14. — THE TRANSLITERATION

OF

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN NAMES

OF TOWNS, VILLAGES, ETC. INTO ARABIC

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

The Ancient Egyptian language did not possess any strict rules of pronunciation, and that *hearing* was the only guide to the right pronunciation of words. My dictum applies naturally more to the Coptic or later form of Egyptian. The same letter was uttered differently in different words without any reasonable explanation to give. After studying this question for some years now and referring to all that was written about it by different authors, I have come to the conclusion that the Copts pronounced their language according to custom and use, very much like modern English, in which a vowel may have different values in different words or

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even in the same word. The reader will see down below the examples I give of the pronounciation of words before I actually touch on the names of towns, etc.

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

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

As we see in our own days, all proper names are transliterated according to hearing and not according to rules of orthography, and that different hearers may write the same name differently in the same language. A modern Egyptian writes the name of the British Capital in Arabic either لندرة, if he heard it from a Frenchman, or لندن if he heard it, uttered from the mouth of an Englishman. Before I go into details, I give here a list of the Coptic alphabet and its corresponding values in Arabic and Greek. These values are very carefully based on numerous documents in which transliterations of Egyptian names were written in Greek, such as the numerous mummy labels and various other bilingual inscriptions; and secondly from documents in which Arabic was first written in Coptic characters as the two folios of a book early found by Tischendorff in the Natroun Monasteries, and the rest of which book, was lately found in the same place and was edited by me in the publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New-York; and second from other documents in which Coptic was written in Arabic characters as the psalmodia of the French Institute of Archæology in Cairo. This latter manuscript, though very late in its dating, yet it serves our purpose here.

Except for the letters ϣ, ϩ, ϫ, ϭ, and ϥ, ⳡ, ⳡ, ϯ, ⳛ, ⳝ and their combinations, and in demotic the letters ı ⳑ , ⲥ , ⲩ and ⳅ , there

was an equivalent in the Greek language, for every other sound in the Egyptian phonemes. For the above letters, however, the Greeks devised certain combinations which will be given below.

EGYPTIAN.	GREEK.	ARABIC.	EGYPTIAN.	GREEK.	ARABIC.
ⲁ	α	أ	ⲩ	υ	و ى ه فى اول الكلمة
ⲃ	β, ου	ب و ف	ⲫ	φ	ف ب
ⲅ	γ	ج غ بدون تعطيش	ⲭ	χ	ك خ ش
ⲇ	δ	د	ⲯ	ψ	بس
ⲉ	ε	أ	ⲱ	ω	أو
ⲍ	ζ	ز	ϣ	σζ, σ	ش س
ⲏ	η	أ ي	ϥ	φ	ن
ⲑ	ϑ	ت ط	ϧ	χ	خ
ⲓ	ι	ى	ϩ	... '	ه ح
ⲕ	κ	ج ق ك	ϫ	τ, τζ, σ	ج معطشة س ش
ⲗ	λ	ل	ϭ	...κ	ش ج
ⲙ	μ	م	ϯ	τι	دى
ⲛ	ν	ن		γ, κ	ج ق (1)
ⲝ	ξ	كس		γ, κ	ق ج (1)
ⲟ	ο	أ أو و		τ. τζ. σ	ج (2)
ⲡ	π, β	ب		η,	أ ع (3)
ⲣ	ρ	ر			
ⲥ	σ	س			
ⲧ	τ	ت د ط			

(1) ق. Hard G. كما تنطق فى الصعيد اى ج جامدة — (2) ج معطشة. — (3) أ إج. ع.

NOTES.

ⲁ and ⲉ are and were pronounced alike everywhere as an Ā = اَ e. g. ⲉⲣⲟⲕ *aròk*, ⲭⲉⲛⲉⲙⲓⲱⲧ جابنيوت *Japaniòt*, etc.

ⲃ is pronounced ﯣ at beginning of syllables ﺐ at end of them. But often in the names of towns it was transliterated ﻑ in Arabic which may presup-pose an original pronounciation similar or near to V, ⲃⲉⲣⲉⲟⲱⲟⲩⲧ became فرشوط in Arabic.

ⲅ often غ but just as often ⲅ hard we have ⲅⲁⲣ غار, ⲁⲅⲁⲟⲟⲥ اغاتوس; but we have ⲛⲧⲧⲕ̄ انتج, انتبج for ⲛⲧⲕ̄, etc., ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ انجالوس.

ⲇ Everywhere د = D.

ⲍ — ز = Z.

ⲏ either ﻯ or اَ. We have ⲛ̄ⲍⲏⲧ ابهات and ⲍⲓⲣⲏⲛⲏ هيريني and in one word ⲡⲣⲟⲫⲏⲧⲏⲥ ابروفيداس, ⲛⲁⲏⲧ = آد اب and ⲁⲙⲏⲛ امين without any reasonable explanation.

ⲑ = ﺕ and ط never ﺙ or ﺙ.

ⲓ = ﻯ.

ⲕ = ﻙ ⲅ ق. The letter ⲕ was probably the equal of the ancient ◢ = ق and it had come to acquire all its characteristic values. We know that since the Roman period probably earlier, the letters ➝, ◢, Ⴄ were con-fused and each of them had the values of *k* and *g* and *k̄*. In Upper Egypt today, and in certain parts of Lower Egypt, the ق is everywhere pro-nounced as a hard ⲅ, a phenomenon characteristic of Egypt amongst all other Arabic speaking countries. We have all sorts of proofs that both in Coptic ⲕ and in Egyptian ◢ the hard sound *g* was covered.

ⲗ ⲙ ⲛ = ﻝ ﻡ ﻥ respectively.

ⲝ = كس or س ك or ⲕ + ⲥ.

ⲟ أ أو و.

ⲡ was probably pronounced originally as *p* but in Roman hieroglyphic and in demotic, already confusion between ▪ and ┃ had taken place. Notice ┃ ﹌ ┘ = αυουϐιs, ┃ ▪ ┗ = ⲱⲕⲧ and other examples. The influence of Arabic not possessing the *p* naturally intensified the confusion.

ⲣ ⲥ = ﺭ ﺱ, respectively.

ⲧ has the two values of د, ت, representing as it does the two old letters ⲇ and ⲧ. In the names of towns however it was often transliterated by the harder ط ⲋⲀⲧⲏⲕ = حدىك and ⲧⲱⲣⲓ = طورىه.

ⲩ, sometimes equalled ڭ as in ⲋⲩⲙⲏⲟⲥ هيمنوس at the beginning of words; and ⲅⲀⲅⲓⲥⲟⲛ ⲩⲙⲀⲥ اباديسون ايماس, sometimes و as in ⲕⲗⲀⲩ-ⲇⲓⲟⲥ اقلودىوس, etc.

ⲫ = sometimes ن are in ⲫⲓⲟⲙ فيوم or ب as in ϧⲉⲛ ⲫⲣⲀⲛ خان ابران we have ⲛⲓⲫⲏⲟⲩⲓ = نيفاوى; but Ⲁⲣⲓⲫⲙⲉⲩⲓ ارى اماوى, without any explanation but custom and usage.

ⲭ = ك = in ⲭⲗⲗⲏ كلك for ⲕⲗⲗⲏ and ⲭⲟⲩⲀⲃ إكوآب; ش in ⲭⲉⲣⲅ شارا and خ in ⲭⲟⲣⲟⲥ خورس and Ⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ ارخن. But we have ⲀⲣⲭⲓⲀⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ارشينجالوس.

ϯ = بس.

ⲱ = أو.

ⲱ = ش, sometimes س if the Arabic transcription was made from a Greek original.

ϥ = ف, all through.

ϧ = خ, all through.

ϩ = ه, in all common parlance and in transcriptions of Coptic into Arabic always so = ه; but we have sometimes ⲧⲱⲃϩ = طبج. In names of certain towns it was equal to ح; see below.

ϫ = almost always ج = j English. But in very few examples of names of towns it was transliterated ش or ص in one or two instances or even ز in the same number.

ϭ, either ش or ح or ج = j. Great confusion has taken place between those two letters ϫ and ϭ. In the documents containing Coptic transcribed into Arabic letters it was always represented as ش. In the documents where Arabic was transcribed into Coptic it did not figure. It must be remembered that the transcription ش for ϭ exist only in very late Mss.

ϯ = دى.

ϫ̄ = ج = g or ڭ. The latter ڭ being pronounced as a hard g at present, it means that ϫ̄ = ج hard always.
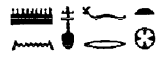
ⲵ, is only the demotic equivalent.

ǀⳑ, is the demotic equivalent of ϫ.

ⲝ, ⳤ, has not survived in Arabic transcriptions.

Before giving the examples of the names of towns that exist in Arabic and of which we know the origin in Egyptian, I should like to draw the attention of the reader that the Arabs had often translated Egyptian names into Arabic, in a literal way, that they often confused an Egyptian name with an Arabic word and have come to treat the word as an entirely Arabic one. Last of all that the idiom of Cairo being the official κοίνη of the Government, it has been adopted all over the country in the names of station, towns, etc. Notice for example the name of the town Keneh = قنا originally Καινή (πόλις) is never pronounced Keneh by the people of the town but ('gnah) whereas in Cairo it is pronounced 'Enah إنا and the official name is Kena = قنا.
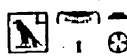
Also Girga is pronounced جرجا in Cairo, Ġerġa whith a hard G; whereas the people of Girgeh say Jerjah or even (derdah).

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

LOWER EGYPT.

☰ = ⲙⲉⲙϥⲓ, ⲙⲉⲛϥⲓ, Μέμφις, منف. Though the actual name ⲙⲉⲛϥⲓ is not used now, yet the site of the town is pretty well-known; and certain quarters of the ancient Capital still retain their old names, e. g. Sakkara = سقارة undoubtedly derived from the god's name ☰. There the ─ was transliterated ق which is actually pronounced ج = hard G.

The part of the ancient town lying on the eastern bank of the river was later called ⲃⲁⲃⲩⲗⲱⲛ بابلون, and the name is still retained in the appellation of the Coptic Monasteries there دير بابلون. Whether the name ⲃⲁⲃⲩⲗⲱⲛ comes from outside Egypt or as Sethe thought was a corruption of a word Pa(h)apinon = Παπινων, coming in turn from an original * ☐ ⚟ ─ ⊙, we cannot tell.

One of the most curious confusions of Coptic names during their transliteration into Arabic, with Arabic words, is what happened in the name of the actual village lying to the south of Old Cairo and which is called in Arabic أثر النبي Athar el Nāby i. e. «The traces of the Prophet». There is no doubt whatever that the origin of this name was the ancient ☐ ─ ⊙

Ḥt ḫr nb = ⲍⲁⲟⲱⲣⲓⲛⲟⲩⲃ = Ἀθωρεννουϐ or « the Golden Hathor » owing to the existence of some sanctuary to the goddess on the site.

⬚ = ⲥⲁ = صا (الجرِ); ⲥ = س.

⬚ = ⲥϧⲱⲟⲩ = Χοῖς; ⟨ = ⲥ = س.

⬚ = ⲡⲟⲩⲥⲓⲣⲓ = βουσιρις = أبو صير; ⲥ = س; ⲡ = ⲃ = ب. The prosthetic أ was added later by confusion with أبو = father in Arabic.

⬚ ⲍⲁⲟⲣⲓⲃⲓ = Ἀθριϐις = اتريب. There is no doubt whatever, that the original transliteration of the name into Arabic was made from the Greek form, in which the ⲍ was lost in the beginning and in the middle.

⬚ = ⲭⲉⲛⲛⲟⲩϯ, ⲭⲉⲃⲛⲟⲩϯ = Σεϐεννυτος, Σεμεννυτος. The same remark mentioned above, applied here with greater certitude for the ⲭ to be transliterated س in Arabic. The ⲃ here = ⲣ as the first Coptic form.

⬚ = ⲡⲁⲗⲁⲙⲱⲛ = بلامون; ⲗ = ل.

⬚, ⬚ = ⲡⲟⲩⲃⲁⲥϯ = βουϐαστης = بسطة (تل); — = ϯ = ط.

ⲭⲱⲕⲉⲭⲓⲕ = ζωκεζικ = زقازيق, Arabic transcription direct from Greek ⲭ = ز = ζ.

⬚ (?) ϥⲁⲕⲱⲥ = Φακκουσα = فاقوس; ⬚ = ⲕ = ق, actually pronounced by the inhabitants Faggous.

⬚, ⬚ [cf. ⬚ and ⬚] = قرّاقرة, always ة = ĝ (to the south of Birket El-Sirgeh); ⬚ = ⲕ = ق, pronounced ج (hard), — = ⲣ = ل.

⬚ = ⲥⲟⲃⲧ = سَقْط (اللَّه); ■ = ⲃ = ف; — = ⲧ = ط.

⬚ = الطيّبة (Daressy) : *the good (village)*. Example of literal translation. It lies 12 kilometres N.-W. of Zagazig.

⬚ = تل الجراد = « The field of locusts », another example of literal translation. It lies near to Inshas انشاص. South-west of Bilbeis.

⬚ = Δάφναι = The camp of תחפנחס of Jezekiel = تل الدفينة = transliterated direct from the Greek; ⟨ = ⲇ, ■ = ف.

⬚ = of the Rosetta Stone = Λυκόπολις βουσιρίτις of the

Greek version = ? تحجين الكوم a little to the N. of Mehallet Roh روح تحلة.
If identification is true, then 𓊖 = س; ⟶ = ج = 𓄿 = ى, which would be
a bit difficult to understand.

𓄿 ⟶ 𓏤 ⊙ = Ὤρην أوريين direct from the Greek, 10 kilometres N.-E. of
Naukratis.

𓎡 𓅢 ⊙ تابير a little to the north of Damanhour ⟿ = ل; ⟶ in 𓎡 = ق.

𓏺 𓏤𓏤 ⟶ 𓄿 ⊙ = ⲦⲘⲒⲚϨⲰⲢ دمنهور; ⟶ = Ⲧ = د = Ἑρμόπολις.

𓂝𓏤𓏥𓏤 = 𓏤 𓄿⊙, Nome II = برة (كوم), in the Markaz of Em-
babeh.

ⲤⲪ𓏤𓏤 𓏰 ⊙ = ⲡⲥⲓⲱⲟⲩⲛ (الحمام) بسيون ˙The Bath. Literal and
exact transliteration. The meaning of the word is often added in Arabic.

Ⲭ 𓏤 Ⲭ 𓏤 ⊙ = ⲡⲁⲃⲁⲓⲗⲟⲥ = ϥⲉⲁⲃⲉⲥ = بلبيس, ϥ = ب.

[▪] 𓄿 Ⲭ ⊙ = ⲡⲁⲟⲁⲛⲟⲛ = Παθανων = بتانون, ⲑ = ت = Ⲧ.

[▪] 𓏰 and variants 𝕊 = ⲡⲓⲁⲁⲕ = Philæ بالق
= بولاق = Bulac; ⟶ = ⲕ = ق.

ⲡⲁⲛϨⲁⲩ = ابنها; ⲡ = ب.

†Ⲕ̄ⲃⲉ = دجوى; ⲕ = ج hard; ⲃ = و; † = د.

ⲟⲱⲫ = طوخ; ⲟ = ط.

⟶ 𓄿 ⊙ = ⲥⲉⲛ†Ⲛ2ⲱⲣ, سنندهور; 2 = ه; † = د.

ⲭⲉⲃⲣⲏ, 2ⲁⲣⲏⲥ = شبرا هارس; ⲭ = ش; 2 = ه and all ⲭⲉⲃⲣⲏ, passim,
always شبرا.

ⲡⲁⲩⲃⲓ = نوى; ⲃ = و.

𓄿 𓏤 𓏤 𓎼 ⊙ = ⲛⲉⲭⲧⲟⲗ; ⲛⲉⲱⲧⲟⲗ = مشتول or بجدول; ⟶ = ⲭ
= ش or ج (j).

𓄿 𓎡 𓏤 ▪ 𓎼 = ⲧⲟⲩ2ⲁⲛⲟⲩⲛ = طاحنوب; | in 𓎡 = 2 = ح.

ⲥⲁ2ⲣⲁϭⲧ, ⲥⲁ2ⲣⲁⲭⲧ = صهرجت; ⲭ = ج = j.

ⲭⲉⲃⲭⲓⲣ = شبشير and جوير; ⲭ = ش and ج = j.

ϣⲉⲟⲛⲟⲩⲧⲓ = شطانوف; ⲑ = ط.

Ἀπονόμερος = ابو النمرس, entirely arabicised.

Μόχνον = ام خنان, similarly.

⟶ 𓄿 ⊙ = Τροη = طرة; ⟶ = ت.

ⲧⲁⲙⲙⲱⲟⲩ, ⲧⲁⲙⲙⲟ2, طموه; ⲧ = ط.

2ⲀⲖⲞⲨⲀⲚ = حلوان; 2 = ح.

†ⲖⲞⳜ, ⲦⲈⲖⲖⳜ = ⲦⲈⲖⲖϬ = دلاص; Ⳝ = ص, from a Greek original. Ζεβεθα = زفتى.

ⳜⲀⲂⲀⲤⲈⲚ = شباس; Ⳝ = ش.

†ⲫⲢⲎ = دفرة; † = د; ⲫ = ف.

ⲦⲈⲚⲐⲰⲦⲈ = اطندا = طنطا, ⲧ and ⲑ = ط.

UPPER EGYPT.

𓈖𓏏𓉐 = ⲦⲰⲚⲈ = تونة; 𓂝 = ⲧ = ت.

ⲠⲀⲨⲈⲓⲦ = بويطا; ⲧ = ط.

𓈖𓏏𓉐 = ⲖⲈ2ⲰⲚ = اللهون; 𓂝 = ⲗ = ل; 2 = ه.

ⲦⲀⲔⲒⲚⲀϢ = دقناش; ⲧ = د; ⲕ = ق, actually pronounced ج hard.

ⲠⲈⲠⲖⲈⲨ = ببلاو.

𓈖𓏏𓉐 = ⲦⲈⲢⲰⲦ = ديروط; 𓂝 = ⲧ = د; 𓏏 = ⲧ = ط.

𓆣𓏏𓉐 = ⳜⲔⲰⲞⲨ = اشقاو اشجاو; 𓆣 = Ⳝ = ش; ⲕ = ق = ج hard.

[𓈖] 𓏏𓉐 = ⲦⲈⲘⲘⲀ = طما; ⲧ = ط.

𓀀𓎟𓂋𓏏𓏏𓏏𓉐 = ⲦⲀ2ⲦⲚ = طهطا; 𓏏 = 𓂝 = ⲧ = ط; 𓊖 in 𓉐 = 2 = ح.

[𓈖] 𓆼𓉐 = ⲦⲔⲰⲞⲨ = قاو, pronounced جاو (Gau) 𓂋 = ⲕ = ج or ق.

Ἀποθήκη = ابو تيج; ⲕ = ج, thoroughly arabicised.

ⲤⲂⲈ2Ⲧ = اصفهت; ⲥ = ص; ⲃ = ف.

𓀭𓈖𓉐 (ⲛ)ⲈⲦⲫⲈ2 = إطفيح; 𓈖 = ⲧ = ط; 𓊖 = 2 = ح.

𓆰𓉐 = ⲔⲰⲤ = قوص, actually pronounced gūs; ⲕ = ق = (ج); ⲥ = س.

𓇳𓉐, 𓀀𓉐 = ⲈⲦⲫⲰ = ادفو; ⲧ = د; 𓏏 = ⲫ = ف.

𓈖𓉐 = ⳠⲚⲒ = اسنا; ⲛ = ا; ⲥ = س.

𓉐𓈖𓏏𓉐 = ارمنت ⲢⲰⲢ𓆷2 — 𓋴𓋴 = ⲈⲢⲘⲞⲚⲦ, ⲈⲢⲘⲀⲚⲦ = ارمنت; 𓈖 = ⲣ = ر.

⊙, و ⚏ = Ϫⲙⲓⲙ = اخمیم; ⊙ = ϫ = خ or ⲱ = ش in Ϣⲙⲓⲙ.

⊙ = ⲤⲞⲨⲀⲛ = أسوان.

(   ) = ⲛⲞⲨⲢⲓⲀⲙⲓ = بلّینا; / = ⲣ = ل.

⊙ = ⲓⲓⲬⲀⲃ = الكاب; ⲓ̀ = ل, by confusion with the arabic article اَل.

⊙ = ⲔⲈϥⲦ = قفط; ⲕ = ق (گ) hard; ⲧ = ط;] = ϥ = ف.

⊙ = ⲦⲈⲚⲦⲰⲢⲈ = دندرة = دندرة; ⲧ = د.

⊙ = ⲌⲰⲞⲨ = هاهو; ⲍ = ه.

⊙ = ϢⲰⲦⲡ = شطب; ⲧ = ش. The ⲓ̀ⲓ disappeared after ⲱ in Coptic and Arabic, and also the ⲡ.

⊙ = ⲤⲓⲰⲞⲨⲦ = أسیوط, سیوط = أسیوط; ⲧ = ط, أ prosthetic.

⊙ = ⲔⲀⲓⲤ = القیس; ⲕ = ق (گ).

⊙ = ⲡⲈⲙϪⲈ = البهنسا = Ὀξύρρυγχος. I cannot tell how the Arabic form is to be explained.

⊙ = ⲌⲓⲓⲓⲤ = اهناس; ⲓ̀ = ⲍ = ه.

ⲃⲈⲢϬⲰⲞⲨⲦ = فرشوط, فرجوط = فرشوط; ⲃ = ف; Ϭ = ش, چ.

ⲃⲈϢⲓⲓ = فشن; ⲃ = ف.

ϥⲃⲰⲞⲨ = فاو; ⲃ entirely omitted.

⊙ = ϪⲓⲢϪⲀ = ⲄⲈⲢϬⲓⲓ; = Ϭ, which is exact = چ.

Καινη(πολις) — قنا; ⲔⲀⲓⲓⲓⲓ; ⲕ = ق, actually pronounced by inhabitants أجنا ('ǧnah).

ⲘⲀⲓⲓⲃⲀⲗⲰⲦ = منفلوط; ⲃ = ف; ⲧ = ط.

ⲘⲀⲓⲓⲀⲀⲨ = ملّوى; ⲛⲗ = ل, ⲛ dropped.

⊙ = * ⲡⲢ ⲦⲈⲓⲓⲞⲨⲌⲈ = بردنوها; ⲧ = د; ⲛ = ⲣ, ⲍ = ه.

ⲀⲡⲞϪⲞⲢⲔⲀⲤ and ⲀⲡⲞⲔⲞⲢⲔⲀⲤ = أبو قرقاس, entirely arabicised with Abu = أبو, pronounced Abuǧorgās.

ⲤⲀⲘⲀⲗⲰⲦ = سمالوط; ⲧ = ط.

ⲧⲱ̣ⲓⲏ̣ⲓ = لكشد; ⲧ = د.

ⲛⲁⲓⲓⲕⲁⲡⲱⲧ = مكيتاد; ⲧ = د.

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