

THE  
CLASSICAL MUSEUM,



A JOURNAL OF PHILOLOGY, AND OF  
ANCIENT HISTORY AND  
LITERATURE.

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VOLUME THE THIRD.

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LONDON :  
TAYLOR AND WALTON, UPPER GOWER STREET.

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M.DCCC.XLVI.

## XXIV.

## ON A EUROPEAN NOTATION FOR EXTRA EUROPEAN SOUNDS.

THE time was, when the project of writing the Hebrew or Arabic language in any but their native characters, was received with scorn by the learned ; but in recent days, the serious evils entailed by the necessity of learning new alphabets have become more manifest with the progress of philology. It may here be not inexpedient concisely to recount them.

(1.) No one is able to learn a foreign language which is written in a new character, unless he systematically submits to a sort of scholastic drudgery. If even he should study diligently an hour a day for a month together, he would lose a very large part of the power of reading thus laboriously acquired, by a disuse of it for two or three months. The tendency, therefore, of the system is, to prevent all from acquiring such language, except those who pursue it with strictly professional objects. However light those may make of this difficulty whose profession leads them into daily familiarity with the foreign character, it is undeniable that numbers are entirely repelled by it from acquiring even an interest in the language which it conceals. The writer knows those who have been, *more or less*, acquainted with the Hebrew and Arabic languages and characters for twenty and fifteen years, who, nevertheless, to this day are forced to spell out the letters slowly and painfully, as a child of four years old in reading English.

(2.) Even those who have already acquired a foreign character so as to read fluently, seldom or never attain the same intimate familiarity with it as with the European type. Hence, if they desire to find a sentence in a work by running the eye over several pages, the labour lost is immense.

(3.) From the want of the distinction between *small* and *capital* letters, it must, in every case, be more difficult to find a required passage printed in any non-European type. Italics are another secondary advantage which we possess.

(4.) The great expense of printing in foreign types, and the far greater liability to misprints, are objections not to be despised.

(5.) The defective apparatus of stops and quotation marks generally to be complained of in Asiatic and African alphabets is another disadvantage. The Hebrew or Masoretic system is too refined and elaborate to be quoted as an exception of any practical interest.

(6.) By its legibility, simplicity, quickness of writing, freedom from diacritical points, which are so liable to be misplaced, —with its full provision for the exhibition of vowels in the text,—the European type seems to have intrinsic advantages over Hebrew, Arabic, Amharic, or Sanscrit.

(7.) For the purposes of modern philology, it is not desirable only, but almost essential, to be able to exhibit side by side, in the same type, the words of numerous and distant tongues. If the learned compile elaborate dictionaries, their work is comparatively useless, unless those who consult them can read the various types in which the foreign words are written ; and this is not to be expected. It is hard to lay on a student of Swedish and Gothic the prohibition to consult a Comparative Dictionary, unless he has first learned the Sanscrit type ; equally unfair to expect a student of Sanscrit to be able to read the Arabic, the Zend, the Burmese, or the Armenian. And if there must be a common system adopted, no one will question that the ordinary European alphabet should be its foundation.

This being conceded, it remains to inquire how unanimity may be attained concerning the particular method to be employed. The single general reply, is, I think, the following. *By introducing no arbitrary inventions in detail, but by following analogies, just as algebraists have done in establishing their notations.* Any system which proceeds on a just analogy will be easily learnt and remembered ; and even if several such systems coexisted, they would not necessarily cause great inconvenience. In a short time, however, that system would prevail which united most secondary advantages, such as legibility, and convenience of writing and printing, with the essential demand of discriminating sounds aright. Hitherto, the chief mischief has arisen from introducing special shifts for special sounds, without reference to any general system, or to the demands of numerous languages. Printers are vexed, and



tion of the *h*-sound to a consonant, such as we hear in the compound words, *inhabit*, *dishearten*, &c. Nor does there seem any reason why such compound sounds as the Irish *th*, *fh*, *bh*, &c. should not be represented by these true equivalents. But the very fact that such double sounds exist as the true *th*, *ph*, &c. makes it improper to represent such as the Greek  $\theta$  and English *f* by *th* and *ph*; for a legitimate use of the latter forms is preoccupied. This is no idle refinement. Serious inconvenience must result from the uncertainty whether such a word as *sepher* represented *sefer* with three consonants, or *sep-her* with four; and would quite lead astray a person seeking information in a strange language. Besides, when a consonant is doubled, as in *afford*, it would be very cumbrous to have to write it *aphphord*, or, if this were endurable, yet how are we then to aspirate by *h* the aspirates? An Irishman says *Fhair* for *Fair*; who would wish to have to write it *Phhair*?

It has been usual to regard the sounds which the French write *ch* and *j* as Aspirates of *s* and *z*. But I apprehend they really are *s* and *z* softened, being nothing but a slightly degenerate pronunciation of *si* and *zi* before a vowel. This is seen in the words *enunciate* and *persuasion* (*si* for *zī*). The Scandinavian tongues write, I believe, *sj* for our *sh*, which recognizes the fact; nor is the Italian *sci* very far from it. The modern Greeks sometimes write  $\sigma\kappa$ , and sometimes  $\sigma\iota$ , before a vowel, for the same sound. I see no serious objection to devoting *j* to the sole office of softening consonants (as *sj*, *zj*, *dj*, *tj*, *kj*, &c.), except the cumbrousness of it, provided that *Y*, not *J*, were used for the isolated consonant, as in English. One remark only need be added; that *D* and *G*, *T* and *K*, when softened, merge in only two sounds—*Dj* and *Tch*, as we write them. This is a familiar fact to grammarians, in such words as *Giorno* from *Diurnus*; it has been less insisted on in the sounds *Tio* and *Cio*, perhaps because the *Tio* so often has also passed into the sound of *Sho*. Etymology must decide (if possible) whether a given sound should be written by softened *G* or *D*, by softened *K* or *T*.

Hard or Thick consonants are known to us as provincial peculiarities, but not as legitimate or radical sounds of the language. The thick *T* of the Irish must have been heard by every Englishman. It is not difficult to conceive of a similar variation of every other consonant. As regards the mark to be used

to denote a thickening of the sound, it ought, if possible, to be such as not to have any other use. The *accent* is forestalled for far too important a function to be superseded, which seems to make some other mark desirable. In an English Hebrew work of the last century, I have seen a cross placed over a *h* or *k*, to denote the strengthening or deepening of the sound; and a very similar artifice is employed by M. Delaporte, in recent specimens of the Berber language. Finally, it should be kept in mind that it may be necessary *simultaneously* to soften and thicken the same consonant, as in the thick or emphatic *Tch* of the Amharic and Armenian. The marks, however, which denote the two changes separately, might in any case be combined, if both were to be placed *above* the consonant.

After these preliminaries, the following scheme will be easily understood.

Primitive.	Aspirates.	Softened.	Strengthened.
D	'd = δ	soft <i>gi</i> Italian	Arabic ض
T	't = θ	soft <i>ci</i> "	Hebrew ט
G	'g = γ, Dutch <i>g</i> ?	soft <i>gi</i> "	Perso-Arabic ق
K	'k = χ, German <i>ch</i>	soft <i>ci</i> "	Hebrew ק
B	'b = V	... ..	} Armenian <i>P</i> ? Amharic <i>P</i> ?
P	'p = F } which may be kept		
Z	... ..	French <i>j</i>	Arabic ط
S	... ..	French <i>ch</i>	} Arabic ص Sanskrit श
M	'm in Welsh = V		
N	... ..	French <i>gn</i>	
L	... ..	French <i>ll</i> , Sanscrit <i>l</i> ?	
R	... ..	Sanskrit soft <i>r</i> ?	Armenian <i>r</i>
H	... ..	... ..	Arabic ح
Ain	Hottentot <i>click</i> ?	Arabic <i>Hamza</i>	Hottentot <i>click</i> ?

No cognizance is here taken of differences which are solely euphonic, as that between the French and English T, the soft and hard German *ch*, the Greek γ and Arabic *Ghain*, the

Amharic and the Arabic *Qáf*. To attend to such minutiae would produce needless embarrassment. It is possible that a fourth kind of mark may hereafter be found needful, to express the *nasal* modification of letters. The nasal *n* in French is wholly euphonic, as was the final *n* nasal (?) of the Romans. The Turkish grammars assign a nasal *n* as an alphabetic letter in that language; but the sound is in practice often neglected, and it does not appear, from the imperfect dictionary to which alone I have at present access, that this sound is ever significant, in contrast to the common *n*. If otherwise, a new notation will be needed. It is easy by trial to satisfy oneself that every consonant of our language admits of being enunciated nasally, in a manner analogous to the French *n*. The sound of the English *ng* is also unprovided for; nor do I know how this is to be done on any general principle, nor whether the defect is of much importance in the Sanscrit and Celtic tongues.

F. W. NEWMAN.

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P.S. Since the above was written, I have become acquainted with the Galla Grammar of Karl Tutschek, from which it appears that the Gallas have a modification of *d* and of *t* different from those known to Sanscrit, Arabic, and Amharic. Nevertheless, their peculiar *D* may be referred to the last column above, and their *T*, perhaps, to the second; on the ground that the *D* is very backward on the palate, as *ض* and its collateral consonants, while *T* is dental, and approaches the sound of *ts*, and is like the aspirates in being forward in the mouth. But on this matter it is perhaps impossible to judge without hearing the sound. The Gallas have also a peculiar nasal *n*, differing essentially from their common *n*.

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