

The Paradox of Kellis (Western Egyptian Desert)

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Abstract

Kellis is a small village in the Dakhlah Oasis in the Western Egyptian desert. From the perspective of spatiality, Kellis seems to epitomise isolation and remoteness, whereas from the perspective of language usage, Kellis seems to exemplify integration and mixture.

The article aims to explain this paradox. In the context of Britain's concept of spatiality, it investigates the linguistic landscape of Kellis therein focusing on three structures in semi-formulaic and formulaic contexts, that is the Greek wish for the addressee's wellbeing, the Coptic Internal Address, and the Greek polite request, in addition to the Coptic variety of Kellis, that is dialect L*. The article traces non-idiolectal contact phenomena in formulaic contexts in order to zoom in on sociolectal variation, that is on markers rather than indicators in Labovian terms. Formulaic and semi-formulaic context are evidently approached differently from free contexts in speech production and comprehension.

Based on the evidence discussed, the article concludes that the inhabitants of Kellis seem to represent a close-knit social network with a certain desire to demarcate themselves. With regard to their language(s), their spatial remoteness however prevented neither innovations nor the spread of aerial features.

[Key words]: sociolect, regionalism, convergence, interference, formulaic

0. Introduction

Kellis is a small village in the Dakhlah Oasis, which is part of the region of

the Oasis Magna in the Western Egyptian desert.¹ The village covers an area of approximately one square kilometre and most architectural structures consist of mud brick. Kellis was inhabited primarily in the fourth century and seems to have been abandoned afterwards.² Apart from the architectural remains, excavations at the site since 1986³ have rendered a wealth of documentary and literary texts. Thus, we are presented with an exceptionally rich documentation, in textual and archaeological terms, coming from a comparatively small area and covering a limited period of time. This allows for an in-depth study of fourth-century Kellis.

In terms of spatiality, Kellis seems to epitomise isolation and remoteness, not only geographically speaking. Yet the attested patterns of language usage tell a completely different story. The present article aims to resolve this paradox by exploring in detail the linguistic profile of Kellis, that is the Greek and Egyptian (Coptic) varieties used in Kellis. However, while our evidence reflects a fully-fledged Kellian variety of Coptic, we do not have sufficient evidence to argue for a fully-fledged local variety of Greek in Kellis. The Greek features discussed below could theoretically be part of a fully-fledged system but as of now we have to treat them as features that are characteristic of the area in question yet not part of a larger system, that is a fully-fledged local variety.

The article is divided into five sections: Section 1 introduces the concept of spatiality. Section 2 applies this concept to Kellis while at the same time pointing out how linguistic evidence casts doubt on the validity of the results. Section 3 introduces the theoretical notions that are of relevance here, that is the relevant language varieties, pragmatic contexts and linguistic processes. Section 4 applies the theory to the linguistic reality of Kellis. Section 5 brings the results together and concludes that the above-mentioned paradox only exists at the surface level.

¹ Cf. Talbert (2000), map 79. Oasis Magna is here used to refer to the geographical region rather than any specific administrative unit.

² Talbert (2000, map 79) hypothesises that the area was occupied already in the Roman period, but conclusive evidence is lacking. Climate change may have been a factor in the abandonment of the site, see Bravard *et al.* (2016), yet further speculations are beyond the scope of this article.

³ Cf. Worp (1995), 1.

1. Space and Spatiality

In order to explain why space is neither empty nor static, Britain developed a model of spatiality that takes into account not only the physical entity 'space' but also its human agents. Britain (2013, 472) distinguishes between three components of spatiality⁴:

- [1] '1 **Euclidean space** – the objective, geometric, socially divorced space of mathematics and physics. When we measure the land area of New Zealand or the as-the-crow-flies distance from Portland to Pittsburgh, it is Euclidean space that we are measuring.
- 2 **Social space** – the space shaped by social organisation and human agency, by the human manipulation of the landscape, by the creation of a built environment and by the relationship of these to the way the state spatially organises and controls at a political level.
- 3 **Perceived space** – how civil society⁵ perceives its immediate and not so immediate environments – important given the way people's environmental perceptions and attitudes construct and are constructed by everyday practice.'

In essence, viewing space as an empty and static entity creates a wrong impression. There are natural borders and obstacles that complicate or even impede movement from point A to point B and there are man-made borders and obstacles to the same effect. Yet even in the absence of boundaries and obstacles, a lack of interest in creating links may impede movement. For example, there may be no trainline between places A and B (as is the case between Oxford and Cambridge). Finally, there are attitudinal borders and obstacles that may limit or even forbid movement where it would theoretically be possible. Again, a lack of interest in creating links may render a similar effect. If we add up the Euclidean (and natural) basis, the manmade structures and the attitudinal vault, we arrive at a comprehensive picture of space or rather spatiality.

Thus, spatiality encompasses aspects of space that are imposed on human agents as well as those that are shaped by them. To take a modern example, there are ways to hop continents. Thus, Euclidean space is no longer the problem, but social space, such as a bad flight connection or none at all, may

⁴ See also Britain (2009), Chambers and Trudgill (1998), Muysken (2010).

⁵ An anonymous reviewer questioned why the attribute 'civil' is significant here. 'Civil' should be taken in a broad sense. That is, we are thinking about a group of people with a common or shared interest.

be one. Yet eventually, whether we decide to hop continents is also a matter of how we perceive space. Do we want to take the risk of delving into a new cultural and societal context?

2. Kellis and the Oasis Magna

1) Space and spatiality in the western desert

The geographical situation of Kellis in the Western Egyptian desert makes it a remote location. This impression is reinforced by the fact that the journey from Kellis to the nearest city (Thebes) in the Nile valley, the area of blossoming economic and cultural centres, took about two weeks under ideal conditions.⁶ Furthermore, a journey through the desert always implied not only physical exhaustion but also danger to someone's life and property. By contrast, the nearby settlements and oases that made up the Oasis Magna were considerably easier to reach.

In terms of social space, two aspects are noteworthy. Firstly, the inhabitants of Kellis appear to have formed a rather close-knit social network⁷ with the inhabitants of nearby oases, with whom they conducted business.⁸ Secondly, Kellis was home to a Manichaean community. In fourth-century Egypt, Christianity had already spread significantly and was set to become the mainstream doctrine.⁹ The Manichaeans, on the other hand, were a marginal 'separatist' group. This explains the suspicion towards non-members and the occasional warnings to be cautious as in [2]:

[2] P. Kell. Copt. 31.53-54 ε-ϣατε-οϣω ετε-ωϣ μμα-[c] δαγ-c αν m-
πα-ϣηρε εν-οϣ-ωρδ mntpe-tn-ka-c εατn-τηνε c-ειε δ-τοτ-ϣ δ-
ρωμε

*e-šate-ouō ete-ōš mma-[s] d'au-s an m-pa-šēre hn-ou-ōrd[†] mntre-tn-ka-s
hatn-tēne s-heie a-tot-f a-rōme*

'As soon as you have finished reading it (sc. the letter), do send it on to my son. Do not keep it with you (as) **it (may) fall into someone's hand (sc. into the wrong hands).**'

The letter was presumably written by a high-ranking figure in the

⁶ Cf. <http://orbis.stanford.edu/> (last accessed 04.10.2019).

⁷ Cf. Conde-Silvestre (2012), Bergs (2012), Milroy and Milroy (2012), 49-50 and chapter 5.

⁸ Cf. Gardner *et al.* (1999), 19-58 (prosopographical data).

⁹ Cf. Depauw and Clarysse (2013), Wipszycka (2007).

Manichaean community, the Teacher.¹⁰ He warns the addressee not to keep the letter with her but to pass it on.

Notwithstanding such indications of a closed group, some members of the Manichaean community left it at least temporarily as [3] illustrates:

[3] P. Kell. Copt. 20.24-26 ΠΙΕΝΕ ΔΕ Α-Π-САЭ КА-Ϣ Ε-Ϣ-Μ[ΑЭ]Ε ΝΕΜΕ-Ϣ Α-
 ΤΡΕ-Ϣ-ΧΙ-СВΩ Α-ΜΝΤ-ΡΩΜΑΙΟΣ Ϣ-ΤΣΕΒΟ ΜΜΑ-Ϣ ΚΑΛΩС
Piēne de a-p-sah ka-f e-f-m[ah]e neme-f a-tre-f-d'i-sbō a-mnt-rōmaios f-
tsebo mma-f kalōs
 'And the Teacher let Piene go with him in order that he may learn Latin.
 He is teaching him well.'

Interestingly, Piene is going to study the Latin language. Latin was not a de facto, that is utilised, official language in early Byzantine Egypt, but in its functional range somewhat rather aligned with minority languages. Yet Latin may have been a language of learned discourse and of international diplomacy.¹¹

Perceived space taps into the attitudinal level¹², which is difficult to assess from a modern perspective. [2] above may suggest that the inhabitants of Kellis were introvert rather than extrovert, in a societal rather than an individual sense. Furthermore, the dangers of a journey to the Nile valley may have had an intimidating effect on the majority of them. However, some members of the community went on those journeys as [4a] and [4b] illustrate:

[4a] P. Kell. Copt. 29.14-15 Ϣ-[ΟΥ]ΗЭ СА-Π-САЭ [Ε-Ι-]ΝΑ-ΒΩΚ Ε-ΡΑΚ[ΑΤΕ]
 ΝΕΜΕ-Ϣ
ti-[ou]ēh sa-p-sah [e-i-]na-bōk e-rak[ate] neme-f
 'I am following the teacher when I am going to Alexandria with him.'

[4b] P. Kell. Copt. 25.42 ΑΝΑΚ ΓΑΡ Α-Π-САЭ КА-Τ Ν-ΑΝΤΙΝΟΥ
anak gar a-p-sah ka-t n-antinoou
 'For the teacher left me in Antinou.'

Based on exchanges of letters, the editors of the texts also suggest that

¹⁰ Cf. Gardner (2006).

¹¹ This is an option one could consider further, rather than a certainty that can be elaborated upon here.

¹² For an extreme proposal regarding the relevance of attitudinal factors to language change, see Thomason (2001).

some inhabitants of Kellis temporarily lived in the Nile valley, perhaps for business-related reasons. Thus, there does not seem to have been an unsurmountable attitudinal boundary between Kellis and the outside world. How open(-minded) the community really was remains unclear from a modern perspective.

2) Evaluating the results

What casts doubt on characterising the villagers of Kellis as introvert and conservative is the fact that Kellis seems to have been a thoroughly bilingual area¹³, a unique feature in fourth-century Egypt.¹⁴ Societally speaking, note that texts in Greek and Coptic are preserved from Kellis and that the usual assignment of languages to domains, which has been suggested for the rest of Egypt at least for the early Coptic period, is not applicable to Kellis.¹⁵ In Kellis, Greek and Coptic seem to have had an equal status already in the early Coptic period.

At the level of the individual, we meet several people who wrote and received letters in Greek and Coptic.¹⁶ In this context, [5] is an interesting reminder to a student to study his psalms:

[5] P. Kell. Copt. 19.13-14 μελετε n-n[εκ]-ψαλμος εΙΤΕ n-ΟΥΙΑΝΙΝ ΕΙΤΕ
n-PMN-KHME ʒOOY <NIM>
melete n-n[ek]-psalmos eite n-ouianin eite n-rmn-kēme hoou <nim>
 ‘Study your psalms every day **either in Greek or in Egyptian!**’

We may speculate whether the writer wanted the student to study Greek and Coptic in order to be proficient in both languages or whether the writer was aware of the nuances that were omitted, added or modified in the Coptic translation of the Biblical text and wanted to encourage critical comparative work in the student.¹⁷

¹³ See also Gardner (2007).

¹⁴ We may lack comparable evidence from other sites and future excavations may bring to light texts that prove Kellis to be less unique than it currently seems.

¹⁵ For the assignment of domains to Greek and Egyptian (Coptic), see e.g. Clackson (2004), Crespo (2007), Fournet (2009).

¹⁶ For Pekysis, see P. Kell. Copt. 77. For Pamour and Maria, see P. Kell. Copt. 65 and P. Kell. 1 71. For the brothers Pekysis and Pamour, see Gardner *et al.* (2014), 83-117.

¹⁷ While we cannot access the writer’s intentions but only speculate, prioritising the religious aspect of reading the texts for their content only would be imposing a dominant discourse on

3. Varieties, contexts and processes

1) Language varieties

As we can conceptualise space at the aerial, societal and, to a certain extent, individual levels¹⁸, we can conceptualise language at these levels. [6] aligns the three aspects of space discussed above with the three corresponding language varieties to be discussed below.

[6] Space and language

	Space	Language
Area	Euclidean space	Aerial features / dialects
Society / social network	Social space	Sociolects
Individual	Perceived space	Idiolects

Generally speaking, we think of a dialect as a variety spoken by a group of speakers that live (or learnt the language they speak) in the same area. The development of a dialect involves no or little intentionality. Dialectal features are mostly indicators in Labovian terms, that is features which the producer of language cannot manipulate actively and consciously. However, as modern examples like France or Germany show, intentionality may be involved in the retention or eradication of dialects. Models of dialect expansion are numerous and varied. What they have in common is that dialectal features are aerial in that they spread over large areas.

Conversely, a sociolect is a variety spoken by a group of speakers that identify as a social group (e.g. a societal sub-group). The development of sociolects is more intentional since speakers of the social group in question seek to demarcate themselves from people who live in their surroundings but who are not part of the aforementioned group. Sociolectal features are mostly markers in Labovian terms, in that speakers can manipulate these actively and consciously. The desire to distinguish oneself from others may be called dissociative.¹⁹

a group of people that may not have fallen under this discourse or simplifying a more complex, yet from our modern perspective unclear situation in the distant past.

¹⁸ Language-related attitudes may be shaped by an individual's surroundings (cf. peer pressure); however, whether or not or to what extent an individual adopts and displays these attitudes depends on the individual rather than the surroundings.

¹⁹ Cf. Hickey (2012).

Here, we may briefly consider the distinction between explicit and implicit knowledge.²⁰ Explicit or propositional knowledge is the knowledge that something is the case. Implicit or procedural knowledge is the knowledge how to do something. While explicit knowledge is something we consciously perceive and are usually able to describe, implicit knowledge is something we draw on subconsciously and are hence usually unable to describe. In order to be a proficient speaker of a language, every individual has and constantly draws on both kinds of linguistic knowledge.

On the scale ranging from explicit to implicit knowledge, the conscious manipulation of language would be located further to the end 'explicit knowledge'. In fact, we may manipulate our patterns of language usage for a specific purpose, be that demarcation or creativity. The features we can modify actively and consciously are the above-mentioned markers. On the other end of the scale, we can locate the above-mentioned indicators, which cannot be manipulated actively and consciously. Theoretically, an initially consciously chosen feature may become more and more ingrained in a pattern of language usage and may thus gradually move from one end of the just mentioned scale to its opposite end.

To complete the picture, an idiolect is an individual's pattern of language usage. This pattern may comprise dialectal and sociolectal features. The features of this pattern may be selected intentionally or unintentionally. Moreover, this pattern may be influenced by the individual's biography, in that someone who has lived in more than one place may have adopted features of the varieties (or languages) spoken in different places or may have undergone a change to their societal status at some point during their life and subsequently adopted or suppressed features. We call the sum of linguistic and extra-linguistic information a language biography.²¹ Unfortunately, we often lack the relevant pieces of information when it comes to corpus languages and ancient settings.²²

2) Pragmatic contexts

We distinguish three types of contexts, that is formulaic, semi-formulaic and free contexts. To use letters as an example, in a private letter of the early Byzantine period, the formulaic sections appear at the beginning and end and

²⁰ For explicit as opposed to implicit learning, see Ellis (2011).

²¹ Cf. Hamers and Blanc (2000), 40, Goglia (2005), 50-58, Elspass (2012), 165.

²² Scribal hands and idiolects do not necessarily correlate one-to-one. The practical issues related to scribal activity however go beyond the scope of this article. On scribal hands, see e.g. Criore (1996), 97-118, Luiselli (2008), 689- 692, Fournet (2009), 32-37, Evans (2007).

form the epistolary frame comparable to English ‘dear X’ and ‘best wishes, Y’.²³ We term semi-formulaic the sections that are not genre makers like the epistolary formulae just mentioned but that appear near the beginning or end or are interspersed in the letter body. These can be greeting sections²⁴ but also formulae that serve to structure the content of the letter body.²⁵ Free contexts are contexts that are phrased without any recourse to precomposed elements such as formulaic frames, but where the writer can phrase as he/she pleases.

This tri-partite distinction as regards pragmatic contexts is useful firstly because minor variations in free contexts are often acceptable and we may not even be aware of them from a modern perspective. By contrast, any variation of a formulaic or semi-formulaic frame disrupts the formulaic structure unless it is an accepted variation of this frame. Secondly, research in the areas of speech production and language learning suggests that speakers / writers and learners approach formulaic contexts differently from less fixed contexts.²⁶

3) Language change

Two processes of language change are relevant to the examples discussed in Section 4, that is grammaticalisation and convergence. We briefly discuss these in turn.

Language-internal grammaticalisation is in essence a process that reflects the continuous usage of a language, or more precisely the natural wear and tear this usage causes. It is the process by which an originally lexical item becomes a grammatical item.²⁷ The process occurs without being triggered by external factors, that is language contact.²⁸ On the way, the lexical item in question undergoes several changes:

[7] Brinton and Akimoto (1999), 12 ‘**Morphosyntactically**, (...) grammaticalization is the result of reanalysis, including fusion across morphological boundaries, syntactic reanalysis, and / or reassignment of morphemes to different semantic-syntactic categories. **Phonetically**,

²³ See e.g. Fournet (2009), Kim (2011), Koskeniemi (1956). See also Section 4.2.2.

²⁴ See e.g. Stolk and Naechtergaele (2016).

²⁵ Cf. Fendel (2018), chapter 6.

²⁶ See e.g. Namba (2010), Weinert (2010), Wood (2010, 2015), Wray (2009).

²⁷ Cf. Bybee (2007, 2010), Brinton and Akimoto (1999), 12, Hopper and Traugott (2003), esp. chapters 3-5. See also Breban (2019) for further references.

²⁸ In several cases, however, it seems that external factors may reinforce the internal process or speed it up.

grammaticalization is accompanied by attrition and loss. **Semantically**, it is traditionally thought to involve “bleaching”, weakening, or loss of meaning, with a movement from concrete to abstract.’ (my emphasis)

A cross-linguistically common path which, among others, Greek and English reflect, is the grammaticalisation of a lexical verb expressing volition into a future auxiliary²⁹:

[8a] English: will + infinitive³⁰

[8b] Greek: (ἐ)θέλω + infinitive³¹

In both languages, the older stages attest to a modal verb ‘to want’, which calls for a prospective complement, whereas the younger stages attest to the reinterpretation of the modal verb as a future auxiliary. Morphosyntactically, the future auxiliary allows for a complement only in the form of an infinitive, in the case of English a bare infinitive; phonetically, it is reduced; semantically, it is bleached. Evidently, the contexts of application also change on the way from a modal verb of volition to a future auxiliary.

Contact-induced convergence, on the other hand, is triggered by external factors, that is language contact. In essence, convergence is the process by which a pattern of language A and the corresponding pattern in language B merge. Patterns are matched up as corresponding based on pragmatic, semantic, syntactic, and / or phonetic features. The patterns are matched based on the feature(s) that appear(s) pivotal. Convergence entails modification of the inherited pattern in language A under the influence of the corresponding pattern in language B.³² A feature of the *Sprachraum* Europe is a perfect tense formed with the auxiliary ‘have.’³³ Such a construction did not exist in classical Greek, which operated with a synthetic perfect tense, but developed gradually in later periods. Although the hypothesis is debated, it seems plausible to assume that language contact (with Latin) reinforced the choice of ‘have’ as a perfect tense auxiliary. Thus, two patterns of the perfect tense converged. The merger was based on the corresponding syntax and semantics of the two patterns.

²⁹ Cf. Heine and Kuteva (2002).

³⁰ Cf. Bybee (2010), 174-176.

³¹ Cf. Markopoulos (2009).

³² Cf. Matras (2009), Myers-Scotton (2002).

³³ Cf. Bentein (2016), Drinka (2017).

In summary, language-internal grammaticalisation attests to the regular usage of a language over a prolonged period of time. Conversely, innovations that reflect the convergence of two languages attest to language contact and potentially to speakers' willingness to embrace their bilingual surroundings. In a usage-based model of language change, we assume that any innovation, that is any modification of the status quo, starts from the individual speaker. The individual speaker may unintentionally or intentionally modify the default pattern. If this modification is not accepted by the surrounding community of speakers, nothing else will happen and the status quo will remain the default. Conversely, if the modification is accepted by the speaker's surroundings, it will spread and become increasingly established.³⁴

4. Linguistic peculiarities of Kellis and the Oasis Magna

The following three subsections explore the Greek and Coptic varieties of Kellis. While the Coptic dialect L* has attracted considerable attention, the Greek variety of Kellis overall seems to resemble the standard of post-classical Greek. However, a description as comprehensive as the one for the Coptic of Kellis does not exist for the Greek of Kellis.³⁵

1) Aerial features: Dialect L*

Coptic sources attest to several dialects at least until the end of the fifth century³⁶ when the Sahidic dialect gained prominence and was on the verge of becoming the standard dialect. In the north of Egypt, the area of the Nile Delta, BOHAIRIC (B) was used. Moving southwards, the Fayum seems to have formed a dialectal area, FAYUMIC (F), whereas in the Nile valley SAHIDIC (S) was used. In the surroundings of Oxyrhynchos in Middle Egypt, we find MESOKEMIC (M) and in the area of Lykopolis (modern Asyut), further to the south, LYKOPOLITAN (L). Moving even further to the south, to Upper Egypt, we find AKHMIMIC (A). Notably, the two areas that are not located in the Nile valley but rendered rich textual evidence, the Fayyum in the south and the Oasis Magna in Middle Egypt, both seem to attest to a distinctive dialect.³⁷ The spatial separation from the Nile valley may have

³⁴ To what extent acceptance/rejection of a feature is a conscious or subconscious process is debated.

³⁵ Cf. Worp (1995).

³⁶ See Choat (2012), 587, Choat (2009), 342.

³⁷ For dialect L* as an in-group variety, see Zakrzewska (2015), yet from a historical rather than

played a role.

The variety of Coptic attested in the texts from Kellis, dialect L*, has been given its own label since it clearly differs from related dialects, even LYKOPOLITAN (L).³⁸ Dialect L* differs from other dialects with regard to phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical features. Moreover, Choat (2007, 2010) in particular has noted the many peculiarities in the epistolary formulae used in Kellis. Nonetheless, dialect L* is clearly identifiable as a Southern Egyptian variety since it shares aerial features with other Southern Egyptian varieties.³⁹ Dialect L* has been described extensively by Gardner *et al.* (1999) and Shisha-Halevy (2001) and the reader is referred to these publications. The aim here is to show that dialect L* combines aerial and distinctive features.

Gardner *et al.* (1999, 90) note the appearance of non-Sahidic stressed vowels as well as the lack of consonantal distinctions typical of the AKHMIMIC (A) dialect and the IDIOM OF THE ASCENSION OF ISAAH (I). They consider dialect L* closest to, but still different from LYKOPOLITAN (L).⁴⁰ Gardner *et al.* (1999, 91-92) list some of the commonalities between L* and other Southern Egyptian varieties. We may classify these as phonological and morphological as in [9]:

[9] Southern Egyptian aerial features

	Phonology	Morphology
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plural indefinite article • Indefinite pronoun • Adverb 'now' • Verb 'to know' • Word-final /ew/ (e.g. 'hour', 'two') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffix of 2pl (stressed) • Stative of t-causatives • Status pronominalis of the verbs 'to do' and 'to give' (here of 'to honour')
Southern Egypt	ⲁⲛ- <i>hn</i> ⲗⲁⲮⲉ <i>laue</i> ⲧⲛⲟⲮ <i>tinou</i> ⲘⲁⲮⲛⲉ <i>saune</i>	-ⲧⲏⲛⲉ <i>-tēne</i> ⲧⲁⲓⲟ, ⲧⲁⲓⲁⲓⲧ <i>taio, taiait</i> ⲉⲓⲣⲉ, ⲉⲓⲧ=/ ⲧ, ⲧⲉⲓⲧ= <i>eire, eit=</i> <i>/ ti, teit=</i>

a linguistic perspective.

³⁸ Cf. Gardner *et al.* (1999), 90.

³⁹ Cf. Gardner *et al.* (1999), 90.

⁴⁰ Since we only have literary texts written in L, we do not know exactly what non-literary L looked like.

	NEΥ, CNEY <i>neu, sneu</i>	
Kellis	εN- <i>hn</i> λαγε <i>laue</i> ϣNOY <i>tinou</i> σαγNE <i>saune</i> NEΥ, CNEY <i>neu, sneu</i>	-THNE <i>-tēne</i> TAIIO, TAIAIT <i>taio, taiait</i> ειPE, ειT=/ ϣ, TEIT= <i>eire, eit=</i> / <i>ti, teit=</i>
Sahidic	εEN <i>hen</i> λααY <i>laau</i> TENOY <i>tenou</i> COOYN <i>sooun</i> NO, CNO <i>no, sno</i>	-THYTN <i>-tēutn</i> TAEIO, TAEIHY <i>taeio, taeiēu</i> ειPE, αα=/ ϣ, TAA= <i>eire, aa=</i> / <i>ti, taa=</i>

A more in-depth analysis of the Southern Egyptian and Kellian lexis is likely to bring to light some shared lexical features. However, this goes beyond the scope of this article.⁴¹

Several phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical features that appear in the Kellian variety of Coptic are shared with one or more other varieties. In most cases, however, the Kellian variety of Coptic takes something one step further, as it were, by abolishing conditions on when certain phenomena can appear, conditions that hold for other (often literary) dialects.

Phonologically speaking, the infix dative preposition NE= *ne=* is a case in point. Omission of the vowel (-ε- *-e-*) is acceptable in dialect M, a literary dialect, either (a) when the personal suffix is a glide (i.e. the suffixes of the 1sg or 3pl) or (b) when the infix appears in a phraseological expression that involves a zero-determined object (e.g. a support-verb construction). Both conditions are irrelevant in L* as shown in [10].

[10] P. Kell. Copt. 44.6 ε-ι-TE- NK-ΟΥ-ϣε εΩT N-ΥTIT
h-i-te-nk-ou-tie hōt n-štīt
 PRF.1sg-INF.give-PRP.to=2sg-ART.IDF.SG-five MATT-warp
 ‘I gave you five warps.’

In [10], the suffix /k/ is not a glide, but consonantal, nor does the infix appear in a phraseological expression, yet the vowel /e/ is omitted.

Morphologically speaking, the perfect conjugation base is a revealing

⁴¹ For the fact that phonological features are most common in dialectal variation, see Adams (2007), 726-731 (with reference to Latin).

example. Other dialects, such as the southern Egyptian dialect L6⁴², which use the perfect conjugation base /h/ call for a vowel between the conjugation base and a consonantal suffix, whereas a vowel is not required with a vocalic suffix. In the Kellian variety, an avocalic conjugation base is permitted with both vocalic and avocalic suffixes. For example, one may find [11a] alongside [11b] in Kellis:

[11a] ⲉ-ⲓ-ϥⲁⲩⲛⲉ
h-i-saune
 PRF-1sg-INF.know
 'I knew'

[11b] ⲉ-ⲕ-ϥⲁⲩⲛⲉ
h-k-saune
 PRF-2sg-INF.know
 'you knew'

In [11a], the suffix is vocalic, so that an avocalic conjugation base is not surprising, whereas the avocalic suffix in [11b] would call for a vocalic conjugation base in dialects other than L*.

Syntactically speaking, the fact that the vowels /a/ and /e/ are used almost interchangeably in the Kellian variety of Coptic impacts on the distinction between the circumstantial ('while') and the focalising conversions of the verb.⁴³ While interchange of /a/ and /e/ is attested in other dialects for the focalising conversion, it is not for the circumstantial conversion. In [12], the circumstantial is inferred from the context:

[12] P. Kell. Copt. 25.56 ⲁ-ϥ-ⲙⲟⲩ ⲁ-ⲛ-ⲉⲁⲩⲩ-ϥ ⲉⲛ
a-s-mou a-n-hatē-s en
 PRF-3sg-INF.die **CS-1pl-PRP.with-3sg** NEG
 'She died while we were not with her.'

Shisha-Halevy (2001) shows the difficulty to distinguish between the two conversions in the texts from Kellis most clearly when he argues against the editors' interpretation in several instances. For example, [13] was taken as a circumstantial conversion by the editors, but as a focalising conversion by

⁴² L6 is a variety of Lycopolitan and appears in non-Sahidic Gnostic texts and in the Heidelberg manuscript of the Acta Pauli. Cf. Kasser (1991).

⁴³ Layton (2011), §§ 413-433 and 444-458.

Shisha-Halevy:

[13] P. Kell. Copt. 15.11 ρα-ι-ϣατπ-τ α-ι-ϙεϑι νε-κ μ-πι-ϙεϙε ϙνο α-ι-ϣϣινε α-τεκ-μντ-ελβητ (...)
ha-i-šatp-t a-i-shei ne-k m-pi-seḏe sno a-i-šine a-tek-mnt-hlk'ēt
 PRF-1sg-INF-1sg **PRFII-1sg-INF.write** PRP.to-2sg DOM-ART.DEF.sg-
 letter two CS-1sg-INF.greet PRP.to-POSS.sg.f-sweetness
 'I hastened [and] **wrote** two letters two you while greeting your sweetness (...)'

In essence, assuming a circumstantial conversion makes the complementation pattern of 'to hasten' synthetic (cf. English 'to hasten **to do** something'), whereas assuming a focalising conversion makes the complementation pattern asyndetic – as indicated by 'and' in the translation. The latter is Shisha-Halevy's key argument in most instances.

[14] summarises the above observations and adds two examples from the lexical domain noted by Gardner *et al.* (1999):

[14] Dialect L* in context

	Phonology	Morphology	Syntax	Semantics / lexicon
	Infixed dative preposition νε=	Perfect conjugation base	Interchange of /a/ and /e/ in the circumstantial and focalising conversions ⁴⁴	Adverb 'very' Apodotic/interrogative particle
Southern Egypt			focalising conversion	ΤΟΝΩ <i>tonō</i> ειε / ειε <i>eie / hie</i>
Kellis	avocalic	avocalic	circumstantial and focalising conversions	ΤΟΝΟΥ (ΤΟΝΕ) <i>tonou (tone)</i> νιε <i>nie</i>
Sahidic (S)	vocalic	vocalic	focalising conversion	ΤΩΝΟΥ (ΤΩΝΕ) <i>tōnou (tōne)</i> ειε / ειε <i>eie / eeie</i>
Mesokemic (M)	(avocalic)			
Lyopolitan (L6)		(avocalic)		

⁴⁴ Note that this interchangeability also impacts on the distinction between 1sg and 2sg.f suffixes on possessive articles and causative infinitive bases, cf. Gardner *et al.* (1999), 90.

2) Manipulating formulaic contexts

Two formulaic phrases, one Greek and one Coptic, reflect the bilingual environment of Kellis from a linguistic perspective. Formulae are often modular, in that there is a formulaic frame with gaps for situation-specific material. The formulaic frame is often un-analysable from a synchronic perspective because it retains older structures or has resulted from, for example, ellipsis that became conventionalised over time. The manipulation of a formulaic frame is a somewhat social process, in that extra-linguistic aspects cause the conscious manipulation of linguistic structures, which had developed out of a specific cultural setting.⁴⁵

(1) Greek wish for wellbeing

Worp (2011-2012) noticed three instances of φυλάττω and its intensifying compound διαφυλάττω with a complement in the dative case rather than the accusative case and pondered whether this could be a regionalism. The three relevant passages come from the Dakhlah Oasis and from Syene (modern Aswan), approximately two hundred kilometres south of Thebai in the Nile valley.

[15a] SEG 26 1724 (Dakhlah Oasis) ὁ θεὸς φύλαξαι τῷ κυρίῳ - -
‘May God keep the lord safe ...’

[15b] SEG 26 1784 (Dakhlah Oasis) εἷς θεὸς ὁ βοηθός, ὁ Χ(ριστὸς) αὐτοῦ
συντήρησο[ν] καὶ διαφύλαξαι τοῖς Λατοπολίταις μετὰ καὶ τῶν ζώων
ἑαυτῶν
‘May one God, the helper (and) his (son) Christ, protect and keep safe the
people of Latopolis and their animals.’

[15c] I.Theb.Sy. 239 (Syene, modern Aswan)
- - - -α ἐνδοξο[τάτου] ἀκ(ολούθου) πρ(εσβυτέρου) Φιλ[ῶν] πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη
κ(ύρι)ε ὁ θεὸς φύλαξ(ον) τ(οῦ) δεσπότ(ου) μου τοῦ οἴκου κ(αὶ) [τ]ῶν
ἐνοικούν-
των ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ῥῶσ(α)ι ἡμ(ᾶ)ς τῆ(ς) πανουργία(ς) διαβολ(ικ)ῆ(ς)
- - - - ὑπάρχο(ντος) ἀκ(ολούθου) κάστρου Φιλῶν
‘... to the most honourable (and) obliging (?) priest of Philae, for many
years,
lord, may God keep safe my master of both the house and its inhabitants
and pull us away from the knavery of quarrel (?)’

⁴⁵ Cf. also Richter (2014).

while the camp of Philae is⁴⁶ obliging'

For [15c], Worp (2011-2012) suggested several corrections to Borchardt's edition, that is reading τ(ῶ) δεσπότ(η) for τ(οῦ) δεσπότ(ου) and inserting καὶ after τ(οῦ) δεσπότ(ου) μου as well as reading διαβ||όλην for διαβολ(ικ)ῆ(ς) thus assuming that ῥῶσ(α)ι combined with two complements in the accusative case. These changes are accepted here. Furthermore, when seeing the three instances in relation to each other, it seems plausible to read φύλαξ(αι) for classical φυλάξῃ in [15c].

Neither φυλάττω nor διαφυλάττω appears in the personal letters from Kellis. διαφυλάττω is entirely absent from the Greek documentary texts from Kellis.⁴⁷ φυλάττω appears once, in P. Kell. 1 15.8, a public declaration, but is there used intransitively and inflected in the middle voice. A lemma search for φυλάττω in the DUKE DATABASE OF DOCUMENTARY PAPYRI (henceforth DDbDP) [search period: AD 300 to 400] results in forty hits but only two for the nearby Thebais. In neither, φυλάττω combines with a dative case. The same lemma search for διαφυλάττω results in twenty hits but only one from nearby Lykopolis. There, διαφυλάττω combines with an accusative case. Thus, there is no additional evidence for a regionalism, but there is no evidence to the contrary either.

Taking the evidence as it stands, we may consider why the dative case replaced the accusative case in [15a] to [15c]. On the one hand, one may consider internal confusion of patterns. That is, the writer may have chosen the pattern of a semantically synonymous or near-synonymous verb. However, other Greek verbs meaning 'to guard' show the same argument structure as φυλάττω.⁴⁸ Alternatively, one may wonder whether the writer aimed to align φυλάττω with verbs meaning 'to help'. These are semantically close enough to φυλάττω to render confusion plausible. For example, βοηθέω calls for a dative case referring to the person who receives help, the beneficiary of the action of helping. Transferring this pattern onto φυλάττω, we would then have the reference to the beneficiary of the action of guarding in the dative case.

On the other hand, the dative case could be the result of interference from Coptic. The verb corresponding to φυλάττω is ροειϛ ε-/ερω= *roeis e-/ero*=.

⁴⁶ Lampe s.v. ὑπάρχω; Bauer s.v. ὑπάρχω.

⁴⁷ Cf. Worp (1995), 249-281.

⁴⁸ There is no additional attested argument structure (with differing semantics associated with it) for φυλάττω, which would explain the dative case. Cf. Naess (2007), chapter 5 and esp. 109 (argument structure(s)).

Unlike φυλάττω, the entity that is guarded or watched is referred to by the complement of the preposition $\epsilon\text{-}/\epsilon\rho\text{o}=\text{ }e\text{-}/ero=\text{ }$. $\epsilon\text{-}/\epsilon\rho\text{o}=\text{ }e\text{-}/ero=\text{ }$ is used to introduce the direct object of verbs of perception but also when the Greek equivalent would be a dative case.⁴⁹ [16] summarises our observations so far.

[16] Internal and external factors

Verbs meaning:	‘to guard / to watch over’ (e.g. φυλάττω, τηρέω, φρουρέω; ροεic $\epsilon\text{-}/\epsilon\rho\text{o}=\text{ }roeis\text{ }e\text{-}/ero=\text{ }$)		‘to help / to assist’ (e.g. βοηθέω; ἡ-ντοοτ= <i>ti-ntoot</i> =)	
Language	Greek	Coptic	Greek	Coptic
Participant structure	beneficiary	beneficiary	beneficiary	beneficiary
Argument structure	accusative case	$\epsilon\text{-}/\epsilon\rho\text{o}=\text{ }e\text{-}/ero=\text{ }$	dative case	$n\text{-}/n\lambda=\text{ }n\text{-}/na=\text{ };$ $\epsilon\text{-}/\epsilon\rho\text{o}=\text{ }e\text{-}/ero=\text{ }$

Notably, the three relevant Greek passages quoted above, [15a] to [15c], seem to reflect a formulaic frame, that is a specialised pragmatic context:

[18] {God}^S {shall guard}^V {human being}^O
 NOM AOR.SBJ.A.3sg DAT

The corresponding Coptic structure in this specific context is $\rho\text{o}eic\text{ }e\text{-}/\epsilon\rho\text{o}=\text{ }e\text{-}/ero=\text{ }$ as widely evidenced by the letters from Kellis.

The reason why the writer did not opt for a prepositional phrase, such as $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma^{ACC}$, in Greek, that is a word-by-word translation of the Coptic pattern into Greek, may be a syntactic constraint. That is the Greek verb φυλάττω is not complemented by a prepositional phrase. Therefore, the process of matching up the Greek and Coptic structures may rather have proceeded along the following lines. Matras and Sakel have dubbed this pivot-matching.⁵⁰

[17] Pivot-matching

Greek pattern	φυλάττω	accusative case
Coptic pattern	$\rho\text{o}eic$ $roeis$	$\epsilon\text{-}/\epsilon\rho\text{o}=\text{ }e\text{-}/ero=\text{ }$
↓		

⁴⁹ Admittedly, the more common preposition here is $n\text{-}/n\lambda=\text{ }n\text{-}/na=\text{ }$.

⁵⁰ Cf. Matras and Sakel (2007), Matras (2009, 2010).

pivot-matching	ε-/ερο= e-/ero=	πρός ^{ACC}
↓		
syntactic constraint	φυλάττω	no prepositional phrase
↓		
accommodating to the syntactic constraint	πρός ^{ACC}	dative case
↓		
result	φυλάττω	dative case

The writer selected the Coptic rather than the Greek pattern from his mental storage but wanted to write in Greek. Hence, he realised the Coptic pattern in Greek by identifying a functional pivot, here apparently the encoding of the reference to the person who is guarded. The morphosyntactic encoding of this functional pivot differs in Greek and Coptic. Moreover, the Greek pattern imposes the syntactic constraint of ‘no prepositional phrase’. In order to accommodate to the syntactic constraint, the writer matched ε-/ερο= e-/ero= to the Greek dative case either because πρὸς^{ACC} corresponds to ε-/ερο= e-/ero= in dative periphrases⁵¹ or with the step in between that ε-/ερο= e-/ero= and πρὸς^{ACC} have a spatial meaning ‘towards’. Finally, the writer used the dative case instead of the expected accusative case in Greek.

Given our limited evidence, we cannot say how this new structure spread. We could hypothesise that pivot-matching took place in the first place and caught on in this specific pragmatic context. While the former would be a subconscious process, the latter would rather qualify as a conscious process of adopting a pattern in a formulaic context.

(2) Coptic Internal address

A Coptic formulaic frame that was influenced by a Greek model is the INTERNAL ADDRESS (henceforth IA) or rather a variant of it. Both the standard pattern and the variant to be explored are attested in the letters from Kellis. The variant is limited to the documentation from Kellis.

The IA is the first sentence of every fourth-century letter. It corresponds to ‘dear’ in an English letter and introduces the addressee and often also the sender. [19a] and [19b] illustrate the Greek and Coptic standard patterns:

[19a] Greek standard
 {addressee}^{DAT} {sender}^{NOM} {χαίρειν}^V
 τῇ Μαρίας ὁ Παῦλος χαίρειν

⁵¹ For dative periphrases in early Byzantine Greek, see Stolk (2017).

‘To Mary, Paul, best wishes.’

[19b] Coptic standard

{sender}^S {write}^{cleft-sentence} {addressee}^{indO} {greetings}^{CS}

παυλος π-ετε-σχει ν-μαρια ε-η-ψινη ερο-σ

Paulos p-ete-shei n-Maria e-f-sine ero-s

name ART.DEF.SG-REL-3sg-INF.write PRP.to-name CS-3sg.INF.greet

PRP.to=3sg

‘Paul is the one who is writing to Mary while greeting her.’

These two standard patterns differ in a number of key features, as shown in [20]:

[20] Key features

	Sequence of sender and addressee	Finite verb	Verb of greeting	Syntactic constraints
IA Greek	Addressee – Sender	∅ (implied)	INF ⁵²	∅
IA Coptic	Sender – Addressee	x (cleft-sentence)	optional (CS)	- SVO sequence - finite verb required - no preposition before the verb

In six letters from Kellis, a variant appears. Noticeably, neither the senders nor the addressees of these letters are always the same. Thus, we can rule out idiosyncrasy.

[21a] Kellian variant (overview)

Letter	Sender	Addressee
P. Kell. Copt. 14	?	?
P. Kell. Copt. 15	Horion	Hor
P. Kell. Copt. 21	Makarios	Shemnoute, Kyria and Maria
P. Kell. Copt. 22	Makarios	Shemnoute, Kyria, Maria and her sons, Tamougen-eia
P. Kell. Copt. 25	a son	Maria
P. Kell. Copt. 26	Mathaios	Maria

In the variant, the Greek pattern is copied into Coptic. All the Coptic

⁵² Morphologically, *χαίρειν* is an infinitive. Syntactically, *χαίρειν* is part of a by this time elliptic accusative-and-infinitive structure as *λέγει* had been dropped from the formulaic frame by the early Byzantine period.

syntactic constraints are overridden except for the one that there must not be a preposition before the (subject-)verb sequence.⁵³

[21b] Kellian variant (example)

P. Kell. Copt. 26 {τα-μο μ-μεριτ ε-ται ντοτ τονου τ-ετε-πεσ-ρεν θαλγ
 νααρε=ι τονου ε-πσ-ρ-π-μεογο ταβε θν-πα-θητ n-no nim τ-ετ-κα-
 εται αρα=σ μννσα π-δαϊσ τα-μο ε-ται ντοτ μαρια} ^{addressee} {**ΑΝΔΚ**
 μαθαιος} ^{sender} {θν-π-δαϊσ χα[ιρε]ιν} ^{best wishes}
*{ta-mo m-merit e-tai ntot tonou t-ete-pes-ren halk' nahre=I tonou e-ps-r-p-
 meoue tabe hn-pa-hēt n-no nim t-eti-ka-htai ara=s mnnsa p-d'ais ta-mo e-
 tai ntot Maria}* ^{addressee} {**anak** Mat^haios} ^{sender} {hn-p-d'ais k^ha[ire]in} ^{best wishes}
 ‘My beloved mother, who is very much honoured by me, the one whose
 name is very sweet to me, while her memory is impressed upon my heart at
 all times, the one who I trust after God, my mother, who is honoured by
 me, Maria, **Α**, Mathaios, in the Lord, greetings.’

In the absence of anything equivalent to the dative case inflection in the Greek model and in order to clarify where the reference to the addressee ends and the reference to the sender begins, the writer inserted a subject pronoun before the reference to the sender, that is himself. Note that the sequence, ‘in the Lord, best wishes’ seems to have been imported into Coptic as a prefabricated unit / chunk without being analysed. ‘Best wishes’ occurs almost never without ‘in the Lord’.⁵⁴ Noticeably, the phrase ‘in the Lord’ is translated into Coptic rather than code-switched. This shows that unlike the infinitive ‘best wishes’, the prepositional phrase was still analysable in the early Byzantine period.

Many formulaic frames are highly fixed structures that are used by native speakers without being analysed. Thus, we may wonder whether a certain amount of conscious manipulation was involved in the modifications of the two formulaic frames just discussed. In the case of the Coptic IA, the writers adopted and subsequently adapted a Greek formulaic frame; this seems to have been a conscious process. In the case of the Greek wish for the addressee’s wellbeing, the writers appear to have drawn on their bilingual surroundings, yet less consciously. However, the adoption of the newly created pattern into a specialised pragmatic context must have been a conscious process.

⁵³ Cf. Grossman (2015).

⁵⁴ For phrases like this in IAs, see Clarysse (forthcoming).

3) Transforming formulaic contexts

For one feature that seems to be a regionalism of the Oasis Magna, the degree of conscious manipulation is unclear. The feature is limited to a very specific pragmatic context, yet it does not involve formulaic frames as the two patterns just discussed.

(1) ἀξιωθείς in specialised contexts

ἀξιωθείς had become a politeness marker in a specific formulaic context at least by the early Byzantine period.⁵⁵ A fully functional aorist passive participle in Classical times, ἀξιωθείς seems to have lost the feature ±anteriority in the formulaic context ‘HAVING BEEN ASKED / BEING ASKED I WROTE FOR X BECAUSE X WAS ILLITERATE’ (ἀξιωθείς ἔγραψα ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ ἀγραμμάτου ὄντος / μὴ εἰδότος γράμματα) (LitF henceforth). Thus, ἀξιωθείς had already entered the path of grammaticalisation. Based on the features (1) morphological form of the finite verb (γράφω), (2) adjacency of the finite verb and the participle (i.e. ἀξιωθείς), and (3) the presence / absence of an agent expression with the participle, four variants of the standard pattern of LitF can be identified. Lack of agreement in number and gender with the grammatical subject suggests that ἀξιωθείς was increasingly perceived as a participle or adverb indicating politeness rather than a participle. This made ἀξιωθείς a good candidate to be imported into request contexts. [22] summarises this development.

[22] The development of ἀξιωθείς

Features	Context	Process	Period	Translation
± anteriority ± passive ± masculine ± singular ± nominative	any	productivity	CG	having been asked / having been deemed worthy
± passive ± masculine (± singular) ⁵⁶ ± nominative	formula variants	grammaticalisation	PG, RG, (BG)	(having been asked) / being asked
± passive (± masculine) ⁵⁷	request	reinterpretation	BG	please

⁵⁵ Cf. Majer-Leonhard (1913).

⁵⁶ For the lack of number agreement, see n. 17 in table [23] = P. Oxy. 31 2602.

⁵⁷ For the lack of gender agreement: P. Mil. 2 81.15-24 (4th c.AD) ἀξιωθείς, κυρία μου

(± singular) ± nominative				
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The use of ἀξιωθείς in request contexts is however largely limited to the Oasis Magna. Of all the instances of ἀξιωθείς in the documentary papyri (cf. DDbDP searches), only eighteen appear in request contexts.⁵⁸ These are listed in [23]:

[23] ἀξιωθείς in requests

Instance	Date	Place	Text type	Passage	Structure	
1	O. Douch. 1.2	4 th / 5 th c.	Kysis	letter	ἀξιωθείς ἐλείω (ἐλήθησον)	PTC – IMP
2	O. Douch. 4.381	4 th c.	Kysis	letter	ἀξιωθείς παράσχου	PTC – IMP
3	O. Douch. 5.635	4 th c.	Kysis	letter	ἀξιωθείς πέμψον	PTC – IMP
4					ἀξιωθείς μὴ ἀμελήσης	PTC – SBJ
5	O. Trim. 1.325	4 th c.	Oasis Magna	letter	μὴ ἀμελήσης ἀξιωθείς	SBJ – PTC
6	P. Kell. 1 6.18-25	4 th c.	Kellis	letter	ὅπως ἀξιωθείς ἀνέλθης	PTC – SBJ
7	P. Kell. 1 7.7-11	4 th c.	Kellis	letter	ἀξιωθείς μὴ ἀμελήσης	PTC – SBJ
8	P. Kell. 1 72.36-40	4 th c.	Kellis	letter	ἀξιωθείς ἀγόρασον	PTC – IMP
9	P. Kell. 1 73.27-28	4 th c.	Kellis	letter	ἀξιωθείς πᾶν ποιήσον	PTC – IMP
10	P. Kell. 1 74.8-14	4 th c.	Kellis	letter	ἀξιωθείς πέμψον	PTC – IMP
11	and 31-32				ἀξιωθείς σπούδασον	PTC – IMP
12	P. Michael 26	4 th c.	?	letter	ἀξιωθείς κέλευσον	PTC – IMP
13	P. Mil. 2.81	4 th c.	?	letter	ἀξιωθείς σοι ἦ + INF	PTC – SBJ
14					ἀξιωθείς πέμψον	PTC – IMP
15	SB 26 16709	4 th c.	Oasis Magna	letter	ἀξιωθείς ποιήσον	PTC – IMP
16	SB 26 16710	4 th c.	Oasis Magna	letter (?)	ἀπόστειλον ἀξιωθείς	IMP – PTC
17	P. Oxy. 31.2602	4 th c.	Oxyrhynchos	letter	ἀξιωθείς συμβαλαίσθαι	PTC – IMP
18	P. Oxy. 8 1130.20-24	5 th c.	Senokomis (Oxyrhynchite nome)	loan of money	βουληθῆς ἀξιωθείς + INF	SBJ – PTC

ἀδελφή, σοι ἦ συναρωθῆναι καὶ ῥανθῆναι τὸ μέγα οἶκος τοῦ γεούχου Περικλέους ἕως ἔλθω· ἀξιωθείς, πέμψον μοι ἀργυρίου τάλαντα δισχίλια ἀλλὰ πάντα, οἶδα γὰρ τὴν σὴν φι[λαδ]ελφείαν· ‘Please, my lady sister, may it appeal to you that the big house of the landowner Perikles is broomed and sprinkled with water until I come. Please, send me the whole remaining 2000 talents of silver / money; for I know your sisterhood.’

⁵⁸ ἀξιωθείς ‘having been asked / being asked’ in request contexts does not appear in literary texts (cf. searches in the THESAURUS LINGUAE GRAECAE (TLG henceforth)). This is primarily because ἀξίω retained its classical syntax and semantics, that is ‘to deem {somebody/something}^{ACC} worthy of {something}^{GEN/INF}’, in literary texts.

While the majority of instances date from the fourth century, originate from the Oasis Magna⁵⁹ and appear in letters, that is in private documents, four instances do not fall in line.

Amongst the otherwise ‘regular’ instances, the two outliers are instances 5 and 16 in [23]. In these, the order of ἀξιωθείς and the finite verb is inverted so that ἀξιωθείς comes to follow the finite verb.

[24] (5) O. Trim. 1 325.2-8 [. . . .] . . . κεράμια [. . . .] . . . παράσχου τῷ [ἀδελφῷ Σαμουν Μακαρίου ἵνα εὔρω αὐτὰ εἰς καταγγισμὸν τοῦ προλοίπου [καὶ] μὴ ἀμελήσης ἀξιωθείς.
 ‘Give [. . .(sc. number) . . .] vessels [. . .(sc. content) . . .] to brother Samoun, Makarios’ son, in order that I may find them for packing (?) of the remainder but **do not forget it, please.**’

In [25], moreover, ἀξιωθείς and the imperative / subjunctive which it modifies are not adjacent.

[25] (16) SB 26 16710.1-7 1[- ca.12 - ἀπόστειλόν μοι ἀξιωθείς].
 πιστεύω γ[άρ] ὅτι ἤδη ἔλαβες το[ύς] τέσσαρας καγκ[έλ]λους τοῦ σίτου ἀπὸ [τῶ]ν γεωργῶν ὧν (. . .)
 ‘**Send** [. . .] to me, **please!** For I believe that you have already received four cancelli of wheat from the farmers who (. . .)’

The inverted order is not surprising given that the same ‘displacement’ also appears in the formulaic context (LitF) in which ἀξιωθείς seems to have started to grammaticalise. Notably, several instances of this displacement in LitF appear in texts from Kellis and the Oasis Magna.⁶⁰ The ‘displacement’ seems to be one of the indicators of ἀξιωθείς becoming a particle or adverb.

Our two late outliers are instances 17 and 18 in [23]. These come from the Oxyrhynchite nome in middle Egypt. In instance 17, the imperative accompanying ἀξιωθείς is inflected in the plural, thus agreement in number is lost.

[26] (17) P. Oxy. 31 2602.3-6 ἀξιωθείς, κύριέ μου ἄδελ<φε>, **συνβαλαίσθαι** τῇ ἀδελφῇ ἡμῶν Θεοδώρα εἴ τι ἐάν σοι ἀξίωσαι.
 ‘**Please**, my lord (and) brother, **help**⁶¹ our sister Theodora in whatever way it seems good to you.’

⁵⁹ Kellis and Kysis are part of the Oasis Magna.

⁶⁰ P. Bodl. 1 46 (Kysis); SB 1 4652 (Oasis Magna); O. Douch 4 375 (Kysis); P. Kell. 1 1; P. Kell. 1 8; P. Kell. 1 45; P. Kell. 1 46; P. Kell. 1 49.

⁶¹ Cf. LSJ s.v. συμβάλλω, I.9.

Instance 18 appears in a loan of money, that is an official document, and shows the inverted sequence of ἀξιωθείς and the finite verb.

[27] (18) P. Oxy. 8 1130.20-24 οἱ δὲ τῆς προθεσμίας ἐνστάσης (ADJ!) τὴν ἀπόδωσείν σοι μοὶ ποιήσωμαι καὶ βουληθῆς ἀξιωθείς συνδοῦναί μοι ἑτέραν προθεσμίαν, ταῦτα τελέσω σοι καὶ τοῦ μετὰ ταῦτα χρόνων τῶν αὐτῶν τόκον, γιγνομένης <σ>οι τῆς πράξεος παρά δε ἐμοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων μοι πάντων.

‘If I do not pay you during the agreed period of time and **you should want to grant** me another deferral, I will pay this to you and the same interest in the time after that, while yours is my work and my people’s work’

Moreover, ἀξιωθείς is here inserted between the finite modal verb and its infinite complement. Thus, [26] and [27] show more peculiarities than only their late date and their origin from outside the Oasis Magna.

(2) ἐρωτηθείς in specialised contexts

A development resembling the one that we can trace for ἀξιωθείς in texts from the Oasis Magna (in the Western desert) may be the one of ἐρωτηθείς in texts from the Eastern desert.⁶² Like ἀξιωθείς, ἐρωτηθείς is morphologically speaking an aorist passive participle in the nominative singular masculine. It appears in LitF instead of ἀξιωθείς during the Roman period. Almost all the relevant instances come from the Oasis Magna and in these ἐρωτηθείς appears in final position⁶³, thus displaced. This suggests that ἐρωτηθείς was following the same path of grammaticalisation as ἀξιωθείς. Finally, like ἀξιωθείς, ἐρωτηθείς appears in only one more pragmatic context, that is in requests. All the relevant instances are listed in [28]:

[28] ἐρωτηθείς in requests

Instance	Place	Date	Text type	Passage	Structure	
1	O. Krok. 1 72.5-9	Krokodilo (Eastern)	RG	letter	ἐρωτηθείς, ἀδελφε, πέμψις μου διὰ Κρινολάου ἢ Λονγείνου τὸν	PTC-SBJ

⁶² A search in the DDbDP in July 2018 using the same criteria that were used for the analysis of all the instances of ἀξιωθείς, resulted in 17 instances of ἐρωτηθείς. 11 appear in a variant of the formula LitF and 2 in the standard pattern of LitF. One instance appears in a prose context. The remaining three instances appear in request contexts.

⁶³ There are two instances in which ἐρωτηθείς appears immediately before the finite verb, i.e. the standard pattern of LitF. Yet both instances come from near Dura Europos (Syria).

		desert, ME)			τυπὸν ἰς <σ>φενδόνην ἵνα ἀρκεσθῆ·	
2	P. Bour. 23.6-8	unknown	RG	letter	εἰς κάραν δὲ ἐρωτηθεῖς, ἀδελφε, ἀγόρασόν μοι καὶ σοι ἄλλας δύο λείτρας χρύματος.	PTC-IMP
3	SB 3 6263.21-22	Alexandria (LE)	RG	letter	ἐρωτηθεῖς, ἀδελφε γλυκύταται, ἐν μηδενεὶ αὐτὴν λύπει.	PTC-IMP

Our evidence is more limited than for ἀξιωθείς but given the close resemblance of the development of both classical participles, we may tentatively assume that ἐρωτηθεῖς was the alternative to ἀξιωθείς, in the function of a politeness marker, in the Eastern desert.

5. Summary and Conclusion

Section 2 cast doubt on the validity of the results of applying the concept of spatiality, which was outlined in Section 1, to the village of Kellis. One may add here that Criboire (2001, 22-23) believes Kellis to have been an educational centre and that literary texts discovered in Kellis confirm this hypothesis thus suggesting a dynamic community.⁶⁴ Section 4 confirmed this impression from a linguistic perspective by drawing on the theoretical notions outlined in Section 3, that is the types of language varieties that are relevant to the Kellian setting, the types of contexts we have to distinguish and the processes of language change that affected Greek and Coptic in Kellis.

The Greek and Coptic varieties of Kellis contain aerial features. In the case of the Coptic dialect L*, these aerial features point to connections with the south of Egypt in particular. In the case of Greek, our evidence does currently not suggest a fully-fledged local variety in Kellis, thus the Greek used in Kellis largely aligns with the variety used in the rest of the country. At the same time, in the Greek and the Coptic of Kellis, we also find innovative features in formulaic and specific pragmatic contexts and these features are specific to the Oasis Magna. These innovative features reflect a thoroughly bilingual environment and seem to be distinctive in-group features (cf. Sections 4.2-3).

⁶⁴ For bilingual, Greek-Coptic, education, see Criboire (1999). I goes beyond the scope of this article to establish the reasons for and the patterns of interaction and learning in this educational centre.

The coexistence of the features just described initially seems to be a paradox. However, the paradox disappears when taking into account that aerial features are the result of subconscious processes. Speakers do not adopt them consciously. Conversely, the manipulation of features in formulaic and specific pragmatic contexts is a conscious process aimed at demarcating one's own speech from other people's speech. Formulaic and specific pragmatic contexts are particularly interesting because their structures are usually highly idiomatic or even fossilised and manipulation must thus be perceived as an intervention. [29] summarises our observations:

[29] Resolving the paradox

	Aerial feature	Formulaic / specific pragmatic context
Coptic	L*	IA
Greek	post-classical Greek	φυλάττω / διαφυλάττω + dative, ἀξιώθεις
Conscious manipulation	–	+
Conscious dissociation	–	+

Thus, the inhabitants of Kellis seem to represent a close-knit social network with a certain desire to demarcate themselves. Their remote location however did not prevent them from innovating, nor did it prevent the spread of aerial features.

Abbreviations

A	Active voice
ACC	Greek accusative case
ADJ	Adjective
AOR	Greek aorist tense
ART	Article
BG	Byzantine Greek (from 4 th c. AD onwards)
CS	Coptic circumstantial conversion
DAT	Greek dative case
DDbDP	Duke Database of Documentary Papyri
DEF	Definite
DOM	Coptic Direct object marker
F	Feminine gender
IA	Internal address
IDF	Indefinite
IMP	Imperative mood
indO	Indirect object
INF	Infinitive mood
LitF	Literacy-related formula ('having been asked / being asked I wrote for X because X was illiterate')
LSJ	Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek English Dictionary
MATT	Coptic Marker of Attribution
NEG	Negation
NOM	Greek nominative case
PG	Ptolemaic Greek (3 rd c. BC to 1 st c. BC)
Pl	Plural
POSS	Possessive
PRF	Perfect
PRFII	Coptic focalising conversion of the perfect
PRP	Preposition
PTC	Greek participle mood
REL	Coptic relative converter / Greek relative pronoun
RG	Roman Greek (1 st c. AD to 3 rd c. AD)
SBJ	Greek subjunctive mood
Sg	Singular
SVO	Subject-Verb-Object Sequence (word order)
TLG	Thesaurus Linguae Graecae
V	Verb

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