

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As ACOR offers another volume in the series on the Petra papyri, it is interesting to reflect back to the time when this body of evidence had not yet been found. In the 25th Anniversary *ACOR Newsletter*, Zbigniew Fiema, the chief excavator of the Petra Church project undertaken by ACOR with the support of USAID, gave a summary of the work of the first phase of the excavations (May 1992–March 1993).¹ At that time there was no hint of the amazing discovery of carbonized papyri in a northeastern room of the church complex that would take place in early December 1993.

The excitement of the discovery of the papyri first captured in news reports broadcast worldwide on CNN and the BBC—among others—can also be felt in the first official ACOR notice.² Then ACOR Assistant Director Glen Peterman provided excerpts from letters by archaeologist Deborah Kooring to her family about the process and events surrounding the recovery of the papyri. This article includes a photo of Ludwig Koenen of the University of Michigan examining the scrolls at ACOR in January 1994.

In 1994 Jaakko Frösén of the University of Helsinki assembled the conservation team and by December forty scrolls had been opened. The conservation phase was essentially completed by May 1995. By late 1995 ACOR had signed agreements with Koenen and Frösén who represented the teams involved in the decipherment and publication of these important papyrus documents. Pierre Bikai, ACOR Director, and Patricia Bikai, Associate Director, coordinated many aspects of the huge effort related to the Petra Church papyri project.³ Discussions of the archaeological and architectural context of the papyri can be found in *The Petra Church* (Amman, 2001) edited by Patricia Bikai.

L. Koenen, the head of the American team involved with the papyri, was the co-author of the first notice in the *Annual of the Department of Antiquities* which discussed Scroll Inv. 10 (17), also known as *Papyrus Petra Khaled and Suha Shoman*.⁴ This document is the subject of the future volume *Petra Papyri II*. Koenen noted that in summer 1996 the Michigan team included Traianos Gagos, Robert Caldwell, and Robert Daniel, all of whom played various roles in studying 17 and in the work leading to the current publication.⁵

T. Gagos spent many summers at ACOR furthering research on the archive and he was one of the authors of *Petra Papyri III*. Tragically, as the world of papyrology knows too well, he died in late April 2010.⁶ At that time he was Professor of Papyrology and Greek in the Department of Classical Studies at the University of Michigan and the Archivist of the Papyrology Collection of the Hatcher Library there. Several texts in this volume were studied by him and some entries are co-authored with colleagues (38, 44, 45, 47 by T. Gagos; 37 and 46 with A. Arjava; 42–43 with C. A. Kuehn; and 48–49 with M. Buchholz). Shortly before he died he had the chance to approve edits to the texts he had been working on and gave his blessing to this volume. The painstaking work progresses without him as there are still volumes to complete (II and V) but they too will bear his mark. For all involved, there will always be a huge sense of the loss of a beloved colleague and a remarkable person. *Petra Papyri IV* is dedicated to his memory.

1. *ACOR Newsletter* vol. 5.1 (Summer 1993: 1–3); all *ACOR Newsletters* are available on the website www.acorjordan.org under publications.

2. *ACOR Newsletter* vol. 5.2 (Winter 1993: 1–3).

3. Pierre Bikai conveyed the sequence of events for the early years in *ACOR Newsletter* vol. 7.2 (Winter 1995, p. 11).

4. Co-authored with M. Kaimio in *ADAJ* 41 (1997: 459–62).

5. Gagos wrote the section on the progress accomplished by the Michigan team in *ADAJ* 42 (1998, 473–75).

6. A memoriam article in *ACOR Newsletter* vol. 21.2 (Winter 2009, p. 8) shows a photograph of him hard at work in his ACOR carrel.

For *Petra Papyri* III (2007), I had the privilege of writing the preface and acknowledging the many people whose help led to its publication. Pierre Bikai acknowledged in *Petra Papyri* I (2002) many individuals and that list is long and noteworthy. He mentioned those who served as Director General of Antiquities of Jordan during the period the papyri project unfolded—Safwan Tell, Ghazi Bisheh, Fawwaz Al-Khraysheh—and to this list can now be added Ziad Al Saad. F. Al-Khraysheh was the Director General from 1999 until 2010. His academic career at Yarmouk University was dedicated to epigraphy so he well understood the significance of the Petra papyri publications. He died suddenly in July 2011, and his loss is tragic for his family and friends as well as the archaeological world of Jordan.⁷ We so wish he could have seen this publication come to light.

In 1995 on the occasion of the visit to ACOR by HM Queen Noor, it was announced that Inv. 83 had been named *Papyrus Petra Scroll HM King Hussein bin Talal and HM Queen Noor al-Hussein*.⁸ This fascinating document is now available in this volume (39) thanks to M. Kaimio who provides many insights.

ACOR continues to support the efforts of the many scholars who are working to bring the five-volume *Petra Papyri* series to completion. Behind the work in Finland has been the Centre of Excellence on “Ancient Greek Written Sources” headed by J. Frösén. The advisory board members are Glen Bowersock, Alan Bowman, and Dieter Harlfinger, and their guidance and encouragement have also been much appreciated.

One of the papyri in this volume was “adopted” in the name of Joanne Cotsen by Lloyd Cotsen (42). The individuals who adopted papyri to help support the project remain well remembered by ACOR. For this volume, a generous donation by The Selz Foundation has provided a subvention for the printing of the book at the National Press. The layout has again been accomplished by Isabelle Ruben. The endless hours of scholarship and the multiple visits by the scholars who contributed to the completion of this volume, particularly Antti Arjava, Matias Buchholz, and Maarit Kaimio, have not been counted—and scarcely could—but ACOR remains deeply grateful to all of them for their continued dedication.

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7. An obituary for F. Al-Khraysheh is in *ADAJ* 54 (2010), p. 7, Arabic section. This volume is dedicated to his memory.

8. M. Kaimio, *ACOR Newsletter* vol. 8.2 (Winter 1996, p. 4) and *ADAJ* 41 (1997, p. 461).