

they had a crucial role, often on the emperor's instructions, in adjudicating land ownership and jurisdiction between communities in the light of changes in a community's status, requiring an understanding of the layout of fields, earlier decisions, and consultation of records. Territorial boundaries were important because communities drew taxes, resources and public services from those in the area they controlled.

Overall, in my view a lemmatised, detailed commentary would be better for surveying technicalities and legal issues. Nevertheless, this is a welcome addition to current research. With its sumptuous presentation and clearly argued if rather limited approach, it will form a valuable part of the still incomplete mosaic of land survey studies.

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JAAKO FRÖSÉN, ANTTI ARJAVA and MARJO LEHTINEN (EDS), *THE PETRA PAPYRI I*. Amman: American Center of Oriental Research, 2002. Pp. xix + 142, plates. ISBN 090956543. \$100.

LUDWIG KOENEN, JORMA KAIMIO, MAARIT KAIMIO and ROBERT W. DANIEL (EDS), *THE PETRA PAPYRI II*. Amman: American Center of Oriental Research, 2013. Pp. xix + 195, plates. ISBN 9789957854362. \$100.

ANTTI ARJAVA, MATIAS BUCHHOLZ and TRAIANOS GAGOS (EDS), *THE PETRA PAPYRI III*. Amman: American Center of Oriental Research, 2007. Pp. xxi + 216, plates. ISBN 9789957854324. \$115.

ANTTI ARJAVA, MATIAS BUCHHOLZ, TRAIANOS GAGOS and MAARIT KAIMIO (EDS), *THE PETRA PAPYRI IV*. Amman: American Center of Oriental Research, 2011. Pp. xx + 212, plates. ISBN 9789957854355. \$115.

ANTTI ARJAVA, JAAKKI FRÖSÉN and JORMA KAIMIO (EDS), *THE PETRA PAPYRI V*. Amman: American Center of Oriental Research, 2018. Pp. xxiii + 338, plates. ISBN 9789957854379. \$135.

Up until thirty years ago, little was known about Petra in Late Antiquity. Excavations in Petra had revealed almost nothing of the city after the 363 earthquake. Some scholars suggested that the city was abandoned by the middle of the sixth century; however, the discovery of the Petra Church began to change this narrative, especially when excavators discovered the charred remains of dozens of rolls of papyrus in 1992. These carbonised scrolls were preserved by a Finnish team, and a joint Finnish–University of Michigan team was charged with analysing the documents. They were able to reconstruct approximately 90 different documents, dated from 529 (document no. 50) to 592 (43), with one document possibly dating to 593 (32). Due to the fragmentary nature of many of the documents, approximately half could not be assigned a date. The main figure in the papyrus is Theodoros son of Obodianos, archdeacon of the Petra Church, and almost all of the recovered documents could be connected to Theodoros.

This archive contains no literary papyrus, and the documents provide almost no historical information. Only one historical figure, the phylarch Abu Karib, son of Harith ibn Jabala, leader of the Ghassanids, appears in the archive, and his appearance is fleeting (39). The vast majority of the Petra Papyrus involve either taxation or contracts between private individuals. These latter documents include leases, divisions of property, agreements concerning marriage and limited quantities of other documents. These documents provide information about five general areas of interest: taxation, land ownership and property transmission, agricultural practices, household matters and linguistic evidence for Arabic speakers in the region.

The taxation documents can be divided into two categories: those dealing with a transfer of tax liability and receipts for the payment of taxes. The documents attesting the transfer of tax liability suggest that it was customary at Petra to delay the transfer of tax liability on the official rolls, sometimes for years (3–5, 19, 23–25, 50, 65, 66). In 22, this tax arrangement seems to have lasted for at least a generation. In these cases, it appears that the new owner of the property paid the

previous owner the tax liability, who then paid the tax. Most of these documents were addressed to *hypodektai* (locally selected tax collectors), but 19, 23 and 65 were instead addressed to a *chartophylax*. Another major group of documents are tax receipts (7–10, 20, 22, 32–35, 37, 45–47, 68, maybe 69), largely between private individuals who acknowledge receiving tax payments due on land that they previously had sold. These documents therefore confirm the situation suggested by the transfer of tax liability documents. For example, in 7–10, Patrophilos son of Bassus pays Flavius Valens. Patrophilos paid a lump sum for several years instead of annually. Fourteen total years of taxes are covered in these three documents, with 575 as a fifteenth year, when all taxes were remitted. Thus the three documents cover tax payments for an entire indiction cycle. It is clear from the taxation documents that elites in Petra owned land throughout the nearby region, including in the territory of the city Augustopolis (modern Udhruh) and around *Kastron Zadakathon* (modern Sadaqa). Taxation in Petra and Augustopolis was controlled by officials in Petra, even though the two cities had separate tax registers (3–5, 19, 25, 50, and see also 52).

The second major topic of interest concerns land ownership and property transmission. Document 17, for example, is one of the longest and most complicated in the archive. It concerns the division of property amongst three brothers (Bassos, Epiphanius and Sabinos) in Petra itself and in two villages nearby named Serila and Ogbana. The brothers received by lot slaves, grainfields, vineyards, threshing floors, dry gardens and portions of dwellings. All the properties are small (60 per cent were one *iugerum* in size) and appear to have been divided up over several generations.

In addition to 17, other documents concern property transmission. Document 1 (dated to 537) is an agreement between Theodoros and his maternal uncle and father-in-law Patrophilos regarding inheritance of property. The properties under consideration are never explicitly described, so the document does not tell us much about the family's property holdings. Document 18 (539/40) describes another agreement between Theodoros and Patrophilos in which a dowry was converted into a value of three-and-a-half pounds of gold (a value of 468 *solidi*). It is unknown why Theodoros wished to convert the dowry into gold, but one speculation is so he could pay off some sort of debt (the word *chreos* appears in line 1). This dowry suggests that the family was not wealthy compared to the richest citizens of the empire, who could have dowries in the hundreds of pounds of gold. Document 29 describes the settlement of a debt between Theodoros and his father-in-law Patrophilos, completed in part with some property that Patrophilos had inherited from Theodoros's deceased son Panolbios. Document 2 is the only document not written in Petra. It comes from Gaza, where Theodoros lived at the time (538). It reveals that his family owned property in Palaestina Prima which was administered from Gaza, with Beersheba and Eleutheropolis possible locations for their holdings.

Document 39, a dispute over property at *Kastron Zadakathon* that was resolved through arbitration, is a unique document in the archive. It contains the only examples of direct speech in the archive, as it presents verbatim the arguments made by the litigants, Theodoros son of Obodianos and Stephanos son of Leontios. At stake were several issues: the use of a courtyard which connected the buildings owned by Theodoros son of Obodianos and Stephanos son of Leontios; a refuse pit located within the courtyard; and access to water that flowed off the roof of an attached building. Document 40 was connected with the property in dispute in 39. The editors suggest that 40 is the first example of a *defensio* ever found on papyrus (IV: 123). A *defensio* is a claim that the seller of a property guarantees that no other person has right to the property being sold, and serves as a guarantee against eviction (IV: 1–3).

The documents also provide information about agriculture in the region around Petra and how agricultural land was managed. Documents mention, for example, grain fields, orchards, dry gardens, oil presses and vineyards. Almonds may have been one of the crops, as the Greek transliteration (*louza*) of the Arabic word for almond (*lūzā*) is mentioned. Two documents mention that the ground was prepared for the growing of new vineyards (17, 62). Installations for agricultural pursuits include threshing floors (open air), cisterns, a granary, stable and a compost pile (17). The fragmentary 36 mentions the division of property, including oil presses and orchards. These documents confirm recent archaeological and botanical evidence for the cultivation of grain, grapes, olives and almonds in the region.

Several leases appear in the documents. Document 59 specifies that the lessee, Monaxios, was required to plant additional vineyards on a plot in Sadaqa. While the legal nature of the lease is complicated (involving the splitting of a lease from a previous owner), it remains an important testimony about the continuance of wine production in the region, which began in the Nabataean

period. One document is an emphyteutic lease, that is to say a lease that allowed the lessee a claim to the property in perpetuity in exchange for a specific amount of income per year. The land mentioned here carried an annual rent of 4½ solidi (51). Emphyteutic leases are rare in the surviving records, as the editors could only find four parallels (V: 81 n.3). This document is one of only two in the archive (also 52) that mention tenants (*geōrgoi*), but nothing is known of their status or conditions.

Another area of interest concerns household life. For example, a marriage contract between Kyra daughter of Georgios, and Flavius Thomas son of Nikephoros, an *embathmos* stationed at Kastron Zadakathon, is recorded in 42. The document is unfortunately very fragmentary, but it is clear that Kyra makes the contract on her own behalf. 43 is also fragmentary, but seems to concern the dowry and/or paraphernal. The total value of this may have been in the range of 60 solidi. The only woman in the documents who plays an active legal role is Elaphia, widow of Elias and guardian of three under-age boys (28). Elias himself selected Elaphia as the children's guardian (*epitropos*). The division of the two young slave boys was made through the casting of lots. Elaphia's children received the younger slave and 3 solidi to make up for the value of the older slave. In addition to 28, documents 17, 57 and 58 contain references to slaves. In 17, two slave couples were to be split amongst the three brothers. The decision was made for two brothers to each receive one couple, and the other brother to be compensated with additional property. This of course suggests that relationships between slaves were considered worthy of maintaining. This procedure is in line with *Cod. Iust.* 3.38.11, which prohibits the separation of slave families on imperial estates, but in 28, the two young boys were divided between Patrophilos and the widow Elaphia. In 57, property was exchanged between Flavius Paulos and the archdeacon Theodoros. Though the document is fragmentary, there are frequent mentions of a *pais* named Kalēmeros, suggesting that the document is about the sale of a slave. If so, then this document is different from those accounting sales of slaves in Egypt, lacking many of the stipulations of those agreements that the slave be of sound health. The sum of 20 solidi is mentioned, equalling the price of an unskilled slave determined by Justinian (*Cod. Iust.* 7.7.1.5), but it is unknown if it refers to the sale price or something else entirely.

Finally, while all of the documents in the Petra Papyri are written in Greek, two documents (17, 62) contain dozens of Arabic words transliterated into Greek, making this collection immensely important for understanding Arabic as a spoken language in the region prior to the Islamic conquest. The preservation of Arabic in the papyri suggests that it was almost ubiquitous around Petra. Most plots of land are named with Arabic words transcribed into Greek, including *μαλ* (*mal* = estate), *αὐν* (*ayn* = spring), *μάθ* (*māt* = plot of land), and *ουαδι* (*wadi* = stream bed). The definite article is variously transcribed as *αλ*, *ελ* and *λα*, perhaps indicating a fluidity of pronunciation. It is possible that some of the plot names can be identified in the modern town of Wadi Musa (which was known as Gaia in antiquity) (II: 49–50), though I am unconvinced of the validity of these connections, which were made by asking locals if they knew any locations named in the papyri.

The editors should be commended for completing the arduous effort of conserving, deciphering and editing the documents, and the volumes themselves are well produced. Nevertheless, a few criticisms can be made. The first concerns the organisation of the volumes. It appears that there was no plan for final publication when the first volume appeared: only Vol. II, which concerns a single document (17), and Vol. IV, which publishes the papyri dealing with Kastron Zadakathon (modern Sadaqa), appear to have any sense of organisation. Instead, Vols I, III and V contain a random mix of documents. For example, tax receipts are found in Vols I, III and V, interspersed with all different kinds of documents. This makes it substantially more difficult to compare documents of the same type. Similarly, if one wishes to examine documents in chronological order, one first needs to consult the 'Updated Synoptic Chronological Table' in Vol. V. Any sort of organisation — chronological, or topical — would have made a major improvement to accessibility.

Another criticism concerns the earliest published volumes (especially Vol. I), which were written prior to the documents acquiring their final numbering system. Documents which were planned to appear in later volumes are referenced using an inventory number which does not correspond with the final document numbers (for example 37 was Inv. 47, while 39 was Inv. 83). This makes cross-referencing documents mentioned in Vol. I much more difficult. Another issue with the lack of planning is that essays in the earlier published volumes (again, Vol. I especially) contain outdated or superseded material. In fact, I would suggest that scholars new to the papyri start with Vol. V and work backwards, rather than starting with Vol. I.

Finally, as one might expect, there are also many unresolved problems in the interpretation of the papyri. For example, it makes sense to adopt the interpretation of R. Caldwell (*ZPE* (2003), 198–200) of an *iota*-abbreviation in documents 7–10, but the editors seem disinclined to do this with a similar document (19). In a later volume, they suggest that documents 7–10 concern payment for the *annona militaris* (III: 169), without much explanation. Another question concerns the difference between ‘free’ and ‘patrimonial’ land (ἐλευθερικὴν τε καὶ πατριωνόλιον). The editors suggest that the difference is that tax on ‘free’ land was paid through the local *curiales*, while that on ‘patrimonial’ land was paid to imperial collectors (I: 76–7). But since these documents are addressed to the *hypodektai*, then why is the ‘patrimonial’ land mentioned? Are the *hypodektai* collecting taxes on both kinds of property? If so, then why are some documents directed towards the *chartophylax*? What do these documents have to do with the collection of the *annona militaris*? Might the ‘patrimonial’ land somehow be associated with imperial estates created after the annexation of the Nabataean Kingdom in 106 C.E.?

Despite these criticisms, the final publication of Vol. V represents the conclusion of a momentous task, which adds to our knowledge of Petra and the wider region in the sixth century. As we read in several documents, Petra remained the capital of the province of Palaestina Tertia, proudly proclaimed as ‘the Antonine imperial colony, the distinguished and native mother of colonies, Hadrianic Petra, Metropolis of the Third Palestine Salutaris’ (I, 23, 55). The imperial bureaucracy was clearly functioning, and Roman law was still being followed until the end of the sixth century. Local elites like Theodoros appear to be prosperous, owing property throughout the southern Levant, and Petra remained an important administrative hub for the surrounding region. In the middle of the sixth century, soldiers were still stationed at *Kastron Zadakathon*, where a number of civilians also lived. Several churches and bishops appear in the documents, as does the pilgrimage site dedicated to Aaron (53 and 54).

However, the documents cannot tell us about the built environment of Petra and the demography of the city. How many people were living there in the sixth century? Was the civic centre still being used? Archaeological evidence suggests the city was much smaller than its heyday in the first and second centuries C.E. The 363 earthquake appears to have destroyed many of the prominent buildings, which in Late Antiquity were looted for building materials. Are the individuals in the Petra Papyri more or less prosperous than the rest of the community? Was the city abandoned shortly after the Petra Church was destroyed? Was this abandonment a gradual or immediate event? In short, the questions surrounding the fate of Petra at the turn of the seventh century remain unanswered, but these documents provide a new avenue to approach the history of the site in the sixth century.

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DANIEL KING (ED.), *THE SYRIAC WORLD* (Routledge Worlds). London: Routledge, 2019. Pp. 842, illus., maps. ISBN 9781138899018. £175.00.

In 2009, Fergus Millar (d. 15 July 2019) published an article in this journal with the title ‘Linguistic Co-existence in Constantinople: Greek and Latin (and Syriac) in the Acts of the Synod of 536 C.E.’ Millar did much to bring Syriac communities and sources from the periphery to the attention of historians of the Eastern Roman Empire. This is perhaps most clearly seen in his volume of collected essays, *Empire, Church and Society in the Late Roman Near East: Greeks, Jews, Syrians and Saracens* (2015). Here we see Millar’s characteristic attention to the multi-lingual, multi-cultural world of the late antique Near East. It is telling, however, that in his 2009 article, ‘Syriac’ is in parentheses. The linguistic barrier has meant that Roman historians and Byzantinists have been slow to appreciate what Syriac studies can offer. This has begun to change, in part owing to Millar’s own work, and *The Syriac World*, edited by Daniel King, will further facilitate this process. Covering all aspects of the field, this volume will prove to be an invaluable resource for specialists and non-specialists alike.

The book is made up of thirty-nine contributions from leading scholars in five sections. The first part presents two essays, one on the Eastern Roman Empire and the other on the Sasanian Empire, as