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Il Dossier Della “Domus Divina” in Egitto

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system. Even if some constituencies did not have recourse to petitions (e.g., rape victims), it is not because of their status. At the bottom of p. 91, “account” should be “claim,” and the phrase in which it occurs should be translated “so that I retain my claim.” On p. 102, “prosecution” should be “attack.” On p. 121, “killed me” (literally “they killed me”) is not translated. On p. 124, “interrogate” should be “expose” (note the aerial emendation).

Chapter 5 argues that the Roman Empire was distant and characterized by weak legal pluralism. I rather think that the levels of government reached all the way to the bottom, and that they were not as confusing to people there and then as we often tend to think. The weak legal pluralism also seems irrelevant, because any legal system is weak on violence (as an open concept). On p. 138, “if that man starts a quarrel, I will refrain from violence” should be “if I suffer violence and that man started it first” and connected with what follows. On p. 160, vosy) should have been translated as possessive, not “right of pasturage.”

The confusing title of Chapter 6, “Fusion and Fusion” appears as “Fusion and Fusion” in the table of contents. In this, the best, Chapter B., discusses two dossiers in more depth. He places a couple of petitions in PCair.lbd. in the context of the archive, and this allows him to provide more convincing interpretations than elsewhere in the book. Instead of translating all relevant documents, B. helpfully summarizes them. Significantly, the dossier includes a reference to mediators, and the violence mentioned casually at the end of the first petition is not mentioned in the second. This exercise in contextual reading shows that the petitions that come without a context are much less meaningful (to us) than they were in the past. The other dossier discussed in Chapter 6 is the well-known petition of Dionsyia, which quotes precedent and earlier decisions. Again, most other petitions are not as helpful, and Dionsyia is also not really about violence but property, a much more complicated case that required multiple hearings. On p. 180, the supralinear insertion should come two words earlier (correct in B’s translation). On p. 194, xaxoyi is a lie, not a mortgage (that would have been isoqoit).

B. writes well but drops the names of just too many critical theorists (I count over forty from Adorno to Žižek in the index). Some of his points were anticipated by Kelly (e.g., petitions are not a last resort but often hot off the press – not surprising in cases of violence), but others correct Kelly (e.g., petitions were intended to get the legal system going or to get the government to respond, not to force an informal resolution of a dispute). Kelly’s more exhaustive presentation and focus on more complex issues will attract more papyrological readers.
on its own. This does result in much formulaic repetition and hundreds of introductions for each of the villagers of Aphrodite to the duke of the Thebaid (pp. 60). This effectively, and perhaps unfortunately, separates papyri of the same provenance into their own sections, not full text, that refer or allude to the domus divina or its personnel, adopts a chronological order. This effectively, and perhaps unfortunately, separates papyri of the same kind by various Oxyrhynchite land interests in one particular nome.

No single type of document prevails in the author’s dossier. Instead, the documents are various in genre: letters, lists, petitions, epistolary instructions, receipts, contracts (sale, loan, lease), oaths, receipts for irrigation machinery parts, work contracts. Some famous pieces are treated at length. The longest discussion (pp. 82-88) is justifiedly reserved for 36 (P. Oxy. 6.9102), a letter written in Constantinople to the duke of the Thebaid concerning the villagers of Aphrodite. Some discussions (e.g., for I.3, 42, 66) are single paragraphs. The mean may be represented by 49 (P. Oxy. 16.2020 = 50, AD 567-588), an account of “fiscal charges owed to the prætorian prefecture” (Hickey, Wine, Wealth, and the State, 110, n. 89), paid in kind by various Oxyrhynchite oikoi, the domus divina at 22.2% of the whole was “the single biggest payer.” This at least suggests the magnitude of imperial landed interests in one particular nome.

As mentioned, Part B’s catalogue, which presents extracts, not full texts, that refer or allude to the domus divina or its personnel, adopts a chronological order. This effectively, and perhaps unfortunately, separates papyri of the same provenance. The Greek is printed continuously, not line-by-line. There is careful introductory discussion of each extract’s provenance, its clear or possible link to the domus divina. Full context is given in these introductions, but there are no translations, though I think these should have been presented for some of the thornier passages, hard to construe without their surrounding texts. The discussion for each testimonia is composed in such a way that each can stand on its own. This does result in much formalistic repetition and hundreds of

(pp. 32-39). It would be a challenge to organize them according to type in such a way as to assess the degree to which the means of exploiting imperial properties mirrored those for private properties. At the very least the listing gives an impression of the variety of requisite human capital for the successful operation of estates of either kind.

The dossier provides some precise evidence for the localities in which domus divina land was to be found and a certain amount of information on the post mortem transfer of properties from one imperial family member to another, e.g., from Arcadia to Eudocia, from Theodora to Justinian. Most intriguing is the movement of former domus divina land into the control of the Aplion of Oxyrhynchus, whether into its own ownership or, if one prefers the thesis of J. Gascoyne (now reprinted in his Fiscalité et société en Égypte byzantine [2008] 125-213), into their tax-collecting “share.” Unfortunately, the papyri give no direct figures on the extent of imperial landed interests in Egypt even for the two main regions for which they provide evidence. Jarius Banaji nonetheless notes (Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity [2001] 149-150) that in Rome, 6.20 (cf. 50, AD 567-588), an account of “fiscal charges owed to the praetorian prefecture” (Hickey, Wine, Wealth, and the State, 110, n. 89), paid in kind by various Oxyrhynchite oikoi, the domus divina at 22.2% of the whole was “the single biggest payer.” This at least suggests the magnitude of imperial landed interests in one particular nome.

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