

Religious and Social Rivalries in Byzantine Egypt on the eve of, and during the Arab Conquest (ca 639-640 CE – ca 645-646 CE)

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Abstract

The fundamental assumption of this article is that A. J. Butler's view, in his otherwise admirable book on the Arab conquest of Egypt, that there were two Christian communities in Egypt fiercely hating each other and solidly isolated at the time of its Arab conquest, cannot be sustained. Focusing on the second Arab conquest of Alexandria – as described in the Arabic sources- an attempt will be made to demonstrate that that there was a fluidity of boundaries separating the Monophysites, the so-called native Egyptians, and the pro-Byzantine Melkites, rooted in the earlier period of their peaceful coexistence. The researcher's view is that both parties were not two separated solid units and their policies were fluctuated and somewhat interwoven. In addition, a further attempt will be made to show that the Arabs during the early period of their dominion did not favor either of the two Christian parties and instead they skillfully employed the previous Byzantine ruling elites in their newly established administration in Egypt.

Keywords: Monophysitism, Egypt, Melkites, Byzantine Empire

Introduction

On 10th Dhu'l-Hijja AH 18 / 12th December 639, according to one of the most reliable Arab authors, Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 871), the Arabs, under the leadership of general 'Amr bn. al-'Āṣ, launched their invasion into Egypt (Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, ed. Torrey, 1922, 58). Less probable is Ṭabari's dating to the year H 20/ 641 (Ṭabari, trans. Juynboll, 1989, 162) and Balādhuri's to year, H 19/ 2nd January – 20th December 640 (Balādhuri, ed. 'A. al-Tabbā'a, 1987, 298). Their attack, an impressive blitzkrieg, was based on speed and mobility (Kennedy, 2007, 4-5). 'Amr's light cavalry skillfully broke through the Byzantines' defenses, managed to drive deep into the land and conquered large areas, avoiding well established strongholds. 'Amr's forces, starting from al-'Arīsh (Rhinocoloura), quickly conquered Pelusium (Faramā') and Bilbays (modern Qanṭara) after short sieges, and finally arrived at the gates of the strongly fortified Babylon, bypassing Alexandria.

Babylon fell to the Arabs on 21st Rabī' II AH 20 / 9th April 641 (Hill, 1971,45) . On the one hand, the strategy of continual fighting resulted in a successful encroachment in southern Egypt without any major battles, and on the other, a swift thrust towards Alexandria which fell easily on 16th Shawwāl AH 21/17th September 642 (Hill, 1971, 46). Thus, the description of the Arab conquest of Egypt falls neatly in two stages: the first from 'Arīsh to Babylon through a vast area defended solely by isolated castles and the second, a determined campaign from Babylon throughout the rest of Egypt, which ended with the Arab victory in spite of the enormous superiority of the Byzantine army. A desperate naval expedition by the Byzantines, ending in the brief

reconquering of Alexandria in AH 25/ ca 645-646, marks not only the Byzantines' last effort to regain Egypt but also a new rearrangement of the social structure of Egypt. This new arrangement is of particular importance, and is the primary focus of this work (Christides, 2012).

Unfortunately, there is not any detailed comprehensive full account of the Arab conquest of Egypt save for Butler's admirable description. However his work needs modification along certain important points (Butler, 1902, ed. Fraser, 1978; Sijpesteijn, 2007; Christides, forthcoming a), i.e. the causes of the anti-Chalcedonian policy of the Byzantines in Egypt, inspired by the emperor Heraclius and applied by his governor in Egypt, the patriarch Cyrus. The most significant part which needs to be revised is the one concerning the composition of the Byzantine army in Egypt. Closely related to this is the composition and reaction of the local population to the Arab invasion and conquest of Egypt, the richest Byzantine province. According to Butler, as the Arabs surged victoriously across Egypt, they were confronted by an army made up of non-native Egyptians supported by the pro-Byzantine part of the Egyptian population, while the native Egyptians (Copts) remained inactive, "the Copts had simply no existence as a belligerent body" (Butler, 1978, 252).

Nevertheless, Butler's assumption that the Byzantine army was composed of foreigners cannot be accepted (Butler, 1978, 268) since it is now known that the Byzantines usually recruited soldiers among the local people in their provinces, and in particular in Egypt most soldiers were of local origin (Jördens, 2012, 69-72; Hendrickx, 2012; Christides, forthcoming a; Christides, forthcoming b). It is only in the second attempt of the Byzantines to regain Alexandria and the whole of Egypt (ca 645-646) that the Byzantine army was composed mainly of non-native Egyptian soldiers (Christides, 2012, 388).

In addition, Butler and Skreslet II expressed the view that those referred to as native Egyptians (*Qubṭ*) not only followed a different religion, i.e. anti-Chalcedonian-Monophysite, but had also developed an isolated community in Egypt separated from the rival Chalcedonian-Melkite (Royal), the latter which was supported by the Byzantine army from the time Cyrus became the patriarch and governor of Egypt (631-642) (Butler, 1978, 252; Skreslet II, 1987, 49).

True, Butler correctly dismissed the theory that the community of anti-Chalcedonians, whom he identified with the Copts, welcomed and/or even aided 'Amr's invasion as it is mentioned in some Arabic source (Butler, 1978, 211). For him the Copts were marginalized but were not traitors, although occasionally noting their collaboration with the Arabs, he refers to John of Nikiou's statement that some of them aided the Arabs by offering their river boats to transport the invading army on the Nile (Butler, 1978, 295). Similarly, Mazzaoui, in an article in which he correctly emphasizes the Islamic religious factor in 'Amr's victory (Mazzaoui, 1993, 175), supports Butler's view of the existence of two rigidly separated communities in Egypt, the pro-Arab Copts against the pro-Byzantine Melkites who supported "the foreign military presence" (Mazzaoui, 1993, 174).

The Rivalries among Chalcedonians (Melkites), Anti-Chalcedonians (Monophysites) and Monothelites in Byzantine Egypt at the time of the Arab conquest

Cyrus' opposition to the Monophysites was not inspired by any personal malevolence, as the Monophysite authors accuse him, but his policy was decided by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610-641). Deeply disturbed by the rivalry between

the Melkites and Copts in Egypt, Heraclius decided to apply a policy of eradicating Monophysitism in Egypt and Palestine and to replace it by a rather absurd doctrinal compromise called Monoenergism (single energy), which later developed into Monothelitism (single will) which was rejected by both Melkites and Copts (Boumis, 2007).

Heraclius' policy is not surprising since he was continuing the desperate struggles of the previous emperors to keep peace in the countries of the East where Monophysitism was constantly spreading. In order to appease the religious unrest of the Monophysites, the emperor Zeno (474-491) and especially the emperor Anastasius (491-518) attempted unsuccessfully to impose a compromise by issuing the edict of "Henōtikon" (union), a mixing of Monophysitism and Diophysitism (Skreslet, 1987, 54). It was Heraclius's choice to send the patriarch Cyrus to Egypt in order to apply a similar compromise which was again received lukewarmly by the Monophysites. Cyrus was not the initial culprit, as he is often accused (Skreslet, 1987, 49), but he was simply applying the religious policy of Heraclius, which the patriarch then abandoned when he realized its ineffectiveness.

The biased Monophysite sources vividly contrast the two rival leaders: the Monophysite patriarch Benjamin is depicted as a stoic person, a true hero who was constantly on the run until he was reestablished. The patriarch Cyrus was pictured as the personification of evil who, inspired by personal enmity, hatefully abused Benjamin. He was seen as the sole responsible agent for the isolation of the Monophysites. Heavily influenced by the Monophysite sources, Butler considered Cyrus an infamous figure (Butler, 1901; Martinez, forthcoming). Likewise Skreslet accuses him of being responsible for the "final break between the Greeks and the Copts" (Skreslet, 1987, 49). In reality, Cyrus applied Heraclius' policy based on the earlier Byzantine tradition of condemnation and pitiless persecution of the Monophysites who did not abide with the Byzantines' compromise. The Syriac anti-Chalcedonian sources explicitly report that it was the emperor Heraclius who asked Cyrus to persecute the anti-Chalcedonian Copts relentlessly and who ordered the arrest and execution of Menas, the brother of the patriarch Benjamin (Evetts, ed. and trans., 1907, 491). Actually, as the researcher believes, a careful scrutiny of the sources reveals that Patriarch Cyrus was a pragmatist who, when he realized the Byzantines' military inability to confront the swarming Arab invaders, abandoned his efforts to resist and realistically undertook the unpleasant task of surrendering under the most convenient terms. His efforts to gain a peace treaty with the Arabs under the best possible conditions enraged the Byzantine emperor Heraclius who dismissed him and recalled him to Constantinople. It is only after Heraclius' death that Cyrus was restored to his position by Heraclius' successors (his wife Martina and his son Constantine) and returned to Alexandria where he arranged for the treaty of the Byzantines' surrender (Butler, 1978, 329, places this treaty on November 8, 641).

The vexing question which is raised next is how we can clarify the distinguishing line that separates the so-called indigenous Egyptians, the Copts, from the rest of the inhabitants of Egypt, among whom, of course, the Jewish population was an independent part. Skreslet's appellation of the Melkites as "Greeks"- probably based on the language- cannot be accepted. As Kubińska mentions, there is no concrete evidence that the Greek language was solely used by the Melkites and the Coptic by the Monophysites in both Egypt and Nubia (Kubińska, 1974, 183-184). It should be taken into consideration that the Greek language was not only the official language of Byzantine and early Islamic Egypt as well as the language of the Church, but also one of the languages of the ordinary people, both Monophysites and Melkites. In Nubia until the ninth century the population was Monophysite and the Greek

language was still in use (Christides, 1992, 351). It is noteworthy that a simple invitation of a wedding ceremony in Apollonopolis, dated to 703-705, was written in Greek by a local inhabitant who was most probably a Monophysite (Rémondon, 1953, 251) (see Appendix).

Another incorrect simplification which appears in the works of some modern authors is that the Copts were the poorest part of the Egyptian population. On the contrary, there is concrete reference that the patriarch Benjamin came from a rich family of landlords (Evetts, 1907, 487). It is noteworthy that John of Nikiou reports that after the Arab conquest of Babylon, which ended on 9th April 641 (Hill, 1971, 45), great panic fell onto all the cities of Egypt and their inhabitants abandoned their houses, landed estates and cattle and escaped to Alexandria (John of Nikiou, trans. R. H. Charles, 1916, 182). No doubt these inhabitants included both prosperous Copts and Melkites. In his determined effort to delineate the Copts, whom he considered marginalized, from the so-called Romans, Butler acknowledges that the inhabitants who fled to Alexandria must have included a substantial number of Copts without giving a reasonable explanation for their numbers (Butler, 1978, 312-313). Unfortunately, Butler did not undertake any thorough examination of the description of the second conquest of Alexandria in ca 645-646, as it appears in the Arabic sources which clearly demonstrate the fluidity of the boundaries between the so-called pro-Byzantine Melkites (*Rūm*) and their rivals, the Copts, whom Butler describes as hating each other. (Butler, 1978, 274).

The Byzantines' decision to undertake a seaborne expedition in order to reconquer Alexandria was a serious blunder (Christides, 2012). The final treaty between the Byzantines and the Arabs concerning the surrender of Alexandria and the rest of Egypt stipulated that "no Byzantine army was to return" (Hill, 41). The rest of the terms were quite generous since the "Byzantine soldiers at Alexandria were to embark carrying their possession and precious goods." (Hill, 1971, 40-41). For this reason, the Byzantines' decision that broke this treaty is severely criticized in the Arabic sources. The description of the second Arab conquest of Alexandria in the Arabic sources reveals some important aspects of the attitude of the local people of Alexandria. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, who offers the best account of the Arab reconquest of Alexandria, reports this historical event under the title *Intiqāḍ al-Iskandarīyah* (Breaking of the [Arab-Byzantine] treaty of Alexandria), and more interestingly he mentions that the city of Alexandria, in general, "broke the treaty" (Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, 1922, 175). But the most illuminating information is his statement that only part of the *Rūm* of Alexandria welcomed the Byzantine invaders (*man bihā min al-Rūm*). Thus, it is evident that those who invited and welcomed the Byzantine army were only part of the *Rūm* inhabitants, i.e. the Melkites (pro-Byzantine). Maqrīzi gives some additional significant information that not only part of the pro-Byzantine party, known as *Rūm*, broke the treaty and summoned the Byzantine army, but also part of the Monophysite *Qubṭ* of the countryside joined the invading Byzantine army (Maqrīzi, 1853, 312). He also reports that the Byzantine army committed terrible actions in the Egyptian countryside, plundering the villages through which they passed (Maqrīzi, 1853, 312). This is not surprising since this army was composed of foreigners in contrast to the Byzantine army of Egypt (Christides, 2012, 386, note 65).

There is no doubt, as clearly manifested in the Arabic sources describing the second Arab conquest of Alexandria, that on the one hand, only part of the pro-Byzantine Melkite Alexandrians sided with the Byzantine invaders (*man bihā min al-Rūm*) and on the other, part of the Monophysite Copts (*Qubṭ*) of the countryside joined the Byzantine invading army. This concrete evidence confirms the present author's view

that the two parties were neither separated nor solidly unified entities and that their policies fluctuated and were interwoven.

In general, the description of the second Arab conquest of Alexandria contributes greatly to a better understanding of the importance of the social structure of the population of Alexandria and Egypt and the role of its more prosperous segment. Most probably, those who called the Byzantines to come and breach the peace treaty, characterized in the Arabic sources as *man bihā min al-Rūm* (part of the pro-Byzantine Melkite party), were wealthy citizens who, as Balādhuri reports, were dissatisfied with the taxes imposed by the Arab conquerors (Balādhuri, 1987, 310). For them finances were more important than any religious antagonism. To this wealthy privileged class obviously belonged those rich people who, as John of Nikiou mentions, abandoned Alexandria when the Arabs were in front of its gates (John of Nikiou, trans. R. H. Charles, 1916, 199).

Unfortunately, the role of the two rival hippodrome factions, the Greens and the Blues, in the social structure of late Byzantine Egypt remains puzzling. The Blues and the Greens developed into racing political parties, bearing their titles from the colors used by their charioteers. Numerous works have been written about these two bitter rival parties in Constantinople but less attention has been paid to their corresponding factions in Byzantine Egypt (Roberto, 2010). In general, in contrast to Janssens' view (Janssens, 1936), the Blues and Greens of Egypt cannot be identified with the two rival religious groups, the Monophysites and Melkites (Skreslet, 1987, 46). Unfortunately, Booth, who wrote the most comprehensive work on John of Nikiou, discusses in his study the relations of the Blues and Greens in Egypt focusing on the rivalry between Phocas and Heraclius without any analytical reference to their role in the Arab conquest of Egypt (Booth, 2011).

In any case, Butler's abrupt statement that the Arabs "seemed to have derived some help from a local combination of the Green and Blue factions [during their siege of Babylon]" is not clearly supported by John of Nikiou, from whom Butler quotes in an obscure passage, "and Menas, who was chief of the Green faction and Cosmas... the leader of the Blues, besieged the city of Misr and harassed the Romans during the days of the Moslems..." (John of Nikiou, ch. CXVIII, 3, 187). Obviously, taking advantage of the hostilities between the Arabs and the Byzantine army near Babylon, both the Greens and Blues raided the Byzantines for their own profit. In a later passage, John of Nikiou reports that Menas, in charge of a large force of Greens, was ready to fight against a large force of the Blues in front of the gates of Alexandria and "thus these two [Greens and Blues] kept up their hostility" (John of Nikiou, ch. 119, 9, 189). The impression we can glean from the above passages of Nikiou is that the Blues and Greens of Egypt were engaged in endless internal fights without any particular religious or social cause. Most probably, they were groups of local soldiers who served their ambitious, ruthless leaders, a sort of roaming «βουκελάριοι», the armed guards of the wealthy landlords who acted as private armies (Gascou, 1976; Christides, 1991, 56).

Butler also failed to properly examine the second Arab conquest of Alexandria although he acknowledged its historical importance (Butler, 1978, 478-479). His statement, "the Copts were no party to the rebellion of Alexandria, which was a breach of the treaty made by Cyrus" (Butler, 1978, 479), is undoubtedly wrong since Maqrīzi, to whom Butler mainly refers, reports explicitly concerning this historical event, "*wa ma'hum man naqada min ahl al-Qurā*" ("and along with the Byzantines [invaders] were also those [the Copts of the countryside] who breached the treaty") (Maqrīzi, 1853, vol. I, 312).

It is indeed amazing that Butler not only ignored the specific evidence of Maqrīzi who reports that the Copts of the countryside joined the army of the Byzantine invaders, but paradoxically states that “they [the Copts of the Delta area] certainly aided the march of the Arabs through the Delta” (Butler, 1978, 480). Butler’s theory is based on an obviously fictitious Arabic legend mentioned by Balādhuri. According to this legend, after the failure of Manuel’s attempt to reconquer Egypt in 645-646, Benjamin, the patriarch of the Copts, who was reinstated to his throne in Alexandria, visited ‘Amr and requested that the Copts be treated better than the Melkites “because the Copts did not participate in the breaking of the peace treaty” (Butler, 1978, 478). Butler considered this legend real and concluded that the Arab conquerors agreed to Benjamin’s request. However, there is no evidence that ‘Amr did not follow the peace treaty of Alexandria which stated that the Arabs should not interfere in the affairs of the Christians (John of Nikiou, 103-104; Butler, 1978, 319-320), who were treated as *ahl al- dhimma* (the non-Muslim subjects living in Muslim countries who enjoyed protection) (Tritton, 1930; Khoury, 1980; Bosworth, 1982; Skreslet, 1987, 75). In the early years following the conquest, the Arab conquerors did not intentionally try to favor the Copts as is frequently assumed incorrectly, but their attitude was bound to circumstantial factors, i.e. the vacuum created in the Melkite Church after the departure of Cyrus to Constantinople.

A Brief account on the relations between Copts and Melkites after the Arab conquest

Following the Arab conquest of Egypt in 642, the Melkites, deprived of their patriarch Cyrus and isolated from Constantinople, suffered a long decline which lasted until the election of Cosmas as patriarch of Alexandria in 727 (Papadopoulos, 1985, 506). This period lies far beyond the scope of the present study. Suffice it to say here that the Muslim conquerors did not intentionally try to side with the Copts at the expense of the Melkites (Skreslet, 112; Papadopoulos, 506). Gradually until the period of the enthronement of Cosmas, most of the churches belonged to the Copts, but as Skreslet points out, “the acquisition of Chalcedonian churches by the Copts in this period was more a result of circumstances than of malice” (Skreslet, 1987, 112). In any case there is little evidence documenting the way each church passed from the Melkites to the Copts. We should take into consideration the shrinking of the Chalcedonian community after the final peace treaty and the evacuation of those inhabitants who decided to leave Egypt. Of course, the lack of a Chalcedonian patriarch also contributed to its decline. After the departure of Cyrus, Petrus III was elected as patriarch of Alexandria (642-651), who also returned to Constantinople. But, as Papadopoulos remarks, in spite of Petrus’ departure for Constantinople, the Chalcedonian Melkites were not forced by the Arabs to mix with the Copts and continued to depend on Petrus. For the Arabs the pacification of Egypt and the smooth transition from the Byzantine administration to the Arab was obviously their main concern. This spirit is evident in the slow process of Egypt’s arabization and its judicial organization (Garcin, 1987; Tillier, 2013).

The illiterate but energetic patriarch Cosmas managed to ratify his appointment by the Umayyad caliph Hishām (724-743), simultaneously acquiring recognition by the Byzantine emperor Leo III (717-741) (Papadopoulos, 1985, 506-511; Skreslet, 1987, 111-125). Patriarch Cosmas reorganized the Melkite Church, appointed bishops all over Egypt and succeeded in retaking a number of Melkite churches, which had been acquired by the Copts (Papadopoulos, 1985, 486-491; Kamalakis, 2010, 241). The number of the churches returned to the Melkites is not known. It is of particular importance that the Melkites managed to retake their churches by appealing to the

Muslim authorities. Thus, the Arabs themselves caused a violation of the treaty of Alexandria which stipulated the prohibition of any interference by the Muslims in the Christians' affairs. It should be stated, nevertheless, that the Muslim authorities were not inclined to favor the Copts, as sometimes wrongly asserted (Iakovides, 2008, 152). The Muslim authorities requested a detailed examination based on concrete evidence before any Melkite church was returned (Skreslet, 1987, 118).

The period that followed the reestablishment of the patriarchate of Alexandria by Cosmas was enriched with numerous historical events which radically changed the religious situation in Egypt.

Conclusions

The general survey of the existing social conditions on the eve of and during the Arab conquest of Byzantine Egypt reveals a constantly increasing rivalry between two religious groups in Egypt, the Melkites, followers of the Chalcedonian synod of 451, and the Monophysites, the anti-Chalcedonians. As Butler correctly points out, after the election of Cyrus as the patriarch of Alexandria and viceroy of Egypt, the mutual hatred of the two religious groups reached its peak, caused by Cyrus' forcible appliance of a hybrid compromise known as "monoenergy" (single energy) and/or "monothelism" (single will). The question which is raised is whether Cyrus' religious intolerance was the sole reason for this crisis or actually it was caused by the underlying antipathy of what Butler calls "purely bred Egyptians" in contrast to the foreigners. Although Butler rejects the view that the Copts welcomed and/or assisted the Arab invaders, he endorses the theory of a hidden rivalry between the "native Egyptians" and the "foreign Egyptians" who followed the manners and spoke the language of the Greek-speaking Byzantines (Butler, 1978, *passim*; Skreslet, 1987, 55, n.137).

A careful examination of the time preceding Cyrus' disastrous policies indicates that there was a peaceful coexistence among all inhabitants of Egypt. As Archbishop Chrysostomos Papadopoulos pointed out, in this period Copts and Melkites lived peacefully next to each other and the Copts frequently attended the liturgy in the Melkites' churches (Papadopoulos, 1985, 457-458). Patriarch Ioannēs Eleēmōn (610-619), who was selected by Heraclius (610-641), enjoyed great popularity by both Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians ((Papadopoulos, 1985, 457-458). It was Heraclius' ill-considered decision to forcibly impose a hybrid compromise which eventually brought the disastrous breach. Nonetheless, the intense rivalry between the two religious factions, Monophysites and Melkites, was not inspired by racial nationalism. Occasional references, found by Butler in the work attributed to Severus (Sawirus) ibn al-Muqaffa' (Butler, 1978, 190, note 1; Evetts, trans., 1907, 498) , reflect isolated cases which do not betray any deeply rooted, disguised nationalism of the native Egyptians. As Odetallah Khouri points out, "even within the broad heresy of the Monophysites, numerous splitting groups sprang fighting against each other [motivated solely by religious issues]." (Jones, 1959; Khouri, 2007, 113; Mikhail, 2007).

A careful scrutiny of the second Arab conquest of Alexandria in 645-646 clearly illuminates the fluidity of the boundaries between the Monophysites and the Melkites even after the first Arab conquest of Alexandria. It should be noted that the Arabs freely recruited for the administration of Egypt those who had been previously employed by the Byzantines. While the Arabs paid little attention to the religious conflicts of the people of Egypt, they concentrated their efforts on their alliance with the ruling elite which had been established in the Byzantine period. The land

continued to be cultivated by the local farmers and the power of the land owning magnates- whether Monophysites or Melkites- was curtailed but not lost.

It is worth mentioning that the evidence of the papyri illustrates very clearly that the great households, the *oikoi*, of the landlords continued to exist after the Arab conquest; for the Arabs, stability of the social order was their main concern. Of course, the power of the landlords was reduced and they abolished their privilege of *autopragia*, which enabled them to pay their taxes directly to the higher authority instead of to the local tax collectors (Christides, 1993, 156-157; Palmer, 2007, 264). In contrast to Dennett's incorrect assumption that the large estates disappeared after the Arab dominion of Egypt (Dennett, 1959, 90) a number of papyri, dated as late as the early eighth century, mention wealthy landlords with large estates in Apollonopolis (Rémondon, 1953, passim). Thus, a papyrus, dated to 703-715, reports a large estate which included bakeries, camels, horses and a large number of personnel (Rémondon, 1953, pap. 98, p. 207). No doubt the previous uncontrolled power of the *boukellarii* (security officers of the landlords) vanished (Gascou, 1976; Christides, 1991, 56), but the landlords continued to be employed by the Arabs in the early administrative network of Egypt (Trombley, 2013, 18). Above all, the main focus of the newly established Arab dominion in Egypt was stability and the uninterrupted continuation of the Arab administration of the country.

The Melkite patriarchate, which was discontinued after the withdrawal of the Byzantine patriarchs, was reestablished with the appointment of Cosmas (727-768) as a patriarch with the approval of the Arab authorities and the consent of the Byzantine emperor Leo III (717-741), who actually had selected him (Papadopoulos, 1985, 507). A number of patriarchs succeeded Cosmas, whose appointments were controlled by the new Arab dynasty of the Abbasids (750-1258). A new chapter in the history of the Church of Alexandria was opened which lies far beyond the scope of the present article.

Appendix

Invitation for a wedding to the pagarch of Apollonopolis (Apollōnos Anō), papyrus 72, ca 703-715. R. Rémondon, *Papyrus grecs d'Apollōnos Anō*, Cairo 1953, p. 151.

Ἐπειδὴ Θεοῦ θέλοντος προσδοκ[ο]ῦμεν συνάψαι τὴν κοινὴν θυγατ[έ]ρα
τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος μηνός, διὸ παρακαλῶ τὴν ὑμετέραν θε[ο]φύλακτον [ἀ]δελφότητα
[ἀ]ν[υ]περθέτως καὶ ἀπροφασίστως ἀξιῶσαι ἡμᾶς τῆς ἐπ[αγα]θοῦ ὄψεως αὐτῆς
μηδένᾳ ἐντιμώτερον αὐτῆς ἔχειν με, μήτε ἡγαπημενότερον ...

(verso) Πατῆ τῷ μεγ(ίστῳ) κόμε(τι) καὶ παγάρχ(ῳ) ...

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