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## Heraiscus as Melitian bishop of Heracleopolis Magna and the Alexandrian see

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Hans Hauben

**HERAISCUS AS MELITIAN  
BISHOP OF HERACLEOPOLIS MAGNA  
AND THE ALEXANDRIAN SEE**

1. HERAISCUS AND THE THEONAS QUESTION

WITH HIS CHARACTERISTIC SEREPENDIPITY, Peter van Minnen has recently pointed out<sup>1</sup> that the Heracleopolitan bishop Heraiscus mentioned in *P. Harrauer* 48<sup>2</sup> (late fourth/early fifth century) as the original owner of a plot of land somewhere in the 320s or 330s must be none other than the key figure in the well known *P. London* VI 1914.<sup>3</sup> This letter, “one of the most important documents ever published”, as Van Minnen rightly claims, was written in Alexandria on the 23rd of May, 335, during a semi-official persecution of Melitians who were hanging around in the streets and suburbs. Pressurized by the ecclesiastical, military and judicial

<sup>1</sup> P. VAN MINNEN, “P. Harrauer 48 and the Problem of *papas* Heraiscus in P. Lond. VI 1914”, *Tyche* 16 (2001), pp. 103–105.

<sup>2</sup> Edited with commentary by Franziska BEUTLER-KRÄNZL [in:] *Wiener Papyri als Festgabe zum 60. Geburtstag von Hermann Harrauer*, ed. B. PALME, Wien 2001, pp. 147–152. Bishop Heraiscus is mentioned on l. 16.

<sup>3</sup> On this text, see our recent studies (with bibliography), in need of some updating now: “Le Papyrus London VI (P. Jews) 1914 dans son contexte historique (mai 335)” [in:] *Atti del XXII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia, Firenze, 23–29 agosto 1998*, edd. Isabella ANDORLINI, G. BASTIANINI, M. MANFREDI & Giovanna MENCÌ, Vol. I, Firenze 2001, pp. 605–618; “Catholiques et Mélitiens à Alexandrie à la veille du Synode de Tyr (335)” [in:]

authorities they had a great deal to suffer from thugs and drunken soldiers. The incidents took place – as we can surmise – on the occasion of a general (albeit rather informal)<sup>4</sup> meeting of Melitian dignitaries and monks convened in order to prepare the Synod of Tyre. At the moment the letter was written, *papas* Heraiscus<sup>5</sup> was still under arrest. Contrary to the established opinion, gradually made up during the last decades,<sup>6</sup> the latter, instead of being the Melitian ‘antipope’ of Alexandria in Athanasius’ early days, now appears as the local bishop of Heracleopolis Magna having just come to the capital in order to join the meeting. Although Van Minnen’s identification cannot be proved beyond doubt, the coincidence is too striking to be dismissed.

The author of the letter, a certain Callistus, was a devout Melitian (perhaps a priest or monk) connected with the monastery of Hathor, a locality belonging at least in 334 to the Upper Cynopolite nome, but situated so close to the border of the Heracleopolite nome that in other periods it was reckoned to the latter.<sup>7</sup> All this implies, according to Van

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*Coptic Studies on the Threshold of a New Millennium. Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Coptic Studies, Leiden, 27 August – 2 September 2000*, edd. M. IMMERZEEL, J. VAN DER VLIET & al. (= *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 133), Leuven 2004, pp. 905–921. That the Heraiscus of *P. London VI* 1914 was without any doubt a bishop is proved by the context: see H. HAUBEN, “On the Melitians in *P. London VI* (P. Jews) 1914: The Problem of *Papas* Heraiscus” [in:] *Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Congress of Papyrology, New York, 24–31 July 1980*, edd. L. KOENEN, R. S. BAGNALL, G. M. BROWNE & Ann E. HANSON (= *American Studies in Papyrology* 23), Chico (CA) 1981, pp. 447–456, esp. 450–453.

<sup>4</sup> Informal, not only because there was apparently no organized assembly, but also because we notice some striking absences: HAUBEN, “Catholiques et Mélitiens” (cit. n. 3), pp. 913–915.

<sup>5</sup> On the title of *papas* (exclusively given to members of the clergy), see T. DERDA & Ewa WIPSYCKA, “Emploi des titres *abba*, *apa* et *papas* dans l’Égypte byzantine”, *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 24 (1994), pp. 23–56, esp. 54–56.

<sup>6</sup> See e. g. HAUBEN, “On the Melitians” (cit. n. 3), *passim*; R. P. C. HANSON, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God. The Arian Controversy 318–381*, Edinburgh 1988, p. 253 (“perhaps the Melitian archbishop of Alexandria”); Annick MARTIN, *Athanase d’Alexandrie et l’Église d’Égypte au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle (328–373)*, Rome 1996 (= *Coll. Ec. Fr. de Rome* 216), pp. 359–361 (Heraiscus as Melitian bishop of the Military Camp near Alexandria; cf. the Index, p. 900 [“évêque mélitien de Nikopolis (Alexandrie)”]); pp. 359–360 n. 72, p. 387 n. 189 (Heraiscus as Melitian bishop of Alexandria); HAUBEN, “Le Papyrus *London VI*” (cit. n. 3), pp. 609–610 n. 38 (with further references); “Catholiques et Mélitiens” (cit. n. 3), p. 912.

<sup>7</sup> See H. HAUBEN, “Aurélios Pageus, alias *Apa Païèous*, et le monastère mélitien

Minnen, that “*P. Lond.* VI 1914 should be read from a more parochial, local, perspective. The letter ... was written from the perspective of the correspondents, who would have been most interested in their own bishop”. It is indeed conceivable that Callistus and/or the monastery were in one way or another under the jurisdiction of the Heracleopolitan bishop,<sup>8</sup> in whose vicissitudes they were of course particularly interested. We can even imagine that Heraiscus and Callistus, accompanied by their ‘brothers’ (l. 4), made the trip to Alexandria together before being harassed by the Athanasians.

As Heraiscus does not appear in the Melitian Catalogue,<sup>9</sup> he must have been appointed after 325/327 (possibly even after Melitius’ death, which occurred shortly after the handing over of that list),<sup>10</sup> presumably as successor of Petrus,<sup>11</sup> who in that case cannot be identified with the Melitian bishop Petrus (-Emis) referred to in l. 48 of the London papyrus.

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d’Hathor”, *Ancient Society* 32 (2002), pp. 337–352, esp. 341–343; cf. G. SCHMELZ, *Kirchliche Amtsträger im spätantiken Ägypten nach den Aussagen der griechischen und koptischen Papyri und Ostraka*, München – Leipzig 2002 (= *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, Beiheft 13), pp. 6–7, 28.

<sup>8</sup> Rather than (or jointly?) under that of Colluthus of Cynopolis superior? This Colluthus was the Melitian bishop there at the time of the Council of Nicaea, his Catholic counterpart being Adamantius: see St. TIMM, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden 1991 (*Beihfte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients*, Reihe B, Nr. 41), V, pp. 2133–2134; K. A. WORP, “A Checklist of Bishops in Byzantine Egypt (A. D. 325 – c. 750)”, *ZPE* 100 (1994), pp. 283–318, esp. 301; cf. HAUBEN, “Catholiques et Mélitiens” (cit. n. 3), p. 911 n. 31.

<sup>9</sup> On that Melitian bishops’ list, see H. HAUBEN, “Le catalogue mélitien réexaminé”, [in:] *Opes Atticae. Miscellanea philologica et historica Raymondo Bogaert et Hermanno Van Looy oblata*, edd. M. GEERARD, J. DESMET & R. VANDER PLAETSE, Brugge 1990 (= *Sacris Erudiri* 31 [1989–1990]), pp. 155–167; cf. ID., “Jean Arkhaph, évêque de Memphis, dans le catalogue mélitien”, [in:] *Philobistôr. Miscellanea in honorem Caroli Laga septuagenarii*, edd. A. SCHOORS & P. VAN DEUN (= *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 60), Leuven 1994, pp. 23–33; “John Arkhaph and «the Bishop»” (Ath., *Apol. sec.* 71. 6.). A Reassessment”, *Ancient Society* 30 (2000), p. 271–275.

<sup>10</sup> On the chronology of the presentation of the catalogue and Melitius’ subsequent death, see HAUBEN, “Catalogue” (cit. n. 9), pp. 155–156 n. 3; “Jean Arkhaph” (cit. n. 9), p. 24.

<sup>11</sup> On the identification problems concerning that bishop, see HAUBEN, “Catholiques et Mélitiens” (cit. n. 3), pp. 910–911 with n. 27–31. At present, it becomes conceivable again that Petrus of Heracleopolis Magna was reconciled with the Catholic community shortly after the Council of Nicaea (before being replaced between 325/327 and 335 by the Melit-

Heraiscus' vanishing as Melitian bishop of Alexandria has a number of consequences, most of which were already stated by Van Minnen in his short but impressive article. Moreover, it alters the general perspective in which the issue of Melitian leadership should be interpreted, reopening questions that were thought to have been definitely settled. Let us reconsider them with fresh eyes.

The first target is the somewhat shadowy Theonas. According to Epiphanius in his chapter on the Melitian schism,<sup>12</sup> the Melitians promptly put one Theonas on the Alexandrian throne after Alexander's death (328). Fortunately the poor man died after three months, just in time to let Athanasius return smoothly from a mission at court.<sup>13</sup> The heresiologist explains that, contrary to the situation in other cities – apparently referring to the parallel Melitian clergy established all over Egypt<sup>14</sup> – there had never been two rival bishops in the capital. This statement clearly includes the situation immediately following Alexander's decease,<sup>15</sup> for although designated by the latter as his successor, Athanasius was not formally elected and consecrated until after Theonas had passed away. As told, the story implies that the Melitians did not see Theonas as the exclusive leader of their own group but rather as the true successor to the Catholic Alexander and sole bishop of the whole Christian community, Catholics as well as Melitians (who, since several months, were officially reconciled).

Although Epiphanius is at times comparatively well-informed when speaking about Melitian issues, the whole matter arouses suspicion as no other author makes mention of it. Theonas is unknown, not even occurring in the Melitian Catalogue, which was drawn up only shortly before.

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ian Heraiscus) and that it was this Petrus who (as advocated by MARTIN, *Athanasie* [cit. n. 6] pp. 316, 317, 362 n. 75, 366 with n. 97, 379) was one of Athanasius' firm supporters at Tyre. Yet, in view of the name's frequency, caution is still recommended.

<sup>12</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* 68.7.2–68.7.4.

<sup>13</sup> Which is, strictly speaking, in contradiction with real chronology but quite understandable if each month concerned is reckoned fully: in fact Athanasius was installed (June 8th, 328) less than two months after Alexander's death (April 17th, 328); cf. MARTIN, *Athanasie* (cit. n. 6), p. 325.

<sup>14</sup> See MARTIN, *Athanasie* (cit. n. 6), p. 325 n. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Which is also made clear by the use of γάρ in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 68.7.3.

If he had really held the Alexandrian episcopal see, we would expect to find him there, if not among the Melitian bishops of Egypt, at least among the Melitian clergy of Alexandria. Besides three deacons the list mentions five presbyters, including one in the Camp, but none with that name.<sup>16</sup> We know that up to that time Alexandrian bishops were normally chosen not only by the presbyteral college of Alexandria but also from that board.<sup>17</sup> Another strong counter-indication could be Athanasius' silence at the Synod of Tyre (335) about his supposed – unexpected if not illegal – immediate predecessor:<sup>18</sup> in Tyre the validity of his own election in that notorious year 328 was under strong debate.

Still more confusing is the fact that when treating the Arian heresy in the next chapter of his *Panarion* Epiphanius tells us a similar story about a certain Achilles, an equally questionable figure. Because of Athanasius' absence, it is said, he was elected in a kind of emergency procedure. Like Theonas in the 'Melitian version', Achilles (died and?)<sup>19</sup> was succeeded by Athanasius after only three months. In the 'Arian version', however, Theonas is intervening as well: he is said to have been established by the Melitians apparently about the same time as Achilles was elected, whereas his death remains unmentioned.<sup>20</sup> The implication is

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<sup>16</sup> We also have a list of Alexandrian clergy going back to ca. 319, about nine years before Alexander's death. Among the 36 presbyters and 44 deacons there are two deacons with the name Theonas, one in the city, the other in the Mareotis region. They belong, however, to the Catholic clergy: see H.-G. OPITZ, *Athanasius Werke* III, I.1. *Urkunden zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites 318–328*, Berlin – Leipzig 1934, 4b, 21 (pp. 10–11). In addition, six Arian presbyters and six deacons are attested, none of them with the said name: *ibid.*, 4b, 6 (p. 7).

<sup>17</sup> See MARTIN, *Athanasie* (cit. n. 6), pp. 328–329, with an orderly table on p. 339. As a deacon Athanasius was soon to become an exception to the (informal and not always applied: cf. HANSON, *Search* [cit. n. 6], p. 249) rule.

<sup>18</sup> Another possible explanation is suggested by MARTIN, *Athanasie* (cit. n. 6), p. 331 n. 36.

<sup>19</sup> His death is not recorded but the implication seems obvious (cf. n. 21). Since according to Epiphanius' story Achilles' election had been fully legal, he could only have been replaced after resignation or decease (the latter being the most 'normal' and self-evident explanation).

<sup>20</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* 69.II.4–69.II.6. Both versions, the 'Melitian' and the 'Arian', are conveniently juxtaposed by MARTIN, "Athanasie" (cit. n. 6), p. 324. See also HANSON, *Search* (cit. n. 6), pp. 247–248.

clear: according to this ‘fuller’ account Theonas has to be regarded as a purely sectarian ‘anti-bishop’ in opposition to the apparently regularly (albeit not in accordance with Alexander’s will) appointed Achillas.<sup>21</sup>

Up to now the documentarily evidenced existence of a Melitian anti-bishop in Alexandria by the time of the Synod of Tyre (335) could support the historicity of Epiphanius’ Theonas only seven years before (328), whereas the story of Achillas was easily dismissed as a kind of doublet.<sup>22</sup> But in view of Heraiscus’ disappearance from the Alexandrian scene, there is no longer any particular reason to maintain the historical reality of his alleged predecessor against the objections put forward above. So for lack of additional data we may safely assume that the (Melitian) ‘archbishop’<sup>23</sup> Theonas, like his counterpart Achillas (obviously orthodox albeit ‘second-choice’ in the eyes of the Catholics), belongs to fiction.<sup>24</sup>

In all probability the characters of the two (competing) excellencies were inspired by their earlier historical namesakes on the Alexandrian episcopal throne.<sup>25</sup> In some respects the models were rather obscure per-

<sup>21</sup> It is a mistake to see in this (probably fictional) Achillas an Arian creature, as I once did (“On the Melitians” [cit. n. 3], p. 454) and others before me (thus H. M. GWATKIN, *Studies of Arianism*, Cambridge 1900<sup>2</sup>, p. 70 n. 2; J. FAIVRE, art. “Alexandrie” [in:] *Dictionnaire d’Histoire et de Géographie ecclésiastiques*, II, Paris 1914, col. 289–369, esp. 307; B. J. KIDD, *A History of the Church to AD 461*, Oxford 1922, II, p. 51), although his character seems inspired by his allegedly pro-Arian predecessor (cf. *infra*). A correct rendering of Epiphanius’ ‘Arian version’ is provided by R. GRYSOY, “Les élections épiscopales en Orient au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle”, *Revue d’Hist. Eccl.* 74 (1979), pp. 301–345, esp. 322: “D’après Épiphane, ... on choisit un certain Achillas. De leur côté, les mélécians profitèrent de ce que le siège était vacant pour tenter de s’en emparer, et ils opposèrent à Achillas un nommé Théonas. Les deux évêques rivaux moururent peu de temps après [see *supra* with n. 19], et c’est ainsi que le siège revint à Athanase.”

<sup>22</sup> See HAUBEN, “On the Melitians” (cit. n. 3), p. 449 n. 15; pp. 453–454 (in particular n. 29 and 30).

<sup>23</sup> This anachronistic terminology (cf. HAUBEN, “Jean Arkhaph” [cit. n. 9], pp. 27–28; cf. “John Arkhaph” [cit. n. 9], *passim*) is used here and elsewhere in this article merely for the sake of convenience.

<sup>24</sup> To this extent, see already F. H. KETTLER, “Der melitianische Streit in Aegypten”, *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 35 (1936), pp. 155–193, esp. 171 n. 45 (still one of the most fundamental studies on the origins of the Melitian schism).

<sup>25</sup> Theonas (282–300, between Maximus and Peter); Achillas (late 311 or 312 [possibly after an interregnum] – May/June 312 or 313, between Peter and Alexander): C. W. GRIGGS,

sons too, and, in the case of Achilles, just as ephemeral (and to some extent even a little suspicious to the orthodox because of the latter's supposed sympathies for Arius). By considering Alexander as Peter's immediate *diadochos*, Epiphanius strikingly ignores the historical Achilles.<sup>26</sup> So it is conceivable that in his confusion he transferred the latter to a later date, thus filling up the unusually long vacancy between Alexander and Athanasius.<sup>27</sup>

Probably we will never know what exactly is underlying Epiphanius' strange reports. Apart from the heresiologist's characteristic propensity to make errors, they seem to reflect the fierce 'electoral struggle' that arose after the death of Alexander. Did they originate in Catholic circles, eager to 'reinterpret' the sharp opposition raised by Alexander's imposition of Athanasius' candidature?<sup>28</sup> Was it perhaps a way to excuse and cover up his possibly uncanonical election and consecration? For if the Catholics could make credible that not they, but the Melitians, by establishing their own candidate without the consent of the other party, had broken up the union with the Church, either transgressing the recent Nicene regulations – according to which the Melitians were not even entitled to put forward their own candidates without the consent of their Catholic colleagues<sup>29</sup> – or violating a specific preliminary electoral agree-

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*Early Egyptian Christianity from its Origins to 451 C. E.*, Leiden 1990, p. 97, 119–120; MARTIN, *Athanase* (cit. n. 6), pp. 325–326 with n. 12; p. 339. Cf. Annik MARTIN, "Athanase et les Méli-tiens (325–335)" [in:] *Politique et théologie chez Athanase d'Alexandrie. Actes du Colloque de Chantilly, 23–25 septembre 1973*, ed. Ch. KANNENGIESSER, Paris 1974, pp. 31–61, esp. 40–41 n. 24; "Aux origines de l'Alexandrie chrétienne: topographie, liturgie, institutions" [in:] *Origeniana octava. Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition. Papers of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Origen Congress, Pisa, 27–31 August 2001*, edd. L. PERRONE & al. (= *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium* 164), vol. I, Leuven 2003, pp. 105–120, esp. 115 and 117.

<sup>26</sup> *Panarion* 68.3.5.

<sup>27</sup> Obviously because of this confusion J. A. FISCHER ("Die Synode zu Alexandrien im Jahr 306", *Archivum Historiae Conciliorum* 19 [1987], pp. 62–70, esp. 67 n. 40 [but see p. 69]) mistakenly considers Epiphanius' Melitian Theonas as an opponent to the historical Achilles, Alexander's predecessor.

<sup>28</sup> Thus, although accepting the historicity of Theonas, MARTIN, *Athanase* (cit. n. 6), pp. 325–326 (cf. p. 331 n. 36; p. 360 n. 72).

<sup>29</sup> On these stipulations, see H. HAUBEN, "Das Konzil von Nicaea (325) zur Wiederaufnahme der Melitianer. Versuch einer Text- und Strukturanalyse" [in:] *TIMAI J. Trianta-*



ment,<sup>30</sup> Athanasius' exclusive election by the Catholic clergy became fully legal and acceptable. Now that there is a serious chance that the stories are fake, the thesis of the canonical (or at least 'moral') irregularity of Athanasius' election becomes more believable.<sup>31</sup>

Be that as it may, it appears that there is no longer any convincing proof for the existence of a Melitian 'anti-pope' in Alexandria, no more than there is any indication that a Melitian ever succeeded in conquering the throne of Saint Mark as leader of the whole Christian community. A fortiori, we no longer have any ground for assuming that such a putative Melitian bishop of Alexandria (in contrast with the 'patriarch' of the Catholics) would have played, in fact or on principle (i.e. according to Melitian ecclesiology), a second-class rôle within the (Melitian) hierarchy. In this respect we will have to reconsider our view of Melitian ecclesiological doctrine.<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, we are faced with the disconcerting fact that the significant and influential Melitian colony in the capital, equipped with a staff of presbyters and deacons – a limited one, but a staff nevertheless – continued to be deprived of a real and full leader, whereas many cities by the time of the Nicene Council had their own Melitian (anti-)bishop. This requires some explanation, for such an absence cannot possibly have been accidental.

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*phyllopopoulos*, edd. J. VELISSAROPOULOU-KARAKOSTA, Sp. TROIANOS, M. P. STATHOPOULOS Kal-liopi A. BOURDARA & N. KLAMARIS, Athina 2000, pp. 357–379.

<sup>30</sup> Such an agreement between Melitians and Catholics is mentioned by Sozomen, *HE* II 17. 4. According to Athanasius' enemies seven Catholic bishops had broken it when they consecrated Athanasius by surprise.

<sup>31</sup> On Athanasius' election, see e.g. HANSON, *Search* (cit. n. 6), pp. 247–248; MARTIN, *Athanasios* (cit. n. 6), pp. 331–337.

<sup>32</sup> On this view and its implications, see H. HAUBEN, "The Melitian 'Church of the Martyrs'. Christian Dissenters in Ancient Egypt" [in:] *Ancient History in a Modern University. Proceedings of a Conference held at Macquarie University, 8–13 July 1993 to mark twenty-five years of the teaching of Ancient History at Macquarie University and the retirement from the Chair of Professor Edwin Judge*, Vol. 2. *Early Christianity, Late Antiquity and Beyond*, edd. T. W. HILLARD, R. A. KEARSLEY, C. E. V. NIXON, A. M. NOBBS, Macquarie University (N.S.W.) – Grand Rapids (Mich.) – Cambridge (U. K.) 1998, pp. 329–349, esp. 336–339; cf. "Catholiques et Mélitiens" (cit. n. 3), pp. 912, 919.

2. THE SEE OF ST MARK  
AS PERCEIVED BY THE MELITIANS:  
A REASSESSMENT

Let us reconsider the available evidence in the light of our new understanding of Heraiscus' position with all the implications involved. The questions we have to ask are twofold: 1. Did the Melitians ever *aim* – and if so, to what extent – to occupy the Alexandrian see (either Catholic or exclusively Melitian) and, if so, why did such attempts remain unsuccessful? 2. How did they exactly perceive that see, from the very outset of the schism in 306 until John Archaph's exile in late 335? It is evident that we have to reckon with the possibility that, as a result of historical circumstances and the evolution of their sect's character, they may have adapted their policies as well as their opinions. Much depended on their – continually changing – relationship with the Catholic hierarchy.

Starting from the beginning we have to go back to the so-called 'Fundamentalurkunden' or 'Veronese fragments'.<sup>33</sup> They seem to suggest that Melitius, the rebellious bishop from Lycopolis, obviously considering Peter's position as forfeited, very probably had the intention, at least initially, to become the overall leader of the Egyptian Church. At any rate, by performing illicit (although in his own view excusable if not fully justified) ordinations in four Delta dioceses and subsequently, after the bishops' execution (that of Phileas of Thmuis took place on February 4th, 306), in Peter's own Alexandria, he arrogated to himself 'archiepiscopal' powers. Whereas the four imprisoned bishops, for all their suggestiveness in their extremely polite letter to Melitius, still remained rather vague ("aliut sperans"), Peter in his message to the Alexandrians plainly accused his Lycopolitan suffragan of "cupiditas in principatu (*sic*)". According to the context these words are clearly to be understood as an eagerness to usurp Peter's position at the head of the Egyptian Church and, by impli-

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<sup>33</sup> On these extremely important documents, see H. HAUBEN, "La première année du schisme mélitien (305/306)", *Ancient Society* 20 (1989), pp. 267–280, *passim*; cf. "Melitian 'Church of the Martyrs'" (cit. n. 32), p. 337 n. 62. See also FISCHER, "Die Synode zu Alexandrien" (cit. n. 27), pp. 63–64. A critical text edition with a thorough commentary is provided by KETTLER, "Der meletianische Streit" (cit. n. 24), pp. 159–163 and *passim*.

cation, take over the Alexandrian see.<sup>34</sup> Strictly speaking (and as – under the force of circumstances – would later actually be the case in the Melitian Church) the Alexandrian see and supreme Church leadership need not necessarily be linked, but at this early stage of the schism, there is no reason at all to assume that Melitius intended to disconnect the two competences:<sup>35</sup> we have seen that there is no longer any explicit evidence for the thesis that the Melitians would ever have depreciated the Alexandrian see as such.

Melitius' ambitions seem tellingly illustrated and confirmed<sup>36</sup> by his resolute and apparently successful attempts to sever some prominent Alexandrian church members, especially presbyters, from their bishop.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> For opposite or more reticent views, see still HAUBEN, "On the Melitians" (cit. n. 3), p. 455 n. 34 (presented in a rather ambiguous wording); "Première année" (cit. n. 33), p. 272 (quoting T. VIVIAN, *St. Peter of Alexandria, Bishop and Martyr*, Philadelphia 1988, p. 39: "impossible to prove"); Ewa WIPSYCKA, "La Chiesa nell' Egitto del IV secolo: Le strutture ecclesiastiche" (1983) [in:] E. W., *Etudes sur le christianisme dans l'Egypte de l'Antiquité tardive* (= *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 52), Roma 1996, p. 147: "A quanto sappiamo, Melizio no ha mai tentato di diventare patriarca".

<sup>35</sup> Cf. HAUBEN, "Melitian 'Church of the Martyrs'" (cit. n. 32), pp. 336–337; 346 (still with some hesitancy).

<sup>36</sup> This aspect has been rightly stressed by W. TELFER, "Meletius of Lycopolis and Episcopal Succession in Egypt", *Harvard Theological Review* 48 (1955), pp. 227–237: the support of the Alexandrian presbyters (on whose powers, compare also E. W. KEMP, "Bishops and Presbyters at Alexandria", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 6 [1955], pp. 125–142, esp. 138–140; R. GRAYSON, "Les élections ecclésiastiques au III<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Revue d'Hist. Eccl.* 68 [1973], pp. 353–404, esp. 395–397) was essential if Melitius wanted to conquer the metropolis's episcopal see. Anyway, his manoeuvres to win their sympathy are quite revealing.

<sup>37</sup> In this respect the intermediate text (2nd fragment) is more explicit than Peter's own letter (3rd fragment) which it echoes: contrary to the intermediate fragment Peter does not mention the machinations of the 'turbulent' Isidorus and Arrius who are said to be envious of his leading position ("inuidentes pontificatui beati Petri"), and where the intermediate text plainly says that Melitius "separavit" the presbyters, Peter's wording is less outspoken: "ut ... conaretur separare". In Peter's eyes the ordinations "in carcere" and "in metallo" (the context shows that these were ordinations to the priesthood; according to the intermediate fragment, in each case only one ordination was performed) constituted a serious transgression and a direct challenge to his authority. Whereas the ordination "in carcere" must have taken place on Alexandrian territory, the other surely happened in the Thebaid. Possibly an Alexandrian was involved (cf. TELFER, "Meletius" [cit. n. 36], p. 229 [but erroneously situating the event in Palestine]). On these ordinations, see HAUBEN,

Later tradition has it that Melitius actually occupied the Alexandrian chair while Peter was in hiding,<sup>38</sup> but this is definitely not true: Peter is only talking about Melitius' improper *ambitions* (not their realization), whereas Alexander and Athanasius remain completely silent about such a coup. When Athanasius speaks of Melitius' "many transgressions of law [*paranomiai*]" he is only alluding to the latter's illegal interventions and ordinations in general,<sup>39</sup> not to a formal take-over. At the most we might say that Melitius acted in some way as if he already were the 'archbishop' without being formally invested as such. That his expectations (whatever they may have been) were not fulfilled, is due to his prompt arrest and subsequent deportation to the porphyry quarries of the Thebaid by the civil authorities. All this still happened in the first half of 306, before Peter's letter to the Alexandrians. Probably in (307 or) 308, he was deported to the copper mines of Phaeno in Palestine.<sup>40</sup> If Melitius' initial plans as suggested by Peter had succeeded, they would have drastically altered the situation: either Melitius would have been recognized by the whole community as the only true leader of the Church, or, in the opposite case, the schism would have proved much more irreparable than it actually turned out to be.

In spite of all these considerations, we must not forget that it remains very difficult, at any rate, to assess what was really going on in Melitius' mind at the moment he entered Peter's territory. As he was openly challenging the authorities, he must surely have reckoned with the fact that he could soon be arrested and even executed. In view of his background and the impulsiveness of his character, it is far from excluded that he was consciously pursuing martyrdom. In that context a long-term strategy from the very outset looks less probable. That does not alter the fact that he was just as consciously assuming his responsibilities and taking the lead of the resistance.

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"Première année" (cit. n. 33), pp. 271–273. Much remains to be said about the Verona documents.

<sup>38</sup> See HAUBEN, "Melitian 'Church of the Martyrs'" (cit. n. 32), p. 337 n. 63.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. HAUBEN, "Première année" (cit. n. 33), pp. 268–269.

<sup>40</sup> For a discussion of the chronology, see HAUBEN, "Première année" (cit. n. 33), pp. 274–279.

But Melitius was not killed and, if we may trust Epiphanius, on his way to Palestine as well as during his ensuing captivity he started to organize his own 'Church of the Martyrs' (in his view the only true one of course),<sup>41</sup> not only ordaining priests and deacons but even consecrating bishops.<sup>42</sup> In the meantime he had been excommunicated.<sup>43</sup> So, when he was released from forced labour in the spring of 311 (after the Edict of Galerius, April 30th),<sup>44</sup> the situation, compared to that of 306, had completely changed. There were two parallel churches now, that of Peter and that of Melitius, so that it had become practically impossible for the latter to again make a credible and efficient bid for the actual governance of the Catholic Church. Peter, on the other hand, being martyred a few months later, on November 25th of that same year, was definitely cleared of every suspicion of weakness. It looked as if his execution, which marked a serious revival for the Catholic party, once and for all cut off Melitius' claims to the overall leadership.<sup>45</sup>

So, if Melitius, from the time of his arrest and subsequent excommunication, did continue to act as an 'archbishop', his authority was in fact confined to his own sectarian Church, now a clearly distinct body. By regaining Alexandria<sup>46</sup> after his release – not his own bishopric of Lycopolis as it seems – he obviously wanted to elaborate his organization using the country's political and religious centre as his base of operations, as well as to keep in touch with what was going on in its leading Catholic circles.

Embroidering on Melitius' initial campaign among the Alexandrian clergy, Telfer<sup>47</sup> concluded that the bishop must have undergone, already before Peter's execution, the ritual ceremonies of investiture (in the way

<sup>41</sup> Cf. HAUBEN, "Melitian 'Church of the Martyrs'" (cit. n. 32), pp. 332–333.

<sup>42</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* 68.3.6–68.3.8; cf. HAUBEN, "On the Melitians" (cit. n. 3), p. 455 with n. 37.

<sup>43</sup> See HAUBEN, "Première année" (cit. n. 33), pp. 268–269.

<sup>44</sup> HAUBEN, "Melitian 'Church of the Martyrs'" (cit. n. 32), p. 329.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. TELFER, "Meletius" (cit. n. 36), p. 231: "Peter could have done nothing so effective for his cause, against that of Melitius, as in dying under the executioner's sword."

<sup>46</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* 68.4.1.

<sup>47</sup> TELFER, "Meletius" (cit. n. 36), pp. 230–231; cf. pp. 236–237.

Telfer conceived them)<sup>48</sup> as ‘archbishop’ of Alexandria. They were performed, said Telfer, by the presbyters under his obedience, who by so doing were eager to formalize the position of their leader (whose authority, despite its universal claims, remained confined to his own, already distinct group). For all its appeal, Telfer’s inference has been rightly rejected on account of the silence of the contemporary sources. So we have to conclude that Melitius, despite his initial overall ambitions and his actual leadership at the time within his parallel Church, probably never took the last and irrevocable step.<sup>49</sup> Did he refuse to become a mere ‘anti-bishop’ of Alexandria, preferring to wait for an opportunity to really take over the whole Catholic Church of Egypt? Whatever the case, that opportunity would never come.

Neither at the election of Achillas (late 311 or 312) nor at that of Alexander (May/June 312 or 313) do we hear of any Melitian candidacy. Did Melitius, waiting for better times now that the Catholic party had regained self-confidence, provisionally give up his pursuit to reform and take over the Egyptian Church from within? At any rate, the fact that his relationship with Alexander was not too bad, if we may believe Epiphanius – actually it seems to have been characterized by ups and downs<sup>50</sup> – suggests that he continued to keep relatively calm and that he did not want to push his dissidency to the brink.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. W. TELFER, “Episcopal Succession In Egypt”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 3 (1952), pp. 1–13 (in any event, rightly highlighting the rôle of the presbyteral college), and the reaction of KEMP, “Bishops and Presbyters” (cit. n. 36), *passim*.

<sup>49</sup> See WIPSYCKA, *La Chiesa nell’Egitto* (cit. n. 34), p. 147 with n. 19, explicitly rejecting Telfer’s thesis (cf. the quotation *supra*, n. 34, with which I can agree, except that I would just strike the word “tentato”: in my opinion Melitius made real attempts but never actually became Alexandria’s ‘archbishop’, neither of the Catholics, nor within his own organization).

<sup>50</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* 68.3.9; 68.4.1–68.4.2, contrasting with Athanasius, *Apol. sec.* 59. 2; Socrates, *HE* I 6.38. According to Theodoret (*HE* I 9.1), Melitius “rebelled against the primacy (προεδρία) of Alexander”. The correct reading is indeed Ἀλεξάνδρου, not Ἀλεξανδρέων (see the critical edition with apparatus by L. PARMENTIER, *Theodoret. Kirchengeschichte* [= *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte* 19], Leipzig 1911, p. 38). It is, therefore, not correct to contend that Melitius rebelled against the primacy of “the Alexandrian bishop” (in general, i. e. the Alexandrian see (thus, wrongly, GRIGGS, *Early Egyptian Christianity* [cit. n. 25] p. 121, referring to this passage). Contrary to my earlier opinion (“Melitian ‘Church of the Martyrs’” [cit. n. 32], p. 336), I no longer see

In the meantime, possibly even until the days of Nicaea, Lycopolis' schismatic bishop was still (permanently or not?) dwelling in the capital. There, i. e. outside his own diocese (!), he held separate eucharistic celebrations for his followers and, as a committed orthodox<sup>51</sup> (perhaps also in order to embarrass Alexander), he even felt obliged to intervene in the rising Arian controversy.<sup>52</sup> By doing so he behaved like (and must have been so considered by his flock) a *de facto* Melitian 'archbishop' of Alexandria, a *de facto* rival to Alexander. But formally speaking that post was never filled in, as is clearly shown by the silence of two basic documents coming from the Catholic and the Melitian side respectively. On the one hand there is the letter of the Nicene fathers to the Church of Alexandria. It does not make any mention at all of such an Alexandrian episcopacy, referring only to Melitius' position in Lycopolis, henceforth devoid of any real authority.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand we have the Melitian Catalogue, produced by Melitius himself between the Council of Nicaea and the formal reintegration of his church, in which he merely figures as bishop of Lycopolis, while Alexandria, in spite of its Melitian clergy, lacks a Melitian bishop.

There may have been several reasons for this vacancy: it is possible that the Catholic community in the capital, backed by the civil and military authorities, while having no choice but to tolerate a number of Melitian clergymen including the sect's founder and chief, refused to accept a *de iure* rival Alexandrian bishop who could be seen as a direct threat to its own leader. On the other hand, there may have been a certain caution on Melitius' side, who perhaps recoiled from provoking a man with whom he seems never to have completely severed contact. Or did it in Melitius' opinion only make sense to become Alexandria's 'archbishop' if all the Christians of Egypt could be united under his sway? As things were going in the 320s, he did not have a ghost of a chance.

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any reason to interpret the Melitian schism as a reaction against the absolute powers of the 'patriarch' of Alexandria.

<sup>51</sup> This term too is used here anachronistically (before Nicaea) for the sake of convenience.

<sup>52</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* 68.4.1–68.4.2.

<sup>53</sup> See HAUBEN, "Das Konzil von Nicaea" (cit. n. 29), pp. 370–379.

Yet, Alexandria remained in some way at the core of Melitius' concerns. In the list he delivered to Alexander, thus showing his willingness to rejoin the Catholic Church, a special place was reserved for his trusted collaborator John (Archaph), the Melitian bishop of Memphis. In a short addition behind his name it was stipulated that John had been charged by the emperor "to be with the bishop", that means with Alexander of Alexandria. Elsewhere I have attempted to interpret these puzzling words.<sup>54</sup> It seems, at least in my opinion, that John, who already at that time appears to have held a responsible position within the Melitian community, had to keep himself, as a kind of spokesman or mediator, at the disposal of the Catholic 'archbishop'. As the Melitians were officially reconciliated under a series of strict conditions, there was no question of challenging Alexander's leadership. It also goes too far to contend that Constantine gave him "prospective rights in regard to the see of Alexandria".<sup>55</sup> Strictly speaking, John's counterpart was not Alexander of Alexandria but Antiochus, the Catholic bishop of Memphis.<sup>56</sup>

Soon after the settlement, Melitius, obviously having retired now to his original diocese of Lycopolis and sensing that his end was near, explicitly designated John as his successor at the head of the Melitian movement.<sup>57</sup> By doing so he not only confirmed a situation that as it seems already existed, but actually perpetuated the schism. From now on, the position of the Melitians became very ambiguous: despite their formal reintegration they continued to constitute a separate body, half within, half outside the Catholic Church. No wonder then, that the fragile union was soon to be disrupted.

One thing is certain: during his term as Melitian leader, John never became or openly attempted to become the (Melitian or Catholic) bishop of Alexandria. In this case again the *argumentum e silentio* is compelling. When, as has been pointed out above, a serious strife arose after the death of Alexander, John seems to have stayed out of the race. Neither Athanasius nor the authors who otherwise know him as a prominent

<sup>54</sup> See HAUBEN, "Jean Arkhaph" (cit. n. 9), *passim*; "John Arkhaph" (cit. n. 9), *passim*.

<sup>55</sup> Thus, TELFER, *Melitius* (cit. n. 36), p. 235.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. HAUBEN, "Jean Arkhaph" (cit. n. 9), p. 31.

<sup>57</sup> Sozomen, *HE* II 21.1–21.2; cf. HAUBEN, "Das Konzil von Nicaea" (cit. n. 29), p. 374.



Melitian cleric,<sup>58</sup> or even as Melitius' successor,<sup>59</sup> mention his name in connection with the electoral incidents of 328. Instead we are told the strange stories about Theonas and Achilles. Was John not explicitly interested at that moment and if so, why? It is impossible to give a satisfactory answer. Did he prefer to remain faithful to the memory of Alexander, by whom he had only recently been readmitted into communion together with his fellow Melitians? For Alexander had now firmly designated Athanasius as his successor (pursuing in fact a similar procedure as Melitius had done with respect to John). Or did he rely too much on the electoral agreement that Athanasius' opponents claimed was reached between both parties,<sup>60</sup> so that the latter's surreptitious election took him by surprise? Anyway, if one considers the stipulations in the missive of the Nicene fathers, the Melitian bishop of Memphis had only a very poor chance to succeed the Catholic bishop of Alexandria, even if the additional note in the Melitian Catalogue might, in a certain way, have suggested the contrary.

On the other hand, it appears that during the last months of Alexander, after the death of Melitius, the Melitians had been subject to harsh repression on the part of the Catholics,<sup>61</sup> which of course must have seriously jeopardized their delicate mutual relations. In these circumstances it is not a priori unthinkable that the Melitian party, considering the Nicene regulations as void, would have done some lobby work and tried to impose its own candidate. But then the question still is: whom did they push forward?

Whereas John of Memphis remains out of the Alexandrian picture, no other Melitian clergyman, as we have learnt now, seems to have occupied the Alexandrian (be it the Catholic, or the exclusively Melitian) throne either: the enigmatic Theonas has in all probability to be removed

<sup>58</sup> Thus, Epiphanius, *Panarion* 68.5.2 (where the expression ἐπίσκοπος τῶν αὐτῶν possibly also refers to his position as leader of the Melitians).

<sup>59</sup> Sozomen *HE* II 21.2; cf. 31.4. John is clearly acting as the Melitians' supreme leader (II 22.2–22.3), especially at the Synod of Tyre (II 25.3, 25.5, 25.12, 25.15; cf. Socrates, *HE* I 30.1), the counterpart of the Catholic leader Athanasius (II 31.4). Sozomen uses expressions like οἱ ἀμφὶ and οἱ μετὰ I. (ἐπίσκοποι).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *supra* with n. 30.

<sup>61</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* 68.5.1–68.5.2.

from our lists, whereas Heraiscus has been duly assigned to Middle-Egypt. And as Callistus' detailed report makes clear, among the many Melitian bishops who in May 335 were spotted in the streets of the metropolis, no one can be pointed to as Athanasius' *Alexandrian* rival.<sup>62</sup> John, his real opponent as Church leader, was at that time dwelling and intriguing in Syrian Antioch.<sup>63</sup>

It is not excluded that in the end, when the position of Athanasius had become untenable, the Melitians may have hoped to replace him on the Alexandrian see by their own chief. But these hopes (if they existed at all) would soon evaporate. Just after the Synod of Tyre Constantine not only banished Athanasius but John as well.<sup>64</sup> Officially the see was kept vacant until the emperor's death on May 22nd, 337.<sup>65</sup> Without the emperor's approval, however, the Arian presbyter Pistus was consecrated as bishop of Alexandria, being accepted only by a minority of the population.<sup>66</sup> Whereas Athanasius came back and was given a triumphant welcome in Alexandria on November 23rd, 337,<sup>67</sup> John forever vanished from history. He had been the second but also the last known leader of the Melitians. Part of them were absorbed by the Arians and, like the latter, often called Eusebians. It is probable that from then on these (former) Melitians considered the Arian bishops of Alexandria, who were appointed during the successive exiles of Athanasius, as their supreme hierarchs as well: first Pistus (even after Athanasius' comeback of 337 for a while, until the winter of 338/339, recognized by the Eusebians),<sup>68</sup> followed by

<sup>62</sup> If there had been a Melitian bishop in Alexandria, he would surely have been involved in the skirmishes and mentioned by name in Callistus' letter, as was the case with Isaac of Letopolis, Heraiscus (of Heracleopolis), Emis (and?) Petrus (one [or two] bishop[s] belonging to a group of seven: cf. HAUBEN, "Catholiques et Mélitiens" [cit. n. 3] p. 910 n. 27), and a bishop from Lower Egypt (see HAUBEN, *ibidem*, p. 916 n. 25). If Emis-Petrus (or: Emis or Petrus) had anything to do with the see of Alexandria he would not have been referred to just as part of a group or merely as "the son of Toubestis" (l. 48), not to mention the fact that we would probably have heard more about him in other sources.

<sup>63</sup> See HAUBEN, "Catholiques et Mélitiens" (cit. n. 3), pp. 913–914.

<sup>64</sup> Sozomen, *HE* II 31.4–31.5; cf. Socrates, *HE* I 30. See HANSON, *Search* (cit. n. 6), pp. 262–263.

<sup>65</sup> GRIGGS, *Early Egyptian Christianity* (cit. n. 25), pp. 141–142.

<sup>66</sup> See HANSON, *Search* (cit. n. 6), pp. 263–264; 267–268.

<sup>67</sup> HANSON, *Search* (cit. n. 6), pp. 265–266; MARTIN, *Athanase* (cit. n. 6), p. 398.

Gregory of Cappadocia (339–345)<sup>69</sup> and George of Cappadocia (357–361 [in fact only 357–358]),<sup>70</sup> whose “disastrous episcopate spelled an end to the Arian community”.<sup>71</sup> Lucius (373–378), imposed shortly after Athanasius’ death, would be the last of the Arian bishops of Alexandria.<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile the more committed, traditional, and ascetic Melitians had since long withdrawn to the monasteries and their surrounding villages, never to leave them again.

Reassessing the evidence we may conclude that the Melitians, despite the initial ambitions of their founder, never came to appoint a bishop in the metropolis, neither one for the whole Catholic community, nor an ‘anti-pope’ for their own group. Considering in particular the absence of the latter, the contrast with the Egyptian countryside, where in 325 a chain of Melitian bishoprics extending from North to South had already been established, is striking, especially if we take into account the relative prominence of the Melitian group in Alexandria as well as the importance of the founder’s and even his successor’s ties with the metropolis. After all, fear of reprisals by the central ecclesiastical and secular authorities is perhaps a less satisfying explanation. The career of the Arian Pistus, for that matter, shows how even an unpopular intruder was able to stand firm for some time. So, if the Melitians had really wanted to install their own metropolitan bishop, either by appointing their current leader (Melitius and John respectively)<sup>73</sup> or another cleric, they probably

<sup>68</sup> See MARTIN, *Athanasie* (cit. n. 6), pp. 398–403.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. HANSON, *Search* (cit. n. 6), pp. 268, 308; J. HAHN, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt. Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II.)* (= *Klio*, Beihefte NF 8), Berlin 2004, pp. 51–55.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. HANSON, *Search* (cit. n. 6), p. 338 (probably already elected in 351 or 352 by a Council in Antioch), 342–344, 385–386, 851; cf. GRYSON, “Les élections épiscopales au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle” (cit. n. 21), pp. 324–326; C. HAAS, “The Alexandrian Riots of 356 and George of Cappadocia”, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 32 (1991), pp. 281–301; HAHN, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt* (cit. n. 69), pp. 64–74.

<sup>71</sup> HAAS, “The Alexandrian Riots” (cit. n. 70), p. 300.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. GRYSON, “Les élections épiscopales au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle” (cit. n. 21), p. 327; HAHN, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt* (cit. n. 69), pp. 76–77.

<sup>73</sup> The hypothetical transfer to Alexandria from the bishoprics of Lycopolis and Memphis respectively, would not have constituted an insurmountable problem. Since the

would have managed. On the assumption that they would have succeeded, the authority of such an 'anti-pope' would have been confined either to the Melitian community throughout Egypt (in the case of Melitius and John), or to that of Alexandria only (in the other case).

So the fact that the Melitians never did appoint such a bishop makes it likely that it was due to a conscious policy on their part, which leads to some interesting conclusions. Contrary to a widespread opinion, the see of St Mark must have retained for them a particular symbolic and institutional value, obviously the same as that attached to it by their Catholic opponents. In other words, in their eyes the bishop of Alexandria must have been just as elevated as in those of the Catholics (which, for that matter, explains Melitius' disdain of Peter, who was allegedly evading his high responsibilities). In this particular respect, we should no longer speak of a specific Melitian (more collegiate, 'anti-Alexandrian') ecclesiology.

On the other hand, it looks as if even after the Melitians had developed their own parallel Church, and despite Melitius' intermittent boycott of the reconciliation process, they never gave up the hope of reintegrating with the Catholics. But it is also clear that this reunion had to be achieved as much as possible on their own terms, that means either by establishing a (Catholic) Church leader in Alexandria who was also acceptable to them, or by taking over themselves the *one and only* see of St Mark, thus establishing their hold on the whole Christian community of Egypt. So the choice was between a 'full' see in Alexandria (with all its implications) or no see at all. An exclusively Melitian see, alongside and opposed to a still existing Catholic see (think of Heraiscus according to our earlier interpretation), was not an option. That they did not realize their goal, had to do with continually changing historical circumstances.

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Council of Nicaea (canon 15–16) such transfers were explicitly prohibited, yet they continued to be practised, especially when 'promotions' were involved. On this question, see GRYSO, "Les élections épiscopales au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle" (cit. n. 21), pp. 309–310. Well-known transfers were, e.g., that of Gregory of Nazianzus from Sasima to Constantinople (GRYSO, p. 318), that of Eudoxius from Antiochia to Constantinople or that of Meletius from Beroea in Syria (?) to Sebaste in Armenia (or vice versa) and then to Antiochia in Syria: GRYSO, pp. 316–317, 330–331; HANSON, *Search* (cit. n. 6), p. 382.

As long as they were not able to take over that very centre of the (Catholic) Church, the Melitian leadership should remain disconnected from the Alexandrian see. In their view it must have been a transitory situation. But that situation was becoming permanent.

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