

Kierán Meinhardt

The Phonology of Greek Loanwords
in Coptic

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Ἀπ' τὴν μικρὴ του, στὰ περίχωρα πλησίον, κόμη,
καὶ σκονισμένος ἀπὸ τὸ ταξεῖδι ἀκόμη
ἔφθασεν ὁ πραγματευτής. Καὶ «Λίβανον!» καὶ «Κόμμι!»
«Ἄριστον ἔλαιον!» «Ἄρωμα γιὰ τὴν κόμη!»
στοὺς δρόμους διαλαλεῖ ...

— Κωνσταντῖνος Καβάφης, *Τὸ 31 π.Χ. στὴν Ἀλεξάνδρεια*, 1924

Truth is not what is uttered in full consciousness. It is always what
“just slips out”—the typing error which gives the whole show away.

— Lawrence Durrell, *Balthazar (The Alexandria Quartet II)*, 1958

Editorial

It is with much satisfaction that I present hereby a third release within the *DDGLC Working Papers* subset of the *Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographica* series—Kierán Meinhardt's *The Phonology of Greek Loanwords in Coptic*. The revised version of his M.A. thesis, submitted to *Freie Universität Berlin* in fall 2025 and subsequently honored with the *Award for Academic Excellence 2026* of the *International Association for Coptic Studies*, this book brings to fruition its young author's broad interests and intense studies in all the relevant subjects.

Kierán Meinhardt graduated at the *Humboldt Universität* (B.A.) and *Freie Universität Berlin* (M.A.) in Historical Linguistics, Greek, and Comparative Linguistics. Besides working as a software developer for companies and several academic projects,¹ language coach for Ancient Greek and Latin in film productions, poet and translator of poetry,² his professional experience also includes work as a student assistant on the *DDGLC Data and Database*. This, along with his deep understanding of the Classical languages, Sanskrit, Arabic, and Coptic and his keen interest in computer-based linguistic analysis (the automatic classification of spelling variants employed in *The Phonology of Greek Loanwords in Coptic* was first developed in a seminar paper) has prepared and led him to the kind of scientific challenge he has taken up with the present book. It is one of the hitherto rare pieces of research on the topic, certainly by far the most comprehensive one, and the one based on the largest set of data, the 2024 version of spelling variants compiled in the *DDGLC* database. Employing linguistic, statistical, and digital methodology in a consistently reflected and equilibrated way, based on a profound notion of the two interacting languages and phonological systems, and guided by a keen sense of meaningful research questions, this book offers a great wealth of significant results and intriguing suggestions with an argumentative lucidity and performative elegance which will likewise intrigue and please the valued reader.

Kierán Meinhardt's *The Phonology of Greek Loanwords in Coptic* is the first publication backed by an accessible and searchable set of *DDGLC*-based digital research data.³ Thanks to the publication funds of *Freie Universität Berlin*, the third volume of *DDGLC Working Papers*, as already the previous one,⁴ can again be offered as an open access publication.

Berlin / Leipzig, 20 September 2026

Tonio Sebastian Richter

1 Such as the DFG project *Altltauisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, the ERC project *ZODIAC: Ancient Astral Science in Transformation* and the ERC project *Kalila and Dimna: Anonym-Classic*.

2 Most recently appeared his German translation of H. P. Lovecraft's sonnets: *Pilze vom Planeten Juggob* (ISBN 978-3-565-46830-0), 2026.

3 Kierán Meinhardt, *Greek Loanword Spellings in Coptic*, 2026.09.29+ddglc.2024-05-09, <https://zenodo.org/doi/10.5281/zenodo.22172183>. This publication grants access to attestation-level data on deviating spellings, which is not yet accessible in the *DDGLC* data recently released through the user interface *DIOSKOROS* (<https://dioskoros.org/>).

4 Nina Speransky, *Transitivity and Aspect in Sahidic Coptic*, *DDGLC Working Papers* 2, *LingAeg StudMon* 26, Hamburg: Widmaier 2022 <<https://doi.org/10.37011/studmon.26>>.

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2024

I am grateful to Tonio Sebastian Richter, Lisa Starogardzki, Anne Grischeck, and Johannes Schütz for accompanying it from its earliest beginnings.

The project subsequently grew into a master's thesis in linguistics, supervised by Professors Malte Felix Rosemeyer and Tonio Sebastian Richter.

2025

I thank Malte Felix Rosemeyer, Sonja Dahlgren, Eliese-Sophia Lincke, and my fellow awardee Vincent Walter for guiding the work along its way. I am grateful to the International Association for Coptic Studies for honouring it with its Award for Academic Excellence.

It has now grown further into this book.

2026

I thank the editors of the series, as well as Christian Casey, Carsten Peust, and Ivan Miroshnikov, for their valuable feedback. I am also grateful to my publisher, Kai Widmaier, for the smooth and accommodating collaboration and for trusting me with the book's typesetting. Finally, my thanks go to Freie Universität Berlin, the birthplace of this book, for funding its Open Access publication.

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Kierán Meinhardt

Contents

Editorial	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
Tables	xv
Figures	xix
1 Introduction	1
2 Greek in Egypt	5
2.1 Pre-Ptolemaic period	5
2.2 Ptolemaic period	5
2.3 Roman period	6
2.4 Byzantine period	7
2.5 Islamic period	8
3 Contact phonology	11
3.1 Types of bilingual speech	11
3.1.1 Imposition	12
3.1.2 Imitation	13
3.1.3 Adaptation	13
3.1.3.1 Orthographic adaptation	15
3.1.4 Integration	15
3.2 Greek and Coptic in contact	16
3.3 Research questions	18
4 Greek and Coptic phonology	19
4.1 Greek	19
4.1.1 Standard Koine (mid III BCE)	19
4.1.1.1 Vowels	19
4.1.1.2 Consonants	20
4.1.2 Early Vulgar Koine (II BCE)	21
4.1.2.1 Vowels	21
4.1.2.2 Consonants	21
4.1.3 Late Vulgar Koine (IV CE)	22
4.1.3.1 Vowels	23
4.1.3.2 Consonants	23
4.1.4 Early Medieval Greek (post X CE)	24
4.2 Coptic	24
4.2.1 Sahidic	25
4.2.1.1 Vowels	25
4.2.1.2 Consonants	26
4.2.1.3 Syllable structure	27

4.2.2	Bohairic	28
4.2.2.1	Vowels	28
4.2.2.2	Consonants	29
4.2.2.3	Syllable structure	30
4.2.3	Fayyumic	30
4.2.4	Mesokemic	31
4.2.5	Lycopolitan	32
4.2.6	Akhmimic	32
4.2.7	Summary	33
4.3	Mismatches and expected interference	33
4.3.1	Orthographic depth	34
4.3.2	Phonetic differences	35
4.3.3	Phonological differences	36
5	Methodology	41
5.1	The <i>DDGLC</i> corpus	41
5.1.1	Dialect and date	41
5.1.2	Genre	43
5.1.3	Confounds between dialect, date, and genre	47
5.2	Detecting spelling variation	48
5.2.1	Greek standard orthography	48
5.2.2	Preprocessing	49
5.2.3	Detecting stress	50
5.2.4	Tokenisation	51
5.2.5	Diffing and post-correction	51
5.2.5.1	Gestalt pattern matching	52
5.2.5.2	Adjacent substitutions	53
5.2.5.3	Haplography	53
5.2.5.4	Dittography	54
5.2.5.5	Digraphs	54
5.2.5.6	Left or right insertions	55
5.2.5.7	Marking stress	55
5.2.6	Weeding out the morphology	56
5.2.7	Estimating accuracy	57
5.3	Statistical methods	58
5.3.1	Types of data	58
5.3.1.1	Nominal data	59
5.3.1.2	Cardinal data	59
5.3.2	Measurements and tests	59
5.3.2.1	Directionality	60
5.3.2.2	Stress	61
5.3.2.3	Contingency tables and Cramér's <i>V</i>	61

5.3.2.4	Precision, recall, and the F_1 -score	62
5.3.2.5	Spearman's rank correlation (ρ)	63
5.3.2.6	Mann–Whitney U -test	64
6	Analysis	65
6.1	Accuracy	65
6.1.1	Accuracy and frequency	66
6.1.2	Diachronic distribution	66
6.1.3	Dialectal differences	69
6.1.4	Genre and text class	70
6.2	Adaptation and other processes	72
6.2.1	Consonants	72
6.2.1.1	Voice and aspiration in obstruents	75
6.2.1.2	Palatalisation	82
6.2.1.3	Psilosis and vulgar aspiration	85
6.2.1.4	Gemination and degemination	91
6.2.1.5	Interchange of liquids	94
6.2.1.6	Conclusion	98
6.2.2	Vowels	98
6.2.2.1	Interchange of vowels	102
6.2.2.2	Conclusion	119
6.2.3	Vowel deletion	119
6.2.4	Vowel epenthesis	122
6.3	Systemic considerations	123
6.3.1	Consonants	125
6.3.2	Vowels	126
6.3.3	Conclusion	127
7	Summary	129
A	Data release and companion website	133
A.1	Data release	133
A.2	Website	134
B	Transcriptions	137
B.1	Common lemmata	137
B.2	Sample texts	140
C	Denominators	143
C.1	Grapheme occurrences	143
C.1.1	By dialect	143
C.1.2	By century (Sahidic only)	145
C.2	Corpus sizes	146
D	Index of spelling alternations	149
	Bibliography	153

Tables

1	Types of mixing two languages (S = secondary, Greek; P = primary, Coptic) .	12
2	Processes of contact-induced phonological change, after Matras (2009: 225) .	17
3	The vowels of Standard Koine	20
4	The diphthongs of Standard Koine	20
5	The consonants of Standard Koine	20
6	The vowels of Early Vulgar Koine	22
7	The ‘diphthongs’ of Early Vulgar Koine	22
8	The obstruents of Early Vulgar Koine	22
9	The vowels of Late Vulgar Koine	23
10	The ‘diphthongs’ of Late Vulgar Koine	23
11	The obstruents of Late Vulgar Koine	23
12	The vowels of Early Medieval Greek	24
13	The vowels of Sahidic	25
14	The unstressed vowels of Sahidic	26
15	The ‘diphthongs’ of Sahidic	26
16	The consonants of Sahidic	27
17	The vowels of Bohairic	28
18	The unstressed vowels of Bohairic	29
19	The ‘diphthongs’ of Bohairic	29
20	The obstruents of Bohairic	30
21	Comparison of phonological features among Coptic dialects	33
22	The vowel phonemes of Late Vulgar Koine	36
23	Reinterpretation and underdifferentiation of Greek obstruents	38
24	Attestations of Greek loanwords in the <i>DDGLC</i> corpus by dialect	43
25	Attestations of Greek loanwords in the <i>DDGLC</i> corpus by dialect and century	43
26	Rules for genre classification	44
27	Attestations of Greek loanwords across genres	46
28	Classification of genres into four broad classes	46
29	Association between dialect, genre, and date	47
30	Top genres per century of Sahidic attestations	48
31	Tokens of πνεῦμα	51
32	Sample of the resulting dataset of orthographic deviations	58
33	Sample of the resulting dataset of attestations (with CER)	59
34	Outcomes of binary classification	62
35	Character error rate (CER) by lemma frequency	66
36	Average character error rate by century and dialect (30+ attestations)	68
37	Accuracy by dialect	69
38	Accuracy by text class	70

39 Accuracy by genre	71
40 Accuracy by dialect and text class	72
41 Sahidic obstruent deviation regularity across centuries (100+ occurrences of the grapheme)	76
42 Obstruent deviation regularity across dialects	79
43 The system of the adaptation of plosives across dialects	80
44 Palatalisation regularity across centuries (Sahidic only)	84
45 Palatalisation regularity across dialects	85
46 Reflex of Greek initial /h/ in Coptic	86
47 Precision, recall, and F_1 -scores for the spelling of Greek /h/ in Coptic dialects	88
48 Psilosis by dialect (lemmata with 5+ attestations, spread $\geq 20\%$)	89
49 Vulgar aspiration by dialect (lemmata with 5+ attestations, spread $\geq 20\%$) ...	89
50 Precision, recall, and F_1 -scores for the spelling of Greek /h/ in Sahidic across the centuries	90
51 Reflex of Greek initial /r-/ and medial /-rr-/ in Coptic	91
52 Rates of (de)gemination on either side of the stress	91
53 Sahidic (de)gemination by century	93
54 Gemination by dialect	94
55 Lambdacism regularity across dialects	94
56 Sahidic lambdacism regularity across centuries	95
57 Directionality of p/λ alternations across regions	96
58 The consonants of Greek loanwords across dialects	98
59 Deviations by stress	101
60 ι/ει deviations by stress (85+ occurrences)	103
61 ι/ει deviation regularity across centuries (Sahidic only)	103
62 ι/ει deviation regularity across dialects	104
63 ι/ει word-final outcomes by dialect	105
64 γ/οι deviations by stress (85+ occurrences)	105
65 γ/οι deviation regularity across centuries (Sahidic only)	106
66 γ/οι deviation regularity across dialects	106
67 η deviations by stress (85+ occurrences)	107
68 η deviation regularity across centuries (Sahidic only)	107
69 η deviation regularity across dialects	108
70 η word-final outcomes by dialect	108
71 ε/αι deviations by stress (85+ occurrences)	110
72 ε/αι word-final outcomes by stress	111
73 ε/αι deviation regularity across centuries (Sahidic only)	111
74 ε/αι deviation regularity across dialects	112
75 ε/αι word-final outcomes by dialect	112
76 Word-final stressed ε/η in Fayyumic versus Sahidic	113

77	o/ω/ωι deviations by stress (85+ occurrences)	114
78	o/ω/ωι deviation regularity across centuries (Sahidic only)	115
79	o/ω/ωι deviation regularity across dialects	115
80	α deviations by stress (85+ occurrences)	116
81	α word-final outcomes by stress	117
82	α deviation regularity across centuries (Sahidic only)	117
83	α deviation regularity across dialects	117
84	α word-final outcomes by dialect	118
85	The system of Greek vowel adaptation	120
86	Stress ratio of vowel deletions (50+ cases)	120
87	Rate of vowel deletions according to dialect	121
88	Anaptyxis by consonant cluster	124
89	Structural comparison of obstruent systems between Coptic and stages of Greek	125
90	Structural comparison of vowel systems between Coptic and stages of Greek .	126
91	Examples of root-and-pattern morphology in Sahidic	128
92	The fifty most frequent Greek loanwords, with plausible Coptic transcription .	137
93	Grapheme occurrences by dialect	143
94	Grapheme occurrences by century in the Sahidic corpus	145
95	Attestations within the scope of the analysis, by dialect and century	147

Figures

1	Imitation and adaptation	14
2	Probable route of words from Koine into Coptic	18
3	Map of Egypt with dialects of Coptic	42
4	Character error rates (CER) by era (well-dated attestations only)	67
5	Consonant deviations (absolute frequency)	73
6	Consonant deviations (regularity in percent)	74
7	Directionality of consonant deviations per opportunity ($\pi(x \rightarrow y) \pm 95\%$ confidence interval)	75
8	Degrees of psilosis and vulgar aspiration by lemma (Sahidic, 10+ attestations)	87
9	Irregular geminations versus geminates in Greek norm spellings	92
10	Vowel deviations (absolute frequency)	99
11	Vowel deviations (regularity in percent)	100
12	Directionality of vowel deviations per opportunity ($\pi(x \rightarrow y) \pm 95\%$ confidence interval)	101
13	The browsing interface, filtered to the deviations of γ	136

