

FROM THE EDITORS
ON THE PLATINUM JUBILEE
OF OUR JOURNAL

SEVENTY YEARS AGO IN NEW YORK, for a few months the place of residence of the war-driven Polish-Jewish exile Raphael (Rafał) Taubenschlag, the first volume of our *Journal* was published. Sadly, no archives exist to elucidate this beginning, but we may imagine that having his own journal would be something to secure Taubenschlag's well-earned position as one of the founding fathers of juristic papyrology, a worthy student of Ludwig Mitteis and others (his earlier attempts with *Archives d'histoire du droit oriental* in the company of Paul Collinet ended with the death of that scholar, and eventually this review merged with *Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité*). It also made possible for him to stand out amongst all the European émigrés doomed to lecture in girls' colleges (or worse) in the new land. In fact, of four scientific articles three were penned by the outstanding European refugees: Hans Julius Wolff and Adolf Berger besides Taubenschlag himself (the remaining one, a publication of a petition, was written by Arthur E. R. Boak, and the rest of the volume was filled with numerous reviews by the Editor of the papyrological essays published shortly before the war and in the war-time; the list is actually quite an interesting witness of his networks and sources in these troubled times).

The scholar soon afterward returned to Poland and, having chosen war-destroyed Warsaw and its University, which stood in ruins, over his original Cracow, domiciled the newly-founded review at Alma Mater Varsoviensis. The preference was probably due partially to the pre-war animosities with the Jagiellonian University, but mostly to the tempting offer of creation of a new chair and Institute of Papyrology.

The move to Warsaw, even if ruined and troubled with obvious shortages, opened completely new perspectives, especially as the government and the new political regime desperately wanted eminent personages back in the country to prove that Poland was rising from ruins, not just material but also intellectual. And so, Taubenschlag was apparently promised – as often recalled by his students Henryk Kupiszewski and Józef Modrzejewski – resources and freedom to run a journal in post-war Warsaw (that included a reasonable budget, a sumptuous car with a driver, but even more importantly relatively realistic access to printing paper and printing-press, as well as an easy way through the censorship office). Not without importance was the close relationship with the proverbially perennial prime minister of the communist Poland Józef Cyrankiewicz, a one-time student of Taubenschlag in the thirties (though he never graduated in law, he apparently kept a heartfelt memory of his notoriously severe teacher), whose brother also secured Taubenschlag's son's survival during the war. Stories are told about the furious Professor storming cabinets of the ministers once the printing-paper for his *Journal* had not been delivered on time.

In Warsaw, the first issue was republished under the auspices of the Warsaw Society of Sciences and Letters (Towarzystwo Naukowe Warszawskie). And with the second volume published in 1948, a second Warsaw papyrologist, Jerzy Manteuffel, succoured Taubenschlag as the co-editor, thus creating the tradition of joint-editing of the *Journal* by a juristic and a 'regular' papyrologist, a responsibility shared till this very day by the Department of Papyrology and the Chair of Roman Law and the Law of Antiquity (which was also marked by the editors to follow: Henryk Kupiszewski, Zbigniew Borkowski, and Ewa Wipszycka). Taubenschlag's death brought the usual hardships to the editorial process: delays in print, deficiencies typical for the regime, and finally, around the time of the martial

law in Poland, a long lacuna in its publication, luckily interrupted with the rise of new Poland in 1989 and thanks to the efforts of Ewa Wipszycka and help of foreign friends (a living example of *amicitia papyrologorum*).

In his first 'Introduction' Taubenschlag firmly stated '[t]he juristic papyrology came into being at the very same time that the papyri arose on the horizon. It is considered, without exaggeration, the most important branch of the science of papyrology.' Obviously overstated, this assertion shows Taubenschlag's typical pride in what he thought was the only valuable interest of humanity (one quickly recalls the famous story when two students slightly late for their 8 o'clock-sharp morning appointment thought of an excuse to placate the strict master: 'Sir, it's just because the Soviets launched the Sputnik today!' – mumbled Kupiszewski and Modrzejewski – 'Well, Gentlemen, if so, papyrology recedes to the second place...' – Taubenschlag sombrely replied). Yet, there was indeed a kernel of truth in it back then: the founding fathers of our discipline had been learned and eminent jurists, and the papyri seemingly opened new horizons for the already somewhat arid study of Roman law (we know well today that those hopes did not fail, but that they brought riches that were not exactly expected by the lawyers of the time). In years to come, however, juristic papyrology gradually faded away, becoming more and more hermetic to the greater world of classicists and with ever fewer scholars proficient in both methodologies. And thus Taubenschlag's promise that '[a]lthough this is a journal of juristic papyrology, it must not be considered as an exclusive journal for jurists' was turned around: the *Journal* became a regular papyrological publication with an occasional visit from the jurists. The overview of the issues of the last five years makes us think that we have been able to restore and keep the right balance between various fields of papyrology, adding to the traditional themes a special focus on Late Antiquity, medieval Nubian and Christian affairs, and lately on Latin legal papyri.

Possibly the most important role of the *Journal* in these seventy years of the papyrological and Roman law rooms in Warsaw (thanks to the Taubenschlagian *origines* we are still lodged together at the premises of the Faculty of Law and Administration of the University of Warsaw and

hold a library in common, one of the best in this part of the *oikumene*, and a unique one inasmuch as we possess books from both fields: ancient legal history and papyrology with epigraphy) has been the creation of a unique environment, a space for debate and study in which different people can meet and discuss, sharing their scientific curiosities and learning from one another. Friendships, teams, and links have been born, interests arisen, questions asked and answered. The *Journal* and the Raphael Taubenschlag Library of Papyrology and Roman Law have brought together people not only in the micro-scale of the campus of the University of Warsaw but also from around the world (being once a meeting place between the East and the West, divided by the Iron Curtain, and now simply a scientific centre of debate of peers – on grand occasions, as the international congresses of papyrology in 1960 and 2013, and small ones, like seminars, workshops, or lectures). This quality seems to be a rarity, and we pledge to keep to it. Let the *Journal* be a journal of juristic papyrology, explaining papyrology to the jurists and the juridical matters to the classicists.

Tomasz Derda
Adam Łajtar
Jakub Urbanik