

**A PRIMER OF CLASSICAL
AND ENGLISH
PHILOLOGY; PP. 3-101**

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A Primer of Classical and English Philology

BY THE

REV. WALTER W. SKEAT

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'You will not find, for so I venture to promise, that this study of words will be a dull one when you undertake it yourselves.'—TRENCH, *On the Study of Words*; Lect. I.

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P R E F A C E

THE object of the present little book is to exhibit some of the more elementary principles of modern philology as applied to the etymology of Greek, Latin, and English words.

In Chapter I, I give the principal points that concern the proper pronunciation of Greek and Latin. For the pronunciation of Anglo-Saxon, the student is referred to Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Primer.

In Chapter II, I show how Greek is usually transliterated, whenever Latin or English words are borrowed from that language. I next state a few laws that govern the combination of letters in Greek; and note the chief vowel-changes in Latin arising from the prefixing of prepositions to verbs.

In Chapter III, I explain what is meant by 'cognate'; with some examples of Grimm's Law as applied to cognate words in Greek, Latin, and English.

In Chapter IV, I note some characteristics of Greek and Latin that are exemplified at every turn when it is desired to compare them with English.

The remaining Chapters are wholly occupied with an exemplification of the principles of gradation; because without a sound knowledge of such principles it is impossible to compare the vowel-sounds in the three languages (Greek, Latin, and English); and until such vowel-changes are rightly understood, no true comparison of cognate words can be made. The reader is referred

to Chapter VI—on Vowel-gradation—of my *Primer of English Etymology* for an account of the seven conjugations of strong verbs in English and some other Teutonic languages; and my chief object, in the present book, is to show how a knowledge of these conjugations may be made to illustrate the equivalent gradations in Greek and Latin. In this way it will be found by no means difficult, not only to understand those gradations, but to remember them. The table at p. 97 gives all the results that are most needed.

I have to thank Mr. P. Giles, our Reader in Comparative Philology, for his kindness in reading over the proof-sheets. For the final form in which the book has appeared, I am of course entirely responsible.

I subjoin a list of the books upon which I have chiefly depended.

CAMBRIDGE;
June 6, 1905.

LIST OF BOOKS MOST FREQUENTLY CONSULTED

- BRUGMANN, K., UND DELBRÜCK, B. *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen*. Erster Band; zweite Bearbeitung. Strassburg; 1897.
- BRUGMANN, K. *Kurze vergleichende Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen*. Strassburg; 1902-4.
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- PRELLWITZ, W. *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*. Göttingen; 1892.
- SKEAT, W. W. *A Primer of English Etymology*. Fourth Edition. Oxford; 1904.
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- SKEAT, W. W. *A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. New Edition. Oxford; 1901.
- UHLENBECK, C. C. *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der gotischen Sprache*. Zweite Auflage. Amsterdam; 1900.
- UHLENBECK, C. C. *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der altindischen Sprache*. Amsterdam; 1898-9.

ABBREVIATIONS. A. F.—Anglo-French. A. S.—Anglo-Saxon. Du.—Dutch. E.—English. F.—French. G.—German. Gk.—Greek. Goth.—Gothic. Idg.—Indogermanic. Ital.—Italian. L.—Latin. Lith.—Lithuanian. M. E.—Middle English. O. F.—Old French. O. H. G.—Old High German. O. Lat.—Old Latin. Scand.—Scandinavian. Swed.—Swedish. Teut.—Teutonic. W.—Welsh.

thus differed from the original Indo-Germanic *u*, which was well preserved in nearly all other languages of the same family, as for instance, in Sanskrit, Latin, Gothic, and Old English. Its primitive sound was, doubtless, the same in Greece as elsewhere, but in Attic Greek it passed into the modified sound at quite an early date. This is shown by the evidence of Latin, which had no such sound in native words, but imitated it when borrowing words from Greek. Hence it came to pass that Latin borrowed the symbol *Y* at the same time, and employed it to designate the Greek sound in borrowed words; and to this day it is called *y grec*, i. e. 'Greek *y*,' in French. Old English had both sounds, viz. original *u*, and a modified *ü* which had arisen from the modification of the old *u*-sound under certain conditions. Hence the Old English scribes availed themselves of the Latin symbols, and very justly employed *u* for the sound of the original Indo-Germanic and Latin *u*, and *y* for the modification of it. By way of a reminder that the latter had a modified sound, they usually wrote a dot above the symbol, so that it appears in Old English MSS. as '*ÿ*.'

4. *Diphthongs.* The primitive Greeks pronounced the diphthongs containing *i* and *u* in such a way as to sound each constituent successively; i. e. *ai*, Gk. *αι*, was pronounced (*ai*), in which short (*a*) was rapidly succeeded by short (*i*), the latter becoming a glide or passing into the consonant corresponding to the *i*-vowel. Brugmann formerly represented this glide by the symbol *i̯*, and the consonantal *u* (our *w*) by the symbol *u̯*; and in this way the original Gk. diphthongs could be denoted by *ai̯*, *ei̯*, *oi̯*, *au̯*, *eu̯*, *ou̯*; written *ai*, *ei*, *oi*, *av*, *ev*, *ov*. But in his *Kurze Vergleichende Grammatik* (1902) he employs the simpler

symbols *ai*, *ei*, *oi*, *au*, *eu*, *ou*. Here *oi* is the E. *oi* in *boil*, and *au* is the G. *au* in *Haus*, or the E. *ou* in *house*. We may add to these the diphthong written *vi*, pronounced as *v* followed by *i*; if we throw the stress on to the latter element, the *v* becomes our *w*, and the sound is (*wii*); E. *we*. Lastly, *α*, *η*, *ω*, originally $\bar{\alpha}$, $\bar{\eta}$, $\bar{\omega}$, are usually pronounced as \bar{a} , $\bar{\eta}$, $\bar{\omega}$ (*aa*, *ee*, *oo*, or \bar{a} , \bar{e} , \bar{o}); neglecting the subscribed ι .

Unfortunately, in Attic Greek, in the fifth century B. C., one of the above diphthongs (at least) had lost its original sound; for *ov* was then no longer a diphthong, but became a simple long vowel, viz. \bar{u} , thus occupying the place of the fifth vowel, which (as above noted) had suffered modification. We can give the sounds of *ai*, *ei*, *oi*, *av*, *ev*, *ov* with sufficient exactness for practical purposes by sounding them, respectively, as E. *ai* in *aiale*, *ei* in *veil*, *oi* in *boil*, *ou* in *house*, *ew* in *next*, and *u* in *rule*.

In Latin words borrowed from Greek, *ai* became *ae* or *e*, at first pronounced (*ai*), as in Greek, but confused, at a later time, with long open *e* (\bar{e})¹. Like the O. Latin *ei* itself, the Greek *ei*, in borrowed words, became long \bar{i} (*i* or *ii*), the same sound as that of \bar{i} in *machine*; and the same result took place in Greek also as early as the third century, B. C. (Brugmann, § 205). This explains the use of *ei* with the sound of \bar{i} in Gothic, which borrowed its alphabet mainly from Greek. The Gk. *oi* in borrowed

¹ The terms 'open' and 'close' have their natural meaning. If we first sound the open *e* in *glory*, and then the close *e* in *note*, it will be felt that the mouth is wider open (i. e. that the jaws are further apart) in the former case than in the latter. So also with the open *e* in *there*, and the close *e* in *vein*. The short close *e* is rare in English, but occurs in *o-bey*, *o-mit*, *pho-netic*.