The Erasmian Pronunciation of Greek and its Precursors

Jerome Aleander
Aldus Manutius
Antonio of Lebrixa

A LECTURE

BY

INGRAM BYWATER, M.A.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF GREEK AND STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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THE ERASMIAN PRONUNCIATION OF GREEK, AND ITS PRECURSORS

How was Greek pronounced in the great classical period of the language? The question has been before the world for some 400 years; and it is still, so to speak, a burning question—one discussed even in our own day with a degree of heat and acrimony which seems strangely out of place in a matter of historical inquiry. We all know that the pronunciation of most modern languages is believed to have changed in various ways in the course of centuries. But Greek is often supposed to be a favoured exception; the pronunciation of it is still thought by many to have remained much the same for more than 2000 years, though the language has confessedly undergone no inconsiderable mutations in other respects, in its vocabulary, its grammar, its structure and general complexion. The antecedent improbability of the idea has been felt and acknowledged not only by a long series of Western scholars, but also by several of Greek nationality, by the late E. A. Sophocles, for instance, and in our own time, Psichari and Hatzidakis. There are others, however, who seem to regard it almost as a point of national honour to assert the antiquity of the Romaic pronunciation; and it is usual with them to describe the opposite view as that of the 'Erasmians', or the 'partisans of Erasmus'[1].

If one is to be called a partisan, the reproach is perhaps to some extent mitigated when one is said to be a partisan of Erasmus. I do not envy the man who can think evil of Erasmus, or speak lightly of his services to literature and learning. He was assuredly, as Scaliger said of him, *un*

[1] For this and similar references in the text see notes at the end.

grand personnage. He is to my mind one of the most interesting figures in all literary history—strong, quick-witted, with a striking gift of humour, and, moreover, a certain intellectual sincerity, which in that troubled age exposed him to the anathemas of both parties. Luther poured the vials of his wrath on him; and he did not fare very much better at the hands of Luther's opponents. As a scholar he was not only at home as few have ever been in both the classical languages, but he was also the master of a Latin style unique in its way, a real instrument for the expression of thought, not as Latin too often was with the men of the Renaissance, a means of disguising poverty of thought. Of him as a religious reformer I will not say more than this, that in the domain of theology proper his aims were indistinguishable from those of so many of the best men before the appearance of Luther: he insisted on the necessity of studying the Scriptures in the original tongues, and as interpreted, not by the Medievals, but by the early Fathers of the Church. Who can forget his Greek Testament and his monumental edition of St. Jerome? Add to this that he is one of the great names in the history of education, the friend and adviser of Colet, and the forerunner of Sturm and Ascham. This brings me to the immediate subject of the present lecture, the new pronunciation of Greek with which Erasmus is so generally identified. His *Dialogus de pronuntiatione* is, its title notwithstanding, a complete treatise on a liberal education, as Erasmus understood it, the reformed pronunciation of Greek and Latin being only a section—though a considerable one—of the whole. His young Lion (for the imaginary child to be educated is playfully treated as a lion's whelp)—his young Lion is to be trained up from the first in the way in which a child of the Renaissance should go; he is to learn to read the best literature in the two classical languages, and he is to learn to read it properly, as the ancients must be supposed to have spoken it, not with the now usual pronunciation, which is very far removed from that of the ancients—*nunc enim tota fere pronuntiatio*

depravata est tum apud Graecos tum apud Latinos[2]. The Greek pronunciation in use at this time throughout Europe was that which the first Greek teachers had brought with them, that current among the cultivated Byzantines of the fifteenth century. It was against this that Erasmus protested, as being a comparatively modern thing, and in various particulars very unlike the speech of the great classical period.

I need not here go over the ground covered by his discussion, or consider how far he may be said to prove his various points; there is no doubt a good deal in the *Dialogus* that a modern student of phonetics must pronounce to be crude or inadequate. But one cannot expect perfection at the outset of a new inquiry; the Gods, we are told, do not reveal the whole truth to mortals at the beginning. There is one thing connected with the *Dialogus* that all have to admit, that it was the first large and systematic attempt to deal with a very real question, one of great philological importance, and that the name of Erasmus gave the question a prominence which the more occasional efforts of previous inquirers had failed to secure for it. Hence it is that even now a certain view of the problem of Greek pronunciation has come to be called 'Erasmian'; and Curtius, Blass, and other investigators in this direction of philology are comprehensively designated as 'Erasmians' or 'partisans of Erasmus'.

From the first moment of its appearance, in 1528, the *Dialogus* caught the ear of the learned world, its success being shown by the many reprints that issued from the presses of France and Germany during the next few years. But its conclusions were from the very beginning rejected in many quarters—often, no doubt, through an instinctive feeling that the existing pronunciation, though not really ancient, was practically preferable to any more or less artificial reconstruction of that of the ancients[3]. There was also another factor in opinion, which we cannot ignore, the theological suspicion of Erasmus as a dangerous man even when writing on a non-theological subject. He had

been for many years in high favour with great Churchmen, with Fisher and Fox for instance in England, and with several kindred spirits on the Continent. But as soon as the Reformation movement took shape, it began to be seen that Erasmus, more than any other living man, had paved the way for Luther, and that though he managed to keep at a certain distance from Luther himself, he had long been a sort of Lutheran at heart. It is not surprising therefore that he had many enemies in the last years of his life, and that his memory was not spared after his death. To some one of these enemies we may attribute the well-known story of the circumstances under which the famous *Dialogus* came to be written. The story itself cannot be traced further back than 1569, when it was put on record in a note by a certain Henry Coracopetraeus (Ravenstein), who gives it as having been told to him by R. Rescius, a younger contemporary of Erasmus. Erasmus had recommended Rescius for the professorship to which he was appointed at Louvain; and the two men were at one time on close terms of intimacy, though their friendship seems to have cooled as years went on. Rescius, then, according to Coracopetraeus, gave the following account of the origin of the *Dialogus*[4]: He and Erasmus were living together in the same house at Louvain, when Henry Glareanus came to see the latter, and knowing his weaknesses, thought it would be a fair joke to play on his credulity by telling him, as the latest piece of news, how certain learned Greeks had recently appeared in Paris with an entirely new way of pronouncing the Greek language; Erasmus accordingly shortly after this (*paulo post*) wrote his famous *Dialogus*, in order to get the credit of the discovery of the new pronunciation for himself; and as the local printer, Peter of Alost[5], was too busy at the moment to undertake the work at once, the manuscript had to be sent off to Basel to be printed by Froben. This is the substance of the Rescius story, which is still repeated, with no little satisfaction by some, as a fact of history. But it is told with so much circumstance that it is not difficult to show it to be a tissue

of improbabilities—as false in fact as it is false in suggestion.

(1) The story distinctly implies that the *Dialogus* was not only written in haste, but also sent off in haste to the Basel printer, Erasmus himself being then at Louvain. This is inconsistent with the known facts of his life at this period. It is quite true that he and Rescius were living together at Louvain under the same roof at one time, but it was in the years 1519–20[6], in other words, eight years before the appearance of the *Dialogus*. In 1521 he left Louvain, to escape the perpetual annoyances of his enemies; and he never saw Louvain again, though considerable pressure was put on him at first to induce him to return. From 1522 to 1528 his home was at Basel. The *Dialogus*, therefore, must be supposed to have been written at Basel, and not, as the Rescius story assumes, at Louvain.

(2) It must also have been written at leisure. There is no sign of haste or improvisation about it; it is indeed a marvel of completeness, with a breadth of survey and an aptness of illustration only possible with an author who has taken his time to think over his subject. One cannot imagine it to be the work of a man who had only recently got a few ideas for it from others in the accidental way the story presupposes.

(3) Erasmus does not really claim the new pronunciation as his own discovery; he is not unaware that there had been others in the field before him. This is quite clear from a passage[7] in the *Dialogus*, in which he—or rather the Bear, who represents him—speaks of the pains he once took to learn to read Latin and Greek correctly. He tells us that he then engaged a born Greek—he means the Spartan Hermonymus, with whom he read during his sojourn in France in 1500–1—in order to acquire from Greek lips the native and national sound of the language[8]. 'But,' he adds, 'I have since come across several men of learning whose pronunciation I should not hesitate to prefer to that of certain Greeks'—*doctos aliquot nactus sum, quorum pronuntiationem ego sane Graecorum quo-*

rundam eloquutioni non dubitem anteponere. He recognizes, therefore, at any rate incidentally, that the Romaic pronunciation, that of his old teacher Hermonymus, was not universally approved by the learned of the age.

(4) Nor can we imagine him to have presumed so much on the ignorance of his readers as to wish to pose as the first discoverer of a new way of speaking Greek. Bishop Gardiner in 1542 was quite aware that there had been others in the field before Erasmus; he points his rebuke to Cheke [9] by reminding him that his theory, so far from being new, had been anticipated not only by Erasmus, but also by others who had preceded Erasmus: *huius tui conatus gloriam, si quam cupis, praeripuit Erasmus . . . et ante eum alii, qui multis argumentis ostendere conati sunt alium fuisse veteribus literarum sonum quam qui hodie obtineat vel apud Graecos vel apud Latinos.*

Gardiner, it will be seen, does not think it necessary to mention any names, but takes it as a matter of common knowledge that Erasmus had had predecessors, and was not the first to dispute the correctness of the then current pronunciation of Greek. The question in fact had been already raised in more than one country, and by scholars of the first eminence in their day, by Jerome Aleander in France, by Aldus Manutius in Italy, and before them both, by Antonio of Lebrixa in Spain.

I.

Aleander, the immediate predecessor of Erasmus, is still remembered by historians as a leading figure in the drama of the German Reformation, owing to the part he played as Papal Nuncio at the time of the Diet of Worms. Before that, however, he is only known as a brilliant humanist, who had been a hearer of Musurus, and was a member of the Aldine circle. Making the acquaintance of Erasmus in 1508, he was advised by his new friend to try his fortunes in France. He accordingly set up as a teacher of the New Learning in Paris, taking the place recently occupied by Fr. Tissard, the first French teacher of Greek

in France; and he remained in France for the next five years. It was towards the end of this educational period of his life—about 1512 apparently—that he produced a short statement on the subject of the Greek alphabet[10], intended no doubt to serve as an introduction to a course of lectures on Gaza's grammar. Here he duly describes the sounds of the Greek letters as then pronounced; but he is careful to warn his readers at the outset that that must not be supposed to have been the ancient pronunciation, since 'both reason and the authority of Greek and Latin writers show that several of the vowels, as also of the other letters, were pronounced in a different way in antiquity'. And in his final paragraph on pronunciation he reasserts this in equally unqualified terms: 'This is pretty nearly the pronunciation of the Greeks of our day, but they are no more happy in it than are the Latins in theirs. Are we to believe the ancients to have pronounced the diphthongs as simple vowels, or the short vowels as long, or the aspirated vowels as *tenues*?' Knowing, however, that custom is against him, he concludes with a characteristic excuse for his own conformity to the established practice, *Scientiam loquendi nobis reservantes usum populo concedamus.* A declaration of this kind, coming from a man like Aleander, is of no little significance; it shows that the idea of a reformed pronunciation must have been already known, and at any rate to some extent accepted, among the learned of Northern Italy. He must have been repeating what he had learnt from others—presumably from Aldus, or even perhaps from Musurus himself. It is a noteworthy fact that although both Aldus and Aleander were so constantly associated with many of the Greeks then in Italy, their protest against the current Greek pronunciation is as outspoken as can be, without the least attempt at compromise or apology, without a sign of apprehension that the new view might alienate their Greek friends, or be resented by them as the impertinent suggestion of barbarians.

II.

It is clear, I think, that Aleander was only following in the steps of the great printer, Aldus Manutius. Aldus, indeed, was much more than a printer; he was a scholar too, and the author of several contributions of some importance to the literature of learning. As far as can be now ascertained, his first public utterance on Greek pronunciation was that in a little tractate, *De literis Graecis ac diphthongis et quemadmodum ad nos veniant*, issued in 1508 in the appendix to a Latin Grammar published in that year[11]. In this tractate, at the end of the section on the Greek diphthongs, he runs off into a digression on the faultiness of the then usual pronunciation: 'But whether these diphthongs and the vowels E, H, O, Ω, Υ were sounded by the ancients as we now sound them, we shall consider in our *Fragmenta*. In my view both the Greeks mispronounce their diphthongs and we ours. And the same must be said of the sacrifice of quantity to accent, which makes us seem to shorten the *-θρω-* in *ἄνθρωπος* and lengthen the *-μο-* in *Σιμόεις*.' The promised *Fragmenta* have not come down to us, but a notion may be gathered of the line Aldus must have taken in them from a note[12]—hitherto overlooked, I believe—in his 1512 edition of the Grammar of Lascaris. The main points in this note, which is too long for quotation, may be thus summarized:

(1) For more than 800 years the diphthongs have been mispronounced, ΑΙ for instance having become *e*, though both the Α and the Ι should be heard run together into one, as that according to the Grammarians is the nature of every proper diphthong. But if ΑΙ is sounded as *e*, ΟΙ and ΕΙ as *i*, and ΟΥ as *u*, they become mere monophthongs.

(2) Η and Ε, Ο and Ω are not rightly sounded. Η should have the sound of long *e*, as in the Latin *debes*, and Ε that of the Italian *e* in *dicĕ*, *panĕ*, and the like. That Η was in antiquity the same as long *e* is shown by the

cry of the sheep in Cratinus, βη βη. Sheep do not say *vi vi*, but *be be*.

(3) The consonants Γ, Κ, Λ, Ν before the vowels Ι and Υ and the diphthongs ΕΙ and ΟΙ are mispronounced, 'as we have explained in our *Fragmenta*.'

From this it will be seen that the lost *Fragmenta* of Aldus must have gone over a good deal of the ground of the *Dialogus*, and anticipated many at any rate of the chief ideas and conclusions of the Erasmian theory. Aldus gave public utterance to his views in a general form in 1508—a noteworthy year in the life of Erasmus also, who spent great part of it in Venice, as a friend and associate of the great printer. This alone is enough to show the improbability of the Rescius story, which makes the idea of a reformed Greek pronunciation come to Erasmus as a new revelation many years after the months he passed in Venice with Aldus in 1508.

III.

But if there was any one man to whom the credit of discovery is due, it was assuredly not Aldus or any other Italian, but a Spaniard, the great Spanish humanist, Antonio of Lebrixa, better known outside Spain as Antonius Nebrissensis. As he is now all but forgotten, except by his own countrymen, I may perhaps be permitted to say a few words on the main facts of his life, and his importance as the restorer of Letters in the Peninsula. He was born in 1444, i. e. twenty years before Erasmus; and he died, according to the generally received account, in 1522 [13], i. e. six years before the publication of the *Dialogus*. After some preparatory study at Salamanca, he left Spain at the age of nineteen, and spent the next ten years of his life in Italy, moving, we are told, in quest of knowledge from university to university: *constat enim eum literarum amore sponte exulantem fere totius Italiae gymnasia collustrasse*, says Paulus Iovius, with a touch no doubt of rhetorical exaggeration. Beyond this very general statement we know nothing of his life in

Italy, except that he was for some time a student at Bologna[14], where there was a famous Spanish College. At Bologna, therefore, he must have come in contact with Galeotus Martius, and also in all probability with the Greek Andronicus Callistus, who was teaching in that university about this time. Whom else he may have heard during these ten years one cannot say, but some notion may be formed of the possibilities that lay before him, if one reflects that this was the golden age of Italian humanism, and that the younger Guarinus, Philelphus, Merula, Landinus, and among Greek scholars Argyropylus, Chalcondyles, and Constantine Lascaris held chairs in this period in Italian schools. Returning to Spain in 1473, Antonio became the prophet of the New Learning among his countrymen; he was the first, he says himself, to withstand the enemies of good Latin, and bear the brunt of their hostility—*primus idemque solus contra linguae latinae hostes signis collatis omnem illorum contra se impetum ausus est sustinere*[15]. The rest of his life in fact was one long warfare against the forces of obscurantism. And the result was that Spain has a place of her own in the intellectual history of the sixteenth century, and though not so distinguished as Italy or France, certainly did much more for learning than was possible in Tudor England.

Some account of Antonio's life may be found in the *Estudio Crítico-biografico*[16] of Hemeterio Suaña, a monograph of considerable value, though perhaps too much of a panegyric, and not sufficiently full or sufficiently documented to meet the requirements of very serious students of literary history. The life of Antonio, in fact, has still to be written; and I take this opportunity of commending it as a subject to any one able and willing to devote some few months to research in Spanish archives and libraries. The period covered by his long life is one of surpassing interest; he saw the unification of Christian Spain, the overthrow of the Moorish kingdom, the discovery of the New World, and the beginnings of

the Spanish preponderance in Europe. And among the minor figures in this dramatic period Antonio stands out as a great personality, a prophet of the humanities, the chosen instrument to make his countrymen what they were during the next hundred years, a learned nation, and one with a great literature.

It is much to be regretted that we are still without an adequate bibliography of his multitudinous writings. These are for us the main facts of his life, as also our chief authorities for the story of his life, since so much of his personal history has to be gathered from them, from Prefaces, Dedications, the Introductions to his *Repetitiones* or *Relectiones*[17], and the scattered references to himself hidden away in the text of his works. But a simple bibliography, however exact, would not always enable one to fix with certainty the chronology of his literary career. Many of his writings in their printed form are undated. And with those that bear a date there is sometimes reason to think that the work itself belonged to an earlier period, having been, for instance, originally written as a lecture, and then put aside and allowed to remain, perhaps for years, in manuscript.

Antonio was not only a zealous educator, but also a prolific writer on a multiplicity of subjects; the extent of his range may be inferred from the fact that his namesake, Nicolas Antonio, in the *Bibliotheca Hispana*, marshals his writings under as many as seven headings, Grammatica, Philologica, Poetica, Historica, Juridica, Medica, and Sacra. His Latin Grammars made him for more than a century one of the recognized authorities in that line of learning. In lexicography he is still remembered as the author of the first Latin and Spanish dictionary, and of lexica of the terms in use in ancient law and medicine. To ancient geography he contributed an edition of Mela, and a dictionary of ancient place-names. As editor or commentator he produced a Virgil, a Persius, a Prudentius, and a Sedulius, as also editions of the Vulgate Psalms, and of the portions of the Epistles read in churches,

together with a selection of Latin hymns. And lastly—for he was interested in Hebrew as well as Greek and Latin—he had some hand in the inception, and possibly the execution, of the great Complutensian Polyglot, though his name does not appear in the list of editors; and he was also the author of more than one contribution to the scholarly interpretation of Scripture. His position in these matters was practically the same as that of Erasmus and so many of the more serious-minded of the pre-Reformation humanists, who had come to see that, without the aid of philology, the true meaning of the sacred writers could not be said to be understood. Antonio is never weary of reminding his countrymen that in all questions of interpretation the first duty of the interpreter is to go back to the original texts, the Hebrew or Greek as it may be. As for the Vulgate he recognizes its authority as the work of a very great expositor; but even this concession to opinion he qualifies to a certain extent by declaring that the common texts of St. Jerome's version were often corrupt, and that the true text might have to be ascertained by a critical examination of that in the most ancient MSS. It was a bold thing to say all this in a country like Spain, only just emerging from medievalism; and it must be admitted that Antonio said it with an uncompromising directness, a note of defiance, which was bound to arouse the hostility of the older school of theologians. The end was that he was threatened at length with a charge of heresy, and his position as professor at Salamanca became untenable, in spite of his great name and long years of service to the university. But at this juncture his good friend and protector, the illustrious Cardinal Ximenes, came forward to save the situation by appointing him to a professorship in the newly-founded University of Alcala—a chair which he held until his death in 1522. This was not the only mark of Ximenes' esteem for him; for it was doubtless through the influence of the all-powerful Cardinal that Antonio had been some years before this appointed Historiographer Royal, with a com-

mission to write the official history of the reign of the Catholic Kings.

Antonio, therefore, was in his day a personage in his own country. But his reputation extended beyond the limits of Spain[18]; many of his works were reprinted even in his lifetime in Italy and France; and he was by his contemporaries everywhere recognized as one of the men of light and leading of the age. Erasmus, one of his younger contemporaries, testifies to his European reputation: *Antonii Nebrissensis nomen apud omnes nos et gratiosum est et celebre*; and he sometimes strains the language of eulogy in sounding the praises of the 'venerable old man'[19]—no doubt in large measure owing to his personal sympathy with Antonio's theological position.

But we have to consider him to-day not as a great educator, or as a polymath, or as a theologian, but as a philologist, the discoverer of a new subject of philological inquiry, the ancient pronunciation of the two classical languages. His claim to priority is indisputable, as he had certainly announced his theory at least a quarter of a century before the appearance of the *Dialogus* of Erasmus. In our present dearth of biographical and bibliographical data, it is difficult to determine how and when the idea first dawned on him. As for the idea itself, no great power of divination was needed to discover it; it was a direct and natural corollary from the fundamental assumption of the New Learning. Once admitted that there was an ancient mode of writing, it was only natural to suppose that there must have been also an ancient mode of speaking; 'Back to the ancients' meant a return to that, as well as a return to their language and style. As far as Latin was concerned, the question of the ancient pronunciation was inevitable; it was observed that each nation had its own pronunciation of Latin, and it was clear that they could not be all of them right, and also that no one of them spoke it in the way described by Quintilian as the normal and correct way. With Greek, however, there was no such diversity of pronunciations.

It had come to the Westerns as an exotic language, with a conventional uniformity of pronunciation, a standard fixed by the speech of the learned Byzantines, who were the first teachers of the language in the West.

Antonio's most formal and direct statement on the subject of Greek pronunciation is in an appendix to the Alcala edition of his *Introductiones Latinae*, which professes to have been revised for the press by the old man himself. Though the volume bears the date of 1523, the pages on pronunciation cannot be assigned to the last period of Antonio's life; all the main points and principles in them are to be found in writings of his of a much earlier date. There is some reason also to think that the statement as we now have it is incomplete, a fragment of a fuller exposition. Taken as it stands, however, it is a fairly reasoned statement, and certainly the first of any length in the period before the publication of the Erasmian *Dialogus*. Antonio propounds here this general thesis:—

In prolatione quarundam litterarum errare graecos et latinos facile potest demonstrari ex definitionibus & principiis quae ab omnibus grammaticis tam graecis quam latinis, tam antiquis quam iunioribus admittuntur.

He begins by laying down definitions of the Letter, the Vowel, the Consonant, the Mute, and the Diphthong, with brief explanations of their phonetic significance and mode of articulation, a point which he promises to consider more fully on a future occasion. As for the Diphthong, he insists on the definition of it, *conglutinatio duarum vocalium in eadem syllaba suam vim retinentium*, as disproving the current monophthongal pronunciation—*ex quo fit ut in diphthongo utraque vocalis proferri debeat.*

From this he passes on to his general assumptions, or as he terms them, *axiomata*. These are six in number:—

(1) That the written letters stand for sounds, just as the sounds stand for thoughts in the mind.

(2) That we should write as we speak, and speak as we write [a rule based on Quintilian 1. 7. 30].

(3) That the distinction in the letters is in their difference of sound, not of shape; and that the same sound may be represented by different letters in different languages. But if the same letter stands in the same language for two different sounds, it is to be regarded as two letters, e.g. in Latin the vowel *U* and the consonant *U*, the vowel *I* and the consonant *I*.

(4) That the consonants retain their natural sound before the various vowels—*consonantes aequaliter vim suam in vocales sequentes perferre* [an extension of the remark in Quintilian 1. 7. 10]. Hence it follows that the soft pronunciation of the Latin *C* and *G* must be faulty, since it makes each of them not one but two letters.

(5) The Greek mutes are of three distinct kinds, labials, dentals, and gutturals—*quae ad epiglottida formantur.*

(6) The number of sounds and letters is not the same in all languages.

The six axiomata he explains at some length, with a certain parade, as it were, of method. When he comes, however, to the *Errores Graecorum*, he notes them with a brevity which seems almost to imply that their faultiness ought to be apparent to any one who has duly understood the foregoing definitions and axiomata. Nothing is said either as to the ancient evidence in confirmation of his view, though Antonio had long been fairly familiar with the texts accessible in his day. One may conjecture, therefore, that the list of *errores*, as we now have it, was originally either a mere abstract, or perhaps a series of notes to be amplified afterwards, when used as the basis of a lecture.

Under the head of *Errores Graecorum*, by which he means those of his Byzantine contemporaries and their followers, he notes fifteen distinct forms of error:—

1. B they pronounce like the Latin consonant *U*, whereas the two letters differ in kind.

2. Γ they sound in one way before E, H, I, Υ, and in another before A, O, Ω.

3. Z has become a single letter, whereas it was really composite, and stood for *SD*.

4. H has now the same sound as I, though it differed only in quantity from E.

5. K has one sound before E, H, I, Υ, and another before A, O, Ω.

6. Λ has one sound before H, I, Υ, and the corresponding diphthongs, and another before the other vowels.

7. N also in the same positions has two sounds.

8. The combination ΛN is pronounced in an inarticulate way as one letter, whereas each letter should be sounded.

9. Σ has now a hissing sound; its true sound, however, was that of the Hebrew ⟨samech⟩ [20].

10. T after a N is sounded like a *D*.

11. Υ is sounded like I, though the two letters differ in kind.

12. X has an inarticulate sound before E, H, I, Υ.

13. The diphthongs have become monophthongs: *perperam enunciant diphthongos per unam vocalem, cum utraque quanquam raptim proferri debeat.*

14. In the diphthongs AΥ and EΥ the second vowel has become a consonant.

15. The diphthong OΥ is pronounced just like the Latin vowel *U*.

To these he adds a further criticism, that the Greeks have no letter to represent the sound of the Latin *F*, or those of the consonant *I* and *U*. One can hardly reckon this among their 'errores'. The probability is that Antonio was thinking of the current pronunciation of *ph* like *F*—which he had long before this (in 1486) rejected as an error.

Though this list of 'Errores' appears for the first time in print in 1523, it is impossible to suppose it to have been the work of the last years of Antonio's life. All the leading ideas in it are to be found in a tract written as far back as 1503 [21], in which he protests with all his usual

vehemence against the current pronunciation of Greek as both unreasonable and inconsistent with the testimony of the ancients themselves. He insists even in this early writing of his that H was a long E, just as Ω was a long O; that in a diphthong both vowels should be heard; that between I and Υ there was a distinction as great as can be between two vowels; that the Greeks are wrong in giving B the sound of the Hebrew beth with a raphe, since *B*, *P*, and *Ph* were always recognized as letters of the same order, differing only *in aspiratione et exilitate*; that Z was not a single letter but a symbol for *SD*; and that Σ had the sound of the Hebrew samech, not that of sin.

It is clear, however, that even this cannot have been his first manifesto on the subject of pronunciation, as he complains in his opening paragraph of the obloquy which the new theory had brought upon him: *et Graecos et Latinos ex benivolis alienos feci cum ostendi illos in multis turpiter errare.* The theory, therefore, must have been before the world for some time before 1503: there are in fact some faint traces of it in an old Salamanca Repetitio of his, dating from 1486[22].

These facts and dates, then, are enough to show that Antonio preceded Aldus, and that he owed nothing to Aldus or any contemporary scholar. The idea of a reformed pronunciation was his own discovery; and he distinctly claims it as his own in 1503, when he tells us that he stood alone at the time, his theory having as yet found no supporters either in Spain or elsewhere.

It would be interesting and far from unprofitable to consider these early attempts at a history of pronunciation on their merits, by showing how far and in what respects they fulfil or fall short of the requirements of a modern science of historical phonetics. It is clear that in some points they agree with the latest theories, and that in others they betray the crudeness as well as the confidence, which so often mark the work of the pioneer. All this, however, belongs, as Aristotle would say, to another inquiry. My chief aim and endeavour in the present lecture has been to

elucidate two points in the general history of Humanism. I have sought to vindicate the memory of Erasmus from a reproach, which has been too long permitted to tarnish his name; and I have also sought to draw attention to the illustrious Spaniard, Antonio of Lebrixa, as a precursor of Erasmus, and the first we know of to start a question of large philological interest, that of the pronunciation of Greek in the classical period of the language.

NOTES

[1] 'Les partisans d'Erasme': M. Mynas, *Calliope*, p. xi (1825); Th. Papadimitrakopoulos, *Nouveaux Documents Epigraphiques démontrant l'antiquité de la prononciation des Grecs modernes*, p. 12 (1890).

[2] *Dialogus*, p. 92 (ed. princ.).

[3] Gardiner in his second letter to Cheke insists upon the practical importance of uniformity of pronunciation: 'Ego vero, Cheke, gravissimis rationibus adductus sum, ut publicum in sonis concentum edicto defenderem, et in eo quoque iudicium meum sum secutus, non ex ipsa sonorum exactiore disquisitione natum, id quod in edicto palam profiteor, sed ex rerum usu et consequentium pervidentia (ut ita loquar) comparatum' (Gardiner ap. Cheke, *De pronuntiatione graecae linguae*, p. 346, ed. 1555).

[4] The note was in the possession of G. I. Vossius, who printed it in his *Aristarchus* 1. 28 (p. 106, ed. 1662): 'Ac Erasmus quidem qua occasione ad scribendum de recta pronunciatione fuerit impulsus, paucis cognitum arbitror. Itaque visum hac de adjicere, quod in scheda quadam habeo, scripta olim manu Henrici Coracopetraei, viri egregie docti, doctisque perfamiliaris. Ea ita habet: *Audivi M. Rutgerum Rescium, professorem Linguae Graecae in Collegio Buslidiano apud Loranienses, meum piae memoriae praeceptorem, narrantem, se habitasse in Liliensi paedagogio una cum Erasmo, plus minus biennio eo superius, se inferius cubiculum obtinente: Henricum autem Glareanum Parisiis Loranium 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 Erasmum plus satis rerum novarum studiosum, ac mire credulum) quosdam in Graecia natos Lutetiam venisse, viros ad miraculum doctos; qui longe aliam Graeci sermonis pronuntiationem usurparent, quam quae vulgo in hisce partibus recepta esset. Eos nempe sonare pro* B *vita*, BETA: *pro* H *ita*, ETA: *pro* αι *ae*, AI: *pro* OI *i*, OI: *& sic in caeteris. Quo audito, Erasmum paullo post scripsisse Dialogum de recta Latini Graecique sermonis pronunciatione, ut videretur hujus rei ipse inventor, & obtulisse Petro Alostensi, typographo, imprimendum: qui cum, forte aliis occupatus, renueret; aut certe se tam cito excudere, quam ipse volebat, non posse diceret; misisse libellum Basileam ad Frobenium, a quo mox impressus in lucem prodiit. Verum Erasmum, cognita fraude, nunquam ea pronunciandi ratione postea usum; nec amicis, quibuscum familiariter*

vivebat, ut eam observarent, praecipisse. In ejus rei fidem exhibuit M. Rutgerus ipsius Erasmi manuscriptam in gratiam Damiani a Goes Hispani pronunciationis formulam (cujus exemplar adhuc apud me est) in nullo diversam ab ea, qua passim docti & indocti in hac lingua utuntur. Henricus Coracopetraeus Cuccensis. Neomagi. MDLXIX. pridie Simonis & Judae.'

[5] Peter of Alost may have been the son of Thierry Martens, who managed his father's business at Louvain for some time. Two books (both dated 1524) are recorded as having his imprint (J. De Gand, *Recherches sur la vie et les editions de Thierry Martens*, p. 151).

[6] F. Nève, *Memoire historique et littéraire sur le Collège des Trois-langues à l'Université de Louvain*, p. 203–5.

[7] *Dialogus*, p. 209–10 (ed. princ.).

[8] Budaeus, in his Letter to Tonstall (*Lucubrationes Variae*, p. 362, ed. Bas., 1557), speaks with scant respect of Hermonymus, but admits that he thought well of his pronunciation: 'Graecum quendam nactus sum senem, aut ille me potius, illi enim vectigal magnum attuli, qui literas Graecas hactenus, aut paulo plus noverat, quatenus sermoni literato cum vernaculo convenit: hic quibus me modis torserit, mox dediscenda docendo, nisi quod & legere optime mihi & pronunciare videbatur e more literatorum, non bene tribus chartis scriberem.'

[9] In his letter to Cheke, prefixed to Cheke's *De pronuntiatione Graecae linguae.*

[10] *Hieronymi Aleandri Mottensis tabulae*, f. 4[r], ed. Lovan., 1518. The original Paris edition was probably printed in 1513 (Paquier, *Jérôme Aléandre*, p. viii).

[11] *Aldi Manutii Romani Institutionum grammaticarum libri quatuor.* Ven. 1508.

[12] Aldus in Lascaris, *De octo partibus orationis*, ed. 1512, fol. & ii[v]: 'Quandoquidem vel hinc colligi potest aetate nostra, & maiorum abhinc annos octingentos, ac plus eo, perperam diphthongos omneis & pronuntiari & pronuntiatum esse; praeterquam αυ & ευ apud graecos; nam apud nos & illas perperam. Si enim ῑ in ᾱῑ diphthongo ἐκφωνητέον, ut supra est scriptum, videlicet ᾱ natura longum maius esse ᾱῑ diphthongo, quae ῑ quod pronuntietur habeat, perperam ac barbare eam nunc proferimus, cum *e* legimus, nam & ᾱ & ῑ in ea sonum habere suum debent confusum in unam syllabam, ut ab ᾱ incipias, & in ῑ desinas, quemadmodum in ᾱῡ & ᾱῡ diphthongis facimus. Praeterea diphthongos omneis proprias hoc modo pronuntiandum esse, patet ipso nomine; diphthongus enim dicitur, quod duos phthongos hoc est sonos, & voces habeat. Id quod Terentianus ait [378-81] . . . At si ᾱῑ *e*, ōῑ & ᾱῑ *i*, ōῡ *u* legas, ut nunc barbare legimus, non diphthongos sed monophthongos pronuntiando

facies, cum sonum utriusque quae in diphthongo propria est vocalis iungere debeas in unam syllabam; nam *ī* in omni diphthongo propria *ἐκφωνούμενον* dicitur a grammaticis, contra *ἀνεκφώνητον* in diphthongo impropria. Atque si *ᾱ* *e* sonat, nec *ā* nec *ī* profertur; *ῡ* etiam in *ᾱῡ* diphthongo *ἐκφωνούμενον*, quemadmodum in *ᾱῡ* & *ēῡ* diphthongis, esse debet, ut ab *ō* parvo incipias & desinas in *ῡ*. Sonum autem *ōῡ* diphthongi idest *u*, ut nunc male pronuntiamus, *ῡ* vocalem apud antiquissimos habuisse existimo. Signum est, quod nunc quoque quod graeci *δύο* nos *duo* dicimus, & quod illi *σῦς*, *μῦς*, *θύλη*, *ῥώμυλος*, nos *sus*, *mus*, *Thule*, *Romulus* dicimus, & alia id genus sexcenta. Eodem modo *η̄* & *ω̄* & *ē* & *ō* non recte pronuntiamus; nam *η* & *ε* proximum ac paene eundem sonum habere debent, hoc est *e* ut *η̄* proferas clarius & sub palato, *ē* vero minore sono in gutture. exempli gratia, ut *η̄* proferas ut *e* latine loquens in dictione *debes*, *ē* vero ut *e* in dictionibus hisce vulgaribus *chĕ dicĕ*, *chĕ panĕ mangia*, *chĕ vino bĕvĕ*, cum barbare loquaris, ut nunc vulgus. sic *o* magnum proferendum, ut *o* in dictione *bōnō* cum latine nunc loquimur; nam apud antiquos nostros *o* breve & *o* longum non eundem sonum habuisse existimo; *o* vero parvum, ut *o* in eadem dictione *bono*, si ut vulgus dixeris, *e bŏnŏ hŏmŏ*, & *miŏ amicŏ*. Sic eas literas pronuntiari debere Terentianus praecipit [450-2] . . . *η̄* praeterea non *i* sed *e* longum sonare debere ostendit etiam Eustathius in Homerum inquiens *βῆ μιμητὸν τῆς τῶν προβάτων φωνῆς*. Idem *βὴ βὴ φωνῆς προβάτων σημαντικόν*. *καὶ φέρεται παρ' αἰλίῳ διονυσίῳ χρῆσις κρατίνου τοιαύτη, ὁ δὲ ἠλίθιος ὥσπερ πρόβατον βὴ βὴ λέγων βαδίζει*. Oves vero non *ri ri*, ut nunc *βὴ βὴ* barbare pronuntiamus, sed *be be* balant; & est balant pro belant a *βη* mutatione *η̄* in *ā* dorice, ut *μήτηρ* mater. Unde & id colligimus, *β* sic pronuntiandum, ut *b* apud nos profertur, non ut *u* consonans, vel *ϝ*, digamma Aeolicum. Alpha igitur & beta & graecis ipsis dicendum, ut nos dicimus, non alpha & *vita*, id quod ex hebraeis acceptum est, qui alpha & Beth non *vith* dicunt. Sed de his in fragmentis nostris longe plura; ubi etiam *γ*, *κ*, *λ*, *ν* sequente *ī* vel *ῡ* vel *ēι* vel *ōι* perperam a graecis nunc pronuntiari ostendimus, sicut apud nos & diphthongos omneis & *c* & *g* sequente *i* & *e*, & *ti* sequente vocali.'

[14] It is difficult to reconcile this date with the language of the colophon of the Alcala edition of his *Institutiones*, which would seem to imply that he was still living in 1523: 'Aelii Antonii Nebrissensis grammatici viri disertissimi commentaria introductionum suarum in grammaticam latinam explicita: & nunc demum per eundem recognita, nisi quatenus aliqua oculos illius vel eius qui eum imprimerentur ipsius partes gessit potuerunt effugere. Multa vero ex superioribus editionibus depravata emendavit & ad exemplare prototypum redegit, nonnullaque in capite de syllabis addidit. Adiecit praeterea repetitionem de accentu cum supplemento maiorum

vocabulorum quae non erant in lexico vel dictionario aliarum impressionum, cum quibusdam regulis de literarum prolatione in qua greci & latini errant. Addidit praeterea de litteris hebraicis accentuque hebraicarum dictionum opuscula duo. Impensis vero Arnaldi Guillelmi de Brocario impresa compluti, atque obsoluta [sic!] idibus Iulii Anno a natali Christiano millesimo quingentesimo XXIII. ex privilegio principum etc.' There is no hint here of Antonio having been dead a year.

[14] Antonio refers to his studies at Bologna at the end of the 'Divinatio' prefixed to his History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella (*Rerum a Fernando et Elisabe Hispaniarum felicissimis Regibus gestarum Decades duae*): 'Et si Romanum sermonem Romae non didicimus, nec Lilybaei quidem, sed Bononiae, urbe scilicet omnium bonarum artium altrice.'

[15] *Ad artem litterariam Introductiones*, f. 147", ed. Ven. 1512.

[16] See *Elogio del Cardenal Jimenez de Cisneros, sequido de un Estudio crítico-biografico del Maestro Elio Antonio de Nebrija* (etc.). Madrid 1879.

[17] These Repetitiones, or Relectiones, as they were sometimes called, were public lectures, addressed not to a class but to the whole body of the University of Salamanca, and delivered at the end of the academical year, i.e. in June or July. Two were thus delivered by Antonio in the last years (1485-6) of his first period at Salamanca. On his return in 1505 he continued these Repetitiones; that for 1506 being reckoned as his Repetitio tertia, and that for 1513 (his last year there) as his Repetitio nona. Nicolas Antonio in the *Bibliotheca Hispana* is in error in saying that the Repetitio tertia is no longer to be found.

[18] In his Repetitio octava, *De numeris* (1512), Antonio tells us that his Repetitiones were read everywhere: 'repetitiones quattuor meas superiores, quae ex recitatione sunt editae, per omnes latini sermonis gentes circumferri.' His pupil Chr. Scobar also testifies, in a letter appended to the Venice edition of the *Introductiones* (1512), that the tract *De vi ac potestate litterarum* was very highly thought of in Italy.

[19] Erasmus Epist. 611, ed. Leid.: 'Academia Complutensis non aliunde celebritatem nominis auspicata est, quam a complectendo linguas ac bonas literas. Cuius praecipuum ornamentum est egregius ille senex, planeque dignus qui multos vincat Nestoras, Antonius Nebrissensis.' He goes even further in his first *Apologia ad Iac. Stunicam* (Opera t. 9 c. 305): 'Sane vehementer hoc in loco probo Stunicae candorem, qui non dissimulet unde et alia pleraque hauserit, nimirum e magno Lexico & Quinquagenis Aelii Antonii Nebrissensis, cuius laudes numquam sic attollet Stunica, quin pro viri meritis putemus aliquid etiam addendum. Sic promeretur hominis integritas, sic labores iuvandis bonis studiis exhausti.'

[20] The word is omitted in the text, a blank being left for it in the Alcala edition, and in the Saragossa (1533) and other reprints. Antonio's usual name for the letter, however, is not *samech*, but *sama*, which is of frequent occurrence in his tract *De litteris hebraicis*.

[21] The date is fixed by Antonio's dedication to his patron Stuniga (or Zuniga), who is described as being at the time Archbishop Designate of Seville—'nunc vero hispalensem archiepiscopum designatum'. Stuniga seems to have been designated to the see in May, 1503 (Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica* 2, p. 183); and to have died in the September of the following year (Gams, *Series Episcoporum*, p. 73).

[22] Printed in the Venice edition of the *Introductiones*, f. 139 v. Antonio refers to this early work in his Repetitio tertia, *De peregrinarum dictionum accentu* (s. l. 1506): 'In secunda repetitione mea disputavi de vi ac potestate litterarum contra usum atque opinionem latinorum graecorum & hebraeorum perperam litteras suas enunciantium. . . . Sed tunc quasi halucinans & inquirens; postea vero consideratius edito etiam opusculo iisdem de rebus quod . . . Ioannis Zuniga ex cisterciensis militiae magistro S. R. E. cardinalis hispani nomine publicavi'.

Bywater, Ingram.
The Erasmian pronunciation of Greek and its precursors.