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The Letter

Law, State, Society and the Epistolary Format
in the Ancient World

Proceedings of a Colloquium
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Edited by
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Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	7
Foreword	11
Sophie Démare-Lafont, Michele Faraguna, Uri Yiftach-Firanko Introduction.....	13
Sophie Démare-Lafont La lettre comme instrument de l'administration royale en Mésopotamie	29
Dominique Charpin « Garde ma lettre en témoignage »: Le rôle de la correspondance dans le système juridique mésopotamien de la première moitié du deuxième millénaire av. n. è.	45
Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum Middle Assyrian Summonses: The Epistolary Format in Judicial Procedures	61
Paola Ceccarelli The Use (and Abuse) of Letters in the Speeches of the Attic Orators.....	83
Edward M. Harris Were there Business Agents in Classical Greece? The Evidence of Some Lead Letters	105
James Sickinger Greek Letters on Stone.....	125
Ingo Kottsieper Briefe als Rechtsurkunden: Zu einigen aramäischen Briefen des Aršames ..	141
Mark Depauw The Evolution and Use of Demotic Contracts in Epistolary Form	155
Katelijan Vandorpe Greek and Demotic Loan Agreements in Epistolary Style. Formalisation and Registration in the later Ptolemaic Period	171
Andrea Jördens Hybride Cheirographa.....	187

Sophie Kovarik	
Der Brief in der Urkunde: Zur Briefform in spätantiken Verträgen.....	201
Éva Jakab	
Urkunden in Briefform: Chirographum und Epistula im römischen Privatrecht	219
Johannes Platschek	
Pecunia constituta und stipulatio: Grenzen des Rechtsschutzes für formlose Geschäfte im römischen Recht	239
Bibliography	251
Index Locorum	273
Plates	307

List of Abbreviations

AbB	Altbabylonische Briefe in Umschrift und Übersetzung
AE	Archaiologike Ephemeris, ekdidomenē tēs Archaiologikēs Hetaireias
Aegyptus	Rivista italiana di egittologia e di papirologia
AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AJPh	American Journal of Philology
AMI	Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran. Ergänzungsband
AncW	The ancient World
Ann. Camerino	Annali della Facoltà Giuridica dell'Università di Camerino
ASNP	Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
APF	Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete
ArOr	Archiv Orientalní
AS	Assyriological Studies
AUCT	Andrews University Cuneiform Texts
AUPA	Annali del Dipartimento di Storia del Diritto Università di Palermo
BaM	Baghdader Mitteilungen
BASP	The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists
BATSH	Beiträge zu den Ausgrabungen von Tall Šeḥ Ḥamad
BCH	Bulletin de correspondance hellénique, École Française d'Athènes
BICS	Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London
BiOr	Bibliotheca Orientalis
BN	Beiträge zur Namenforschung
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CCG	Cahiers du Centre Gustave-Glotz
CÉ	Chronique d'Égypte
Chiron	Chiron. Mitteilungen der Kommission für alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts
ClAnt	Classical antiquity

CM	Cuneiform Monographs
CNI	Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Ancient Near Eastern Studies
CQ	Classical Quarterly
CW	The Classical World
DHA	Dialogues d'histoire ancienne
Dike	Dike: Rivista di storia del diritto greco ed ellenistico
DMOA	Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui
FAOS	Freiburger altorientalische Studien
FIRA	Fontes iuris Romani antejustiniani
FM	Florilegium Marianum
FoSub	Fontes et subsidia ad Bibliam pertinentes
G&R	Greece and Rome
HAW	Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
Hermes	Hermes. Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie
Hesperia	Hesperia. The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens
HSPh	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
Index	Index: Quaderni camerti di studi romanistici
IVRA	Iura. Rivista internazionale di diritto romano e antico
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JARCE	Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JEOL	Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap Ex Oriente Lux
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
JJP	Journal of Juristic Papyrology
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
Labeo	Labeo. Rassegna di diritto romano
LAPO	Littératures Anciennes du Proche-Orient
MAIBL	Mémoires de l'academie des inscriptions et belles-lettres
MARI	Mari. Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires
MBPR	Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte
MDAI	Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique en Iran

MDOG	Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient Gesellschaft zu Berlin
Mesopotamia	Mesopotamia. Rivista di Archeologia, epigrafia e storia orientale antica
MVN	Materiali per il vocabolario neosumerico
NABU	Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires
NAPR	Northern Akkad Project Reports
OAAS	Old Assyrian Archives, Studies
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OMRO	Ouheidkundige mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden
PIHANS	Publications de l'Institut historique et archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul
Phoenix	Phoenix. Bulletin uitgegeven door het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap Ex Oriente Lux
RA	Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale
RAN	Revue archéologique de Narbonnaise
RBL	Review of Biblical Literature
RE	Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft
REA	Revue des études anciennes
RHD	Revue historique de droit français et étranger
RIDA	Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité
RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Assyrian periods
RIME	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Early periods
RIA	Reallexikon der Assyriologie
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAAB	State Archives of Assyria Bulletin
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
SBL MS	Society of Biblical literature, Monograph series
SBAW	Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse
TAPhA	Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association
TCS	Texts from Cuneiform Sources

TR	Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis = Revue d'histoire du droit
TUAT	Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
YOS	Yale Oriental series, Babylonian texts
ZA	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie
ZABR	Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik
ZRG	Zeitschrift für Rechtsgeschichte
ZSSRA	Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Romanistische Abteilung

Foreword

The group *Legal Documents in Ancient Societies* was established in 2008 to enhance collaboration among students of everyday documentation in the Ancient Near East, Ancient Egypt, the Greek and Hellenistic world, and the Roman State down to late Antiquity. A key means of achieving this goal is a series of annual meetings, focusing each on a different topic. The first meeting, held at the *American Academy in Rome* on 28.–30.9.2008, focused on the study of different documentary applications of the letter from the third millennium BCE to late Antiquity. The twelve papers delivered in the meeting illustrated how letters were applied for similar purposes in different civilizations, sometimes millennia apart. Dominique Charpin, Ingo Kottsieper and James Sickinger, for example, demonstrated how royal state-apparatus applied letters for administrative purposes in the old Babylonian period, the Persian empire, and the Greek and Hellenistic world. Eva Cancik and Ingo Kottsieper discussed the application of letters in the administration of Justice in 13th century BCE Assyria and the Persian period. Sophie Démare-Lafont, Edward Harris and Éva Jakab showed how the application of letters promoted complex economic activities extending over different states and continents. The reader of this volume can study these cross cultural phenomena and will undoubtedly pinpoint others.

The papers delivered in Rome enabled the participants to pinpoint evolution of the position of the letter as a legal document in the Greek and Roman world. Letters began to be written in the Greek world in the archaic period, probably not long after the introduction of the Greek alphabet. But at first letters, and perhaps writing in general, were treated with suspect as a means to be employed by free states or their citizens for the documentation of their everyday activity. This fact was demonstrated by the papers of Paola Ceccarelli and James Sickinger. Besides, even if letters could be, and were certainly used on a regular basis for different purposes, early letters as discussed and cited by Edward Harris do not exhibit an established format that would indicate their independent use as a routine instrument for the documentation of everyday, particularly legal activities. Things changed in this respect in the Hellenistic period. Not only did letters become, as shown by James Sickinger, an established and acceptable means of issuing decrees by Hellenistic monarchs. The letter also became a routine type of legal document, recording legal acts whose performance was not attended by witnesses, and which gave rise to an obligation solely by virtue of the fact that the document was written by the prospective debtor in person. The result of this change, the *cheirographon*, was discussed in most papers focusing on the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine period.

Mark Depauw and Katelijn Vandorpe studied the evolution of the Demotic and Greek letter format as an established type of legal document in Persian and Ptolemaic Egypt. Sophie Kovarik studied the final triumph of the letter format, in the

Byzantine period, as *the* default means of documentation of legal activity. Andrea Jördens showed how the *cheirographon*—originally written by just one of the parties and therefore recording his obligations, but not those of the addressee of the document—was transformed, on occasions, into a “normal” legal document, recording obligations of both parties alike. Finally, Eva Jakab studied the reception of the *cheirographon* into Roman legal practice and theory. This last issue was also taken up by Johannes Platschek, whose paper focused on the procedural implications of contracts that were entered upon informally and were occasionally given evidence of in letters, as opposed to those entered upon by formal acts created within *ius civile*.

Sources quoted in this volume are abbreviated according to the conventions in each field of research. Ancient near eastern sources are abbreviated by S. Démare-Lafont and E. Cancik-Kirschbaum according to the conventions given in R. Borger, *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur*, 3 vol., Berlin, 1967–1975, while D. Charpin’s article follows those of the *Archives Babylonniennes, XX^e–XVII^e Siècles av. J.-C.* (www.archibab.fr). Classical literary sources, if abbreviated, are abbreviated according to routine conventions that can be found, for example, at <http://iam.classics.unc.edu/main/help/P.html>. Greek inscriptions are cited according to the conventions of the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (SEG), and are also available at <http://dge.cchs.csic.es/1st/21st3.htm>. Greek and Demotic papyri are cited according to the conventions of the *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets* (http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist_papyri.html#c). Aramaic texts discussed by I. Kottspieper are cited according to the conventions established by Porten-Yardeni 1986–1999.

Thanks are due to people and institutes who made the meeting and the publication of this volume possible: The *Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New-York University*, which sponsored the meeting, the *American Academy in Rome* which hosted us in its course, the *Emil and und Arthur Kießling Stiftung für Papyrusforschung*, which offered financial support for the publication of the present volume, Professor Hans-Albert Rupprecht, who made this financial support possible, Dr. Kai Ruffing, who accepted this book into the distinguished series *Philippika. Marburger altertumskundliche Abhandlungen*. I would also like to thank the participants in the meeting for the oral and written versions of their papers as they are published in this volume and to the members of the steering committee of the group *Legal Documents of Ancient Societies*, Sophie Démare-Lafont, Mark Depauw, Michele Faraguna, Eva Jakab and Dennis Kehoe for their advices, as well as for their moral and practical support. Special thanks are due to Roger S. Bagnall, without whose support and guidance the idea of our group would have never been materialized.

Uri Yiftach-Firanko

Jerusalem, July 2012