The Role for Pronunciation in Koine Greek: ἡ προφορὰ τῆς ἀρχαίας κοινῆς γλώσσης
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Randall Buth
### Institute for Biblical Languages and Translation, Israel

randall.buth@iblt.ac
founder, Biblical Language Center, Israel

1. Speech is vital for the field of NT studies if the field is to mature. **Speech is vital for READING**.

2. (Catherine Walter, "Phonology in Second Language Reading: Not an Optional Extra," *TESOL Quarterly,* Vol. 42, No. 3, Psycholinguistics for TESOL [Sep., 2008], 455-474.) "What does this imply? First of all, it means that for progress in reading, classroom time will be better spent in increasing proficiency and exposure to the **spoken** language generally than in attempting to teach comprehension skills." (Walter, 470)

3. Diane August and Timothy Shanahan, "Executive Summary" *Developing Literacy in Second Language Users: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth,* edited by Diane August and Timothy Shanahan (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2006). "However, this is **not** the case for text-level skills—reading comprehension and writing. ... The research suggests that the reason for the disparity between word- and text-level skills ... is **oral** English proficiency. . . . It is not enough to teach language-minority students reading skills alone. Extensive **oral** English development **must** be incorporated into successful **literacy instruction**."(p. 4) [bold is mine--RB]

4. Statement of American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL):
Research indicates that **effective** language instruction must provide significant levels of meaningful communication* and interactive feedback in the target language in order for students to develop language and cultural proficiency. The pivotal role of target-language interaction in language learning is emphasized in the K-16 *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century.* **ACTFL therefore recommends that language educators and their students use the target language as exclusively as possible (90% plus) at all levels of instruction during instructional time and, when feasible, beyond the classroom**. In classrooms that feature maximum target-language use, instructors use a variety of strategies to facilitate comprehension and support meaning making.
*Communication for a classical language refers to an emphasis on reading ability and for American Sign Language (ASL) to signed communicative ability. (Approved by the ACTFL Board of Directors 5-22-2010: https://www.actfl.org/news/position-statements/use-the-target-language-the-classroom)

5. Choosing a pronunciation system should be informed by many factors. Some of the factors contradict each other so a reasonable compromise may be an expected result. Here are six primary factors:
a. A pronunciation system may be intended for persons wishing to learn Koiné Greek, particularly, the Roman period in the land of Israel, 63 BCE to 325 CE. The "Chaucer principle" mitigates against simply using a Homeric or Platonic phonology or orthography.
b. The pronunciation should preserve the same significant sound distinctions that were used in the Roman period. This means that the pronunciation system should be phonemic. This term will be explained below.
c. The pronunciation system should, as far as practical, be historical. That is, it should reflect the way in which the language sounded in the Roman period.
d. When options were/are available, the pronunciation should help students with adapting to other dialects of Greek so as to become a bridge to the whole Greek language. When in doubt, decisions should fit with the known historical outcome.
e. When options were/are available, the pronunciation should be practical for speakers of English, Spanish, French and German.
f. Carrying capacity for live, new communication must be considered.   This mitigates against simply adopting modern Greek which needed to make changes to the language. εμείς εσείς "we" and "you all".
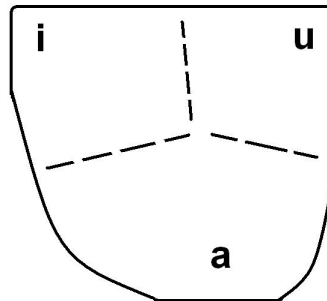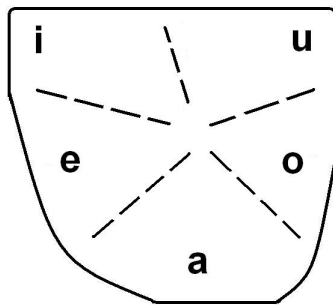
6a.
Vowels formed in mouth by tongue height

nasal passage

i   u

a

lips

tongue

lips
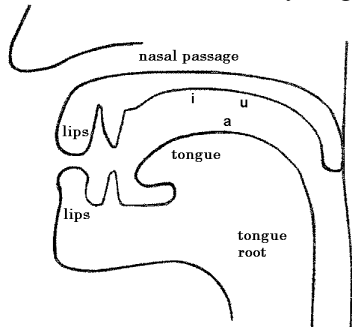
tongue
root

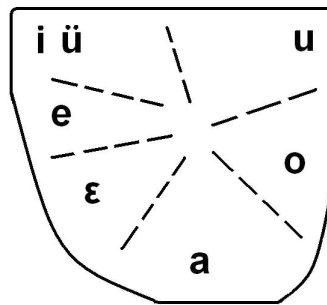6b.
Magnified areas for three-vowel language:

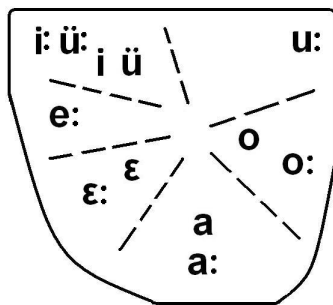i   u

a

6c.
magnified areas for 5-vowel areas:

i   u

e   o

a

6d.
magnified areas for 6-vowel areas:
plus rounded-tongue ü (=7 phonemes):

i ü   u

e

ɛ   o

a

6e.   Sidney Allen//Stephen Daitz
magnified area for 6-vowel areas:
plus long(:) and short duration:

i: ü: i ü   u:

e:

ε   o   o:

ε: ɛ:

a
a:

6f. (Restored Attic, 5th century, 403 BCE orthography)
magnified areas for 6-vowel areas
plus long and short duration (Greek symbols)

ι υ   ι υ   ου

ει

η   ɛ   ο   ω

α

α
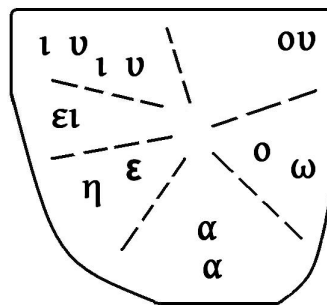
7. Ancient Greek (7-5c BCE) had a defective orthography that did not differentiate long and short vowels. This was partially corrected in 403 BCE when the Euclidean reform added HTA (the old rough breathing sign) and Ω ΜΕΓΑ to the orthographic system. This only partially marked long vowels since I, Y, and A were left ambiguous.
NB: The ancient Greek distinctions φ, θ, χ vs. π, τ, κ were between hard, aspirated stop sounds like English 'p' 't' 'k' and between unaspirated Spanish 'p' 't' 'k'. (/h/ [already dropped in Ionic] and /w/ [dropped soon after Homer] were unmarked.)

Athenian Greek phonology and orthography 403, BCE

Athenian Consonant Phonemes, c. 403 BCE

		labial	alveolar	velar	open
stop	aspirated	pʰ	tʰ	kʰ	
	unaspirated	p	t	k	
	voiced	b	d	g	
nasal	voiced	m	n		
sibilant	voiceless		s		
	voiced		z (zd)		
trill	voiced		r		
lateral	voiced		l		
vocoid	voiceless				h

Athenian Greek Consonants, c. 403 BCE

		labial	alveolar	velar	open
stop	aspirated	φ	θ	χ	
	unaspirated	π	τ	κ	
	voiced	β	δ	γ	
nasal	voiced	μ	ν		
sibilant	voiceless		σ		
	voiced		ζ		
trill	voiced		ρ		
lateral	voiced		λ		
vocoid	voiceless				ʻ

Athenian Long vowels, 403BCE

	front flat	front round	central	back
high	i:	ü:		u:
high mid	e:			
low mid	ɛ:			ɔ:
low			a:	

Athenian short vowels, 403BCE

	front flat	front round	central	back
high	i	ü		
high mid				
low mid	ɛ			o
low			a	

8. After Alexander the Great, Greek rapidly spread throughout the ancient world and Greek went through a wide-ranging phonological rearrangement, not too different in scope than the Great English vowel shift after the Black Plague and Chaucer. This was the Great Greek Vowel Shift.

Athenian Long Greek vowels, 403 BCE

	front flat	front round	central	back
high	ι	υ		ου
high mid	ει			
low mid	η			ω
low			α	

Athenian Short Greek vowels, 403 BCE

	front flat	front round	central	back
high	ι	υ		
high mid				
low mid	ε			ο
low			α	

9. Imagine receiving a 1st century letter: ΤΩΙ ΟΙΕΙΩΙ

10. By the 1st century BCE within major dialects[1] throughout the Mediterranean world of Koiné Greek, length dropped out of the system with the resulting vowels and symbol pairs:

Pair 1: [ει] was pronounced the same as [ι].
Pair 2: [αι] was pronounced the same as [ε].
Pair 3: [ω] was pronounced the same as [ο].
Pair 4: [οι] was pronounced the same as [υ].

11. **ει=ι, ι=ει**   attestation   normalized   English
Ben Kosiba 1.9   ισ   εἰς   'to, for' (132-135 CE)
Ben Kosiba 1.7   συνεξελθιν   συνεξελθεῖν   'go out with'
Babatha 25.4   επιδη [=epidé]   ἐπειδή [=epidé]   'since' (131 CE)
Babatha 25.6   νυνει   νυνί   'now' (for short iota)
Babatha 15.8   υμειν   ὑμῖν   'for you' (125 CE)

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1   This does not mean that an ω-μέγα would sound exactly the same as an ω-μέγα in another dialect. To the contrary, we may assume that there would be continual small changes from dialect to dialect and even from village to village in some cases. What the above equivalencies mean is that within any particular dialect, the ω-μέγα, however it is pronounced, will be pronounced like ο-μικρόν in that dialect.

   Likewise, the equivalencies do not mean that marginal dialects would not exist that did not follow the equivalencies of the major, majority dialects. The equivalencies above point out what a traveller would hear in the majority dialects all over the Mediterranean, from Rome to Judea, from the Aegean to Egypt.

Babatha. 21.24   ενι εκαστω   ἑνὶ ἑκάστῳ   'for each one'(no grammatical iota)

12.   **αι=ε, ε=αι**
Papyrus 99.4   ειδηται   εἰδῆτε   'you would know' (154 BCE)
Ben Kosiba line 11   ποιησηται   ποιήσητε   'you should do'
Babatha 16.16   αινγαδδων   (gen. pl.)   En Gedi (127 CE)
Babatha 11.1   ενγαδοισ   (dat pl.)   En Gedi (124 CE)
Babatha 37.8   εταιροισ   ἑτέροις   'for others' (131 CE)
Babatha 24.18   αποδιξε   ἀποδεῖξαι   'to declare' (130 CE)

13.   **ο=ω, ω=ο**
Papyrus 100.2   ομνυο   ὀμνύω   'I adjure' (152 BCE)
Babatha 15.10+11   ηγεμωνοσ   ἡγεμόνος   'of governor' (125 CE)
Babatha 20.16+40   ανθομολογημενης   ἀνθωμολογημένης   'acknowledged'
Papyrus 109.14   αυτον   αὐτῶν   'of them' (100 CE)
Papyrus 109.15   ενπιροσ   ἐμπείρως   'skillfully'

14.   **οι=υ, υ=οι**
Papyrus 103.12   επυησεν   ἐποίησεν   'did' (95 BCE)
Papyrus 109.2   τωι οιειωι   τῷ υἱῷ   'to the son' (100 CE)
Papyrus 109.3   πυησασ   ποιήσας   'having done'
Papyrus 110.14   λυπον   λοιπόν   'remaining' (100 CE)
Babatha 20.30   ηνυγμενον   ἠνοιγμένον   'opened' (130 CE)

There are two additional points on υ:
a.   οι and υ had not yet merged with / ει, ι / as the modern, *itacistic* change.[2]
b.   Notice the extra ι in the next document, probably reflecting a rounded-front vocalic [ü] pronunciation of υ.
Babatha 21.17, 25   δια ενγυιου   διὰ ἐγγύου   'by guarantor' (130CE)

15. after learning the above, does it help in reading a papyrus from 100 CE?   Yes.
Loeb Papyrus 109.2   τωι οιειωι   (100 CE, the year itself)
Compare #8 above, a silent iota is written for grammatical dative.

16. The Status of η -- Pre-200 CE η = [e] in Judea
See #9 above where "EnGedi" is written with αι and ε.
But Babatha 20.4, 6, 8, 23, 25, 26, 29; 23.3 12; 24.2; 26.3 all use η in the name "EnGedi". The scribe of documents 20-26 was especially poor in Greek and cannot be representing any kind of historical or 'correct' spelling. It is a vulgar spelling and shows that η had not yet merged with ι in the Judean Greek dialect.
Babatha 20.8   εν **η**νγαδοις   (dat. pl.)   in En Gedi (130 CE)
Babatha 26.3   **η**νγαδηνη   (adj. n. f. s.)   En Gedean (131 CE)
However, by 200 CE η appears to have shifted to ιωτα [i] in Koine.
John 10:41 p66   **ει**ν (corrected to **η**ν)   ἦν   'was' (c200 CE)
John 11:44 p66, 75   κ**η**ριαις   κειρίαις   'cloth strips' (c200 CE)
2Cor 12:21 p46   ταπεινωσ**ει** (subj?)   ταπεινώσ**η** (subj) 'would humble' (c200 CE)
These manuscripts were written at a time when ει sounded like ι and they show confusion of ει as ι elsewhere in their writing (e.g., p46 Rom 8:32 ημειν for ἡμῖν. p66,75 John 3:10 γεινωσκεις for γινώσκεις) so these alternations of η and ει appear to reflect the [i] sound for η. (However, 2Cor 12.21 may also reflect substandard grammar by p46, intending a future.)

17. Consonants – soft fricatives were early
  17a   Σαλβίου for the Latin [Salvius] (1st century CE).
                πρεβέτοις   for the Latin [privatus] (1st century CE)
                Φλαβία for the Latin [Flavia] (149 CE)
                Φλαουβίου and Φλαυβίας   for the Latin [Flavius/-a] (120 CE)
                p46 (late 2nd century), already has Σιλβανοῦ at 2Cor 1.19, corrected to Σιλουανοῦ.

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[2]   The modern Greek vowels have ει, η, οι, υ, ι, υι all being pronounced as [i]. The process of the change is called *itacism*, since the various historical vowels changed their sound into *iota*.

17b			Likewise, examples of γάμμα reflecting a fricative abound, in some cases approaching a palatal [y] sound. The **insertions** and the substitutions with ι would not be probable without γάμμα having become a soft fricative.
ιγερου	for	ἱεροῦ	'of a temple, of holy' (from 5 BCE)
υγιου	for	υἱοῦ	'of a son' (from 16 CE)
εριευς	for	Ἐργεύς	(frequent in 1c CE)

It appears that the ancient voiced stops β, γ had already gone *soft* by the first century and should be pronounced like International Phonetic Alphabet [β, γ]. This is all the more compelling when compared to φ, θ, χ. "Erasmians" have generally adopted the fricative pronunciation of these stops, in line with modern and late Koine Greek.[3]

18. The Tyndale House Greek NT uses ει for etymological long *ιοτα*. Πειλᾶτος, κρείνειν "to judge". They are to be applauded for this. However, the consistency of Vaticanus spelling does not mean that length was still being used in Greek speech. It appears to testify to scholarly redaction.[4]

19. Modern Greek has simplified the vowels to five [i] [e] [a] [o] [u] and the φ, θ, χ, β, δ, γ are all fricatives. There is no rough breathing [h] and tone is only word accent (usng high and low). Basically, modern Greek may be considered a reduction of Koine Greek where η and (υ and ο) merged into ι [i].

20. A Koine pronunciation may use these fricative consonants φ, θ, χ, β, δ, γ and add seven vowels ι η ε α ω ου υ without rough breathing. (ει αι ο οι become orthographic variants of ι ε ω υ.) This system had considerable stability and carrying capacity.
The Roman catacombs show how widespread this was, from the East to the West: κεῖται was spelled in many ways: κιται, κιτε, κειται and κειτε were especially frequent and prominent. Also κιθε, χιθε and others, that show a hard "stop" pronunciation of θ and χ. (Principle 5d and 5e would support adopting the general fricative pronunciation.) Rough breathing was sometimes left off of Latin spellings of Greek.

21.   **First Conclusion: Why Not Use a Koiné Pronunciation?**

Pronunciation becomes an issue when someone wants to invest the time and energy to become truly fluent in the language, able to think, listen and read at normal conversational speeds. A phonemic Koiné results in a dialect in which the user will appreciate the sounds and writings of the first three Christian centuries in a manner in which the original audiences would have perceived them. It provides a perspective on word choices by an author. Assonance, rhyme, and avoidance of ambiguity in their system become clearer.

So why wouldn't someone want to use a Koiné pronunciation? Some persons are primarily interested in an older literature like Homer's epics or the Attic playwrights. For such people an older pronunciation could be used for reading, like what some people do today when reading Chaucer in a Chaucerian pronunciation. This would apply to Restored Attic and should be distinguished from the various systems that go by the name "Erasmian".

Some also argue that Greek should be taught with an artificial sound system that differentiates every graphic distinction in the Greek writing system. It would help students learn to spell. The irony is that most teachers who raise this objection rarely ask their students to spell anything. Students only read printed texts that are already spelled "correctly." An artificial approach goes against historical and natural language use that we see in every other language. While some people rightly justify the reading of English Chaucer in an ancient Chaucerian pronunciation, no one would argue that English learners should use Chaucerian when reading Shakespeare and certainly not when using modern English. Shakespeare is almost modern English in comparison to Chaucer. The English vowels and consonants have changed even more than the Greek vowels. So if we don't use Chaucer in English for Shakespeare, we have even less of a reason to demand this for Greek. The "cost" of this approach leads to a system that does not match the papyri, does not match the language choices in the NT, and sounds cacophonic to modern Greek users.

From the another direction: professional conferences are not a good reason for preserving a system that is historically out of sync or that joins some phonemes incorrectly. (See the incorrect vowel pairings of US Erasmian ει is incorrect as η [e], υ incorrect as ου, ο incorrect as α.) At professional conferences audiences can only be assumed to follow written texts and must

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[3]   Examples are from Gignac (1976:71-70).

[4]   "Official documents follow Classical orthography in principle, with one exception. According to usage introduced at the beginning of the Hellenistic period, EI has virtually become the norm for ancient /ī/ (hence, e.g., ἐτείμησαν and νείκη for ἐτίμησαν and νίκη). But in other registers we can observe a multitude of exchanges between equivalent graphemes."(Claude Brixhe, "Linguistic Diversity in Asia Minor during the Empire: *Koine* and Non-Greek Languages," p 232 in *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language,* edited by Egbert J. Bakker [Chichester/Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, pp 228-252.])

be provided with written examples for extensive quotes, like here, so that pronunciation systems become irrelevant to the objection.

It is a true advantage to be able to listen to Koiné texts and perceive them rapidly and within the same linguistic framework as the original audience. One can read ancient papyri as spelled, can appreciate the original spelling of the Greek New Testament[5], and have better linguistic instincts about which words and choices may have been influenced by sound. Plus, the system is accepted as compatible with "Greek" by modern Greek speakers. As for carrying capacity, we can use a system that was good enough for Paul, Luke, and Josephus.[6]

Practical Applications

22.   τὸν οφθαλμόν // τῶν οφθαλμῶν .   τὸν ἀδελφόν // τῶν ἀδελφῶν.
Accusative singular: Low low low high
Genitive plural: High low low high

23.   καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. Read as θεός   ἦν... Low high high low high low

24.   ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων·.
Read first ζωή as ζωή [high--Focus], second as ἡ ζωὴ ἦν [ζωή -- low--Topic/Contextualization].

25.   καὶ ἔρχονται πρὸς αὐτόν, παραλυτικὸν φέροντες, αἰρόμενον ὑπὸ τεσσάρων.
Read, probably, παραλυτικόν   φέροντες [high--Focus]?

26.   Enclitics and questions on accent
ἡμεῖς δὲ τοῦ Μωϋσέως **ἐσμὲν** μαθηταί· (John 9.28) The focal τοῦ Μωϋσέως attracts ἐσμέν as reinforcement.

27.   ὃς δ᾽ ἂν τηρῇ **αὐτοῦ** τὸν λόγον, (1Jn 2.5) Listen to αυτου with and without its accent,
possibly attracted to the verb as an enclitic with Focus on τηρῇ.

28.   ὅτι ἐὰν καταγινώσκη **ἡμῶν** ἡ καρδία, ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν. (1Jn 3.20). "Enclitic" attraction?
ἐρευνητέον "this/these need investigation. As the field becomes sensitive to using Greek communicatively,
some of these features of prosody will come more into focus. Make a nice PhD on Koine prosody.

29.   Rom 5.1
εἰρήνην **ἔχομεν** πρὸς τὸν θεὸν   א1 B2 F G P Ψ 0220vid 104 365 1241 1505 1506 1739c 1881 2464 *pm [Byz]*
εἰρήνην **ἔχωμεν** πρὸς τὸν θεὸν   א* A B* C D K L 33 81 630 1175 1739* *pm* lat bo *[Byz]*

30.   πίστις χριστοῦ. The effects of fluency in a language
1965 "My love she speaks . . ."   and   1966 "My love is warmer ..."

31. To me the most important issue with pronunciation is not the proper evaluation of the many textual issues and word choices that may or may not have been influenced either through ambiguity or even avoiding ambiguity. All of these are valid and benefit from a Koine pronunciation. The biggest and most compelling issue for Christian scholarship is to have the kind of **oral fluency** that enhances **high-level textual processing** and fuller **comprehension**. That is what we expect in every other literature. That is the language skill that we demand in Russian, German, or English literature. That is the commitment that we owe to God as caretakers of his word.

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[5] Many are unaware that the oldest papyri and oldest uncial manuscripts reflect a 1st century Koiné pronunciation in their spelling. Westcott and Hort followed some of these, correctly, though the editors of the NA/UBS text have artificially re-spelled the earliest strata of the Greek New Testament, partially to accomodate an incorrect Erasmian pronunciation. See, e.g., Δαυείδ, Πειλάτος, Ἠλείας, and χρεοφιλέται.

[6] Benjamin Kantor is currently compiling a data base of all attested spellings from the land of Israel and is writing a book on Koine phonology of the Roman period.