

Letter of Callistus

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<i>Incipit:</i>	Γινώσκειν ὑμᾶς θέλομεν τὰ πραχθέντα ἐνταῦθα
<i>Date:</i>	ca. May-June 335
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This document is a letter written by Callistus, a Melitian, to his brothers at the Hathor monastery describing the abuses inflicted upon them by the Athanasian party. The document begins with a description of a drunk mob rampaging against the Melitians on May 19. Callistus names them as “followers of Athanasius” which would then explain their conduct against the Melitians. While some may argue that Athanasius was directly involved with this mob, it seems rather unlikely that he would direct a drunk mob against his enemies. It is interesting that Isaac of Letopolis is mentioned among those who were imprisoned by this mob. He is one who had beaten Ischyras and induced him to spread the charge that Athanasius sent Macarius to break a sacred chalice. The three letters in lines 35 & 36 seem to be about this charge.

The second part is about Athanasius at this time. The aforementioned Macarius was imprisoned abroad, and Callistus reports that Athanasius was disheartened by it. The interesting part of this section relates Athanasius’ actions against the Melitians. Callistus relates both imprisonments and beatings of some kind. This corroborates the Melitian charge against Athanasius that he had imprisoned and beaten them. Notably, this is reported in Sozomen *HE* 2.25 and not by Athanasius in any of his works.

The English translation below was produced by J. Sauer for FCC with reference to Sir Harold Idris Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt*.

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1. τῷ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ ἅπα Παιηοῦ καὶ Παταβεῖτ πρεσβυτέρους Καλλιστος ἐν	1. To my dear brother Apa Paieus and Patabeit, elders. Callistus
κ(υρί)ῳ θ(ε)ῷ χαίρειν. Γιν(ώ)σκ(ε)ιν ὑμᾶς θέλομεν τὰ πραχθέντα ἐνταῦθα	greetings in the Lord God. We wish you to know the things which happened here;
πράγματα· ἐξάφιν γὰρ ἠκούσατε (ἀ) ἐπάθαμεν ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἐκ(ε)ῖνῃ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ Ἡρα-	for suddenly you heard what we suffered on that night at the house
κλέου τοῦ κο(<μ>)μενταρησίου. εἰσὶν γὰρ καὶ τινες ἀδελφοὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐλ[θ]όντων πρὸς ὑμᾶς	of Heraclius the recorder. For there were even some brothers from those who came to you
5. μεθ’ ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ καὶ δύνονται καὶ αὐτοὶ τὰ πραχθέντα [ὑ]μῖν ἀναγ(<γ>ε)ῖλαι. μετὰ	5. with you in the house, and they themselves are able to tell you the things which happened. For when

γὰρ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκ(ε)ίνη(<ν>) ἐν τῇ τετράδι καὶ εἰκά(δ)ι τοῦ Παχ[ὼ]ν μηνὸς Ἰσακ	that day on the 24 th of the month of Pashons [May 19], Isaac
ὁ ἐπίσκοπος ἀπὸ Λητοῦς ἦλθεν πρὸς Ἡραεῖσκον ἐν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, καὶ ἠθέλησεν	the bishop from Letopolis came to Heraiscus in Alexandria, and he wished
γεύσασθαι μετὰ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ. ἀκούσαν[τε]ς οὖν οἱ διαφέρον-	to dine with the bishop in the camp. Then, when they heard, the
τες Ἀθανασίου καὶ ἦλθασιν φέροντες μεθ' ἑαυτῶν στρατι(ώ)τας τοῦ δουκὸς καὶ τῆς	followers of Athanasius also came bringing with them the soldiers of the <i>dux</i> and the
10. παρεμβολῆς, οἰν(ώ)μενοι ἦλθασιν ὥρα ἐνάτη συνκλ(ε)ίσαντες τὴν [π]αρεμβολὴν βουλομε(<νοι>)	10. camp. They came intoxicated at the ninth hour after they closed the camp hoping
καὶ αὐτὸν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς πιάσαι. ἀκούσαντες οὖν τινὲς στρατι(ώ)ται [ο]ἱ ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ καὶ	to seize both him and the brothers. Then, when some soldiers in the camp also
φόβον θεοῦ ἔχοντες ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ἤρκαν αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔκρυψαν ἐν ταῖς κέλλαις ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ.	having the fear of God in their heart heard this, they took and hid them in the storerooms in the camp.
καὶ ἐκ(ε)ίνων μὴ εὐρεθέντων ἐγβάντων αὐτῶν εὗραν τέσσαρ(α)ς ἀδελφοὺς ἐρχομένους ἐν τῇ πα-	And because they were not found, the drunk soldiers went out and found four brothers coming into the
ρεμβολῇ, καὶ κατακόψαντες αὐτοὺς καὶ (αἰ)μαρ(ρό)εις ποιησάμενοι ὥστε αὐτοὺς κινδυνεῦσαι καὶ ἐξέβαλ(ο)	camp, and after cutting them down and drawing blood so that they were in danger, they even threw
15. αὐτοῦ ἔξω τῆς Νικοπ(ό)λεως. καὶ μετὰ <τῶ> τούτους ἐκ(κ)βαλ(ε)ῖν ἀπήλθασιν πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν πύλην τοῦ	15. them out of Nicopolis. And after they threw them out, they departed again to the gate of the
Ἡλίου ἐν τῇ μονῇ ἐν ἧ̄ (εἰ)σὶν ἐπιξενούμενοι οἱ ἀδελφοὶ καὶ πιάσαντες ἄλλους πέντ(ε) ἐκ(ε)ῖ εἶ(<ρ>)ξαν	Sun in the inn in which the brothers were being housed, and after seizing five others there, they imprisoned
αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ ὀψίας, καὶ συ(γ)νκλ(ε)ίσαντες αὐτοὺς μέχρι τοῦ τ[ὸ]ν πραιπόσιτον προε(λ)θ(ε)ῖν	them in the camp in the evening. And after shutting them in until the <i>praepositus</i> came
ἐν τοῖς σίγνοις τὸ πρὸς πρ(ω)ῖ καὶ λαβὼν αὐτοὺς ὁ πραιπόσιτος καὶ ὁ σκριβας καὶ αὐτοὺς ἐκέλευ-	to the guard room in the morning and the <i>praepositus</i> and scribe took them, he ordered them
σεν ἐγβληθῆναι ἐκτὸς τῆς Νικοπόλεως· καὶ τὸν μονάρην Ἡρακλίδην δ(ή)[σα]ντες καὶ ὑβρίσαντες	to be thrown out of Nicopolis, and after they bound and beat the innkeeper Heraclides,
20. ἐνέτ(ε)ιλαν τῷ αὐτῷ ἐπαπ(ε)ιλούμενοι, ὅτι κατὰ ποῖαν (αἰ)τίαν τοὺς μ[ο]ναχοὺς τῶν Μελιτιανῶν	20. they threatened him and ordered him, “Why did you permit the monks of the Melitians
(εἰ)ασας ἐν τῇ μ(ο)νῇ; καὶ ἄλλον ἀδελφὸν Ἀμμωνα ὄντα ἐν τῇ παρεμβ[ο]λῇ [κ]αὶ αὐτὸν ὑποδεχόμενον	in the inn?” And another brother Ammon who was in the camp and was welcoming
τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς συνέκλ(ε)ισαν ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ, παρήγ(<γ>)εἰλαν δὲ αὐτῷ ὥστε μὴ ὑποδέχεσθαι αὐ-	the brothers they imprisoned in the camp, they ordered him so that he would not welcome
τὸν μοναχὸς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ. ἄλλος γὰρ ἀδελφὸς οὐκ ἔστιν (ε)ἰ μὴ οὗ[τοι οἱ] δύο ὑποδέχομενοι τοὺς	monks in his home. For there was no other brother welcoming the brothers except these two;

ἀδελφούς· ἐποίησαν αὐτοὺς δ(ε)ιλιανθῆναι. θλιβόμεθα οὖν πάνυ διειρ[γμέ]νοι ὑπὸ αὐτῶν κατὰ τό-	they made the others to be cowards. Therefore, we were exceedingly afflicted, separated by them in our own
25. πον. ἐπιλ(υ)πούμεθα οὖν ὅτι οὐκ ἐπιτρέπουσιν ἡμῖν πρὸς τ[ὸν] πάπαν Ἡραεῖσκον ἀπελθ(ε)ῖν	25. place. Therefore, we are distressed that they do not permit us to leave to Pope Heraiscus
καὶ ἐπισκέψασθαι αὐτόν. ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ γὰρ ἐν ᾗ ὑβρίσθησαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ὁ πραι[π]όσιτος τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἔπεμ-	and to visit him. For during the night in which the brothers were maltreated, the <i>praepositus</i> of the soldiers
(ψ)εν φάσιν τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ λέγων ὅτι ἡμάρτησα καὶ ἐπαρ(ω)νήθην ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ὅτι τοὺς ἀδελφούς	sent a report to the bishop saying, “I sinned and became drunk at night so that I mistreated the brothers.”
ὑβρίσα. ἐποίησεν δὲ καὶ ἀγάπην ἐν ἐκ(ε)ίνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ Ἑλλήν ὢν δ[ιὰ] τὸ ἀμάρτημα ὃ ἐποίησεν.	And he also performed an act of service that day, although he was a Greek, because of the sin which he committed.
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Ἀθανάσιος δὲ μεγάλως ἀθυμ(ε)ῖ καὶ αὐτὸς παρέχ(ε)ι ἡμῖν κάματον διὰ τὰ γραφ(ό)μενα καὶ τὰς	And Athanasius is greatly disheartened, and he himself gives us trouble because of what is being written and the
30. φάσ(ε)ις τὰς ἐρχομένας αὐτ[ῶ] ἀ[πὸ] ἔξωθεν, ἐπ(ε)ιδῆ ὁ β[α]σιλεὺς Μακάριον εὐρῶν ἔξω ἐν τῷ	30. reports coming to him from outside. For the emperor, finding Macarius outside in the
Κομι(τ)ά[τῳ] [- ca.15 -]υρῶ γράψας [.] ανουὺς ὅτι δήσας αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπι	court ...written to...because having bound him and...
α ἀπο [- ca.16 -]α ἵνα αὐ[το]] εἴσται. ἀπελθόντων οὖν Ἀρχελά-	...so that... Therefore, Archelaus leaving
ου τοῦ [. καὶ] μετὰ Ἀθαν[ασίου] τοῦ υἱοῦ Καπίτωνος,	...and...with Athanasius son of Capiton,
The reverse side	
βουλόμενοι ἀποσπᾶσ(αι) Μακάριον, ἡ φάσις οὖν ἀπ(ῆ)λθην πρὸς ἅπα Ἰωάννην ἐν Ἀντιοχίᾳ·	wishing to drag away Macarius. Then the report went out to Apa John in Antioch.
35. ἦλθεν καὶ πιάσας αὐτοὺς κατέσχεν αὐτούς, ἐπ(ε)ιδῆ ἐπὶ συκοφαντία καὶ δ(ε)ινὰ ἦσαν γράψαν-	35. He came and after seizing them imprisoned them, because in slander they were even writing terrible things
τες κατὰ Ἡραεῖσκου, καὶ αὐτὸς Ἀρχέλαος τὰ γ(<ρ>)άμματα ἤρκεν ἔξω. ὁ θεὸς οὖν ἐποίησεν	against Heraiscus, and Archelaus himself took the writings out. Therefore, God both brought
καὶ τοὺς τρ(ε)ῖς ἔξω καὶ ἔχ(ε)ι ἔξω. τοῦτ' οὖν ἤκουσεν Ἀθανάσιος ὅτι Ἀρχέλαος	the three abroad and keeps them abroad. Then, Athanasius heard this, that Archelaus
συνεσχέθη, πάνυ ἀθυμεῖ Ἀθανάσιος. πολλαχῶς οὖν ἦλθαν ἐπὶ	was detained; Athanasius is exceedingly disheartened. Then many times they came for
αὐτὸν καὶ μέχρις νῦν οὐκ ἀπεδήμησεν· ἐνεβάλλ(ε)το δ[ε] τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ θα-	him, and until now he did not flee home; but he placed his luggage in the
40. λάσση ὡς αὐτοῦ ἀπ(ο)δημοῦντος, καὶ πάλιν εἰς δεύτερον ἦνε(<γ>)κεν τὰ σκεύη	40. sea as if he were fleeing, and again a second time he took the luggage
ἀπὸ τοῦ πλοίου, μὴ βουλόμενος ἀ[π]οδημῆ[σ]α[ι] ψαι . . ἔγρ[α]ψα (ἵ)να	from the boat, not wishing to flee home...I wrote so that
γνωῖ(ε) ἐν ποίᾳ θλίψ(ε)ι ἐσμέν· ἦνε(<γ>)κεν γὰρ ἐπίσκοπον τῆς κάτω χώρας	you may know in what affliction we are; for he took a bishop of the lower country

καὶ συνέκλ(ε)ισεν αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ μακέλλῳ, καὶ πρεσβύτερον τῶν αὐτῶν μερῶν	and imprisoned him in the meat market, and an elder of the same parts
συνέκλ(ε)ισεν καὶ αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἀπλικίτῳ καὶ διάκ(ο)να ἐν τῇ μεγίστῃ φ(υ)λακῇ, καὶ μέχρις	he imprisoned him also in the camp's prison, and a deacon in the great prison, and until
45. τῆς ὀγδόης καὶ εἰκάδος τοῦ Παχῶν μηνὸς καὶ Ἑραῖσκος συνεκκλ(ε)ισμέ-	45. the 28 th day of the month of Pashons [May 23] even Heraiscus was imprisoned
νος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ εὐχαριστῶ μὲν τῷ δεσπότη θεῷ ὅτι ἐπαύθησαν (αἱ) πλη-	in the camp. I thank the Lord God that the blows have ended
γαὶ ἅς εἶχεν καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ ε(β)δόμῃ καὶ εἰκάδι ἐποίησεν ἐπισκόπους ἑπτα ἀποδη-	which he had, and on the 27 th [May 22] he caused seven bishops
μῆσαι· Ἐμῖς καὶ Πέτρος εἰς αὐτούς ἐστιν, υἱὸς Τουβέστις. μὴ ἀμελήσητ(ε) οὖν	to leave home. Emis and Peter were among them, as well as the son of Tubestis. Therefore, do not overlook
περὶ ἡμῶν, ἀδελφοί, ἐπ(ε)ιδῆ τὰ ψωμῖα ἀφῆκαν ὀπίσω, ἵνα διὰ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον μῆ-	us, brothers, because they left behind the pieces of bread, in order that, on account of the bishop,
50. πως ἔξω ἀρθῆ ἵνα τ(η)ρῆ αὐτὰ μετ' αὐτοῦ. ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀγοράζων ἄρτους εἰς δια-	50. it may not be taken outside and he may guard them with himself. For I, while buying bread for
τροφὴν ἠγόρασα ἀρτάβην σίτου (ταλάντων) ἰδ. ἐπὶ οὖν εὗρητ(ε) εἰδήμ(ο)να ἀπο-	food, bought an artaba of grain for 14 talents. Then, after you find an expert,
στ(ε)ίλατέ μοι ὀλίγα ψωμῖα. ἀσπάζομ(αι) τὸν πατέρα μου Πραυοῦν καὶ πάντας τοὺς	send to me a few pieces of bread. I greet my father Prauos and all the
ἀδελφούς τοὺς ὄντας μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ Θεόνα τὸν διάκ(ο)να Σαπρίωνα καὶ Ὠρίωνα	brothers who are with him and Theon the deacon, Saprion and Orion
καὶ Παπνούτιν καὶ ἅπα Σαρμάτην καὶ Παώμιον καὶ Πιὸρ καὶ Εὐδαίμωννα καὶ ἅπα Τρύφωνα	and Papnutius and Apa Sarmates and Paomius and Pior and Eudaimona and Apa Tryphon
55. καὶ Γερόντιον καὶ ἅπα Ἱέρακα καὶ ἅπα Ἑλενᾶν καὶ ἅπα Ἀρηοῦν καὶ ἅπα Πιάμ καὶ Κορνήλιον	55. and Gerontius and Apa Hierax and Apa Helenas and Apa Harenus and Apa Piam and Cornelius
καὶ Πισάτιν καὶ Κολλοῦθον καὶ Ἰωσήφ καὶ τὰ παιδία αὐτοῦ καὶ Φίνες. μὴ ἀμελήσης οὖν,	and Pisatius and Colluthus and Joseph and his children and Phines. Then do not neglect,
πάτ(ε)ρ, ἀποστ(ε)ῖλαι πρὸς Ψαεῖν ἀπὸ Τερότ ἐνεκεν τῆς ἀρτάβης τοῦ σίτου, καὶ ποιήσον	father, to send to Psaeis from Terot on account of the artaba of grain, and send
Τουᾶν ἀπὸ Ταμούρω ἵνα καὶ αὐτὸς ἀπέλθῃ εἰς Ταμούρω ἐνεκεν τῆς ἀρτάβης τοῦ σίτου.	Tuan from Tamuro in order that he also may leave for Tamuro for the artaba of grain;
(αἱ) ἡμέραι γὰρ εἰσὶν τοῦ λαβ(ε)ῖν αὐτοὺς αὐτάς. ἀσπάζομ(αι) Παῦλον τὸν ἀναγνώστην καὶ ἅπα	for these are the days that they should receive them. I greet Paul the lector and Apa
60. Ἡλι(<α>)ν καὶ Ἄνουβᾶν μέγαν καὶ Ἄνουβᾶν μικρὸν καὶ Παμούτιν καὶ Τιτούην καὶ τὰ παιδία αὐτοῦ καὶ Ὅρ	60. Elias and Anubas the elder and Anubas the younger and Pamutius and Titues and his children and Hor
ἀπὸ Τουμνακῶν καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀδελφούς αὐτοῦ τοὺς μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ Παπνούτιν καὶ Λεο-	from Tumnakon and all his brothers with him and Papnutius and
νίδην τὸν ἀδελφὸν α[ύ]τ[οῦ] καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν τὸν ἄλλον τὸν μετ' αὐτῶν.	Leonides his brother and the other brother with them.
Written perpendicular	
ἄ[πα Παιηοῦ καὶ Παταβεῖτ π(αρά)] Κα(<λ>)λίστου.	To Apa Paieus and Patabeit from Callistus.

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