

FOREWORD

In the present volume of the Petra Papyri, the editorial principles have remained much the same as in the two volumes published so far (P. Petra I and III). All the texts included in P. Petra IV are somehow connected with Sadaqa, a garrison town situated some 25 km southeast of Petra and populated by both soldiers and civilians (see Introduction to 37). Several of the wealthier inhabitants of Petra seem to have possessed property in Sadaqa or its environs, among them Theodoros, son of Obodianos, the central figure of the whole archive, who owned a house in the town and at least occasionally lived there. Sadaqa evidently belonged administratively to the territory of Petra. There are a few further Petra documents which mention Sadaqa, one of which was published in the previous volume while others will be published in the fifth and last volume (23, Invs. 84 and 86v).

Volume IV covers most of the dossier's known time span, from 544/45 (45) to 592/93 (43). The texts include several new receipts connected with taxation (clearly a common type of document in Petra), and two agreements on the marriage and marital property of a soldier to a woman called Kyra. By far the most important text in the volume is the very long settlement of a dispute over property rights (39). With a length of over six meters, it is the largest papyrus written *transversa charta* ever published (2 from Gaza is even longer but preserves less text). It gives a vivid glimpse of rural town life in sixth-century Palestine, of quarrels between neighbors, and [add for symmetry] of the ways they were settled. Among the Petra papyri, this text is rivaled only by 17, an extensive division of property, which will be published later in a separate volume as P. Petra II.

It has been again our delight to receive help and advice from many colleagues in different fields. The main contributors are listed on the title page. In addition, Robert W. Daniel, Zbigniew T. Fiema, and Catherine Saliou have shared their expertise on housing and buildings in the ancient Near East. Terrence Szymanski and Cassandra Borghes gave valuable technical assistance to Traianos Gagos. James G. Keenan, Margot Stout Whiting, and Klaas A. Worp have read through all or most of the manuscript and corrected innumerable errors, both in substance and in style. Roger S. Bagnall, Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, Robert Hoyland, and Michael C. A. Macdonald have advised us on individual questions. The remaining lapses are all our own. The Finnish editorial team is part of a "Centre of Excellence in Research" program 2006–2011 of the Academy of Finland, directed by Jaakko Frösén. Barbara A. Porter, Director, and her staff at the American Center of Oriental Research have always patiently backed up our work. For this support we are very grateful.

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