THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Egyptian Ethnic Identity Development in Anti-Chalcedonian Coptic Literature

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures
School of Arts and Sciences
Of The Catholic University of America
For the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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By
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Washington, D.C.

2015
Egyptian Ethnic Identity Development in Anti-Chalcedonian Coptic Literature

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The rapid increase of rhetorical and thematic elements in Coptic literature emphasizing the land and people of Egypt during the centuries following the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) was interpreted by many scholars in the early twentieth-century as a sign of Egyptian nationalism. Beginning in the late twentieth century the study of late antique Christianity has witnessed an almost complete rejection of this analysis. Yet, while offering valid objections to the nationalism thesis, contemporary scholarship has not provided a helpful framework with which to understand Egyptian-centered rhetoric in Coptic texts and its role in the overall formation of Egyptian Christian identity.

This project pursues questions related to the presence of ethnic rhetoric in Coptic literature toward the goal of understanding the role of ethnicity in Egyptian Christian life and thought. In the fifth through seventh centuries, areas of focus include the value of nationalism as an analytical tool, the surge of ethnic rhetoric and its role in christological controversies, and the effect of the international aspect of Miaphysitism on the Egyptian community. The historical, hagiographical and homiletic literature under investigation are divided into the following three periods: the period immediately following Chalcedon (late fifth century), during the rule of Justinian and others (sixth century) and immediately following the Arab Conquest (early seventh century).
Because nationalism has proven to be an inaccurate interpretive tool, the analysis of ethnic rhetoric in anti-Chalcedonian texts analyzes Egyptian identity from the perspective of ethnic identity development utilizing the anthropological methodology of Fredrik Barth. While the nationalism thesis has been rejected, no comprehensive analysis of ethnic rhetoric in anti-Chalcedonian literature has emerged. This project demonstrates the existence of a process of ethnic boundary maintenance in Egyptian Miaphysite literature after the Council of Chalcedon. At odds with the larger Byzantine Empire, Egyptian Miaphysites reestablished the boundaries of Egyptian identity primarily by the standard of anti-Chalcedonian theology. The Miaphysites of Egypt elevated their people as the guardians of orthodoxy to the extent that ethnic identity became a cause for division among fellow Miaphysites of different ethnic backgrounds.
This dissertation by Vince L. Bantu fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures by Janet Timbie, Ph.D., as Director, and by Sidney H. Griffith, Ph.D., and Scott F. Johnson, Ph.D. as Readers.

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para mi chula
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## Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACO</td>
<td>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIFAO</td>
<td>Bulletin de l’institut français d’Archéologie Orientale</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSAC</td>
<td>Bulletin de la Société d’archéologie copte</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCR</td>
<td>Coptic Church Review</td>
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<td>CE</td>
<td>The Coptic Encyclopedia</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSCO</td>
<td>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOP</td>
<td>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFAO</td>
<td>Institut français d’archéologie orientale</td>
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<tr>
<td>JA</td>
<td>Journal Asiatique</td>
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<tr>
<td>JEA</td>
<td>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</td>
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<td>JECS</td>
<td>Journal of Early Christian Studies</td>
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<td>JTS</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>Oriens Christianus</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCA</td>
<td>Orientalia Christiana Analecta</td>
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<td>OIUC</td>
<td>The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</td>
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<td>PG</td>
<td>Patrologia Graeca</td>
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<td>PO</td>
<td>Patrologia Orientalis</td>
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<tr>
<td>REB</td>
<td>Revue des Études Byzantines</td>
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<tr>
<td>RHE</td>
<td>Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROC</td>
<td>Revue de l’Orient Chrétien</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBL</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature</td>
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<td>VetChr</td>
<td>Vetera Christianorum</td>
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### Important Terms

<table>
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<tr>
<th>English</th>
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<tr>
<td>Roman</td>
<td>γρωνιος, ρωνιος, κροιος</td>
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<td>race</td>
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<td>ethnicity</td>
<td>πατρια, οενος</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower Egypt</td>
<td>τεχωρα ετσαγετ, ἤκατω πνωρα</td>
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<td>Upper Egypt</td>
<td>φυρος, φανου πνωρα, πτωχ ἰπωβαρεικον ἰτεκνη, ἀφρος ἰπωβαρεικον ἰτεκνη</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ρεθινη, ρεθινη, εκυπτιος, Αιγυπτιος</td>
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<td>Egyptianness</td>
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<td>Greek</td>
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<td>foreign</td>
<td>οινο, οινιογου, ζενικος, εντοικος, εινικος</td>
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<td>citizen(ry)</td>
<td>δινος, δημοκρατιον, δημοκρατιον, ευπολιτικ</td>
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<td>land</td>
<td>κας, κας</td>
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<tr>
<td>region</td>
<td>δινος, χωρα, τοου, θοου, καλς, κις, νωσις</td>
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<td>barbarian</td>
<td>βαρβαρος</td>
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<tr>
<td>community</td>
<td>ποικιων</td>
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<tr>
<td>people</td>
<td>λαος, συγγενεα, κεως, κεως</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>country</td>
<td>κας, χωρα, κεως</td>
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<tr>
<td>custom</td>
<td>θεος, συνηθεια, κεως, κεως</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>καυκος, καυκιανος</td>
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<tr>
<td>oppression</td>
<td>μουρτερ, κεως</td>
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<td>Westerners</td>
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<td>Easterners</td>
<td>κεως</td>
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<tr>
<td>unity</td>
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Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the faithful support of the faculty and staff of the Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures. I am grateful for the instruction in Syriac that I received from Monica Blanchard and Father Sidney Griffith. The work of Stephen Davis in Egyptian Christianity greatly influenced my interest in this project and I benefited greatly from stimulating conversations with him. It was a tremendous blessing to reconnect with my undergraduate advisor Brian Howell of Wheaton College. His direction was crucial in helping me find some footing in the anthropological sources.

The library staff of Princeton Theological Seminary was helpful in providing a base for me to work in New Jersey. Removed from the wealth of resources in the Semitics/ICOR library in D.C., I always experienced a resourceful and hospitable environment at PTS. I am eternally grateful to the Forum for Theological Exploration for their financial, academic, and vocational support during this process. The mentoring and emotional support provided by FTE was fundamental in developing as both a student and teacher.

I thank Scott F. Johnson for his mentorship and friendship that has been a tremendous blessing to me throughout my doctoral journey. His guidance of this dissertation was grounded in a friendship that has been an immense encouragement to me. My journey through this graduate program has come to successful fruition because of Janet Timbie. Janet guided me through my struggles in attaining competence in reading Coptic through attentive tutoring and countless hours of encouraging conversation. Janet’s dedication to me as a student has been evident even from a distance these last two years as she has kept in constant communication offering helpful revisions and personal encouragement.

My greatest motivation throughout this long journey has been my wonderful daughters and my beautiful wife. My daughters dancing around me or napping on my back while writing provided an unspeakable joy that kept me working. My wife was the rock that held us up during this process. The strain that this challenging journey placed on her did not stop her from offering constant encouragement and support. My wife’s love and support is the reason I have made it this far and it is to her that this dissertation is dedicated.
Introduction

The following study will focus on ethnic identity development among anti-Chalcedonian Egyptians of Late Antiquity; such an investigation must draw primarily upon hagiographical, homiletic and historical works. It has become common in studies of Late Antiquity to prioritize documentary sources that are legal, administrative and/or economic in nature: “It is primarily through the testimony of the papyri that we encounter the material structures and the social, administrative, and legal vocabularies preserved in the other sources, deployed, given meaning, and lived in by those who experienced them.”¹

While documentary papyri may be the most useful source in attempting to reconstruct the social and economic context of Late Antique Egypt, understanding of religious and ethnic identity is attained through hagiographical material in which the attitudes of Egyptian Christians are most clearly presented. Indeed, documentary papyri often leave one in the dark regarding the social and religious convictions of a particular community, as in the case of the monastery of Apollos of Aphrodito.²

Primary attention will be given to the anti-Chalcedonian/Miaphysite texts of Egypt written after the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) into the period immediately following the Arab Conquest (642 CE). The majority of recent scholarship has avoided the term “Monophysite,” a polemical term originating outside the communities that it labels.³ While “anti-Chalcedonian” or “non-Chalcedonian” are certainly more

¹ Peter Sarris, Economy and Society in the Age of Justinian (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 8.
appropriate, they are also not optimal as the communities that did not accept Chalcedon include other groups inside and outside of Egypt, such as Eutychians and the Church of the East.⁴

The term “Miaphysite” (“one nature”), originally used by Cyril of Alexandria, refers to the central claim of this group: that Christ exists in one united nature, both human and divine.⁵ The following study will employ the terms “anti-Chalcedonian” as well as “Miaphysite” while avoiding use of the term “Monophysite.” In order to avoid an overly-broad topic, the present analysis will focus exclusively on the elements of Egyptian Miaphysite texts in which Egyptian ethnic identity comes to the fore.

As has been stated frequently in early Christian scholarship, Roman imperial culture amplified the inclusive, universalizing element of the Christian tradition:

In some ways, this missionary theme gave Christian Roman universalism a stridency that it had not possessed before. Roman imperialism was set in a new context that redefined civilization so that all Christians, Germans and Persians as well as Romans, shared the same Christian oikoumene.⁶

The present study focuses on Egypt as a means of investigating the other side of that coin; while Roman imperial Christianity promoted universality, social factors such as

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⁵ Dietmar Winkler originally proposed this term as a more theologically correct and respectful term: “The refusal of the term Monophysites by the Oriental Orthodox should be taken seriously,” Dietmar Winkler, “Miaphysitism: A New Term for Use in the History of Dogma and in Ecumenical Theology,” The Harp 10, 33-40 (1997), 40. Fergus Millar has proposed the term “orthodox” arguing that this is the term that anti-Chalcedonians used to self-identify. This term is problematic, however, in that all sides of the christological debate identify as “orthodox.” Fergus Millar, “The Evolution of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the Pre-Islamic Period: From Greek to Syriac?” JECS 21, 43-92 (2013), 44.
ethnicity contributed to enduring divisions within the Christian Church. In the case of Egypt, the role of ethnic difference as a means of framing theological discourse became increasingly evident after Chalcedon. Arietta Papaconstantinou describes Egyptian identity after the Islamic Conquest as discernible primarily through the articulation of anti-Chalcedonian theology:

I argue that, even though local characteristics were quite naturally present, much of what is identified as typically Egyptian in postconquest Coptic culture was in part a construct of the Egyptian Monophysite (or non-Chalcedonian) Church searching for a new identity and a new legitimacy. In this quest it was important to that Church to mark its indigenous origin.7

As stated above, the defining characteristic of Egyptian Christian religion, after Chalcedon, is Miaphysite doctrine. However, Papconstantinou claims that Copts constructed an anti-Chalcedonian identity by “reevaluating” the previous two centuries of their history:

By explaining the defeat of the Byzantine army, and reevaluating the country’s religious history during the two previous centuries, they sought above all to define a new identity for the Egyptian dhimmis, an identity that would be solidly structured around the Monophysite Church and its institutions.8

As has been demonstrated, the framing of Egyptian identity by means of boundaries defined by Miaphysite doctrine is not a process that began with the Islamic

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8 Ibid, 69.
Conquest but two centuries earlier, with the Chalcedonian Schism. The Islamic Conquest reinforced a process already well underway. While the Copts’ *dhimmi* status under Islam generated an even more pressing need to define a distinct identity, Egypt’s Christians had already experienced minority status as a “heretical” faction within the Byzantine Empire:

Drawing from the distinction between Christianity and Islam, John of Nikiu and George the Archdeacon introduced an ethnic and territorial element in what until then was a purely religious division: the Chalcedonians were identified with the Romans, and the Monophysites with the local Egyptians. As the story goes, the Romans left the country after their defeat, and the Christian community that remained in Egypt had a common ethnic origin, a privileged position in the landscape, and a common history of suffering at the hands of foreigners. The Egyptians, speakers of the Coptic language, thus turned into the Copts, the indigenous population of the Valley and members of the Coptic, that is to say anti-Chalcedonian, Church. Thus, the terms defining the group acquired a meaning that was simultaneously religious and ethnic. In a parallel development, the Romans were gradually constructed as the imperial, foreign oppressors, whose theology was heretical and whose faith was corrupt. This was instrumental in bringing out more vividly the idea of an orthodox, local, suffering community.⁹

Papaconstantinou is correct in basing Egyptian Christian identity on loyalty to anti-Chalcedonianism, rather than on the doctrine of foreign oppressors. Papaconstantinou finds precedents in Hellenistic literature for the depiction of Egypt as the oppressed underdog:

In fact, the capacity of Egyptians to endure pain or persecution is one of many Greek clichés about Egypt, repeated throughout classical and late antiquity. It is not surprising that the Egyptians chose it for their own literary production as one of their defining characteristics, considering

⁹ Ibid, 72.
how well it fit the motif of persecution both as a legitimating device and as a founding myth for the community.\textsuperscript{10}

Stephen Davis shows how the adoption of martyrdom as a central theme in the life of the Coptic Church came about during the period of the Great Persecution at the beginning of the fourth century CE.\textsuperscript{11} This further demonstrates that the elements that define Egyptian identity were strengthened, but not created, at the time of the Islamic Conquest. Papaconstantinou does recognize that the Egyptian strategy of identification was rooted in the fifth and sixth centuries:

After the Council of Chalcedon, and especially after Justinian’s efforts to bring the anti-Chalcedonians back into the sphere of the imperial Church, the use of Coptic became a sign of resistance and identity among the non-Chalcedonians. This was partly because early on the language was very common in monasteries, which were to become the pillars of the Monophysite Church.\textsuperscript{12}

This argument is problematic in implying an \textit{a priori} connection between the Coptic language (in contrast to Greek) with anti-Chalcedonianism. Rather, Chalcedonians as well as anti-Chalcedonians had Greek and Coptic-speaking constituencies in Egypt. Papaconstantinou’s above statement also stands in contrast to the core of her argument that the Islamic Conquest in the seventh century represents the beginning of Egyptian Christians shaping their identity along ethnic lines. Similarly, Frend claims that “only in the time of Heraclius do we find Coptic monks equating the

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, 72-3.

\textsuperscript{11} Stephen J. Davis, \textit{The Early Coptic Papacy} (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2004), 42.

\textsuperscript{12} Papaconstantinou (2006), 83-4.
fact of their being Egyptian with their opposition to the emperor’s Chalcedonian creed.”

This would locate the Egyptian identity argument to the eve of the Islamic Conquest. The hagiographical sources of the fifth and sixth centuries surveyed in the following chapters paint a starkly different picture. Papaconstantinou notes that Egyptian preoccupation with forming ethnic identity along Miaphysite lines generated a “new need”:

The total break, both political and mental, that this entailed with the imperial church in Constantinople created a new need, that of displaying the institutional continuity with the Church of the past. It needed to show its religious legitimacy, by recognizing both its distinction from the other Church and its continuous identity over time, all the way back to its very creation.

Anti-Chalcedonians wanted to demonstrate that their position was in agreement with the Christian voices of the past. And this was not a new position taken at the time of the Islamic Conquest. An earlier example of this strategy was found in the Life of Longinus when the Lycian monk summoned the voices of his deceased predecessors at the Enaton monastery who unanimously condemned the Tome of Leo. Likewise, Romans were not “gradually constructed as the imperial, foreign oppressors” since there is swift development of anti-Byzantine rhetoric in the writings of Timothy Aelurus and Dioscorus.

14 Papaconstantinou (2006), 78.
15 Vite Longino, 86.
16 Papaconstantinou (2006), 72.
Stephen Davis shows how the works of Timothy mark the beginning of theological resistance framed in ethnic terms.\textsuperscript{18} As Averil Cameron has stated, texts such as these were “powerfully prescriptive, creating identity and proscribing difference.”\textsuperscript{19} Chalcedonianism was rapidly associated with the Byzantine Empire, from the perspective of Egyptians. However, awareness of the new perspective developed gradually and was not solidified for another century from the viewpoint of the authorities in Constantinople.\textsuperscript{20}

It will be demonstrated that events such as the reign of Justinian and the Islamic Conquest continued to shape the Egyptian Miaphysite identity that took form in the aftermath of Chalcedon. The ethnic rhetoric present in Egyptian Miaphysite texts will be analyzed through the lens of contemporary anthropological methodology. However, the study will begin with an historical overview of the period under discussion in order to place the ethnic rhetoric of post-Chalcedonian Egypt in historical context.

\textit{Historical Overview}

Taking Chalcedon as a chronological starting point means leaping into the middle of heated conflict with many events. Christological controversy engaged the attention of the Christian world and tension was high between leaders of Egypt and Constantinople. The Alexandrian patriarch Cyril enraged Antiochene bishops by his condemnation of Nestorius in their absence at the Council of Ephesus (431 CE). The emperor Theodosius

\textsuperscript{18} Davis (2004), 90.
II’s attempts to reconcile the two patriarchates produced a temporary peace with the Formula of Reunion in 433 CE. Nestorius was exiled and Cyril was lauded as a hero, but tensions rose again only a decade later.

Soon after Dioscorus became patriarch after Cyril’s death (444 CE), a Constantinopolitan monk named Eutyches began emphasizing a particular interpretation of Cyril’s “one nature” christology. Although Cyril’s use of the phrase *mia physis* had caused a degree of unrest,21 his position was ultimately accepted as part of the Formula of Reunion. Eutyches, however, interpreted “one nature” Christology in a manner that led to his excommunication by his Constantinopolitan bishop, Flavian. However, Dioscorus, sympathetic to the views of Eutyches, convened a second council in Ephesus (449 CE) with the support of emperor Theodosius that exonerated Eutyches and deposed Flavian. Having alienated both Constantinople and Rome, Dioscorus found himself in a vulnerable position following the death of Theodosius II (450 CE).

The new emperor Marcian, sharing the Roman bishop Leo’s view of Ephesus II as a *latrocinium* (“Council of Robbers”), called for a new council in Chalcedon (451 CE). The *Tome* of Leo, which was composed in 449 CE as a response to Eutyches but ignored at Ephesus II, became the accepted formula on which “two nature” Christology was founded. For the majority of the Egyptian delegation at Chalcedon, as well as the Egyptian church, the following decisions that were made at Chalcedon were unacceptable: 1) a “two nature” Christology was favored that seemed to resemble the theology of Nestorius, 2) Theodoret was reinstated, 3) the Council refused to accept

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21 John of Antioch expressed concern that language such as “mia physis” would fail to take into account Christ’s humanity. Cyril clarified Christ as having “one enfleshed nature,” see Davis (2004), 81.
Cyril’s *Twelve Anathemas* against Nestorius, and 4) the Council decided to depose and exile Dioscorus.  

While there was a significant Chalcedonian constituency in Egypt before and after the Islamic Conquest (and even a Nestorian church), the Miaphysite church has remained the majority since the Fourth Ecumenical Council. The events at Chalcedon began the process leading to the formal schism between the majority Egyptian church and the Chalcedonian church that was backed by imperial authority. The decades following Chalcedon also saw the gradual dissolution of the Western Empire by Germanic invasions, culminating with the removal of Romulus Augustulus in 476 CE by the Ostrogothic leader Odoacer. Constantinople and the eastern regions were now the center of power and authority for the Roman Empire, as evidenced by the re-taking of much Western territory by Justinian less than a century later.

The final two centuries of Byzantine rule in Egypt before the Arab Conquest saw constant tension between opponents and supporters of Chalcedon at the highest ecclesiastical level. While there was negative reaction to Chalcedon throughout the empire, a notable example being the murder of the Chalcedonian bishop Severianus in

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Palestine, the greatest Miaphysite opposition came from Egypt. This should not indicate, however, that Egypt was the only source of opposition while the rest of the empire reacted “only in a positive way.”

However, the fifth-century represented an era of greater consolidation of religious communities across socio-economic and educational lines. In comparison to earlier centuries where doctrinal matters were the concern of the educated class in many cases (e.g. Origen), the support for Miaphysite doctrine in the fifth-century among all social classes resulted in the popular dissent against Chalcedon. After the exile of Dioscorus to Gangra, the emperor Marcian appointed the Chalcedonian Proterius as Patriarch of Alexandria, a decision with severe consequences for the Egyptian church. Riots immediately broke out and after a few years in office, Proterius was murdered by a mob and the anti-Chalcedonian Timothy Aelurus was ordained Patriarch of Alexandria by anti-Chalcedonian clergy (457 CE). Monastic circles provided some of the most significant support for the anti-Chalcedonian movement. The counter-ordination of

26 Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition. Volume Two, Part One: From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604)* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1996), 105. Grillmeier’s point holds especially true in the late fifth-century when Egypt produced such anti-Chalcedonian figures as Dioscorus, Timothy Aelurus and Macarius of Tkōw. Syria, in contrast, did not become as staunchly anti-Chalcedonian as Egypt until the sixth-century during the time of Severus of Antioch and John of Ephesus.


Timothy Aelurus angered supporters of Chalcedon, such as Leo, bishop of Rome, and eventually Emperor Leo I sent Timothy Aelurus into exile in 459 CE. Meanwhile, Leo of Rome sent letters to major sees in the empire comparing the faith of the Miaphysites to Valentinism, Manichaeism, and Eutychianism in an effort to discredit the movement.31

While Timothy Salofaciolus, a Chalcedonian monk from the Pachomian community, enjoyed imperial support as Patriarch for the next two decades, Timothy Aelurus retained the support of Egypt’s anti-Chalcedonian community while in exile. The various letters of Timothy Aelurus that survive in Syriac attest to the position of the Alexandrian patriarchs at the center of the anti-Chalcedonian movement.32 During a brief coup against Emperor Zeno by the naval commander Basiliscus (475 CE), the latter’s anti-Chalcedonian convictions paved the way for a brief return for Timothy Aelurus as Alexandrian patriarch.

Timothy Salofaciolus peacefully retreated to his old monastery at Canopus for a time; but after the return of Zeno to the imperial throne in 476 CE, he returned as patriarch. When Timothy Aelurus died a year later (477 CE), the anti-Chalcedonian Egyptians installed Peter Mongus as patriarch. Timothy Salofaciolus retained imperial

the way in which the Chalcedonian cause was also most vehemently supported among the monastic communities of Constantinople, Heinrich Bacht, “Die Rolle des orientalischen Mönchtums in den kirchenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen um Chalkedon (431-519),” in Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart, vol. 2, eds. Aloys Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht, 315-338 (Wurzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1953), 270. Bacht also points out that the popularizing capabilities of monastic circles transcend divisions of socio-economic status, p. 310. See also Price and Gaddis, 22; Gregory, 116.

31 Leo’s lack of understanding of the various movements at odds with Chalcedonianism is evident in his identifying Timothy Aelurus as a Eutychian, Grillmeier, 192.

support until his death in 482 CE. Another Pachomian monk from the Chalcedonian party, John Talaia, had a brief term as patriarch but fell out of favor with Emperor Zeno.

Zeno then looked to Peter Mongus to establish unity between Egypt and the rest of the Byzantine church through a compromise formula, the *Henotikon*. Emperor Zeno’s *Henotikon* reaffirmed the condemnation of Nestorius and Eutyches, affirmed the *Twelve Anathemas* of Cyril, but avoided any explicitly Chalcedonian language (e.g. two natures). This document was issued — without the approval of the bishop of Rome — in an attempt to appease all sides of the Chalcedonian controversy and to win back the Miaphysite communities of the empire.

While Peter Mongus’ acceptance of the *Henotikon* caused unrest among Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians, his emphasis on the aspects of the document that were agreeable to the anti-Chalcedonian party (especially its inclusion of Cyril’s *Twelve Chapters*) along with his presentation of the *Henotikon* as an anti-Chalcedonian statement offered the Egyptian church the possibility of a peaceful relationship with Constantinople, which was impossible in the time of Dioscorus and Timothy Aelurus.\(^33\) Severus of Antioch also accepted the *Henotikon* while calling for a more explicit rejection of Chalcedon.\(^34\)

Some have understood the *Henotikon* as being more favorable to the Miaphysites, though it was presented as a *via media*.\(^35\) However, especially in monastic communities in Egypt, the *Henotikon* was still unacceptable due to its lack of any specific condemnation of the *Tome* of Leo.\(^36\) The *Henotikon* was also unacceptable to the majority

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33 Davis (2004), 96.
35 Grillmeier, 255.
36 Ibid, 259.
of Chalcedonians. After the death of Peter Mongus in 490 CE, the final fifth-century patriarchs — Athanasius II (490-496 CE) and John I Hemula (496-505 CE) — maintained a more peaceful relationship with Constantinople, though theological differences were unresolved. The late fifth century also witnessed conflict between Christians and the dwindling pagan minority in Egypt.

The early sixth century brought renewed controversy to Egypt’s ecclesiastical landscape. While the early years of the sixth century were more peaceful for the majority anti-Chalcedonian community due to Emperor Anastasius’ relaxed attitude regarding christological issues, the ascension of Justin I saw a reversal of this trend. In an attempt to improve relations with Rome, Justin I supported the Chalcedonian party and expelled anti-Chalcedonian clergy when he took the throne in 518 CE.

Justin deposed many anti-Chalcedonians in Syria and Asia Minor and some, such as Severus of Antioch, took refuge in Egypt. During his time in Egypt, Severus came into theological conflict with fellow exile Julian of Halicarnassus, formerly an ally of Severus. While Severus accused Julian of docetism for emphasizing Christ’s divinity, Julian accused Severus of “Nestorianism” for emphasizing Christ’s humanity. Both Julian and Severus had sizable support in Egypt, leading to conflict between the two

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38 Bowersock, Brown, and Grabar, 33.
40 Justin’s pro-Chalcedonian campaign was a massive shift in Byzantine ecclesiastical life, in contrast to the idea that the policies of Justin represented “only a moderate initial reaction against the previous regime of Anastasius,” John W. Barker, Justinian and the Later Roman Empire (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 62.
41 Davis (2004), 100.
parties; the patriarch Timothy III ultimately sided with Severus in an attempt to end the controversy.\textsuperscript{42}

Justinian, the nephew and successor of Justin, continued and advanced the pro-Chalcedonian policy of Justin during a nearly forty-year reign (527-565 CE).\textsuperscript{43} Roman emperors of this period were cast as defenders of orthodoxy and so it was in the interest of restoring the empire to its former glory that Justinian enforced Chalcedonian doctrine in majority Miaphysite communities. One prominent example is the removal of Abraham of Farshut from his position as leader of the Pachomian monastic community, whereupon he spent some time in the anti-Chalcedonian community of the White Monastery before founding his own community at Farshut.\textsuperscript{44}

The imperial policy that sought to suppress anti-Chalcedonianism was largely motivated by a desire for theological unity in the empire in the face of the growing threat posed by Belisarius, including the possibility of the loss of Rome.\textsuperscript{45} Immediately following the death of Timothy III, his archdeacon Theodosius, who was from the party of Severus, was ordained patriarch of Alexandria. However, the supporters of Julian installed Gaianus who represented an extreme separatist party in Egypt.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[42] Ibid, 100-1.
\item[43] Justinian is often credited as one of the most influential Byzantine emperors who restored the Roman empire “to a position of military and ideological dominance in the lands bordering the central and western Mediterranean, whilst at home he had sought to bolster the legal, administrative, and religious authority of the imperial office,” Sarris, 1; Barker, 131. Maas argues that Justinian’s reform is most characterized by his making himself the object of both religious and political loyalty, Maas, 22. Sarris describes how Justinian’s strengthening the tie between emperor and subject was more effectively done in a religious manner as opposed to a purely secular one, Sarris, 206.
\item[44] Cramer and Bacht, 335.
\end{footnotes}
Patriarch Theodosius, who enjoyed the support of the empress Theodora, regained the patriarchal throne with the help of an armed guard.\textsuperscript{46} But only one year later, Justinian deposed Theodosius and installed the Chalcedonian Paul Tabennesiota as patriarch in Alexandria. After unsuccessful attempts to persuade Theodosius to accept Chalcedonian belief, Justinian stripped Theodosius of his rank as bishop (an unprecedented imperial action) and kept him in Constantinople in exile.

Justinian attempted to reconcile Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians at the Second Council of Constantinople (553 CE) by condemning the Three Chapters: the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Ibas of Edessa. But the attempt was unsuccessful. By the time of the fifth ecumenical council, anti-Chalcedonian doctrine was too deeply-rooted in Egypt, Syria, Armenia and the Arabian Peninsula and reconciliation with Chalcedonians did not happen.\textsuperscript{47}

While in exile Theodosius still functioned as a spiritual leader for anti-Chalcedonians in Egypt as well as Syria and Arabia. Theodosius consecrated Jacob Baradaeus as metropolitan of Edessa and Theodore as metropolitan of Bostra. While the sixth century saw the end of the Byzantine system of ruling \textit{curiales}, Christian bishops in major metropolitan areas filled this leadership vacuum. Bishops, therefore, held much influence as they became an extension of the \textit{curia} system.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46} Imperial and ecclesiastical politics in the time of Justinian were complicated by the ongoing support of Miaphysite communities by the empress Theodora, Norwich, 194.


\textsuperscript{48} Mark Whittow, “Ruling the Late Roman and Early Byzantine City: A Continuous History,” in \textit{Late Antiquity on the Eve of Islam}, ed. Averil M. Cameron, 143-169 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013), 169. Bishops functioned as \textit{curiales} principally as local agents for the estates of the Church in a particular region. However, there is no evidence that bishops ever had formal civic duties on the order of the previous \textit{curia} system, John F. Haldon, \textit{Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 97.
Immediately following the deaths of Justinian in 565 CE and Theodosius one year later, Justin II (565-578 CE) successfully prevented any anti-Chalcedonian leadership from taking hold in Egypt during the following decade. Now that the greatest imperial ally for anti-Chalcedonians, Empress Theodora, had also passed away, the situation for the Miaphysites of Egypt was very difficult. Peter IV assumed the patriarchal throne for a short time (576-577 CE), but rival claimants from both the Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian (both Severan and Julianist) parties competed for authority.

In addition to schism within Egypt, tension between Egypt and Syria began to grow in the later decades of the sixth century. Two examples of interference with ecclesiastical elections sparked tension between these two regions. First, Paul of Antioch attempted to intervene in the Alexandrian electoral process in 575 CE, then the newly ordained Patriarch of Alexandria, Damian (578-607 CE), attempted to interfere with the election of the Antiochene episcopal chair in 579 CE.

While these events contributed to a tense atmosphere in Egyptian-Syrian ecclesiastical relations, an official breakdown occurred when a treatise written by Damian against the Tritheist movement was criticized by the Antiochene patriarch, Peter of Callinicum. While Peter initially attempted to heal the schism, the two eventually began publicly attacking each other. Damian accused Peter of tritheism and Peter accused Damian of Sabellianism in his treatise Against Damian.

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51 Davis (2004), 110.
While Damian was patriarch, and during the reign of Emperor Maurice (582-602 CE), social and political unrest was widespread in the Egyptian delta. Upper-class citizens of the Delta city of Aikēlah led an armed rebellion in which they seized grain ships and stopped tax payments to Constantinople. Another tax ship was seized around the same time at Akhmîm in Upper Egypt by a group of slaves led by a rebel named Azarias. Local uprisings such as these were influenced by the party politics of the Greens and Blues — factions that originated as business sponsors for hippodrome athletes but evolved into political entities that sometimes resisted imperial control over local affairs. 52 While Egypt did not play a significant role in the political and military conquests of the seventh century, it nonetheless “assumed an important role in the broader Byzantine imperial economy in terms of agriculture, commerce and artisanal production.” 53

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52 There were originally four groups, Reds, Whites, Greens, and Blues. The Reds and Whites continued operating well into the Medieval period but were eclipsed in popularity by the Greens and Blues primarily because the eventual association of the parties with political and social concerns only necessitated two parties, not four, Alan Cameron, Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 53. While these “circus factions” often expressed protest against imperial policy, they should not be thought of as “the only means for expression of popular feelings or discontent,” Barker, 84. It was in fact only occasionally that the factions used their platform in the hippodrome to express political opinion, Evans, 39. The most famous such incident was the Nika revolt of 532 in which the Blues and Greens united in violent protest against Justinian in response to the murder of several people from both factions, Evans, 120. The name Nika comes from the common faction chant “Nika!” (“win!”) during the hippodrome competitions, Norwich, 198. This riot claimed 30,000 lives, Alan Cameron, 278. Geoffrey Greatrex demonstrates that, contrary to popular opinion, the Nika revolt, though one of the bloodiest riots of the sixth century, was not entirely unique but was one of several violent uprisings influenced heavily by the circus factions. There was nothing that occurred during the Nika revolt that was without precedent; the most unique feature of this riot was the interaction between the factions and the emperor, namely that Justinian changed from favoritism toward the Blues to an equally hostile position akin to that of Anastasius, Geoffreay Greatrex, “The Nika Riot: A Reappraisal,” in Late Antiquity on the Eve of Islam, ed. Averil M. Cameron, 59-85 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013), 79. While originally developed in the hippodrome of Constantinople, there is evidence for extensive circus activity in Oxyrhynchus in the sixth century, Evans, 37. The common oversimplified identification of Greens as Miaphysite and Blues as Chalcedonian is not supported by historical evidence, Alan Cameron, 126.

More specifically, “das Lande wurde vor allem als Getreidedepot betrachtet, das für die Versorgung Roms und später Konstantinopels zu sorgen hatte.” Protests involving the disruption of grain shipments or tax payments between Constantinople and Egypt had dire consequences for the Byzantine Empire as Egypt was the wealthiest region in the empire. Taxation was the economic foundation of the Byzantine state and agriculture was the basis of state, Church and private wealth. It is due to the economic importance of Egypt that efforts were at times made toward religious reconciliation, such as the Henotikon.

The beginning of the seventh century witnessed a resolution of differences between the anti-Chalcedonians of Antioch and Alexandria. Damian’s successor, Anastasius (607-619 CE), and Peter’s successor, Athanasius of Antioch, met near Alexandria for an ecclesiastical summit at which they issued a joint statement declaring

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55 Walter E. Kaegi, Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 19; Sarris, 3. Sarris goes on to demonstrate how Justinian’s massive economic and military development of the eastern empire contributed to social unrest and class conflict which aided both the Persian and Arab conquests, p. 230. The imperial administration’s increasing failure to demand tax revenue from reluctant estate owners largely contributed to growing social tension, p. 221. The various nomes of Egypt were designed to be economically controlled by a landowning class in a manner consistent throughout the empire, Jane Rowlandson, Landowners and Tenants in Roman Egypt: The Social Relations of Agriculture in the Oxyrhynchite Nome (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 7. Fergus Millar shows how reluctance among Egypt’s upper class to render tax revenue to the state was a dilemma since Egypt’s initial incorporation as a Roman province, Fergus Millar, The Roman Empire and its Neighbours, Second Edition (New York, NY: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1966), 186. The land tax in late antique Byzantium was evenly levied regardless of the size of property- Chris Wickham, “The Other Transition: From the Ancient World to Feudalism,” in Late Antiquity on the Eve of Islam, ed. Averil M. Cameron, 25-58 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013), 32. Large estate owners in the fifth and sixth centuries were increasingly managed by in-resident landlords as opposed to the more common practice of renting in the third century, Peter Sarris, “The Origins of the Manorial Economy: New Insights from Late Antiquity,” in Late Antiquity on the Eve of Islam, ed. Averil M. Cameron, 109-141 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013), 119. Egyptian landowners were unique in the empire as being the only social elites allowed to hire bucellarii as private guardians of their property, as opposed to most landowners who retained the security of state military, Whitby, 333.
56 Wickham, 35.
57 Haldon (1990), 26.
58 Haacke, 118.
their reunion. This summit took place while Anastasius was forced into exile by the Chalcedonian, imperially-sanctioned patriarch John “the Almsgiver.” Anastasius also faced opposition for his reunion with Antioch from more extreme anti-Chalcedonians, such as the remaining “Damianites,” the faction still loyal to Gaianus.59

Immediately following the ecclesiastical tenure of Anastasius, the Persian shah Chosroes II invaded and controlled Egypt as part of the Sasanian Empire for the following decade (619-629 CE).60 The Sasanians had already conquered Syria and Palestine, which resulted in the removal of the relic of the True Cross to Ctesiphon. Chosroes had conquered much of the eastern Byzantine Empire over the past two decades, taking advantage of Phocas’ military coup against emperor Maurice in 602 CE.61 The conquest of Egypt, the first in Sasanian history, was a long-awaited goal of the Persian Empire.62

The Persian and later Arab conquests of eastern Byzantium were made easier by the weakening of the Byzantine military due to measures taken by Justinian and Maurice to revitalize the economy by reducing the burden of financial benefits paid to those in military service.63 While many Christian texts of these periods put the blame for the Persian Conquest on the Egyptian Jewish population, depicting them as “advisers” of the

59 Davis (2004), 112.
61 Davis (2004), 113.
Persians, there is no evidence of a significant Jewish faction in support of the Persian invasion.\textsuperscript{64}

After conquering Alexandria, the Persian military quickly moved throughout Egypt, conquering Oxyrhynchus in 620 CE.\textsuperscript{65} A few years after Patriarch Benjamin was installed as patriarch of Alexandria (626-665 CE), the Byzantine emperor Heraclius reconquered Egypt in 629 CE. Heraclius used the Egyptian campaign as an opportunity to study Persian military tactics, a strategy that would aid him for the duration of his reign.\textsuperscript{66} As emperor, Heraclius changed some practices that were inherited from the Roman Empire. He replaced Latin with Greek as the official language of the empire as it was the dominant language in Byzantine society and the Church. Heraclius also introduced new military tactics that would aid the Empire in reclaiming territories from the Persian Empire.\textsuperscript{67}

The brief, ten-year period of Persian occupation favored the anti-Chalcedonian community of Egypt as the Chalcedonians were suspect due to their connection to Byzantine imperial power.\textsuperscript{68} When Egypt returned to Byzantine control, Heraclius, a staunch supporter of Chalcedon, appointed Cyrus (known as the “Caucasian”) as patriarch in Alexandria. At first, Heraclius along with Constantinopolitan Patriarch


\textsuperscript{65} Ruth Altheim-Stiehl, “The Sasanians in Egypt- Some Evidence of Historical Interest,” in \textit{BSAC} 31 (1992), 96.


\textsuperscript{67} Gregory, 160.

\textsuperscript{68} Davis (2004), 115. John ‘the Almsgiver’ was forced to flee to his native Cyprus during Persian occupation.
Sergius promoted Monotheletism (the doctrine of Christ having “one will”) in an attempt to win over anti-Chalcedonians without compromising the doctrine of Christ’s two natures.

Although this doctrine had a significant following, it was finally rejected both by Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians, who were suspicious of any imperially-supported doctrine,⁶⁹ as well as by Chalcedonians who, especially in Constantinople, viewed this position as conceding too much to so-called “Monophysite” doctrine. At the time of Egypt’s return to Byzantium, the economic system of the agrarian aristocracy was irrevocably damaged.⁷⁰

But during political and social change, there were certain constants. The process of settling disputes through private mediation, which reached back to Pharaonic times, was practiced throughout Byzantine Egypt and persisted well into Arab rule.⁷¹ A well-documented land dispute between members of a prominent Oxyrhynchite family began in 622 CE and culminated in a series of private mediations ending with the official signing of the deed in 647 CE.⁷² Egyptian disputes were typically resolved through the

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⁶⁹ Ibid, 116.
⁷¹ Schafik Allam, “Observations on Civil Jurisdiction in Late Byzantine and Early Arabic Egypt,” in *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*, ed. Janet H. Johnson, 1-8 (Chicago, IL: OIUC, 1992), 4. Allam points out that Egypt was quite unique in its deviation from the prevalent Roman customs of mediated disputation as it maintained practices rooted in Pharaonic times, p. 4. One specific unique trait of Egyptian disputation is the relative lack of involvement of the state in private affairs, p. 3.
⁷² Ibid, 2.
composition of a written agreement called a *dialusis* including an oath from the issuant and penalties for breaching the agreement.\textsuperscript{73}

This example of continuity in the settlement of private disputes spanned two turbulent decades in which Egypt passed from Persian, to Byzantine, and then to Arab hands. While much of Egypt’s economy and society changed drastically during the mid-seventh century due to political changes, the evidence indicates that the process of settling private disputes remained unchanged.\textsuperscript{74}

In the mid-7\textsuperscript{th} century, the Chalcedonian patriarch Cyrus began to use military and economic pressure to enforce Chalcedonian doctrine in the anti-Chalcedonian community. The anti-Chalcedonian patriarch Benjamin went into exile in Upper Egypt and the monastic leader Samuel of Kalamun went into exile among the Berbers along the Mediterranean coast, after being severely beaten twice at Cyrus’ orders according to hagiographical sources. During this brief period between victory over Persia and the Arab Conquest (629-633 CE) of major portions of the Byzantine Empire, Heraclius was able to gain some political and economic advantages for Byzantium, including in Egypt.\textsuperscript{75}

However, Arab forces soon began conquering significant territory. The newly ascendant Arab power understood the role of foreign conquest in promoting cohesion in its own forces.\textsuperscript{76} The Arab Muslim forces ascended in an era of empires increasingly

\begin{footnotes}
\item[73] Ibid, 6. Maged Mikhail explains Egypt’s unique private system of dispute settlement as a result of the Christianization of Egypt, specifically the public trust of clergy and holy men as disputation mediators, Mikhail (2014), 154-5.
\item[75] Kaegi (2003), 226.
\item[76] Butler, 149.
\end{footnotes}
characterized by the spread of universalizing monotheism. The first Muslim incursion into Byzantine territory was in Syria in 633 CE, just one year after the death of Muhammad. The Byzantine military had no coherent plan for defending Syria or Palestine, which resulted in a disastrous defeat. The defense of Egypt was also difficult for Byzantine forces due to the distance from Constantinople. Meanwhile, on the eastern front, Arab forces overran the Persian Sasanian Empire when Ctesiphon-Veh Ardashir was seized in 638 CE.

Due to the increasing Arab threat to Egypt, the Alexandrian patriarch was endowed with plenipotentiary powers during the 630s. The Arab armies swiftly conquered Alexandria and much of Egypt (640-642 CE) and began incursions into Libya in 645 CE; after the Byzantine loss of Syria and Palestine to Arab forces, defending Egypt became a military impossibility. The underestimation of the Arab armies on the part of Heraclius played no small part in the swift defeat of Byzantium. The Chronicle of John of Nikiu presents a detailed report of the Arab Conquest in which he indicates that it was ‘Amr’s capture of the port city of Babylon that ensured the conquest of Alexandria. Contrary to many historical interpretations of the Arab Conquest of Egypt,

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77 Robert G. Hoyland, *In God’s Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 12. Hoyland goes on to demonstrate how the Arab Conquests came about on the heels of the Late Antique period which was increasingly characterized by imperial power being inextricably linked to religious movements, 13.
78 Kaegi (1992), 67.
79 Ibid, 87. Regarding military action from the West, it has been rumored (though without substantiation) that Maximus the Confessor advised the exarch of Africa not to send troops to support Egypt because of their Miaphysite beliefs, Howard-Johnston (2010), 160.
80 Kaegi (1998), 49.
81 Howard-Johnston (2010), 468.
82 Ibid, 135.
84 Kaegi (2003), 236.
85 Howard-Johnston (2010), 188.
the Christian community of Egypt was not unanimously supportive of the Arab conquerors.\(^6\)

The fortress of Babylon, among the most fortified in Egypt, stood beside the Nile and represented the final challenge to ‘Amr’s military due to its fortifications.\(^7\) When the fortress fell after a seven month siege, the patriarch Cyrus fled and ‘Amr gained control of Egypt. The Arab Conquest of the eastern provinces of the Byzantine Empire is unusual in that there was relatively little bloodshed in comparison to later invasions by the Crusaders or the Mongols.\(^8\) After negotiating a peace treaty with the Arab commander ‘Amr ibn al-’Âs, Cyrus died and ‘Amr allowed Benjamin to return to the patriarchate and begin to restore anti-Chalcedonian strongholds in Egypt.

The Arabs suppressed a Byzantine-supported revolt in Alexandria in 645 CE.\(^9\) The Egyptian reaction to Arab rule took various forms; there were examples both of cooperation and resistance to Muslim rule.\(^9\) Over time, Christian life became more insular as public processions were not allowed and Christians only practiced their cult within the confines of church structures.\(^1\) Christians, along with Jews, were classified as

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\(^6\) Mikhail utilizes documentary evidence to demonstrate that the majority of Egyptian support for the Arab Conquest came not from clergy but from secular elites, Mikhail (2014), 25-9.

\(^7\) Buter, 249.


\(^9\) Butler, 489. The revolt was led by Manuel the Augustulis- Kaegi (1998), 59.

\(^9\) Davis (2004), 123. See also Averil M. Cameron, “Introduction,” in Late Antiquity on the Eve of Islam, ed. Averil M. Cameron, xiii-xxxvii (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013), xiii. The common assumption held in prior scholarship was that the “bitterly disaffected Monophysites seem to have aided the invaders willingly, welcoming their escape from the oppressive and Chalcedonian central government,” Barker, 233; Kaegi (1998), 49. While this view has been effectively repudiated, it is noteworthy that “there does not appear to have been any great longing for a return to Byzantine rule among Egyptians,” Kaegi (1998), 60.

dhimmīs, or protected people, and were required to pay a tax (jīzāh) of two dinārs per adult male. While Chalcedonian Egyptians enjoyed imperial support before the Conquest, ‘Amr did not favor either Christian group.

The Muslim Conquest of Egypt had significant social, political and economic ramifications that are difficult to over-estimate. The use of Greek in administrative life went into rapid decline and disappeared during the eighth century. The replacement of the municipal economies dominated by senatorial elites after the Conquest introduced a governing body that included a wider variety of social backgrounds. Toward the end of the seventh century, efforts aimed at achieving doctrinal unity increased again in Constantinople. The sixth ecumenical council (Constantinople III) was convened in 680 CE by Constantine IV to condemn monothelitism, while an additional council, the Quinisext Council, was convened by Justinian II in 692 to add disciplinary canons to the fifth and sixth councils. Such proceedings, at this point, had little immediate effect on the Egyptian Church, as it was under Islamic rule from the middle of the seventh century.

The Arab conquerors became more hostile toward Christians in Egypt at the end of the seventh century. The new Egyptian emir, ‘Abd al-Aziz, ordered the destruction of crosses and placed anti-Christian expressions of Muslim faith over church doorways in

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92 Butler, 454. Cyrus paid tribute to the Arabs for three years prior to the invasion in an attempt to buy them off, Butler, 481.
93 Ibid, 447. However, Melkites and other groups increasingly gravitated toward the anti-Chalcedonian Coptic Church, consolidating its ecclesiastical hegemony in Christian Egypt, Mikhail (2014), 60.
94 Kennedy, 222.
95 Ibid, 428.
96 Judith Herrin argues that the Quinisext Council (or Council in Trullo) continued the spirit of Chalcedon by attempting to establish universal Christian doctrine despite the fact that the sees of Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria were now under Islamic authority, Judith Herrin, “The Quinisext Council (692) as a Continuation of Chalcedon,” in Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400-700, ed. Richard Price and Mary Whitby, 148-168 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 164.
the Delta region. While the present discussion will not proceed beyond the seventh century, it should be noted that the condition of the Copts under Islam, one that persists into the present, took full shape in the seventh century. Similarly, patterns of ethnic identity in Egypt were significantly affected between the events following Chalcedon in the fifth century and the Arab Conquest in the seventh.

**History of the Nationalism Debate**

The question of Egyptian Christian ethnic identity development has not been addressed in scholarship directly but instead enters in the form of a debate regarding the existence of nationalism in Coptic literature. Scholars working in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries alleged that an anti-Hellenistic sentiment motivated early Coptic writers in Upper Egypt (most notably, Shenoute) to formulate a religious movement interested not in profound theological engagement but in Egyptian nationalistic propaganda that was both anti-Byzantine and anti-Alexandrine. Scholarship in the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has seen a complete rejection of this analysis. The discussion of early Egyptian ethnic identity development will be aided by a brief survey of this debate as it has developed in scholarship over the last hundred years.

The origin of the nationalism thesis can be traced to the work of Émile Amélineau. Amélineau claims that Christianity was adapted and fused with various elements of pre-Christian Egyptian religion and culture while Islam entered Egypt as an

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opposing force demanding the rejection of indigenous religious practice: “Les idées des Coptes, je dois le dire, ne cessèrent point d’être égyptiennes et ne devinrent chrétiennes que de nom.” The Chaledonian controversy gave rise to a spirit of rebellion in those belonging to the Egyptian miaphysite movement and this resulted in a fractured ecclesiastical situation from which Egypt never recovered: “les querelles religieuses doubles de haines politiques atteignirent un degré de sauvagerie digne des temps préhistoriques.”

While Alfred Butler openly critiques Amélineau’s analysis of the Arab Conquest of Egypt, he also labels Egyptian Miaphysites as “native Egyptians” and Egyptian Chalcedonians as the “imperial party:” “The Jacobites were by creed Monophysites, by race mainly, though not exclusively, native Egyptians: while the Melkites were orthodox followers of Chalcedon and for the most part of Greek or European origin.”

However, Butler stands out among early twentieth-century scholarship as one of the first to expressly renounce the concept of nationalism: “National independence they had never known, and such an ideal can scarcely have entered into their dreams; but for religious independence they had struggled and fought incessantly ever since the Council

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98 Émile Amélineau, Résumé de l’histoire de l’Égypte depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu’a nos jours (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1894), 63. Amélineau supplies the persistence of the practice of the preservation of corpses to support his thesis: 211; Egyptian monasticism, the most unique feature of Egyptian Christianity in Amélineau’s estimation, is also rooted in ancient Egyptian religious practice, 215. Butler follows this analysis, Butler, 491.
99 Amélineau (1894), 210.
100 Ibid, 235.
101 Butler, xix.
102 Ibid, 29.
103 Ibid, 46. Butler goes so far as to suggest that “the Copts had good reason to hate the Empire,” 268. Likewise, Cyrus is said to harbor hatred for the “native Church of Egypt,” 317. It is due to this argument that Butler perceives of the Arab Conquest as affording the Egyptian Church “religious freedom,” 439.
of Chalcedon. That ideal they cherished at all times in their hearts, and for it they were prepared to sacrifice all else whatsoever.”104

Perhaps the best-known early work espousing nationalism is Johannes Leipoldt’s monograph Schenute von Atripe. Essential to Leipoldt’s analysis is an alleged political and economic division among native “Egyptians” (i.e. Coptic-speaking) and wealthy, land-owning Greeks:

Auch zu Schenutes Zeit waren die Ägypter durch die Natur ihres Landes dazu gezwungen, der hohen Politik fernzubleiben. Nur reiche Leute, die ihre Äcker durch Sklaven bestellen ließen, konnten sich Staatsgeschäften hingeben; aber Großgrundbesitzer scheinen unter den nationalen Ägyptern nur verschwindend wenige gewesen zu sein: die Reichen, die uns im Leben Schenutes begegnen, werden fast alle ausdrücklich als Griechen bezeichnet. Doch die Ägypter haben auch damals, wie vor alters, trotz ihrer ungünstigen wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse nie daran gedacht, sich gegen die Regierung zu erheben: allein aus religiösen Gründen erlaubten sie sich von Zeit zu Zeit eine Kritik, nur ganz selten aber eine energische Bekämpfung der höchsten Würdenträger.105

For Leipoldt, the majority of Coptic-speakers were farmers who were in an economically precarious situation due to Egypt’s over-dependence on the Nile and their vulnerability to barbarians raids from the south.106 Leipoldt operated under the assumption that the Greek language remained largely unspoken in Upper Egypt due to hostilities between “Greeks” and “Copts”: “Die griechische Sprache war den Kopten, und zwar selbst den Kleriken, im allgemeinen nicht geläufig.”107 Impoverished farmers were

104 Ibid, 181.
106 Ibid, 23.
economically unable to marry, which led to an increase in theft and murder resulting in high incarceration rates among the agrarian poor.\(^\text{108}\) Meanwhile, vineyards were run by Greek-speaking landowners\(^\text{109}\) and the “Gentile” Byzantine army, along with the taxation it enforced, became an object of intense hatred for the hapless Christian community.\(^\text{110}\) Egyptian religion became obsolete as the “Greeks” remained entirely pagan while “Copts” adopted Christianity.\(^\text{111}\)

It is against this social background that Shenoute is depicted as “ein Mann, der von Liebe zu seinem Volke erglühte, sah hier unermessliche Aufgaben vor sich”\(^\text{112}\) and “den reinen Vertreter des ägyptischen Volkstums.”\(^\text{113}\) Leipoldt credits Shenoute with eradicating the practice of mummification in Christian Egypt.\(^\text{114}\) While Leipoldt believes that most “Egyptians” did not know Greek, he recognizes Shenoute’s familiarity with the language while asserting that his knowledge of Hellenistic culture and theology only served the purposes of polemic.\(^\text{115}\) Without any supporting evidence, Leipoldt makes the claim that Shenoute’s monastic program was rooted in an attempt to formulate a sense of Egyptian nationalism that moved away from Greek-influenced concepts of metaphysics.\(^\text{116}\)

\(^{108}\) Ibid, 25. Leipoldt’s analysis is based in large part on racist depictions of the people of Late Antique Egypt: “Aber dem Orientalen fällt es sehr schwer, zu leben, ohne den Geschlechtstrieb zu befriedigen: so befriedigte man ihn in unsittlicher Weise, wo und wie man nur konnte: selbst das Unglück eines anderen wurde zu diesem Zwecke ausgenützt,” 25; “die nationalen Ägypter, trotz ihrer geringen geistigen Beziehungen zum Griechentume,” 28; “Ihm (Shenoute) fehlt die harmlose Naivität, fehlt die schlichte Einfalt, fehlt die kindliche Ausdrucksweise, die sonst den Bauern im Niltale eigen ist,” 47-8.

\(^{109}\) Ibid, 23.
\(^{110}\) Ibid, 25.
\(^{111}\) Ibid, 29.
\(^{112}\) Ibid, 26.
\(^{113}\) Ibid, 47.
\(^{114}\) Ibid, 32.
\(^{115}\) Ibid, 72.
\(^{116}\) Ibid, 84.
The rise of Coptic-speaking Christianity was “ihr Werk bleibt doch eine gewaltige nationale Tat.” Indeed, Leipoldt goes so far as to claim that the adoption of Christianity in Egypt and especially its expression in Coptic literature was rooted in a nationalistic desire to formulate an Egyptian (Coptic-speaking) identity opposed to that of pagan Greek neighbors: “Der äußere Anlaß ist vielleicht ein rein nationaler gewesen; wenigstens war die nächste Folge der Annahme des Christentums durch die Ägypter eine Stärkung des Volksbewußtseins.”

Numerous scholars of the early and mid-twentieth century accepted Leipoldt’s presentation without much critical analysis. Perceived as wholly distinct from and hostile to the Byzantine Empire, the Coptic Christian community of Egypt has often been described as a nationalistic community rooted in the anti-Greek sentiment of Shenoute. This was understood to be the dividing force between Egypt and the rest of Byzantium during the Christological controversies of the fifth and sixth centuries that paved the way for the Islamic Conquest.

One of the earliest works to expand the nationalism thesis from Egypt to the entire Byzantine Empire was E.L. Woodward’s *Christianity and Nationalism in the Later Roman Empire*. Woodward asks “how far was the struggle between Orthodoxy and Heresy, in the later Roman Empire, really a political struggle between the central authorities of the Empire and the different nations of which the Empire was...

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117 Ibid, 34.
118 Ibid, 33.
Woodward’s answer to this question is that “the Monophysite heresy—the prevailing topic of thought—was used as an instrument for expressing nationalistic feelings.” For Woodward, theological controversy is really nationalism in disguise:

But there is one other factor that became more important as the empire began to decay; it is the part played in theological controversy by non-intellectual, nationalistic motives: the constituent parts of the empire had, as we have seen, great political interests, but little means of expressing in a concrete form the emotions of national or even urban patriotism, and the community of race or language. As local influences, therefore, developed different types and schools of thought, drawing different conclusions from the common data of Christianity, it became a point of national or racial honour to uphold these different conclusions irrespective, to a large extent, of their philosophic value.

Woodward maintains that paganism was the primary religious movement among the Greek, land-owning ruling class while Christianity had no following in this group. This is in contrast to his claim that the Chalcedonian faith was confined to the Greeks while anti-Chalcedonianism was the faith of the Coptic-speaking community. Because Christianity was a nationalistic, and therefore anti-Byzantine, movement, the sophisticated Greek-speakers perceived Christianity as more despicable than Judaism. Byzantine imperial efforts to bring dissidents into conformity only served to galvanize

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120 E.L. Woodward, *Christianity and Nationalism in the Later Roman Empire* (London: Longmans, Green, 1916), vi.
121 Ibid, 94.
122 Ibid, 5; Woodward’s thesis, like Leipoldt’s, is plagued by similar paternalistic views towards Near Eastern communities: “that these missionaries could make converts by the thousand, is due partly to the natural backwardness of country districts,” 11; “the Church in Syria adopted a more mystical and oriental defence of the episcopate,” 21-2.
123 Ibid, 11.
124 Ibid, 45. These conflicting statements further demonstrate the weakness of Woodward’s overall argument.
125 Ibid, 12.
opposing movements: “Monophysitism was adopted by Alexandria and Egypt as a national creed... The orthodox party was regarded as anti-national.”

Concessions to Chalcedonianism such as the Henotikon were seen as weakness. Syria, Armenia, Gothic Germania and Africa are taken to be just as nationalistic and anti-Byzantine as Egypt. Woodward depicts the nationalistic resistance on the part of the Miaphysites as an “evil effect of the politico-religious strife”: “Christianity has always shown itself incompatible with a pure nationalism.”

Ultimately, Woodward’s analysis blames both the arrogance of Justinian’s imperial policies and the nationalistic fervor of the Miaphysites for the split between Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian communities: “At the accession of Justinian, the Church had come to the parting of the ways...the compromise degraded the papacy and only encouraged the pride of the Monophysites; the great words came to nothing; the achievements of conquest fell away into ruin of misgovernment, rebellion, and disease.”

The work of Jean Maspero expanded upon that of Amélineau. Maspero claims that Egyptian nationalism was manifest in pagan religious practice: “la ‘philosophie’ formait une sorte de société demi-secrète, qui considérait comme un devoir national d’employer la science à defender les restes de l’ancienne religion.” The alleged

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126 Ibid, 40.
127 Ibid, 44.
128 Ibid, 46.
129 Ibid, 47.
130 Ibid, 48.
131 Ibid, 70.
132 Ibid, 35.
133 Ibid, 65.
134 Ibid, 65.
135 Ibid, 95.
animosity between “Greeks” and “Egyptians” is due to the aspirations for Egyptian national independence rooted in vain pride in Egyptian culture and history: “Les Égyptiens, de leur côté, étaient un people volontiers vaniteux.”

It is because of the intense pride in Egyptian history that Maspero depicts Egypt as the most difficult of all regions for Christianity to firmly penetrate. Because paganism became an increasingly dangerous option, Christianity became the best vehicle through which to express Egyptian nationalism: “Il n’est donc pas exact de dire, comme on l’a souvent répété, depuis M. Amélineau et M. Leipoldt, que le christianisme égyptien fut une reaction de l’esprit national contre l’hellenisme. La religion nouvelle venait de l’étranger tout comme l’Olympe grec…Comment les “nationalistes” de la vallée du Nil pourraient-ils voir dans cette croyance officielle un instrument de protestation contre l’hellénisme? Car la “haine du Grec” très réelle chez eux, s’exerce contre le Grec actuel, le Byzantin, beaucoup plus que contre le Grec d’autrefois, l’idolâtre.”

Maspero claims that the Miaphysite doctrine was contrived “un peu au hasard” for the sole purpose of justifying what he calls an “irrévocable scission entre les Grecs et les deux principales races orientales de la Romania, les Égyptiens et les Syriens.” Egypt along with Syria expressed an animosity towards the “Greeks” that was fueled primarily by “le nationalisme égyptien.”

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137 Ibid, 182.
138 Ibid, 184.
139 Ibid, 190.
140 Ibid, 188.
142 Ibid, 231.
réaliser par le fait leurs désirs d’indépendance nationale."\textsuperscript{143} However, it was the extreme nationalism on the part of the Egyptians that has led Maspero to detect an eventual Egyptian-Syrian, intra-Miaphysite conflict in the writings of Syriac historiographers such as Michael the Syrian.\textsuperscript{144}

Maspero’s analysis is laden with bias as he characterizes Miaphysite doctrine as “un assemblage d’affirmations décousues, contradictoires, de theories orthodoxies”\textsuperscript{145} which fails to adequately address the theological tenets of their opponents. Ultimately, the phenomenon of Miaphysitism, for Maspero, is not fundamentally theological: “En somme, le monophysisme n’est pas une hérésie, il est seulement une intention schismatique.”\textsuperscript{146} Any articulation of dogma was merely “les imaginations les plus folles” of the Egyptians.\textsuperscript{147} Maspero cites the murder of the Chalcedonian patriarch Proterius as evidence for the Egyptian church being under the sway of an anarchic populace from the mid-fifth century onward.\textsuperscript{148}

Egypt is the most distinct province of the Byzantine Empire: “La race copte est restée nettement consciente de son individualité, et de sa supériorité prétendue.”\textsuperscript{149} The Church of Egypt expressed a distorted, nationalistic version of Christianity that was

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid, 260.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid, 311.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid, 3. Maspero’s prejudice is directed specifically at Christian Egypt: “La littérature théologique des Coptes, très étendue, ne contient pas une seule œuvre de valeur ni même de simple médiocrité,” 17; “Pourquoi les Orientaux, notamment les Égyptiens, si peu faits pour les spéculations abstraites,” 18.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid, 11.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid, 193.
\textsuperscript{149} Maspero (1923), 24.
polluted with ancient Egyptian culture and religion.\textsuperscript{150} Maspero agrees with Leipoldt’s assessment that the Christianization of Egypt was rooted in anti-Hellenistic sentiment.\textsuperscript{151}

It is because of the alleged syncretistic nature of Egyptian Christianity that Alexandria is taken to be the greatest manufacturer of heresies in Late Antiquity.\textsuperscript{152} The wedge between Byzantium and the “Oriental” provinces (Egypt, Syria, Armenia) is driven deeper by the policies of Justinian despite the emperor’s abiding love for these groups.\textsuperscript{153} Maspero argues that this ethno-political tension was the cause of the Byzantine loss of Egypt to the Arab Conquest.\textsuperscript{154}

Harold Idris Bell advanced an even more blunt version of the nationalism thesis. Bell argues that monasticism was Egypt’s greatest contribution to the Christian movement and that it was rooted in Egyptian nationalism.\textsuperscript{155} The Thebaid is depicted as the stronghold of Egyptian nationalism as its “appalling solitude” rendered it completely un-Hellenized and enabled inhabitants to more thoroughly retain ancient Egyptian culture.\textsuperscript{156} Fueled by intense anti-Hellenism, Egyptian monks endeavored to counter the fusion of Greek thought and Christian theology articulated by Clement and Origen.\textsuperscript{157}

Bell advances the theory of anti-Hellenism by identifying nationalism as an inherently Hellenistic feature that, in the case of Egypt, reacted against itself: “Christianity in fact (not in Egypt only) released hidden nationalist impulses and gave

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid, 28.  
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid, 32.  
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid, 49.  
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid, 106.  
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid, 109.  
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, 112.
new life to the native idiom. The city-state, which was the most characteristic
manifestation of Hellenic life and to which its brilliance and intensity were chiefly due,
was also its chief weakness in the process of permeating the Eastern world.”\textsuperscript{158}

Bell also goes further than his predecessors in asserting an alleged racial purity of
Egyptian Christians: “The Egyptian Church thus acquired a strongly nationalist character.
The Egyptians, without an admixture of Greek blood, have never shown much capacity
for abstract philosophical thought.”\textsuperscript{159} Indeed, even Greek-speaking Egyptian leaders like
Cyril are taken to be “ardent nationalists.”\textsuperscript{160}

Ultimately, in the same manner as prior scholarship, Bell depicts the Egyptian
Miaphysite movement as purely political: “The monks who flocked at the tail of their
Patriarch to the Councils of the Church had certainly little comprehension of the
theological subtleties involved; what they could understand was the political opposition
of Egypt to the Imperial government.”\textsuperscript{161}

A.H.M. Jones was one of the first scholars to directly challenge the nationalism
thesis: “If they felt like this the heretics fairly certainly did not put their sentiments into
writing.”\textsuperscript{162} In examining the question of nationalism in the Donatist movement, Jones
points out that there was no dissident attitude among African adherents of Donatism
towards the Roman Empire but that appeals were made to the emperor against the

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid, 112.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid, 113. Condescending statements like these are frequent throughout Bell’s analysis: “The
Monophysites or Jacobites, supported by the ignorant monks, who were hostile to Hellenic culture in all its
forms, were quite incapable of making any important contribution to the thought of the age,” 116.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid, 116.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid, 114. The idea that the Miaphysite movement was motivated principally by hatred for the
Byzantine Empire is also expressed in T.W. Arnold, “The Pictorial Art of the Jacobite and Nestorian
\textsuperscript{162} A.H.M. Jones, “Were Ancient Heresies National or Social Movements in Disguise?” in \textit{JTS} 10,
280-298 (1959), 281. For more general background on Jones and his contribution to historiography, see
Caecilianists.\textsuperscript{163} Even after their condemnation by Constantine, Jones argues that a nationalististic fusion of Donatism and Berber identity is implausible as the corpus of this movement survives entirely in Latin.\textsuperscript{164}

Jones argues against the idea that Egyptian Miaphysites were nationalists, if that is based on their use of the Coptic language and the alleged welcome given to Persian and Arab conquerors: “There is no very convincing evidence that Greek-speaking Egyptians favoured Chalcedon and Copts opposed it.”\textsuperscript{165} Jones argues that the anti-Hellenistic/anti-Alexandrine sentiment of Ptolemaic Egypt was wholly absent during the Christian period as Alexandria served as the undisputed religious capital of Egypt. Drawing heavily on the negative attitude toward Arab oppression expressed by John of Nikiou, Jones rejects the idea that there was a warm welcome for the Arab Conquest on the part of the Copts.\textsuperscript{166}

Egyptian solidarity is motivated not by national sentiment but ecclesiastical unity: “This monolithic solidarity may be attributed to national sentiment, but it is more simply explained by the structure and traditions of the Egyptian church.”\textsuperscript{167} In the case of the Syriac-speaking world, Jones argues that Syriac did not become associated with Miaphysitism until after the Arab Conquest and that there was only one case of a Syrian bishop collaborating with anti-Byzantine rebels.\textsuperscript{168}

The Armenian Church was, by nature, a national church as it existed in an independent kingdom. However, Jones argues that there was no anti-Byzantine sentiment in Armenia and offers the appeal to Justin II during the conflict with Persia as evidence of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item Ibid, 282.
  \item Ibid, 284.
  \item Ibid, 287.
  \item Ibid, 289.
  \item Ibid, 289.
  \item Ibid, 292.
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\end{footnotesize}
Jones speculates on the motives behind the nationalist thesis that dominated studies of Christianity in the early twentieth century:

The nationalist and socialist theories which I have been discussing seem to me to be based on a radical misapprehension of the mentality of the later Roman Empire. Today religion, or at any rate doctrine, is not with the majority of people a dominant issue and does not arouse major passions. Nationalism and socialism are, on the other hand, powerful forces, which can and do provoke the most intense feelings. Modern historians are, I think, retrojecting into the past the sentiments of the present age when they argue that mere religious or doctrinal dissension cannot have generated such violent and enduring animosity as that evinced by the Donatists, Arians, or Monophysites, and that the real moving force behind these movements must have been national or class feelings. The evidence for nationalism of any kind in the later Roman Empire is tenuous in the extreme.  

Jones also counters the widely-held belief that Egyptian Miaphysites (as well as others) were not at all concerned with theological issues: “The generality of people firmly believed that not only individual salvation but the fortunes of the empire depended on correct doctrine, and it was natural that they felt passionately on the subject.” Jones’s challenge led to a radical shift in scholarship as the nationalism thesis was no longer accepted wholesale. Soon after Jones’s article, W.H.C. Frend’s seminal work on the Miaphysite movement offered a compromise position that took into account the issues raised by Jones:

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169 Ibid, 293.  
171 Jones, 296.
The wise study by A.H.M. Jones warns against too ready an acceptance of the “nationalist” approach to the study of non-orthodox movements, especially in the east Roman provinces. At the same time a study of the Monophysites cannot be confined to the history of Christian doctrine. The issues raised by the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon touched on many, perhaps nearly all, aspects of the relations between government and governed in the east Roman provinces in the fifth and sixth centuries. Religion was the medium through which this relationship was expressed both in its harmony and its dissent. Indeed, it was the only medium that would have been understood at this period.\(^{172}\)

Frend supports the idea that Egyptian Miaphysitism “owed little of its initial impulse as a reaction against Chalcedon to non-religious factors.”\(^{173}\) Indeed, Frend claims that no anti-Byzantine sentiment existed in the Christian Near East until the fourteenth century.\(^{174}\) Frend sees a fundamental difference between the Miaphysite and Donatist controversies and their response to the opposition; while the Donatists enforced strict liturgical separation, such division did not appear in the Miaphysite controversy until the tenure of Severus of Antioch.\(^{175}\) The fact that, for Frend, ecclesiastical separation was not an option for the early Miaphysites attests to the complete lack of any “non-theological element in Monophysitism.”\(^{176}\)

The ecclesiastically schismatic provinces of the Eastern Empire did not produce the same bitter conflict that appeared in the Western Empire at a somewhat earlier period.


\(^{173}\) Ibid, xiii.

\(^{174}\) Ibid, xiv.


\(^{176}\) Frend (1972), 62.
due to the presence of greater military conflict in the West.\(^{177}\) Frend rejects the nationalism thesis with regard to the Miaphysite controversy but wholly embraces it in the case of Donatism in Africa: “It was also a regional schism, the outcome of rivalry between the clergy of the province of Numidia and those in the capital, Carthage…the justice of the description of Donatism as a ‘movement of protest’ with firm regional basis in rural Numidia can hardly be gainsaid.”\(^{178}\)

However, as Christianity evolved in the passage from Greek-speaking Alexandria to the Coptic-speaking monastic communities in the desert, so too Egyptian Christianity shifted its focus from orthodox theology to fanaticism.\(^{179}\) Following the thinking of Leipoldt, Frend identifies Shenoute as introducing a self-conscious Egyptian spirit by means of the Coptic language thereby bolstering the anti-Greek sentiment already found in the writings of Antony.\(^{180}\)

The fanatical, anti-intellectual, Coptic-speaking monks are the source of an Egyptian “national religion”\(^{181}\) that did not exist in the time of the Great Persecution, in the early fourth century. While avoiding the language of nationalism in some respects, Frend clearly follows scholars who espoused this theory. Frend sees the manifestation of Egyptian pride as complete at the eve of the Arab Conquest. While prior to the fifth century Egyptian Christians viewed their nationality as secondary to their Christian identity, the Coptic Church under Apa Benjamin offered evidence that these views had been reversed.\(^{182}\)

\(^{177}\) Ibid, 63.
\(^{178}\) Ibid, 69-70.
\(^{179}\) Ibid, 70. Frend extends this analysis to Syria and Armenia as well.
\(^{180}\) Ibid, 72. Frend equates anti-Hellenistic (i.e. anti-pagan) remarks in Antony and Shenoute with an ethno-political anti-Greek sentiment.
\(^{181}\) Ibid, 73.
\(^{182}\) Ibid, 74.
Frend has been presented as an opponent of the nationalism thesis, but this is not an accurate depiction of his views. Though at times praising the critique of Jones, Frend reiterates several significant components of the nationalism thesis: an overstated cultural-political distinction between Alexandria and Upper Egypt, alleged anti-Greek sentiment in the writings of Shenoute, depiction of Coptic monasticism as anti-intellectual and an analysis of Egyptian Miaphysites as motivated primarily by Egyptian pride.

While scholarship of the later twentieth century for the most part avoided the term “nationalism,” the core precepts of the thesis continued to be espoused. Tito Orlandi also asserts an anti-Greek sentiment in post-Chalcedonian Egypt:

This is probably the moment when Greek began to be perceived as the language of the oppressors and the patristic Greek (“international”) culture was looked upon with suspicion as the vehicle of false dogmas and misleading historical information. It was at this time that Egypt really sensed the need to build a historical and spiritual culture, one typically Egyptian (therefore Coptic), in opposition to that of the imperial, Greek-speaking church.

Conversely, there were several scholars who advanced the argument against the nationalism thesis. In his dissertation on the Coptic History of the Church (CCH), David W. Johnson argues that in the CCH “there is no evidence to support the nationalism thesis.


\[184\] Maged Mikhail demonstrates how the nationalism thesis persists implicitly in contemporary scholarship despite its complete rejection: Maged S.A. Mikhail, “Egypt from Late Antiquity to Early Islam: Copts, Melkites, and Muslims Shaping a New Society,” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2004), 4-5.

Johnson effectively makes the point that the concern of the CCH (and this may be applied to anti-Chalcedonian Coptic literature as a whole) is not political but theological.

The allegiance of Coptic writers of this period resides with leaders who espouse orthodox (i.e. anti-Chalcedonian) theology regardless of their ethnic or national origin: “The dislike of Pulcheria and Marcian is in sharp contrast to the approval given to Basiliscus and Zeno. The former two were supporters of Chalcedon, while the latter two were not. There is no ill-feeling manifested against the Byzantine throne as such, but against enemies of the Egyptian church.”

E.A.E. Reymond and J.W.B. Barns present a via media by rejecting nationalism but attempting to account for Egyptian-centered rhetoric: “Now it cannot be denied that the Egyptian had always regarded the land of the Nile, and his own native part of it especially, as the center of the universe…but its obdurate pride was founded as much on the theological achievements of Alexandria as upon the spiritual achievements of Egyptian monastic asceticism.”

Central to the argument made by Reymond and Barns is the complete rejection of an alleged animosity between Hellenistic Alexandria and Coptic-speaking Upper Egypt. While there is indeed an element of ethnocentric pride in Coptic texts, this Egyptian pride encompasses multiple languages and racial/ethnic backgrounds.

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187 Ibid, 81.  
Reymond and Barns also argue against a nationalist sentiment due to a lack of expressed pride in ancient Egyptian culture and religion: “Pharaoh is the type of the tyrant here as with Christians in general, and his gods are vain and abominable.”189 And just as Egyptian pride includes both Coptic and Greek elements, so too does anti-pagan sentiment in Coptic texts despise both native Egyptian religious practice as well as those adopted from the larger Byzantine Empire.190

However, Reymond and Barns do believe that Egyptian Christians were “implacably opposed to the high-handed imposition of foreign patriarchs by imperial Constantinople”191 during the period following Chalcedon. Therefore, it is clear that the period of scholarship immediately following the publication of Jones’ article was characterized by a wide variety of responses to the nationalism thesis.

Ewa Wipszycka points out that Jones’ article dramatically changed studies on Egypt in Late Antiquity: “L’autorité académique de l’auteur était assez grande pour obliger tous ceux qui se sont occupés du Bas Empire à citer cet article, mais personne parmi ceux qui pensaient autrement n’a entrepris une discussion avec lui.”192 Nevertheless, “l’efficacité de cette opposition récente contre les theses nationalistes n’a pas été considerable.”193 While the later-twentieth century was characterized by conflicting responses to the nationalism thesis and the challenge raised by Jones, the refutation of the nationalism thesis as presented in Wipszycka’s article has put a complete end to any nationalist analysis of late antique Egypt.

189 Ibid, 5.
190 Ibid, 6.
191 Ibid, 5.
193 Ibid, 11-12.
Focusing solely on Egypt, Wipszycka asks “y avait-il, dans l’Égypte Byzantine, un conflit national gréco-copte? et s’il existait, quel rôle jouait-il?” Wipszycka denies the existence of tension between “Greeks” and “Egyptians” based, first of all, on an “argumentum ex silentio.” Also, non-Egyptian figures from the Bible such as Abraham, Moses and John the Baptist along with Greek Christian figures such as John Chrysostom are held in the highest esteem alongside Egyptian figures such as Athanasius, Cyril and Shenoute. This refutes the idea that Coptic-speaking Christians had no regard for non-Egyptians; the exaltation of Greek-speakers from other parts of the empire discredits any kind of Coptic anti-Greek sentiment.

While post-Chalcedonian Coptic literature expresses a certain Egyptian pride, “l’attachement au pays natal ou à la ville natale et l’orgueil qu’on tire des glories passées et présentes de son pays ou de sa ville ne suffisent pas à faire une mentalité nationaliste.” Wipszycka claims that Egyptian regional pride (what she terms “égyptocentrisme”) is not contrary to a concurrent Roman pride; regional pride was common and compatible with a larger Roman identity.

Contrary to the common idea that Egyptian nationalism was cultivated primarily in monastic communities (often thought to be Coptic speaking only), Wipszycka

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194 Ibid, 15.
195 Ibid, 16.
198 Ibid, 28.
199 Ibid, 21-22. Roger Bagnall expands this point in stating that Egypt is no more culturally distinct than any other imperial province- *Egypt in the Byzantine World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 16.
highlights the fact that Egypt as a whole was highly cosmopolitan, meaning diverse in language and culture. And this was also true of monasteries such as the Enaton.\footnote{Wipszycka (1992), 23. Leslie MacCoull has also demonstrated the thoroughly bilingual atmosphere of late antique Egypt as evidenced in the documentary papyri which survive in abundance both in Greek and Coptic, MacCoull, “Further Notes on Interrelated Greek and Coptic Documents of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries,” in Documenting Christianity in Egypt, Sixth to Fourteenth Centuries, Part 1, 341-53 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 352. The Enaton monastery was a good example of this diversity as it housed many language groups due to its function of serving travelers along major pilgrimage routes, R.P.F.M. Abel, “To Ennaton,” in Oriens Christianus 1 (1911): 77-82. See also, Scott F. Johnson, Languages and Cultures of Eastern Christianity: Greek (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), 44-7.}

Wipszycka counters the idea held by “tout le monde”\footnote{Ibid, 35.} that there is a sharp socio-cultural distinction between Alexandria and Upper Egypt (or \textit{chora}). The common assumption that these two districts were culturally isolated is invalidated by pointing to the presence of Coptic-speaking communities in Alexandria as well as by the fact that “grec était très répandue parmi les Coptes.”\footnote{Ibid, 24.}

Wipszycka also points to the lack of Greek/Egyptian tension in the \textit{Apophthegmata Patrum} as well as in the \textit{Acta Martyrum}.\footnote{Ibid, 24.} The idea that Greek was not spoken in Upper Egypt is disproven by highlighting Greek-speaking communities south of Alexandria, as well as by the work of bilingual writers such as Dioscorus of Aphrodito in the sixth century.\footnote{Ibid, 38.}

The nationalist thesis is based to a great extent on the belief that the monastic communities of Upper Egypt were entirely Coptic-speaking and that knowledge of Greek was nonexistent. Wipszycka counters this idea by highlighting the evidence for Greek-speaking monks in the Pachomian community.\footnote{Ibid, 47.} Moreover, critical statements made against Hellenistic culture “étaient dirigés par des Grecs.”\footnote{Ibid, 42.}
In the case of Shenoute, Wipszycka counters the common theory of Shenoute’s anti-Hellenism by highlighting Shenoute’s own literary indebtedness to the second sophistic.\footnote{Ibid, 49. See also Bagnall, (2007), 7.} It is because Greek and Coptic-speaking Egyptians did not see themselves as separate peoples that Greek-speaking Egyptians did not strive to “garder leur identité ethnique” at the advent of the Arab Conquest.\footnote{Wipszycka (1992), 39.}

Because there was no Greek/Coptic division in Egypt, there also is an “absence de cette correlation stricte, régulière, entre division ethnique et hiérarchie socioéconomique.”\footnote{Ibid, 40.} Wipszycka supports her thesis by arguing against theories claiming that Athanasius spoke Coptic. Benjamin I, as the first Coptic-speaking patriarch, supports the idea of the unity of Greek and Coptic-speakers in Egypt at the time of the Arab Conquest.\footnote{Ibid, 45. Wipszycka points out that although the majority of the corpus attributed to Benjamin was primarily in Coptic, there are still Greek works attributed to him, 46.} For Wipszycka, the fact that the most important office in the Egyptian church was occupied solely by Greek-speakers until the seventh century completely disproves the theory of Greek/Coptic division.

Ultimately, for Wipszycka, the Egyptian Miaphysite polemicists were an insignificant minority whose views should not be taken as reflecting those of the entire church of Egypt: “La littérature polémique monophysite était l’oeuvre d’extrémistes. Il serait faux de penser que tout le monde avait toujours l’attitude qui s’exprime dans cette littérature.”\footnote{Ibid, 58.} The Egyptian church, including both Greek and Coptic-speakers as well as Alexandrians and desert-dwelling monks in Upper Egypt, experienced no division along
socio-cultural lines but was united by common values and practices such as monastic piety, pilgrimage, and the veneration of saints.\textsuperscript{212}

Wipszycka’s study has influenced recent studies of Late Antique Egypt to the extent that there has been no support for the nationalism thesis in the last two decades of scholarship.\textsuperscript{213} Willy Clarysse demonstrates the way in which Greek-descended Egyptians formed an integral part of Egyptian society since the time of the conquest by Alexander the Great. While many Greeks returned to their homeland after the initial conquest, many others remained in Egypt because they owned significant plots of land.\textsuperscript{214}

Greeks simultaneously retained their culture of origin and adapted to their new environment in a manner not unlike immigrant behavior across space and time. Cultural isolation came primarily in the form of maintenance of the Greek language while assimilation came primarily through intermarriage.\textsuperscript{215} Egyptian art also represents the culturally-blended fabric of Egyptian society as Greek-descended Egyptians borrowed native Egyptian practices to a greater degree than those who moved in the opposite direction did.\textsuperscript{216}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{212} Ibid, 61. Wipszycka’s views are foundational for Walter Kaegi (1998), 34.
\bibitem{213} Though one can still find ideas resembling this analysis in contemporary scholarship: “About one hundred years after Antony’s death, in 451, the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon on the nature of Christ essentially severed the Church in Egypt from the sees of Constantinople and Rome. The Egyptian Church became a national church, one that increasingly used Coptic as its liturgical, biblical, and theological language,” Elizabeth Bolman, \textit{Monastic Visions: Wall Paintings in the Monastery of St. Anthony at the Red Sea} (New Haven, CT: Yale University and the American Research Center in Egypt, 2002), 13.
\bibitem{215} Ibid, 52.
\end{thebibliography}
James Evans claims that “the Monophysite controversy was partly a struggle for empowerment, which we should not confuse with a nationalist movement.”\(^\text{217}\) In his study of poverty and early Christianity, Peter Brown declares the nationalism thesis an utter failure: “The religious issue of the closeness of God to humanity was serious enough, in and of itself. The passions this issue aroused do not need to be explained, as if they were fueled by deeper forces, by social grievances or by nationalist aspirations.”\(^\text{218}\) Brown rejects any attempt at dismissing religious motivations in favor of social ones as a lack of understanding late antique religion: “It would be wrong to suggest that the division between Monophysite and Chalcedonian can, in any way, be reduced to a ‘lining up’ of divergent social visions.”\(^\text{219}\)

In his analysis of Egyptian Christian literature between Chalcedon and the Arab Conquest, Stephen Davis also rejects nationalism as a descriptor for pro-Egyptian rhetoric: “To identify such rhetoric as an incipient political ‘nationalism’ would be anachronistic: the Copts did not voice aspirations of supplanting the Byzantine emperor with their own form of government. Revolution was simply not in the realm of possibilities.”\(^\text{220}\)

Davis does, however, attempt to account for the ways in which anti-Chalcedonian Copts increasingly began to define themselves as a distinct people: “In this way, a type of populist ‘national culture’ was constructed, a shared community defined in terms of religious-ethnic solidarity and created through the production of ‘minority discourse’.”\(^\text{221}\)

\(^{217}\) Evans (1996), 192.
\(^{219}\) Ibid, 107.
\(^{220}\) Davis, (2004), 121.
\(^{221}\) Ibid, 121.
In a similar vein, Orlandi describes the emerging ethnic rhetoric of anti-Chalcedonian literature as “the birth of an Egyptian national Christian consciousness.”

In his translation of and commentary on the Coptic *Martyrdom of John of Phanijōit*, Jason Zaborowski notes many examples of anti-Muslim rhetoric that is primarily articulated through ethnic identifiers (Saracen, Arab, Ishmaelites). Zaborowski, however, cautions against reading such ethnic rhetoric as an assertion of Egyptian pride, citing Wipszycka as support for his analysis: “Instead of promoting an ethnic pride enmeshed with Christian identity (that many scholars associate with Coptic Christianity), *J.Ph. Phan.* projects a wider scope of Christian identification that includes the captive Roman Christians in their fold.”

Zaborowski argues that the *Martyrdom* cannot reflect an Egypt where Christians and Muslims are evenly divided along ethnic lines (i.e. Egyptian vs. Arab equated with Christian vs. Muslim) because twelfth-century Egyptians were ethnically mixed of both Egyptian and Arab descent. Zaborowski argues that Egypt’s rapid Islamicization was not so much a process of conversion as repopulation. Waves of immigration and inter-marriage ushered in a sweeping Islamicization that eventually made Muslims (of both Egyptian and Arab ancestry) the dominant group.

Anti-Islamic rhetoric couched in ethnic terminology should be understood as expressing purely religious polemic: “The evidence seems to show that 1) the polemical

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224 Ibid, 175.
225 Ibid.
strategy of criticizing Islam with ethnic identifiers is not the mirror image of a Coptic ethnic pride (or nationalism), and 2) the author’s Coptic identity carries less weight than his identification with a wider Christian identity.” 226 However, the question still remains for Zaborowski as to “when or how did Copts come to see themselves as an ‘ethnochurch’?” 227

In discussing the effects of the post-Chalcedonian schism as it occurred in the Syriac-speaking world, Volker Menze also points out that despite the inadequacy of the nationalism thesis, there must be an attempt to account for the social aspect of ecclesiastical schisms that is based on more than theological matters: “A controversy, however, does not inevitably lead to the foundation of a separate church- or even churches- as happened eventually in post-Chalcedonian times. It may therefore be suggested that an issue beyond the Christological question caused the final break.” 228

In other words, a thorough rejection of the nationalist thesis has not yet produced a useful framework within which to understand the role social factors did play in christological controversies. “Nor is there good reason to suppose that any form of political or secular nationalism, even if ‘in disguise,’ lay behind this movement. It is true, however, and must be in some degree relevant, that, apart from the Syrian region, it was in areas which showed a distinctive ethnic and linguistic character that ‘orthodox’ (or ‘monophysite’) churches took root.” 229

Roger Bagnall also follows Wipszycka’s analysis in claiming that while “Egypt does offer a number of areas of religious practice that may seem at first specific to it, but

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226 Ibid, 177.
227 Ibid, 176.
228 Menze, 59.
229 Millar, 44.
these need careful disentangling to see what may really be Egyptian.”\textsuperscript{230} While, for Bagnall, Byzantine Egypt was no more distinctive than any other province of the empire, the Arab Conquest introduced a sense of separation in identity on the part of Christian Egypt: “A hundred years later, this verdict would be significantly altered. Egypt had diverged in many ways, partly by the subtraction of some of the cultural elements found in the fourth to sixth centuries, partly by addition, partly by alteration.”\textsuperscript{231}

Bagnall perceives a clear cultural distinction expressed in Egyptian Christian literature during the period following the Arab Conquest. However, there is doubt about the existence of such a distinctive character during the Byzantine period in Egypt. Moreover, there is a clear need for a better analytical term than nationalism with which to describe pro-Egyptian rhetoric in anti-Chalcedonian Coptic texts. While strongly discounting the nationalism thesis, Mark Moussa admits the possibility that “the natives of Egypt found pride in the unique association of their faith with their race.”\textsuperscript{232} Bagnall concludes his analysis by highlighting the various questions related to the question of Egyptian ethnic identity development that need more research:

In interpreting this shift, we need to ask if we see this change happening only in the period after the conquest or as at least in part a development already underway in the sixth century, perhaps as a result of Justin II’s less conciliatory policies and those of his successors, matched by an intransigent institution-building response on the Egyptian side. Or is it only the in the seventh century that these changes really come about, possibly in part the result of the Persian invasion and its destructiveness, especially in the cities? Or are both important factors? As is often the case, documentary sources tend to give a sense of continuity in practice, but sometimes by ferreting out the context we may obtain a different view… Nationalism is a doubtful interpretive concept for this emerging world, but

\textsuperscript{230} Bagnall (2007), 14.
\textsuperscript{231} Ibid, 16.
\textsuperscript{232} Moussa, 508.
was there an Egyptian consciousness detaching itself and reconstructing its past to justify such a detachment? If so, when did this come about? This is still a frontier for study.²³³

Bagnall accurately summarizes the state of the current discussion of Egyptian ethnic identity development. While nationalism has been shown to be an anachronistic framework within which to interpret anti-Chalcedonian Egyptian literature, there is still need for a better framework for the analysis of the “égyptocentrisme” present in Coptic texts.

**Anthropological Methodology**

Nationalism has failed as an analytical tool in assessing anti-Chalcedonian Egypt primarily because this phenomenon is inherently political:

Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent. Nationalism as a sentiment, or as a movement, can best be defined in terms of this principle. Nationalist *sentiment* is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfillment. A nationalist *movement* is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind.²³⁴

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²³³ Bagnall (2007), 16.
The desire for political autonomy that undergirds any nationalist movement was not present in Late Antique Egypt. Because modern nationalism requires that ethnic boundaries not cross political boundaries, anti-Byzantine sentiment among Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians does not fit the profile of nationalist sentiment. Moreover, the multilingual Egyptian environment contradicts the central assertion of the modern nationalist spirit, which holds that state boundaries must enclose people who speak the same language. Nationalism requires an industrial, post-agrarian society in which “the production and reproduction of men outside the local intimate unit, is now the norm, and must be so.”

While it has often been asserted that the spirit of anti-Chalcedonian Egypt was an expression or awakening of underlying anti-Hellenistic national pride, nationalism is “not the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force, though that is how it does indeed present itself. It is in reality the consequence of a new form of social organization;” specifically, the transition from agrarian to industrial forms of political economy.

The idea that Egyptian Christianity was founded on nationalist pride in Egyptian culture reaching back to pharaonic times has been refuted. If anti-Chalcedonian polemic were fueled by a spirit of nationalism, then solidarity with Egypt’s past would be a defining characteristic of this nationalism: “An important aim of nationalist ideology is thus to recreate a sentiment of wholeness and continuity with the past.”

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235 Smith (1971), 23.
236 Gellner (1983), 1.
238 Gellner (1983), 38.
239 Butler, 29; Leipoldt, 26; Woodward, 44.
241 Reymond and Barns (1973), 5.
However, modern sociologists recognize that contemporary instances of Coptic nationalism have their roots in the nineteenth century.\(^{243}\) Nationalism “holds the nation to be the primary and highest location of loyalty and identity.”\(^{244}\) Late antique Egyptian Christians should not be understood as nationalists because, as will be demonstrated below, their highest loyalty was neither to Egypt nor to Byzantium but to the Church. While nationalist ideology focuses the highest loyalty on the state, the Egyptian Christian writers of Late Antique Coptic texts identified primarily as Christians. Any national, ethnic or other social identity was subordinate to their religious identity.\(^{245}\)

Nationalism (and nationhood), is a more specific conceptual unit than ethnicity: “Any definition of nations in terms of shared culture is another net which brings in far too rich a catch…this richness of differentiation does not, and indeed cannot, normally or generally converge…with the boundaries of political units.”\(^{246}\) The existence of polyethnic nations exemplifies the difference between nationalism and ethnicity.

While nations encompassing multiple ethnic groups might be expected to be defined primarily by conflict, numerous multiethnic nations are defined by cultural integration and non-ethnic identity formation.\(^{247}\) Perhaps the single most significant reason nationalism is an inappropriate label for anti-Chalcedonian Egypt is that, while

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\(^{243}\) Pieternella Van Doorn-Harder, “Copts: Fully Egyptian, but for a Tatoo?” In Nationalism and Minority Identities in Islamic Societies, ed. Maya Shatzmiller, 22-57 (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 25; Pieternella draws heavily upon the theories advanced by Anthony Smith in analyzing modern Coptic nationalism, 49.


\(^{246}\) Gellner (1983), 54.

\(^{247}\) Eriksen (2002), 116.
rooted in the thought of Kant, nationalist ideology is commonly thought to come into existence during the American Revolution. Therefore, as Maged Mikahil states:

“Nationalist ideology as such did not exist in the Middle East prior to World War One, which renders the whole discussion of ‘nationalism’ in seventh-century Egypt anachronistic.”

It is clear that the concept of nationalism was used in the early twentieth century interchangeably with (or, more often, in place of) ethnicity: “Cultural nationalism may exist with or without political nationalism.” Because nationalism is now understood in contemporary scholarship as fundamentally a political concern, the use of this term in reference to what we may more accurately label ethnic identity was simply due to lack of development in the anthropological study of nationalism. Now that it has become clear that nationalism, as it is currently defined, does not accurately describe sentiment in Late Antique Egypt, the concept of ethnicity emerges as a better interpretive tool.

The following study of anti-Chalcedonian texts will interpret Egyptian-centered rhetoric not from the perspective of nationalism but of ethnicity. It is necessary, therefore, to begin with an understanding of what this term means by consulting the discipline of social anthropology. Max Weber defines ethnicity as “those human groups that entertain...

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248 Smith (1971), 27; the late eighteenth century U.S. context embodies the anticolonialist spirit which Smith argues is essential to nationalist movements, 65; Smith also argues that nationalism is a modern ideology that has roots in antiquity, Smith (1986), 11.

249 Mikhail (2014), 18.

250 Hayes (1960), 5. Smith (1986) distinguishes the two phenomena: “Nationalism, both as ideology and movement, is a wholly modern phenomenon, even if, as we shall see, the ‘modern nation’ in practice incorporates several features of pre-modern ethnics and owes much to the general model of ethnicity which has survived in many areas until the dawn of the modern era,” 18; yet nations must have an “ethnic core,” Smith (1986), 212. However, not all nationalistic ideologies have ethnic roots, Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World (London: Pine Forge Press, 1998), 36.
a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration.”^251

Crucial to the Weberian understanding of ethnicity is that it is based on an artificial belief in common origin. Ethnic affinity, for Weber, is also best mediated through common language, shared religious beliefs and ritual regulation of life.^252 It will prove more useful, however, to analyze the period presently under investigation by seeing ethnicity not as a collection of cultural features but as a system of marking inclusiveness and exclusiveness. Contemporary anthropological and sociological studies of ethnicity have largely moved away from the Weberian understanding of ethnicity as common descent (Primordialism).^253

The following analysis of ethnic rhetoric in anti-Chalcedonian texts will make use of the anthropological methodology of Fredrik Barth. The concept of ethnicity that is most useful in analyzing Egyptian-centered rhetoric is Barth’s methodology of ethnic boundary maintenance. This method was presented in his introductory essay in Ethnic Groups and Boundaries:

First, it is clear that boundaries persist despite a flow of personnel across them. In other words, categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories. Secondly, one finds that stable, persisting, and often vitally important social relations are maintained across such boundaries, and are frequently based precisely on the dichotomized ethnic statuses. In other words, ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence

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^252 Ibid, 390.
^253 Cornell and Hartmann, 17.
of social interaction and acceptance, but are quite to the contrary often the very foundations on which embracing social systems are built.254

Barth introduced a radical shift in the way ethnicity was previously understood; namely, that geography and social isolation were the determining factors in the development of ethnic identity. This antiquated understanding of ethnicity has “produced a world of separate peoples, each with their culture and each organized in a society which can legitimately be isolated for description as an island to itself.”255 Rather, ethnic groups maintain and reformulate their identity in the midst of constant migration, contact and changing demographics.

This leads to the central aspect of Barth’s thesis: ethnic studies must shift focus from investigating internal constitution to the maintenance of ethnic boundaries: “The critical investigation from this point of view becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses.”256 Cornell and Hartmann describe ethnic boundaries thusly: “Identity construction involves the establishment of a set of criteria for distinguishing between group members and nonmembers.”257

For Barth, identifying the ethnic boundary as the central component to understanding ethnicity “allows us to specify the nature of continuity, and investigate the

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255 Ibid, 11.
256 Ibid, 15. This view is reflected in Smith (1986): “Ethnicity is a matter of myths, memories, values and symbols, and not of material possessions or political power,” 28. While Smith claims to diverge from Barthian scholarship, he yet is heir to Barthian theory in defining ethnicity primarily as a system of group differentiation, Smith (1986), 97.
257 Cornell and Hartmann, 81. In a more recent treatment on this topic, Barth more specifically nuances his understanding of ethnic “boundaries” as “a concept, that is used generally by people to perform mental operations and construct categories,” Fredrik Barth, “Boundaries and Connections,” in *Signifying Identities: Anthropological Perspectives on Boundaries and Contested Values*, ed. Anthony P. Cohen, 17-36 (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), 17.
changing cultural form and content.” The dichotomizing between “us” and “them” is the only constant in ethnic identity; the cultural content that gives ethnicity a visible form cannot effectively serve as an analytical tool due to its constantly changing form. While cultural content will always change, the boundaries maintained by ethnic groups signal the limits of exclusion and acceptance.

The persistence of ethnic boundaries requires not only the means of identifying distinction but also a method of interacting with outsiders which allows for persistent difference: “Stable inter-ethnic relations presuppose such a structuring of interaction: a set of prescriptions governing situations of contact, and allowing for articulation in some sectors or domains of activity, and a set of proscriptions on social situations preventing inter-ethnic interaction in other sectors, and thus insulating parts of the cultures from confrontation and modification.” Such interaction is a necessity for the persistence of ethnic boundaries and does not entail a lack of cultural distinctiveness.

Barth’s methodology has been very influential in studies of ethnicity. George De Vos grounds his analysis of ethnically plural societies in Barth’s concept of boundary

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259 Ibid, 16.
260 In a recent conference revisiting the concepts laid out in Ethnic Groups, anthropologists ask “what is still useful in Barth’s work on ethnicity and where new directions should be taken” while also affirming that “there is little doubt that its central tenets were clearly formulated and still stand.” Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers, *The Anthropology of Ethnicity: Beyond ‘Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,’* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1994), 1. Iain Prattis exemplifies the way in which Ethnic Groups is thought among anthropologists to be the seminal Barthian work that stands out among his corpus, Iain Prattis, “Barthing up the Wrong Tree.” *American Anthropologist* 85, 103-109 (1983), 103. Ronald Cohen demonstrates how Barth’s work provided anthropologists with new language to analyze ethnicity that has served as a foundation for following generations to build upon and advance- Ronald Cohen, “Cohen, Ronald. “Ethnicity: Problem and Focus in Anthropology,” in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7, 379-403 (1978), 383. Cohen follows Barth’s understanding of ethnicity as inherently interactive: “Ethnicity has no existence apart from interethnic relations,” 389. The interactiveness of ethnicity as outlined by Barth is also at the foundation of Anna De Fina’s analysis of modern Italian-American communities: Anna De Fina, “Code-Switching and the Construction of Ethnic Identity in a Community of Practice,” in *Language in Society* 36, 371-392 (2007), 373.
maintenance: “We both contend that boundaries are basically psychological in nature, not territorial. They are maintained by ascription from within as well as from external sources that designate membership according to evaluative characteristics.”

De Vos expands Barth’s concept of boundary maintenance by asserting that such articulation of ethnic boundaries necessarily entails some form of conflict. This aspect of ethnic boundary maintenance helps to explain Egyptian Christian ethnic identity development in that for the Copts, re-evaluation and articulation of ethnic boundaries comes alongside of frequent conflict with neighboring peoples over several centuries.

Eugeen Roosens also finds ethnic boundaries useful in understanding the social construction of ethnic descent, especially in the context of claiming membership in a group through ancestral connection. Victor Uchendu employs Barth’s concept of self-ascription and outside ascription in analyzing ethnic identity development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Gerald Berreman utilizes Barth’s understanding of the role played by

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262 Ibid, 16. Similarly, Kiyoteru Tsutsui draws on Barth in his study of instances of ethnic mobilization; i.e. “collective action against the state by a group of people who are perceived, by themselves or others, to constitute a different category based on their shared origin and culture,” “Global Civil Society and Ethnic Social Movements in the Contemporary World.” Sociological Forum 19, 63-87 (2004): 65.


conferring of status through boundary maintenance in his analysis of marketplace interactions in urban India.\textsuperscript{265}

The work of Richard Jenkins draws heavily upon Barth. Jenkins describes *Ethnic Groups* as “the seminal text from which stems much current anthropological conventional wisdom about ethnicity”\textsuperscript{266} and “central to pretty much all subsequent anthropologizing about ethnicity.”\textsuperscript{267} Jenkins’ analysis describes ethnicity as a constantly changing, shared system of cultural differentiation and identification.\textsuperscript{268}

Stephen May, Tariq Modood and Judith Squires summarize the utility of the work of Barth in the field of anthropology: “Acknowledging that ethnicity is a social and cultural construction in this way allowed social theorists to explore its articulation with other social forces and the various, or multiple, manifestations, that may result...Put another way, if ethnicity is primarily an aspect of social relationships, then it can best be analyzed through the various uses to which individuals and/or groups put it.”\textsuperscript{269}

Criticism of Barth’s methodology has not proven convincing. Furthermore, many critics of Barth still recognize Barth’s profound impact: “Fredrik Barth’s introductory essay...was extraordinarily influential in directing attention to the workings of categories of self- and other-ascription. But Barth does not distinguish sharply or consistently between categories and groups, and his central metaphor of ‘boundary’ carries with it

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{267} Ibid, 13.
\item \textsuperscript{268} Ibid, 14.
\end{itemize}
connotations of boundedness, entitativity, and groupness." On the contrary, Barthian scholarship has consistently maintained that the renegotiation of ethnic boundaries is a dynamic and mobile process. The need for further development of Barthian theory has been recognized in anthropological scholarship:

Although Barth has provided a groundwork for the elementary understanding of ethnicity, his approach fell short of accounting for these political and structural repercussions in the construction, organization and institutionalization of cultural difference. Why, when and how do individuals and groups maintain ethnic boundaries? In trying to give an answer to these questions post-Barthian sociology has moved in different directions.

While the field of anthropology continues to develop the theories presented by Barth, *Ethnic Groups* has already achieved its goal of providing a new theoretical framework within which to understand ethnicity. Various disciplines now have an accessible concept of ethnicity to apply to new areas of research. The goal of the present study is to understand the way in which Egyptian-centered rhetoric in anti-Chalcedonian texts functions as Egyptian ethnic boundary maintenance.

An analysis of this movement from the perspective of ethnic studies does not equate with a revival of the nationalist thesis, as modern nationalism did not create ethnic consciousness. However, studies in Late Antiquity utilizing modern methods of social

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272 Ibid, 4.

science are often met with accusations of anachronism: “At first sight, the appearance of a book on ancient ethnicity might seem like a gratuitous and anachronistic exercise, attempting to impose upon antiquity a subject whose true relevance is more topical. Nothing could be further from the truth.”274

It is necessary therefore to provide a brief survey of how modern anthropological and sociological methodologies have aided scholars of Late Antiquity. The following review of scholarship will demonstrate the usefulness of modern social sciences in reconstructing the historical context of late antique religious communities.

Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex, in their study on Late Antique culture and ethnicity, state that “no community or cultural group, in antiquity or today, exists in isolation from other social groups.”275 Anthony Smith’s The Ethnic Origins of Nations provides a useful tracking of ethnicity across both the modern and pre-modern eras: “Though not all cultural differences reflect ethnic differentiation, much less ethnic community (ethnie), the persistence over centuries of separate styles attached to particular peoples in certain areas, does point to the longevity and widespread incidence of ethnie in all periods.”276 Philip Wood’s recent work addresses issues of ethnic identity

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274 Ibid, 1. For an example of scholarly reluctance to utilize modern methodology in analyzing ancient sources, see Maged Mikhail: “Academics have largely succeeded in purging such terms as ‘national,’ ‘colonial,’ and ‘imperial’ from their prose — though some attempts to read pre-modern history in light of current theoretical frameworks threaten to repeat those old misleading binary perspectives under new, more sophisticated guises,” Mikhail (2014), 17.

275 Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex, Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity (London: Duckworth, 2000), xiv. Greatrex finds the term “ethnicity” unhelpful in analyzing late Roman identity, 278. This objection, though not infrequent, is invalid as it is based on an attempt to understand ethnicity in Late Antiquity simply by equating the modern concept of ethnicity to the use of ethnos in ancient texts. This perspective demonstrates a lack of interaction with contemporary anthropology; this is evident in the case of Greatrex as his study contains no reference to anthropological/sociological studies of ethnicity (or in any other subject for that matter).

276 Smith (1986), 46. Similarly, though not focusing on antiquity, Christopher Fennell’s work on early U.S. American religion and ethnicity is a helpful example of how archaeological anthropology can aid scholars in literally unearthing centuries-old expressions of ethnic identity, Christopher C. Fennell,
in the early medieval Near East, though it could benefit from more interaction with anthropological sources.\textsuperscript{277}

Ralph Mathisen and Hagith Sivan address the degree to which the changing frontiers of Roman identity shaped social and ethnic boundaries in Late Antiquity.\textsuperscript{278} Mathisen, in a volume coedited by Danuta Shanzer, demonstrates the social, political, cultural, and religious interaction between Roman and “barbarian” empires, in contrast to the common assumption of their isolation.\textsuperscript{279}

Benjamin Isaac has utilized the modern study of racism by sociologist Michael Banton and he postulated that racism is rooted in Greco-Roman attitudes toward foreigners:\textsuperscript{280} “If they have given us, through their literature, many of the ideas of freedom, democracy, philosophy, novel artistic concepts and so much else that we regard as essential in our culture, it should be recognized that the same literature also transmitted some of the elementary concepts of discrimination and inequality that are still with us.”\textsuperscript{281}

Isaac also follows Ashley Montagu in claiming that while the category of race is a social fabrication, racism is a tangible phenomenon.\textsuperscript{282} Aaron Johnson has demonstrated how, in the case of Eusebius’ \textit{Preparatio Evangelica}, the categories of religion and

\begin{flushright}
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\textsuperscript{281} Ibid, 516.
\textsuperscript{282} Ibid, 34.
\end{flushright}
ethnicity cannot be neatly separated and that a misguided attempt to do so is what leads
many modern scholars to misunderstand their relationship in Late Antiquity.283

Denise Buell argues strongly for the usefulness of analyzing Late Antique
Christianity in light of modern concepts such as “race” and “ethnicity” as she examines
the depiction of Christians as a new genos in early Christian texts: “The central argument
of this book is that early Christian texts used culturally available understandings of
human difference, which we can analyze in terms of our modern concepts of ‘ethnicity,’
‘race,’ and ‘religion,’ to shape what we have come to call a religious tradition and to
portray particular forms of Christian ness as universal and authoritative.”284

Buell’s argument is based largely in the thought of anthropologist Ann Stoler,
especially regarding the fluidity and fixity of the concept of race.285 Central to Buell’s
argument is the idea that the universalizing claims of Christianity utilize the very social
categories that are thought to be transcended: “Early Christian universalizing claims can
be fruitfully understood in terms of local attempts to negotiate and construct collective
identities in a complex socio-rhetorical landscape.”286

Buell’s argument reflects that of Aaron Johnson who understands early religious
polemic as inherently ethnic in nature: “Christianity was defended, therefore, within and
against a world of nations; in other words, Christianity was conceived not merely as one
among many separate religious positions, but, rather, was mapped into the imaginary and

283 Aaron P. Johnson, Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius’ Praeparatio Evangelica (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 199.
285 Ibid, 6-7.
286 Ibid, 164.
constructed national and ethnic landscape. And hence, Christians themselves were often represented as such.”^287

While Buell’s study effectively demonstrated the usefulness of understanding how the concept of race is employed in early Christian literature, there is an interchangeable use of “ethnicity” and “race” requiring further nuance using anthropological sources. Buell does show, however, that a double-sided conceptualization of race is “compelling not only for our time but also for antiquity…This approach allows us to render early Christian discourse ‘knowable,’ but does not require that we collapse historical differences.”^288

Buell also argues against the timid approach of much early Christian scholarship that deals with race and ethnicity in Late Antiquity: “If we want to move beyond racism, we cannot wait for it to outgrow its troubled past on its own; rather, we need to confront the elusive elasticity of race.”^289 One reason often given for not speaking of race or ethnicity in early Christianity is that they are difficult concepts to define. But this should not hinder the attempt, as these concepts are not “neatly distinguished even in modern parlance.”^290 Buell wants to encourage the use of the concept of race in the analysis of Late Antiquity by more cautious scholars, such as Jonathan Hall.^291

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^290 Ibid, 21.
Hall argues that Hellenistic identity expanded from ethnicity to broader cultural criteria in the fifth century BCE. Hall’s understanding of ethnicity is derived directly from that of Barth: “The ethnic group is a self-ascribing and self-nominating social collectivity that constitutes itself in opposition to other groups of a similar order.” Also, “Ethnic groups are not static or monolithic, but dynamic and fluid. Their boundaries are permeable to a degree, and they may be subject to processes of assimilation and differentiation.” Hall offers this definition of ethnicity as a specific type of cultural identity, characterized by its employment of symbolic notions of kinship, descent and common history.

Hall depicts the ethnogenesis of Hellenic society, in true Barthian fashion, as simultaneous with the advent of the depiction of the barbaroi. As ethnic identity is detectable most notably through differentiation from the Other, it is reasonable to understand Greek identity through its self-described distinction from its foreign neighbors. The idea that Greek identity was something that could be attained is advanced in Aaron Johnson’s survey of Porphyry and the theory that the third-century philosopher severely downplayed his Phoenician background and presented himself thoroughly Hellenized.

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293 Hall (2002), 9.
294 Hall (1997), 33.
295 Hall (2002), 17.
296 Ibid, 189.
297 Aaron P. Johnson, Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre: The Limits of Hellenism in Late Antiquity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 243. Averil Cameron supports this idea in highlighting the fact that to be Hellenized was much more complex than simply being a Greek-speaker, “The Eastern Provinces in the 7th Century A.D. Hellenism and the Emergence of Islam,” in Changing Cultures in Early Byzantium, ed. Averil Cameron, 287-313 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), 300.
This stands in contrast to Irad Malkin who rejects ethnicity as a process of self-differentiation in favor of a concept of primordiality: “Primordiality is a shared belief that the ethnic grouping has its origins in a remote past, often centered around founding ancestors and an ever-growing genealogical tree.” In the same volume, Hall’s analysis provides a helpful interpretation of the development of Greek identity through group differentiation. While Malkin’s perspective is critical of the Barthian school, he helpfully points out that “whereas nationalism is certainly a modern phenomenon, ethnicity is not.”

Averil Cameron analyzes the rise of Roman Christianity through the role of rhetoric, with methodology she identifies as being rooted in Foucault. In her work analyzing the role of rhetoric in Christian disputation, Cameron has demonstrated that such polemic is widely influenced by political, cultural, and historical circumstances. Cameron has also demonstrated the manner in which polemic served as the means by which early Christian authors framed theological and social identity.

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299 Ibid, 172.
300 Ibid, 16.
In his analysis of the Coptic *Martyrdom of John of Phanijōit*, Jason Zaborowski draws upon the methodology of James C. Scott in order to understand how this late twelfth-century Bohairic text functions as a hidden transcript.\(^{304}\) Zaborowski draws on Scott’s work regarding hidden transcripts as he presents the *Martyrdom* as a subversion of dominant ideology by a minority group: “Typically the private or hidden transcript of a subordinate group is unavailable for scrutiny, and hence, unavailable as a source of history. But the Coptic *Martyrdom of John of Phanijōit* offers us the rare opportunity to extend ideological analysis to an actual hidden transcript from medieval Egypt.”\(^{305}\) Zaborowski explains that in the case of the *Martyrdom*, the primary motivation was to keep the text “hidden” by composing it in Bohairic, thus rendering it unintelligible to the dominant Arabic-speaking population. In this way, punishment or persecution for the text’s numerous critical comments about Muslims might be avoided: “As an expression of self-identity, that transcript reinforces ‘a strong “us vs. them” imagery’ that depicts Islam as an antithesis to Christianity.”\(^{306}\)

Bas ter Haar Romeny edited the proceedings of a symposium that discussed the ideas raised by A.H.M. Jones’ pivotal article and analyzed the role of ethnicity and


\(^{305}\) Zaborowski (2005), 15.

\(^{306}\) Ibid, 30.
nationality in the formation of the Syrian Orthodox community. In many respects, the aim of this symposium was similar to that of the present project, with the difference that the focus in ter Haar Romeny’s publication is primarily the Syriac-speaking world: “It appeared to us that there was room to study this problem again, the more so since the social sciences have given us new tools and more precise definitions of such core terms as ethnicity, nation, and identity.”

As in the present study, ter Haar Romeny and others have drawn from sociologists such as Gellner, Barth and Smith while continuing the discussion sparked by Jones, with specific focus on the Syrian Miaphysites. However, ter Haar Romeny relies on the theory of Smith and Geertz in so far as it differs from that of Barth: “In defining ethnic groups as units of ascription and self-ascription, as Barth does, and in focusing on the boundary that defines the group, instead of on the ‘cultural stuff that it encloses,’ it may seem that ‘anything goes,’ as though there were no relation to shared cultural characteristics initially possessed by the members of a group.”

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308 Haar Romeny, 4.


310 Haar Romeny, 8. Anthropological studies on ethnicity contrast the view of Haar Romeny: “Ethnic identities are fluid across time and social contexts, sometimes even to the point of ‘ethnic switching.’ The public presentation of ethnic identity is also situational, which reveals the plural or hybrid character of modern ethnicity,” Jimy M Sanders, “Ethnic Boundaries and Identity in Plural Societies,” in Annual Review of Sociology 28, 327-357 (2002), 328. Ton Derks and Nico Roymans demonstrate how the subjective construction of ethnic identity through interaction with the Other functions in antiquity. Ethnic Constructs in Antiquity: The Role of Power and Tradition (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 1.
As will be demonstrated, however, Egyptian ethnic identity is much more easily detectable through self-ascription than through a “continuity with the past”\textsuperscript{311} that did not exist in Late Antique Egypt. What is inaccurately labeled a relativistic position\textsuperscript{312} in fact allows social scientists to understand the constantly changing participation within, and between, various ethnic groups. While much of Barthian theory has been modified over the last half-century, the central tenets of his views are still accepted by the majority of anthropologists. Barth’s model has shifted the previous understanding of ethnicity as “a nebulous expression of culture”\textsuperscript{313} to the maintenance of ethnic boundaries.

Jacques van der Vliet makes use of the anti-Orientalist methodology of Edward Said as he claims that the trend among Copts to depict themselves as the “sons of the Pharaohs” (a phenomenon he calls “Pharaonism”) is actually the result of modern Western Orientalism.\textsuperscript{314} Modern Coptic nationalism is understood by van der Vliet as Egyptianity; an identity discourse that focuses on Egypt as a nation inclusive of ethnicity and religion.\textsuperscript{315}

In a study of the same period under investigation in this dissertation, Stephen Davis analyzes the anti-Chalcedonian movement in Egypt from the perspective of post-colonialism: “This intervention by the imperial, pro-Chalcedonian church functioned, I

\textsuperscript{311} Haar Romeny, 8. Sanders explains the necessity of Barthian theory thusly: “According to Barth, studying ethnic groups only in terms of their cultural traits and institutional forms leads researchers to confound the effects of cultural tradition with how ecological circumstances lead to changes in patterns of belief and behavior,” Sanders, 328.


\textsuperscript{313} Vermeulen and Govers, 12.


\textsuperscript{315} Ibid, 282.
would argue, as a form of ecclesiastical colonialism. The military, legal, economic, and
rhetorical policies of Constantinople and Rome were specifically designed to displace
and disenfranchise the Coptic opposition, and to secure a pro-Chalcedonian outpost at
Alexandria.”

Davis demonstrates the way in which anti-Chalcedonian Egyptians respond to the
colonialist Chalcedonian imperial policy through a narrative of resistance involving
compromise and complicity — applying ideas associated with Edward Said. Arguing
against criticism that maintains that analytical tools such as post-colonialism are
inappropriate in studies of Late Antiquity, Davis cites Gellner and Young, who
demonstrate the value of post-colonialist theory in studying ancient sources.

Andrew Jacobs also utilizes the methodology of post-colonialism in his study of
Late Antique Christian textual construction of the Holy Land: “My argument throughout
this study is that Christians staked their imperial claims on a self-conscious appropriation
of Jewish space and knowledge; that is, they embedded their power and authority in the

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316 Davis (2004), 87.
317 Ibid, 87.
authenticated existence of a religious, political, and cultural ‘other’.** Jacobs shows how imperial Christian authors appropriating the material space of the oriental “Other.”

While drawing heavily upon postcolonial theorists such as Said and Young, Jacobs also follows Anderson’s concept of “imagined communities” in understanding Eusebius’ presentation of Constantine’s affinity for the Holy Land. Jacobs also draws upon the work of Michel Foucault in understanding the ideology of power and authority in early Christian depictions of Palestine.

Analyzing the role of paideia in early Christian literature, Jacobs grounds the study in Bourdieu’s understanding of the role of knowledge production in the formation of social class. Jacobs also uses psychoanalytic theory (Freud and Lacan specifically) in his study of medieval Christian legends concerning Jesus’ circumcision and how these reflected identity politics and appropriation of self vis-à-vis the Other.

In a study focusing on Egyptian ethnicity, Kurt Werthmuller traces the development of Copto-Arabic Christian identity in Ayyubid Egypt:

Far from merely and passively assuming a state of “dhimmitude”…as the hegemony of Islamic jurisprudence dictated, medieval Copts actively

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321 Jacobs labels the dominant Christian discourse of the fourth century “imperial” not in an administrative sense but with reference to the way “they are implicitly drawing on forms of cultural, economic, or political authority that transcend the needs or desires of a local or subaltern figure,” 11-12. For discussion of subalterns see, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, ed. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 271-313.
323 Ibid, 52-53.
324 Andrew S. Jacobs, “‘What Has Rome to Do with Bethlehem?’ Cultural Capital(s) and Religious Imperialism in Late Ancient Christianity,” in Classical Receptions Journal 3, 29-45 (2011), 31.
participated in the formation of their own identity. They also played key roles in the life of the wider Egyptian community in concern with a dynamic sociopolitical context that had its own ways of transcending confessional boundaries when individual interests and economic loyalties called for cooperation and tolerance. It is in the porosity of these boundaries, the ‘in-between spaces’ in which Copts engaged with their Muslim rulers and fellow Egyptians, that we can most clearly see the vibrancy with which this community pursued its own priorities and carved out a sense of identity--of “being a Copt”--in the Ayyubid era.  

Werthmuller argues that Barth’s construction of ethnic boundaries as necessarily entailing outside contact is central to understanding medieval Coptic identity: “The core of Barth’s point is relevant here…a more nuanced approach must address both the areas of life they shared with the Muslim majority and its dynastic leadership and those areas they claimed as distinctly and uniquely their own.”  

In a recent volume edited by Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann, Barth’s methodology is presented as foundational for the volume’s assessment of religion and ethnicity in medieval Europe: “This focus on agency is especially important for the study of past identities.”

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327 Werthmuller, 13. Werthmuller claims that “ethnicity is not the concern of this study,” 13. However, his study intends to demonstrate the ways in the Coptic community implicitly and explicitly formulated the boundaries of their communal identity, primarily through the writings of patriarch Cyril III ibn Lqaq. 14. Because the language of boundary maintenance is indebted to Barth and the primary sources for Werthmuller’s study are expressions of Egyptian Christian identity over against Islamic hegemony, his analysis of “communal identity” is equivalent to Egyptian ethnic identity.

Pohl’s description of ethnicity as a “way of partitioning the social world and the
discourse that gives meaning to it” which “guides the corresponding strategies of
identification and differentiation”\textsuperscript{329} is particularly helpful in understanding ethnic
rhetoric in late antique Egypt. Ethnicity denoting the process of ascription of collective
identity is a helpful way of conceiving of this common term. As Bas ter Haar Romeny
has noted: “The social sciences have not produced ‘precise definitions’ of these concepts,
and one cannot simply use a checklist to establish ethnicity.”\textsuperscript{330}

The works reviewed above are a small sample of research that focuses on Late
Antiquity and is also supported methodologically by modern research in sociology and
anthropology. While it is crucial to avoid anachronistic attempts to equate ancient social
phenomena with those of the present day, there is an equally dangerous tendency to
neglect examining the socio-cultural dynamics of religious discourse in Antiquity. In an
attempt to maintain a balance, this study of anti-Chalcedonian Egypt will avoid the
language of nationalism while analyzing the ethnic rhetoric present in Coptic texts during
the period between Chalcedon and the Islamic Conquest. This inquiry aims to attain a
deeper understanding of the role and development of ethnic identity in the Late Antique
Coptic community.

\textsuperscript{329} Pohl (2013), 2.
\textsuperscript{330} Haar Romeny, 328. Similar difficulty in establishing definitions is expressed in the field of
anthropology, Philip Gleason, “Identifying Identity: A Semantic History,” in \textit{Theories of Ethnicity: A
**Chapter 1: Aftermath of Chalcedon**

The following three chapters will investigate ethnic boundary maintenance in anti-Chalcedonian literature during the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries. The structure of this analysis is based on the three periods of anti-Chalcedonian literature outlined by David Johnson: 1) texts focusing on the immediate aftermath of Chalcedon composed in the early sixth century, 2) texts focusing on the religious policies of Justinian composed in the mid- to late sixth century and 3) texts focusing on Cyrus the Caucasian composed during the aftermath of the Islamic Conquest.331

In chapter one, anti-Chalcedonian texts relating the events immediately following Chalcedon in the late fifth century will be explored. Some of the most significant figures in this period are Timothy Aelurus, Longinus and Macarius of Tkôw. While it has been demonstrated that anti-Chalcedonian doctrine emerged as the rubric for Egyptian identity, this process of identity politics has been understood to begin with the Islamic Conquest.332 While this interpretation is understandable, there are traces of ethnic identity formation in fifth-century sources.

The ethnic rhetoric of seventh-century Coptic texts is certainly more overt than in those of the fifth. However, the earlier sources reveal that Egyptians began a process of equating Miaphysite doctrine with Egyptian identity immediately following Chalcedon. In light of this, Chalcedon should be understood as the initial event that sparked a perceived need among Egyptian Miaphysites to distinguish themselves from their

332 Papaconstantinou (2006), 72.
newfound Byzantine Chalcedonian adversaries, a need that did not exist before the Byzantines became “heretics.”\(^{333}\)

The ethnic element of these early fifth century texts is not blatant. The development of Egyptian Christianity as an ethnic-specific church is a gradual one that begins at Chalcedon and takes full shape after the Islamic Conquest. The following study will proceed chronologically (as opposed to thematically) because, as will be demonstrated, ethnic rhetoric in anti-Chalcedonian Egyptian texts becomes more intensified and obvious in response to historical events in the history of Christian Egypt. Therefore, the three periods of texts surveyed in the following chapters should be understood to represent a gradual progression of increasingly ethnicized religious polemic.

**Timothy Aelurus**

Timothy Aelurus was a controversial figure in Late Antiquity and is presented with varying degrees of partiality both in ancient and modern sources. Relying heavily on the epistles of Leo and the *Collectio* of Giovanni Mansi, an eighteenth-century dictionary provides a critical presentation of Timothy Aelurus as an “intruder” who gathered a “motley band of ignorant and turbulent men” to stage a coup on the episcopal see of Alexandria after being consecrated “without the countenance of a single legitimate prelate.”\(^{334}\) Timothy has also been presented negatively by ancient sources. It is very

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\(^{333}\) The fact that no pro-Chalcedonian literature survives in Coptic and that the Melkites of Egypt were concentrated in a few urban centers attests to the lasting assimilation of Miaphysite and Egyptian/Coptic identity, Mikhail (2014), 82.

common for Timothy to be portrayed as a murderer, thief, and even sorcerer by his opponents in Late Antiquity such as Theodore Anagnostes:

Timothy the Cat [Weasel], having had recourse in magic, went round at night to the cells of the monks, calling them each by name, and when there was a reply, he would say, “I am an angel and I have been sent to tell everyone to refrain from communication with Proterios and the party of Chalcedon, and to appoint Timothy the Cat [Weasel] bishop of Alexandria.”

Even the origin of Timothy’s epithet (“Aelurus”) depends upon one’s attitude toward the fifth-century patriarch; the Greek word αἰλουρός, typically translated as “cat,” is thought by opponents to allude to Timothy’s alleged stealthy activities at night; in contrast, supporters claim that the name refers to his extremely thin frame, due to his adherence to the monastic lifestyle (αἰλουρός is often translated as “weasel” by the latter group). Writing with a positive bias, John Rufus presents Timothy as accurately predicting the fall of the Western Roman Empire and labelling it as God’s judgment for the acceptance of Leo’s Tome. The use of eschatological motifs in his attack on the Chalcedonian position was a tactic Timothy shared with Peter the Iberian.

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335 Translation from David Johnson, “Pope Timothy II Aelurus: His Life and His Importance for the Development of Christianity in Egypt,” in Coptica 1, 77-89 (2002), 78.
336 For αἰλουρός as a sneaky “Weasel” see W. Bright, 1031; for αἰλουρός referring to Timothy’s physique, see Johnson, 78-79; R.Y. Ebied and L.R. Wickham, “Timothy Aelurus: Against the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon,” in After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History Offered to Professor Albert van Roey, ed. and trans. C. Laga, J.A. Munitiz, and L. Van Rompay, 115-166 (Leuven: Peeters, 1985), 115.
Chalcedonian historian Zacharias of Mytilene gives this explanation of Timothy’s name at the time of his forced ordination:

> And the faithful people of the city [who said], “Ordain him [even] by force and unwillingly and seat him on the chair of Mark!” He was weak in body from much [self-]mortification, and on account of his emaciation the members of the party of Proterius used to mockingly call him “The Weasel.”

Timothy’s ordination at the behest of the people of Alexandria is also mentioned in the fragments of the *Life of Timothy Aelurus*. According to Zachariah, the Roman general Dionysius deposed the anti-Chalcedonian patriarch Timothy and supported the Chalcedonian Proterius, which resulted in massive rioting and death in Alexandria. Dionysius was forced to bring in the monastic leader Longinus to restore Timothy to the patriarchate and stop the violence. Longinus, a foreign monk from Lycia, led the monks of the Enaton monastery in a revolt against the imposition of the *Tome* of Leo by the Byzantine prefect Acacius:

> When Saint Apa Longinus received the letter, he gathered together all the brothers and read the copy to them. When they heard it, they cried out as one, “Anathematize that abominable ordinance and everything in it, ungodly Leo too, and everyone in communion with him!”

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This hagiographical account goes on to describe the miraculous triumph of the monks of Enaton over the Byzantine army without bloodshed, which led to the establishment of anti-Chalcedonianism as the Egyptian faith. Although Timothy is not mentioned in the sixth-century *Life of Longinus;* monastic communities such as the Enaton supported his doctrinal position.

Timothy’s popularity is demonstrated again in the *Chronicle* that mentions “countless numbers of children” who were brought to him for baptism during Holy Week, while only six children were brought to Proterius. Proterius was murdered shortly thereafter by an angry mob and Timothy was reinstated as undisputed patriarch. However, by command of Emperor Leo I, Timothy was sent into exile at Gangra in Asia Minor in 460 CE. Timothy was then exiled to a more distant location, Chersonesus, due to further pressure from the Chalcedonian opponents of Timothy in Constantinople. The *Life of Timothy Aelurus* identifies the bishops of Constantinople and Rome as the primary enemies who caused Timothy’s exile.

The success of these bishops is attributed to bribes and to the actions of lawless men, thereby characterizing Byzantine (and Roman) Chalcedonians as both heretical and corrupt. Timothy remained in exile for nearly 20 years, though briefly returned to Alexandria when Basiliscus succeeded Zeno as emperor. Timothy died in 477 CE, only

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342 Zacharias of Mytilene explains how Dionysius enlisted the aid of Apa Longinus to protect Timothy, see Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle*, 135.
343 Ibid, 136.
344 Ibid, 147.
345 Ibid, 151. See also *Plerophoria*, 63.
346 *Life of Timothy Aelurus*, 166.
347 Ibid. There is confusion in the *Life* with Timothy’s second banishment occurring in 475 CE at his return during the reign of Zeno.
348 Ibid, 184.
a few years after his return to Alexandria. Upon his return, Timothy’s position as leader of the people of Egypt was unchanged as he was welcomed with crowds chanting “Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord,” (Matt. 21:9). Timothy’s exile may have deprived him of direct ecclesiastical authority in Alexandria, but the trials of exile may have earned him greater respect from the Egyptian population.

It is during this time of exile that Timothy composed several letters, almost entirely preserved in Syriac, from which we gain insight into his life in his own words. Perhaps the best-known work written during Timothy’s exile is his treatise Against the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon (Against Chalcedon), a work that became important in the florilegia of Christian theology formed in Late Antiquity. This text and the other large-scale treatise composed by Timothy, On the Unity of Christ, surviving completely only in Armenian, are thought to be epitomes; that is, later summaries written by a different author. Timothy also wrote a church history in an attempt to establish that patriarchal authority derived from his place in the line of succession from his Alexandrian predecessors, and at the same time present Miaphysite doctrine as the faith of Egypt.

349 Bright, 1033; Watts provides the date of July, 477 CE, Watts (2010), 229.
350 Frend, 173.
351 Watts (2010), 228.
352 There are also several texts attributed to Timothy preserved in Armenian. However, the Timothean corpus was almost certainly originally composed in Greek, Joseph Lebon, “Version arménienne et version syriaque de Timothée Elure,” in Handes Amsorya: Zeitschrift für armenische Philologie 41 (1927): 718.
353 Ebied and Wickham (1985), 117.
354 Johnson, 82.
It is especially through a collection of Timothy’s letters—preserved primarily in Syriac and in Ethiopic translation\textsuperscript{356}—that we learn most about his “particular mode of pastoral governance and… a still broader picture of his doctrinal stance.”\textsuperscript{357} In these letters Timothy waged war both on Chalcedonianism and Eutychianism, a strategy that would be followed by Severus and other Miaphysites.\textsuperscript{358} Although both Timothy and Eutyches denounced the Council of Chalcedon, their concepts of the hypostatic union were not the same.\textsuperscript{359} Timothy was not a theologian but a church leader and polemicist who used his monastic background to gain the support of ascetic communities in establishing anti-Chalcedonianism as the faith of the Egyptian people.

The anti-Chalcedonianizing of Egypt is a process that begins with the episcopal career of Timothy Aelurus. This attests to the importance of the fifth-century patriarch: “Timothy’s place in the world’s history is secured.”\textsuperscript{360} Even from the perspective of his opponents, Timothy’s tenure as patriarch represented a turning point in Egyptian religious identity: “Qui rescribunt Calchedonensem synodum usque ad sanguinem uindicandam, eo quod non alteram fidem teneret quam synodus Nicæna constituit; Timotheum uero non solum inter episcopos non haberi, sed etiam Christiana appellantione priuari.”\textsuperscript{361}

\textsuperscript{357} Johnson, 83: These letters stand in contrast to the collection of \textit{florilegia} contained in \textit{Against Chalcedon} in which, Timothy’s distinctive voice is more absent as he relies heavily on the doctrinal statements of previous Church fathers see, Watts (2010), 225.
\textsuperscript{358} Grillmeier, (1986), 64.
\textsuperscript{360} Ebied & Wickham (1985), 115.
\textsuperscript{361} Liberatus, \textit{Brevarium}, ed. Edward Schwartz, ACO 2.5 (1932), 124.
The developing ethnic dimension of anti-Chalcedonianism is suggested by the opening of his letter: “Again while writing to all of Egypt, the Thebaid, and Pentapolis, and instructing them concerning those who are called Diphysites (ܢܝܢ̈ܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܟܝ) he writes thusly.”\(^{362}\) Timothy writes to “all Egypt,” presenting the Egyptian people as completely Miaphysite. Such language describes not so much the reality of fifth-century Egypt but the identity Timothy is prescribing for Egyptians. Timothy believes that it is his duty to instruct the Egyptian Church on matters of the orthodox (i.e. anti-Chalcedonian) faith as they endure Chalcedonian hegemony as part of the Byzantine Empire.

Egypt and Byzantine imperial authority begin to be juxtaposed in the period following Chalcedon. The biographical *History of Dioscorus* represents this ethnicized polemic in its depiction of Pulcheria: “Satan, the cursed serpent, continued his previous battle with the woman. He whispered to the impure heart of Pulcheria thusly, ‘You are turning and remaining silent; the empire of your fathers will belong to another race (ܓܘܢܣܐ), and you who are a daughter of the Romans (ܒܪܬܐ ܕܪ̈ܘܡܝܐ), are despised’.”\(^{363}\) Representing Byzantine imperial authority as under the influence of Satan illustrates the beginning of a new phase in which Egyptian Christians depicted Constantinople in increasingly polarized terminology.

Even in the Syriac-speaking world, in a work from John of Maiuma, Timothy, along with “Alexandria and all Egypt,” is associated with the anti-Chalcedonian movement: “My Lord, Father, will that orthodox bishop (Timothy) remain in exile and

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the city (Alexandria) and all of Egypt (مصر), perish and be captured by impiety?  

The specific subject taken up in this letter is how Egyptian Christians are to treat repentant Chalcedonians:

In accordance with what I have said before, anyone who has received ordination (bishop, priest, or deacon by our holy and orthodox fathers and bishops) who has partaken of the impiety of the Diphysites (people who are murderers of their brothers) and who now desires to repent and acknowledge God with tears—let them return our clergy or orthodox monks of their region to the bishops, so that they may be witnesses of his repentance.

The term Diphysites (or Dyophysites) is constantly employed by Timothy as reverse polemic against his opponents who pejoratively label the anti-Chalcedonians as “monophysites.” This term remains unsatisfactory to Egyptian Christians who understand the hypostatic union as consisting of two united natures (i.e. Miaphysites). Indeed, the writings of Timothy have often been described as “les origines des sectes monophysites.” It remains clear that Timothy “apparaît comme la première des figures majeures du mouvement opposé à Chalcédoine.” Timothy labels the “Diphysites” as “murderers of their brethren,” a curious accusation given the involvement of the anti-Chalcedonian party in the murder of Proterius. Although Timothy’s concern in this

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364 John of Maiuma, *Plerophoria*, ed. F. Nau, PO 8.1 (1911), 20. John of Maiuma later claims that the coronation of Marcian brought to the entire empire the same “darkness that had seized Egypt,” 25. John interestingly associates Dioscorus’ adherence to Miaphysitism with Simon of Cyrene, claiming that “Cyrene is a part of Egypt,” 31.

365 Letter to Egypt, the Thebaid, and Pentopolis, 341.

366 Lebon (1908), 701.


letter is primarily with priestly converts from Chalcedonianism, he opens with some brief instructions concerning foreigners (ܢܝܐ ܐܟܣ):

Of the foreign monks (ܢܝܐ ܐܟܣ) who come to you that you don’t know, first acquaint them with the harm of the heresy of those who are called Diphysites, even if it has escaped their notice. If they agree and will be with us, let them anathematize those who are like they were, namely the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo…let them be received into communion…But if they take upon themselves communion with the heretics as well…then neither pray nor eat with them.369

Timothy goes on to exhort the Egyptians to allow Chalcedonian monks safe passage home while demonstrating charity and hospitality, perhaps in hopes of gaining them for the anti-Chalcedonian side. Such hospitality is to be extended especially to foreigners (ܢܝܐ ܐܟܣ).370 Likewise, Timothy instructs the Egyptians to receive laymen (ܬܟܡܠܘ) into communion after rejecting the Chalcedonian faith. In addition to discussing foreign monks, Timothy provides instructions regarding previously ordained officials (ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܩܕܝܡ ܩܒܠܘ ܟܝܪܛܘܢܝܐ) and laymen (ܢܝ ܥܠܡܐ).371 Interestingly, Timothy provides more detailed information as he moves up the ranks of church hierarchy: the attention given to laymen accounts for one sentence, there is one paragraph for monks, and the majority of the letter focuses on priests.

Employing the imagery of the prodigal son, Timothy instructs the Church of Egypt to require a one-year penance from clergy who convert to anti-Chalcedonianism.


369 *Letter to Egypt, the Thebaid, and Pentapolis*, 341. Ebied & Wickham rightfully render this phrase as “foreign religious.” However, the Syriac word that would more likely be behind “religious” (i.e. a devout Christian of an unspecified rank) would more likely be ܗܝܡܢܐ. That Timothy takes up the theme of how to deal with converted priests later in his letter further supports the idea that he is specifically talking about traveling monks here. The populist fashion in which monks tended to be drawn to various theological camps is likely behind Timothy’s caveat “even if it has escaped their notice.”

370 Ibid.

371 Ibid.
After this, converted clergy may resume their ecclesiastical office. This policy was also adopted by Severus of Antioch, the most prominent anti-Chalcedonian leader and theologian.  

David Johnson argued that Timothy expected that his rule for converting priests would be met with dissatisfaction by some Egyptian Christians: “Timothy’s attention rather focuses on the internal divisions within the Egyptian church. One problem involves those extremists who oppose his lenient penance for the Chalcedonians who are willing to convert to the true faith.”

Indeed, Timothy exhorts his followers in terms that imply the presence of anti-Chalcedonians who have no desire to receive Chalcedonian converts:

Let Christian love (ܪܚܡܬ ܠܡܫܝܢܝܐ) return to him from those who live in Alexandria, pious and orthodox clergy of mine, you who are worthy of the rank of priesthood, as you lift up to us the perfection of sincere canonicity and the unity (ܚܕܘܬܐ) which we pray may exist among all the orthodox (ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܘܪ̈ܬܕܟܣܐ).  

Timothy’s exhortation for loving acceptance of recent converts from the Chalcedonian faith is balanced with strict anathematization of the Chalcedonian formula on the part of recent converts: “Let the penitent’s anathematization be in writing with his own hand...For good works occur not only before the Lord but also before people.”

Timothy wants the Christians of Egypt to warmly embrace former Chalcedonians, just as the father embraced the prodigal son, but he also wants the Chalcedonian converts to publicly demonstrate their allegiance to the anti-Chalcedonian faith.

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373 Johnson (2002), 86.
374 *Letter to Egypt, the Thebaid, and Pentapolis*, 342.
375 Ibid.
That Timothy seeks to depict Egypt as the guardian of Christian orthodoxy is also evident in his writings on church history (ܬܫܥܝܬܐ). Timothy refers to Dioscorus as both “patriarch of the church of Alexandria” and as the “guardian of the faith (ܢܬܘܪܐܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ),” thus combining Alexandrian patriarchal authority with universal Christian authority. Such a rhetorical strategy further represents Timothy’s early attempts at identifying the Miaphysite movement with Egyptian ethnic identity. Timothy depicts the Alexandrian patriarch as the sole champion of orthodoxy, rescuing the universal Church from heresy. In doing this, Timothy equates Egyptian ecclesiastical authority with universal Christian orthodoxy. Egyptian Christianity, as epitomized in the Alexandrian patriarch, becomes the normative measure of Christian orthodoxy from the perspective of Timothy.

Timothy ends his short letter to Egypt with a string of biblical quotations in order to encourage the people of Egypt to endure the present difficulties by maintaining unity: “Those who desire to live in fear of God in Christ will be persecuted…A great storm has come upon the Church of God dear brothers, and it is required of us that we suffer together.” Johnson noted that Timothy stated his ultimate goal of unifying his people in the final words of his letter to Egypt:

For if we do not have peace with each other we cannot do battle with our Lord Jesus Christ’s enemies. So let’s be diligent, beloved, and let those of us who have caused distress, and those who are by means of division causing distress for zeal of Christ, attain unity of the Spirit among

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376 Timothy Aelurus, “Extraits de Timothée Aelure,” ed. François Nau, PO 13 (Paris, 1919), 208; see also p. 211.
377 Ibid.
378 See Johnson (2002), 86.
379 Letter to Egypt, the Thebaid, and Pentopolis, 343-ܐܬܘܪܐ is rendered as “faction” in the translation of Ebied & Wickham.
ourselves. For it is required of us that we lay down our lives both to Christ our Savior and also to one another.\textsuperscript{380}

Timothy’s short letter to the faithful of Egypt is ultimately concerned with the promotion of the orthodox faith (anti-Chalcedonian) through outreach to foreigners, inclusion of clerical, monastic and lay converts, and the unification of the entire Egyptian Church under the banner of anti-Chalcedonianism as a witness to all the enemies of Christ who might oppose it. Timothy’s letter addressed to “all Egypt, the Thebaid, and Pentopolis” illustrates the intention of the fifth-century Egyptian patriarch to unite his people in the faith that he believed to be orthodox. While there were many non-Miaphysites in the geographic region under the jurisdiction of Alexandria, Timothy prescribes a totalizing, anti-Chalcedonian position for “all Egypt.” Over time, a schism developed that would forever change the religious landscape of Egypt and the Christian Near East.

In the context of the colonial relationship between Byzantine Chalcedonian hegemony and anti-Chalcedonian Egypt, Timothy’s letter to his homeland should be understood as resistance rhetoric that lays the foundation for anti-Chalcedonian, Egyptian ethnic identity development.\textsuperscript{381} Such rhetoric increases in the following centuries in the literature of this area, especially in monastic circles.\textsuperscript{382} The rich Egyptian history that Timothy and his contemporaries inherited played a role in the ethnic boundary maintenance present in the anti-Chalcedonian movement:

\textsuperscript{380} Ibid, 342-343.
\textsuperscript{381} For an analysis of Egyptian resistance rhetoric utilizing post-colonial theory, see DAVIS (2004), 85-128.
\textsuperscript{382} See Frend \textit{Rise} (1972), 70-71.
While local cultural identity, language and traditions gave Egypt its own very different and self-aware history, it was hardly surprising that the rejection by the council of Chalcedon of the Alexandrian-monophysite-position increased this feeling of difference, and that monophysitism took on also thenceforth the role of vehicle for local, regional-rather than separatist-expressions of independence.\(^{383}\)

Timothy’s letter assumes that the anti-Chalcedonian doctrine is the truest expression of Christian faith and is taken as the faith of the Egyptian people. Language in his letter that has direct communal address (i.e. “you,” “us,” or “our”) can be understood as speaking to the entire Egyptian people who are assumed to be anti-Chalcedonian (i.e. “let such a one repair to the bishops, the clergy of ours (ملاّمهم مل) in his vicinity”).\(^{384}\)

This collectivist tone underlines an appeal for the unity of the Egyptian people in a single cause based on the common struggle of oppression: “A great storm has come upon the church of God, dear brothers (ܝܒܝܐ ܚܝ ܚܒܐ);”\(^{385}\) “So let us be diligent, beloved (ܠܒܝ ܚܒ);”\(^{386}\)

While the ethnic rhetoric present in anti-Chalcedonian texts becomes more obvious in the sixth and especially the seventh centuries, Timothy lays the foundation here for Egyptian Miaphysite strategies of identity formation.

A similar “us”/“them” dialectic is present in Against Chalcedon as Timothy champions the archbishop of the Egyptian people (“our”) against an elusive “them” associated with the majority party of Chalcedon: “And yet, they endeavored to enact the deposition of the blessed and holy one, our father (ܐܒܘܢ) and archbishop Dioscorus, who was an utter praise and wonder to them at the synod in Ephesus only a little while

\(^{383}\) Haldon, 287.
\(^{384}\) Letter to Egypt, the Thebaid, and Pentapolis, 341.
\(^{385}\) Ibid, 342.
\(^{386}\) Ibid, 343.
ago. However, Timothy includes many non-Egyptians whom he understands to be orthodox in the list of the faithful. In Against Chalcedon, this is done primarily through appeal to previous church fathers.

While Cyril is his main authority, Timothy also quotes several non-Egyptian figures such as Julius of Rome and Theodotus of Ancyra. While Egypt and her inhabitants are most highlighted, Egyptian Christian writers at all times understand their Christian identity to unite them with many outside the boundaries of Egypt. This theme emerges in Timothy’s letter to Claudianus in which he quotes 1 Peter 2:9, referring to the orthodox faithful suffering at the hands of “heretics” as “an elect generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (ܥܡܐ), an alien people (ܟܢܫܐ), with a zeal for good works.” In this context, the “people” to whom Timothy and his audience ultimately belong is the universal Church.

Interestingly, Timothy offers a direct rebuttal of the nationalism thesis when he accuses the supporters of Chalcedon of being motivated by political rather than by theological concerns, a criticism often levied against anti-Chalcedonians: “And it wasn’t in zealous fear of God but in obsequiousness of the ruler at that time that they affirmed this impiety.” This is also the perspective of the CCH as Marcian is depicted as offering the patriarchal throne as a bribe: “And the emperor sent the Tome to Alexandria

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387 Against Chalcedon, 138.
388 Ibid, 134.
390 Against Chalcedon, 141.
saying, ‘The one who will subscribe first, he is the one who shall sit upon the throne and be archbishop’.”

The *History of Dioscorus* presents a similar picture when the empress Pulcheria attempts to trick the patriarch Dioscorus through flattery: “Then she went to the saint where he was. She fell at his feet weeping and begging him saying, ‘I am your servant and your daughter; you are the father and the head of the entire kingdom of the Romans (ܪܝܫܐ ܕܟܠܗ ܐܘܚܕܢܐ ܕܪ̈ܘܡܝܐ).’” Pulcheria’s plea to Dioscorus did not work; the patriarch spurned the empress, declaring her a heretic. This scene demonstrates not an Egyptian desire to secede from Byzantium but to define itself as the theological and moral center of the empire.

As argued above, a desire for a political revolution against the Byzantine state was not a motivating factor in Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian polemic. In fact, the tone of Timothy’s writing often exhibits a desire for cooperation with Constantinople. According to Blaudeau, “Il se montre désireux de bénéficier du soutien du basileus pour le bien de celui-ci comme de son empire.” This analysis finds support in Timothy’s letter to the abbot Claudianus which ends with an expression of hope for an imperial return to orthodoxy:

> And I sent you a pamphlet so that I might encourage the fear of God which is in you. It was composed by us a year ago when the Emperor summoned us from exile that I might examine the increase in the seditious

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391 David Johnson (1973), 113-14. This passage appears in a parallel manuscript published by David Johnson, “Further Fragments of a Coptic History of the Church: Cambridge OR. 1699 R,” in *Enchoria: Zeitschrift für Demotistik und Koptologie* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1976), 7-17. The *CCH* depicts Egyptian Chalcedonians as the result of political sycophancy or persecution: “Those who subscribed to the Tome of Chalcedon destroyed this (the orthodox faith) as they were forced (ζημτρευκάτεχε) to say that Christ functions in natures,” 117.

392 *Histoire de Dioscore*, 55.

393 Blaudeau, 125.
of the Church, the solution of the heresies mentioned above and help on orthodox decrees. Although the Emperor who summoned us regretted it, we pray that our Lord’s will be done, rejoicing in our Lord.\textsuperscript{394}

However, there is a steady pro-Egyptian tone in the works of Timothy, which is often critical of imperial Chalcedonianism. An interesting detail in the letters of Timothy is the way he addresses fellow Miaphysites outside of Egypt as “dear friends” (�性(="")ับ),\textsuperscript{395} often drawing the wording directly from Paul. However, it is only when writing to his fellow Egyptians in Alexandria that he opens and closes the letter addressing them as “my brothers (ܡܲܒܵܐ).”\textsuperscript{396} The early reaction to Chalcedonian hegemony found in the writings of Timothy represents resistance rhetoric in the form of statements of collective consciousness framed in ethnic terms; that Timothy is addressing the nation of Egypt and begins his letter with attention to “foreign monks (ܢܲܘܲܐ ܕܲܝܲܪܐ ܐܟܲܣ)” reveals Timothy’s assumption that outsiders visiting churches in Egypt must be instructed in the faith of its people (i.e. anti-Chalcedonianism).

That there were many Chalcedonian Egyptians is evident in the massive conflicts that took place during this period. It should not be assumed that the Egyptian people were a monolithic, anti-Chalcedonian group. Similarly, that anti-Chalcedonianism became the dominant, popular position in Egypt does not preclude an international element in anti-Chalcedonianism. For example, the writings of Timothy Aelurus became accepted as orthodox teaching in Armenia during the sixth century.\textsuperscript{397} However, Timothy’s letter—

\textsuperscript{394} Another Letter Written by the Same to the Priest and Abbot Claudianus from Exile at Chersonesus, 346.
\textsuperscript{395} Ibid. 344.
\textsuperscript{397} Frend, Rise (1972), 308.
and the majority of Coptic literature immediately following this period—testify to an anti-Chalcedonian majority in Egypt. More importantly, from the perspective of Egyptian writers, anti-Chalcedonianism was the faith of their people: 398

Here, we can see how Timothy begins to construct a way of speaking that incorporates certain ambivalent terms and dichotomies typical of resistance rhetoric...On the other hand, the complexity and complicity of Timothy’s resistance can be observed in his posture toward imperial power...Finally, in characterizing the Chalcedonian clerical hierarchy in Egypt as “unknown and foreign,” and in contrasting them to the “people” of Egypt, Timothy demonstrates an early move to shape Egyptian Christian identity in something approximating populist terms. 399

The anaphoras of Timothy were included alongside Cyril, Basil and Gregory in the Great Euchologion of the White Monastery, attesting to the way anti-Chalcedonianism became embedded in all areas of Coptic Christianity, including liturgy. 400 To underscore the social, ethnic, and political realities surrounding the christological controversies and their effects in Egypt is not to ignore the warning of Ebied and Wickham:

What matters for Timothy and his followers is the simple assertion of a real and true incarnation by the truly divine Word of God. When such emotions are misunderstood or insensitively passed over, the controversy inevitably becomes patient only of interpretation as a logomachy masking political and economic conflicts. Such an interpretation, though superficially appealing, and having perhaps also a measure of truth...is, none the less, as this brief extract poignantly reveals, quite unfaithful to

398 “In Egypt, however, the Chalcedonian cause was lost,” Frend, Rise (1972) 154; see also, Watts (2010), 226.
399 Davis (2004), 90.
400 Stephen J. Davis, Coptic Christology in Practice: Incarnation and Divine Participation in Late Antique and Medieval Egypt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 104.
the way Timothy, and men like him, understood and experienced the conflicts in which they were involved.\textsuperscript{401}

It must not be forgotten that Timothy and his followers truly believed their faith to be the revelation of God and consistent with the teachings of the apostles and church fathers. Any attempt to dismiss religious rhetoric, such as the letters of Timothy, as political maneuvering in theological dress would be an inaccurate analysis. Timothy’s theological conviction indeed was “daß Christus wirklich als ein Toter begraben war, in der Erde lag.”\textsuperscript{402} To point out the role of social, ethnic and political realities surrounding these theological issues can be complementary to the idea that these controversies are fundamentally theological:

Regional identity does not necessarily imply separatism…A study of the Monophysites cannot be confined to the history of Christian doctrine. The issues raised by the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon touched on many, perhaps nearly all, aspects of the relations between government and governed in the east Roman provinces in the fifth and sixth centuries. Religion was the medium through which this relationship was expressed both in its harmony and its dissent.\textsuperscript{403}

Rather, by understanding social conditions, a better picture of the world from which these letters come is produced. As stated above, attempts to understand the religious life of fifth-century Egypt without bringing in anachronistic factors should not

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\textsuperscript{401} Ebied & Wickham, 328.
\textsuperscript{403} Frend, \textit{Rise} (1972), x-xi.
\end{flushright}
lead to denying the effect of political, social and economic systems on the religious
landscape of Late Antiquity.

In conclusion, what we see in Timothy’s letter addressed to the people of his
patriarchate, comprised of Egypt, the Thebaid, and Pentapolis, is an early move on the
part of the exiled patriarch to unite his people under an anti-Chalcedonian statement of
faith by rhetorically structuring it as the faith of the Egyptian people. Indeed, Timothy is
credited in the *Plerophoria* with “bringing together the people,” (ܡܟܢܫ ܠܥܡܐ).
Perhaps the most vivid example of ethnic boundary maintenance present in the theological work
of Timothy Aelurus is in his summary of church history (ܬܫܥܝܬܐ).

Timothy attributes the fall of Rome to the Chalcedonian schism: “And they were
the cause of the schisms and divisions of kings for it was not long after the council of the
oppressors (ܘܡܐ̈ �� ��) that the destruction of Rome occurred. Up until those days there was
strife, division, and schisms in the ecclesiastical ranks who were among the kings.
Because of this, the Westerners (ܡܥܪ̈ܒܝܐ) have not reconciled with the Easterners
(ܡܕܢܚܐ) to this day.”

Timothy links Chalcedonian doctrine with imperial authority and claims that it is
“a lie and not faith which prevailed throughout the land (ܐܪܥܐ).” Timothy contrasts
imperial Chalcedonian doctrine with the anti-Chalcedonian faith of the East: “Indeed
what church in Egypt, Libya, or the East (ܡܕܢܚܐ) has not mourned over the exploits of
their persecution and their impiety? What region or city has forgotten the murders against
the sheep of Christ from that time until today as well as the exiles and assaults?”

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404 *Plerophoria*, 130.
406 Ibid, 216.
Timothy lays the foundation for a trend in Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian literature of contrasting imperial Chalcedonianism with Miaphysite doctrine. And that Miaphysite doctrine is coterminous with Egyptian identity, even though it is also an international movement.

Motivated by a commitment to theological orthodoxy, Timothy labored to promote anti-Chalcedonianism as the faith of Egypt: “Timothée transmet à ses successeurs la conviction que tant que l’empire continue d’exister, la foi monophysite est appelée à devenir universelle sous l’impulsion de l’archevêque d’Alexandrie.” The contextualization of anti-Chalcedonianism in Egyptian ethos, making one-nature Christology a feature of Coptic identity, simultaneously connected Egyptianness to the international Miaphysite movement. The praise for Timothy and his achievements on behalf of his people found in the CCH attest to the function of this patriarch in Egyptian Christian memory:

And Pshoi died upon the throne, because he himself was an orthodox. When he died, all the clergy and the archimandrites and the entire country set Timothy on the throne. Then all schisms in the church were brought to nothing [...] was in it again, without any offense on any side. But there was peace for all the peoples who hated the Tome of Chalcedon.

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408 Blaudeau, 128.  
409 Timothy Salofaciolus, the Chalcedonian patriarch who is often called Pshoi in the CCH to distinguish Timothy Aelurus, David Johnson (1973), 181.  
410 Johnson’s edition has τεκκάλας [οδύνε ἔπεις κι]ςς which he has translated “and it (the church) was again at rest (?),” Ibid, 119; trans. 139. Orlandi’s edition has τεκκάλας which does not appear in his translation, Tito Orlandi, Storia della Chiesa di Alexandria: Testo Copto, Traduzione e Commento: Vol. II: Da Teofilo a Timoteo II (Milano: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, 1967), 57. Because of the discrepancies in the editions, the apparent uncertainties of both modern translators, and the gaps that are present in both, I have chosen to include a lacuna indicating the inability of rendering a sensible translation at this point.  
411 David Johnson (1973), 119.
Longinus

Orlandi has argued that the *Life of Longinus* is a compilation based on several texts including homiletic and biographical material with a prologue and title added later.\(^{412}\) He has noted parallels and potential instances of borrowing from other sources such as the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium*, and the *Panegyric on Macarius of Tkow*.\(^{413}\) The primary function of the material that is presented in the *Life* is to serve as “semplici spunti di meditazione per i monaci.”\(^{414}\) In his English translation of the *Life*, Tim Vivian claims that the primary purpose of the *Life* is to serve as a devotional aid: “This last, I believe, is the way its original author intended it to be heard: as a sustained parable on humility.”\(^{415}\) While hagiographical works such as the *Life* provide invaluable insight into the mindset of late antique Egyptian Christians, the historical information presented must be taken with a grain of salt.

For example, while the *Life* claims that Longinus spent significant time as *hegoumenos* of the Enaton monastery, the silence on this matter in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* casts doubt on this detail.\(^{416}\) Equally questionable is the identity of the victim of mob violence by the Alexandrian Miaphysites. While the *Life* reports that the prefect of Egypt (Acacius) was burned in the Hippodrome, the Chalcedonian Evagrius claims that...
Proterius was murdered at the order of Timothy Aelurus. What is clear is that the violence in Alexandria resulted in the exile of Timothy Aelurus and his replacement by the Chalcedonian Timothy Salofaciolus at the order of Emperor Leo I. This Chalcedonian presence in Alexandria during the tenure of Longinus at the Enaton calls into question the depiction of Egypt as completely anti-Chalcedonian in the *Life*. In the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, John of Maiuma presents Longinus as having a central role in the installation of Timothy Aelurus as patriarch:

They had as their head and chief the blessed ascetic and great prophet Longinus, the father of the monks (ܓܕܕܝܲܲܪ̈ܐ ܐܒܐ), who was inspired and provided for them according to the will of God for this (purpose). They all reached an agreement to send men who were suited for the task. By force (and) without his foreknowledge nor his being at all aware (of it) beforehand, they took from the desert the holy Timothy, that famous confessor and true martyr, who already had been honored with the dignity of the priesthood by the great Archbishop Cyril…They brought him to the city, to the church called Kaisarion, where the whole city was assembled as one, so to say, together with the women and the children. Together with the holy monks they made haste to perform his ordination and to raise him up as high priest, preacher, and fighter for the fear of God.

The *Life* however, is the primary source of information concerning Longinus. The panegyrist begins with the customary self-abasement common to Coptic hagiographic material: “Like someone standing under an extremely high rock attempting to lift the

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418 Davis (2004), 91.
rock or climb it, I am at an utter loss for how will I be able to climb it?" Such examples of exaggerated humility are followed by an expression of resolve motivated by awareness of spiritual duty:

But since I understand my own feebleness, I wish to be silent about the history of those saints given their exaltedness and my own inferiority. But then I see judgment before my eyes… ‘why do you shut your mouth and not tell us of the life of these saints?’…Paul, the teacher, exhorts, ‘Remember your great ones’…As I was pondering these things, I reckoned it necessary to begin writing the history of the saints and to further our remembrance of their way of life.

Longinus is said to be from a city in Lycia, a mountainous country in southwest Asia Minor, which attests to the reality that anti-Chalcedonians in Egypt were a cosmopolitan group with many non-Egyptian leaders. The ethnic diversity that characterizes the Egyptian people—in antiquity as well as today—is an example of the manner in which ethnic boundary maintenance develops through contact and incorporation with outside groups. A more inclusive vision of the orthodox community coexists with pro-Egyptian rhetoric. It is interesting that while the panegyrist introduces Longinus and identifies his foreign race (ⲡⲉϥⲅⲉⲛⲟⲥ) he also provides something of a disclaimer: “He was from a city of Lycia according to his race as it is reckoned on

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421 Vite Longino, 46.
422 Hebrews 13:7.
423 Vite Longino, 48-50.
424 Barth, 11.
425 Vivian translates ṔⲧⲟⲧⲧⲩⲔⲓ as “birth,” thus losing the ethno-cultural sense of ṔⲧⲟⲧⲧⲩⲔⲓ in this context—Vivian, 249.
earth, but he was a citizen of heavenly Jerusalem for his citizenship was in heaven, according to the teaching of the wise Paul. This leaves the impression that the panegyrist feels a slight pressure to legitimize a non-Egyptian’s place on the roster of proud Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians. By appealing to Longinus’ place in the heavenly (i.e. orthodox) community, the panegyrist immediately rebuts any race-based criticism of Longinus’ contribution to the Miaphysite cause. However, as will be shown in the discussion of other texts, such explanations are not necessary when the saint has an Egyptian background. The disclaimer in the Life of Longinus, coming at an early stage of the anti-Chalcedonian movement, attests to the significance of ethnic identity and the author’s awareness of the Egyptian people’s need for Egyptian heroes.

Longinus is said to have begun monastic life in Lycia at the monastery of Apa Hieronikos under the guidance of Lucius. Lucius and Longinus left the monastery due to a conflict that arose over Lucius’ leadership and the two began healing many people in Lycia. Their immense fame causes them to flee in order to cultivate humility. Lucius tells Longinus to go to the Enaton monastery west of Alexandria. Upon reaching the Enaton, Longinus chooses not to identify himself as a monk out of humility. The text then reports that he was not wearing the “foreign” monastic habit that would have identified him as foreign and as a monk: “There was no cowl upon him nor scapular nor habit (ⲡϩⲉⲑⲟⲥ) which the foreign monks (ⲛⲙⲙⲟⲛⲁⲭⲟⲥ ⲛⲝⲉⲛⲓⲕⲟⲥ) wear.” The gatekeeper nonetheless

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426 Philippians 3:20.
427 Vite Longino, 50.
428 Ibid, 60.
correctly identified Longinus as “a young foreign monk” (οὗτος ὁ νέος Νεσικός) who stood at the door for days because he wanted to enter the monastery. Impressed by Longinus’ patience, the hegoumenos allowed Longinus to enter and serve in the monastery. After two years of menial labor, Longinus was recognized as a monastic figure by “a Lycian merchant, (from) Apa Longinus’ country (τεχωρά).” After hearing of all the miraculous deeds done by Longinus and Lucius in their “country” (τεχωρά), the hegoumenos ordered them to shave Longinus’ head and clothe him “according to the monastic habit of Alexandria” (κατὰ περισσία ιρακότε). However, after becoming famous Longinus left his monastic community again and settled near the sea as a rope maker.

Lucius was led to Longinus by divine guidance and the two of them performed miracles, the news of which “filled the great city of Alexandria and all of Egypt” (ις τῆς πόλεως Ἡράκλεις ἤν κνομε τηρε). Once again Alexandria and Egypt are referred to as distinct geographic and cultural units. Byzantine Egypt was divided into many administrative units, not merely Alexandria and Egypt. What is constantly referred to as “Egypt” in Egyptian texts is itself comprised of multiple administrative nomes. However the frequent reference to “Alexandria and Egypt” refers to linguistic and cultural differences as opposed to governmental ones.

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429 Ibid, 62.
430 Ibid, 64.
431 Ibid.
432 Ibid, 66.
433 Ibid, 70. Vivian renders κνομε τηρε as “the surrounding countryside,” Vivian, 261. However, such a translation would be more fitting for the reference to “Alexandria and its region” (ιρακότε ἤν περισσία), Vite Longino, 70.
The final section of the *Life* discusses Longinus’ place in the anti-Chalcedonian movement and is generally considered the only section of the *Life* with historical value.⁴³⁵ At the outset of introducing the christological controversy, the encomiast depicts Chalcedonian doctrine as an imposed force that is synonymous with Byzantine hegemony: “And it happened at that time when the emperor Marcian desired to send a magistrate to Alexandria with the *Tome* of the impious Leo, he commanded that the city of Alexandria, and especially the monks of Enaton, subscribe to it.”⁴³⁶ It is Longinus’ mobilization of the monks of the Enaton in opposition to this “polluted doctrine” (πελάγημα ετχερή)⁴³⁷ that launches him into the position of *hegoumenos* of the monastery. Following the rejection of the *Tome* at the Enaton, Chalcedonian hegemony is associated with the local Byzantine authorities in Egypt: “The emperor instructed Acacius, the prefect ruling at that time, to force the monks at the laura to subscribe to the defiled *Tome* of Leo.”⁴³⁸

The ecclesiastical and political tension grows because of the response from the Enaton as the monks refuse acceptance of the *Tome*, while setting the emperor (αυτοκρατωρ) and God (παντοκρατωρ) in opposition,⁴³⁹ expressing rejection of the former out of obedience to the latter. It is interesting that in the midst of such rebellion, Leo is the one labelled by Longinus as “lawless” (παρανομος).⁴⁴⁰ The depiction of both

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⁴³⁶ *Vite Longino*, 78.
⁴³⁷ Ibid, 80.
⁴³⁸ Ibid. Vivian expands παντοκρατωρ as “the prefect of Egypt,” Vivian, 268.
⁴³⁹ Ibid, 82. This juxtaposition occurs just a few lines before the monks declare their refusal as based in their obedience to “the Almighty” (παντοκρατωρ). Interestingly, this stands in contrast to the emperor who is referred to as “your authority” (τεκεσογια), insinuating a lack of recognition of Marcian as a legitimate authority over the orthodox community.
⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.
imperial and local Byzantine authority as wicked continues, as both the magistrate and prefect dispatch a group of soldiers to murder the monks at the Enaton.

Byzantine authority is again contrasted with that of God as Longinus is warned of the threat by the Lord, who “sets aside the designs of rulers.” 441 When the soldiers attacked the monks, who were bearing palm branches, their arrows miraculously missed them. The power and wealth of the Byzantine forces is contrasted with characteristics of the humble monks of Egypt: “The wicked have drawn their swords, they have stretched their bows to cast down a poor and wretched one, to slay the upright of heart.” 442

After seeing the miraculous survival of the monks, the imperial troops prostrated themselves before Longinus and were invited to the Enaton monastery. After the monks reach the monastery and beseech the deceased fathers through prayer, the fathers called out from their tombs for the monks to renounce the Tome of Leo, as it divides Christ into two natures. Upon hearing the voice of the deceased saints, the court official (ⲡⲙⲁⲅⲓⲥⲣⲓⲛⲟⲥ) and the whole army (ⲡⲉⲥⲧⲣⲁⲧⲉⲩⲙⲁ ⲧⲏⲣϥ) were astonished and prostrated themselves before Longinus. 443 Many soldiers decided to renounce

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441 Ibid. Psalm 32:10.
442 Vite Longino, 84. Orlandi identifies the biblical citation as Psalm 10:1-3: Orlandi (1975), 85; however, Vivian notes that it is a conflated citation including elements from 10:1-3 and 11:1-2: Vivian, 270. Vivian’s citation follows the LXX while the Coptic Psalms combine Psalms 9 and 10: see Wallis E. A. Budge, The Earliest Known Coptic Psalter: The Text, in the Dialect of Upper Egypt, Edited from the Unique Papyrus Codex Oriental 5000 in the British Museum (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd., 1898), 9-11. The above citation therefore, draws from Psalm 10:2 and 9:22 as it is numbered in the Coptic Psalms. The difference between the above citation and the Coptic Psalm 9:22 is of interest: ὙΠΕΡΗΦΑΝΕΣ ἸΩΝΟ ΜΠΑΣΘΗΡΙΗ ΧΕΡΙΟ “While the wicked are puffed up, the poor burn.” The word ὑΠΕΡΗΦΑΝΕΣ is not present in the Coptic nor its equivalent in the LXX: ἐν τῷ ὑπερηφανεύσεσθαι τὸν ἀσεβῆ, ἐμπυρίζεται ὁ πτωχός. The addition of ὑΠΕΡΗΦΑΝΕΣ by the encomiast of the Life, amplifying the already present ΟΥΡΗΝΗ, can only serve to emphasize the meek position of the monks of the Enaton in comparison to the Byzantine soldiers. This edition emphasizes the ongoing contrast of the meek Egyptian orthodox with the impious Byzantine Chalcedonians prevalent in the Life.
443 Vite Longino, 86.
their “military status and the vain deeds of this life” (ντεγιντατοί ην ἡπερήνης ἡπειβος εὐμογεῖς).

In this narration we see again several strands of Egyptian ethnic boundary maintenance present in anti-Chalcedonian literature. By subordinating the Byzantine political and military forces to the spiritual authority of the Egyptian saints of Enaton, the theological and ascetic superiority of Egypt over against Byzantium is depicted. The entry devoted to Longinus in the Synaxarium highlights this event only in its brief recollection of his life. However, the mention of converts to the orthodox faith, in this case the Byzantine soldiers, attests to the international, multiethnic nature of the anti-Chalcedonian movement. This rhetorical strategy simultaneously sets Egypt up as the orthodox light to the nations and portrays it as welcoming outsiders who ascribe to the orthodox (i.e. anti-Chalcedonian) faith.

The court official and other soldiers returned to Alexandria proclaiming the deeds of Longinus in the manner of those who have an encounter with Jesus in the Gospels. The citizens of Alexandria are then said to have stormed the praetorium, seized the prefect Acacius, and burned him in the middle of the city. The panegyrist offers this explanation of the violence of the mob: “I say this, they did not condemn him to death only because of this, but it was a judgment of the justice of God by the mouth of the great Apa Longinus and the brothers who were with him as a prophecy that our father David spoke in the tenth psalm, which he sang in this way, ‘Fire and sulfur are the portion of their

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444 The encomiast uses the same word often used to describe the monastic renunciation of worldly possessions characteristic of the ascetic life, thus linking anti-Chalcedonian confession with ascetic piety.
445 Vite Longino, 86-88.
446 Synaxarium (1915), 766-7.
Following the assassination of Acacius, the “bishop of that heresy” (πεισκοπὸς ἀρχαὶς ἑτήμασι) fled the city after taking off his ecclesiastical garments and putting on layman’s clothing.

The author then reports that “the Church openly proclaimed the teaching of the faithful orthodox.” It is interesting that, despite the minority status of Miaphysitism in the Byzantine Empire during the fifth-century, the Life attributes an anti-Chalcedonian confession of faith to “the Church” (τεκνάς). Such a universalizing statement, which stands in contrast to Byzantine religious dynamics of the fifth-century, further attests to the early attempt at framing Egyptian orthodoxy as an ecclesiastical standard. This Egyptian-centric language supports the ethnic boundary maintenance that permeates texts such as the Life. Following the conflict with the Chalcedonians, Longinus spends his last twenty years as leader of the monastery, during which time his mentor Lucius dies.

That the text reports Longinus having ruled “in their midst as a bishop” attests to the dominant role played by ascetic hegoumenoi in Late Antiquity. Longinus’ humility is the attribute most accentuated in the Life as he “commanded them to flee from vainglory” and “he was humble in every way; his face was cast down as he walked, a walk of wisdom.” The Life concludes with a short passage about Longinus’ death that again cast Alexandria and Egypt as anti-Chalcedonian bulwarks: “Oh how great was the mourning that occurred the day in which he went to rest. Not only the monastic brethren

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447 Vite Longino, 88. Psalm 11:6 (Coptic Psalm 10:6), again, a variant reading of the Coptic Psalm 10: ϕαβακοῦς εἰς ἑφεκτηκεν ἑγουκακέν ἡ ὦπη ὑμῇ ἐπὶ τὸν πεψεν ἰδασ. Perhaps the “scorching wind” is removed in the above citation and emphasis is placed upon “fire and sulfur” because of the nature of the assassination of Acacius.
448 Vite Longino, i.e. Proterius.
449 Ibid.
450 Ibid, 90.
451 Ibid, 88.
452 Ibid, 90.
but even the city of Alexandria and its environs (Ἄλλα τόποι έρχονται ἵνα ἂν εὖ τεκνίζῃ), especially those in the surrounding countryside (蒎εινοὶ λαχεῖς περιλαμβάνει).”

Vivian speculates that the comment emphasizing the anti-Chalcedonian faith of the surrounding countryside may indicate that “the city was strongly chalcedonian while the outlying areas were anti-chalcedonian.” The distinction between Alexandria and Egypt appears often in the anti-Chalcedonian literature of this period and also appears in the *Life of Longinus*. In sum, the *Life* presents a picture of Longinus as a champion of orthodoxy who established anti-Chalcedonian doctrine as the faith of the Egyptian people despite Byzantine interference. The *Life* stands in a series of “strongly anti-Chalcedonian historical traditions that emphasized the impiety of Chalcedon and the glory of ascetic resistance.”

**Macarius of Tkôw**

The *Panegyric on Macarius of Tkôw (Panegyric)* is considered to be originally composed in Greek and is attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria. As one reads through the *Panegyric*, it becomes evident, as Stephen Emmel has noted, that “viel davon wird in

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453 Ibid.
454 Vivian, 281, n. 119. An interesting counter-example to the frequent depiction of Upper Egypt as vehemently anti-Chalcedonian is the picture presented in the *Life of Zenobius*. The *Life* offers no critique against the Council of Chalcedon or the *Tome* of Leo however, takes serious issue with the Nestorian movement that has maintained popularity in the region of Akhmîm in the late fifth century. See, David W. Johnson, “The Dossier of Aba Zenobius,” in *Orientalia* 58 (1989), 193-212; Walter Till, “Koptische Heiligen- und Martyrerlegenden: Texte, Übersetzungen und Indices Herausgegeben und Bearbeitet,” in *OCA* 102 (Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1935), 126-133. The silence on Chalcedonianism in Upper Egypt in contrast to the frequent critique of Nestorianism found in the *Life* offers a more variegated picture of the concerns of orthodox Egyptian Christians during the late-fifth century. For the presence of Chalcedonians/Melkites in predominately urban areas, see Mikhail (2014), 82.
456 Watts, 136.
The patchwork of unrelated stories contained in the *Panegyric* has led scholars to doubt that the work was written by Dioscorus of Alexandria and, instead, see it as a compilation of separate accounts.\(^{459}\) Since the *Panegyric* was most likely not composed by Dioscorus, its date of composition cannot be in the mid-fifth century. David Johnson points to the erroneous version of the death of Timothy Salofaciolus in the *Panegyric* as evidence of a *terminus a quo* no earlier than the early sixth century, because no author who lived during the mid-fifth century would have made such a glaring mistake.\(^{460}\)

The *Panegyric* opens with the identification of the scribes Peter and Theopistus as the authors of the work, who are recording the life of Macarius as reported to them by the patriarch Dioscorus when they visit him in exile at Gangra.\(^{461}\) As soon as he enters the narrative, Macarius is described with a characteristic that is central to understanding the ethnic boundary maintenance in the *Panegyric*: he did not “know how to speak Greek” (ἐγεννηκόμενος ἦν ἐφακές ἀναγχαῖος).\(^{462}\) Macarius is depicted as a soldier who, despite his unfitness for battle (i.e. his linguistic handicap), “nevertheless he did not stop wanting to

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\(^{458}\) Emmel, 92.


\(^{460}\) Ibid, 12. This is also the date put forth by Michael Gaddis, *There is No Crime for Those who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005), p. 188, n. 144.

\(^{461}\) Nau has argued for the dependence of the *Panegyric* on the biographical *History of Dioscorus*, also claimed to have been composed by Theopistus- Nau (1903), 16.

\(^{462}\) *Macarius of Tkōw*, 3. The Bohairic manuscript from which Amélineau made his edition differs significantly from the two Sahidic manuscripts found in Johnson. For example, the above citation, Amélineau has ὅσαν ἔγγικα ἄν δέον ἔκτενον Ελληνικά: *Panégyrique de Macaire de Tkōou*, ed. É. Amélineau (Paris: Leroux, 1888), 93. The Bohairic manuscript Amélineau edited was incomplete, Samuel Moawad, *Panegyrikos auf Makarios von Tkōōu* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2010), 47. Moawad’s edition, translation and commentary is of the Arabic translation of the *Panegyric*, to which he assigns a *terminus a quo* of the 13th century, 53.
come with us to the war of Chalcedon’’ (ἌΛΛΑ ΗΠΕΙΡΙΩ ΤΟΥΕΩΔΙ ΝΗΜΑΝ ΕΠΙΟΛΥΝΟΣ ΝΙΚΑΛΧΗΛΩΝ). After Dioscorus summoned the Egyptian bishops to accompany him to Constantinople, Macarius is one of the few bishops who did not desire to “remain on their throne.” Though he lacks money, Macarius initially turns down the offer to travel with the bishops in the ship and expresses a desire to travel by foot.

Describing Macarius as poor and spurning physical comfort enhances his monastic credentials. Macarius traveled instead with the archbishop whereupon his linguistic handicap immediately became clear:

I said to him (Macarius): ‘Come, father, and sit next to us.’ But he did not understand my speech. However, he walked toward me when I motioned with my hand. He said to me: ‘Behold, I have come because you called me.’ And I too would not have understood his speech if Peter, the deacon, had not interpreted his speech for me, for he knew the Egyptian language (ⲉϥⲉⲣⲉⲣⲙⲏⲙⲉⲩⲉⲓⲏ ⲛⲏⲓ ϫⲉ ⲉϥⲉⲙⲓ ⲉϯⲗⲁⲗⲓ ⲥⲛⲟⲩϯ). And Theopistus, the deacon, said to me: ‘My father, what are you doing with this mouthless one who is on board with us?…But I said to him: ‘No, my son, do not utter words of this sort against God’s just one…Theopistus fell to his feet, weeping and saying: ‘Forgive me, my father. I have sinned against your holiness.’ When Peter had interpreted these words for him, the holy man in his exceedingly great humility said: ‘I have sinned, my son.’ I said to him: ‘Believe me, my father, if you do not absolve him, I will excommunicate him.’ And this holy man said to him: ‘God forgive you your sins, my son’.

The meekness displayed by Macarius in the face of mockery served as an example of ascetic humility, and providing such examples is a major aim of hagiographical compositions such as this. Macarius’ humility is illustrated throughout the

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463 Macarius of Tkôw, 3. Moawad points out in his commentary that Dioscorus’ ability to speak Greek is what affords him status as “der vorne das Heer,” p. 158.
464 Ibid, 4.
465 The Bohairic has εὑερερινηγεσιν ην ης εφεσιν ετάλλοι εχοντι “he translated because he knew the two languages,” Macaire de Tkoou, p. 95-6.
466 Macarius of Tkôw, 4-7.
Panegyric. Upon arriving at Constantinople, Macarius is dressed in “dirty garments,” which he feels appropriately express his attitude toward the emperor.

The aspect most relevant to the present study is the role played by ethnicity/language in the case of Macarius. Macarius, as a Coptic-speaker without knowledge of Greek, has a certain kind of marginalized status. However, the laudable humility displayed by Macarius in the face of prejudiced behavior depicts Macarius and the Coptic-speaking Egyptian people thought to be barbarian as spiritually advanced. The multi-lingual environment of fifth-century Egypt, in which some are monolingual in Coptic, others monolingual in Greek, and others bilingual, contradicts the common assumption of Egypt’s cultural and linguistic homogeneity.468

As they prepare to set sail from Alexandria, Macarius has a midnight vision in which the emperor Marcián and empress Pulcheria appear in the likeness of the dragon and harlot of Revelation 12 and 17 respectively. These villainous characters implore the bishops from “every land” (ⲛⲉⲉⲡⲓ̈ⲥⲕⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲙ̅ⲡ̅ⲕⲧⲁⲭⲱⲣⲁ) to cast down their crowns (Revelation 4) and to gather together. However, the voices of Athanasius and Psote implore the bishops not to throw away their crowns (i.e. subscribe to the Council of Chalcedon). After the bishops ignore the exhortation of Athanasius and Psote, their crowns are given to Macarius and Dioscorus.

Macarius is frequently depicted as the only bishop who stayed the course of orthodoxy: “Apa Macarius did not desire to remain upon his throne corruptly like the rest

467 Ibid, 41.
469 Macarius of Tkôw, 11.
of the bishops who desired to remain on their thrones. They subscribed to the impious Tome. Macarius did not desire to remain upon his throne. Rather, he desired the One who seated him upon the throne of Tkôw, the humble (σωμβ) city.”

In Macarius’ vision, Byzantine imperial figures appear as oppressive, demonic forces while anti-Chalcedonian Egyptians are depicted as steadfast, orthodox martyrs. These themes are common to Coptic literature of this period. Dioscorus and Macarius are portrayed as the sole champions of orthodoxy, while the bishops from many lands are depicted as apostates. This rhetorical strategy casts Egypt as the source of orthodox belief for all of the Byzantine Empire.

While aboard the ship heading for Constantinople, Macarius heals a sailor with an inflamed eye. Attention is again given to ethnicity and language: “And when the holy man, Apa Macarius, saw him with the pain that was upon him, he had compassion on him and said to him: ‘Come, my son, behold the path.’ He drew him to himself. And the sailor spoke to him in Egyptian (πεχαΐονενν αε ηωι ηετεκυπττοιοι), for he was an Egyptian himself (χενογεκυπττοιοι ζωομ).” Upon being healed, the sailor exclaimed: “One is the God of this Egyptian elder (Τινεξςιο ηεκυπττοιο) who is on board with us!”

Immediately after these events, another miraculous event is recorded again highlighting Egyptian ethnicity. A businessman onboard the ship stole the tunic of one of Macarius’

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470 Ibid, 20. Identifying Tkôw as “humble” or “small” further amplifies the contrast between the humility of both Macarius and the Egyptian people and the insolence of Byzantine Chalcedonians.
471 Ibid, 15. The above citation is from the Morgan 609 manuscript. The Cairo Hamouli B has: πεχαΐι ηωι ηεκυπττοιοι. The identification of the sailor as Egyptian is wholly absent from the edition of Amélineau: Macaire de Tkouou, 101.
472 Macarius of Tkôw, 16. Morgan 609 does not have ηεκυπττοιο. The reference to Macarius as the “Egyptian elder” is quite frequent throughout the Panegyric. While the Sahidic typically has this as πεξςιο ηεκυπττοιο, the Boharic, as in the case above, often has παξελλον πρωι ηοιιιι: Macaire de Tkouou, 100.
monastic brothers. Upon hearing Macarius reassure the brother that the tunic would return to him, the servant threw it in the sea out of fear of Macarius’ prophetic abilities.473 When the tunic miraculously appeared to the brother of Macarius, the servant persuaded the sailors to viciously beat the brother. While beating and spitting on the brother, the only recorded words on the part of the assailants were: “All Egyptians are liars and perjurers (ⲕⲉⲩⲡⲧⲓ̈ⲟⲥ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ϩⲛ̅ⲣⲉϥⲓ̈ϭⲟⲗⲛⲉ ϩⲛ̅ⲣⲉϥⲱⲣⲕ̅ ⲛ̅ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲓ).”474 When Macarius intervened and implored the servant to tell the truth, the servant confessed, to the amazement of the rest of the ship as they exclaimed, “Truly this man is a saint.”475

The prejudiced attitudes towards Egyptians that the panegyrist dramatizes are turned on their head as Macarius again emerges as the archetype of humility. However, the fact that the encomiast desires to depict Egyptians as victims of prejudiced ideology attests to the minority discourse at play in Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian literature.476 David Johnson cites these remarks expressing prejudiced attitudes towards Coptic-speaking Egyptians as evidence against the presence of “national pride.”477 However, ascetic humility is often depicted by means of well-established racist attitudes, as in the case of stories about Moses the Black in the Apophthegmata Patrum.478 That the author of the Panegyric includes the racist perspective toward Coptic-speaking Egyptians only

473 Macarius’ deacon, Pinution, claims: “The primary quality of my father is this: nothing is ever hidden from him,” Macarius of Tkôw, 22.
474 Ibid, 17. Cairo Hamouli B has only ⲁⲕⲣⲁⲩⲧⲓ̈ⲟⲥ, without ⲁⲕⲣⲁⲩⲧⲣⲕ Ⲡⲧⲟⲧⲓ̈ⲟⲥ while the Bohairic has only Ⲝⲣⲓⲛⲧⲓ̈ⲧⲟⲩⲧⲓ̈ⲟⲥ: Macaire de Tkoou, 103. Perhaps this expression is an adaptation of Titus 1:12. Moawad translates from the Arabic: “Alle Kopten sind Lügner,” 110.
475 Macarius of Tkôw, 18.
477 Macarius of Tkôw, 12. Johnson also argues against Coptic authorship of the Panegyric in light of the writer’s disassociation with the “barbaric south” of Egypt: 60. This argument however, is problematic as it depends upon the antiquated view that the Coptic language ought to be associated with Upper Egypt and Greek with Lower Egypt.
enhances the laudable humility displayed by Macarius and further commends the piety of the Egyptian people.

En route to Constantinople, Pinution told Dioscorus about various miracles that were performed by Macarius, including combating paganism alongside Besa, the successor of Shenoute at the White Monastery. Upon arriving at Constantinople, Macarius’ meekness is again emphasized as he is only allowed to enter the proceedings as a servant to Dioscorus. Following the dismissal of the adherents to the Tome, Juvenal is accused by his fellow Palestinians of adhering to the “foreign faith” (εκείνης τῆς θρησκείας) of the “Diphysites” (Πυθυστής).

Again, the imperial forces of the Byzantine Empire are contrasted with the meek, faithful orthodox, this time in Palestine. Indeed, Palestine and Egypt are often cast as strongholds of Miaphysite resistance in the late fifth-early sixth century. Juvenal and the emperor Marcian are depicted as heretical oppressors who work together, as Juvenal is then said to return to Jerusalem with four hundred imperial troops. The Panegyric reports that “all the people” (πλὴρος ἡ πόλις) were reciting the Miaphysite Trisagion at the shrine of Holy Mary while surrounded by soldiers:

For they were proclaiming the Trisagion at that time: ‘Holy is God,’ that is to say, ‘Holy are you, God.’ ‘Holy is the Strong One,’ that is to say, ‘You are holy, Strong One.’ ‘Holy is the Immortal One,’ that is to say, ‘You are holy, Immortal One.’ ‘Who was crucified for us, have mercy on us,’ that is

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479 *Macarius of Tkôw*, 47. The pejorative term used by the anti-Chalcedonian party to refer to the adherents of Chalcedon. The Chalcedonian faith created a God-head of four persons from the perspective of the Panegyric: “You have made the Trinity a quaternity by dividing his body into four pieces,” (ἐκείνης τῆς θρησκείας εὐσεβίας πόλις, ἡ πόλις), 48.


481 *Macarius of Tkôw*, 49. Cairo Hamouli B has “the entire city” (πλὴρος ἡ πόλις).
to say, ‘Who was crucified for us, have mercy on us.’” (χειρισκόμενον εἰκόνις ἰδιότι· ἀγίος εἰσχύρος· ετελεῖ αὐτόν ἁμαρτημάτων· διόνυσος ἵππας· ετελεῖ ἁμαρτημάτων· ἱμηρός γαρ ὅτι ἀπέκτεινεν να ἃν)\(^{482}\)

As the crowd not only cursed Juvenal, but “even the lawless emperor” (ἵνα περνήσῃ παραδοξος),\(^{483}\) the Panegyric states that Juvenal gave the order to murder everyone in the church. In a confrontation between Juvenal and the priest Silas, Juvenal appeals to Scripture to persuade Silas to “not speak evil against the ruler of your people,” (ἵνεκδειησαμος επάρχων ἤπεκλασκ).\(^{484}\) Silas’ response to this request to first “honor God and the king,” further illustrates the ethnic boundary maintenance present in anti-Chalcedonian texts: any allegiance expressed towards one’s laos is subordinated to adherence to orthodox belief.

In his argument with Juvenal, Silas alleges that Shenoute intended to have Juvenal excommunicated, but this was not supported by Cyril. Shenoute is introduced as “Apa Shenoute, the Egyptian, the citizen of the barbaric region of Egypt,” (Ἀπὸ οἰκονομείς Πατρίξιος· πετυπη εἰπτου Νῆπὶβᾰρβᾰρικὸν ἠτεχνήμε).\(^{485}\) However, after Silas’ lengthy statement, Silas and the entire congregation were murdered, and their “blood reached the

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\(^{482}\) Ibid, 50. The Panegyrist decision to include the Coptic translation of the Trisagion further amplifies the focus of the Panegyric on the significance of the Coptic language as it is the primary language of its hero. The wording is almost identical in the Bohairic, likely a result of the significance of this declaration of Miaphysite identity across dialectical boundaries: Macaire de Tkou, 125. The inclusion of the Miaphysite Trisagion, usually attributed to Peter the Fuller in 470 CE, is further evidence negating Dioscoran authorship of the Panegyric: Macarius of Tkôw, 10.

\(^{483}\) Ibid, 51. Morgan 609 has “the transgressing emperor” (ἵνα περνήσῃ παραδοξῶς).


\(^{485}\) Macarius of Tkôw, 60. It is interesting that the Panegyric uses καίνη for the first time here in contrast to the frequent use of ἕπαγγέλλειος. While καίνη is used here to designate the land of Egypt, ἕπαγγέλλειος is most often used in this text to refer to an Egyptian’s ethnic identity. καίνη is used again being referred to as “barbarian”: “he (Cyril) caused him (Nestorius) to be exiled to Egypt’s barbaric south,” (ὁ Αἰγύπτιος ἕπαγγέλλειος ἤτεχνημε), 107.
ankles of the soldiers." Due to these bloody events in the narrative, Juvenal is depicted as the one whose “impiety and madness was more evil and accursed than anyone (παραφόνε ην).” Juvenal then takes his troops to the monastery of Longinus in order to enforce their acceptance of the faith of Chalcedon.

Longinus’ response to the decurion illustrates the close relationship between monastic communities throughout Egypt and the Alexandrian patriarchate: “Has the throne of Alexandria also subscribed? If so, bring it and I too will subscribe.” The *Panegyric* then describes the event, which is also recorded in the *Life of Longinus*, where the soldiers enter the tomb of the deceased fathers of the Enaton, who order Longinus to renounce the *Tome* and the Council of Chalcedon. Like the *Life*, the *Panegyric* also reports the immediate conversion of the soldiers while adding the detail of their becoming monks. The *Panegyric* explains the background of the decurion convert, Nestorius Andragathes, who was victorious in battle against the “barbarians who are called Arabs,” (ἡπαρβάρος ἐτούνογτε ἐροοῦ ἡερβάρος) and whose name became outlawed due to the association with the Nestorius condemned at Ephesus I.

The story then shifts back to the events surrounding the meeting between the emperor Marcian, Macarius and Dioscorus at Constantinople. Dioscorus opposes the

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486 Ibid, 63.
487 Ibid, 64.
488 Ibid 71. Morgan 609 claims that the soldiers came to a monastery in Lycia while Cairo Hamouli B claims that “they came to the city of Alexandria (Ῥαχώτε) by the command of the lawless emperor. They came to the monasteries which are in the ninth district (ἢπαρκών).” David Johnson notes that Hamouli B conforms more closely to the Coptic tradition of Longinus’ tenure as *hegoumenos* of the monastery at Enaton while the association of Longinus with Lycia in Morgan 609 most likely arises from Lycia being Longinus’ birthplace: 54, n. 92. This is highly likely and the relative distance from Jerusalem to Lycia as compared to Alexandria makes a visit from Juvenal more probable to have occurred in Alexandria.
490 *Macarius of Tkôw*, 78.
Chalcedonian definition because it unnecessarily adds to that which was laid down by the orthodox fathers, a position often taken by anti-Chalcedonians. Protesting against Chalcedon, Dioscorus exclaims: “I am orthodox, the descendant of orthodox people,” (มั่นใจⲛ̅ⲛⲟⲣⲉ ⲛⲟⲣⲑⲟⲇⲟⲩⲧⲓⲟⲥ). The frequent contrast between Egyptian Miaphysites and Byzantine/Constantinopolitan Chalcedonians during the fifth and sixth centuries contradicts the idea that this ethnicized religious polemic was an innovation of Egyptians under Islamic rule.

The archbishop and others in attendance express agreement with Dioscorus and beseech the emperor to accept the doctrine laid out by the Alexandrian patriarch: “Cast away these Manichaean deceivers from you, do not allow them to deceive you, O emperor.” The fact that, from the beginning, anti-Chalcedonians appealed to imperial authorities to accept the orthodox faith (i.e. Miaphysite) attests to their strong desire for theological unity throughout the empire and further disproves any hint of nationalist separatism.

The suggestion by Samuel Moawad that Dioscorus represents the beginning of a movement of Egyptian independence from Byzantium does not accurately express the tone of the Panegyric. Religious literature of this period asks governmental leaders to align themselves with theological orthodoxy for the good of the empire or a particular region. Such admonition would not come from Egyptian Miaphysites if their ultimate desire were to become politically independent from the Byzantine Empire. Rather, the

491 Ibid, 90. The second part of this exclamation is only present in Morgan 609. The sense here could be ethnic as well as religious.
492 Papconstantinou (2006), 72.
493 Macarius of Tkôw, 94. The pejorative use of “Manichaean” in theological controversy is a common way to insult an opponent and should not be taken literally. See also, D. Johnson (1980), 73, n. 133.
494 Moawad, 38.
Egyptian church saw itself as the moral center of the empire called to return its leadership to theological orthodoxy.

Egyptian leaders also take to task the leaders of the foreign lands in which they are in exile. Dioscorus accuses Sabinus, the bishop of Gangra where Dioscorus was in exile, of leading his city astray through “innocent” heresy: “He (Sabinus) said what Abimelek, the king of Geras said, ‘Lord, do not destroy an ignorant nation,’” (ογρεωνος ματςουγη). After Dioscorus’ successful protest, Marcian dismissed the bishops at the behest of Nestorius Andragathes who was, at that time, a heretic (i.e. Chalcedonian). Marcian then met with his advisors and devised a plan to murder Macarius.

However, a child named Misael came to warn Dioscorus, telling him to allow “this Egyptian elder” (περικκ υπεντπης) to flee lest he be killed. Macarius is referred to twice more as “this Egyptian elder” in the story told of his healing a woman who had leprosy. When praised for his miraculous deed by the woman and her husband, Macarius angrily implores them to honor only God, again emphasizing his great humility. References to his ethnic identity again associate Egyptian ethnic boundaries with those of the orthodox, monastic politea.

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495 Macarius of Tkôw, 113. Genesis 20:4. The wording found in the Bohairic Gen. 20:4 is quite different: “My Lord, will you destroy an unknowing and just people?” περικκ υπεντπης ματςουγη: see, de Lagarde, 40-1. This wording more closely follows the LXX: “Lord, will you destroy an unknowing and righteous nation?” Κύριε, έθνος αγνοουν και δικαιον ἀπολεις which also varies from the Hebrew: “My Lord, will you destroy a just nation?” אדני הגןי גם צדיק תהרג. While the biblical account of Abimelek reports the king of Geras understanding his kingdom as “just,” Sabinus is depicted less righteously as “ignorant.” While “ignorant” can have a meaning approximating “innocent” as in the LXX and Bohairic OT, the absence of the quality of “just” in the Panegyric is likely an intentional omission by the panegyrist as critique of Sabinus.

496 Macarius of Tkôw, 97.

A synod was then convened in Alexandria in which an imperial courier (περεταρίως)\textsuperscript{498} named Sergius and the future Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria, Timothy Salofaciarius,\textsuperscript{499} commanded the bishops of Egypt to subscribe to the Tome. In order to emphasize the corruptness of the Byzantine Chalcedonian movement, the courier offers the throne of archbishop to the first bishop willing to subscribe to the Tome.

Proterius signs the document, thus beginning his rule as patriarch as the result of an imperial bribe. Macarius rebukes Proterius, declaring that “all Alexandria is a witness against you.”\textsuperscript{500} Samuel Moawad points out that the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon indicate that Dioscorus’ anti-Chalcedonian teaching had more influence among the people of Egypt than any imperial policy.\textsuperscript{501} In the same way, the Panegyric depicts the powerful influence of Dioscorus and by association, Macarius.

However, the Panegyric reports that all the bishops subscribed to the Tome “through fear,”\textsuperscript{502} leaving Macarius as the lone pillar of orthodoxy in the manner of Elijah against the priests of Ba’al. John of Maiuma (John Rufus) also identifies Dioscorus as the only bishop to oppose the Chalcedonian definition.\textsuperscript{503} The Alexandrian Synaxarium speaks of Dioscorus similarly: “Certiores autem fecerunt Marcianum imperatorem et Pulcheriam imperatricem, neminem obsistere iussioni eorum de fidei professione, nisi Dioscorum, patriarcham alexandrinum.”\textsuperscript{504} The Panegyric uses Dioscorus’ international reputation as the chief opponent of Chalcedon to raise the standing of Macarius.

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\textsuperscript{498} Ibid, 120. Morgan 609 has περεταρίως, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{499} More often spelled Salophaciolus.
\textsuperscript{500} Ibid, 121. This phrase is absent from Cairo Hamouli B.
\textsuperscript{501} Moawad, 4.
\textsuperscript{502} Macarius of Tkôw, 122.
\textsuperscript{503} Plerophoria, 19.
But there is also an underlying criticism of the Egyptian bishops who accepted the *Tome* when coerced. The criticism is implied by the counter-example of Dioscorus and Macarius, who stand as champions of Egyptian orthodoxy. In doing so, the boundaries of Egyptian ethnicity are aligned with Miaphysite resistance. The panegyrist holds the Egyptian bishops accountable to a group-specific standard that supports ethnic boundary maintenance. In Barth’s terms: “Since belonging to an ethnic category implies being a certain kind of person, having that basic identity, it also implies a claim to be judged, and to judge oneself, by those standards that are relevant to that identity.”

After Macarius’ continued refusal to subscribe, the enraged Sergius grabbed Macarius and “gave him a kick under the genitals, and he fell and died immediately” (Ἀφ᾽ ἡς ἡμῶν ἑκάκτης ἑναιῶνασκεον ἄριστ ἀμην ἵπεγνυν). Although the text stated that the majority of Egyptian bishops subscribed to the *Tome*, it claims that “Alexandrian citizens” (Πλυνος ἑφεβοῖκοτε) wrapped Macarius’ body and placed him in the *martyrion* of John the Baptist and Elisha the prophet. This greatly angers Timothy Salofaciarius who asks: “People, what are you doing with this unclean Egyptian (πεἰςκύπτιος ἁκαβαρτος), burying him in the sanctuary of the saints?” Timothy is immediately struck by lightning and dies.

After Timothy’s reported death, a young mute child is cured at the sight of Macarius with John the Baptist and Elisha the prophet embracing one another. At the

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505 Barth (1969), 14.
506 *Macarius of Tków*, 123. The *Synaxarion* also reports Macarius’ death occurring after returning with Dioscorus; however, the *Synaxarion* claims Macarius accompanied Dioscorus to Chalcedon: *Synaxarion* (1921), 10.
507 *Macarius of Tków*, 124.
508 This event is clearly ficticious as Timothy Salofaciolus becomes patriarch of Alexandria after the exile of Timothy Aelurus.
sight of his child’s miraculous healing, the father exclaims: “One is the God of this Egyptian elder (ⲡⲉⲓϩⲗⲕⲓ ⲛⲉⲕⲩⲡⲧⲓ̈ⲟⲥ)!” Immediately following this event, the same exclamation is made by a hunchback who is also healed by the corpse of Macarius. The constant labelling of Macarius by his ethnic identity enhances the role played by ethnicity in this polemical text. Indeed, as Samuel Moawad has pointed out, “der Streit über die Natur Christi im 5. Jh. Nicht nur auf einer theologischen Ebene abspielte.” The boundaries of Egyptian ethnicity are being defined as coterminous with adherence to anti-Chalcedonian doctrine.

After the narrator described these events, Pinution exclaimed: “All Egyptians (ⲛⲉⲕⲩⲡⲧⲓ̈ⲟⲥ ⲧⲏⲣⲟ) have died a single time. But you have died many times, O my father.” Such a statement could have easily been addressed to “all people” as opposed to “all Egyptians.” Again, the ethnic label is meant to rally the Egyptian people by means of the anti-Chalcedonian teaching. The Panegyric ends with an exhortation to follow the orthodox example of Dioscorus, just as Macarius did. This text models the construction of boundaries for Egyptian ethnicity around the Miaphysite confession of faith.

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509 Ibid, 125.
510 Ibid, 127.
511 Moawad, 6.
512 Macarius of Tkôw, 128. Cairo Hamouli B has: “For truly Macarius has become more blessed than all Egyptians of this time. Macarius died a single time. But you, my lord father, have died many times.” In the context of the narrative, the panegyrist is addressing Antony the Great. Cairo Hamouli B adds material not present in Morgan 609 which indicate the purpose of this statement; the victory of Macarius is on the shoulders of the greater sufferings endured by Antony, the father of all Egyptian monastic figures.
Chapter 2: Response to Justinian

The survey of early sixth-century sources describing mid-fifth century figures has demonstrated the degree to which Egyptian Miaphysite leaders immediately responded to Chalcedon by rallying their congregants around the anti-Chalcedonian banner. The mid-to late sixth century brought further changes for Egyptian Christians, most notably during the reign of Justinian I. Volker Menze has demonstrated that it was the imperial policies of emperor Justin I, his nephew Justinian I and the Second Council of Constantinople (553 CE) that played a larger role than Chalcedon in the schism between Antioch and Constantinople.

In Menze’s analysis, Syriac-speaking figures such as John of Ephesus played an integral role in forming a Syrian Christian identity coterminous with Miaphysite doctrine as a result of the imperial policies of the mid-sixth century.\textsuperscript{513} Menze’s analysis of the Syrian Orthodox Church closely resembles the present study. The reign of Justinian provided an impetus for the Syrian Church to craft a new identity in opposition Byzantine Chalcedonians in a manner similar to Egyptian Miaphysites. However, in the case of Egypt, the response against Chalcedon was immediate and unified across every level of ecclesiastical authority.

A contributing factor to Egypt’s swift reaction is its uniquely unified ecclesiastical structure under the Alexandrian patriarch.\textsuperscript{514} While there were significant Syriac-speaking anti-Chalcedonians in the late fifth century such as Philoxenus of Mabbug and Jacob of Sarug, the fact that the Egyptian patriarch Dioscorus was exiled at the time of Chalcedon resulted in a swiftly negative reaction on the part of the Egyptian

\textsuperscript{513} Menze, 276.
\textsuperscript{514} Bagnall, 13; Brakke, 10.
Church. The sixth century advanced the process of the formation of a divergent Egyptian ecclesial identity that began at Chalcedon. The reign of Justinian is the central event that intensified anti-Byzantine and pro-Egyptian rhetoric. The Egyptian church’s perception of itself as persecuted by the Byzantine Empire is present in sixth-century sources and is not a later “recasting of Byzantine rule.”

The main figures of sixth-century, anti-Chalcedonian Egypt who will be surveyed in the following chapter are Apollo of Hnēs, Daniel of Scetis and Abraham of Farshut. The hagiographical texts relating the lives of these Egyptian ascetics include significant evidence of anti-Chalcedonian polemic framed in ethnic terminology. Indeed, the role played by these monastic figures in the fight against Chalcedon is presented as their greatest achievement, solidifying anti-Chalcedonianism as the most important feature of Egyptian Christianity.

While Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo are important targets for the Miaphysite invective present in these texts, the person and administration of Justinian receive greater attention in each of the following texts. A unique feature of these texts, as opposed to those dealing with fifth-century figures, is the inclusion of other theological concerns apart from Chalcedonianism. Yet, as will become evident, Chalcedonianism is the primary concern for Egyptian Christians continuing into the sixth-century. The following texts will illustrate how these dogmatic concerns continue to shape the boundaries of Egyptian identity.

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515 Mikhail (2014), 91.
Panegyric on Apollo

The author of the *Panegyric on Apollo* (*Panegyric*) identifies himself as Apa Stephen, bishop of Hnēs (ⲕⲡⲧⲡⲫ) who was a monk in the Monastery of Isaac during Apollo’s tenure as archimandrite. While neither the *Panegyric nor the Panegyric on Elijah* provides any further information on Stephen, the similarity in style of both works removes any significant cause for doubting his authorship. The question of the original language of the work, whether Greek or Coptic, remains open in the case of the *Panegyric* as well for most Egyptian literature of this period.

Reymond and Barns have suggested the following criterion: “If a writing is not intended to have any circulation or interest outside Egypt, it may well be composed in Coptic; but if it is intended for a wider public it may be assumed to have been originally in Greek.” As indicated by Kuhn, Apollo’s central role in the *Panegyric* would indicate its composition in Coptic. The extremely high and wide-ranging amount of Greek loan words (a pattern that becomes evident even in the excerpts below) might indicate a Greek composition if the rule of Reymond and Barnes is accepted. Kuhn offers one possible explanation: “Is it possible to suggest that the author was bilingual, that he was imbued with Greek language and Greek thought, but that he composed the work for a Coptic-speaking audience in Coptic?”

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516 The only other text attributed to the same Stephen is a panegyric on the martyr Elijah. Isaiah 30:4 refers to the city as Tāvel. The late antique name, Heracleopolis Magna, refers to its status as the capital of the nome Heracleopolis, just south of the Fayyum Oasis.


518 Reymond and Barnes, 18.

519 *Panegyric on Apollo*, xi. The frequent occurrence of relatively complex Greek-like constructions gives the *Panegyric* a rather awkward flow in Coptic, as opposed to Orlandi’s praise of Stephen of Hnēs’ writing as being “scrittà in un copto molto elegante;”: Tito Orlandi, *Vite di Monaci Copti* (Roma: Città Nuova Editrice, 1984), 186.

520 *Panegyric on Apollo*, xi-xii.
This suggestion is plausible especially given the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual nature of Byzantine Egypt. Kuhn is also correct in arguing that the Panegyric must have been composed during the sixth century. Stephen claims to describe events that took place during the reign of Justinian (527-565 CE) and states that Apollo met Severus shortly before the latter’s death (538 CE). The manuscript from which Kuhn has made his edition is dated to 822-823 CE which gives the Panegyric a terminus ante quem of the early ninth century. However, given the knowledge of sixth-century events present in the Panegyric, a sixth-century composition of the Panegyric is possible.

The Panegyric describes the monastery of Isaac as existing in two locations (ἡμοῖς ἡμῶν ἀκτίστριον): one for men and a convent to the north for “virgins who struggle to acquire the contentment of the incorporeal ones.” After formulaic introductory remarks, Stephen expresses the universal appeal of Apollo’s politeia:

The pleasant scent of your sufferings has been spread abroad. For which are the communities (νεοκοινωνία) and lands (insulae) from which no one has gathered in this place today to come and worship and enjoy (απόλαυε) Christ our Lord who is upon the mystic table instead of the manger of Bethlehem? Therefore, I shall raise my voice accordingly with the psalmist: The Lord gathered them out of their lands (ἡνεκευχοφρα), he led them in a straight way (that they might go up to) the city of dwelling.

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521 Wipszycka (1992), 38.
522 Panegyric on Apollo, xii. Orlandi also concurs that the Panegyric must have been composed before the Arab Conquest: Orlandi (1984), 186.
523 Ibid, xii.
524 Ibid, 34.
525 Most likely an intentional play on the name of Apollo which occurs also at the beginning of the same paragraph.
526 I follow Kuhn’s addition of these words which are found in Psalm 106:7 from which the Panegyric quotes: χιονος ἐν εὐθυγραμματεία που ἐν βασιλείᾳ ἐπετρέπει- see Budge, 116.
527 Panegyric on Apollo, 1-2.
That Stephen addresses his audience as the “Christ-loving people” (πλαος ἁμαρτεχε)\(^{528}\) indicates his understanding of the faithful orthodox as being a λαος comprised of all ἑπισκοπω and χωρα. Such comments express Egyptian ethnic boundary maintenance in the sixth century. The Panegyric highlights the role of the Egyptian faithful, bolstering the spirit of Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians while also encouraging the faithful orthodox outside of Egypt. The use of terms denoting social forms of organization (laos, genos) in the context of religious polemic is characteristic of early Christian literature.\(^{529}\) In this context, as in the Panegyric, the audience for these texts is a people that is both Christian and Egyptian.

At the same time, Egyptian Miaphysites do not hesitate to distance themselves from the negative depictions of Egypt as presented in the Old Testament.\(^{530}\) testifying further to the dominant importance of the Christian faith for the land and people of Egypt. Stephen clearly presents the vision of unity in diversity so prevalent in late antique Egyptian thought: “Even if those that come forth from it (the monastic community) are many, there still exists to all the holy brethren of the community one single focus, that is the holy way of life (ετεταςματικα ετοιμαμ), even if the good conduct (πραξε) for which each one strives is different.”\(^{531}\)

The Panegyric begins by praising one of Egypt’s most treasured sons, Apa Pachomius. Pachomius is compared to Abraham for both were called to leave their

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\(^{528}\) Ibid, 2.
\(^{530}\) Panegyric on Apollo, 22. This section can also be found in the additional manuscripts edited by Kuhn. Karl H. Kuhn, “Two Further Fragments of a Panegyric on Apollo,” in *Le Muséon* 95 263-268, (1982): 264-265.
\(^{531}\) Panegyric on Apollo, 20.
“country, people and father’s household” (περίκερας πιθανοτήτων πατριάς πατρεσκεψτικός) and come into the “land flowing with milk and honey.” Pachomius is actually given greater credit than Abraham who “went on the road up to the mountain of his sacrifice for three days,” while Pachomius “endured to such an extent from this district (περιτοιχία) until he went up to the monastery established on the mountain.” And while Abraham maintained all his possessions after he “left his country behind” (ἀπελώκος ησυχίας ἡπερεκτικός), Pachomius’ only possession was his virtue (ἀρετή).

The comparison between the two figures, which serves to highlight the strengths of the politeia of Pachomius, is predictable as the Egyptian abbot is also compared to the biblical figures of Moses, Joshua, David and Elijah in a manner consistent with late antique hagiographical literature. However, comparing Pachomius with Abraham in light of their respective sojourns is somewhat more interesting. Pachomius’ journey to Pbow is comparable to Abraham’s climbing the mountain of Moriah and both figures are said to have left their “country” (καρπ). While Pachomius left his hometown in the diocese of Latopolis in the Thebaid, Abraham left his home in Ur to undertake a journey of far greater geographic and cultural distance. Latopolis in the Thebaid is understood to be a different καρπ than Pbow, and it is in a symbolic sense as he leaves “the world” for ascetic life. The comparison with

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532 Ibid, 3.
533 Genesis 22.
534 Panegyric on Apollo, 3-4.
535 Ibid, 3.
537 For Pachomius’ birthplace, see his Life, Armand Veilleux, Pachomian Koinonia I: The Life of Saint Pachomius and His Disciples (Collegeville, MN: Cistercian Publications, 1980).
Abraham demonstrates the broad usage of \( \text{kak} \). The Thebaid and Pbow are understood to be distinct \( \text{kak} \), a word most often referring to a distinct country, but here having symbolic meaning. The primary function of the comparison in the narrative is to highlight Pachomius’ sacrifice to take up the ascetic life.

The cultural diversity that was present in Byzantine Egypt must be kept in mind when encountering the pro-Egyptian ethnic rhetoric in anti-Chalcedonian texts. The Panegyric provides evidence of diversity in Byzantine Egypt with regard to theological affiliation. While late antique Egypt is commonly thought of as entirely anti-Chalcedonian, the Panegyric indicates that the Pachomian monastic community of Pbow had become Chalcedonian. After comparing Pachomius’ arrival at Pbow to Abraham’s coming into the “land flowing with milk and honey,” Pbow is then described as “the holy community…even if that true grapevine which was beloved at first has now turned to bitterness.”

Stephen quotes from Jeremiah 2:21 as he derides the monastery of Pbow in an intentional effort to cast himself in the role of an Old Testament prophet who vehemently appeals to his people to turn away from their sinful ways (i.e. adherence to Chalcedon). The depiction of a homogenously anti-Chacledonian Egypt is inaccurate, but it is also significant that Egyptian Chalcedonians are depicted as fellow countrymen who have fallen from grace and are also vastly outnumbered. Stephen the panegyrist expresses sorrow at the presence of heretics (i.e. Chalcedonians) among his people (i.e. Egyptians).

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\( \text{kak} \) often refers to the whole earth. For an example of such a use in this text, see Panegyric on Apollo, 18. Its lexical range also refers to specific lands or countries: see, Walter E. Crum, A Coptic Dictionary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 131a-b. Orlandi translates \( \text{kak} \) using the Italian word “terra,” which would equate more closely with the English “land,” Orlandi (1984), 189. Likewise, Orlandi later uses “terra” to translate the Greco-Coptic word χωρα: Orlandi (1984), 199.

Panegyric on Apollo, 3.
which is another attempt on the part of the Egyptian anti-Chalceodnian party to make the Miaphsyite position coterminous with Egyptian identity.

Background information on the Pachomian monastery provides context for Apollo’s story. Despite lengthy praise of his ascetic virtue that is packed with biblical references, not much information is presented by Stephen about Apollo’s life before entering the monastery at Pbow. The Panegyric reports only that Apollo “chose for himself wisdom since his youth” and that he “became holy in his hands but pure in his heart.” Stephen then describes Apollo’s practice of keeping many vigils and barely sleeping for three years.

Apollo was comforted by spiritual support as an angelic host regularly transported him into their presence “making him all the more eager for virtue.” Apollo’s capacity for suffering was one of the defining characteristics of his politeia and his experience of divine encounters evidently raised suspicion: “Why do you doubt concerning the meeting with him of the species of incorporeal ones?” In an effort to verify Apollo’s heavenly interactions, Stephen tells a story about how Apollo, who was working on the harvest and fell ill of exhaustion, encountered the crucified Christ. Stephen also describes some of Apollo’s self-inflicted suffering such as praying through the night on top of a heated oven or while wrapped in a wet garment in the freezing cold.

Stephen uses these examples as instruction for his audience about proper monastic attitude toward suffering: “For those who submit to God shall be transformed in their

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540 Ibid, 9.
541 Ibid, 10.
542 Ibid, 11.
543 Ibid, 12.
strength.” Ascetic suffering fits with the high emphasis placed on martyrdom throughout the Coptic tradition. And it reinforces the anti-Chalcedonian position of the Panegyric. Indeed, immediately following the commendation of Apollo’s ascetic suffering, the adherents of Chalcedon are compared to the smoke rising from the pit in Revelation 9:

This very pit of the abyss was opened again in the days of the Emperor Justinian. Again that soul-destroying madness, again the torrents of lawlessness flowed in their ravines to shake the house of the faithful. For after Marcian, the culprit of the peril of the faith, perished, and after Basiliscus and Zeno and still others after these, the bad weed sprouted again in the kingdom of Justinian like a hidden fire in chaff which continues to produce smoke. Now the wretched bishops who had gathered together at Chalcedon became fodder for destruction and death and heresy, but their sins continue to be active. And their wickedness was unending and even their retribution was unceasing. For the fire of apostasy which those wretched bishops kindled everywhere drew to itself the laments and tears of the holy prophets until the end.

That the Panegyric numbers Basiliscus with the pro-Chalcedonian figures, such as Marcian and Justinian, who were despised by the Egyptian Miaphysite community is curious given the more positive image of Basiliscus found in other anti-Chalcedonian texts. The Chronicle of Zacharias of Mytilene indicates that Basiliscus demonstrated a more relaxed attitude toward anti-Chalcedonians than his rival Zeno. Indeed, even Zeno is presented in a positive light, for his Henoticon is “aimed at the annulling of the

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544 Ibid, 12.
545 Davis (2004), 42.
546 I follow Kuhn’s emendation of θοι found here to the Coptic word θοι: see, Panegyric on Apollo, 14.
547 Ibid.
Synod of Chalcedon and of the Tome of Leo.” It is possible that the different perspective of the Panegyric indicates a more strictly anti-Chalcedonian stance taken by Egyptian Miaphysites than that of other communities throughout the empire.

Once again, Chalcedonian doctrine is linked to Byzantine hegemony in contrast to the position of the Egyptian faithful. Stephen speaks as an Old Testament prophet as he cries, “Woe to the peoples,” (ογιοι νησαλοος) referring to Byzantine imperial authorities loyal to Chalcedon. Stephen supplies the usual objection to Chalcedon with regard to Christ’s nature: “Indeed he is not divided into two natures (ψεις), may it not be so, or two persons (προοιοοι) as it seemed to the corrupt council (τυγχοοοος ετακαρι), but he is one Lord, one Christ, one and the same without change (ανωαιβε) and division (αγνωνοπω).” Stephen uses similar wording to that found in the Tome in a rhetorical maneuver aimed at discrediting his opponents.

Polemical rhetoric expressing anti-Jewish sentiment is commonplace in early Christian literature and also appears in the Panegyric: “By means of Jewish thinking (ἡντιοκαλα), they divided this unified one, our Lord Jesus Christ, into two natures and two persons, and instead of the holy Trinity they brought forth an unlawful quaternity (ογετρας οπαρανοον).” The Miaphysites’ practice of labeling the

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551 Ibid, 15.
552 Ibid, 15-16. Kuhn expands νησαλοοι to “the Jews’ religion,” a translation that is not completely without warrant given the presence of the prefix νητ-. I, however, have rendered a more literal translation in an attempt to allow the text to simultaneously evoke a religious as well as ethnic sense of νησαλοοι. While it is commonplace in early Christian scholarship to minimize anti-Jewish rhetoric to merely a theological (as opposed to ethnic) rhetorical strategy—something I believe Kuhn is attempting here—it is the goal of this present study to demonstrate the way in which ethnic and religious boundaries cannot be so neatly delineated. Orlandi also translates more closely to the text: “Essi divisero in una concezione giudaica,” Orlandi (1984), 199. For an example of reading anti-Jewish rhetoric as purely theological, see Christina Shepardson, Anti-Judaism and Christian Orthodoxy: Ephrem’s Hymns in Fourth-Century Syria (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 20. Another example of
Chalcedonian position as “Jewish” relies on the view that the divinity of Christ is disrespected or violated in certain statements, just as Jews disrespected Christ himself in the gospel accounts.

Despite the inaccuracy of this interpretation of Chalcedonian doctrine, Miaphysite communities such as the monastery of Isaac can use it to portray themselves as the faithful remnant in an apostatized empire. Imperial authorities are frequently labeled “lawless” (παρανομος), while it is actually the Egyptian Miaphysites who engaged in frequent expressions of political rebellion. The Panegyric vividly depicts the Chalcedonian Byzantine administration, with a special focus on the emperor Justinian, as an evil oppressive force under which the Egyptian church must suffer and endure:

For truly it was not only the apostolic throne of Alexandria which manifested its light, the holy Dioscorus, which Christ set upon the lamp stand of the high priest at that time, but almost the whole country of Egypt (τεχορα τηρη σκεαδον ηκανε) and also the holy community of Pbou. The aforesaid calamity reached it not only in previous times but also in the days of the Emperor Justinian. And who will be able to see, or who will be able to hear the suffering of the orthodox at that time? For the pillar of orthodoxy and the true athlete of election, the holy Severus, the holy patriarch of Antioch, committed to many sojourns while being watched over, especially by God, as herald of orthodoxy. The emperor even called the patriarch of Alexandria, our father Theodosius, to him to Constantinople, openly as if honoring his holiness, but truly he wanted to seize him in order to annul ordination. I will stop up, said that emperor, these great rivers, so that their canals and their backwaters will dry up. I will hide, he said, the light under the bushel, so that the feet of those who

anti-Jewish rhetoric, Panegyric on Apollo, 18. These excerpts taken from pages 15-16 of the Panegyric can also be found in an additional manuscript containing a fragment of the Panegyric, Kuhn (1982), 266-8. For another example of anti-Jewish rhetoric in Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian texts: “The light and the sweet fragrance remained in the place of the saints (Scetis) effecting the salvation of everyone for a long time until the Jewish council (παραγηγην πιουδαιον) gathered, which occurred in Chalcedon where they divided (φορη) the Holy Church by their impiety, placing a blindness filled with obstacles (ποροι) and stumbling blocks (ποσφηλιαδια) on the entire world,” Zacharias of Sakha, Vie de Jean Kolobos, ed. Émile Amélineau (Paris: Annales du Musée Guimet 25, 1894), 389. Trans. Tim Vivian and Maged Mikhail, CCR 18 (1997): 3-64. The Life of John the Little is an example of an eighth-century text extra-positing anti-Chalcedonian sentiment into fourth-century material from the Apophthegmata Patrum.
run to it will be impeded. What lament does not occur for the orthodox at that time? The churches were abandoned, your \(553\) clerics were few. The majority of the orthodox bishops (περιγον ημετεροκοπους ημοθοδοξοα)\(554\) had fallen asleep in the faith, having been perfected by the teaching of their father. Thus then when the darkness of the error had spread abroad (παρεδωραλ), the wild beasts boldly proclaimed, wolf after wolf, to hunt the sheep of the Lord. They who came together at Chalcedon mixed the cup of the Judaism (πυκα νιυμηνιωγαλα), and the one who will drink it, his reward is the office of archimandrite of Pbow. O wicked demand, O bitter conflict! The command occurred, the wolf set out, the order of the emperor proceeded. And as it is written, that emperor sent out his arrows. He disturbed the brethren of the holy monastery (τκοινωνια). He increased his intimidations to disperse the sheep of the Lord, for\(555\) they did not want to transgress the faith of the Lord.\(556\)

Justinian’s efforts at Pbow resulted in the archimandrite Abraham of Farshut being “taken away from them” and a “transgressor” (παραβας)\(557\) appointed in his place by Justinian. Those loyal to the Miaphysite position, including Apollo, left Pbow with Abraham and came “to this very mountain” (i.e. the monastery of Isaac)\(558\) in order not to “make themselves foreigners (ναλλοτριας) to the God of their fathers.”\(559\) After leaving Pbow, Apollo is said to have wandered as “a sojourner in an alien region” (εφο ηπιοιουει γνοτωμ ιωμ),\(560\) with no specific details on where exactly he went.

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\(553\) Kuhn speculates a scribal error in ηεκληρικας and mentions the possibility of reading instead ηεκεμαρικας, Panegyric on Apollo, 17 n.133. If the addition of both kappas is not a scribal error however, the emphasis on “your clerics” serves to enhance the minority discourse at play in the Panegyric.

\(554\) Again, reinforcing the Egyptian Miaphysite self-perception as a faithful minority.

\(555\) Kuhn here has “if” indicating his reading ευτιωγας as having a circumstantial converter.

\(556\) Panegyric on Apollo, 16-17.

\(557\) Ibid, 17.

\(558\) Ibid, 18. The same phrase is repeated on p. 19.

\(559\) Ibid. The full lexical range of αλλοτριος, denoting idolatry and adultery (i.e. belonging to another god or person) as well as ethnic foreignness could be operative here. The sin of apostasy (i.e. adherence to Chalcedon) evokes the imagery of violating both one’s faith as well as ethnic group.

\(560\) Ibid.
Perhaps this “alien region” was again simply a neighboring district to that of Pbow and it was “alien” because it was not his monastic home.

However, given that Apollo’s entrance to the monastery of Isaac is likened to the journey of the patriarch Jacob, who was instructed to “return to the land (ⲡⲕⲁϩ) in which you were born,” this seems unlikely. Unless Apollo was born in the environs of Hnēs, the reference to his returning to the land in which he was born must refer generally to Upper Egypt. This might indicate that Apollo spent some time outside of Egypt. Despite these uncertainties, what remains clear is the manner in which the Panegyric again depicts Apollo as a prophet called to lead his people, while also making it clear that theological diversity was present in late antique Egypt.

Not only did Apollo’s monastic career involve extensive disputations with Chalcedonians, but his arrival at the monastery of Isaac led to his confrontation with the Meletian community in the area: “I am referring to the Meletians who were active in this mountain at that time and were acting as a stumbling block in every way to this saint’s way of life.” Unfortunately, the Panegyric does not provide any more information about the Meletian community of Hnēs or Apollo’s dealings with them. While one would hope for more information regarding this aspect of religious life in the area of Hnēs, the relative lack of information provided about Meletians in comparison to that for

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561 Ibid.
562 Ibid. 20.
563 However, as Orlandi has pointed out, the attestation of the persisting existence of the Meletians is “una notizia molto interessante”: “Non solo abbiamo la testimonianza della loro sopravvivenza così a lungo, ma Stefano ci dice che essi occupavano il monastero di apa Isaac al momento della venuta di Apollo,” Orlandi (1984), 186. Goehring argues that the absence of details on Melitian activity in Pbow is because the majority of textual evidence that survives comes from the Pachomian camp, and from times much later than the events they describe. However, Goehring does provide helpful documentary evidence that provides information on the Melitian presence in Pbow: James E. Goehring, Ascetics, Society, and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International. 1999), 187-195.
Apollo’s conflict with Chalcedonians demonstrates that the latter was much more important for the monastery of Isaac.

The *Panegyric* shifts abruptly from the Meletians to more stories about the miraculous deeds of Apollo and his work overseeing the construction of a church at the monastery of Isaac. Apollo’s ability to discern hidden realities was shown as he identified those who were worthy and unworthy of receiving communion.⁵⁶⁴ In another story, Apollo discerned the thoughts of two young men, one desiring to leave the monastery and another desiring to enter.⁵⁶⁵ One of the many visions Apollo receives includes news of a visit from the patriarch, Severus of Antioch:

The patriarch Severus came and the saint Apa Apollo was in another district (Ῥηκέτου). So then this man prayed in the habit of a foreign monk (Ῥνογούσχνα ἢμονάχος νομιτὸν) and went along the road. Yet this was not hidden from our father, for he immediately ran after him. The saints know the way of the saints. The great harts met one another, the image of the prophets, the seal of the apostles. And the patriarch said to our father, “You are Apollo, the one worthy of the joy (ἀπολαταίς) of the saints. Truly when I was in Antioch, I saw the light of your prayers and your way of life (πολητικός) gloriously proceeding to the high heaven, to the Lord. So I went into the wine-press of the righteous. And his fruits were going to be in the wine-press of the righteous, being blessed of the Lord forever.” When our father had prostrated himself at his holy feet and besought him to return and spend the rest of the day with him in the monastery, the patriarch besought as well, “The time of my death is approaching and I am hurrying to move on that I may reach my dwelling-place (παμμ. ἢοσία), the place upon which I will lay down the burden of my body.” Then, having saluted one another, this man went along the road, but our father joyfully returned to the monastery due to the pleasure (τοιμασίος) of the countenance (προσομοι) of Christ, the holy Severus.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁴ *Panegyric on Apollo*, 26.
⁵⁶⁶ Another intentional word play on the name of Apollo.
⁵⁶⁷ *Panegyric on Apollo*, 31-2.
Because of his connection with Severus, the memory of Apollo is permanently cemented as a champion of anti-Chalcedonian orthodoxy. The panegyrist Stephen praises Severus as the *prosopon* of Christ while also identifying his ascetic practices as foreign (ⲟⲩⲓⲓⲟ). While ⲟⲩⲓⲓⲟ can often refer to a practice being “strange” or “erroneous,” in this case, ⲟⲩⲓⲓⲟ must have an ethnic meaning, since it is applied to the highly-revered Severus. Orlandi therefore translates it with the Italian term “straniero,” which also has an ethnic sense. ⁵⁶⁸ Severus is highly venerated in the Coptic community, which attests to the existence of a Miaphysite movement that crosses ethnic boundaries. Yet the labelling of his ascetic practices as ⲟⲩⲓⲓⲟ also indicates that there is a sense of shared identity among Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians, and awareness of difference from non-Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians.

Stephen then describes the last days of Apollo: “He fell into a great sickness as his intestines were plagued. Therefore, he continued to vomit blood and phlegm for the rest of his days.” ⁵⁶⁹ However, this “holy spit”⁵⁷⁰ served as a healing agent for many people in the community. Likewise, Apollo bathes in water that then becomes a source of healing for various infirmities. Apollo dies on the 20th of Paône and is entreated by Stephen to “remember your community (ⲧⲉⲕⲥⲩⲛⲁⲅⲱⲅⲏ) which you have begotten from the start, this mountain in which you dwelt.” ⁵⁷¹ In the same vein, Stephen makes his final appeal to “this people, orthodox and of the same belief,” (ⲡⲓⲗⲁⲟⲥ ⲇⲉ ϩⲱⲱϥ ⲧⲉⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲛⲟⲣⲑⲟⲇⲟⲭⲟⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛϩⲟⲙⲟⲇⲟⲟⲥ) ⁵⁷² so that they also beseech the Lord for protection and

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⁵⁶⁸ Orlandi (1984), 212.
⁵⁶⁹ *Panegyric on Apollo*, 35.
⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.
⁵⁷¹ Ibid, 38.
⁵⁷² Ibid.
provision. The ἀλος that Stephen addresses probably means the community of Hnēs and the orthodox, anti-Chalcedonian Egyptian people as a whole.

**Abraham of Farshut**

The longest text providing information about Abraham of Farshut is the *Panegyric on Abraham of Farshut* (*PanAb*) contained in White Monastery Codex GC. Although the beginning of the *PanAb* remains missing, internal evidence indicates that the text was a panegyric, most likely delivered on the saint’s feast day: “(lines wanting) the great deeds of this saint who we celebrate today, our holy father Apa Abraham.”

Although the first two leaves from Codex GC are missing, the text of the *PanAb* that is still available in the codex begins at the end of the customary introductory remarks found in hagiographical material and immediately before the narration of Abraham’s childhood: “But in order that we not make the story any longer, let us turn to the matter that lies before us and begin his life from his youth.” The *PanAb* identifies Abraham’s birthplace as the “village called Tberēt” (†ⲧⲕⲧⲡⲣⲛⲟⲩⲧⲕ ⲫⲧⲙⲧⲟⲩⲧⲡ ⲫⲣⲟⲥ ⲫⲉⲁⲣⲧⲱⲧ) in the “district of Diospolis” (ⲧⲟⲩ ⲩⲟⲩⲧⲧⲡⲟⲩⲧⲡ), which has been identified as the modern city of Farshut.

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574 Ibid., 72.
575 Ibid.
Abraham is said to be the son of “great people” (ⲛⲉⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛⲟⲥ) in the village of Farshut and the panegyrist identifies himself as a συγγένεια of Abraham. The lexical range of συγγένεια allows for the possibility of an ethnic sense in this context as opposed to merely expressing a familial bond. Such emphasis placed on familial and ethnic kinship at the beginning of the PanAb immediately evokes feelings of ethnic solidarity common in anti-Chalcedonian Egyptian texts. Upon reaching the age of twelve, Abraham (along with his kinsman, the panegyrist) was enrolled by his parents in a school with devout teachers, in the manner of Moses, who “was instructed in all the wisdom of Egypt,” (ⲙⲉⲧⲣⲉⲧⲓⲕⲓⲏⲥ).

After successfully completing this education (τπεδέγιςκε), Abraham was called by God to the “spiritual land (πκλ) that is fertile, which the Lord visits every time, I mean the life of philosophy (πνοκ ςτε ϕλογοφικ), monasticism (τⲉϯⲧψοⲩⲧⲓⲕоⲩ).” But before entering the ascetic community, Abraham spent a year in mourning over the death of his parents: “He completed the year for his parents according to the custom of the world (τςγιϯϯ ςϯκοςκος).” This provides an interesting example of the way in which Egyptian Christian texts mark distance between their heroes and cultural practices common in their social milieu.

Such distancing is illustrated by referring to specific mourning practices as being “of the world,” (ϯκοςκος) as opposed to being derived from the Christian faith. This further demonstrates the manner in which the Christian faith acts as a standard by which

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577 PanAb, 72.
579 PanAb, 74.
580 Ibid.
581 Ibid. Goehring notes that ἱπτομε ψιθεατε refers to a “year of mourning for his parents,” p.75 n.29.
Egyptian Miaphysites pick and choose which elements of their ethnic identity they will emphasize and which they will ignore. After mourning his parents, Abraham unsuccessfully attempts to persuade his sister to join him in the ascetic lifestyle. Abraham then entered the Pachomian community and studied the *politeia* of Pachomius, Horsiesius and Theodore while the monastery was under the leadership of Pshintbahse (ⲡϣⲛⲧⲃⲁϩⲥⲉ). Upon the death of Pshintbahse, Abraham became leader of Pbow and was immediately confronted by the Chalcedonian policies of Justinian:

> And at that time, the devil set the storm in motion and raised up a disturbance against the church of the Lord (ⲉ̅ⲫⲛ̅ ⲧⲉⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲙ̅ⲡⲟⲉⲓⲥ), while an emperor named Justinian was rising up. And his heart was corrupt and his mind went astray, raving in the madness (ⲡⲗⲖⲃⲉ) of the heretics. And when he sat on the throne, he dedicated himself to the blasphemies of Arius and Nestorius and the *Tome* of the impious Leo. Then he wrote a letter to the whole land of Egypt (ⲉⲧⲡⲟⲓⲥ ⲛⲓⲡⲓⲡ ⲛⲕⲏⲙⲉ), to the bishops in each diocese (ⲙⲁⲣⲏ ⲉⲕⲏⲙⲉ) and the superiors of the monasteries so that they might come to him in the imperial city (ⲉⲧⲡⲟⲓⲥ ⲛⲓⲡⲓⲡ ⲛⲕⲏⲙⲉ). He wrote to the saint, Apa Abraham, who was superior of Pbow at that time, so that he might come to the court and appear before him.  

The opposition between Byzantine Chalcedonian authority and Egyptian Miaphysite monasticism is expressed in late antique Coptic hagiography through what Goehring calls “totalizing non-Chalcedonian discourse.”

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582 Ibid, 76.
583 Perhaps a reference to Manicheans whose doctrine are commonly referred to as *mania*, a polemical word-play on the name of the founder of the movement, Mani see, John Kevin Coyle, *Manichaeism and Its Legacy* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2009), 10-12. Indirectly associating Justinian with Mani would be consistent with the other names listed in the *PanAb* with whom Chalcedonian doctrine is inappropriately connected.


585 Goehring (2012), 51. See also, Cameron (1991), 7.
Justinian and Leo are depicted as pawns of the devil who persecute “the church of the Lord.” The panegyrist here seeks to depict the anti-Chalcedonian community as the true ecclesia. The “whole land of Egypt” and all its bishops oppose the diabolic Justinian, which establishes the Egyptian church as the primary opponent (in the minds of Egyptian Miaphysites) of Chalcedonian oppression. The faithful Egyptian bishops of each region are also contrasted with the daunting “imperial city” in a rhetorical attempt to present the anti-Chalcedonian Egyptians as David going up against Goliath.

Abraham goes to Constantinople with four of his monastic colleagues. Justinian explains the intention behind his invitation in a manner intended to further distance the Byzantine emperor, and the doctrinal position he represents, from Egyptian Miaphysites. He does it “so that you might join our faith and celebrate the Eucharist (ⲥⲩⲅⲉ) with us, and I will give you glory and great honor in my empire,” (emphases mine). The “us/you” language reinforces the Byzantine/Egyptian polarization prominent in PanAb. Just before a significant break in the manuscript, the PanAb reports Abraham’s refusal to accept Chalcedonian doctrine because of his desire for eternal glory rather than earthly honor.

Abraham’s position indicates that the population around Pbow in the sixth-century was predominately anti-Chalcedonian. On the other hand, Paul van Cauwenbergh has argued that the Pachomian monastic community was primarily Chalcedonian based on a panegyric on the fifth-century Pachomian archimandrite Martyrios. The panegyric connects Martyrios with the construction of the grand basilica of Pbow which van Cauwenbergh claims took place during the patriarchate of Timothy Salofaciolus:

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586 PanAb, 78.
587 Ibid.
La construction de l’église dont parle ce document, se fit du temps de l’empereur Léon et d’un archevêque d’Alexandrie du nom de Timothée, alors que “Dieu apaisa la tempête qui s’était levée contre l’Église.” Cet empereur ne peut être que le second successeur de Théodose II, Léon 1er, qui regna de 457 à 474. L’archevêque Timothée est sans doute le Salophaciole (460-481), et non le monophysite Aëlure qui fut exilé par l’empereur Léon, à cause de son opposition au concile de Chalcédoine. C’est vraisemblablement cette opposition et ses conséquences que le document en question envisage, quand il parle de “la tempête qui s’était levée contre l’Église.” Les moines de Pakhôme nous apparaissent ainsi comme attachés à la foi de Chalcédoine.  

Van Cauwenbergh asserts that the sixth-century conflict between Abraham and Justinian introduced a doctrinal division into the Pachomian koinonia that did not exist in the fifth century. However, Arnold van Lantschoot argued that the events described in the Martyrios panegyric occurred within the first two years of the reign of Emperor Leo I (457-459 CE). This would place the construction of the basilica during the patriarchate of Timothy Aelurus as he was not banished to Gangra until 460 CE. Following van Cauwenbergh, Goehring argues that there was a predominately anti-Chalcedonian constituency at Pbow in the time of Abraham. The Miaphysite presence at Pbow did not begin with Abraham’s confrontation with Justinian, but developed over time.

After Abraham’s refusal to accept Chalcedon, the text breaks off and the rest of the confrontation with Justinian is not described in PanAb. The panegyric picks up again.

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589 Ibid, 159.
with Abraham establishing a monastic dwelling (ⲙⲉⲧ ⲛⲟⲩⲩⲓⲧⲉ) at “the mountain of his village,” (ⲙⲁⲣⲱⲟ ⲛⲟⲩⲩⲓⲧⲉ).\textsuperscript{592} However, due to the limited space in this initial settlement, Abraham constructs a larger dwelling place on the same spot. After another break in the text of four pages, some brief miracle stories involving Abraham are included, followed by a gap of twenty pages. The text picks up again when Abraham is visited by Pachomius, Petronius and Shenoute and the date of his death is announced by his monastic predecessors. Later in the \textit{PanAb}, these iconic figures are lauded as spiritual authorities over both Egypt and the rest of the world:

\begin{quote}
You know, oh my beloved, that this righteous one is a great one (ⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩς)\textsuperscript{593} among the saints and a perfect elect among the monks, like our ancient fathers and forefathers (ⲙⲉⲧⲧⲏⲧⲟⲩ ⲛⲧⲣⲧⲏⲧ ⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲣⲓⲧⲧⲟⲩ), that is, Apa Pachomius and Apa Shenoute and Apa Petronius and Apa Horsiesius, the fathers of the world (ⲙⲉⲧⲧⲟⲩ ⲛⲧⲧⲟⲩ).\textsuperscript{594}
\end{quote}

That these Egyptian monastic leaders are introduced as “our fathers” (ⲙⲉⲧⲧⲟⲩ) indicates a sense of ownership of their memory on the part of the anti-Chalcedonian community of the White Monastery, where the text was preserved. Yet the authority of these Egyptian ascetics extends beyond the Nile Valley to the \textit{kosmos}. In this rhetorical strategy, the Egyptian Christian tradition is supreme among all Christian communities yet open to receiving anyone sharing its faith. Egyptian Christian identity therefore, is defined less by notions of common descent than loyalty to a specific set of ideas and to particular historical figures. The \textit{PanAb} declares that Abraham’s “citizenship is in the heavens with his fathers,” indicating the priority of his eschatological community over an

\textsuperscript{592} \textit{PanAb}, 80.  
\textsuperscript{593} Heb. 13:7.  
\textsuperscript{594} \textit{PanAb}, 98.
earthly social identity. This parallels the primacy of religious affiliation over ethnicity, which is a recurrent theme in Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian texts.

After his disciples lamented the news of his imminent death, Abraham “did not cease from his ascetic practices (νεκτοςκοις).” In PanAb, Abraham exhorts his disciples at length and then dies, just before a break in the text of six pages. The text picks up again, eulogizing Abraham and telling a story about his healing the affliction of “a man named Elias of Djouboure from the district (επηγατογον) of Antinoë, a protector of the very rich (ουπροεκτωρ πε πηναο ωμητε).” More miracle stories follow, including one about how he provided food during a famine and another in which he expels demons.

After a ten page break in the text, the conclusion of PanAb describes another exorcism and also a miracle that occurred on the day of his commemoration. Tears dripped from the altar as a sign of imminent destruction that would occur “in the whole land of Egypt and Ethiopia,” (Ειπ πικς τηρη πηκνμπ ιπ ιεοοοε). Perhaps the sign is meant to indicate the imperial policies of Justinian, which were in force throughout Egypt and Ethiopia, given the strongly anti-Byzantine tone of the text.

The same codex contains another fragmentary text, On Abraham of Farshut, (OnAb) which relates the events surrounding Abraham’s time in Constantinople in more detail. The text begins (after eight missing pages) with Peter, an imperial secretary (περεφερεντηρος), imploring Abraham and his companions to endorse Constantinopolitan doctrine: “My lord (παχωκε), the emperor says, ‘Let your fatherhood

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595 Ibid, 86.
596 Ibid, 92.
597 Ibid, 102.
go to the archbishop and hold fast to him according to the custom of your fathers (κατὰ πεθὼς ἵνα θείωσετε).”\textsuperscript{598}

The author of \textit{OnAb}, who is certainly an Egyptian, depicts Byzantine Chalcedonians employing “us/you” language that further emphasizes the Egyptian/Byzantine opposition. Whether or not members of the imperial court actually conceived of Egyptian Christians as having a distinct theological lineage (vis-à-vis ἰδικὴ ἴσωτε), the division between the two groups is clear. Although Theodosius the archbishop appeals to Theodora on behalf of Abraham, Justinian still demands Abraham’s submission to the Constantinopolitan bishop:

He (Justinian) said to him (Abraham), “Why did you not go according to the custom of your fathers (κατὰ πεθὼς ἱνακεῖστε)\textsuperscript{599}?” The elder said to him, “You ask about the custom of our fathers. We have not heard that faith has changed from the time of our fathers.” The emperor said to him, “Is your faith that of all (ἡσαυροῦ)?” The elder said to him, “If you ask the orthodox bishop, the shepherd of the people (ἰδικὸς ἰεράκος), you will be told. But I am a layman, a peasant in doctrine. And just as Apa Athanasius gave it to our father Apa Pachomius when they were both together in the body, when he gave us the means to do it, we did not avoid the canons that Apa Athanasius had given (two pages missing).”\textsuperscript{600}

The panegyrist communicates the idea that while Chalcedonian doctrine is a change (ὀμφα) in the Christian faith, the Egyptian Miaphysites are faithful to a line of orthodox teaching that reaches back to Athanasius. The orthodox archbishop Theodosius


\textsuperscript{599} The change from plural ἰδικῆςετε to ἱνακεῖστε indicates that while the initial confrontation with the imperial secretary included Abraham’s entourage, the present scene with Justinian includes only Abraham.

\textsuperscript{600} \textit{OnAb}, 104.
is introduced as the “shepherd of the people.” Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians ascribe universal authority to the Alexandrian patriarch, the last line of defense for the orthodox. While the Byzantine emperor misunderstands the “custom” (τεοςος) of Egyptian Christians, the true εος of Egypt is an anti-Chalcedonian reading of the teaching of forefathers such as Athanasius. As Goehring points out, Justinian assumes that authoritative teaching belongs to Constantinople, while Abraham asserts Alexandrian authority.  

Abraham appeals to Egyptian ecclesiastical authority and further enhances the ethnic boundary aspect of his refutation of Chalcedonianism.  

In this text, it is the Byzantine Chalcedonians, and not the Egyptian Miaphysites, who are making a radical break from orthodox Christian faith and thus leaving Egypt to play the role of the lone anti-Chalcedonian hero. After a two-page break, OnAb refers to those who have subscribed to Chalcedon as those who have “agreed to a foreign faith (ευπτις τις Κομημο).” The Constantinopolitan bishop, Theodore, expressed frustration at an Egyptian monk’s refusal to persuade Abraham to subscribe to Chalcedon. The monk declared to Theodore that anyone who persuades someone to agree to Chalcedon is “subject to fiery hell and he is outside the catholic church (ευνοος ετσις εντε εκκλησι).”  

OnAb presents Egypt as the “catholic church” and the bearer of universal authority. It is Egyptian Miaphysites such as Abraham who engage in the fight (παγων) for the “right faith,” (τπις ετσις ταυν). Another passage in OnAb aligns catholic church and Egyptian church: “Even though the throne of the catholic church (πεσωνος

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602 OnAb, 104.
603 Ibid.
604 Ibid, 106.
ⲗⲉⲛⲉⲱⲧ Pachomius is the son of the catholic church.”

In vivid imagery, the panegyrist compares the Pachomian community and its struggle against Chalcedonianism to a sailing ship:

“For listen, there is a ship that has a mast set firmly in it with all the ropes tied to it, twelve from one side and twelve from the other, and the rudder that steers it. With the sail set, it is sailing on a large body of water while everyone (ⲟⲩⲟⲛ ⲛⲓⲙ) watches that ship. So it is with our father Apa Abraham.” Narses, the imperial Praepositos, who was present and orthodox, replied and said to Theodore the general, “Ask this old man to explain the riddle of the ship and the ropes.” Theodore replied and said to the brother, “It is the Praepositos who asks that you explain the ship for us.” The brother said to him, “The ship is the federation (ⲧⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛⲓⲁ), the rudder is the spirit of our father Apa Pachomius. And the twenty-four ropes tied to it are the twenty-four communities (ⲛ̅ⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛⲓⲁ) bound to him. The mast is Apa Abraham and all the leaders who were orthodox (ⲛⲁⲡⲏⲩⲉ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛⲟⲣⲑⲟⲇⲟⲭⲟⲥ). The sail is the shadow of the federation (ⲧⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛⲓⲁ). The water it sails through is the population (ⲡⲗⲁⲥ) of monks. The rudder is the image (ⲡⲧⲩⲡⲟⲥ) of the cross on which Christ was crucified.” The Praepositos said to him, “Why are there also anchors?” The brother said to him, “The anchors are there for the sake of the orthodox like you, so that they hold on to the faith like the anchors that hold on to the ship. But I urge you and all the orthodox with you to guard your anchor in the holy faith and not leave it to destruction.”

While Justinian is described as a threat (ⲧⲁⲡⲓⲗⲏ), Theodora is presented as a supporter of the Miaphysite cause:

“Behold, I have spoken with the emperor about you so that he might release you. But the emperor gave in to his madness (ⲧⲉϥⲙⲁⲛⲓⲁ) saying, ‘If you are not in communion (ⲡⲉⲣⲓⲧⲱⲧⲉ ⲛⲟⲣⲑⲟⲇⲟⲭⲟⲥ) with me, I will not allow...”

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605 Ibid, 108.
606 Ibid, 106.
607 Ibid.
608 Perhaps a further insult by associating Justinian with Mani.
you to be archimandrite.’ So I sent to you through my secretary saying, ‘Do not leave the side of the archbishop, because the emperor gave word to me that he would release him, and he would go to Egypt (ⲉⲕⲏⲙⲉ); and you too will go with him. Now behold [3 ½ lines damaged or missing] here I will watch over you and attend to you.”

Abraham sent back word to Theodora through her assistant who is identified as a monk of the Syrian people (εγνώναξος πε ṕ꨼ⲥⲛⲥⲓⲣⲟⲥ) named Presbeutes (πρєⲙσβυτ新陈代谢); his ethnic identity is highlighted and immediately followed by the fact that “he was orthodox (εγνώροδοξος ḡⲟῳ πε).” After requesting permission to return “to Egypt (ⲉⲕⲏⲙⲉ),” OnAb reports that Abraham had “renounced (ἀποτάςς) the leadership of the Pachomians, causing discord among the Pachomian monks captive in Constantinople. Abraham’s loss of leadership caused great celebration among the “accusers (ⲛⲕⲧⲏⲛⲟⲣⲟς)” in Constantinople who “rejoiced greatly like the devil, roaring like lions and wolves of Arabia (ⲧⲣⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏⲧⲏ网小编) The manuscript containing the text of OnAb ends in the middle of a discussion between a certain John, from the Pachomian community, and Justinian about the future leadership of the federation.

Further information about Abraham is presented in the Panegyric on Manasseh (PanMan) in a lengthy excerpt published by Goehring along with the Abraham texts. The excerpt on Abraham in PanMan begins with Abraham succeeding the archimandrite Sebastian as head of the Pachomian monasteries. After briefly introducing Abraham and

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609 OnAb, 108.
610 Ibid.
611 Ibid.
612 Ibid. Chalcedonian oppressors are also referred to as “wolves” (ⲟⲩⲱⲛϣ̅) in the Panegyric on Apollo, 17.
describing his godly attributes, the *PanMan* shifts to the encounter with Justinian, giving the impression that it is Abraham’s involvement in Christological controversies that is his primary point of interest for sixth-century Egyptians: “Christ spoke through his (Abraham’s) mouth, until the time when the profane emperor Justinian ruled the empire.”

Unlike the account found in *PanAb* in which Abraham visits the emperor at Constantinople in response to an invitation, *PanMan* claims that Abraham was abducted by individuals who are named explicitly: Peter of Nemhaate, Patelphe of Šmin, Pešour of Ermont, and Pancharis. A significant gap in the manuscript follows the introduction of these individuals, leaving details about their role in Abraham’s abduction unclear. When the text begins again, an unidentified individual is deriding Abraham to Justinian while vying for the position of archimandrite of Pbow:

He (Abraham) went into the gathering place, every place where your men stood and where they sat, he had all the brothers draw water and wash the entire assembly hall since he loathed you our lord emperor (ⲡⲉⲛϫⲟⲉ ⲡⲣϩⲟ), and all who are under the authority of the Roman empire (ⲧⲥⲟⲟⲡ ⲡⲩⲕⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁⲩⲧⲟⲩ ⲛ̅ⲩⲕⲣⲁⲧⲱⲩⲕ ⲛ̅ⲧⲡⲕⲟⲥ), So now send for him, bring him here and punish him as a criminal until everyone knows what it means to oppose the emperor. Since we will celebrate the Eucharist with our lord the emperor (ⲧⲩⲧⲁⲕⲟⲩⲩ ⲡⲩⲕⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟ ⲡⲣϩⲟ), you will give us command (ⲧⲕⲓⲅⲉⲧⲓⲯ ⲛⲕⲃⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ)615 of Pbow, and we will carry out every order of our lord the emperor through a command of imperial authority (ⲟⲧⲕⲓⲅⲉⲧⲓⲯ ⲛⲕⲃⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ⲛⲟⲩⲕⲃⲉⲣⲁⲧⲓⲯ ⲛⲟⲩⲕⲃⲉⲧⲓⲯ ⲛⲃⲉⲧⲓⲯ).616

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614 Ibid.
615 Goehring highlights Crum’s gloss of ⲧⲕⲃⲉⲣⲁⲧⲓⲯ as referring to monastic authority - *PanMan*, 113 n. 182. See also Walter E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 251b.
616 *PanMan*, 112.
Goehring has demonstrated how this cleansing episode continues a theme that is also found in Shenoute. In the same way that Shenoute labored to emphasize moral purity in the monastic synagoge, the writer of PanMan utilizes the imagery of purity and impurity to define orthodoxy and heterodoxy for a new generation. While Shenoute uses the rhetoric of purity and impurity to define proper monastic conduct, the panegyrist of PanMan employs the same imagery to shape the boundaries of Coptic orthodoxy. The polarization of Byzantine and Egyptian identity, which is also at work in the discourse, indicates that ethnic boundaries, as well as religious, are being established through texts such as PanMan.

Justinian is often labeled as “our lord the emperor” (ⲡⲉⲛϫⲟⲉⲓ ⲡⲣⲓⲓⲟⲩ) by the unnamed Chalcedonian Egyptian, whereas the rebellion of Abraham is likened to criminality. Both sides in the conflict over Chalcedonian dogma represent either allegiance to or rebellion against Byzantium. Egyptian Miaphysites clearly want to depict their Chalcedonian opponents as pawns of a devious emperor, who is “motivated by Satan.” By subscribing to a heretical doctrine, Chalcedonians have simultaneously renounced their Egyptian identity and taken on Byzantine identity.

Perhaps the most striking example of ethnic boundary maintenance in literature relating to Abraham is the claim that Abraham loathes both the emperor and “all who are under the authority of the Roman Empire.” This statement stands out as it expresses disdain not for heretics, but for Romans. While Abraham and the Egyptian people also

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618 Ibid, 175.
619 PanMan, 112.
620 Ibid.
are Romans, the context of this statement clearly refers to Roman (Byzantine) authority, which, as has been demonstrated, is associated with Chalcedonianism.

PanMan, composed by Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians, expresses the views of some segment of the Miaphysite community in sixth-century Egypt. The fact that Egypt still existed “under the authority of the Roman empire” in the sixth century does not change the fact that her Miaphysite citizens felt a growing distance from the Byzantine Empire. While a literal, political separation was not in the purview of the author of PanMan, the doctrinal differences necessitated distinguishing the Egyptian Miaphysites through a process of re-drawing ethnic boundaries. While texts such as PanMan must be analyzed cautiously with regard to their historicity, they nonetheless provide invaluable insight into the attitude of their authors, an insight that gains value in a relatively poorly-documented period of Egypt’s history.⁶²¹

Enraged by Abraham’s refusal to subscribe to Chalcedonian doctrine, Justinian sends a letter to the “duke of Antinoë” (ⲡⲇⲟⲩⲝ ⮐ⲧⲃⲭⲏⲙⲉ ⲧⲏⲣϥ) demanding that Abraham be sent to him and that the duke inform him of “the condition of all of Egypt (ⲡⲟⲩⲭⲏⲙⲉ ⲧⲏⲣϥ).”⁶²² The oppressive paternalism attributed to Justinian and the Byzantine forces in PanMan is advanced as the duke receives Justinian’s letter: “Then he (the duke) immediately sent some soldiers to quickly arrest him, because the word of the emperor prevails. When the soldiers entered the monastery, they searched deviously,⁶²³ arrested the holy elder Apa Abraham, and brought him to the duke in Antinoë.”⁶²⁴

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⁶²² PanMan, 114.
⁶²³ Goehring notes the similarity in wording here to Mark 14:1, probably an intentional effort on the part of the panegyrist to liken the arrest of Abraham to that of Christ, Goehring (2012), 115, n. 194.
⁶²⁴ PanMan, 114.
Abraham is sent to Constantinople “by animals” (ὤπνπτηνοογε) on a difficult journey of almost three months and is under the control of “savage soldiers” (Ῥἐψενατοι νατριον). After a break in the manuscript, the texts resumes with Justinian reassigning leadership at the Pachomian federation to its Chalcedonian constituency: “Moreover some people here who belong to the federation of Apa Pachomius are faithful, truthful people who love the emperors. I will give them the office of archimandrite of Apa Pachomius and allow no one to oppose them.”

The author of PanMan again equates christological doctrine with one’s allegiance to the Byzantine emperor. The fact that PanMan labels Chalcedonian Egyptians as “lovers of the emperors” provides invaluable insight into the perspective of anti-Chalcedonian Egypt toward Byzantine hegemony. Indeed, the implication here is that it is a desire to obtain imperial favor and not theological conviction that motivates the Chalcedonians in the Pachomian community. Abraham, however, desires to avoid the punishment that awaits Nestorius, Arius, Juvenal, and Marcion, and is expelled by the emperor.

Theodora attempts, unsuccessfully, to persuade Justinian who declares: “If he will not celebrate the Eucharist (ϲυναρε) with me, he will never dwell in the federation of Apa Pachomius.” Before another significant break in the manuscript, Theodora summons Abraham: “Are you my holy father Apa Abraham, the archimandrite of Pbow?”

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625 I.e. by land, not by sea.
626 PanMan, 114.
628 Ibid.
629 Ibid.
630 Ibid.
Theodora is represented as a faithful Miaphysite as she not only recognizes Abraham’s position as archimandrite but also addresses him as “my holy father” (Ὡς ἐμὸν ἀδελφόν). After a significant lacuna, the portion of PanMan dealing with Abraham concludes as Abraham relates the events surrounding his banishment to the Pachomian monastery and expresses sorrow over being replaced by the Chalcedonian archimandrite Pancharis: “[10 lines wanting] those who were present at the time Pancharis entered the monastery. Grief is listening to them.”

The Copto-Arabic Synaxarion is the other primary source of information on Abraham. The Synaxarion briefly relates the confrontation with Justinian but provides more information about the later part of Abraham’s life. The Synaxarion claims that after his banishment from Pbow, Abraham went to the White Monastery where he copied the rules of Shenoute and sent them to the monastery of Apa Moses. Abraham was then given a revelation by God to found a monastic community at Farshut where he also became an ordained priest and provided much aid to citizens suffering famine. However, the most significant factor in the literature related to Abraham with regard to the question of Egyptian ethnic boundary maintenance is the role he played in the Miaphysite struggle.

Abraham’s banishment along with the other Miaphysites of the Pachomian koinonia caused the federation to become primarily Chalcedonian. It is the “Chalcedonizing” of the Pachomian community that Goehring has convincingly

631 Ibid, 118.
632 Synaxarion, 402. For a comparison with the rules of Moses, see René-Georges Coquin, “La “Règle” de Moïse D’Abydos,” 103-110.
633 Ibid, 403.
identified as the primary cause of the decline in Pachomian monasticism after the sixth century:

When Egypt remained non-Chalcedonian, the latter-day pro-Chalcedonian Pachomian movement became irrelevant and lost its place in history. While Byzantium and the West continued to trace the history of coenobitic monasticism back from their own northern Mediterranean ascetic heroes to the early Pachomians, the Coptic church tracked its development from the early Pachomians through Shenoute and his White Monastery federation to the present. As a result, Shenoute came to eclipse Pachomius within the Coptic tradition, while he remained virtually unknown in Byzantium and the West.634

Goehring points out in another work that there was a Chalcedonian community in Egypt at the Tabennesiote monastery at Canopus. He demonstrates that despite the presence of Chalcedonians in Egypt, the decidedly anti-Chalcedonian leanings of Egypt are demonstrated by the dissolution of the Pachomian community precisely because it became predominately Chalcedonian after Abraham’s banishment.635 Indeed, the memory of Pachomian monasticism was absorbed by the anti-Chalcedonian White Monastery.636 Perhaps the most significant factor in the literature relating to Abraham is the way in which Miaphysite doctrine became so strongly associated with Egyptian identity that

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636 Goehring (2007), 162. See also Tito Orlandi, “Un Projet Milanais Concernant les Manuscrits Coptes du Monastère Blanc,” *Le Muséon* 85 (1972): 403. In a different work, Goehring asserts the existence of Greek/Coptic tension in sixth-century Egypt as evidenced by the survival of the various *Vitae* of Pachomius. While the Greek versions of the *Vita* emerge throughout Byzantium and the West through Alexandria, the Coptic versions, with numerous anti-Chalcedonian additions, survive only in the White Monastery, James E. Goehring, “Pachomius’ Vision of Heresy: The Development of a Pachomian Tradition,” *Le Muséon* 95 (1982): 260. While, as has been argued, anti-Greek sentiment in Coptic literature is an inaccurate analysis, there is an ethno-linguistic distinction between Greek-speaking and Coptic-speaking Egyptians that follows doctrinal affiliation to a significant degree.
failure to adhere to this doctrinal position resulted in the demise of one of Egypt’s greatest religio-cultural institutions.

Daniel of Scetis

Daniel of Scetis has been described as the most important figure in that renowned monastic center during the Byzantine period. Although Daniel of Scetis is not the Daniel found in the Apophthegmata Patrum, it is unclear if he is the same Daniel that Egyptian and Ethiopic tradition identify as the hegoumenos of the Monastery of Saint Macarius. The various texts about Daniel of Scetis are commonly thought to be derived from Greek sources composed no earlier than the seventh century. While the Daniel stories have been translated into various languages over the centuries, Tim Vivian has proposed the following two strands of transmission: Greek-Syriac-Arabic and Coptic-Ethiopic.

The Coptic (and later, Ethiopic) strand is unique in that the hagiographer assembled the various Daniel stories and composed a Life. The Coptic is also unique in that it contains material about conflict with Justinian and Chalcedonian doctrine that is not present in the Greek texts. The inclusion of such material highlights the importance of

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639 Vivian (2008), 4.
640 Ibid, 5.
the Miaphysite position for the Egyptian Christians who wrote and read this text. And while the story of Anastasia is not included in the Coptic *Life*, a Coptic panegyric relates the story of Anastasia and emphasizes her flight from Justinian into Egypt, which is also a flight from Chalcedonians.\(^{641}\)

In this section, only the Coptic *Life* will be investigated in detail, though other translations will be consulted at relevant points. The present study does not seek to provide a detailed analysis of the entire Daniel dossier, but to understand how stories about Daniel that are preserved in Coptic illustrate the role of ethnicity in the anti-Chalcedonian movement in Egypt.

The historicity of the anti-Chalcedonian material in the *Life* has been called into question by some.\(^{642}\) However, the addition of the conflict with Justinian is better explained by noting similarities with the *Life of Samuel of Kalamun*, which contains a similar story.\(^{643}\) Considering the great attention given to Justinian in accounts of sixth century events, as in the material relating to Abraham of Farshut and Apollo, it is not unlikely that the monastic community at Scetis came into confrontation with Justinian, as van Cauwenburgh states: “La résistance de Daniel au concile de Chalcédoine ne nous étonne guère chez un moine de Scété à l’époque de Justinien.”\(^{644}\)

Just as Justinian tried to force Chalcedonian doctrine on Abraham of Farshut in order to use the monastic community at Pbow to influence the rest of Upper Egypt, in the same way Justinian tried to control Lower Egypt through Scetis: “Scetis was undoubtedly

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\(^{641}\) van Cauwenbergh, 14.

\(^{642}\) Evelyn White, 246.


\(^{644}\) van Cauwenbergh, 27.
the most important monastic center in Lower Egypt. And, as at Pbow, the emperor could have decided on force.”

Britt Dahlman hypothesizes that a Greek original is behind the Coptic anti-Chalcedonian material: “It is more likely that these episodes, too, were originally written in Greek-versions which have not survived, as is the case of a great deal of other literature defending anti-Chalcedonian views.”

If Dahlman’s hypothesis is correct and the Coptic, anti-Chalcedonian material does come from a lost Greek original, this would demonstrate a degree of success on the part of Greek-speaking Chalcedonians who sought to repress anti-Chalcedonian literature in Greek. It also explains why this material only survives in Coptic and Ethiopic, for there was a decidedly anti-Chalcedonian majority in those two communities.

The proemium identifies Daniel as the *hegoumenos* of Scetis and emphasizes the virtue (Ἀριθμή) and “way of life” (Πανομήδη) of Daniel in keeping with the style of Egyptian hagiography. The *Life* opens with two stories, which are shared with the Greek manuscripts, about Mark and Eulogius. The first story narrates Daniel’s encounter with an “idiot” (σάθες) named Mark who had a reputation in Alexandria as a madman.

It was the “custom of the great father of Scetis to go to Alexandria at the Great Festival (i.e. Easter) to meet with the archbishop (ὁ οὐρανός τινες ἐπὶ τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν ἡμῶν ὄρην).” When Daniel encountered Mark, it was revealed to Daniel, the archbishop, and the people of

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645 Vivian, 100.
646 Dahlman, 58.
647 *Vie et récits de l’Abbé Daniel le Scété (VI Siècle)*, ed. Ignazio Guidi. ROC 5 (1900): 535. It is interesting to find εἰρηνή as opposed to the more frequent πάρθενος. Perhaps this represents an increasing Coptization of traditionally Greco-Coptic terms in the Bohairic dialect.
648 Ibid, 536.
649 Ibid.
Alexandria that this imbecile was in fact a monk who was faking insanity as a penance for previous sexual sin. Mark died shortly thereafter and Daniel ordered the monks of the Enaton to come and bury Mark with great honor.650

The longest single anecdote in the Coptic Life deals with Eulogius, who was a stonemason in an unidentified village in Upper Egypt.651 Daniel was traveling with a disciple who complained excessively about stopping at this village on their way back to Scetis, unaware of Daniel’s prior acquaintance with Eulogius. As they sat in the village square “like foreigners” (ὡς οἰκεῖοι πρώτοι),652 Eulogius saw them and invited them to come to his home.

Eulogius made a habit of “searching in the streets for foreigners” (ἐκκαθιστᾶ ἔτη ἰὸς ἐσταυρεῖ καὶ ἐστιν ἱησοῦς ἱλιοῦ) and bringing them to his home for a meal.653 Daniel and his disciple are Egyptians, but they are still identified as “foreigners,” because they are not local residents. The distinction could also derive from regional differences in speech or

650 The Greek and Armenian versions claim that the monastic communities of Nitria and Kellia also participated in the funeral proceedings: Dahlman, 123; Vivian (2008), 211.
651 While the Life does not identify the town as being in Upper Egypt, the reference to Daniel being “in Egypt” (ἐν Χαίρι) and “sailing on the river (i.e. the Nile)” (ἡγεῖςος γὰρ ἕνα πάντοτε) indicates an Upper Egyptian location: Vie de Daniel, 538. Χαίρι is often used to refer to Upper Egypt as a geo-cultural region distinct from Alexandria and Scetis. The Ethiopic text identifies the town as “the City of Egypt,” which Vivian suggests could have been Memphis, Vivian 135, n. 4. Vivian argues against Goldschmidt and Pereira who identify the city as Kift, Lazarus Goldschmidt and F.M. Esteves Pereira, Vida do Abba Daniel do Mosteiro de Sceté: Versão Ethiopica (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1897) 39, n. 1. The Syriae text identifies Thebes as the starting point for Daniel and his disciple on their journey, Christa Müller-Kessler and Michael Sokoloff, The Forty Martyrs of the Sinai Desert, Eulogios the Stone-Cutter, and Anastasia. A Corpus of Christian Palestinian Aramaic III (Groningen: Styx, 1996), 69. Similarly, the Armenian and Latin versions place Daniel’s starting point in the Thebaid, Vivian (2008), 235; 245.
652 Or “stranger.” See Crum, 565b-566a. The term “stranger” in modern parlance typically refers to someone with whom an individual has no acquaintance. Unlike the time of Crum, the word “stranger” today does not carry a sense of social difference, which is clearly what is meant here in the Life. Although in modern use, the word “foreigner” typically refers to someone from another nation (which is not the case here in the Life), ὧς οἰκεῖοι is also used in Coptic literature to refer to people from other regions of Egypt.
653 Vie de Daniel, 539.
appearance between different districts of Egypt or between Egyptians of the Upper and Lower regions of the Nile.

On their way back to Scetis the next day, the disciple urged Daniel to tell him about Eulogius. Daniel initially refused, due to the disciple’s prior grumbling, but agreed to tell him when the disciple continued to insist. Daniel describes events that brought him to Eulogius forty years earlier, when he visited the same village on business and Eulogius welcomed him to his home. Daniel, impressed by Eulogius, prayed for the success of Eulogius’ ministry of hospitality and promised to work for the salvation of Eulogius’ soul. Eulogius then found a cave filled with money belonging to the Ishmaelites.\footnote{Ibid, 541. The Greek text has “Israelites,” Dahlman, 154. The Syriac follows the Greek here: ܐܝܣܪܐܝܠ ܒܢ, Christa Müller-Kessler and Michael Sokoloff, The Forty Martyrs of the Sinai Desert, Eulogios the Stone-Cutter, and Anastasia: A Corpus of Christian Palestinian Aramaic III (Groningen: Styx, 1996), 80. Vivian speculates that the Coptic translator may have introduced a tenth-century anachronism given the context of Muslim (“Ishmaelite”) hegemony, Vivian (2008), 109, n. 79. The Ethiopic also says “Ishmaelites”: Vivian (2008), 136.}

In order to avoid an attempt by the local landlord to seize his newfound wealth, Eulogius went to Constantinople, where he was made a procurator by Justinian, in the Coptic version. The Greek text identifies the emperor as Justin I\footnote{Dahlman, 154. The Armenian, Latin, and Syriac follow the Greek, Vivian (2008), 235; 248; Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff, 81.} while the Ethiopic states that Anastasius was the emperor when Eulogius arrived in Constantinople and that Justinian was emperor when he left.\footnote{Vivian (2008), 137-8.} While this difference in the various versions could be the result of translation errors, it is also conceivable that Justinian plays a more important role in the Coptic Life due to an even more negative attitude toward him in the Coptic-speaking community.
Eulogius’ new position as procurator led to a change in behavior and he became “arrogant and merciless,” (ὡς ἀρrogαντὸς καὶ ἀνθρωπός). In the Coptic Life, Justinian is the source of Eulogius’ spiritual downfall since he is the one who showers Eulogius with possessions that compromise his piety. The Greek text reports Eulogius was given a large estate that was “known as ‘The Egyptian’s’ to this day,” (λέγεται τὰ Αἰγύπτου μέχρι τῆς σήμερον). Eulogius’ ethnic identity comes to the fore in the Greek text in a manner that separates him from his Constantinopolitan neighbors. This example of outside ascription of ethnic identity was not included in the Coptic or Ethiopic manuscripts, suggesting that Greek texts emerging from Egypt maintained a rhetoric of difference between “Greeks” and “Egyptians.”

Daniel, alerted to Eulogius’ fall from virtue, returned to the village and was dismayed to learn that Eulogius had been appointed procurator. Daniel receives a vision of Eulogius being dragged to court by a man who is identified in the Greek as “an Ethiopian” (ἑνὸς Αἰθίοπος). The Coptic Life, however, does not label the ethnicity of Eulogius’ captor, perhaps indicating the absence of the anti-black/Ethiopian racism prevalent in Greek literature.

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657 Vie de Daniel, 541.
658 Dahlman, 154. While neither the Coptic nor Ethiopic retain this detail, the Armenian, Latin and Syriac follow the Greek here, Vivian (2008), 238; 248; Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff, 81.
659 Dahlman, 154. The Syriac follows the Greek in identifying the person as Ethiopian, Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff, 82. The Armenian claims that Eulogius was dragged away by “black demons,” Vivian (2008), 238. See also, Byron, 37.
660 Vie de Daniel, 541. Likewise, the Copto-Arabic Synaxarion does not identify any person dragging Eulogius away, but merely narrates a vision of Jesus sitting as celestial judge, Vivian (2008), 124. This could indicate that the Synaxarion follows the Coptic version of Eulogius and not the Greek. For anti-black “othering” in early Christian literature, see Byron, 122-9.
However, the Ethiopic text retains the ethnic dimension of this portion of the narrative as Eulogius is dragged away by “black men.” It is possible that the Ethiopic story of Eulogius did not use the Coptic text. But the Ethiopic text also identifies the court official as “black” instead of Ethiopian, perhaps in an attempt to preserve a positive image of Ethiopians at the expense of some other, unidentified black ethnic group. Daniel went to Constantinople “diligently seeking the home of Eulogius the Egyptian,” (περιεργασάμενος τὴν οἰκίαν Εὐλογίου τοῦ Αἰγυπτίου). Eulogius is identified as an Egyptian, thus distinguishing him from his Byzantine neighbors. The Coptic text is missing at this point and the Ethiopic does not identify Eulogius’ ethnic background here. This is another example of Greek texts identifying Egyptians as the culturally-distinct Other. When Daniel found Eulogius, the stonecutter ignored him and his escort began to beat Daniel. Daniel then encountered the empress and he asked to be released from his pledge to Eulogius.

The empress declared, “I do not have the authority,” and so Daniel tried talking with Eulogius again, only to be beaten by a doorkeeper until Daniel’s “entire body” was broken. Distressed, Daniel departed for Alexandria and while at sea was reproved by the Lord in a vision. Daniel was criticized by an angelic figure for his over-zealous attempt at saving Euologius.

Daniel saw a vision of the empress arguing with the angelic figure, who orders Daniel to return to his cell in Scetis, and states that Eulogius would return to his simple,

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662 Dahlman, 156. Following Vivian, I have also consulted the Greek due to a lacuna in the Coptic text at this point, Vivian (2008), 110, n. 83.
663 Byron, 2.
664 Dahlman, 158.
monastic way of life. If Justinian is emperor during Eulogius’ time in Constantinople in the Coptic *Life*, the negative attitude toward Justinian on the part of the anti-Chalcedonian Coptic community is enhanced, but so is the positive view of the empress, Theodora.

Theodora acts as Daniel’s advocate here in a manner consistent with anti-Chalcedonian depictions of the empress throughout this period. Indeed, it is likely that Justin I in the Greek became Justinian in the Coptic so that the empress could be the well-known ally of the Miaphysites. The *Life* then reports the death of Justinian and states that his successor brought charges against Eulogius, along with two other consuls. When word reached Eulogius that he was sentenced to death, he fled to his village in Egypt. He “clothed himself in his former manner” and went back to the cave where he had found the treasure, hoping to find more.

When he found the cave empty, he declared: “Get yourself up and work! There’s nothing like this in Egypt!” (ⲙⲟⲛ ⲡⲉ ⲭⲏⲙⲓ). In the Greek text, Eulogius declares “for here is Egypt,” (ὦδε Αἴγυπτός ἐστι) expressing his disappointment that because he is now in Egypt, he will not have the same wealth and status that he had Byzantium. The Armenian and Latin versions express this sentiment more directly: “This is Egypt, and not Constantinople.” In the text, according to sixth-century Egyptians, Constantinople is the source of wealth and power and Egypt is a place of squalor in which material prosperity is limited.

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665 The Syriac here refers to Eulogius as “Eulogius the Egyptian,” Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff, 90-1.
666 Vie de Daniel, 543.
667 Ibid, 544.
668 Dahlman, 162.
669 Vivian (2008), 241; 251.
This phrase is entirely absent from the Ethiopic text.\textsuperscript{670} This may indicate a different view of Egypt on the part of their Ethiopian neighbors. Perhaps from the perspective of the Ethiopic translator, Egypt is not the inferior economic society compared to Byzantium as it is presented in the Coptic \textit{Life}. Eulogius then returns to his previous way of life, including extending hospitality to foreigners. Daniel visited the village and told Eulogius about all that had happened to him and the two wept together.

The next story in the \textit{Life} tells the story of a thief who repented and joined the monastery after an attempted robbery at a female monastery at Scetis. Beginning with this story, the rest of the \textit{Life} is preserved in the Coptic and is not extant in Greek. The thief gathered a group together to rob a women’s monastery that was located in “some fertile districts,” (ⲛⲁⲑⲟϣ ⲛⲟⲩⲧ). The few possessions of the community were “dispensed through it (i.e. the monastery) to the poor and foreigners,” (ⲉⲩϭⲟϩ ⲉⲃⲡⲓⲧⲥ ⲛⲓϣⲏⲕⲓ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲛⲓϣⲉⲙⲕⲟⲩ).\textsuperscript{671} The thief’s plan of entering the monastery disguised as Daniel backfired when the water used by the virgins to wash his feet became a healing agent for one of the virgins who was blind. The thief repented, left his fellow thieves and went to Scetis to become a monk.\textsuperscript{672}

The remainder of the Coptic \textit{Life} deals with Daniel’s confrontation with Justinian and the Christological controversy:

And it was at that time that the impious (ⲧⲓⲅⲧⲓⲃⲙ) Justinian became emperor, he who was polluted (ⲧⲟⲓⲥⲕⲓⲧⲓ) and terrorized the entire world (ⲧⲟⲓⲓⲕⲟⲩⲙⲕⲛ ⲩⲣⲥ) and the Catholic Church in every place (ⲧⲓⲃ ⲛⲟⲩⲧ).\textsuperscript{673}

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\textsuperscript{670} Ibid, 139.
\textsuperscript{671} \textit{Vie de Daniel}, 545. Crum suggests reading \(\sigmaο\gamma/\chi\omega\) in this case as \(\sigmaο/\chi\omega\): see, Crum 797a; 753a.
\textsuperscript{672} The Ethiopic text identifies the Monastery of Macarius as the destination of the thief and residence of Abba Daniel, Vivian (2008), 144.
\end{flushright}
He endeavored to enforce the accursed faith of the defiled Council of Chalcedon everywhere and scattered the beautiful flocks of Christ. He chased the orthodox bishops and archbishops from their thrones, and the impious Justinian was not satisfied with this, but also disseminated the impious Tome of Leo, which the impious council of Chalcedon had accepted. He propagated it everywhere that lay under his control (ⲙⲁⲛⲉⲛ ♨ⲛⲃⲉⲛ ⲉⲧⲭⲏ ϧⲁⲃ ⲡⲉϥⲁⲙⲁϩⲓ) in order to make everyone subscribe to it. When it was brought to Egypt, a great disturbance occurred among all the orthodox faithful who were in the land of Egypt (ⲛⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲧⲣⲟⲩ ⲛⲟⲣⲑⲟⲩⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲡ ϧⲉⲛ ϯⲭⲱⲣⲁ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲭⲏⲙⲓ), and it was brought to the holy mountain of Scetis in order that our holy fathers might subscribe to it. Since our holy father Daniel was father of Scetis at that time, the Lord revealed the matter to him before it was brought to Scetis. The saint himself gathered together all the elders and told them what the Lord revealed to him and he taught them everything in order that they become strong in the orthodox faith and not turn away, even unto death. When the emperor’s soldiers brought the Tome—filled with every impiety of the lawless (ⲡⲓⲡⲁⲣⲁⲛⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲭⲏⲙ ⲉⲧⲇⲟⲧⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲭⲏⲙⲓ) to the holy mountain of Scetis, our holy father Abba Daniel came out before them. In like manner, the superior came out to meet them, along with multitudes of elders among the saints. When the elders met the soldiers, they (the soldiers) brought the Tome filled with impiety and extended it to the elders, saying, “The emperor has commanded all of you to subscribe to the formula of the faith (ⲉⲡⲥⲩⲛⲃⲟⲛ ⲙⲡⲓⲛⲁϩϯ).” Our holy father Abba Daniel, the blessed superior, responded and said to the soldiers, “What formula of the faith is this?” They said to him, “That of the great Council of Chalcedon at which six-hundred thirty-four bishops gathered.” Our father Abba Daniel was filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit; he leapt forward and seized that Tome filled with every impiety. He tore it and cried out to the soldiers saying, “Anathema to the defiled Council of Chalcedon! Anathema to anyone who is in communion with it! Anathema to anyone who believes according to it! Anathema to anyone who turns away from the life-giving suffering of Christ! As for us, it will never happen that we accept this impious rule of the faith but we will anathematize everyone who accepts it and believes in it. We will believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, consubstantial Trinity existing in a single Godhead, unto our last breath.”

The author of the Life leaves nothing to the imagination with regard to the attitude of the community of Scetis toward the Tome, the Council of Chalcedon, and Justinian, all

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673 Vie de Daniel, 547-9.
of which seemingly cannot even be mentioned without adding a descriptor such as “defiled” (ἐτσωμέν) or “impius” (ἀσεβής). While the anti-Chalcedonian literature of the late-fifth century also repeatedly targets the Tome and Chalcedon as the source of heresy and division, the sixth century adds Justinian to this list of Chalcedonian villains. Later centuries will bring further additions to the ever-expanding dossier of the Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian community’s greatest adversaries. Conversely, Egypt and her church are consistently presented as the lone defenders of orthodoxy. While Chalcedonian hegemony is imposed throughout the “entire world” (ῥοκογῆς τῆς) by Justinian, Egyptian monastic heroes resist the polluted doctrine.

Immediately after painting a grim picture of Justinian’s imperial policy that affected “every place that lay under his control” (ἤμεν ἐν ἐκεί ἡ πεφανχαρί), Egypt is introduced as the only region that reacted to Justinian’s intervention with a “great disturbance” (οὗνοικη νοσορτρ). Daniel’s resistance to the imperial soldiers stands as a model for the monastic community of Scetis and all of Egypt: “As for us, it will never happen that we accept this impious rule of the faith but we will anathematize everyone who accepts it and believes in it.”

This is an example of how anti-Chalcedonian Egyptian hagiographers fashion the boundaries of Egyptian ethnic identity. Daniel is clearly laying down the requirements for inclusion in the Egyptian Christian community. As a result of Daniel’s “great courage” (ἐνικοτιμῆς καταναπραγμ) and the soldiers’ “rage” (χοτ), Daniel and the elders of Scetis were subjected to “great tortures so that for a little while he approached death.”

674 Ibid, 548.
Daniel then went "to Egypt" and built a small cell to the west of a village named Tambôk where he briefly lived, while continuing in his ascetic politeia.

After the death of "the impious emperor Justinian," Daniel returned to Scetis and resumed his office as hegoumenos. The Life describes a raid on Scetis led by "barbarians" shortly after Daniel’s return that resulted in the destruction of Scetis and many prisoners being taken to "their country." The closing section of the Coptic Life narrates Daniel’s return to Tambôk and his subsequent death.

Daniel is held up as an anti-Chacledonian role model meant to encourage the audience of the Life to follow his example. The author of the Life galvanizes his congregation around a specific dogmatic position in a manner quite common in early Christian polemic. The ethnic dimension of the conflict is evident in the frequent juxtaposition of Byzantine Chalcedonians and Egyptian monastic figures. The Life of Daniel frames Egyptian ethnicity by equating it with the standard of Miaphysite orthodoxy and setting the Byzantine Other outside the boundaries of Egyptian identity. The Life delineates the boundaries of Egyptian Christianity quite clearly: "We will anathematize everyone who accepts it and believes in it (Chalcedonian doctrine)."

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675 Ibid, 549.
676 Vivian identifies “Egypt” here as any more densely-populated region outside of Scetis, including Alexandria, Vivian (2008), 116, n. 104. Against this view, “Egypt” more often designates Upper Egypt in hagiographical literature and is often contrasted with Alexandria, Macarius of Tkôw, 60.
677 Vie de Daniel, 549.
678 Ibid. Not surprisingly, the Life attributes the death of Justinian to the wrath of the Lord.
680 Vie de Daniel, 548.
Chapter 3: Identity Formation under Islam

The Islamic Conquest in Egypt created conditions that furthered the ethnic boundary maintenance in anti-Chalcedonian texts that began two centuries earlier in the aftermath of Chalcedon. The majority Miaphysite Egyptian Church had lived as a pariah in the Byzantine Empire, experiencing a significant degree of colonial oppression. The schism with Constantinople led the Egyptian ecclesiastical leaders to reconstruct their identity in opposition to their former Christian brethren. Before Chalcedon it would have been unnecessary for Egypt and Alexandria to make such a point of asserting an individual identity as they could proudly associate themselves with mainline Byzantine Christianity with whose doctrine they agreed. However, the Chalcedonian schism necessitated the renegotiation of identity boundaries governed by their newfound religious identity.

Two centuries later, the Islamic Conquest introduced two significant developments in this process of identification: 1) the Copts situation as double-minorities—living as “schismatic” Christians within the wider Byzantine Christian world and as a minority under Islamic dominance—resulted in increasingly blatant ethnic rhetoric in Coptic texts and 2) Byzantine Chalcedonianism (and the Chalcedonian/Melkite church in Egypt) remained the primary target of Coptic religious polemic despite Islamic hegemony.

The following chapter will focus on the Coptic and Arabic texts concerning the seventh-century figures Benjamin of Alexandria, Samuel of Kalamun and Isaac of Alexandria. The texts concerning these figures spend more time criticizing their previous

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681 Davis (2004), 87.
Byzantine rulers than their present Muslim ones. This comes about because, unlike the new Muslim authorities, the Byzantines were Christians and were held to a higher degree of accountability by Egyptian Miaphysites. From the perspective of Egyptian Christians, the Arab Muslims were simply barbarians. Byzantine Chalcedonians, however, were heirs to the Christian tradition and were corrupting the faith. While it may seem that a lack of Muslim critique by seventh-century Christians could be an attempt to avoid persecution, the Byzantine persecution of the sixth century did not stop sixth-century Christians from publically speaking out against Byzantine Chalcedonians.

Seventh-century Coptic figures continue to distance themselves from Chalcedonians while expressing various attitudes toward their Muslim leaders. Texts related to Benjamin of Alexandria, for example, give the impression that the Muslim conquerors liberated the persecuted Copts from the devious Chalcedonians. The *Chronicle* of John of Nikiou interprets the Islamic Conquest as divine judgment on the Byzantine Empire for the error of Chalcedonian doctrine. The *Apocalypse of Samuel of Kalamun* offers a different perspective several centuries later as it calls the Copts to distance themselves from the Arab language. However, even in one of the few examples of anti-Muslim rhetoric from this period, the point is not to criticize Islam but to call Christians to renewal by rejecting the Arabic language.

The persistence of Chalcedonians as the primary enemy of Egyptian Miaphysites into Islamic times demonstrates the importance of anti-Chalcedonianism for constructing Egyptian identity. The Copts had to distinguish themselves from fellow Christians who held a different theological position; the difference between Copts and Muslims was
obvious. Groups often express greater disapproval toward neighbors with whom they have more familiarity and similarity than toward groups that are distant and unknown.

And yet, the Islamic Conquest increased the ethnic rhetoric in Coptic texts. The reality of Islamic rule and the increasing Muslim population in Egypt following the seventh century engendered concern for the preservation of Coptic identity. This is evident in that the strongest examples of Egyptian ethnic rhetoric come from texts composed in Arabic. As the Coptic language became endangered, the assertion of Egyptian identity among Copts became more strident. The following texts will demonstrate the culmination of anti-Chalcedonian Egyptian identity formation by setting a trajectory for Coptic identity under Muslim rule.

**Benjamin of Alexandria**

Benjamin served as Alexandria’s 38th patriarch from 622-661 CE, placing him at the crucial turning point when Egypt passed from Byzantine to Persian, back to Byzantine, and then to Islamic hegemony.682 The political upheaval only heightened the religious tension in Egypt as Chalcedonians, supported by the Byzantine authorities, vied with Miaphysites for adherents. The socio-religious context of seventh-century Egypt is evident in the writings of Benjamin.683

Outside of his own writings and those of his successor Agathon, much of the information about Benjamin must be gleaned from the *AHPA*. Although written several centuries after the time of Benjamin, the following passages will demonstrate how the

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683 Henri De Vis, *Sermon de Benjamin sur les Noces de Cana* (Hauniae: Glyndalske Boghandel-Nordisk Forlag, 1922), 54.
memory of Benjamin in the AHPA corroborate the role he played in the formation of Egyptian identity. Benjamin is said to come from the village of Barhût in the province of Al-Buhairah, the son of a wealthy family. Strongly desiring the monastic life, Benjamin entered the Monastery of Canopus under the leadership of Theonas where he quickly achieved monastic excellence.684

After Benjamin received a vision in which he became patriarch, Theonas took him to patriarch Andronicus who ordained Benjamin as a priest. After the death of Andronicus, Benjamin became patriarch during the Persian occupation.685 After the victory of Heraclius over the Persians and the appointment of Cyrus as Chalcedonian patriarch, Benjamin fled Alexandria, expecting persecution by the authorities.

As the AHPA states, “So the Father Benjamin, the confessor, the militant by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, settled the affairs of the Church and put them in order, and gave injunctions to the clergy and laity, and charged them to cleave to the right faith even unto death. Then he wrote to the rest of the bishops of the province of Egypt, that they should hide themselves before the coming temptation.”686 Cyrus is reported to have pursued Benjamin throughout Egypt for ten years until the armies of ‘Amr ibn al-Âs conquered Babylon.687

Benjamin was then restored to his patriarchal throne in Alexandria and granted security by ‘Amr who allegedly instructed the patriarch to maintain “the government of his (Benjamin’s) nation.”688 The brief mention of Benjamin in the Chronicle of John of

684 AHPA, 487.
685 Ibid, 489.
686 Ibid, 490.
687 Ibid, 492.
688 Ibid, 496. Following the dating of Jülicher, Müller places the date of Benjamin’s return between the end of 643 and the beginning of 644 CE: Müller (1956), 330.
Nikiou also describes Benjamin’s restoration: “And Abba Benjamin, the patriarch of the Egyptians, returned to the city of Alexandria in the thirteenth year after his flight from the Romans, and he went to the Churches, and inspected all of them.”

After engaging in rigorous religious reform and reestablishing the Miaphysite movement in Egypt, Benjamin fell ill and died on the 8th of Tubah. At his passing, Benjamin received a heavenly reception by Athanasius, Severus, and Theodosius of Antioch. Benjamin is widely credited with consolidating the Egyptian church under the banner of the Miaphysite confession.

One of the central texts connected to Benjamin is the *Book of the Consecration of the Sanctuary of Benjamin* (Book of the Consecration). This text, attributed to Benjamin’s successor Agathon, narrates the events surrounding the consecration of the church of Makarios at Scetis, a typical event in the administration of Benjamin, as he actively engaged in the reestablishment of churches and monasteries following his reinstatement as patriarch. The Coptic manuscript containing the *Book of the Consecration* comes from the monastery of Makarios of the Wadi El Natrun and this copy is dated to 1348 CE.

Coquin makes the argument that the *Book of the Consecration* was composed in Greek based on what he considers a high number of Greek loan words in the text, a

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689 *Chronicle*, 200.
690 *AHPA*, 502.
693 Coquin, 10. Coquin takes this date to be accurate as this period was characterized by great prosperity in the monastery of Makarios, 12. The Arabic version of the *Book of the Consecration* is also recorded in the *AHPA*, 503-18.
feature that is rare in Bohairic literature. While a Coptic original is possible, Coquin points out the frequent occurrence of sentence structures and word placements that are awkward in Bohairic but common to Greek. The *Book of the Consecration* claims to have been composed by Agathon, a priest of Benjamin who succeeded Benjamin as patriarch. No other texts are attributed to Agathon that might be compared with the *Book of the Consecration* and, his authorship cannot be conclusively proven or disproven.

The proemium introduces Abba Benjamin, “patriarch of the great town (†ⲩⲝⲧⲣⲓⲛⲱⲧⲛ ⲡⲙⲃⲁⲕⲓ) of Alexandria,” and describes the occasion of the homily (ⲟⲙⲉⲗⲓⲁ) as “concerning the consecration of the great, catholic and apostolic church of the great Theophoros and Pneumatophoros our father Abba Makarios of the holy mountain of Scetis.” The sanctuary of Makarios is described in the homily as “the sanctuary that is greater than every sanctuary in the world.” Benjamin receives much praise; in addition to the introductory phrases, he is described as “the fame of orthodoxy” and “the one who understood the concepts of the Scriptures.” Such a description is likely an attempt to depict Benjamin as the champion of orthodoxy (i.e. anti-Chalcedonianism) in contrast to Cyrus, a rhetorical move that likely reminded the audience of the theological issues of the seventh century. The descriptor “orthodox” labels the Miaphysite position and is applied also to Macarius who is called “this strong and orthodox ascetic” (ⲡⲡⲡⲧⲕⲟⲧⲣⲓ ⲛⲁⲥⲕⲧⲏⲥ ⲛⲟⲩⲧ ⲛⲟⲣⲓⲩ ⲛⲟⲩϩ).
While the text does not anachronistically assign Macarius an anti-Chalcedonian position, labeling him “orthodox” during a period when this term is clearly associated with Miaphysitism represents a common strategy among Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians. Pre-Chalcedonian figures exist in an uninterrupted succession of orthodoxy with Miaphysite figures.

The author of the Book of the Consecration identifies himself as Agathon, “son of my father Abba Benjamin the archbishop. And I myself knew a multitude of establishments of my father.” Agathon begins the homily by recounting a vision told to him by Benjamin, which occurred “while finding a little time of peace from the persecution of the heretics.” Here Benjamin is again being introduced as the suffering shepherd of Egypt who is constantly harassed by the oppression of heretical (i.e. Chalcedonian) forces. This indirect method of battling Chalcedonian doctrine also appears later when Jesus is referred to as “the indivisible Christ” — a refutation of the supposed Chalcedonian division of the natures of Christ.

Benjamin’s consecration of the newly-constructed church of Makarios was initiated by a visit by “some ascetic monks” to Alexandria during the Christmas celebration. The crowd gathered at the Church of the Theotokos is a large and diverse crowd: “All the clergy gathered unto me with the powerful of the city and all the people; peasants and aristocrats; wealthy and poor; and a

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700 Coquin renders ἡγούμενος ἐραττός as “dispositions,” evoking the idea of Agathon enjoying material provisions at the benevolence of Benjamin. The following context, however, reveals the likelihood of ἡγούμενος ἐραττός referring to other “establishments” of other monasteries and churches that Agathon has witnessed, Crum, 456a.
701 Livre de la consecration, 78.
702 Ibid, 80-2.
703 Ibid, 84, lines 13 and 25-6.
704 Ibid, 86.
multitude of high-ranking, faithful women,” (ερε πικληρος τηρι θογντ εροι νεως ινιγοα’
ντε τις τις νεως πιλαος τηρι νικουξη νεως ινινοι νεως παλαμεοι νεως ινιζεκι νεως θανκεμου
μπιετ τη ντε ινιοι ινευλυτικος). 705

Benjamin accepts the monks’ invitation to come to Scetis in order to consecrate
the Church of Makarios, which is being built for elderly monks who need to visit a more
accessible church. While Benjamin and the monks are traveling to Scetis, they pass by
several notable monasteries including that of Isaac of Pernouj, Abba Pishoi, Abba John,
and the “Roman” fathers Maximus and Dometius: “And we went directly to the
community of our Roman fathers Maximus and Dometius,” (ογο ντοψα χαυογενε
εορκουγη ηνενοιντ ηραμεος μαχιμος νεω θανγετος). 706 It is unclear if “Roman” (or
“Byzantine” or “Greek”) here refers to linguistic, ethnic, or geographic identity.

Typically in Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian texts, “Roman” is associated with the
oppressive Chalcedonian emperor. Therefore, regardless of what aspect of social identity
is being understood here in the Book of the Consecration, note that it is possible to
describe pre-Chalcedonian leaders as “Romans” even though later use of the term was
negative.

While the reference to “Byzantines” is often negative in Egyptian Miaphysite
literature, it is significant to note positive uses of the labels (Byzantine, Roman) to
moderate any simply nationalist reading of anti-Chalcedonian literature. Likewise, any
attempt at positing a simple Greek-versus-Egyptian conflict in late antique Egypt is

705 Ibid, 82.
706 Ibid, 100. Coquin emended οφρυγη, as it appears in the manuscript to οφρυγη given his
assessment of the text being “certainement fautif,” Coquin, 101, n. 27. In his French translation however,
Coquin follows the Arabic manuscripts that replace οφρυγη with what Coquin translates “au couvent.” His
emendation is unnecessary as οφρυγη is an expected Bohairic spelling for ραγη and agrees with the Arabic
text, Crum, 306a.
mistaken. The highest allegiance of Egyptian Miaphysites is to their faith community which, especially before Chalcedon, includes “Romans” as well as any other people group of the faith understood to be orthodox in Egypt.

These monastic figures, Maximus and Dometius, are presented as kindred spirits of the Miaphysite hero Benjamin and their social identity as “Roman” is still highlighted, thus indicating some degree of distinction from Egyptians who do not receive such identifiers. This further highlights two fundamental aspects of Egyptian ethnic identity development being advanced here: Egypt and her citizens are the primary focus while outsiders are marked as Other and yet are afforded a degree of insider membership, provided they can be connected to anti-Chalcedonian doctrine.

Upon arrival at the monastic “community” (ⲧⲣⲏⲟⲩ) of Makarios, Benjamin is greeted “in the manner of the sons of the Hebrews (ⲧⲣⲟⲩ υⲃⲣⲉⲟⲥ) when they sang to our Lord Jesus Christ when he entered Jerusalem” to the point of “shaking the entire mountain (of Scetis).” Moved by the scene at Scetis, Benjamin proclaimed:

I give you thanks my Lord Jesus Christ because you have made me worthy once more to witness the freedom of expression (ⲧⲣⲏⲩ) of the orthodox faith and the fulfillment of the holy churches, the destruction and overthrow of the godless heretics (ⲧⲣⲟⲩ). The praise is yours, benevolent Savoir, for the way in which you have allowed me to see the churches yet again in their glory and their good condition. I give you thanks my Lord Jesus Christ for you have saved my soul from the hands of the tyrant, dragon, apostate, the one who chased me on account of the orthodox faith. I give you thanks, my lord Christ, for you have allowed me to see my sons once more as they surround me in your honor, my Lord Jesus.

707 Ibid, 104.
Benjamin’s pursuer is later identified as the Chalcedonian patriarch Cyrus. After leaving “the Romans” (ⲛϫⲛⲧⲣⲏⲩⲩ, 709) Benjamin calls on his priest Agathon to bring him the necessary books for the consecration of the church and its sanctuary. Agathon is described by Benjamin as “my priest, the one who suffered with me (εταρχησαν ηνην) because of the faith in the time of the tribulation (πιπρασκοσ) when he chased me (εφεξοχι ηνωι); namely, Cyrus the Caucasian, the enemy of every righteousness (ιοε Κυρος πικαχως πικαχι ητε ηεωνι ηιβεν).” 710

In anti-Chalcedonian literature of this period, Cyrus is constantly labeled by his ethnic origin in the Caucusus (πικαχως), a rhetorical strategy that ascribes the status of Other to the imperially-sanctioned Chalcedonian party in Egypt. The boundaries of Egyptian Miaphysite identity are defined in contrast to the foreign doctrine of Chalcedon. 711 Cyrus is depicted as the Chalcedonian oppressor, while the Miaphysites (who were actually the majority party in Egypt) present themselves as an oppressed minority. Cyrus is berated in a manner consistent with that used for former enemies of Egypt and he is added to the list of most despised adversaries, including Leo, Marcian, and Justinian. Though the Book of the Consecration was written during Arab rule in Egypt, the most despicable figure is the “tyrannical dragon” Cyrus.

At the outset of the consecration, Benjamin receives a vision of Makarios described as “father of the nations,” (ογιωτ ητε ραμαλως). 712 This is another example of

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709 Ibid, 110.
710 Ibid, 110-12. The AHPA also constantly refers to Cyrus as “the Colchian,” even omitting his actual name, AHPA, 491.
711 Davis (2004), 120.
712 Livre de la consecration, 114.
the way in which Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian texts ascribe universal authority to
Egyptian heroes of the faith. Similarly, when Benjamin sees a vision of a cherubim, the
angelic figure lauds Makarios as “the father of the patriarchs and the bishops” (φιλατ
πατριαρχας καικυβισκοπος) as well as “all the monks of this entire mountain,”
(καθομαχος θηρου οτε πατσου θηρο). Makarios is “father” to Egypt’s highest
ecclesiastical and political office holder, the Alexandrian patriarch.

And the horizon of this homily reaches beyond Egypt. While praising the
benevolence of Makarios, Benjamin refers to certain righteous ones as “the nets that
gather together every race to the kingdom of God and do not reject anyone,” (ησαρηνι
ενωσον ενθεου ηγενο οτε φε μετουρο οτε φε εγινεο γλεβο ηλι). The vision
set forth in the Book of the Consecration is one in which all races of humanity gather in
the Kingdom of God; it is a global vision that motivates Benjamin and it does not only concern Egypt. The church is described as “the gathering place of the angels and the port of every soul that takes refuge in (φωτ ηλι) God, the Savior of each one.”

Benjamin makes it clear in his homily that a share in the orthodox community is
not based on ethnic identity. Rather, those who “love the glory of people more than the
 glory of God” are the ones whom “the blessed, catholic, and apostolic church
excludes.” However, Egyptian figures such as Makarios, “the guardian of all,” are

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713 Ibid, 116. Again, on p. 138 at which point, Benjamin adds “and (the father of) all the doctors (καθομον) of orthodoxy.” The universal authority ascribed to Makarios continues throughout the homily as he is later called “the consolation (καθομον) of all the monks and the bishops and all the great doctors of the entire universe (καθομον τηρο),” 172.
714 Ibid, 124.
715 Ibid, 146. Likewise, Makarios is described as “the port of health for the entire world (καθομον τηρο), curing every infirmity,” 182.
716 Ibid, 150.
717 Ibid, 154.
718 Ibid, 126.
those who lead the rallying call for orthodoxy. Egypt is further elevated as Benjamin quotes from Isaiah at the consecration of the Church of Makarios: “There will be an altar to the Lord in the land of the Egyptians and a stele to the Lord in its holy districts,”

Despite the fact that the context of the biblical passage refers to Jews suffering at the hands of Egyptians, Benjamin takes the passage out of context and uses it to depict the Church of Makarios as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. While Egyptian Christians typically disassociated themselves from the Egypt of the Old Testament, in this passage there is an example of pro-Egyptian rhetoric emerging in the seventh century. Biblical interpretation is modified to elevate Egyptian, anti-Chalcedonian identity. Perhaps the most significant aspect of Egyptian ethnic rhetoric here is not the hermeneutic revision but instead the alteration of the wording. While Benjamin’s quotation refers to Egypt’s “districts” (נֶפֶרְוֹוָו) as “holy” (אֶֽהָיָ֥ב), this positive label is wholly absent from the Septuagint: “In that day there shall be an altar to the Lord in the land of the Egyptians and a pillar to the Lord by its border (τὸ ὀρίον αὐτῆς).” Egypt is being transformed from the source of the oppression of the people of God (i.e. Israel) to the bulwark of Christian orthodoxy. Such scriptural revisions enhance the pro-Egyptian aspect of anti-Chalcedonian texts. Thus, while Benjamin’s vision is of an international Christian community that is open to all, it is also one in which Egypt stands at the center inviting others to follow its decidedly Egyptian brand of orthodoxy. The homily then

describes a vision in which Benjamin sees elderly monks of every rank offering incense that covers the entire church and then receiving the Eucharist.

In another vision Benjamin sees a celestial figure who implores him to read the canons of the church. The canons include one involving the introduction of “foreign clerics”: “Anyone among the clergy who brings a cleric foreign to Egypt or a ruler into this holy sanctuary because of human glory, let him be anathema,” (Ῥημεῖος τὸν ἑορτάσαν 
οὐκ ἔχοι ἐπὶ ξενόχωσιν ἐπὶ ἑτέρω χεριό οὐκ ἔχοι ὑπὸ υἱὸν ἐν 
οὐφερῃ ἑλπίδι νεωκλησώσης ὑπὸ ἁγίων ξενισθῆναι).720 While the focus of this canon is the importance of ascetic humility, the emphasis on preventing the intrusion of outsiders adds an ethnic dimension. After reading the canons to Agathon, Benjamin describes the events surrounding Anatolios, ruler of Pšate, who came to the consecration of the church. The miraculous healing of Anatolios’ son is described and the homily concludes with copious praise for Makarios and the monastic community of Scetis. Benjamin concludes the homily with encouraging words that continue the theme of minority discourse:

Now, O my holy fathers, let us pray steadfastly so that our Lord Christ strengthen us in the foundation (ῥημεῖος) of his holy Church and that he would be a fence for us in his goodness and that he would allow the orthodox faith to persevere (ὑπὸ ξενισθῆναι) a fearlessness (οὐκ ἔχοι ἐπὶ ξενόχωσιν) in all times. And we, the Christians, are exalted (ἐπὶ ἔκκλησι) in him at all times. And he saves us from the oppression (ποιμαντὴρ) of those who rule (ὑπὸ ξενισθῆναι) and from the malice (παραθυρήσω) of the hunter (παραθυρήσω), the enemy of every truth- the devil. For the kingdom and the power and the authority belong to our Lord and our God and our Savior Jesus Christ.721

720 Ibid, 158.
721 Ibid, 188-90.
The oppression (πωροφτερ) of the faithful comes from those who rule (νιν εταμαρι), which further underlines the depiction of the orthodox Egyptian majority as faithful martyrs living under tyrannical Chalcedonian rule. It is interesting that the enemies explicitly named in the homily are connected to Byzantine Chalcedonianism while reference to the new Islamic hegemony is absent. What is clear is the way in which Benjamin uses the rhetoric of the oppressed minority in order to shape an identity for the Egyptian church that is defined by anti-Chalcedonian resistance.

The second core text for Benjamin is his exegesis of John 2:1-11, found in the Homily on the Wedding at Cana (Homily). While the Book of the Consecration is generally attributed to Agathon, the Homily may be an authentic work of Benjamin, the only surviving text written by the patriarch. The complete Bohairic text of the Homily is found in a tenth-century manuscript and is generally considered a translation of a Sahidic original. Although the date of composition of the Homily is unknown, Mikhail points out that 13 Tobi is both the date of the liturgical celebration for the miracle at Cana and the death of the monk Isidoros, suggesting that this was the date that the sermon was delivered.

Müller describes the importance of the Homily both for reconstructing Benjamin’s life and for Coptic literature: “Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana ist bis zur Stunde das einzige, vollständig erhaltene Werk Benjamins. Es handelt sich um eines der besten Zeugnisse koptischer Predigtkunst, das wir besitzen- ein kraftvolles Werk, das der

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722 Müller (1956), 338.
723 Maged Mikhail, On Cana of Galilee: A Sermon by the Coptic Patriarch Benjamin I in CCR 23.3, 66-93 (2002), at 69. See also De Vis, 53; Müller, 11-2.
Persönlichkeit unseres Patriarchen alle Ehre macht.” As Mikhail states: “In addition to its literary merit, the sermon is crucial in gaining an understanding of the patriarch. Through it, one can discern the character of the man described in the History of the Patriarchs.” The Homily has also been noted as a source for understanding Benjamin’s anti-Chalcedonian and Monoenergist theology.

The Homily begins with the same type of minority rhetoric that was found in the Book of the Consecration, in this case using imagery of sheep, wolves, and shepherds: “It is the custom (ⲥⲩⲛⲏⲑⲓⲁ) of shepherds to tend sheep in pastures that have no bad weeds in them; and not only this, but you find them bearing the burden of (guarding against) the wolf. For they do not allow themselves to sleep so that they (the wolves) do not enter the pen while the sheep are inside and seize one of them.” Benjamin describes the vulnerability felt by the Copts of the seventh-century through the imagery of innocent sheep at the mercy of the wolves of heresy. Again, it is possible that the Arab conquerors are also in the background. Benjamin is the shepherd who protects his flock in a manner consistent with that of his patriarchal predecessors: “We also, my fathers and brothers, according to the commandment of our fathers, eagerly beseech God at all times to protect us in the saving faith of our holy fathers, Athanasius, Alexander, and Cyril-the equal, unwavering balance of the dogmas of the faith.”

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726 Mikhail (2002), 66.
727 Cyril Hovorun, Will, Action, and Freedom: Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 51. It is inaccurate to label, as Hovorun does, the anti-Chalcedonian theology of Benjamin as being “Severan,” 51. Benjamin, rather, stands in the anti-Chalcedonian tradition of Egypt begun by Dioscorus and Timothy Aelurus, almost a century before Severus.
728 Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana, 54. Also edited in Sermon de Benjamin sur les Noces de Cana, ed. Henri De Vis (Hauniae: Glydendalske Boghandel-Nordisk Forlag), 1922. An English translation is provided by Mikhail (2002).
729 Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana, 56
The anti-Chalcedonians present their position as in direct continuity with that of pre-Chalcedonian patriarchs, from whom both sides claim descent. Ancestry (both theological and ethnic) continues to play a role throughout the *Homily*. While warning his congregants against drunkenness (while discussing the presence of wine at the wedding feast), Benjamin asks: “Is there not a man here today who drank, became drunk, went out, committed robbery, was arrested, was killed, died, and his body was not worthy to go to the tomb of his ancestors (ⲛⲉϥⲓⲟⲥⲓ)?”

Benjamin also rhetorically asks: “Is there anyone today that has not become a foreigner to their hometown (ⲓⲧⲁⲩⲣⲓⲙⲕⲟⲡⲏⲳⲓ) because of debts for wine?” Benjamin is warning against drunkenness using the well-known example of people whose drinking habit has caused them to fall into such debt so as to become “foreigners” to their community. The sense of belonging, of being a part of the in-group, comes from adherence to the behavioral standard of orthodoxy offered here. The inclusion of the faithful orthodox is contrasted in the *Homily* with the exclusion of those who reject orthodox doctrine.

Benjamin begins his exposition of the Gospel passage by introducing each apostle in attendance and explaining his typological role in the miracle. While it may seem odd that a seventh-century Coptic text would introduce Peter as “the first among the

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731 Ibid, 128. Mikhail translates: “Are there not men today who are evicted from their hometowns on account of their drinking debts?” Mikhail (2002), 82. Mikhail’s translation helps illustrate the meaning of the text: Benjamin is warning against drunkenness using well-known examples of people whose drinking habit caused them to lose their property because of debts. While this translation is certainly warranted and helps interpret the context of the passage, translating ἐταχυρηθέντο ἁποικισμένα as “evicted from their hometowns” is a bit far from the Coptic. It is more helpful to retain the sense communicated here, that one’s drinking and financial irresponsibility can cause one to become so estranged from their hometown that they “become a stranger/foreigner.” The consequences are grave as one does not simply lose property but becomes a social pariah to their homeland.  
732 Or “strangers.”
Mikhail explains the way in which Peter’s importance is stressed throughout the Coptic tradition. Any attempt to minimize the apostle’s importance in the Egyptian church is a modern phenomenon. The apostle Judas is used to attack the ever-expanding list of enemies:

For, I will say that a single Judas gave up his Lord at that time, but I do not know where all these Judases came from. But you will say to me, “Do you know who they are?” It is I who will tell you about each one of them. He is Arius, he is Nestorius, he is Macedonius, he is the impious (παράδεισος) Leo, he is Ibas, he is Theodore, he is Theodoret, he is Leontius, he is the defiled (πετρομοντ) Julian, he is George the Arian, he is Gregory his brother who resembled him in his deeds. He is the one whose name is not worthy to be announced, who brought great evils upon the church, the lawless (παραδείσος) Cyrus who is polluted (φιλησομοντ) in all his deeds. He is Victor, the bishop who bore the sins of his entire city, and behold, he is Melitius in Upper Egypt (φιλησομοντ). Are they not all Judases?

Only anti-Chalcedonian Egyptians are in continuity with the orthodox champions of the fourth and early fifth centuries, the Chalcedonians are described as the direct successors of earlier heretics. Benjamin offers two fundamental trajectories for theological lineage: the anti-Chalcedonians are the faithful heirs to the orthodox teachings of Athanasius, Alexander, and Cyril, while the Chalcedonians are spreading the heretical teachings of Arius, Julian, and Nestorius.

The theological opponent given most negative attention in Benjamin’s dossier of heretics is his Chalcedonian nemesis, Cyrus. Continuing the exposition of the miracle at Cana, the Homily addresses other theological positions common to Benjamin’s context:

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733 Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana, 68.
734 Mikhail (2002), 75, n. 46.
735 Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana, 80-4.
“But let it not be that one of the heretics say that Christ ate and drank like a human. Go away, defiled dog! I believe that everything that people do my Savior did except sin alone.” Benjamin is commenting on the miracle at Cana and also arguing against those who claim that the human actions of Jesus cannot be reconciled with his divinity: “My beloved, let us not trust the heretics, lest they lead us astray and take us to perdition with them.”

Mikhail suggests that Benjamin’s polemic is aimed at Eutychianism, which was part of the larger doctrinal context of seventh-century Egypt. Given the stance that Benjamin takes regarding the will and activity of Jesus, his target could also be the monoenergist/monothelite positions that were also being discussed during the seventh century. In either case, it is noteworthy that Coptic anti-Chalcedonian literature is not solely focused on refuting Chalcedonian doctrine. While the majority of texts in this period focus on the Chalcedonian controversy, the Miaphysites are also competing with other “heresies.” The multi-faceted theological landscape of seventh-century Egypt opposes any interpretation that reduces the concerns of the Copts to Chalcedonianism only.

The Homily then shifts to a collection of seemingly unrelated anecdotes that deal with monastic and priestly roles. The first anecdote relates a vision that Benjamin received “when God gave us relief from the suffering and oppression which befell us from the lawless Cyrus (ⲕⲩⲣⲟⲥ Ⲁⲩⲣⲩⲣⲱⲉⲟⲩⲧⲟⲩⲧⲟⲩ)”. The vision describes the expulsion of a

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736 Ibid, 118.
737 Mikhail identifies these heretics as Eutychians- Mikhail (2002), 81, n. 90.
738 Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana, 120.
fornicating priest from the White Monastery, due to an apparition of Shenoute accompanied by angelic figures. The priest swore oaths denying charges of sexual impurity and was then rebuked by the appearance of the archimandrite Shenoute. The second story concerns Benjamin’s encounter with two Manichaeans at an Upper Egyptian chapel who engaged in an unspecified sinful act that was miraculously revealed to Benjamin.

The Manichaeans are identified as “foreigners”: “they were foreigners (Ῥαντζενίκος), merchants from Egypt.” The outsider label that is applied to them could be motivated by a desire to disassociate the “heresy” of Manichaeism from Egyptian identity. They confessed to Benjamin that they had been persecuted in “our land” (τενχαρα) for selling the Eucharistic elements and for engaging in devil worship. Enraged, Benjamin reported them to Shenoute, the magistrate of Antinoë, who had them burned alive until “nothing at all was found of them.”

The story ends with an exhortation to Christians of every rank to guard themselves from sin, “especially (from) Manichaeans like these.” Yet while it is the Manichaeans who are the victims of terrible violence endorsed by Benjamin, the patriarch represents himself as a member of an oppressed minority. This anecdote begins in a manner similar to the first story: “It happened to me, the insignificant Benjamin, while I ran from the persecution of those who rose up against me.”

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740 Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana, 152. That ἡμικος is used in place of the more common Coptic descriptor ῶεμικον could indicate a desire to unambiguously highlight the priest’s ethnic, outsider status as ῶεμικος can also refer simply to a “stranger,” Crum 565b.
741 Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana, 162.
742 Ibid, 186.
743 Ibid, 190.
744 Ibid, 150. Mikhail simply translates “while I fled from persecution,” Mikhail (2002), 84. Müller (150) and De Vis (79) give a more literal translation. The presentation of Benjamin and the Coptic
minority discourse persists despite the majority status in Egypt of the Coptic orthodox or the oppression enacted by this group towards others.

The final section of the Homily recounts a meeting between Benjamin and a “perfect monk” named Isidoros who lived at the Enaton monastery. This anecdote chronologically precedes other events described in the Homily since Benjamin’s first meeting with Isidoros takes place before Benjamin’s exile. Isidoros shut himself in his cell for thirty-six years and when the superior of the Enaton knocked at his door, Isidoros declared that no one would see his face except Benjamin, “the father of the faith.” Upon hearing this news, Benjamin visited Isidoros who recounted the events of his life. His parents and sister died when he was a child and Isidoros then entered the Enaton monastery where he became close to his monastic father, who left Isidoros and went into the desert. When that happened, Isidoros did not leave his cell for over three decades.

After narrating these events to Benjamin, Isidoros began weeping bitterly as he received a vision of the imminent persecution of Benjamin:

As for you, O my father, during this year a devil is coming to this city to persecute you. For the Romans will rule over the country of Egypt and they will persecute you until they cast you from your throne (ⲛ̅ⲣⲱⲙⲉⲟⲥ ⲡⲃⲧⲓ ⲡⲧⲟⲩ ⲩⲛⲃⲧⲓ ⲉⲧⲟⲩ ⲩⲧⲟⲩ Ⲏⲟⲩ ⲫⲟⲩⲧⲇ Ⲧⲫⲓ Ⲧⲟⲩ ⲡⲧⲟⲩ). You will flee to Upper Egypt as they persecute you until you go to the monastery (ⲓⲱⲧⲟⲩ Ⲧⲟⲩ) of the Archimandrite Abba Shenoute. You will suffer great, evil oppression (Ⲫⲧⲟⲟ Ⲩⲟⲩ Ⲩⲟⲩ ⲩⲟⲟ ⲯⲟⲟ). As it is written, the shepherd will be struck and the sheep of the flock will scatter. You will spend eleven years persecuted from place to place. But do not fear. No one will be able to subdue you, nor will the evil one conquer you. After this, God will remember you and he will bring you back to your throne joyfully. And I shall see you restored. The Lord is the one who

orthodox as persecuted is a frequent theme throughout Benjamin’s corpus and the exaggeration of the original text should be reflected in translation.

745 Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana, 196.
746 Ibid, 200.
knows yet another thing; no one will lay his hands upon my eyes except you. Then do not fear; God will send his angels before you and he will guard you everywhere you go.\footnote{747}{Ibid., 232–6.}

Again, Cyrus is referred to simply as the “devil” who is the source of persecution. The phrase σορατομωρος appears four times in Isidoros’ apocalyptic vision to stress the theme of persecution. Benjamin’s role as a persecuted martyr is heightened by the shepherd/sheep imagery, by expulsion from the episcopal throne, and by pursuit from “place to place,” reaching as far as the White Monastery.\footnote{748}{Mikhail takes the mention of Shenoute’s monastery here as an indication of this being the furthest south Benjamin traveled during his exile: Mikhail (2002), 91, n. 158; a supposition that leads him to doubt the Coptic text claiming that Benjamin traveled north (ϩⲏⲧ) to the White Monastery before encountering the fornicating priest: 82, n. 101; for the Coptic, see Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana, 134; De Vis, 75: Müller and De Vis both follow the Coptic. This conclusion is unwarranted, Isidoros’ vision of Benjamin reaching the White Monastery does not require this being the patriarch’s southernmost destination. The notoriety of Shenoute’s monastery is most likely the cause for its specific mention here; and it would not be implausible to imagine Benjamin visiting a point further in the south resulting in his traveling north back to the White Monastery.} However, the oppressive concepts of persecution (σορατομωρος), expulsion (ωπτογειτονικος), injury (σεμαρωγης), and suffering (οφοςοιος) are contrasted with protection (ντεμαρωςιες), remembrance (επιηκηγει), and restoration (ογοι).

Benjamin is speaking to the Coptic orthodox community through Isidoros and offering the hope of restoration in the midst of persecution. While Islamic hegemony is the oppressive reality of his audience, it is nonetheless “Roman” persecutors who function as primary targets in Benjamin’s polemic. The elusive third person plural “they” who enact the various persecutions endured by Benjamin are identified as τηρωμεσος,\footnote{749}{Mikhail translates τηρωμεσος literally as “the Romans,” Mikhail (2002), 91; while Müller and De Vis give a more interpretive gloss: “Die Byzantiner,” Müller, 232; “Les Grecs,” De Vis, 98.} and they are contrasted with the “country of Egypt,” (τχωρα τηκη). The “Romans” are
depicted as the source of social oppression and theological heresy in a rhetorical strategy in which Egyptian Miaphysite identity opposes the Chalcedonian, Byzantine Other.

The AHPA follows this strategy as the Arab Conquest is portrayed as due to “Roman” faith: “The Lord abandoned the army of the Romans before him (Muhammad), as a punishment for their corrupt faith, and because of the anathemas uttered against them, on account of the council of Chalcedon, by the ancient fathers.”

Likewise, the AHPA calls Benjamin a “fugitive from the Romans.” The AHPA also contains one of the clearest examples of anti-Chalcedonianism shaping the boundaries of Egyptian ethnic identity. After his return to Alexandria, the AHPA describes Benjamin’s monastic residence:

Now the place, wherein the patriarch dwelt, was a pure habitation without defilement, in a monastery called the Monastery of Metras, which was the episcopal residence. For all the churches and monasteries which belonged to the virgins and monks had been defiled by Heraclius the heretic, when he forced them to accept the faith of Chalcedon, except this monastery alone; for the inmates of it were exceedingly powerful, being Egyptians by race and all of them natives, without a stranger among them; and therefore he could not incline their hearts towards him. For this reason, when the Father Benjamin returned from Upper Egypt, he took up his residence with them, because they had kept the orthodox faith, and had never deviated from it.

This passage demonstrates the way in which Miaphysite doctrine is a prerequisite for inclusion in the Egyptian people. The categories of Egyptian and Miaphysite are contrasted with Roman and Chalcedonian, going so far as to employ the vocabulary of

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750 AHPA, 492-3.
751 Ibid, 495.
752 Ibid, 498.
“purity” and “dilution” with reference to the pure Egyptian (Miaphysite) race. In his analysis of the above passage, Frend states that “the account shows the extent to which in the mid-seventh century, race had become identified with religion in Egypt.” The fact that this passage does not express nationalist sentiment also shows that it should not be reduced to merely “regional chauvinism.”

Ethnicity and theological orthodoxy function here as overlapping markers of identity. Benjamin’s audience is meant to identify with the oppressed Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians who hope to be saved from their theological opponents, who are also given ethnic labels. Benjamin then describes the fulfillment of prophecy including his persecution and restoration:

I went to Alexandria. And you all know how great the evil that happened to us was and how much was the danger. I fled from place to place until I went to the Monastery of the Saint Apa Shenoute according to the prophecy of the saint. All the things that he told me happened to me. Afterwards, God the Merciful again had pity on his church. The people rejoiced with us, and we went to Alexandria. After we rested for a few days, I arose and went to that saint. While standing outside his door, he cried out from inside, “It is fitting that the Archbishop, the new Dioscorus, has come.”

Benjamin emerges from great evil and danger and returns from exile. Like Dioscorus, his episcopal predecessor, he suffered exile due to his Miaphysite convictions. Benjamin calls on his audience to remember the persecution carried out by the Chalcedonians (“you all know” and draws on collective

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754 Mikhail (2014), 22. Mikhail goes on to present the above statement as expressing “regional sentiment,” a significantly watered-down interpretation of the text. A specific region is not highlighted, as has been the case in many of the texts surveyed in the present study, but the people of Egypt.
755 Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana, 236-40.
memory to construct an image of the orthodox as faithful martyrs. Benjamin shares the sense of oppression of his audience and then shares in their hope, due to the happy ending of his restoration.

What exactly is meant by the celebratory gathering of “the peoples/nations” (ⲛⲓⲗⲁⲟⲥ) at Benjamin’s return to Alexandria? Is this a reference to the collective Egyptian people, including cultural and administrative factions? Or is Benjamin describing an international gathering of various anti-Chalcedonian groups? In any event, the scene is clearly meant to be a universal celebration of a return to “orthodoxy” in the episcopal seat of Egypt. As reported in the AHPA, “Benjamin the patriarch, sat among his people a second time, by the grace and mercy of Christ, the whole land of Egypt rejoiced over him.”

Benjamin’s account of the events of the early seventh century lacks any polemic against the present-day Islamic rulers, in contrast to the decidedly negative portrayal of Byzantine Chalcedonians. As Mikhail notes, “Interestingly, even where it might be expected, there is no reference at all to ‘Amr or the Arab conquest in the sermon.” While it may be possible that anti-Islamic or anti-Arab polemic would be avoided due to fear of persecution, it is more likely that the text simply has other interests: 1) maintaining an intense anti-Byzantine tone and 2) portraying Coptic life in a positive light, as Benjamin does at the end of the Homily.

If one were to read the Homily with no knowledge of its wider historical context, Islamic dominance in seventh century Egypt would go unnoticed. This contrasts with the way John of Nikiou describes the Muslim conquerors and uses pejorative ethnic

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756 AHPA, 497.
757 Mikhail (2002), 68.
terminology: “For ‘Amr had no mercy on the Egyptians, and did not observe the covenant they had made with him, for he was of a barbaric race.” In the Homily, the Coptic orthodox seem to rest in a place of peace and self-determination after the tyranny of Cyrus. Similarly, the AHPA depicts Benjamin’s return as the end of an era of oppression:

Therefore when the holy Benjamin heard this, he returned to Alexandria with great joy, clothed with the crown of patience and sore conflict which had befallen the orthodox people through their persecution by the heretics, after having been absent during thirteen years, ten of which were years of Heraclius, the misbelieving Roman, with the three years before the Muslims conquered Alexandria. When Benjamin appeared, the people and the whole city rejoiced, and made his arrival known to Sanutius, the duke who believed in Christ, who had settled with the commander ‘Amr that the patriarch should return, and had received a safe-conduct from ‘Amr for him.

The AHPA further reports that Benjamin prayed for, prophesied about, and exhorted ‘Amr and left the commander’s presence after receiving great signs of respect. In a shifting political landscape and in the face of national vulnerability, ethnicity and ethnic boundary maintenance may be emphasized, as Barth states: “The process whereby ethnic units maintain themselves are thus clearly affected, but not fundamentally changed, by the variable of regional security.” The texts dealing with Benjamin illustrate this point. Egyptian, anti-Chalcedonian identity is shaped by using

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758 Chronicle, 195.
759 De Vis, 55.
760 AHPA, 496.
761 Ibid, 497.
762 Barth (1969), 37.
insider/outsider terms for Egyptians versus Byzantines and their Chalcedonian/Melkite allies. This is the primary concern in these texts even after the Arab Conquest.

The absence of Islamic critique also could be an effort to protect the Coptic community from a new type of persecution. For it is clear from texts such as the Chronicle of John of Nikiou that Egyptian Christians were not entirely in support of Arab Muslim rulers. It seems more plausible, however, that the need to distinguish themselves from their fellow Christians was stronger than any need to distinguish themselves from Arab conquerors, who were clearly of a different faith. The remaining texts that focus on seventh-century Coptic figures will further illustrate the degree to which Byzantine Chalcedonian authority remains the primary target of Miaphysite polemic even under Islamic rule.

**Samuel of Kalamun**

During the period following the Islamic Conquest, one of the central figures of anti-Chalcedonian texts is Samuel of Kalamun. The texts associated with Samuel are the *Life of Samuel of Kalamun* (*Life*) and the *Apocalypse of Samuel of Kalamun* (*Apocalypse*), a text of unknown authorship attributed to Samuel. The two works are “complementary texts springing from the same monastic tradition.”\(^{763}\) The numerous beatings endured by Samuel throughout the *Life* afford him the title of a martyr even though he was not murdered for his belief: “O the one who was martyred many times without losing his life!”\(^{764}\) Most of the information about Samuel can be found in his *Life*.


Alcock suggests c.597-695 for his life and argues for a ninth-century date for the Sahidic manuscripts of the *Life*.\textsuperscript{765}

The *Life* claims to have been composed by Samuel’s successor Isaac and read publically on Samuel’s feast day, the 8\textsuperscript{th} of Khoiak (χοιακ).\textsuperscript{766} Isaac acknowledges a lack of personal acquaintance with Samuel but says he has learned about his life from disciples of Samuel: “Our holy fathers heard from their fathers who were before them, and they heard from their fathers, who were the disciples of that great one, Apa Samuel...our honored spiritual fathers, who we are under and who told us everything.”\textsuperscript{767}

After customary remarks of self-abasement, Isaac proceeds with relating the life (ⲃⲓⲟⲥ) and conduct (ⲡⲟⲗⲩⲧⲓⲁ) of “the holy champion (ⲁⲑⲓⲩⲣⲟⲥ), Apa Samuel.”\textsuperscript{768}

Isaac provides information regarding Samuel’s regional identity: “As to the nationality (ⲧⲡⲧⲣⲓⲧⲉ) of the holy Apa Samuel, he was a man of the northern region (ⲧⲉⲧⲩⲣⲓⲧⲉ ⲃⲧⲁⲧⲓ ς), belonging to the neighborhood (ⲡⲃⲣⲓⲣⲟⲛ) of the city of Pelhip from the village of Tkello.”\textsuperscript{769} However, Samuel’s local identity is less important than his heavenly citizenship: “However, his true nationality (ⲧⲥⲧⲡⲧⲣⲓⲧⲉ) was the heavenly Jerusalem.”\textsuperscript{770} This qualification indicates the subordination of regional and/or ethnic identity to religious identity in Coptic anti-Chalcedonian literature. From the perspective

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\textsuperscript{765} Ibid, vii-ix. Pereira argues for a Coptic vorlage of the *Life*, Pereira, 60. Butler (185) and Hoyland (286) argue for a seventh-century composition.

\textsuperscript{766} *Life*, 1. Alcock identifies this date as December 4, n. 3.

\textsuperscript{767} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{768} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{769} Ibid, 2. The village of Tkello, just outside the city of Pelhip, lie in the northeast Delta region, n. 16.

\textsuperscript{770} Ibid. The theme of citizenship in Jerusalem is frequent in the *Life*. Samuel is called the “seed of Zion” and a "relative (ⲟⲩⲣⲙⲏⲓ) of heavenly Jerusalem,” 3. Apa Agathou is “counted among heavenly Jerusalem,” 4. Samuel is also referred to as a “citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven,” 17.
of the Life, it is Samuel’s adherence to orthodoxy, which affords him a place in heavenly Jerusalem. That is more significant than his regional affiliation.

However, Egypt and her people are consistently highlighted in the Life, which attests to the way that ethnic and religious identity gradually become synonymous.

Samuel is said to come from a pious, wealthy family, and his father, Silas, was an elder in the church. After their initial attempts at persuading Samuel to marry failed, his parents allowed him to become a monk. Samuel’s father passed away shortly after building a church and seeing Samuel ordained a deacon. Samuel then went to Scetis where he served under Apa Agathou and matured in his ascetic practices. After Agathou’s death, Samuel continued his monastic lifestyle and “his fame reached the northern region (ⲉⲭⲱⲣⲁ ₋ⲧⲥⲁ ₢ⲏⲧ), even the cities on the coast.”

The Life then reports the first of Samuel’s encounters with Chalcedonians:

It happened at the time of the lawless (παρανομος) Cyrus, when he came to the city of Alexandria pursuing the holy archbishop Apa Benjamin. They sought after him with false charges desiring to kill him and to sit on his throne. But our God the Christ Jesus, the one who knows every deed before it happens, then saved the archbishop from the hands of the impious one (πασεβης). He hid him in the south of Egypt. After these things, the Caucasian (παχυκαινος) sat on the throne and he was given authority over the populace (ταρχη ιπερηχμωσιος). Then when he sat on the throne tyrannically (ϩ αυθεντικως), he set forth the Tome of Leo. Later he sent a cruel magistrate (ονακιχτριανος πογος) into the

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771 Ibid, 5.
772 Alcock translates this portion as follows: “he was given civil authority,” 79. Alcock argues that in addition to the heavy influence of the Fayyumic dialect on the Life, there are also instances of Bohairic influence, specifically the appearance of the Bohairic plural definite article υν, viii. Orlandi/Campagnano follow this reading: “e gli fu data l’amministrazione della cosa pubblica,” Tito Orlandi and Antonella Campagnano, Vite de Monaci Copti (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1984), 232. The Ethiopic version leaves this detail out and instead modifies material found in the Coptic; Cyrus sends word to Benjamin and Samuel saying: “Em quanto estiverem vivos, não terei auctoridade no paiz do Egypto,” F.M. Esteves Pereira, Vida do Abba Samuel do mosteiro do Kalamon (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1894), 141.
holy mountain of Scetis, as his feet were in a hurry to shed blood. He gave him the polluted Tome of Chalcedon (πτωμὸς ἐτχάρη ἡκαλληδων)\(^{773}\) and told him, saying, “Let all the elders subscribe to this Tome from the least to the greatest,”- because the entire country of Egypt depended on those elders (περετεχωρά τὴρς ἤκινη ἁμα ἡκαλτήρκετο ἐτημα). “Make haste and search the cells of the monks and the deserts. Perhaps you will find the one with the great beard, Benjamin,\(^{774}\) and send him to me that I may take my revenge on him; for while he still lives, my kingdom and archbishopric do not extend throughout the entire country of Egypt (ἡκεστοῦτα ἵπτανταρρό ἵπτανταρραρχανηκοπος ἐπιτεχωρά τηρε ἤκινη).” And in this way the magistrate came to Scetis with a great show (of force) (γίογνος ἰμαντας), two hundred soldiers following him, and took control of (κρασος) the great church of Apa Macarius. He commanded that they gather all the elders from the smallest to the greatest. He sought after the hegumen of Scetis, who was called John. And they did not find him, because all the possessions of the church were his. And for this reason he fled to the inner marsh. The barbarians (wingConstants2)\(^{775}\) saw him in that place and took him prisoner to their country (χώρα).

The encounter reported here contains many of the typical features of ethnic rhetoric common to Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian literature: villainization of Byzantine Chalcedonians,\(^{776}\) assumption of Miaphysite uniformity among Egyptians, willingness to be martyred for the cause of orthodoxy, and equating Egyptian identity with rejection of Chalcedonianism. The Life depicts the Byzantine-endorsed magistrate as a snorting.

\(^{773}\) It is interesting that the Tome here is referred to as the “Tome of Chalcedon” in addition to its usual name, the “Tome of Leo.” This demonstrates the way in which Coptic Miaphysites hold the Tome and the council as equally despicable enemies of orthodoxy, despite the Tome’s composition having preceded the council.

\(^{774}\) Alcock’s translation does not include Benjamin’s name here, although it is present in the Coptic text, 80.

\(^{775}\) Alcock translates ἐβαρβαρος as “‘Berbers’” throughout his translation of the Life. This is likely because the Life later reports that these “barbarians” came from the West, 13.

\(^{776}\) Although there were Chalcedonians that were Egyptian (thus not associated with Constantinople/Byzantium), Egyptian Chalcedonians are not the primary target of anti-Chalcedonian polemic in Coptic Miaphysite literature. This is evidenced in the frequent attacks on Leo, Justinian, the Tome, and the council itself. In seventh-century Coptic literature, Cyrus is also attacked and his foreign background is highlighted. While Chalcedonians who were native to Egypt were certainly enemies of the Miaphysites, Chalcedonian figures connected to imperial authority are most highlighted by the Coptic Miaphysites.
enraged tyrant in contrast to the tranquil, courageous Egyptian monks. Such embellishments serve to reinforce the attitude that Egyptians are encouraged to maintain toward themselves and toward the Chalcedonians. The encounter between the magistrate and Samuel is recounted next in the Life:

Then when the magistrate assembled all the brothers, he had them (soldiers) read the polluted Tome of Leo to them (monks). And he had them read a letter of the Caucasian to them, teaching them with his erroneous words and inciting them by the Tome which was full of darkness. Then after they stopped reading the letter, he caused a deacon to raise his voice in the crowd, saying, “My holy fathers, do you believe thus according to that which is written in this Tome?” But they were silent. Again he said it, up to three times, but no one answered him. The magistrate became very angry and ordered them to be struck, saying, “Why have you not spoken, but remain silent like these lifeless stones? Nor have you blessed us and said ‘Welcome, you and your king who sent you.’ Perhaps you think I will refrain from the shedding of your blood. Never! I will not spare you in any way!” Then he said, “Will you not speak then, infuriating monks?” And at that moment the holy Apa Samuel leapt up, desiring to give his life to death and to manifest strength. He said to the magistrate, “What do you want us to do for you? We do not accept this Tome nor that which is written in it, nor yet do we accept the Council of Chalcedon nor do we have any archbishop but our father Apa Benjamin.” After this the magistrate became enraged and ground his teeth at him (Samuel). He said to him, “By the might of kings, I shall make you subscribe to this Tome first and you will confess all the things in it, because you have acted shamelessly and spoken wickedly.” The holy Apa Samuel prepared himself to give his life to death. He said to the magistrate, “This is only a small deed which you have invoked me to do. Bring the Tome here to me, and I will convince you.” The magistrate had them give it to him while he rejoiced greatly. When it was placed in his hand, he held it out towards the people (ⲗⲟⲥ), saying, “O my fathers, do you accept this Tome? Anathema to this Tome! Anathema to the Council of Chalcedon! Anathema to the impious Leo! Anathema to everyone who believes according to it!” He made haste, tore up the Tome, and threw it outside the door of the church. The magistrate was filled with rage against the holy Apa Samuel; he snorted in his nose and forced his hands upon one another. He caused ten soldiers to strike him at the same time, until everyone said that he was already dead. And the magistrate incited them against him, “Strike him with cords of skin.” After this he made them bind his hands behind him. And they tied a rope to one of his feet and they
hung him. Then they fixed him on stakes and tortured him until his blood flowed like water. A cord which was in the hands of a subordinate escaped from his hand and came upon his right eye, and his pupil immediately burst and came down upon his cheek. When the magistrate saw that his eye was destroyed and that his blood was flowing down like water, he immediately returned to his senses and calmed a little in his anger. He made the soldiers stop striking him and said to the holy one, “Your eye which has been destroyed has saved you from death, strange monk.” And he made twelve soldiers chase him and his monastic children out and cast him out of the mountain (Scetis).

The Life uses ethnic competition by claiming strategic motivation on the part of the imperial Chalcedonians, who want to gain the support of the majority Miaphysites. Cyrus tries to convert the monasteries because “the entire country of Egypt depended on those elders.” The Life also describes the Caucasian’s motivation in these terms: “For while he (Benjamin) still lives, my kingdom and archbishopric do not extend throughout the entire country of Egypt.”

In Samuel’s second confrontation with the Chalcedonians, Cyrus restates his desire to control the people of Egypt by controlling the monastic communities. The Egyptian Miaphysites depict themselves as the majority of the Egyptian populace opposing the hegemony of the Chalcedonian minority. An anti-Chalcedonian majority in Egypt is assumed, while Chalcedonianism is represented only by the oppressive ruler

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777 The Copto-Arabic Syanxarion reports that both Samuel’s eyes were destroyed, Pereira, 187.
778 Alcock suggests θαυμασιανος is a corruption of θαυμασιανος, used here in an ironical way, 7, n. 81. Given the ironical sense employed here, I have gone with a more negative gloss provided in Liddell-Scott, 786a.
779 Life, 6-7.
780 Ibid, 9.
who is rhetorically labelled and ostracized by reference to his foreign origins: “the Caucasian.”

After horrific torture, Samuel’s disciples take his battered body to a cave outside of Scetis where they begin making preparations for him to die. An angel appears, heals Samuel, and instructs the monks to settle in the monastic community of Neklone in the Fayyum. After a short period of monastic activities, Samuel’s fame again spread “from the Fayyum district and even reached the districts that surrounded it.” As a result, Samuel healed so many that he eventually had to carve out a retreat space a mile from the monastery. After a short time of peace, Samuel again engages in the struggle against the Chalcedonians. This time, Samuel is confronted directly by the patriarch Cyrus:

Then after he (Samuel) spent a full year in complete tranquility in the small cave, Cyrus the Caucasian came south in the land of Egypt, persecuting everywhere and seeking the holy Apa Benjamin. Every monk he came upon, he would make him subscribe to the defiled Tome of the impious Leo and receive communion (ⲥⲟⲧⲁⲡⲉ) from his hands. After this he came into the district of the Fayyum with a great show (of force), and

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781 Pereira demonstrates that Muslim sources often call Cyrus a “Greek”, despite his Arabic moniker “Muqaqas,” 42. Pereira argues that the Muslim association of Cyrus’ identity as “Greek” is due to his connection to Byzantine imperial authority. He further demonstrates the political and economic connotations of this epithet: “e este sobrenome teria sido dado por irrisão ao patriarca, que ao mesmo tempo era director das contribuições, pelos Coptos que o detestavam tanto por melkita, como por recebedor das contribuições, e lembrando o ultimo d’estes cargos que foi sempre odiado no Egypto,” 53.

782 Life, 8. Alcock translates ⲥⲟⲧⲁⲡⲉ as “almost.” Here I follow his understanding of this term as it appeared on page 5, n. 57. In this instance, Alcock takes the meaning provided by Liddell-Scott “used to soften a positive assertion with a sense of modesty,” Liddell-Scott, 1744a-b. As ⲥⲟⲧⲁⲡⲉ is used here in the same way as p. 5, it is likely that the Life is depicting the extent of Samuel’s renown. It is unlikely that the Life would seek to depict the extents to which Samuel’s notoriety “almost” spread. Orlandi and Campagnano’s translation also bears this understanding of ⲥⲟⲧⲁⲡⲉ: “la fama del suo profumo si sparse nel distretto del Faium fino a raggiungere il distretto vicino (emphasis mine),” Orlandi and Campagnano, 236.

783 ⲥⲕⲙⲁ here more likely means “in” given that Cyrus came from the north in Alexandria to the Fayyum district. This is in contrast to Alcock’s reading ⲥⲕⲙⲁ as “from,” Life, 83. It is unlikely that Cyrus is coming from ⲅⲧⲣⲏⲥ (i.e. Upper Egypt) but rather that he comes south from Alexandria into “Egypt.” This reading is also reinforced by the fact that ⲅⲧⲣⲏⲥ is often associated with Ⲧⲧⲉ in contrast to Alexandria. The translation provided by Orlandi/Campagnano agree with this reading: “andò a Sud nella terra d’Egitto Ciro il Cauchiano,” Orlandi and Campagnano, 237.
Victor the Bishop of the Fayyum came out to meet him in great joy and empty glory of this world, glorifying him until he was received into the city of the Fayyum. And it happened after this he announced from the city of the Fayyum the polluted Tome of Chalcedon, by the order of Justinian the fraudulent king of the Romans, who ordered that the entire land of Egypt join the defiled Tome of Chalcedon. When the orthodox people saw that the Caucasian had endeavored to lead them astray with his erroneous words, they withdrew each to his own cell and left him, in order to ignore him. When the Caucasian saw that the rulers and the rest of the orthodox withdrew from and ignored him, nor did they obey his erroneous words, he then became very angry and said to himself, “I shall arise and turn to the monasteries of the entire district, and I shall make the monasteries submit to me and the monks first subscribe to the Tome of Leo and my faith. For if they subscribe, then the people will subscribe without any hesitation.”

While the Life would have its readers think that the entire Egyptian populace is uniformly Miaphysite, there is mention of Egyptian Chalcedonians. However, Egyptian support for Chalcedon is depicted as arising from corrupt motivations. The Egyptians who accept Chalcedon are sycophants who attempt to curry imperial favor, as in the case of Victor, bishop of Fayyum. Victor’s position as bishop is presented in the Life as the result of the “empty glory” he receives in the company of Cyrus. The validity of his bishopric is negated because his position rests on apostasy. While the Life reports the existence of Chalcedonians in Upper Egypt, the text leaves the impression that Egyptian Chalcedonians are yielding to worldly desire, a chief concern of ascetics. During his travels throughout Upper Egypt, Cyrus arrives at Samuel’s monastery at Neklone:

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784 This form is problematic. Alcock translates this bound group as “the false-king of the Romans,” Life 83. Orlandi/Campagnano translate similarly: “il falso, imperatore dei romani,” Orlandi and Campagnano, 237. Alcock’s Greek index identifies this Greek root as ψευστής. I have avoided the translation of ψευστής as “false” as found in Alcock and Orlandi/Campagnano to avoid association with ψέυδο, which appears later in the Life.

785 Life, 9.
He went forth into all the monasteries, and the monks he found, he caused them to subscribe to the Tome of Chalcedon and receive communion from him. Then the holy Apa Samuel, when he saw the great destruction that occurred through the deceitful Caucasian, assembled all the brothers who were on the mountain of Neklone: they consisted of two hundred worldly (ⲛ̅ⲕⲟⲥⲙⲓⲕⲟⲛ) brothers and one hundred and twenty monks. He spent a long time speaking with them from the word of God, teaching them what was profitable for their souls and speaking with them in comforting words, saying, “I call upon you, my fathers and my brothers, in order that each one hide himself in the cell (ⲙⲁ) that he desires for a few days, until the Lord Jesus delivers us and saves us from this polluted subscription and the stinking blasphemies of the polluted Council of Chalcedon. And I believe that if you listen to me, God will guide us and save us and protect your dwelling places, and He will return you to your monasteries (ⲯⲱⲟⲧⲡⲕ) peacefully, without any harm.” When the holy Apa Samuel said this, his words pleased all the brothers; they left him, saying, “Bless us, our holy father. We are prepared to die for the orthodox faith.” The holy Apa Samuel blessed them and led them away in peace and as for him, he withdrew with his disciples. Then when morning happened and the sun rose a little, behold three soldiers came to the monastery to prepare the place before the Caucasian. They did not find a single monk in the entire monastery, except only the one who serves. The soldiers recklessly seized him, ran down with him and met the Caucasian on the road at the mouth of the canal. They said to him, “We did not find a monk in the monastery except only this one.” The Caucasian said to him, “Why have the monks not come out before me? Or what is the reason that they went away?” The housekeeper (ⲟⲕⲟⲛⲟⲙⲟⲥ) said, “I do not know why they have gone.” He ordered him to be struck until he told him everything that occurred. The housekeeper said, “Do not strike me. I will tell you the truth. For this man Samuel, the ascete, gave a long lecture, admonishing them by his words and making you out to be a blasphemer, saying that you are a godless Chalcedonian Jew and to avoid the foreign Eucharist from your hand (ⲧⲙⲟⲩⲧⲕ̅ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲕ̅) or communicating with you in any

786 Neither Alcock nor Orlandi/Campagnano have been able to identify more precisely what is meant by Ⲝⲟⲩ Ⲭⲡⲓⲛⲟⲩⲛ, Life, 84, n. 72; Orlandi and Campagnano, 238. Given the elusive nature of this term, I have rendered it more literally.

787 Alcock’s translation does not bring out the presence of Ⲭⲧⲟⲧⲕ̅ here and thus loses the ethnic dimension of the text: “you were a godless Chalcedonian Jew and that we were not to celebrate the mass with you or communicate with you in any way,” Life, 84. It is necessary, however, to retain the rhetoric of the text that continues to frame Cyrus as an invading foreign heretic in contrast to the faithful Egyptians. The translation of Orlandi/Campagnano brings out the sense of “foreignness” intended by the author of the Life: “che tu sei un giudeo calcedoniano ed empio e che tu lasci che gli stranieri partecipino alle tus synaxeis e comunichino con te in qualsiasi cosa,” 239. Given that the translation of Orlandi/Campagnano is based on the same manuscript as that of Alcock, it is interesting that their reading of χεκαῳ entails a second-person singular subject prefix not present in Alcock’s translation. Pereira’s translation of the Ethiopic manuscript indicates that this phrase is not recorded in Ge’ez: “que tu eras impio, e eras Judeu, e não tinhas
way. Because of this, the monks obeyed him and all withdrew.” When the Caucasian heard this, he became very angry: he bit his lips in a great rage and cursed the housekeeper and the monastery and the monks who dwelled in it. He turned to another road, and he has not gone up to the mountain to this day. After this the brothers returned to the monastery peacefully.

In this second encounter, the orthodox Egyptian people (λαος) are again opposed by the daunting imperial forces, which are now associated with Justinian. Though Heraclius was on the throne during the time of Cyrus, the reference to Justinian attests to the intense Egyptian hatred (at least in Miaphysite circles) for the sixth-century champion of Chalcedonianism. The contrast between Egypt and Byzantium is heightened by reference to monastic ideals of religious piety. While Samuel is consistently portrayed as cool-headed, the Life reports numerous instances of Cyrus’ becoming filled with rage that leads to physical violence. The ascetic patience and long-suffering of the Egyptians are enhanced, while Chalcedonian authorities are depicted as raging heretics, lacking in the monastic virtues. The Life describes the confrontation between Samuel and Cyrus in this way:

The Caucasian,\textsuperscript{788} the false-archbishop, maintained evil as he went in to the city of the Fayyum; immediately he sent servants and acquaintances to go to the mountain of Neklone and bring to him Apa Samuel, his hands bound behind him and a chain on his neck. Then they came to the monastery and found the saint. They seized him and took him to him (Cyrus). And he walked while rejoicing in the spirit saying, “O that it

\textsuperscript{788} Alcock’s translation leaves out πιστος with no explanation: Life, 84. Orlandi/Campagnano’s translation as well as the manuscript edited by Amélineau retain this epithet in their translations, Orlandi/Campagnano, 239; Amélineau (1895), 775.
would happen that my blood will be shed today for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” In this, he shamed the Caucasian before everyone, that perhaps he might kill him. After these things, the Caucasian told his soldiers, “Bring me this profane monk.” And so the soldiers presented him before Cyrus. When the impious one saw the man of God, he was filled with rage against him and ordered the soldiers to strike him until his blood flowed like water. After this, he said to him, “Are you Samuel, the wicked ascete? Who appointed you *hegoumenos* over this monastery? Who ordered you to teach the monks to remove themselves from me and my faith?”

The holy Apa Samuel said, “It is better to obey God and our father, the archbishop Benjamin, than to obey you and your demonic teaching, O son of Satan and deceiving Antichrist.” When the Caucasian heard these things, he ordered that Samuel be struck on the mouth, crying out and saying, “Samuel, the glory that men give you as an ascetic is destroying your mind. But it is I who shall instruct you and teach you to speak well; for this reason you have not honored me as archbishop nor have you honored my authority as I am commander of the citizenry of the land of Egypt (*ⲉⲓⲟⲛⲧⲁⲝⲏⲥⲁⲣⲭⲏⲥⲉⲛ̅ⲛⲉⲇⲉⲙⲱⲥⲓⲟⲛⲛⲧⲉⲭⲣⲁⲕⲏⲙⲉ*).”

The holy Apa Samuel answered him and said to the Caucasian, “Mastema too is a commander (*ⲧⲁⲝⲏⲥⲁⲣⲭⲏⲥ*): he rules the angels. His arrogance and faithlessness estranged him from God and His angels. But you, O Chalcedonian heretic, your faith is defiled and you are more accursed than the devil and his demons.” When the Caucasian heard these things, he was extremely angry and he pointed to the soldiers to strike him to death. Immediately he endeavored to slaughter the righteous man, except that the rulers of the city of Fayyum saved Samuel from him. When he saw that he had escaped from his hands, he ordered that Samuel be cast out from the mountain of Neklone, saying, “If you will not commune with

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789 Cyrus repeatedly refers to Chalcedonianism as “my faith.” This is in contrast to the catholicity of the Miaphysite position as is often depicted in Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian literature. The *Life* depicts Chalcedonianism as an innovation of antagonists such as Cyrus, not the result of divine revelation.

790 Alcock’s translation does not have “as an ascetic” (*ⲡⲉⲇⲉⲉ̅*) although it is in the Coptic, *Life*, 85. The translations of Orlandi/Campagnano and Amélineau retain this phrase, Orlandi/Campagnano, 240; Amélineau, 776.

791 Codex B, from which Amélineau made his edition, has ⲣⲉⲇⲉⲉ̅ whereas Codex A has ⲣⲉⲇⲉⲉ̅. Amélineau (1895), 776. Orlandi/Campagnano’s translation follows Codex A: “ma io ti darò una lezione e t’insegnerò a parlar bene,” p. 240. While Alcock’s translation also follows Codex A (p. 85), he prefers the reading found in Codex B: “Codex B reads ‘badly’, which I think is perhaps better: the sense would be ‘I will teach you about speaking badly’,” 85, n. 77. I follow Orlandi/Campagnano in translating from Codex A; it seems more likely that Cyrus would want to instruct Samuel how to speak well (i.e. to espouse Chalcedonian doctrine).

792 For translating ⲧⲁⲝⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲡⲒⲓⲧⲇⲏⲧⲏⲥⲉ⌀ⲕⲏⲧⲏⲥ in, I stick closer to Alcock’s translation of “civil ruler” ([*Life*, 85] as opposed to the more fiscal sense of the term presented in the translations of Amélineau (“préposé sur les revenus,” p. 776) and Orlandi/Campagnano (“comandare sui tribute,” p. 240).

793 An alternative name for Satan which Alcock identifies as being mentioned in the *Book of Jubilees, Life*, 11, n. 112. Amélineau identifies this name in a Coptic text contemporary with the *Life*, Amélineau (1895), 776, n. 10.
me in my faith, withdraw from the monasteries of this province, lest you
die terribly by my hands.”

While Cyrus represents oppressive imperial power, the Life subverts Byzantine
authority through its presentation of the Miaphysite population. The Egyptian people are
persecuted, but Cyrus still needs the assent of the monastic communities and the capture
of Apa Benjamin: “for this reason you have not honored me as archbishop nor have you
honored my authority as I am commander (πάρχων) of the citizenry (ἡδεμοιοι) of
the country of Egypt.” Cyrus’ insecurity is clearly depicted in the Life. On the one
hand, he childishly asserts his authority, while, on the other, he wants the lowly Samuel
to recognize that authority. The Egypt/Byzantium opposition is an “in-house” debate
between divergent Christian factions and it is distinct from the anti-Hellenistic sentiment
that sometimes appears in Coptic monastic texts. While giving final exhortations on his
death bed, Samuel comments on the value of prayer: “It is said in the wisdom of the
Greeks (Ἑλληνικόν) that he who desires separation from God, let him neglect prayer and
fasting. If the Greeks, who do not know God, commend prayer and fasting as the great
principles (Ἦχος), then how much more should we, the children of the exalted
God.” Here, Ἑλληνικόν clearly refers to Greek philosophy and non-Christian, pagan
culture. This criticism is distinct from the anti-Chalcedonian polemic prevalent in the
Life. While the Coptic texts view “Greeks” as largely ignorant of God, Chalcedonians
are separated brethren who have strayed from the orthodox faith.

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794 Life, 9-11.
795 Ibid, 10.
796 Ibid, 35.
797 I.e. “pagans.”
After the second encounter, the weakened Samuel was led by an angel to settle with his disciples on the mountain of Takinash. Shortly thereafter, the angel instructed Samuel to leave his disciples at Takinash and to settle in the marsh (ⲡⲩⲗⲗⲟⲥ) near a small church, which is the place where Samuel’s encounter with the “barbarians” begins. A “godless” raiding band of barbarians seized Samuel, destroyed the church, and beat Samuel severely while shouting angrily “in their language.”

The godless barbarians are ethnically distinguished from the Egyptian people of God further positioning Samuel and the Copts as the godly influence on both heretics (Chalcedonians) and heathens (barbarians). After the barbarians carried Samuel away on a camel, an angel of the Lord possessed the camel and kept it from moving. Frustrated, the barbarians left Samuel for dead and he made his way back to the church.

After a brief respite, the barbarians returned to Samuel’s village. After raiding the village, the barbarians took Samuel as prisoner to “their country” (ⲡⲥⲩⲭⲱⲣⲁ) and sold him as a slave to a “great barbarian,” (ⲟⲩⲛⲟ ₪ⲃⲃⲣⲃⲃⲣⲟⲥ) named Sokortes. While living as a slave in the “foreign and idolatrous country” (ⲟⲩⲭⲱⲣⲁ ⲱⲓⲧⲙⲟⲩⲧⲓⲧ) the angel of the Lord possessed the camel and kept it from moving. Frustrated, the barbarians left Samuel for dead and he made his way back to the church.

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798 Pereira identifies attestation to a monastery and church at Takinash in Coptic documentary papyri, 40.
799 Life, 11.
800 Ibid, 13. Later in the Life while Samuel is practicing extreme asceticism alone in the desert, he is attacked by demons who “terrify in the manner of the barbarians,” 31.
801 Ibid, 13.
802 Ibid, 15. The ethnic group of Sokortes is identified as the “country of the Mazices,” (ⲡⲥⲩⲭⲱⲣⲁ Ⲥⲛⲡⲃⲧⲕⲇⲧⲑⲥ) 15. Alcock translates ⲡⲃⲃⲣⲃⲃⲣⲟⲥ as “Berbers” throughout his translation. Pereira’s Portuguese translation of the Ethiopic text indicates a significant variation from the Coptic version; the “barbarians” are not named as such as they are commonly throughout the Coptic text. The god of the Mazices, “Maldizes,” is named once, 154. Coupled with the reference to this group in the Ethiopian Life as “occidentales,” Pereira identifies this group as “berber,” 57. This group is also mentioned in the CCH as potential threats to the exiled Nestorius. The name Ⲥⲛⲡⲃⲧⲕⲇⲧⲑⲥ is spelled the same in the CCH as in the Life, David Johnson (1973), 105. Zaborowski suggests the intriguing possibility of the “barbarians” referring to Arab conquerors, thus explaining the surprising silence on the Arab Conquest in the Life, Zaborowski (2003), 115.
803 Life, 19.
of the barbarians, Samuel is reunited with John, *hegoumenos* of Scetis who was sold into slavery after the Chalcedonian incursion into Scetis. Sokortes tries to force Samuel to worship the sun and then savagely tortures Samuel when he refuses. John describes the pagan practice of the Mazices to Samuel:

> For it is the custom (συνήσις) that when they see the sun come up, they turn their face to the east and worship it, saying ‘Welcome, our lord the Sun, for you have illuminated us as we were in the darkness of the night.’ And again, when it comes to set just a little, they turn their face to the west and worship it saying, ‘Our lord the Sun, will you go and leave us in the darkness of the night? Come quickly up and illuminate us.’ Now this, my holy father, is the custom the barbarians do daily.  

After failing to convert Samuel to sun worship, Sokortes attempts to force Samuel to marry. The devil visits Sokortes in the guise of a man and suggests he bind Samuel to a female slave so that he will forgo his monastic vow of celibacy and provide Sokortes with slave heirs. While Samuel was distressed by his situation, an angel informed him that he would be used by God to heal people. Samuel then healed many people including a man who could not walk and a deaf child whose mother Samuel calls “seed of Canaan,” (πεστηριά Χαναан).  

When Samuel’s fame began to spread throughout the land of the Mazices, “the elder (παύσος) of the village” feared that Samuel might “do wickedness in our entire country (χωρα).” He wanted to send Samuel “back to his own country” and

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804 Ibid, 15. The *Life* claims that sun-worship was the state religion of the Mazices. When Sokortes’ wife desires healing from Samuel, Sokortes expresses his reluctance: “I am afraid of the laws of the Mazices, even more so our lord the Sun,” 20.

805 Ibid, 15.

806 Ibid, 20. Alcock sees this as a reference to Mt. 15:22, 180. While this is possible, the wording is not present in the Gospel. Alternatively, this could be an ethnic epithet for neighboring barbarians from the perspective of late antique Egyptians.
decided that the Mazices would no longer engage in slave trafficking in Egypt “since their God is greater than all the gods.” After Samuel healed Sokortes’ wife, the slave-owner makes a similar exclamation: “Your God is one (οὐ.anim.pi.ν.kο.μο.γ.tε), and there is no other beside him.” Sokortes’ wife calls Samuel “a god of the Egyptians.” Sokortes swears “by the oath of the Mazices,” that he will return Samuel to Egypt if he heals his wife of barrenness and she gives birth to a son. After complying, Samuel returned to re-establish his monastery at Kalamun where he was assured by an apparition of Mary that “no barbarian would come to this place again.”

Indeed, Samuel and his monastery ensure the liberation of the Egyptian people from the marauding barbarians: “God will put an end to the barbarians by the faith of these saints and they will not come to Egypt and attack it again. And the path to Kalamun has opened up to everyone without any fear.” The Life celebrates Samuel as the Egyptian champion and victor over the barbarians: “For all the rulers of Egypt heard that the holy Apa Samuel had begun to build a church in the valley of Kalamun…All men who lived in Egypt said, ‘Because of the prayers of the holy Apa Samuel and the sufferings he has undergone, God has withheld the barbarians and not let them enter Egypt to this very day.’ So he was to the surrounding districts like an apostle of God.”

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807 Life, 20.  
808 Ibid, 21.  
809 Ibid.  
810 Ibid.  
812 Ibid. Precisely what is meant by “Egypt” in this context is confusing given that Egypt is presented in this paragraph as a region distinct from Kalamun: “They spent two whole years living on their small fruits, so that they never went to Egypt for anything,” 24. Also, one of Samuel’s monks traveled “to Egypt” to sell merchandise, 25. For another reference to travelling to Egypt for the purpose of commerce, see, 30.  
Popular Egyptian support of Samuel and his monastery is further attested by the financial support Samuel receives from leaders such as the bishop of Kois,\footnote{Ibid, 25.} the eparch of Pelhip, and the bishop of Fayyum who consecrated the church at Kalamun.\footnote{Ibid, 26.} Samuel spent the remainder of his life as *hegoumenos* of the monastery at Kalamun performing miracles and eventually dying of illness. Samuel is firmly cemented in the Coptic memory as an ascetic hero who defended Egyptian orthodoxy.

A fragment of a tenth-century homily in praise of Samuel attests to the place of Samuel in Egyptian Christian memory: “For he is a benevolent guardian (προστάτης) of the Christian faith; he is a pride (ομογογυ) for the monks in their monasteries (συμαγωγή); he is a joy for the ascetics in the desert cells; he is an ambassador (πρεσβεύτης) of the archimandrites; he is a fellow citizen (Συμπολίτης) of the kingdom of heaven; and a great leader (βασιλη) of all the archimandrites.”\footnote{Homélie en l’Honneur de Samuel de Kalamon, ed. Jean Simon. “Fragment d’une Homélie Copte en l’Honneur de Samuel de Kalamon,” in Miscellanea Biblica, vol. 2, 161-178 (Rome: Ex Schola Typographica Pio X, 1934), 174.}

The fame of Samuel in Egypt and the Fayyūm is also evident in the *Apocalypse* that is attributed to him. The *Apocalypse* claims to be the words of Samuel of Kalamun as recorded by his disciple Apollo\footnote{Apocalypse, 404. Here the author claims that there was further content regarding a secret conversation between Samuel and Gregorios that Samuel desired not be recorded.} and as indicated by Nau, it is a hybridized text that is part sermon and part apocalypse.\footnote{Ibid, 405. Likewise, Aritetta Papaconstantiou identifies the *Apocalypse* with a group of Egyptian texts from this period she calls “prophetic homilies,” “‘They Shall Speak the Arabic Language and Take Pride In It’: Reconsidering the Fate of Coptic After the Arab Conquest,” in Le Muséon 120, 273-299 (2007): 281.} While it is not mentioned in the *Life*, the *Apocalypse*
is mentioned in both the Ethiopic and Copto-Arabic Synaxarion. The French translation provided by Ziadeh is based on the Arabic text, which is the only surviving witness to the Apocalypse, although Nau suggests that there was an eighth-century Coptic original version.

The Apocalypse begins with introductory remarks describing the nature of Egypt during the Islamic Conquest. Arab Muslim invaders are contrasted with the Egyptian people who are simply referred to as the Christian people: “Lorsque les émigrants arabes se furent emparés de l’Égypte, ils étaient peu nombreux: mais ils multipliaient leurs bienfaits envers le peuple chrétien.” Such a generalization continues a trend common to Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian literature of assuming that Egyptian ethnic identity equals

819 The Ethiopic Synaxarion identifies the subject of the Apocalypse as the Muslims, Pereira, 182. The Copto-Arabic Synaxarion, however, refers to the Muhajirun, who Pereira identifies as the early companions of Muhammad at Medina, 188, n. 2.

820 Apocalypse, 406. Ziadeh agrees with Nau’s assessment and provides the evidence that the Arabic of the Apocalypse is awkward and does not conform to typical grammatical conventions, further suggesting a Coptic original. That Ziadeh provides the Egyptian-centeredness of the text (e.g. focus on Egyptian names, places, etc.) as further evidence for a Coptic Vorlage is unconvincing; one would expect a similar focus on Egypt from Copto-Arabic writers of this period, 374-5. Papaconstantinou also presupposes a Coptic composition, Papaconstantinou (2007), 274. She pushes the date back to the tenth-century and suggests the Apocalypse may have been a reaction to the rise in Arabic use among Copts due to Arabic-speaking figures such as Severus ibn al-Muqqafa’, 292. Jos van Lent has argued for a ninth-century composition, Jos van Lent, “The Nineteen Muslim Kings in Coptic Apocalypses,” Parole de l’Orient 25, 643-693 (2000): 664. John Iskander argues for an eleventh-century provenance, John Iskander, “Islamization in Medieval Egypt: The Copto-Arabic ‘Apocalypse of Samuel’ as a Source for the Social and Religious History of Medieval Copts,” Medieval Encounters 4, 219-227 (1998): 221. Jason Zaborowski has argued for an originally Arabic composition, stating that the Apocalypse represents an appeal of fully-Arabized Copts to return to the language of their ancestors, Jason Zaborowski, “From Coptic to Arabic in Medieval Egypt,” in Medieval Encounters 14, 15-40 (2008), 17. While this is certainly possible, it seems more likely that such an anti-Islamic polemic focusing primarily on the use of the Arabic language would have been composed in Coptic. While Zaborowski is correct in noting the Apocalypse’s ironically unapologetic deployment of the Arabic language in its anti-Arabic message, it is inaccurate to equate the contemporary attitude of modern Copts with the feelings of the medieval audience of the Apocalypse (36); the modern Coptic community does not express a general disapproval of the Arabic language as is present in the Apocalypse. Maged Mikhail has argued for a late-tenth century composition because of the rise in Arabic names among Christians as well as its use in liturgy during the tenth-century, Mikhail (2014), 99.

821 Apocalypse, 392.
Christian (Miaphysite) identity. The present study has examined this trend in Egyptian texts from multiple centuries, geographical region, and various levels of society.

Equating Egyptian with Miaphysite is not unique to the context of seventh-century Fayyûm: “It is regional peculiarities and ambivalence toward the authorities, not anachronistic theories of nationalism that should be the bases for understanding seventh-century Egyptian Christianity.” While Zaborowski is correct in rejecting nationalism as an interpretive mechanism, the pro-Egyptian/Miaphysite attitude is more than “a localized, religious tradition.” While Egyptian ethnic boundary maintenance takes the specific form of anti-Arab xenophobia in the *Apocalypse*, the Egyptocentrism that goes along with this sentiment seems to have taken firm root immediately after Chalcedon.

The anti-Chalcedonian Egyptian movement collapses religious and ethnic identity and any attempt to neatly separate the two misses the unified identity development in the text: “Even the text’s many references to the loss of Coptic language are most clearly in connection with spiritual instruction (*waṣīyah*), and not explicitly connected with ethnic pride or ethnic solidarity…Forgetting Coptic means losing their religious identity, not an ethnically-defined identity.” The *Apocalypse* deals with religious conversion and cultural assimilation simultaneously, which further attests to the complex, interconnected nature of Coptic identity. It is because of these broad themes in the *Apocalypse* that Maged Mikhail is probably correct that the intended audience was not exclusively

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822 Zaborowski (2003), 102.
823 Ibid, 115. While central to Zaborowski’s treatment of the *Apocalypse* is the thesis that its tone represents a localized phenomenon, other statements seem to indicate otherwise: “The *ASQ’s* references to the loss of Coptic certainly signal a provincialism, or regionalism, that reflects the local colors of Christians in Qalamûn, and Egypt in general,” 113. This last statement is more accurate in placing the *Apocalypse* in a broader trajectory of pro-Egyptian, Miaphysite literature.
824 Ibid, 112.
monastic but included the urban laity. The exposition of pseudo-Samuel begins with commentary on the role of God in the recent imperial power shift:

Béni soit Dieu qui a établi les temps en leur fixant une limite, qui exalte une nation et en abaisse une autre, qui détrone et éleve les rois. Ne croyez pas, mes enfants bien-aimés, que cette nation est agréable aux yeux de Dieu parce qu’il a livré cette terre à leurs mains; car la sagesse de Dieu est insondable pour les humains et il n’y a personne qui puisse connaître les œuvres du Créateur ni la fin des temps si ce n’est lui seul.

The author is prescribing the attitude that the Copts should maintain toward Islamic hegemony: the current political power is not a godly one, but the change in imperial hegemony is ultimately in God’s hands. The Apocalypse reminds its readers that such oppression of the orthodox is nothing new: “Je vous fais part, mes enfants, des maux nombreux que les hérétiques ont commis contre les Orthodoxes au temps du père Dioscor.” The various periods of oppression endured by the Egyptian orthodox are recounted and offered as the reason for the Islamic Conquest of Egypt: “C’est pourquoi Dieu entendit la prière de ses élus qui criaient vers lui et leur envoya, selon leur demande, cette nation qui recherché l’or et non la profession religieuse.” This is also the perspective of the Chronicle of John of Nikiou: “And every one said: ‘This expulsion (of the Romans) and victory of the Moslem is due to the wickedness of the emperor Heraclius and his persecution of the Orthodox through the patriarch Cyrus. This was the

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825 Mikhail (2014), 8.
826 Apocalypse, 392.
827 Ibid, 393.
828 Ibid. Again on 397: “Leurs actions, dont vous êtes témoins, ont pour cause les péchés commis par mon peuple, car il a rejeté mes commandements et mes ordonnances pour ressembler à cette nation.”
cause of the ruin of the Romans and the subjugation of Egypt by the Moslem’.\textsuperscript{829} This does not mean, however, that the \textit{Apocalypse} (nor Egyptian Miaphysite literature in general) endorses Muslim dominance: “Plût à Dieu que vous n’eussiez pas rappel leur nom au milieu de nous aujourd’hui, car c’est une race superbe que nous ne devons pas nommer dans les assemblées des saints. Ah! Ce nom! Celui des Arabes, et leur domination contraire à nos lois! Ces rois hautains qui régneront de leur temps!”\textsuperscript{830}

The \textit{Apocalypse} contains extensive anti-Islamic polemic; Muslims are accused of adultery, oppression of the poor, fornication, governmental mismanagement, and blasphemy. Indeed, as Iskander states, “the sins for which the ‘Apocalypse of Samuel’ mostly faults the Christians have to do not with conversion to Islam, but with becoming like Muslims, and practicing the sins in which the Muslims supposedly indulged themselves.”\textsuperscript{831} Islam is depicted as a disease of the “émigrés arabes”\textsuperscript{832} which contaminates the Christian peoples of the world: “Beaucoup d’autres peuples se mêleront à eux: les Hébreux, les Grecs, les Édesséniens, les habitants de Djordján, les habitants d’Amid…les Chaldéens, les Persans, les Berbères, ceux du Sind et de l’Inde.”\textsuperscript{833}

The greatest concern of the \textit{Apocalypse} is the way in which Islam will affect the Christians of Egypt, specifically their use of the Coptic language: “Ils commettront encore une autre action, dont vos cœurs seraient contrits de douleur, si je vous la disais, à savoir ils abandonneront la belle langue copte dans laquelle le Saint-Esprit s’est souvent

\textsuperscript{829} \textit{Chronicle}, 200.
\textsuperscript{830} \textit{Apocalypse}, 393.
\textsuperscript{832} \textit{Apocalypse}, 397.
\textsuperscript{833} Ibid, 394.
exprimé par la bouche de nos pères spirituels; ils apprendront à leurs enfants, dès leur jeunesse, à parler la langue de l’hégire et ils s’en glorifieront.”

This passage expresses the union of Coptic orthodox confession with Egyptian ethnic identity. The Coptic language, an extension of Egyptian ethnic identity, is presented as necessary for theological orthodoxy: “Behind this linguistic bias is the perception of the Coptic language as the cultural conduit and authenticating seal of Egyptian Christianity.” Indeed, as Papaconstantinou has indicated, the period preceding the composition of the *Apocalypse* was one in which Greek fell into disuse and Coptic became distinctly the language of the Christians. The primarily linguistic focus of the *Apocalypse* should be seen as part of a larger argument against Egyptian assimilation to Arabization. It is in the Egyptian language that the “spiritual fathers” spoke and loss of this language naturally results in apostasy.

The *Apocalypse* goes on to lament the replacement of Coptic by Arabic in the liturgy and the loss of Coptic literature due to the presence of “livres étrangers.” The primary invective of the *Apocalypse* is against the clergy who adopted Arabic for the purpose of upward mobility. “Abandonneront cette langue pour parler la langue arabe et s’en glorifier, jusqu’au point où l’on ne pourra plus reconnaître en eux des chrétiens;

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834 Ibid, 394-5.
835 Zaborowski (2008), 16. See also, 36: “The Coptic language increasingly served as an indexical symbol of Coptic Christian identity, similar to the ways other minority communities have been served by their languages.”
836 Mikhail (2014), 100.
838 Ibid, 298.
840 Papaconstantinou, 295.
The *Apocalypse* claims that the loss of the “sweet language” renders Copts unidentifiable - not as Egyptians (as one might expect), but as *Christians*.

This further demonstrates the merging of religious and ethnic identity that is fully developed by the time of the *Apocalypse*. As Papaconstantinou states, the *Apocalypse* is less an accurate description of the linguistic situation of early medieval Egypt than “a way for one section of the Christian establishment to criticize another.” Again, it does not advance understanding of Coptic identity after the Arab conquest to separate religious and ethnic identity when reading a text where they clearly overlap. As Zaborowski states, “The faith of the monks of Qalamūn is fixed on Egypt for reasons of spiritual heritage, but not for any apparent ethnic nationalist motives.” While it is true that the nationalism thesis is an ineffective analytical tool, to dismiss the role of ethnicity is to miss a vital component in Coptic identity formation.

The value of the Egyptian language/ethnicity among the Coptic orthodox (Miaphysite) is evident in the *Apocalypse*. Iskander states, “It is this sort of Arabization, with all of its implications of linguistic and social change, which the ‘Apocalypse of Samuel,’ and by implication, the church, decried.” The rejection of the Coptic language is tantamount to exclusion from the heavenly community: “En vérité je vous dis, mes enfants, que ceux qui abandonneront les noms des Saints pour donner à leurs

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841 *Apocalypse*, 395. Papaconstantinou disagrees with Ziadeh’s identification of the “barbarians” here specifically as Berbers; she argues rather that the *Apocalypse* refers to the Arab conquerors as barbarian. She contrasts this with the use of ἄρχος in the *Life*, which she identifies with Berbers along with Alcock, Papaconstantinou (2007), 276, n. 13.

842 *Apocalypse*, 396.

843 Papaconstantinou (2007), 278.

844 Zaborowski (2003), 111.

845 Iskander, 225.
enfants des noms étrangers, ceux qui agiront ainsi seront exclus de la benediction des Saints; et quiconque osera parler à l’intérieur du temple la langue de l’hégire, celui-là s’écartera des ordonnances de nos saints Pères.”

The message of the *Apocalypse* is clear: preserve Christian orthodoxy through continued use of the Coptic language: “Et je vous supplie humblement de recommander à ceux qui viendront après vous jusqu’à la fin des âges, de veiller parfaitement sur leurs âmes et de ne pas laisser un chrétien parler la langue arabe dans ces lieux, car c’est là matière à un grand jugement: beaucoup en effet oseront parler à l’autel la langue de l’hégire.”

The insistence in the *Apocalypse* on maintaining the Coptic language as a defining feature of Egyptian ethnic boundaries challenges Barth’s argument that “cultural matter” is not tied to shifting ethnic boundaries: “However, most of the cultural matter that at any time is associated with a human population is not constrained by this boundary; it can vary, be learnt, and change without any critical relation to the boundary maintenance of the ethnic group.” Ethnic studies has also advanced the idea that ethnicity is not dependent on language.

While this holds true, to some extent, given Egypt’s multi-lingual environment, the *Apocalypse* represents an alternative perspective, insisting on language as an identifying mark for insiders. The *Apocalypse* presents an Egyptian ethnic boundary that is very dependent on and most visible through the Coptic language, a defining aspect of

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846 *Apocalypse*, 396.
847 Ibid, 398.
848 Barth (1969), 38.
849 Derks and Roymans, 2.
“cultural matter.” Yet the decline of the Coptic language and the growing use of Arabic support Barth’s argument, since the boundaries of Egyptian identity continue to be asserted even while cultural matter shifts from Coptic to Arabic.

It is interesting that the *Apocalypse* focuses less on the dangers of Islamic doctrine and primarily on the use of the Arabic language. The Egyptians are cautioned through “radical alarmist rhetoric” to avoid not only the Muslim religion, but the Arab ethnic group: “Celui qui se garde des œuvres des Arabes et ne les imite pas pourra sauver son âme.” Egyptian Christians are called to return to the language, tradition, and practice of the monastic forefathers, “eux dont les prières font prospérer la terre de l’Égypte.”

The *Apocalypse* pleads with those Egyptians who have “sold out.” The land of Egypt is holy and ought to be esteemed by its people: “Bienheureux êtes-vous, mes enfants, puisque vous avez mérité d’habiter la terre de la Vierge très pure Notre-Dame Marie.” The conflation of religious and ethnic identity goes both ways in the *Apocalypse*. Just as Egyptian and Christian are synonymous, so too are Arab and Muslim with polemical force: “Jusqu’à quand durera cette épreuve et la domination de cette race sur la terre d’Égypte?”

The *Apocalypse* has as its goal the non-violent ethnic purification of the Egyptian people by the eradication of Arabic in future generations: “Prescrivez à vos enfants de

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851 Ibid, 286.
852 *Apocalypse*, 399.
853 Ibid, 400.
854 Hoyland, 258.
855 *Apocalypse*, 401. This is a reference to the consecration of the church at Kalamun to Mary.
856 Ibid, 402. Here Apa Gregorius laments and inquires of Samuel as to the duration of the Islamic oppression.
recommender à ceux qui viendront après eux jusqu’à la fin des âges futurs, que personne ne parle à l’intérieur du chœur [litt. de l’autel] la langue de l’hégire.” 857

The Apocalypse ends with eschatological predictions of the fall of the Arab people at the hands of the Greek and Ethiopian empires: “Il arrivera aussi que le roi de l’Abyssinie accomplira de grands ravages dans le domaine de leurs ancêtres du côté de l’Orient. Ceux de l’hégire s’enfuiront aux déserts où ils étaient auparavant; ils fuiront de l’Est devant le roi des Abyssins et le roi des Grecs fondra sur les Fils d’Ismaël et les cernera dans la vallée d’Al-Héfar, demeure de leurs ancêtres.” 858

These events are the beginning of the reign of the anti-Christ and the appearance of the nations of Gog and Magog. The eschatological motif that comes forth strongly at the end underlines the need for the Egyptian church to solidify its commitment to orthodoxy through a re-shaping of ethnic boundaries. The Apocalypse represents a desperate attempt at bolstering the Coptic language during a period of Egyptian history in which Arabic was increasingly becoming the language of daily life and also the liturgical language of the Coptic community. Regardless of the date and language of composition, the place of the Apocalypse in the trajectory of the Egyptian Miaphysite movement is clear. Both the Life and the Apocalypse define Egyptian ethnic identity by reference to anti-Chalcedonian doctrine and contrast it with the Byzantine and Arab/Muslim Others.

857 Ibid, 401.
858 Ibid, 404.
**Isaac of Alexandria**

Most of the available information regarding the patriarch Isaac can be found in the hagiographical *Life of Isaac of Alexandria* (*Life*) and in the *AHPA*. The *AHPA* claims that Isaac was patriarch for only three years. Much scholarship has focused on the question of exactly when Isaac’s three-year reign transpired: the *Life* claims that Isaac’s consecration took place on Sunday, the 8th of Choiahk (December 4). Alfred Butler demonstrated that if December 4 fell on a Sunday, Isaac’s reign would have occurred between 684 and 690 CE, and 690 CE was more likely since 684 CE fell within the lifetime of Isaac’s predecessor, John III of Samannud.

Although Butler here is contradicting the claim of the *AHPA* that Isaac reigned from 686-689 CE, he follows the *AHPA* in its claim that Isaac’s reign lasted 2 years and 11 months, thereby agreeing with the date provided in the *Life* for Isaac’s death date, the 9th of Hator (November 5, 693 CE). Following the computation of Butler, the dates of 690-693 CE seem most probable. Bell observes that the facts provided by the author of

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859 The Bohairic text has been edited twice with French translation and a more recent English translation has also been provided, Émile Amélineau, *Histoire du Patriarche Copte Isaac: Étude Critique, Texte et Traduction* (Paris: Leroux, 1890); *Vie d’Isaac Patriarche d’Alexandrie*, ed. E. Porcher, PO 11 (1915); David N. Bell, *Mena of Nikiou: The Life of Isaac of Alexandria and The Martyrdom of Saint Macrobius* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1988). David Johnson notes the similarity between the accounts found in the *Life* and the *AHPA* and argues for a relationship in their transmission, David Johnson (1973), 71. The following study will follow Porcher’s edition of the *Life*.

860 *AHPA* (1910), 24.


862 Butler, 549.


864 Butler, 549. For the date provided in the *Life*, see p. 386.
the *Life*, a contemporary, should be given greater weight than that of the *AHPA*, written centuries later.\textsuperscript{865}

Butler has argued for a birthdate of the early 640s given the past-tense reference in the *Life* to the persecution of Cyrus and the reestablishment of the Coptic patriarchate in Alexandria (after 644 CE).\textsuperscript{866} While Butler is correct in placing Isaac’s entry into Scetis after 644 CE, it is unlikely that Isaac was a small child at this point, given his service as archivist. Rather, as Bell suggests, his birthdate was most likely before the 640s.\textsuperscript{867} The *Life* identifies its author in the proemium as Mena, bishop of Pishati (the Greek name of which is Nikiou). Amélineau suggests a late seventh-century/early eighth-century date of composition for the *Life*.\textsuperscript{868} Bell concurs with this assessment as Mena would probably have been appointed bishop of Nikiou in the late 690s before Patriarch Simon’s death in 700 CE.\textsuperscript{869}

The *Life* begins with customary remarks of self-abasement and introduces Isaac by focusing on his most notable feature, his role as patriarch: “He was entrusted with tending the sheep of the Church of the great city of Alexandria, of all of Egypt, and even of those under all of heaven.”\textsuperscript{870} The *Life* here continues a trend common to anti-Chalcedonian literature of Egypt: the ascription of universal authority to the Alexandrian patriarch.

\textsuperscript{865} Bell (1988), 24.
\textsuperscript{866} Butler, 550. For the reference to Cyrus see, *Life*, 315.
\textsuperscript{867} Bell, 25.
\textsuperscript{868} Amélineau (1890), v.
\textsuperscript{869} Bell (1988), 27.
\textsuperscript{870} *Life*, 304.
Attention is also drawn to the land of Egypt, thus highlighting the importance of its people in the universal Church. Patriarchal authority in Egypt is presented as synonymous with universal ecclesiastical authority. At the time of Isaac’s ordination as patriarch, the *Life* claims that “he illuminated the entire world (ⲡⲓⲟⲥⲡⲟⲥ ₋ⲧⲏⲣ ρⲧ).” Such rhetoric is evidence of the attitude and feelings of seventh-century Egyptian Christians, to some extent.

Egyptian Christian writers—separated from Byzantine Christianity, with pagan barbarian neighbors immediately to the west and south, and now living under Islamic hegemony—depict themselves as the lone champions of orthodoxy shining the light of sound doctrine on the dark world surrounding them. This theme appears throughout the *Life*. The text begins by highlighting the importance of Egyptian ethnic identity in the life of Isaac: “This saint, my brothers, was an Egyptian in his race (ⲟⲩⲣⲉⲙⲛⲭⲏⲙⲓ ₋ⲉⲩⲡⲉ ₡ⲉ ⃰ⲁⲧⲁⲧⲉⲛⲟⲥ) and came from a village called Pisho.” The *Life* goes on to describe the wealthy Christian family into which Isaac was born, his baptism, and catechetical education during childhood.

It is significant for ethnic boundary maintenance that Isaac’s “race” is highlighted at the beginning of the *Life*, expressing the text’s “thoroughly Egyptian spirit.” The word ρⲥⲟⲥⲡⲟⲥ here should not be confused with the modern concept of race; the

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871 *Life*, 355.
reconstruction of ancient concepts of race and ethnicity is not a simple matter of equating these social phenomena with the words *genos* and *ethnos*.\textsuperscript{874}

These terms and their use in antiquity do not equate with the contemporary understanding of race and ethnicity. Rather, in the analysis of the present study, ethnicity is identified through a process of defining the boundaries of a social group through ascription of inclusivity and exclusivity.\textsuperscript{875} Although Isaac’s ῥεος here is identified as ῥεῳκηθη, this does not refer to inherited physical characteristics that are associated with a “race,” meaning a complex of genotypic and phenotypic characteristics. Rather, Egyptianness is a social ideal that is inclusive of multiple languages, skin tones, and geopolitical regions but exclusive when it comes to religion. The exclusive factor among the Egyptian people is Miaphysite confession.

Isaac is introduced in the *Life* as an insider due to both his doctrine and his ethnicity. After Isaac’s schooling, he soon rose to prominence in the service of an archivist (خدامⲱⲣⲓⲟⲥ) named Meneson who served the prefect (ⲡⲉⲡⲁⲣⲭⲟⲥ) of Egypt, George.\textsuperscript{876} Despite attempts by his parents to have Isaac betrothed, Isaac entered the monastic community at Scetis where he came under the influence of Zacharias, ḥεγμουmenoς of the monastery of Makarius. Because Isaac did not inform his parents about where he was going, they engaged in a massive search for him, resulting in Isaac’s hiding with a priest named Joseph. Joseph is said to have endured persecution at the

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\textsuperscript{874} See Isaac, 34; Buell, 21.  
\textsuperscript{875} Barth (1969), 14.  
\textsuperscript{876} Life, 307. I follow Amélineau and Porcher’s emendation of *.AddField|AddNote* to *בסופו|אמנ欄*: Amélineau (1890), 5, n. 1; Porcher, 307, n. 1. Bell also notes the persistence of Latin and Byzantine government titles, despite the lack of insight into exactly what these titles meant during Islamic rule in Egypt, Bell (1988), p. 44, n. 6.
hands of the Chalcedonian patriarch Cyrus: “A multitude … testified of him that he was a 
confessor (οἰκολογήτης) who had been made to stand before the throne (βάθος) of the 
impious Cyrus and had been given many blows for the confession of the faith.” A 
negative recollection of the Chalcedonian patriarch places the Life in the Egyptian anti-
Chalcedonian literary tradition and the reference to Cyrus also suggests that the Life 
belongs to the period following the “Muslim liberation.” After making inquiries of the 
archbishop, Zacharias feared Isaac’s parents would involve the “ruler” (ἐξογια) of 
Egypt, and ordered Isaac to hide with an ascetic named Abraham. Soon after, Isaac 
confronted his parents, explained his decision to become a monk, and was reconciled 
with them.

Isaac remained under the supervision of Zacharias at Scetis and his fame began to 
spread “in all the country (χώρα) of Egypt.” As Isaac grew in ascetic fame, an old 
monk of Scetis prophesied that Isaac would become patriarch of Alexandria: “Behold an 
Israelite (οἰκογενής) in whom there is no treachery! This one will be archbishop of the 
city of Alexandria and patriarch. This one will be great before the Lord and his words 
will reach the end of the world (οἰκογενής)”! It is interesting that the quotation from 
John 1:47 is pulled out of context and Isaac is called “an Israelite,” in a manner consistent

877 Life, 315.
879 Life, 317. Bell argues that the patriarch referred to here is Benjamin, 48, n. 28. This is certainly 
possible, as Issac’s youth most likely fell before the end of Benjamin’s reign in 661 CE.
880 Life, 327.
881 Ibid.
with Egyptian monastic literature. While the Life places Isaac’s identity as an Egyptian at the forefront, his orthodoxy affords him citizenship in the heavenly New Jerusalem.

As Isaac’s fame grew, he restored to the orthodox, Miaphysite faith one from the party of akephalai:

Another one of them, whose name was Ianne, was of an exalted race (φαίνοντας Έλληνες κατακόρυφοι) and became the saint’s friend. He was of the heresy of the unblessed (τρεπόμενος συντροφός) who said that since the holy Dioscorus there was no archbishop over them. In this they divided the churches and became heretics. When he came to him (Isaac), he made him a Christian (κατά Χριστόν) and a monk.883

What exactly is meant by “exalted race” is unclear; Bell translates this phrase as “noble lineage.”884 Amélineau also understands the phrase to refer more specifically to a particular family (“sorti d’une famille élevée”)885 while the sense in Porcher retains a broader cultural dimension (“qui était de race illustre”).886 While this is lexically possible, it does not bring any further clarity to the description of Ianne. Does this refer to ethnic, governmental, or familial affiliation? The appearance of ἔλληνες here indicates a reference


883 Ibid, 328. Amélineau suggests that the “unblessed” group to which Ianne belonged were Chalcedonians, Amélineau (1890), xxvii-xxviii. Amélineau argues that the group’s claim of lacking a patriarch since Dioscorus indicates their being Chalcedonian as this period pre-dates the reign of Peter Mongus, when the akepholai formulated. Bell, however, suggests that this group should be identified with the akepholai who followed neither the anti-Chalcedonian nor Chalcedonian patriarchs during the time of Peter Mongus, Bell (1988), 53, n. 48. This view is more likely as it would be unlikely for Chalcedonians to define themselves as having no patriarch, as the above excerpt from the Life asserts. Chalcedonians would not have claimed to have no patriarch as there was often a rival Chalcedonian patriarch in Alexandria. The akepholai (ἀκεφαλοί) are also mentioned specifically as the heresy of a local bishop during a healing story later in the Life, 370. Mikhail also suggests Ianne belonged to the akepholai and highlights this event as part of Isaac’s policy of ecumenism, Mikhail (2014), 63.

884 Bell (1988), 53.

885 Amélineau (1890), 24.

886 Porcher, 328.
to a broader social identity. What is clear is that members of heterodox (i.e. non-Miaphysite) communities are rhetorically differentiated from the Egyptian orthodox by highlighting aspects of social Otherness. Non-Miaphysite groups are blamed for the division of the churches, while anti-Chalcedonian figures such as Isaac stand as beacons of orthodoxy who restore penitents to the “Christian” faith. Isaac’s admission to anti-Chalcedonianism is synonymous with his becoming “Christian,” i.e. Miaphysite. Isaac emerges in Scetis as the next Egyptian hero of the faith in a long succession of Miaphysite champions.

Isaac’s reputation as associate or aide (συγκάλλος) and secretary (νοτάριος) in Scetis resulted in his drawing the attention of the Alexandrian patriarch, John III of Sammanud. Despite Isaac’s attempts to hide his talent as secretary, archbishop John enlisted his service in composing paschal letters (ημιορταστική) one month a year while he spent the rest of the year in solitude at Scetis. Isaac’s ascetic fame continued to spread to “everyone in the land of Egypt” and there was pressure for Isaac to be ordained a bishop. After the death of Zacharias, the patriarch John received a vision indicating that Isaac would be the next patriarch. While describing the death of John, the Life also provides information about the relationship between Christians and Muslims in seventh-century Egypt:

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887 Crum’s dictionary suggests that ἀχταλογ here indicates those who have been forbidden to take communion, lending greater credibility to the argument that this group are akepholai. Crum, 336a.
888 Life, 331.
889 Ibid, 334.
890 Ibid, 339.
It happened in those days that the king (ⲟⲩⲣⲟ) sent for the archbishop to meet with him. Indeed he did this many times, as he brought the archbishop to him because of the love for him. The name of that king was ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, and he was also called Al-Emir. And he had secretaries who were two God-loving men- Athanasius and Isaac, and their sons. And the entire praetorium (ⲡⲓⲡⲣⲉⲧⲱⲣⲓⲟⲛ) was full of Christians. In fact, in his beginning when he first came to Egypt, he endeavored to do evil to the churches. He broke the crosses and did many evil things to the archbishop. But God, who punished Pharaoh of old, He also put fear into this other one in a dream, saying, “Be careful concerning the archbishop.” And he loved him as an angel of God.891

This excerpt demonstrates the relatively positive attitude of the Copts toward their Muslim rulers in contrast to the decidedly negative presentation of Byzantine Chalcedonians. Indeed, as Maged Mikhail states, “in that Life (of Isaac), it is safe to assume that ‘Christians’ referred only to anti-Chalcedonians.” A similar attitude is present in the AHPA: “And by his (Isaac’s) means the liturgies in the churches of the orthodox, where they could not be performed before, were restored.” Yet Coptic orthodoxy does not exhibit a blind allegiance to all things Egyptian. Pharaoh is contrasted with the orthodox faithful and there is no attempt to maintain continuity between ancient and Coptic Egypt. The “new Pharaoh” of Muslim rule is depicted as favorable to Christians and plays an important part in the elevation of Isaac.

During his visit to the Muslim ruler, John fell ill and returned to Alexandria where he soon died. Although John had indicated his desire for Isaac to succeed him as patriarch, a deacon named George wanted the office. George rallied many bishops to his cause and he was almost ordained. One bishop halted the process while other bishops

892 Mikhail (2014), 43.
893 AHPA (1910), 24.
were attempting to ordain George in the middle of the week, against the custom of ordination on Sunday. When the rest of the bishops arrived in Alexandria, a sharp division arose as many wanted to ordain Isaac, following John’s wishes, while others wanted to ordain George. Isaac is presented as the humble ascetic who simply “served George as he was not thinking of things of this sort.”

During the deliberation process, it was discovered that George was married and had “very evil children,” and Isaac was chosen as patriarch. There was a great feast at the monastery (ⲡⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ) of St. Sergius during which Isaac was “seized” and ordained “against his will” in front of “a multitude of people (ⲟⲩⲛⲛⲟⲥ) of Babylon and Alexandria and the entire country (ⲭⲱⲣⲁⲓⲃⲉⲛ).” Despite the alleged national support for Isaac, the matter was brought before ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Marwan, who presented the two candidates to the multitude in a manner similar to the Gospel story of Pilate, Jesus, and Barabbas. The Egyptians, however, are presented in a more positive light than the crowd at the trial of Jesus as they cry out for Isaac’s ordination, choosing him rather than the priest George.

‘Abd al-‘Aziz is a reverse Pilate as he insists on the ordination of George, who is clad in priestly garments: “He (Isaac) is a feeble man!” Despite ‘Abd al-‘Aziz’s preference for George, the Egyptian people choose Isaac, dressed in the humble monastic habit in contrast to George’s priestly robes. The account found in the AHPA differs

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894 Life, 350.
895 Ibid.
897 Mt. 27:11-26; Mk. 15:1-15; Lk. 23:1-25; Jn. 18:28-40. This is the first attested incident of Islamic governmental involvement in the Coptic patriarchal electoral process, Mikhail (2014), 184.
898 Life, 352.
significantly from the Life; in AHPA, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz is said to have discovered John’s preference for Isaac and vetoed George’s nomination. In the account found in the Life, the Egyptians are depicted as a new Israel that knows how to recognize God’s anointed, in place of a worldly imposter. Indeed, Isaac’s ordination is presented as a source for joy of the entire Egyptian people:

Oh, how great was the joy and gladness that occurred in the entire country of Egypt! (τὰ χαίρετα τῆς παγίας) And the multitude jubilated before him, as each village alternated with one another, on the east and the west of the river, from Babylon to Alexandria. Multitudes of bishops walked with him, those who all gathered unto him for his appointment over the churches. And there was John among them, bishop of Pshati, who was commissioner of the episcopate of Upper Egypt (Ἄγιος Νικηφόρος), he being a man perfected in the wisdom of God and of men, along with Gregory, bishop of Kais, he being superintendent of the bishops of Lower Egypt (Ἁγιασμὸς Νικηφόρος). The Life presents Isaac in the tradition of Athanasius and Cyril as the pillar of orthodoxy rescuing the Egyptian people from heresy: “When the holy Isaac went into Egypt, he brought back a multitude from their heresies and brought them into the orthodox faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Isaac further solidifies Miaphysite orthodoxy

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899 AHPA (1910), 23.
900 Although the Life does not quote from the Gospel story, the similarities between the two accounts indicate a high likelihood of the familiar story being in the mind of the writer.
901 Porcher identified ηαποτρτης as the Greek τοποτηρητής, 354, n. 2. I follow the suggestion of Amélineau who emends ηαποτρτης to ηαποκατης as this edition only requires the shifting of one letter, Amélineau (1890), p. 49, n. e. For an in-depth discussion see, Amélineau (1890), xxiv-xxv. Bell does not express a preference for either option but notes that regardless of the loan word used here, the importance of the bishoprics of Nikiou and Kais is evident, Bell (1988), 89, n. 96.
902 Life, 354.
903 A clear understanding of Egypt as a rhetorically-constructed space remains elusive in the Life; “Egypt” refers to the entire nation while it also is conceived as a region distinct from Alexandria and Scetis, as in the above excerpt.
904 Life, 357.
in Egypt through a certain local council known as the “One Hundred”: “And in those days the One Hundred gathered in Alexandria because the archbishops before him were unable to do this because of the enemies of our faith.” This reference most likely does not concern the recent Islamic rulers in Egypt but the former Byzantine Chalcedonian hegemony. The Life continues to express greater disdain for past Byzantine rulers than for the current Muslim government. The relatively empowering Islamic leadership provides Isaac with the opportunity to align the boundaries of Egyptian identity with the standard of anti-Chalcedonianism (“our faith”). Isaac is said to have enjoyed great favor from the Muslim governor: “And God kept him safe before the king of the Saracens, for he was greatly honored by him (Isaac) as he (‘Abd al-‘Aziz) also honored him. He (‘Abd al-‘Aziz) summoned him many times and they sat together and they socialized for the king had seen many healings by his (Isaac’s) hands.”

Isaac is also presented as exerting great spiritual influence on the Muslim governor. One day, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz saw an awesome fiery presence surrounding Isaac as he stood at the altar which caused the governor great fear. When Isaac explained that the divine presence accompanied him every time he was at the altar, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz exclaimed: “Your faith is a great (one), you Christians! And I thought until today that Abba John who was before you was great before God. But now I know that you are a father to that one and you are higher before God.” The Life claims that ‘Abd al-‘Aziz

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905 Ibid, 363.
906 This is also the opinion of Bell, 67, n. 119. Bell also notes the enigmatic nature of the reference to this otherwise unknown Alexandrian synod.
907 Life, 363. The relationship between Isaac and the Muslim governor is an example of the way in which many seventh-century Muslims, often themselves former Christians, paid great respect to Christian leaders, Tannous, 472.
908 Patriarch John III of Samannud, 677-686 CE.
909 Life, 366.
called Isaac “Patriarch” and that his attachment to Isaac extended to the whole of the Egyptian church: “The king built churches and monasteries for monks around his city, for he loved the Christians.”

Tensions later began to rise between Isaac and ‘Abd al-‘Aziz. First, some “Saracens who hated our faith” accused Isaac, saying he “abominates (ⲕⲏⲧⲛⲥⲟⲩⲧ) us and our faith.” These officials suggested the ‘Abd al-‘Aziz invite Isaac to dinner and kill him if he made the sign of the cross over the food. Several of the governor’s secretaries were Christians and warned the governor that Isaac would certainly make the sign of the cross, resulting in Isaac’s execution. Many Christians held high office in the government, which is evidence that Arab Muslim conquerors were a numerical minority in the seventh-century. The Life also depicts the Christians as positioned to influence Muslim authorities by voicing their sense of special knowledge. When Isaac came to dinner, he craftily made the sign of the cross as he picked up a basket of dates and pointed his hands in either direction under the guise of asking the governor where he wanted Isaac to sit. When the Christian secretaries later informed ‘Abd al-‘Aziz of Isaac’s innovation, he became all the more enthralled with Isaac: “Truly, I have not found a wise man like this one!”

The Life concludes with a final anecdote further attesting to the influence Isaac exerted as patriarch during Umayyad rule in Egypt and provides fascinating insight into international relations along the Nile Valley:

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910 Ibid, 368.
911 Ibid, 372.
912 Ibid, 376.
Listen, and I will tell you of this other marvelous deed! It happened at that time that the king of Makouria (ⲡⲙⲁⲩⲣⲓⲁ) sent messengers to the archbishop with letters telling him how the bishops in his country (ⲧⲉⲕⲟⲩⲣⲓⲁ) were few because of the length of the journey and the time. For they were not able to pass through by (order of) the king of Mauritania (ⲡⲛⲓϣⲭⲱⲣⲓⲁ) until he had made peace with him. 913 Although the two kings established in these countries were both Christians, they were not at peace with each other. Since one of them was at peace with the king of the Saracens, this was the king of Mauritania. But the other who was of the great country (ⲡⲣⲓⲥⲁⲩⲧⲉⲕⲟⲩⲣⲓⲁ) of Makouria was not at peace with the king of the Saracens. It happened that when the archbishop read the king’s letters, he knew what was in them. He was grieved much for the sake of the churches, and he immediately wrote letters to the king of Mauritania, giving him counsel and instruction through the words of the holy Scripture as he also said, “You are both Christians!” He wrote many words to him to establish his soul in the orthodox faith of the Son of God. Afterwards he wrote to him, 914 “Do not prevent the men of the upper kingdom from passing through his country when they were going for the sake of their bishop so that the churches would not be deserted lest you will find great guiltiness before God!” 915 When the enemies of our faith knew of these things, they slandered the archbishop before the king, saying, ‘We tell you, O king, that the king of Makouria has sent messengers with letters to Abba Isaac the archbishop so that he will appoint a bishop for them who they will take to their country. Not only this, but he sent another one to the king of Mauritania counselling him to make peace with the king of

913 The Roman province Mauretania (modern Morocco) is unlikely, Mikhail (2014), 356, n. 121. The AHPA provides different locations for the two disputant nations: “In those days the patriarch addressed letters to the king of the Abyssinians and the king of the Nubians,” (1910), 24. Amélineau differs from the AHPA as he identifies the nation of “Mauritania” as the territory of the Blemmyes, Amélineau (1890), xxxv. Rather than identifying “Makouria” with Ethiopia as in the AHPA, Amélineau indicates this region encompassing the bishoprics of Dongola, Korti, Ibrim, Bucaras, Saï, Termus, and Suenkur, xxxiv. Porcher suggests rather that Mauritania is correct and that the scribe may have confused “Makouria” for Morocco, 377, n. 1. This is less likely and requires a greater deviation from the text. Bell follows the suggestion of Amélineau, stating that “Maurotania” is also referenced as the land of the Blemmyes in the Life of Shenoute, Bell (1988), 94, n. 132. The suggestion of Amélineau and Bell is more likely especially in light of the frequent conflict between the Blemmyes/Beja and Makouria, William Y. Adams, Nubia: Corridor to Africa (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 451-2.

914 The text here does not supply an indication of a quote (e.g. χε). Bell begins the quote much later (73) while Porcher puts nothing in quotes here (378); neither does Amélineau (1890), 72. I agree with Bell that this should be a quote given the presence of a second-person address (ⲧⲉⲕⲩⲣⲓⲁ) but this would work better if the quote begins at the beginning of Isaac’s final instructions to the king of Mauritania.

915 The AHPA adds that the episcopal secretaries replaced Isaac’s letters with their own in an attempt to quell the governor’s rage, AHPA (1910), 24.
Makouria, our enemy. If this happens, O king, they will be of one single mind, and will rise up against us and make war with us.”

The Muslim governor ‘Abd al-‘Aziz was enraged and had Isaac brought to the provincial capital at Babylon to be executed. When Isaac was brought before ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, he was accompanied by the luminous presence of Peter and Mark. The governor was terrified at their presence and asked Isaac who these figures were. Isaac replied: “These two men you saw were disciples of Christ, the King of kings, the one by whom kings are kings. Moreover, those whom you saw walk with me at all times. Because of this, O king, be careful concerning the Church. Do not oppress it! For truly, he who oppresses the Church has oppressed God!” The Muslim governor was terrified at these words and ordered Isaac to build a church at Halban. The AHPA provides a strikingly different account of the governor’s reaction to Isaac:

Then he commanded to destroy all the crosses which were in the land of Egypt, even the crosses of gold and silver. So the Christians in the land of Egypt were troubled. Moreover he wrote certain inscriptions, and placed them on the doors of the churches at Miṣr and in the Delta, saying in them: “Muhammad is the great Apostle of God, and Jesus also is the Apostle of God. But verily God is not begotten and does not beget.”

The AHPA abruptly turns to Isaac’s death and says nothing about ‘Abd al-‘Aziz’s changed attitude toward Isaac and the Copts. The different account of the AHPA is likely

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917 Ibid, 384.
918 AHPA (1910), 25.
a product of the relatively hostile environment experienced by the Copts centuries later. However, the positive depiction of ‘Abd al-‘Aziz and Islamic rulers in general during the seventh century indicates not so much an absence of inter-religious tension as a preference on the part of the Copts for Islamic hegemony in comparison to Byzantine Chalcedonian rule. After the Nubian incident in the *Life*, Isaac soon fell ill and died in the presence of all the bishops, clerics, and monks.

However, this incident testifies to the influence exerted by the Alexandrian patriarch over the kingdoms of the Nile Valley. The above narrative provides a fascinating example of Egyptian ethnic boundary maintenance. While under Islamic rule, Coptic Egypt is presented as the pillar of orthodoxy that provides doctrinal guidance to the neighboring Christian kingdoms of Nubia. That ‘Abd al-‘Aziz was enraged at this Coptic intervention in international affairs is no surprise. The *Life* boldly depicts Isaac, and by extension the Egyptian church, as the true authority that commands greater respect than political rulers from outside of Egypt. In this, the *Life* illustrates resistance to the poly-ethnic stratification that entails the maintenance of “a categorically different distribution of assets”\(^9\) between the Egyptian Christians and Arab Muslims rulers. Under Islamic hegemony, Isaac is depicted as the symbol of Egyptian religious superiority. The *Life* represents a final phase of Egyptian ethnic boundary maintenance in anti-Chalcedonian literature, for under Islamic rule the Copts have fashioned an identity distinct from that of Muslim Egyptians. Their identity is principally defined by the Miaphysite faith.

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Conclusion

Anti-Chalcedonianism in International Context

It is clear that Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians established adherence to Miaphysite doctrine as the requisite element for inclusion in the Egyptian community. It becomes necessary, therefore, to balance this internal process of ethnic boundary maintenance with the perspectives of anti-Chalcedonian “outsiders.” How can anti-Chalcedonianism be equated with the faith of the Egyptian people given that it also had an international presence? How does ethnic identity continue to frame dialogue between various groups in which Miaphysite theology took root (especially groups in Egypt and Syria)? There was a high degree of international contact in the anti-Chalcedonian community and the best example of this is found when exiled Miaphysite leaders live among their Miaphysite brethren of different ethnic backgrounds.

At the accession of Emperor Justin I in 518 CE, Severus (465-538 CE), patriarch of Antioch, avoided imprisonment by fleeing to Egypt where he lived the last twenty years of his life in exile. In the various letters that survive in Syriac translation, Severus provides much insight into the Egyptian community from the perspective of a non-Egyptian fellow Miaphysite. Severus claims that he is engaging in a “sojourn in a foreign land (ܐܪܥܐ ܢܘܟܪܝܬܐ)” which he also calls “the Christ-loving city of the Alexandrines.”

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920 It has been suggested that Severus’ original works in Greek do not survive due to the posthumous condemnation of his works, Pauline Allen and C.T.R. Hayward, Severus of Antioch (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 31.

The portrait of Alexandria is similarly positive in the *Life of Severus*: “I will be baptized in Alexandria where there is orthodoxy all the time (شوضوع ܬܪܨܐ ܒܟܠܡܢ).”

The *Life* reports that Severus’ first act as patriarch was to “reestablish the union with the Egyptians,” which had been dissolved by his predecessor. Severus frequently holds Egypt and “the East” together as equal safeguards of orthodoxy: “I find the present state (ܩܬܐܣܛܝܣ) of the holy churches in the East and in Egypt to be more pure (ܐܘܪܬܘܕܘܟܣ) than the conditions of those previous ones.”

Severus displays the utmost respect and admiration for his Miaphysite colleagues in Alexandria, “the city renowned (ܪܒ݂ܬ ܫܡܐ) for its orthodox faith of the city of the Alexandrines.” Understanding the immense reverence felt by Egyptians for Cyril of Alexandria, Severus refers to the patriarch as “Cyril the chief warrior of orthodoxy (ܪܝܫܫܢܐ ܕܐܘܪܬܘܕܘܟܣ)”. 

In a manner similar to anti-Chalcedonian literature in Coptic, Severus refers to the Miaphysite confession of “all of Egypt” as he praises the Egyptians’ readiness to forgo their own safety and comfort for the anti-Chalcedonian cause: “This is not only in the men, but also in all the women, and it is to be seen in every age. Thus those who are in all of Egypt are also ready to forgo themselves for such struggles if the time calls for it.”

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923 Ibid, 113.
924 *Sixth Book*, 56-7.
925 Ibid, 237.
926 Ibid, 173.
Egyptians themselves, as well as foreigners, see Egypt as the home of a thoroughly anti-Chalcedonian people. Despite the evidence for religious diversity in sixth-century Egypt, Miaphysitism is put forth as the favored belief of the Egyptian people. Syria, along with Egypt, is depicted in the Severan corpus as purely Miaphysite in contrast to the Byzantine “heretics.” Severus depicts his home country of “the East” as a beacon of orthodoxy and leading example for other nations. In recounting the oppression of “Eastern” Miaphysites at the hands of Byzantine Chalcedonians, Severus claims: 

For I have not wept for you— it is unnecessary to weep for you— but for the countries (ܐܬܪ̈ܘܬܐ) that are deprived of you and for those who are God-fearing who dwell in them, and generally speaking for that entire district (ܟܘܪܐ). If there were not universal wrath, and the face of God were not rejected, you by all means would have endured, as pillars of the great house who would have prevented the fall that was threatening it.”  

Egyptian Miaphysites also describe themselves as a source of orthodoxy that shines light in the darkness prevailing in the nations around them. During his time as a prisoner among the “barbarians,” Samuel of Kalamun demonstrates the power of God to the Mazices leading to the conversion of many. 

While Severus portrays his own people as a guiding light, he also understands Syrian Miaphysites to be part of the international community of orthodox believers: 

We were set forth as ridicule by those who are zealous for the Chalcedonian ungodliness; and in Palestine, as I have learned, and in other provinces (ܗܦܪܟܝܣ) they were going all around, high and low, opening and extending their big mouth and saying: “Those who pride themselves on

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928 Ibid, 279-80.
929 Life of Samuel of Kalamun, 20.
being orthodox, behold- they have been manifestly seen to be obedient to the teaching of Eutyches, which is the error of the house of Mani.  

In a letter addressed to Dioscorus II of Alexandria, Severus frequently speaks of the union between the two Sees as “our communion.” Severus then refers to those “outside” the communion who will recognize God’s presence among the Egyptian-Syrian party because of the great faith of its members. Miaphysite confession is again the primary standard for membership in this multi-ethnic community. The anti-Chalcedonian community exists as a diverse community from the beginning while its greatest champion, Severus, expresses the desire for the “outsiders” to be included.

Severus later mentions the Tome of Leo, the “king of the church of the Romans” (ܪܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܗ ܝ ܕܪ̈ܗܘܡܝܐ). This contrast pits Romans against Egyptians and Syrians in a manner similar to that of Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian texts. This rhetorical strategy also contradicts the view advanced by Richard Price that Chalcedonianism slowly became associated with the Roman Empire. Egypt, in particular, through some leaders, expressed an immediate and vehement opposition to Byzantine Chalcedonianism.

This phenomenon explains Egypt’s altered relationship with Byzantium following Chalcedon, which included a degree of isolation. As Harmless notes, “in the aftermath of

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930 Collection of Letters, 290.
931 Sixth Book, 291.
932 Ibid.
933 Ibid. Severus follows this with saying, “Oh that he never had been (king)!"
934 E.g. Life of Timothy Aelurus, 166; Vie de Daniel, 547-9; Life of Samuel of Kalamun, 6-11.
935 E.g. Richard Price, “The Development of a Chalcedonian Identity in Byzantium (451-553),” in Religious Origins of Nations? The Christian Communities of the Middle East, 307-325 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 307. If Severus is not considered “immediately,” surely the writings of Timothy Aelurus represent an “immediate” reaction against Chalcedon that simultaneously connects the doctrine with Byzantine imperial authority. From the perspective of its opponents, Chalcedonianism was associated with Byzantium from the beginning.
Chalcedon, Egyptian monasticism, while remaining vibrant locally, lost much of its international appeal. For much of the Christian world, memories of Egyptian monasticism remained locked away in the classic texts of the fourth and fifth centuries.  

In another letter addressed to Dioscorus II of Alexandria, Severus refers to “our people” (ܚܠܝܢ ܕܝܠܢ), including the orthodox of Syria and Egypt in contrast to “all strangers” (ܒܩܘܒܚܐ ܚܠܝܢ). In the same letter, the “evil Leo” is the “head of the church of the Romans,” not the leader of the orthodox communities. It is likely that the “outsiders” Severus speaks of refers principally to Byzantine Chalcedonians. The letters of Severus clearly demonstrate that the anti-Chalcedonian movement extends beyond Egypt and seeks expansion.

Severus’ diplomatic attitude is evident in the way he blames the previous tension between Egypt and “the East” on the Syrians! The patriarch claims that the association of some Syrians with Nestorius brought division between the two regions. Severus credits the “unity” (ܚܕܝܘܬܐ) between the churches in Egypt and the East to the latter’s eventual condemnation of Nestorius. Severus’ genius as an ecumenical ambassador is evident: as an exile living among Egyptians, denouncing Nestorius and accepting responsibility for previous tension solidifies unity between Syrians and Egyptians. The affinity between Egypt and Syria is also shown in the way Severus is praised in Egyptian Miaphysite texts such as the Panegyric on Apollo and the Life of Isaac of Alexandria.  

936 Harmless, 43.  
937 Collection of Letters, 323.  
938 Ibid, 324.  
940 Panegyric on Apollo, 31-2.  
Papaconstantinou points out that the *Life of Samuel of Kalamun* names the predecessors of the Fayyumic monk as not only the expected Egyptian figures of Antony, Pachomius, Macarius, and Shenoute but also Severus.\(^{942}\)

The *History of Dioscorus* presents the patriarch Dioscorus as promoting a universalized Christianity that cuts across ethnic boundaries. In one episode an Egyptian merchant has a chance encounter with Dioscorus and some of his disciples while they are in exile at Gangra. Dioscorus sent his disciples (one of whom claims to be the author of the text—Theopistus) to beg for alms from the merchant. The disciples came to the Egyptian merchant’s ship and asked for alms: “I did this not knowing that the man was from our city (ܡܕܝܢܬܢ).\(^{943}\) Since I didn’t know, I would rather die of starvation than ask him.”\(^{944}\) The merchant, however, responded: “My lord deacon, do not be ashamed, for I know that you are in a foreign (place).”\(^{945}\) For he didn’t know that we were in exile but he thought that we made an error at sea.”\(^{946}\) When the disciples brought him to Dioscorus, the merchant engaged Dioscorus in the following conversation:

“The way I see it, you cannot be saved from this imprisonment.” Our holy father said to him, “As long as we are firm in the faith of our holy fathers, we will be saved.” And he spoke with him many words useful for the soul. Then he brought forth the cloth in which the money, i.e. gold, was bound. And he gave it to my father, saying, “Receive from your son this gift that it might meet your needs and those of my brothers, your sons; for you are in exile (ܐܟܣܘܪܝܐ).” My father said to him, “My son, we are not in a foreign (place).”\(^{947}\) God is the one who created the entire world, who gives

\(^{942}\) Papaconstantinou (2006), 82. Severus’ importance for Egypt is also evident in his final resting place being the Enaton monastery, also the location of subsequent Coptic papal coronations. See Scott Johnson, 44-7.

\(^{943}\) i.e. Alexandria.

\(^{944}\) *History of Dioscorus*, 79.

\(^{945}\) ܐܟܣܢܝܐ

\(^{946}\) *History of Dioscorus*, 79.

\(^{947}\) ܐܟܣܢܝܐ
us strength to do battle for the sake of the true faith, and who empowers and doesn’t make us foreigners (ܢܝܐ̈ܐܟܣ) in every place (ܕܘܟ) that we go to.”

Despite the patriarch’s initial refusal to accept charity, the merchant insisted until Dioscorus accepted. The incident with the merchant inspired Dioscorus to begin giving all his money away to those in need in Gangra. What is significant in this scenario, however, is the universalizing rhetoric attributed to Dioscorus. Dioscorus and Severus, mirror images as patriarchs exiled in another’s country, are both remembered as champions of the ethnic inclusivity of the Miaphysite faith. The two patriarchs were praised by their foreign brethren in similar terms. Just as Severus enjoyed fame among the Egyptians, Dioscorus was celebrated among the citizens of Gangra, according to the text: “The fame (特斯ّه) of the holy Dioscorus spread throughout the entire island of Gangra as they said, ‘God has sent us a protector (ܡܥܕܪܢܐ) and savior (ܦܪܘܩܐ).’”

The patriarch’s biography also expresses a sense of solidarity between Egyptian and Syrian Miaphysites. After the death of the patriarch, the remaining anti-Chalcedonian community of Gangra receives consolation. The text claims that after the time of the exiles at Gangra, there will be universal devastation for orthodox Christians: “But only we who are in Egypt and Syria of the East are the remnant of the true faith. But the remnant of the nations (ܐܬܪ̈ܘܬܐ) is filled with the teaching of the Devil.”

Severus is commemorated in a fifteenth-century homily attributed to a bishop of Assiut: “We remember him on the holy altars for he is worthy to be remembered in all

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948 History of Dioscorus, 94-5.
949 Ibid, 103.
the Orthodox churches, not only in his jurisdiction of Antioch but also throughout all the jurisdiction of the great city of Alexandria.⁹⁵⁰ This homily expresses the profound reverence for Severus among the Copts. Egyptian pride is also present as attention is constantly given to the benefit of Severus for the Egyptian people: “Your benefits will not be confined to Antioch but will extend to the whole land of Egypt and the land of Upper Egypt, for you will wander around it preaching like our masters, the apostles.”⁹⁵¹

Indeed, the *Homily* describes Severus’ flight from Antioch as intended for the benefit of the Egyptian church:

> His escape was made, not out of fear of death, but rather God did not yet wish to give him rest but instead wished him preserved for the benefit of many people and especially for the land of Egypt and that of Upper Egypt, for (this land) was seized by false teachings and the Lord desired that the holy Abba Severus should be (the land’s) physician.⁹⁵²

A similar point is made in the *Life of Severus* as the patriarch is said to have been born for the edification of all peoples:

> The great Severus was Pisidian in his race (ܘܒܓܢܣܗ). The city of Sozopolis brought him forth. The name was attested by his deeds, especially because he was not only the savior of one city, but of all the faithful of the entire world (ܬܒܝܠܐ), as his tribulation demonstrates.⁹⁵³

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⁹⁵³ *Vie de Sévere par Zacharie le Scholastique*, ed. M.A. Kugener, PO 2, 199-400 (1907): 211.
Severus is remembered both in Syria and in Egypt as God’s gift to the world. The *Homily* by the bishop in Assiut was delivered in the monastery of Severus’ namesake, the monastery of Saint Severus: “Your name will be placed in this monastery forever to commemorate your presence in the land of Egypt and as a sign of your coming to the land of Upper Egypt.”\(^954\) This monastery witnesses to the important role Severus plays in Egyptian Christian memory a millennium after his death. Before his death, Severus receives consolation from the Virgin that stresses his importance for the Egyptian people:

> Do not be sad O Severus, for my beloved Son wanted the land of Egypt to receive the benefits of your teachings and your sayings and the words, which He delivers by your mouth. Do not be sad O Severus, and do not let your heart be distressed by your death in a foreign country, for all the earth is for the Lord and we are foreigners in it, as the prophet said: “I am a foreigner in the earth, hide not from me Your commandments.”\(^955\)

The homilist links his see in Assiut to that of Severus: “What shall I say about you, O city of Assiut, which is worthy of all honours? If I compare you to the city of Antioch, I find you her inheritor, just as the daughter inherits from her mother.”\(^956\) The author of the *Homily* demonstrates the extent to which Egyptian Christians stand in the tradition of Severus. Severus is regarded as a foundational pillar of Egyptian Christianity in later centuries, which demonstrates the extent to which participation in the Miaphysite community transcends ethnicity.

It is evident that both Egyptian and non-Egyptian Miaphysites assume an ecumenical unity that prioritizes doctrine over ethnicity. Even when tensions rose

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\(^954\) *Homily on Severus*, 55.  
\(^955\) Ibid, 53.  
\(^956\) Ibid, 83.
between Egypt and Syria in the later sixth-century, a belief in unity of doctrine persisted. Despite intense theological debate between Peter of Callinicum and Damian of Alexandria, the former still expresses respect for “the great and Christ-loving city Alexandria.”

Peter maintains his desire for unity despite his having been “banished from the country of Egypt like evil-doers.” Peter distances himself from Apollinarianism and Arianism by appealing to the “all-wise Cyril, the renowned teacher, and by Saint Severus, his exact stamp and seal.” Peter venerates Cyril as “the light of the Christ-loving Alexandrians, and even (ܡܠܘܢ ܕܝܢ) of the whole world.” Though his writing expresses contempt for the position of Damian, Peter nonetheless expresses a desire for unity and a respect for the Egyptian church.

As has been pointed out throughout this study and in much of modern scholarship, ethnic identity is subordinated to religious confession in the Christian Near East and Egypt in particular: “le monophysisme n’est pas un phenomene exclusivement egyptien.” Jason Zaborowski argues that individual ethnic identity was not a

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958 Ibid, 92.
959 Ibid, 96.
961 Ebied and Wickham explain that the Dossier represents an earlier, more amiable tone from Peter before composing his principal work, Against Damian: Petri Callinicensis Patriarchae Antiocheni Tractatus contra Damianum, vol. 1, ed. R.Y. Ebied, A. Van Roey, and L.R. Wickham, CSCO Series Graeca 29 (Louvain: Peeters, 1994), xiii. However, in Against Damian Peter also exhibits reverence for the orthodoxy of “the great Christian city of the Alexandrians,” vol. 2, 157. This is not because ethnicized polemic is absent from Peter’s writing, for his anti-Sabellian polemic is laced with ethnic rhetoric. Peter frequently refers to Sabellius as “the Libyan” and speaks of Libyan culture as “Jewish” and “atheist” throughout Against Damian, e.g. vol. 1, 272.
significant factor in the medieval Christian Near East but that a larger Christian identity was the primary identifier for Egyptian Christians.\textsuperscript{963} As evidence, Zaborowski points to Egyptian refugees in Syria, such as John of Phanijōit, as well as to prominent leaders in the Egyptian Church who were of Syrian origin, such as Patriarch Mark III (r. 1163-1189) and the historian al-Makīn Ibn al-‘Amīd (1205-1273).\textsuperscript{964}

Reymond and Barns demonstrate the international scope of Coptic hagiography: “Indeed, the Coptic martyrologies seem to go out of their way to glorify saints of foreign origin who fulfill their martyrdom in exile in Egypt.”\textsuperscript{965} The early Christian world was understood to be composed of various \textit{ethnie} who belong to the group not by ancestry but by following a superior way of life.\textsuperscript{966} Christianity’s ultimate goal is to include all nations by appealing to the universality of the Gospel, a practice rooted in Greek philosophy.\textsuperscript{967} Porphyry similarly depicted the nations as having various degrees of compatibility with the philosophical values of Hellenism.\textsuperscript{968}

Late antique and early medieval Copts found inspiration from Hellenism as well as from their fellow anti-Chalcedonians. Edward Watts demonstrates the extent to which “Egyptian communities also drew upon Palestinian traditions of resistance,“\textsuperscript{969} as the \textit{Plerophoria} and the \textit{Life of Peter the Iberian} circulated widely in Egypt. Egyptian sources express support for the position of Palestinian Miaphysites: “How many thousands have been killed for Christ because of this (Chalcedon); in Alexandria and in Egypt and in Jerusalem because they would not bow to the golden idol nor submit to

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{963} Zaborowski (2005), 177.
\item \textsuperscript{964} Ibid, 177-8.
\item \textsuperscript{965} Reymond and Barns, 5.
\item \textsuperscript{966} A. Johnson (2006), 23.
\item \textsuperscript{967} A. Johnson (2013), 213.
\item \textsuperscript{968} Ibid, 298.
\item \textsuperscript{969} Watts, 136.
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communion with the council of Chalcedon.” Conversely, the *Life of Peter the Iberian* depicts Egyptian Miaphysites as fellow participants in the anti-Chalcedonian struggle:

But it thus happened that when the news of the death of Marcian, that head, cause, and patron (ܩܝܘܡܐ) of evils such as these, arrived at the city of the Alexandrians, those believing people who already started grieving from the many sufferings and persecutions (ܓܘܘܕܘܦܝܐ ܠܨܢܐ ܣ) that had come upon them, as has been said, and their hands were weak, while they acquired time to breathe, were revived again.971

In their analysis of the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, Cornelia Horn and Robert Phenix showed how the strength of anti-Chalcedonianism in Gaza during the time of Peter was due to Egyptian influence.972 In the above passage from the *Life*, ethnic distinctions are maintained as the Alexandrians/Egyptians are referred to as “those believing people,” giving the reader the sense that the Egyptian orthodox are a distinct group, apart from the broader community addressed by the *Life*.

Despite the ecumenical unity between Egypt and Syria, ethnic distinctions continue to be made in Miaphysite writings. Severus displays awareness of the distinction between the Greek vocabulary of the “Byzantines” and Greco-Coptic vernacular: “But the Egyptians call a male child *malakion*, whereas the Byzantines (say) *philikarion*.”973 It is interesting that Severus, a Syrian Greek-speaker, does not include Antiochenes in this comparison.

972 Ibid, xlix.
973 Collection of Letters, 334.
The significance of local custom is also present in the *Life of Severus*. The *Life* claims that, before his baptism, Severus went to Alexandria to study grammar and rhetoric “since the custom (ܥܝܕܐ) has taken root in his country, as people say, that they should approach holy baptism as adults.”974 Ethnic difference or local custom also influenced liturgical traditions. In a letter to Caesaria, Severus discusses liturgical differences among various ethnic groups within the orthodox community:

> But I want your God-loving excellence to know that the order of hymns and psalms have been handed down differently (ܐܚܪܢܝܐܝܬ)975 for the Egyptians, differently for the Palestinians and Phoenicians, and differently for the Syrians; according to the custom it has been preserved from the beginning in each of the districts (ܪܐܠܡܐ).976

And when the *Panegyric on Apollo* introduces Severus into the story, the patriarch’s ethnic difference is noted: “The patriarch Severus came and the saint Apa Apollo was in another district (ϩⲛⲕⲉⲧⲱϣ). So then this man prayed in a foreign monastic habit (ϩⲛⲟⲩⲥⲭⲏⲙⲁ ⲛϣⲙⲙⲟ) and went his way.”978 C.D.G. Müller has shown how the Tritheist conflict involving Damian and Peter of Callinicum was exacerbated by linguistic and cultural differences.979 Severus writes about Julian after his death, stating that he “pointlessly became wicked” and despite “kind and brotherly” admonishments,

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974 *The Life of Severus*, 9.
975 Brooks has “in one form” for each group. While this is certainly acceptable, the more literal sense of ܐܚܪܢܝܐܝܬ brings out the ethnic distinction present among liturgical tradition more clearly.
976 Gk. χλίμα
977 *Collection of Letters*, 332.
978 *Panegyric on Apollo*, 31.
was not “converted to virtue” regarding the question of the incorruptibility of Christ’s body.\textsuperscript{980}

Elizabeth Bolman discusses the inclusion of ethnic foreigners in the artwork at the monastery of St. Antony: “Barsuma is famous for opposing the Council of Chalcedon of 451, and in this he was in agreement with the doctrinal position of the Coptic Church. No doubt because of this he is described in the open scroll he holds as a combatant.”\textsuperscript{981} Coptic Christian art is open to persons who denounced Chalcedon, as this is the primary boundary of Egyptian identity.

However, Bolman demonstrates that, while open to anti-Chalcedonians from other territories, the art of the monastery strongly exhibits Egyptian pride: “The Egyptian character of the monastic saints conveys a strong sense of pride. The inclusion of Barsuma suggests that matters between the two groups were not overtly hostile, but the emphasis is Coptic.”\textsuperscript{982} The primacy of Egyptian identity over other possible identities in the monastery of Antony is also evident in the graffiti of the monastery. As Sidney Griffith has pointed out, the formal inscriptions of the upper walls of the monastery are all in Coptic while the graffiti written on the lower walls in the vernacular of various pilgrims.\textsuperscript{983} The image of Coptic inscriptions dominating graffiti in various languages is consistent with the role of Egyptian ethnicity in multicultural contact in the centuries after Chalcedon. While Egyptian Christianity embraces all peoples who confess

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{980} Sixth Book, 393.  
\textsuperscript{981} Bolman, 53.  
\textsuperscript{982} Ibid.  
Miaphysite doctrine, the role of the Egyptian people is emphasized over that of non-Egyptians.

In addition to mentioning cultural differences between Egyptians, Syrians, and others, one of Severus’ central concerns in his letters is celebrating the Eucharist across ethnic lines. Severus tirelessly champions Egyptian-Syrian unity, but many people on both sides were not enthusiastic about shared communion. Severus assures a presbyter of the doctrinal purity (i.e. Miaphysite confession) of the Egyptian church: “He should not be disturbed as to the condition (ܡܩܬܣܪܡܐ) that prevails in the holy churches in Alexandria and in Egypt, in that it is purified from comingling and communion (ܚܘܠܛܢܐ ܘܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ) with heretics now, to speak with God’s assured confidence now.”

The assurance Severus offers the presbyter indicates that there was doubt on the part of Syrian Christians regarding the orthodoxy of Egyptians. Severus constantly addresses the “bishops from Syria in Alexandria,” many of whom have caused tension between foreign exiles and native Egyptians:

Our entire argument with you concerns those who are residing in Alexandria and are of divisions that are superfluous and intolerable (ܕܡܢܝܬܝܘ ܘܠܐ ܡܣܬܝܒܪܢܝܬܐ) because they have damaged (ܡܣܓܦܐ) many. This has become manifest. Therefore do not cease giving, in the right time and to those in need, the grace that is never-ending; that which, as it is written, was given without expense and without expense is being asked for.

In a different letter, Severus recommends the ordination of the presbyter Thomas to the archimandrite Theodore, who is in doubt as to the qualifications of Thomas. Given

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984 Sixth Book, 158.
986 Mt. 10:8.
987 Sixth Book, 159.
the context of the letter, it is clear that Theodore’s hesitation is rooted in ethnic tension.

Severus admonishes:

All of you who are held in communion to us must not conceive of one single distinction between those who are exiled from the East, and are glorified by the struggle of confessorship, and the holy bishops in Egypt. And you must reckon to be one church (ܒܕܐ ܥܕܬܐ) which is united (ܡܠܚܡܐ) in the orthodox faith, thanksgiving, and communion; and is well purified and clean from the lack of comingling with the heretics. And you must not be divided meaninglessly over ordinations; but that the fear of God that is in you and the God-fearing archimandrites of the rest of the holy monasteries who were exiled from Palestine on account of true doctrine ought to present, with discernment, the familial brethren (ܐܬܪ̈ܘܬܐ) to the God-loving bishops in Egypt so that they will perform ordinations for elders and deacons for you and they will satisfy the deficiency of your need. For how is it not illogical and that which is full of every indictment that as the bishops who have been exiled from other countries (ܐܝ娟ܡܝܪܐ ܡܫܡܢܐ) and who bear upon them marks for Christ’s sake and flee to the great, orthodox, and apostolic church of Alexandria as to a mother, that people of childish thinking should fabricate difference (ܫܘܚܠܦܐ) in the midst of those who are thus united and constitute the unity of the members of the one body (ܐܕܚܕ̈ܡܚܝܕܝܢ락ܡܠܚܡܘܬܐ ܕܗܕܡܓܘܫܡܐ), and who by means of the reality itself (of the unity) proclaim the tenacity and steadfastness of the holy, persecuted churches, those in the East and those in Egypt (ܡܨܪܝܢ);988 those who even now are prepared to suffer those things and who manifest the steadfastness that is in their devotion? I think that which occurred recently in Alexandria has reached your hearing, things that are able to demonstrate even to those who are really stupid the steadfastness and resolution of the holy archbishop Timothy, and of the God-loving bishops under him, and of the churches in their cities; so that one may fittingly proclaim the renowned sayings of Isaiah the prophet, “Tabernacles shall not tremble; the edges of her tabernacle shall never be unstable, and her ropes shall not be decimated.”989 Therefore for a one to attempt to separate (ܠܡܥܡܠܫܒܐ) by vain thinking those things which are so clearly united (ܠܡܚܫܡܢܐ), and to divide (ܠܡܦܠܓܘܐ) those things that are so indivisible (ܠܐ ܡܦܠܓܘܐ) through the inspiration of grace from above is filled with every reproach and accusation.990 Of this we admonish your love of God as well as all who

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988 The use of ܡܨܪܝܐ here is less common for Severus who more often uses ܐܝܘܦܛܘܣ.
989 Is. 33:20.
990 The polarized language of “division”, “indivisibility”, “unity”, and “separation” is particularly potent given the anti-Chalcedonian context from which Severus operated. It is likely that Severus’ warning
share communion with us to flee from, and to throw such stumbling blocks out of the Lord’s paths as it is written.\textsuperscript{991} And that you should reckon as one the ordination, as we said before, of the holy Eastern and Egyptian bishops, and that you shall conceive of not one difference (\textit{̣ܟܝܠܐ}) between them.\textsuperscript{992}

Severus tells fellow refugees not to hesitate to share communion with Egyptians. He explains that it is the shared anti-Chalcedonian faith that is the foundation for the shared communion between the two ethnic groups: “For as one and the same faith prevails in the holy churches in the East and those in Egypt, one ought to reckon the communion also to be of the same value (\textit{ܫܬܠܦܐ}), since priests are not able, whatever they be in their conduct (\textit{ܣܥܘܪܘܬܗܘܢ}), to improve or diminish the sacrament.”\textsuperscript{993}

This letter is the first in the third “section” (\textit{ܛܝܛܠܘܣ}) of Severus’ letters and the colophon reads as follows: “Third section: That one not doubt on account of the conduct (\textit{ܦܘܠܝܛܝܐ}) as well as the customs (\textit{ܕܘܒܪܐ}) of priests, but only ask if they are orthodox as well as of the proper doctrine (\textit{ܐܘܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܐ ܐܘܟܝܬ ܬܪܝܨܝ ܫܘܒܚܐ}).”\textsuperscript{994} The main concerns exiled Syrians have regarding Egyptian bishops is their conduct (\textit{ܦܘܠܝܛܝܐ}) and customs (\textit{ܐܘܬܐ}). While the broader context reveals that \textit{ܦܘܠܝܛܝܐ} refers to moral character, it is unclear what exactly is meant by \textit{ܕܘܒܪܐ} here.

It is likely that \textit{ܬܣܣܐ} refers to cultural differences that, while not affecting the moral or doctrinal correctness of the bishops, nonetheless create barriers in the minds of Syrians in Egypt. This tension demonstrates the degree to which ethnic boundaries persist against “dividing that which is united,” while directly referring to the unity between Egyptians and foreign exiles in this context, has a secondary application to Severus’ Chalcedonian opponents.

\textsuperscript{991} Romans 14:13.
\textsuperscript{992} Sixth Book, 182-4.
\textsuperscript{993} Ibid, 261.
\textsuperscript{994} Ibid.
among fellow Miaphysites despite the attempt of Severus and others to promote unity. Severus constantly emphasizes that the standard for accepting Egyptian communion is anti-Chalcedonian doctrine, or "so long as they are of one and the same orthodox faith."995

He also claims that it is an offense "against the laws of the Spirit" and "a superfluous and very oppressive thing (ܝܬܝܪܬܐ ܗܝ ܛܒ ܘܝܩܝܪܬܐ)" for Syrian exiles to refuse Egyptian communion and request it be sent from "beyond the borders." Severus denounces the prejudice of exiled Syrian priests in Egypt by highlighting the plight of other exiled priests: "For to those the offering is of necessity (ܐܠܨܐܝܬ) sent who, while living in countries outside of the borders and being orthodox, are devoid of priests to offer the edifying and heavenly sacrifice (ܕܒܚܬܐ ܗ ܝ ܡܠܝܠܬܐ ܘܫܡܝܢܝܬܐ)."996

Unlike the Syrians in Egypt, these exiled Syrians require communion sent to them due to a lack of orthodox priests. Those in Egypt have no excuse for refusing communion simply due to prejudice. Severus mentions a certain John and Sergius who hesitated to receive communion with Egyptians: "For one could hear them reciting various dreams and prophecies; indeed, on account of them they hesitated to share communion with the holy churches in Egypt."997

Volker Menze speculates about the tension behind this passage: "Some of the exiled non-Chalcedonians might have encountered ritual or sacramental differences between their tradition, and the habits of the local Egyptians whose offspring established the Coptic Church."998 Menze refers to the above cited passage in which Severus notes

995 Ibid, 262.
996 Ibid, 268.
997 Ibid, 369.
998 Menze, 152.
liturgical differences between the different ethnic groups. As Menze notes, it is likely that these types of cultural differences were the source of the tension Severus addresses. Severus makes his disapproval of such attitudes clear:

However, because making accusations (κατηγορεῖν) is not pleasing to me, I will make clear and expound to those who are mine and who love me what it (my opinion) is to them, and proclaim it also to those who are against me; the communion (ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ) that now prevails in the persecuted church (ܥܕܬܐ ܪܕܝܦܬܐ) of the East and in all the Egyptian church, and is pure in the proclamation of the faith, and in the rejection of the evil Chalcedonian ungodliness (ܒܝܫܘܬ ܪܘܫܥܐ ܟܠܩܝܕܘܢܝܐ), and in purification and no commingling with heretics—I thus hold and I thus draw near to this (communion), in like manner I drew near it with the highest conviction and coherent thought.

Severus appeals to his prejudiced Syrian brethren by pointing to the strength of numbers found in the Egyptian-Syrian unity: “We gained besides the East the whole of Egypt also supporting us and equipped with purity along with us, and not bound in a yoke with unbelievers.” Severus expresses a similar attitude toward the Palestinian church:

But also that Palestine was subject (ܡܫܥܒܕܐ ܗܘܬ) to the apostolic seat of Antioch in previous times is undisputed (ܦܘܫܟܐ). However I and the God-loving bishop Isidore are one person together, and I myself say that his love of God enacted the ordination on my behalf; on account of this, let all questions and conflict cease.

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999 Ibid.
1000 Gk. κατηγορεῖν
1002 Sixth Book, 370.
1003 2 Cor. 6:14.
1004 Sixth Book, 370.
1005 Ibid, 154.
It is interesting that before describing the unity of Syria and Palestine, Severus mentions the latter’s prior subordination to the former. Perhaps the patriarch is addressing Syrian Christians who feel that an earlier jurisdictional arrangement must influence the current relationship between the two sees. Yet Egyptian culture caused many exiled Syrian Christians to avoid communion in Egyptian churches. Questions about ecclesiastical rank and moral quality were raised by Syrians in ways that displayed prejudice:

The same grace of adoption is received from the cleansing of regeneration both by one who has been made worthy of baptism from a priest resplendent in virtues, and by one (person) from one (priest) who is abased and despicable in his lifestyle; both one (who receives) from an archbishop, and one (who receives) from an elder who holds the lowest rank. For both confer one and the same seal at the time they symbolize (ܡܪܐܙܝܢ) and believe one orthodox faith that is the same in every matter and soundness…The difference of the character of those who offer sacrifice (ܕܡܟܗܢܝܢ) makes no difference whatsoever in the mysteries (ܪ̈ܐܙܐ) that are celebrated, as long as both of them confess one orthodox faith, and are not stained by the mark of any heresy. 1006

Severus encourages unity by declaring his equal concern for Egypt and Syria:

“For do not reckon me as anything but equal in my concern for the church of the Antiochenes and that of the Alexandrines; but I am not lying even if I say it is much greater.” 1007 Severus also claims that he has had greater success than the Alexandrian patriarch in converting Hellenistic philosophers, “those who for a very long time had not

1007 Ibid, 147.
shared communion (ܐܫܬܘܬܦܘܢ) as you know, but were satisfied by the acts of the records made by the blessed Dioscorus.**1008** Despite the respect paid to Dioscorus, Severus clearly depicts himself as the orthodox savior rescuing Egypt from heresy. Severus goes on to describe the incompetence of the presbyter Theodore:

Even while I was living in the city of Antiochus, I used to hear concerning the memory of the saintly bishop, father Theodore, that he would answer and say publicly to many who came to Egypt asking him whether or not they should receive communion (ܕܢܫܬܘܬܦܘܢ), “If you have been made fully assured (ܕܦܠܝܪܘܦܘܪܝܬܝܢܐ), receive communion,” and other things that resemble these things and approximate them. And I endured because it was a time of endurance, and because none of those bishops in the East heard anything like this. But as the reports were yours and confined to you, not much harm befell.**1009**

Though Severus works to establish unity, statements such as the above reveal his underlying sense of superiority to Egyptian Christians. Other Syrian sources express condescending attitudes towards Egypt more blatantly; John of Ephesus calls Alexandrians “une horde de barbares.”**1010** The existence of anti-Palestinian sentiment among extreme Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians attests to the ethnic division among Miaphysites. Severus illustrates such tension as he offers a critique of Christian Egypt. An interesting example is a comment about Egyptian Christians whose ethnocentricity leads them to deny communion to fellow Miaphysites based on their ethnicity:

I do not know how, while you have abandoned the letters and advice that are from within that time, you say to us that we shouldn’t pay attention to those that are from Cappadocia, the useless country (ܐܬܪܐ ܚܪܒܐ), but to

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**1008** Ibid, 147.  
**1009** Ibid, 149.  
**1010** Wipszycka (1996), 22.
despise the divine laws I just now mentioned. Rather, attention is due to one soul and to many. Furthermore, how can we call the two Cappadocias and Armenia useless? But in this you thought or spoke rather like the natives of the country (ܢܝ ܐܬܪܐ)- grant me your pardon to say- and not truly. For it is the habit of the Alexandrians to think that the sun rises for them only, and towards them only the lamp shines, so that they even jokingly nickname outside cities ‘lampless’ (ܡܨܝܚܐܝܬ ܕܠܐ ܫܪ̈ܓܐ ܢܟܢܘܢ). For if it were that one could weigh the population of a people (ܥܡܐ) for an accurate judgment, as in the case of weights that are distinguished by the tipping of the surface of a scale, the inhabitants of all these countries will produce no less than the entire city of the Alexandrians.\textsuperscript{1011}

Ethnic difference was understood to play a role in the divisions of the Church.

Peter of Callinicum blames the Chalcedonian schism on linguistic and cultural factors:

“The Westerners, not from heretical intention but rather from simplicity (ܦܫܝܛܘܬܐ) and the constraints (ܐܠܝܨܘܬ) of their language, were not a little bit hindered over the phrase ‘three hypostases (ܘܡܐ̈ܩܢ) of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.’\textsuperscript{1012}

There were also examples of Egyptian animosity towards foreigners. The Life of Severus recounts an uprising led by an Alexandrian monk named Nephalius in whom “jealousy was suddenly aroused against all those in Palestine who were of the communion (ܟܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ) with the fathers in Egypt and Alexandria.”\textsuperscript{1013} Nephalius is said to have “disturbed the people of his country (ܠܥܡܐ ܡܢ ܕܐܬܪܗ ܫܓܐ)” and “was the cause of a myriad of seditions and killings in his country”\textsuperscript{1014} because he resented the union between Peter Mongus and emperor Zeno. Nephalius apparently led a force of thirty thousand Egyptians as he continued “perverting the peace and order of his country.”\textsuperscript{1015}

\textsuperscript{1011} Collection of Letters, 317-8.
\textsuperscript{1012} Contra Damianum, 121.
\textsuperscript{1013} Life of Severus, 105.
\textsuperscript{1014} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1015} Ibid, 107.
Severus defended the position of the moderate anti-Chalcedonians and gained the favor of the emperor who ordered that the exiled monks be allowed to return to their monasteries.\textsuperscript{1016} This instance is one of the few in anti-Chalcedonian literature in which the Byzantine emperor is portrayed in a positive light, but it also undermines any sense of anti-Byzantine nationalism at work in Egypt. Severus’ assessment of Egyptian pride also reveals his own persistent ethnic prejudices despite his attempts to foster unity. However, Severus’ critique of Egyptian ethnocentricity accurately reflects the situation, for Coptic anti-Chalcedonian texts do express this attitude. In the \textit{Life of Isaac}, a “Saracen” Christian woman who comes to Egypt is unable to recognize heresy and must receive instruction from the wise Egyptians.\textsuperscript{1017} In his analysis of the above passage of Severus, Frend notes that the patriarch’s influence on religious life or anti-imperial sentiment in Egypt was minimal.\textsuperscript{1018}

In various passages from Severus, as well as throughout Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian literature, Egypt is depicted as the source of orthodoxy, shining its light on nations darkened by heresy. Modern anthropologists have noted how Egyptian ethnic pride is displayed by Egyptian Christians in the present day, in contrast to the stance of the Maronites, who display more solidarity with the national government.\textsuperscript{1019} Ethnic tension also persists between Egyptian and Syrian Christians despite their shared Miaphysite confession. This phenomenon is best understood as constraint on inter-ethnic contact resulting from the threat of violence toward a particular community:

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{1016} Ibid, 109.
\bibitem{1017} \textit{Life of Isaac}, 368-72.
\bibitem{1018} Frend (1982), 31.
\end{thebibliography}
In this situation, many forms of interaction between members of different ethnic groups may fail to develop, even though a potential complementarity of interest obtains. Forms of interaction may be blocked because of a lack of trust or a lack of opportunities to consummate transactions. What is more, there are also internal sanctions in such communities which tend to enhance overt conformity within and cultural differences between communities. If a person is dependent for his security on the voluntary and spontaneous support of his own community, self-identification as a member of this community needs to be explicitly expressed and confirmed; and any behavior which is deviant from the standard may be interpreted as a weakening of the identity, and thereby of the bases of security.\textsuperscript{1020}

The available sources certainly speak of a lack of trust between the various Miaphysite communities in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries. Despite many expressions of inter-ethnic unity among anti-Chalcedonians by the movement’s greatest leaders, many of these communities wanted to elevate their own group over other groups, despite the “complementarity of interests.” Chalcedonian Byzantine hegemony represented a threat to Miaphysite identity and this contributed to persistent ethnic tension among the various groups in this international movement. Preoccupied with survival, Egyptian Christians reacted by elevating their own status as those for whom “only the lamp shines.”\textsuperscript{1021}

\textit{Final Remarks}

The Council of Chalcedon is an identifiable turning point for assertions of Egyptian identity. Before Chalcedon, most of Egypt was in theological agreement with

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{1020} Barth (1969), 36-7.
\textsuperscript{1021} Collection of Letters, 318.
\end{flushright}
the mainstream Christianity of the Byzantine Empire. Indeed, one of the most revered
figures in Egypt, Athanasius, is remembered across the Christian tradition as the
champion of Nicene orthodoxy.

Although he experienced exile and persecution at the hands of imperial
authorities, there was no ongoing Egyptian resistance or lasting schism. Likewise, the
victory of Cyril over Nestorius at the Council of Ephesus was supported by most
Christian groups in the Roman Empire (and by some in the neighboring Persian Empire).
Egypt was united doctrinally with the other important regions of the Empire before
Chalcedon and assertions of Egyptian pride were infrequent.

This is not to say that manifestations of Egyptian pride only came into existence
at the time of Chalcedon; Egyptian Christians were certainly aware of and took pride in
their Egyptian identity in the fourth and early fifth centuries, according to important
literary sources. The Life of Antony opens by identifying the monastic leader as “Egyptian
by race”\(^\text{1022}\) and presenting Antony as lacking Greek literacy.\(^\text{1023}\) Sayings in the
Apophthegmata Patrum also express preference for Egyptian culture and language rather
than the cultural capital of knowledge of Greek:

Abba Arsenios was once asking an Egyptian elder about his own \textit{logismoi}. Another person, when he saw him, said, “Abba Arsenius, how is that you,
who have such a command of Greek and Roman learning, are asking this
peasant about your \textit{logismoi}?” But he said to him, “A command of Greek
and Roman learning I have, but I have not yet learned the alphabet of this
peasant.”\(^\text{1024}\)

\(^{1022}\) Athanasius, \textit{Life of Antony}, ed. Robert C. Gregg, in \textit{Athanasius: The Life of Antony and The}
\(^{1023}\) Ibid, 83.
\(^{1024}\) Apophthegmata Patrum VIII, ed. John Wortley, in \textit{The Book of the Elders: Sayings of
In these early texts it is a native Egyptian, Coptic-speaking identity that is emphasized. So it would be partially inaccurate to speak of the ethnic boundary maintenance in anti-Chalcedonian texts in terms of ethnogenesis. Originally used to describe the emerging Gothic communities of the fifth-century, ethnogenesis now refers more broadly to “new collective identities that could support independent political groupings,”\(^{1025}\)

Egyptian ethnic identity already had a well-established history. However, Chalcedon represented a turning point in Egyptian identity development wherein ethnic rhetoric came to the fore in a new way that expanded beyond the focus on Coptic language and culture. In that sense there is a “new collective identity.” Lucas van Rompay makes a similar argument regarding anti-Chalcedonians across the Eastern Empire:

> The important question arises as to whether anti-Chalcedonian, Miaphysite Christianity, so firmly rooted in Egypt and Syria, also carried undertones of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identity and even of political resistance. If some of these elements were present, they seem to belong to the outcome of the process rather than to its beginnings.\(^{1026}\)

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Miaphysite doctrine provided Egyptian Christians with a frame to assert identity in an unprecedented manner. Even in Shenoute, who wrote before Chalcedon and became the greatest Coptic writer in the history of the language, ethnic rhetoric is strikingly absent. Michael Foat describes the categories of barbarian, Hellene, Jew, Christian, and heretic, through which Shenoute interprets the social world of his day:

We will have some slight sense of what this world looked like to Shenoute: his barbarians, Hellenes, Jews and heretics, as well as those who adopted the world narrative he promoted, were real to him, not in terms of mere economics, or mere nationalism. Shenoute did not live in a mere world, a world reducible to the formulae of our interpretive schemata. For him, the world was full of other meanings. It was the good creation of a stern but loving king, who had made his perfect will known and would judge his subjects on the basis of their adherence to it.

Foat’s analysis of the worldview of Shenoute supports the present thesis. While Shenoute clearly lived in a world in which some Coptic-speaking Egyptians retained ethnic consciousness, the assertion of any kind Egyptian identity was not a priority for the leader of the White Monastery Federation. But such ethnic rhetoric is common in the anti-Chalcedonian literature produced in Egypt in the fifth and sixth centuries. In making the case against nationalism by noting the Greek-Coptic unity of Egypt, there is a tendency to downplay the growth of anti-Byzantine/pro-Egyptian rhetoric following Chalcedon:

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1027 Recent scholarship of Near Eastern Christianity has demonstrated the way late antique Christian communities used intersecting aspects of identity to continuously reshape and redefine cultural categories, Andrade, 31.

L’amour de la patrie, de son passé, de ses personnages illustres, de ses monuments, constitue l’un des traits du modèle culturel pan-hellénique, proper aux intellectuels grecs depuis l’époque hellénistique. Les intellectuels alexandrins dont il est question ici partagent cette attitude; mais la patrie, pour eux, n’est pas seulement, comme d’habitude, la cite d’origine: elle est l’Égypte tout entière. Leur attachement au passé de l’Égypte n’est nullement incompatible avec leur conscience d’appartenir à une communauté culturelle supérieure, embrassant tous les gens cultivés de langue grecque. Leur patriotisme égyptien ne se nourrit pas de haine ou de méfiance: on pouvait haïr les autorités de Constantinople, les hauts fonctionnaires, mais cela n’entraînait pas une haine de la culture grecque.1029

While Ewa Wipszycka is correct in denying the presence of anti-Hellenism in fourth-century Egypt, pro-Egyptian rhetoric in anti-Chalcedonian literature cannot be subsumed to a “modèle culturel pan-hellénique.” Dismissing Egyptian ethnic boundary maintenance as a function of Roman provincialism is an insufficient explanation. David Johnson describes how anti-Chalcedonian polemic was modified in Egypt to enhance the Egyptian people’s role, distinguishing it within a “pan-Hellenistic” strategy of identification. It included:

a firm adherence to the teachings of Cyril of Alexandria as interpreted by Dioscorus and Timothy over against the Nestorian Chalcedonian doctrine, and a rejection of Eutychianism and similar beliefs. Onto this basic structure the Egyptian writers grafted characters and stories indigenous to Egypt. These stories were no doubt meant to enhance the role of Egypt, especially the role of the Copts, in the unfolding of the struggle against the Chalcedonians. Thus, formidable characters and newsworthy events appear that either found no place in Greek histories of the time or are related in a quite different form from that found in the Greek sources.1030

1030 David Johnson (1986), 223.
Anti-Chalcedonian identity in Egypt becomes visible by ascribing “Otherness” to the Chalcedonian Roman Empire. In contrast to Wipszycka’s claim that “leur patriotisme égyptien ne se nourrit pas de haine ou de méfiance,” the rise of the Miaphysite movement includes expressions of intense hatred for the Byzantine Empire, as represented by Egyptians anti-Chalcedonians. Wipszycka helpfully explains how Egyptian ethnic pride does not entail a hatred of Greek culture, but in the late fifth-century there is an emerging anti-Byzantine Egyptian identity that does not fit the anti-nationalism thesis.

Likewise, the assertion of a separate Egyptian identity does not develop in the medieval redactions of the *AHPA*, as claimed by Jacques van der Vliet.\textsuperscript{1031} Van der Vliet provides a nuanced analysis of Egypt’s complex reaction to Islamic hegemony, but in so doing he contradicts his own thesis. He argues that what he calls “Egyptianism” begins with nineteenth-century Orientalist scholarship.\textsuperscript{1032} While Pharaonism in its modern form may have many connections to anachronistic and prejudiced depictions of Egypt in nineteenth-century scholarship, van der Vliet ignores the highly ethnicized polemic of pre-Islamic Egypt. The renunciation of nationalism, or in the case of van der Vliet, Pharaonism, still leaves no helpful alternative with which to understand the role of Egyptianness in late antique religious life.

Understanding Egyptian-centered rhetoric as evidence for the development of awareness of Egyptian ethnicity through the assertion of Miaphysite boundaries leads to understanding of late antique Egyptian identity. The fifth-century witnesses the expansion of themes of ethnicity that were already present in Egyptian Christianity. Following Chalcedon, however, Egypt had to construct an identity in opposition to some

\textsuperscript{1031} Van der Vliet, 288.  
\textsuperscript{1032} Ibid, 283.
of their fellow Christians. The seventh century saw the rapid and complete subjugation of
the Egyptian Christians to Arab Muslim rule. This led to the acceleration of the process
of Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian ethnic boundary maintenance, a process that had been
underway since Chalcedon. With the passage of time, concern increased for the
preservation of the Coptic (i.e. Egyptian Christian) heritage in the face of increasing oppression.

However, the anti-Byzantine/anti-Chalcedonian polemic is harsher than any anti-
Islamic sentiments expressed in seventh-century Coptic literature. It is likely that Copts
expressed greater hostility toward Byzantine Chalcedonians than toward Muslims
because the former were considered heretics, while the latter were barbarians or pagans.
As Foat has pointed out, heretics are “supremely dangerous”\textsuperscript{1033} in the mind of Shenoute.

The social, ecclesiastical and political subjugation of Egypt to Constantinople in
the fifth century necessitated the “continuing dichotomization between members and
outsiders.”\textsuperscript{1034} In Barth’s analysis, this dichotomization is the primary vehicle through
which ethnic identity can be asserted and understood. Assertions of ethnicity are
discernible in the heightened rhetoric that calls attention to the land and people of Egypt.
Instead of relying on a pre-existing, fixed definition of ethnicity, the theological divisions
of Chalcedon led Egyptian Christians to reify those divisions through ethnic rhetoric.
Despite the international constituency of the Miaphysite movement, Egyptian anti-
Chalcedonians expressed a localized form of this doctrine, specific to and primarily
concerned with the people of Egypt. As prescribed in the \textit{AHPA}, the program for the

\textsuperscript{1033} Foat, 59.
\textsuperscript{1034} Barth (1969), 14.
promotion of orthodox Christianity depends on a community of “native Egyptians by race, without a stranger among them.””\textsuperscript{1035}
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