et indocti in hac lingua utuntur.*” The voucher for the story is VOSSIUS, from whose *Aristarchus*, lib. 1, c. 28, Wetsten quotes it.

[8]Havercamp, vol. ii. p 174.

[9]*Ueber die Aus-sprache des Griechischen.* Leipzig, 1825. *De Sonis literarum Græcarum; auctore* GUSTAVO SEYFFARTHIO. Lipsiæ, 1824.

[10]“If we find a word pronounced in a given manner in the time of Athenæus, we are warranted, in the absence of proof, in supposing it to have been pronounced in the same way in the time of Homer; and what prevailed in Homer’s time may be presumed to have continued till the age of Athenæus.”—PENNINGTON, p. 7. This is too strong. Considering the immense interval of time and progress of culture between HOMER and ATHENÆUS, and considering the tendency to change inherent in human nature, I can see no presumption that the pronunciation of the language should have remained through so many centuries unchanged.

[11]“I cannot help thinking that if this treatise of Dionysius had been in early times made a text-book in schools, no controversy would ever have arisen upon the pronunciation of the Greek letters,” (except the diphthongs,) “or upon the nature of quantity.”—PENNINGTON.

[12]“*Vulgus antiquæ pronuntiationis tenacissimus est.*”—WETSTEN. Compare the observations of Professor L. Ross, below, on the antique element in modern Greek.

[13]Pluto Cratylus, sec. 74, Bekker.

[14]Aristophanes, *Lysist.* 86.

[15]What he says about the tongue performing no part in the formation of the vowels is manifestly false, as any one may convince himself by pronouncing the three sounds, *au, ai, ee*, successively, with open mouth before a mirror. He will thus observe a gradual elevation and advance of the tongue, as the sound to be emitted becomes more slender.

[16]This limitation must be carefully borne in mind; for after Athens ceased to be a capital, being overwhelmed by Alexandria, it still remained a sort of literary metropolis, giving, or affecting to give, the law in matters of taste, long after its authority had ceased practically to bind large masses of those whose usage fashioned the existing language.

[17]In some English schools a small concession has been made to common sense, and to sound principles of teaching, by confining the long slender sound of *a* to the long  $\alpha$ , while the short  $\alpha$  is pronounced like the short *a* in *bat*. Now, as changes are not easily made in England, especially among schoolmasters, who are a stiff-necked generation everywhere, it would have been worth while when they were moving, to kick the barbarous English *A* out of the scholastic world altogether. But their conservatism was too strong for this; besides, the ears of many were so gross that they would not have distinguished, or would have sworn that they could not distinguish, a long *a* from a short one, without giving the former the sound of an entirely distinct vowel! There is no limit to the nonsense that men will talk in defence of an inveterate absurdity.

[18]The following passage from MITFORD (*Pennington*, p. 37) may stand here as an instructive lesson, how blindly prejudice many sometimes speak: "Strong national partiality only, and determined habit, could lead to the imagination cherished by the French critics, that the Greek

v was a sound so unpleasant, produced by a position of the lips so ungraceful as the French U.”—*History*, book ii. sec. iii., note. SCALIGER (*Opuscula*: Paris, 1610, p. 131) says rightly, “Est obscurissimus sonus in Græca vocali v, quæ ita pronuntianda est ut proxime accedat ad iota.”

[19]“*Ut sit, id saltem nacti sumus interpretum S. sc. singularum atque omnium auctoritate ut constet Aī mature atque optimis adeo Græcorum temporibus simplici vocali E respondisse.*”—SEYFFARTH, p. 101. See also the Stanza from CALLIMACHUS, where *ναίχι* echoes to *ἔχει*, *Epig.* xxx. 5, (and SEXTUS EMPIRICUS *adv. Grammat.* c. 5.)

[20]“*Quā potestate literæ Eī fuerint eā Græcorum ætate in quam veteres Sc. s. interpretes incidunt ex plurimis iisque variis verbis in singulas linguas conversis adeo clarum est ut nulla fere restet causa de eā dubitare.*”—SEYFFARTH. The Old Testament translators, in fact, use it as regularly for *Hirek* and *Yod*, as they do Aī for *Tzere*, *Segol*, and *Sheva*.

[21]With regard to this sort of evidence arising from wrong spelt words, it is manifest that a single example proves nothing. When Aunt Chloe, for instance, in the American novel, says, “I’m *clar* on’t,” this is no proof that the Americans pronounce the *ea* in *clear* like *a*; the only conclusion is, that certain vulgar people in America pronounce it so, and a word with a different vocalization must be written in order to express their peculiar method of utterance. But when mistakes of this kind occur extensively, and in quarters where there is no reason to suspect anything particularly vulgar, they authorize a conclusion as general as the fact, especially where no evidence exists pointing in a different direction.

[22]THIERSCH uses the passage as a proof of the antiquity of the modern slender sound.—*Sprachlehre*, § 16, 5.

[23]GODOFREDI HERMANI *de emendenda ratione Græcæ grammaticæ*, Lib. i. c. 2, quoted at length by LISCOV, p. 21.

[24]On revisal it strikes me I have given the enemies of Itacism an unfair advantage by not stating, that, while in any other language the attenuation of so many different sounds into one, might have proved a very grievous evil, there is such a richness of the full sound of  $\alpha$  (which the English have effaced) and  $\omega$  in Greek, that the blemish rarely offends. I have to mention also, that, while a certain prominence even of this slender sound seems necessary to the phonetic character of Greek, as distinguished from Latin, I have no objection, in reading Homer and the elder poets, (were it only for the sake of the often quoted πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης!) to pronounce  $\omicron$ , as *boy* in English, and  $\eta$ , as we do it in Scotland; just as in reading Chaucer we may be forced to adopt some of the peculiarities of the pronunciation of his day. But in the common use of the prose language, I think it safer to stick by the tradition of so many centuries, than to venture on patches of classical restoration, where it is impossible to revive a consistent whole. I may say also, that if  $\upsilon$  be pronounced uniformly like the French *u*, the itacism will be diminished by one letter, while the difference between that and the modern Greek pronunciation is so slight, that a Scotchman so speaking in Athens will be generally understood, whereas our broad Scotch *u* ( $\omega\omega$ ) besides being entirely without classical authority, recedes so far from the actual pronunciation of the Greeks, as to be a serious bar in the way of intelligibility.

[25]CORPE's Neo-Hellenic Greek Grammar. London, 1851. See also a notice of this work in the ATHENÆUM for last year, where I am happy to observe that the opinions advocated in this paper are supported.

[26]Greek Grammar. 1851, sect. 44, 45. DONALDSON (Greek Grammar, p. 17) says, 'The

accent is the sharp or elevated sound with which one of the last three syllables of a Greek word is *regularly* pronounced. This “*regularly*” is as significant as Mr. JELF’s “*ought*.”

[27]Of course I except Professor MASSON of Belfast, whose complete mastery of the living dialect of Greece is the object of admiration to all who know him.

[28]Classical Museum, vol. i. p. 338.

[29]There is also a greater *emphasis* or *stress* given to the accented syllable, as is manifest from the pronunciation of the modern Greeks, and from the striking fact that in the modern dialect, the unaccented syllable has sometimes been dropt, while the accented constitutes the whole modern word, as δὲν for οὐδὲν, μᾶς for ἡμᾶς.

[30]QUINCTIL., lib. i. c. 5; DIOMED. de Oratione, ii.; PUTSCH. i. 426.

[31]JELF, in the Preface to his Grammar, calls the doctrine of accent “a difficult branch of scholarship.” The difficulty is altogether an artificial one, made by scholastic men who will insist on teaching by the eye only and the understanding, what has no meaning at all except when addressed to the ear. The doctrine of accentuation in English has no peculiar difficulty, plainly because men learn it in the natural way by hearing.

[32]“*Si quis igitur vestrum ad accuratam Græcarum literarum scientiam aspirat, is probabilem sibi accentuum rationem quam maturrime comparet, in propositoque perstet scurrarum dicacitate et stultorum derisione immotus,*” ad Med. 1, apud JELF, vol. i. p. 37. I wonder if Porson himself pronounced according to the accents. If he did not, he is just another instance of that extraordinary incapacity of apprehending a large principle that is so characteristic of the English mind.

[33] I may insert here the whole of the passage of BOÏSSONADE, from which the words in one of the prefixed mottoes are taken. “*Nisi quod maxime cupio, in omnibus academiis nostris, gymnasiis et scholis hodierna Græcorum pronuntiatio recipiatur. Nam cum prorsus perierit antiqua pronuntiandi ratio qua Demosthenes, et Sophocles, vel ipsi Alexandrini sub Ptolemæis utebantur, et fere ridiculum sit unumquemque populum ad suæ linguæ sonos, atque etiam ad libitum, Græcorum quos legit librorum pronuntiationem efformare, id saltem boni, admissa neotericorum pronuntiatione, lucrabimur, non solum ut Gallus homo et Germanus Anglum intelligant Græce loquentem et ab illo Græce ipsi loquentes intelligantur, sed id etiam ut cum Græcis doctis et scholastica institutione politis confabulemur verbis antiquorum et facillime, si velimus, hodiernæ linguæ cognitionem ac usum assequamur.*”—HERODIAN, Epimerisni, BOÏSSONADE. London, 1819. Prefat.

[34] History of the University of Cambridge, Section vii.

[35] When I was at the railway station, SKIPTON, in Yorkshire, waiting for a train, I heard one of the men call out, “Any person for *Mánchéster*” with a distinct and well-marked dwelling of the voice on the second as well as the first syllable. This gave me a very vivid idea of the manner in which the Greeks must have pronounced ἄνθρωπος, accenting the first syllable, but dwelling on the second syllable with a distinct prolongation of the voice.

[36] See the essay on this subject in the second volume of the Greek works of Professor RANGABE of Athens.

[37] Every practical teacher ought to know how much more easily the doctrine of quantity may be taught with constant reference to accent than without it; so that pronouncing a word like ἡμέρα, the accent on the penult, is the easiest way to make the student remember that the final syllable of that word is long.

[38] Δεῖ τὴν φωνὴν ἐν τῷ μελωδεῖν τὰς μὲν ἐπιτάσεις τε καὶ ἀνέσεις ἀφανεῖς ποιεῖσθαι—ARISTOXENUS, apud PENNINGTON, p. 226.

[39]“Our composition of classical verses is almost entirely mechanical. When a boy composes such a verse as *Insignemque canas Neptunum vertice cano*, how is he guided to the proper collocation of the words? Not by his ear, certainly, for that would be struck precisely in the same manner if he wrote it *Insignemque cano Neptunum vertice canas*; no, he learns from books that the first of *cano* (I sing) is short, and the first of *canus* (hoary) is long. Having so used them, their respective quantity is stored up as a fact in his memory, and by degrees he remembers them so well, that when he sees either of them used in a wrong place, he thinks it offends his ear, while in truth it only offends his understanding. But I apprehend a Roman boy’s process of composition would be quite different. Having been used from his cradle to hear the first syllable of *canus* take up about twice as much time as that of *cano*, such a verse as *Insignemque cano Neptunum vertice canas*, would really hurt his ear, because in the second foot the thesis would be complete before the syllable was expressed, and he would have a time or σημεῖον too much; and in the sixth he could not fill up the time of the arsis without giving to the syllable a drawling sound which would be both unusual and offensive.”—PENNINGTON, p. 249. So long as such an absurd system of writing verses, whether Latin or Greek—from the understanding and not from the ear—is practised, the boys who refuse to have anything to do with prosody shew a great deal more sense than the masters who inculcate it.

[40]“Ἀπομνημονεύματα Πολεμικὰ, διαφόρων μαχῶν συγκροτηθεισῶν μεταξύ Ἑλλήνων καὶ Ὀθωμάνων κατὰ τε τὸ Σούλιον καὶ Ἀνατολικὴν Ἑλλάδα ἀπὸ τοῦ 1820 μέχρι τοῦ 1829 ἔτους. Συγγραφέντα παρὰ τοῦ Συνταγματαρχοῦ Χριστοφόρου Πεῤῥαΐβου τοῦ ἐξ Ὀλύμπου τῆς Θετταλίας, καὶ διηρημένκ εἰς τόμους δύο. Ἐν Ἀθήναις, ἐκ τῆς



Τυπογραφίας Ανδρέου Κορόμηλα, Ὀδὸς Ἑρμοῦ, Ἀριθ. 215. 1836.”

[41]“Αθῆνα, Decemb. 31, 1851.”

[42]Perhaps some classical young gentleman at Oxford or Cambridge may be moved by the consideration brought forward in the following passage:—“I was much delighted with this really Grecian ball, at which I was the only foreigner. The Grecian fair I have ever found peculiarly agreeable in society. They are not in the smallest degree tainted with the artificial refinements and affectations of more civilised life, while they have all its graces and fascinations; and I cannot help thinking that as some one thought it worth while to learn ancient Greek at the age of seventy, for the sole purpose of reading the Iliad, so it is well worthy the pains of learning modern Greek at *any* age, for the pleasure of conversing, in her own tongue, with a young and cultivated Greek beauty.”—*Wanderings in Greece*, by GEORGE COCHRAN, Esq. London, 1837.

[43]In a paper on the Comparison of the Forms of the Nominative Case in certain Latin and Greek Nouns, (*Zeitschrift für die Alterthums-Wissenschaft. 9<sup>e</sup> Jahrgang*, No. 49,) Professor Ross writes to Professor BERGH of Marburg, as follows:—“My views are founded chiefly on the observation of the dialect used by the common people of Greece, among whom and with whom I lived so long. This dialect, indeed, now spoken by the Greek shepherds and sailors, and which, of course, is not to be learnt from books, but from actual intercourse with the people, the majority of philologists are apt to hold cheap, but it has been to me a mine of rich instruction, and I have no hesitation in saying that, at all events, in reference to the non-Attic dialects of the Greek tongue, to Latin, Oscan, and even Etruscan, more may be got from this source than from the many bulky commentaries of the grammarians of

the Middle Ages. See what I have said on this point in my *Reisen auf den Griechischen Inseln*, iii. p. 155.”

#### Transcriber’s Notes:

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Uncertain or antiquated spellings or ancient words were not corrected.

Typographical and punctuation errors have been silently corrected.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK  
THE PRONUNCIATION OF GREEK; ACCENT AND  
QUANTITY. A PHILOLOGICAL INQUIRY \*\*\*

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