J. Chameroy: Marcellesi, Pergame de la fin du Vᵉ au début du Iᵉʳ siècle découvert sur le territoire de la ville. La composition des monnaies ramassées à Atarnée justifie de nouveau une datation tardive des bronzes Asclépios Sôter (à partir de la fin du IIᵉ siècle); surtout, l’absence d’Athéna Niképhoros et des bronzes civiques de Pergame n°63–65 prouve qu’ils n’ont été émis qu’après la désertion d’Atarnée c’est-à-dire au Iᵉʳ, et non au IIᵉ siècle.

Le second ensemble digne d’intérêt comprend 63 bronzes, mis au jour dans un canal à Pergame. Clos vers 30 après J.-C., ce lot donne un aperçu du numéraire circulant dans la ville au début de l’Empire: si les bronzes attalides ont entièrement disparu, sont encore présents (par ordre d’ancienneté) quelques Asclépios Sôter (13%), Athéna Niképhoros (21%) et surtout des bronzes civiques n°64–65 à l’aigle et à la victoire (46% des bronzes déterminés). La proportion élevée de ces derniers montre (en parfait accord avec les don­nées des trésors et des analyses élémentaires) qu’il s’agit bien des séries les plus tardives produites par la cité, au Iᵉʳ siècle av. J.-C.

Une fois restituée la succession des émissions de bronze à partir des données de l’archéologie et des analyses élémentaires, la situation à Pergame n’apparaît pas si exceptionnelle que ne le prétend M.-C. Marce­llesi (p. 97), qui croit à l’émission parallèle de bronzes civiques et dynastiques dans la métropole mysienne (p. 86, 114, 167). Au contraire, une absence d’émission civique de bronze à Pergame sous les Attalides semble évidente dans la chronologie révisée. C’est d’ailleurs la conclusion implicite à tirer du catalogue de l’auteur, qui ne connaît de bronzes civiques d’époque attalide que les dernières émissions des n°14–17 (« c. 300–c. 250 »)1 et le bronze n°21 (« c. 250–c. 200 » ou pré-attalide?) frappés dans un volume insignifiant,2 mais plus aucun bronze civique pour les années c. 200–133! L’enquête de grande qualité menée par M.-C. Marce­llesi est donc bien en peine de documenter une activité monétaire conséquente de la ville de Pergame sous les Attalides, à moins de vouloir considérer, à contre-courant de l’auteur, les premiers cistophores comme des monnaies civiques.

Pour autant, l’absence d’émissions de bronzes civiques sous les Attalides ne ré­vèle pas forcément une intervention des dynastes dans les affaires urbaines, encore moins une atteinte à l’autonomie des institutions de la ville. Avec un pragmatisme certain, la cité de Pergame pouvait considérer la frappe de bronzes civiques comme superflue tant que les dynastes approvisionnaient la cité par leurs abondantes séries de bronze au nom de Philétaire – monnaies qui, de plus, présentaient l’avantage de garder leur validité au-delà de la ville et de sa chora.

Mayence Jérémie Chameroy


This study uses 568 petitions and 227 reports of court proceedings on papyrus dated between 30 B.C. and A.D. 284 (18) to explore a number of issues having to

1 On a vu à partir du trésor de l’Asclépieion que la frappe des bronzes n°14–17 s’acheva en fait peu après les premières émissions de bronzes attalides vers 260.

2 Le bronze civique n°21 ne forme en effet que 1,7% des 520 bronzes hellénistiques émis à Pergame découverts dans la Stadtgrabung; il est entièrement absent de la liste des mon­naies de fouilles publiée en 1913 par K. Regling. Pour une datation pré-attalide, voir supra.
do with social control, defined as «all those resources available by which members of society attempt to assure the norm-conforming behavior of others» (16).

Where K. narrates individual cases, or illustrates an argument with a series of cases, he can be quite entertaining, and his interpretations, even when he is reading between the lines, are mostly convincing. But the social control perspective adopted by K. is hardly illuminating. There is so much else that falls under that heading, and there is so much in petitions and reports of court proceedings that does not fall under it, that K.’s discussion is incomplete on both counts.

The petitions taken into consideration by K. involve disputes, mostly between two private parties, sometimes between a private party and an official. The focus is on petitions as the first step in a process of litigation. That would seem to require a more strictly legal or juridical approach, but K. is at pains to avoid this. The other texts taken into consideration by K. are reports of court proceedings before representatives of the government, ranging from a decurio to the prefect of Egypt himself. Given that these texts emanate from the government and include input from its representatives, they would seem more promising for K.’s social control perspective, but K. fails to draw the right conclusions from the differences between the two types of texts he uses. About 42% of petitions involving disputes concern theft and violence (see table 4.3 on 163), but very few such cases (only about 9%) appear among the reports of court proceedings; cases involving illegal pasturing (about 3% of petitions) do not occur there at all. This suggests that petitions in cases involving theft, violence, and illegal pasturing served other purposes than petitions in cases that more regularly made it to court.

In the first chapter (1–37) K. rejects and modifies existing social-historical approaches to petitions. He claims petitions are «close to useless» (9) for writing about crime because of the distortions in the narratives about theft and violence they include. Presumably the forthcoming study by A.Z. Bryen, Violence in Roman Egypt: A Study in Legal Interpretation (Philadelphia, PA, 2013), will qualify K.’s pessimism here. He also rejects the idea that petitions were the last resort, used only when other venues for dispute resolution had been exhausted. From the evidence presented in table 7.1 on 271–272 it follows that most petitions were written on the spur of the moment. But I wonder what happens to the data, if petitions for theft and violence – the ones most likely to be time-sensitive – are left out. Disputes over property may arise without a clearly datable offence and drag on for quite a while before they are put down in writing in the form of a petition.

K. also has to qualify the social control perspective he adopts, by eliminating one of the three types of control which he deems irrelevant for the distant past (medical control; but what about falling sickness in Greek religion and various kinds of ‘infirmity’ in Roman law?), by expanding the definition of legal control (adding civil law to criminal law, which is foremost in the minds of those such as J.J. Chriss who espouse a social control perspective), and by allowing informal control to go largely unexamined. K. admits that petitions and reports of court proceedings, subsumed under legal control, play only a minor role in social control overall, but they are our main sources and can at least be tapped for ideology and rhetorical argumentation (K. engages more with the former than the latter).
In ch. 2 (38–74) K. provides some background for those new to petitions on papyrus. Petitions were rarely written by the petitioners themselves, more ordinarily by professional scribes, so the petitioner’s voice is muted or hard to distinguish from boiler plate. It does not really matter, because for K. boiler plate translates to ideology. It is easier to believe that reports of court proceedings contain the voice of the different actors. K. makes interesting observations on the accuracy of some of the details in the petitions: names, status, and occupation of the petitioners will have been mostly accurate; those of the offenders may not have been and may even have been manipulated. Dates and facts that could easily be established (e.g., the size of plots; see table 4.2 on 158) are assumed to be more accurate than the monetary values and the narratives of events. K. also addresses the issue of representativeness (petitions have the same chronological distribution as all papyri in Roman Egypt – but not after A.D. 400) and that of draft versus handed-in petitions. About two thirds of all petitions from 32 B.C. until A.D. 284 with a known provenance are from the Arsinoite nome (250) with Oxyrhynchus (69) and Hermopolis (24) in second and third place.

In ch. 3 (75–122) K. suggests that one of the problems with petitions from a legal control perspective is that there were too many venues (listed in table 3.1 on 81), too many bureaucratic options for parties to pursue, but not enough with sufficient jurisdiction to reach firm decisions. Even firm decisions were sometimes ignored and had to be repeated. If K. had explored the petitions by type, he would have found that the plurality of options was a boon rather than a drawback. What if most petitions for theft and violence merely served the need for emotional outlet on the part of the petitioners? The presence of bureaucratic options nearby would have been very useful to them. As we have seen, few such cases ever made it to the higher echelons of the bureaucracy, almost always located at a greater distance from the parties. That petitions for theft and violence often did not make it to court is not a matter of attrition (making it harder for some, perhaps socially disadvantaged groups, to get through to the top?), as K. maintains, but rather of weeding out cases that could be adequately dealt with at a lower level. Is it so difficult to imagine that the lower echelons of the bureaucracy were actually successful in solving most cases involving theft and violence? It is also possible that the charge of theft or violence was dropped if cases involving such a charge did make it to the next level, where the cases were more appropriately presented as being about disputed property vel sim. In such cases the lower echelons of the bureaucracy may have been very helpful in allowing parties to sharpen their case before it went to the next level. ‘Useful,’ ‘successful,’ and ‘helpful’ do not fit K.’s much bleaker view of the legal system.

K.’s table 3.2 on 92 suggests that decisions, including referrals to higher authority, were generally reached swiftly, at least by modern standards. Court appearances were required in some cases, and these admittedly required additional steps (serving a summons; alternative steps in case of non-appearance; adjournments; etc.), but K.’s claim that the state did not have sufficient manpower to adequately administer justice is asserted rather than argued. Only the more complicated cases required the full attention of the entire state apparatus,
and these left more traces in the evidence and are therefore overrepresented, even if their number still seems fairly small.

In ch. 4 (123–167) K. explores the social background of the petitioners. He can do this, because petitions sometimes derive from family archives, which allow a better grasp of the social background of the individual petitioners. Predictably, they belong by and large to the propertied classes, because disputes are mostly about property. Since most petitioners are from villages, there are no real outliers. The one petitioner from a city discussed at greater length (the weaver Tryphon from Oxyrhynchus) is from the lower end of the social scale, and K.’s characterization (131) is perhaps too optimistic. Half of the petitions where the subscription allows the inference (in only one out of five cases) were subscribed by the petitioners themselves. This shows that petitioning and litigation were more literate activities than participation in the census, which was required of all. Even so, one third of census documents were subscribed by those heads of household submitting them. In Roman Egypt the most publicly active members of society were literate and vice versa.

Table 4.3 on 163, which I already referred to, deserves closer scrutiny. It includes the 631 factual claims made in the 568 petitions and the 178 factual claims made in the 227 reports of court proceedings. Disputes about tenancy and labor are conspicuously absent in both, presumably because they mostly concerned smaller claims that could be dealt with informally. Writing a petition, let alone going to court, required some investment on the petitioner’s part. There was no guaranteed return, so only the more substantial or tangible claims made it to petitions, and only some filtered through to the courts. What made it to the courts and what did not is illuminating. The most frequent factual claims in petitions are theft and violence, both about 21%. In third place comes debt (about 15%), and property and succession come in at fourth and fifth place (about 7.5% and 3% respectively). Significantly, theft and violence appear very infrequently in reports of court proceedings (only about 4% and 5% respectively). Debt, at about 13%, remains in third place, while property and succession come in ex aequo in second place (about 13.5% each). Significantly, the most frequent factual claim made in reports of court proceedings is ‘other’ (about 35%, up from 6% in petitions), surely an indication of the harder-to-categorize cases that had to make it to the courts to get settled.

In ch. 5 (168–209) K. claims that petitions reinforced the ideologies of the state informally (because K. sees petitions, even if written by professional scribes, as private, and they at least echo state ideology). He uses ‘ideologies’ in the plural, because they do not form a coherent system, with most topoi deriving from the rule of law, but some more fuzzy topoi deriving from paternalism or euergetism. I am not sure everyone would subscribe to K.’s statement on 170: «it seems unthinkable that discourses repeated on such a scale had no impact at all.»
What if these discourses were boiler plate mindlessly repeated by scribes and ultimately deriving from a distant past where they would have had some meaning? At any rate, K. does underscore some useful things in this chapter, such as the aural and visual impact of court proceedings and generally the public nature...
of torture and punishment. All of these could be echoed in petitions and reports of court proceedings, but their full effect escapes us.

Chapter six (210–243) focuses on networks detectable in petitions, but most of these networks turn out to be families, as expected. More interesting are K.’s remarks (229–241) about the gender bias in the evidence. Of 514 gendered petitions only 73 are from women and 9 jointly from men and women. The lower participation rate of women in property ownership and literacy go a long way to explain the bias.

In ch. 7 (244–286) K. argues his case for petitions being an additional way to enforce private dispute resolution rather than as a last resort for parties to a dispute. I think in arguing (probably correctly) against overestimating the latter, he overestimates the former, for which there is little evidence before A.D. 400. Parties to disputes in Roman Egypt may well have embraced the legal system without a preference for settlement out of court. I think a case can be made that they used petitions as a first resort, not to force a settlement out of court, but to get the legal system going.

In ch. 8 (287–326) K. shows that resorting to legal control through petitions could make disputes worse and even turn them into outright feuds. That is not necessarily a drawback of the system – from the perspective of the malevolent ‘user.’ Classical Greek sycophancy is mentioned rather frequently, whereas Latin delatio is much rarer.

K. provides a list of petitions in Appendix 1 and a list of reports of court proceedings in Appendix 3. The texts are arranged alphabetically by the siglum for their edition, which is not very helpful, and the information included for each text is minimal. It does not allow the reader to check the statistics provided in most tables. A chronological or typological arrangement – or a real database – could have been more helpful. The index locorum allows one to explore the material alphabetically, if one so wishes. When K. discusses individual cases, he can be quite subtle and is always alert to the possible context, which is not usually spelled out in any detail in the petitions themselves. Papyrologists will use the book mainly for this.

Cincinnati

Peter van Minnen


M.-C. Villanueva Puig (= V. P.) gilt der Fachwelt als profilierte Kennerin der attischen Vasenmalerei und der dionysischen Ikonographie.1 Das hier besprochene Werk ist die überarbeitete und gekürzte Fassung ihrer im Jahr 2000 eingereichten Pariser Dissertation. Das Vorwort stammt von Oktober 2005, gedruckt