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**THE RHETORIC OF *AIKIA*
IN PETITIONS FROM ROMAN EGYPT***

ON 26 HATHYR, 248 CE, Aurelios Sarapion, an octogenarian Arab archer from the village of Philadelphia was the victim of a violent attack.¹ When a soldier named Iulios allegedly stole a piglet from Aurelios' daughter, Aurelios naturally tried to get it back, asking the soldier to swear an oath that he did not take the piglet. Instead, he was met with a savage beating by the soldier in broad daylight, right in the middle of the village in front of a number of witnesses, among whom were a procurator and other Arab archers, who saved Aurelios from what he was sure would be a very painful death. While the circumstances of Aurelios' case are unique, the instance of violence is not; there are hundreds of extant petitions detailing violence suffered by the inhabitants of towns and cities in Egypt. But the way Aurelios Sarapion (or perhaps his scribe) describes the act of violence warrants some attention. While this petition uses the noun ὄβρις in its opening, the act of violence is described later on with the phrase πληγαῖς με ἠκίσατο, 'he brutalized me with blows'. The verb used here, αἰκίζεσθαι (sometimes αἰκίζειν), is a relatively rare verb in ancient Greek texts; yet we see a marked uptick in its usage in petitions

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¹ SB IV 7464. A fuller discussion of this petition follows below.

from villages and small towns in Roman Egypt. This article will discuss the significance of this linguistic trend in petitions concerning violence in light of their geographical and temporal provenance and offer a rhetorical analysis of the use of this peculiar term for violence in various petitions.

Violence and its relationship to society and law are important and complex features of the social and legal landscape of Roman Egypt and have enjoyed much study and discussion. As scholars have shown, the population of Roman Egypt had a sophisticated way of negotiating and verbalizing notions of violence and justice through the writing of petitions, which remain our most important source for studying violence in Roman Egypt. They provide us with an idea of how violence was perceived and received in the Roman Egyptian social and legal systems.² Some of these narratives are simple and modest, while others border on the incredible. What they have in common is a rhetorical program, which not only aims to grab the attention of the official to whom it is addressed and ensure that some action come about as a result, but also serves to develop a stylized language of violence that extends beyond legal terminology and taps into the socially transgressive nature of the crime.

In what follows I will show the development and use of the rhetoric of *aikia* in petitions concerning violence from Ptolemaic Egypt through the Roman period. First, I will suggest a model for analysing the rhetoric of

² A select bibliography on violence and law in Roman Egypt: R. TAUBENSCHLAG, *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt in the Light of the Papyri, 332 B.C. – 640 A.D.*, Warsaw 1955; N. LEWIS, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, Oxford 1983; R. BAGNALL, ‘Official and private violence in Roman Egypt’, *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 26 (1989), pp. 201–216; D. HOBSON, ‘The impact of law on village life in Roman Egypt’, [in:] B. HALPERN & D. HOBSON (eds.), *Law, Politics, and Society in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, Sheffield 1993, pp. 193–219; R. ALSTON, ‘Violence and social control in Roman Egypt’, [in:] *PapCongr.* XX, pp. 517–521; B. KELLY, *Petitions, Litigation, and Social Control in Roman Egypt*, Oxford 2011; A. BRYEN, *Violence in Roman Egypt: A Study in Legal Interpretation*, Philadelphia 2013; J. KEENAN, J. MANNING, & U. YIFTACH-FIRANKO (eds.), *Law and Legal Practice in Egypt from Alexander to the Arab Conquest: A Selection of Papyrological Sources in Translation, with Introductions and Commentary*, Cambridge 2014; R. MASCELLARI, ‘La descrizione di atti criminosi e violazioni nei papiri: ὕβρις, αἰκία, πλῆγαι, βία’, [in:] R. HAENSCH (ed.), *Recht haben und Recht bekommen im Imperium Romanum: Das Gerichtswesen der römischen Kaiserzeit und seine dokumentarische Evidenz*, Warsaw 2016, pp. 483–521.

aikia in the petitions. Then, after a discussion of *aikia* with respect to other terms for violence, I will trace the use of the term through Classical and Imperial Greek literature and in Ptolemaic petitions. Following this I will examine the use of *aikia* in the petitions from Roman Egypt. It will become evident that the sudden increase in the use of *aikia* in papyri of the second and third centuries CE is not mere accident of survival, but rather a rhetorical tool utilized in response to the legal environment of Roman Egypt.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO *AIKIA*

The effect of the rhetoric of *aikia* can perhaps be best analysed through the lens of conflict resolution. Deborah Hobson has argued that in Roman Egypt, especially in villages where formal legal structures likely ceded to local forms of dispute settlement, there were other, extra-legal ways to settle a dispute, arguing that law was a last resort for petitioners.³ Benjamin Kelly has argued against this view, suggesting instead that many petitioners did resort to legal action before any other kind of arbitration, though others still used these petitions to force a settlement of the dispute out of court.⁴ He suggests a model of social control whereby the legal system is used to reinforce social norms both formally, through law (against violence in our case), and informally, through group pressures surrounding ideological or moral values. Since, as we will see, *aikia* fuses issues of legality and moral transgression, Kelly's model of social control seems the best fit.

An important motivating factor for the use of this specific term for the resolution of violent conflict was the inefficiency of the legal system of Roman Egypt.⁵ After suffering some injustice, a petitioner could submit

³ HOBSON, 'Impact of law' (cit. n. 2), pp. 199–200. She follows Nader and Todd's (see reference in Hobson's article) model of seven ways to settle a dispute: 'arbitration, mediation, negotiation, coercion, avoidance, and "lumping it"' (p. 199).

⁴ KELLY, *Petitions* (cit. n. 2), chapter 7, esp. pp. 276ff.

⁵ For the inefficiency and inefficacy of the petition process in Roman Egypt, see KELLY, *Petitions* (cit. n. 2), chapter 3.

a complaint detailing the nature of the crime and a request for restitution or punishment. The petition would be filed with a local official (usually the *strategos* or *epistrategos*, but sometimes a centurion or *beneficiarius*, who ranks below the centurion) either to begin the process of bringing an action against someone or to keep the accusation on record (ἐν καταχωρισμῶ) should there arise a need to seek action against the offender in the future. But there was no guarantee that submitting a petition to an official would result in a trial or resolution to the case. This was especially true for those living in villages, for whom a court appearance usually meant a long and expensive journey to the metropolis of their nome. The petition describing the act of *aikia* would thus exercise a certain amount of social control by forcing a settlement to the dispute through the threat of further litigation, and it would be kept in the register if further violence were to become an issue.⁶ With this in mind, it comes as no surprise that the petitions examined here come from a number of villages in the Arsinoite nome: seven from Karanis, three from Soknopaiou Nesos, one from Theadelphia, and one from Narmuthis; as well as one from Kysis in Oasis Magna.⁷ Only four of the petitions in question were found in Oxyrhynchos: two from Oxyrhynchos proper, one from the Herakleopolite nome, and one of unknown provenience.⁸ The use of *aikia* in the petitions thus seems to be connected to a need for recourse to institutional control over violent behaviours in places where legal institutions had little formal presence.⁹

⁶ E.g., BGU I 45, *Chr. Mitt.* 116.

⁷ Karanis: *P. Mich.* VI 421, *P. Mich.* XXI 838r, *P. Giss.* 61, BGU I 256, *P. Mich.* VI 425, *P. Cair. Isid.* 63, *Chr. Mitt.* 116; Soknopaiou Nesos: *SB* I 5238, *P. Amb.* II 77, BGU I 45; Theadelphia: *P. Oslo* II 22; Narmuthis: *P. Sijp.* 16; Kysis: *Chr. Mitt.* 63.

⁸ See the Appendix at the end of this paper for a full inventory of the papyri in alphabetical order.

⁹ For the gradual municipalization of the Roman criminal justice system and its withdrawal from the villages, see W. G. CLAYTOR, 'The municipalization of writing in Roman Egypt', [in:] A. KOLB (ed.), *Literacy in Ancient Everyday Life*, Berlin – Boston 2018, pp. 319–334.

AIKIA AND OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE

There were many Greek words and phrases at a petitioner's disposal to describe an act of violence.¹⁰ In Roman Egypt, the law of violence against persons is that of ὕβρις, an approximate translation of the Roman legal term *iniuria*. Accordingly, this is the most frequently used method of describing assault in both Ptolemaic and Roman papyri. There exists a formal legal term as well for damage of property, βία. Other verbs such as (ἐκ- or κατα-)κόπτειν, τύπτειν, ἐπιτιθέναι, or πληγὰς ἐπιφέρειν and associated terms meaning variously 'attack', 'assault', or 'beat', appear with some frequency as well.

So why use *aikia*? One thing that sets it apart from other words for violence is a strong moral connotation. Etymologically it is composed of the alpha privative and the adjective εἰκός: it is something not just violent but 'unseemly'. Over time the word came to mean something like 'abuse' or 'mistreatment'. Most translators of these petitions opt for 'abuse', 'mistreat', or 'beat' as a translation of the verb αἰκίζεσθαι. As we will see in one petition, the verb does not always necessarily mean physical violence, though the implication may be there. In that sense, its meaning sometimes hedges closely to that of *hybris*, whose status as an official legal term likely neutralized the intensity of its original meaning of 'outrage' into general 'violence'.¹¹ The appearance of *aikia* in the petitions specifically in Roman Egypt reveals an attempt to introduce a description of a truly savage and unjustifiable form of violence that would grab the attention of an

¹⁰ For a concise collection and discussion of terms relating to violence in Roman Egypt, see BRYEN, *Violence in Roman Egypt* (cit. n. 2), pp. 54–65. See also MASCELLARI, 'Descrizione' (cit. n. 2).

¹¹ The levelling of the term *aikia* with *hybris* is also found in Athenian forensic rhetoric, whereby a defendant pleading a private δίκη αἰκείας would argue that the case is tantamount to a public γραφή ὕβρεως, due to the implications that the resolution of the case would have for the community at large. Cf. Dem. 54 (*Against Conon*), in which the speaker, all too glad to bring a capital case against Conon, opts to bring a δίκη αἰκείας instead, ostensibly due to his reduced state as a result of his injuries and to avoid appearing too ambitious, but more likely to avoid the risks that come with pursuing a public suit, such as higher penalties for losing.

official and ensure a swift resolution to the matter. It carries with it an implication that the person committing the crime is also committing a serious violation of the norms that keep the social order, which the legal system must then correct. A more accurate translation for *αἰκίζεσθαι* (in the sense of physical violence, which is often specified) would be ‘brutalize’ or ‘thrash’, with emphasis on the indignation, abasement, and moral outrage of the act of violence.¹²

P. Oslo II 22 clearly illustrates the difference between the generic violence of *hybris* and the specific, transgressive connotation of *aikia*. It is a petition from a woman named Sarapous to the *strategos* of the Arsinoite nome, explaining that she had been continually assaulted in her own home and asks for help so that she may live a peaceful life. Sarapous writes (ll. 6–10):

ἀθθαδία καὶ τόλ[μη χρώμενος ἐκάσ] | τοτε ἐπέρχεται μοι καὶ [νῦν ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ
μου] | οἰκία ὕβρεις ἀνηκέστ[ας μοι συντελεῖ], | οὐ μόνον κακολογῶν, ἀ[λλὰ
καὶ πληγαῖς] | αἰκίζόμενος.

Using his customary insolence and daring, he continually attacks me, and now, in my own home, he commits aggravated assault against me, not only cursing me, but also brutalizing me with blows.¹³

Sarapous begins by characterizing the man with the words *ἀθθαδία καὶ τόλ[μη]*, ‘insolence and daring’. Already we see that it is not just the violence at issue but the very character of the person. He violates the otherwise peaceful existence of herself and others in the village by his very presence. Her claim of continuous attacks against herself highlights the excessive and irremediable nature of the violence, calling them *ὕβρεις ἀνηκέστας*, literally ‘incurable outrages’ or, in more legal terms, ‘aggravated assault’. Sarapous then conveniently breaks down the anatomy of this *hybris* as ‘not only verbally assaulting me, but also brutalizing me with

¹² A. BRYEN, ‘Visibility and violence in petitions from Roman Egypt’, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 48 (2008), pp. 181–200, at 195, remarks upon the element of shame and dishonor involved in an act of *aikia* in a request for a medical examination (*P. Oxy.* LXI 4122).

¹³ All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

blows' (οὐ μόνον κακολογῶν, ἀ[λλὰ καὶ πληγαῖς] αἰκιζόμενος). Thus, we can see that *aikia* is distinct from *hybris* as a specifically physical form of violence that then constitutes the abstract violence of *hybris*. It would have been enough for Sarapous to claim an act of *hybris* against herself. But the specification of verbal insults as well as physical abuse both provides details as to the nature of the act of *hybris* and homes in on the socially transgressive and brutal act of physically assaulting an old woman in her home. The excessive and intrusive nature of the violence are central to her claim: Sarapous' narrative places special emphasis on the invasion of her privacy ([ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ μου] οἰκία), the psychological damage she has suffered (οὐ [δυναμένη καθησυχάζειν]), and the pitiful state such attacks have left her in (ἐπὶ σέ κατ[αφρεύω ἀσθενῆς] καὶ ἀβοήθητος ὑπάρχουσ[α]).¹⁴

Thus, compared to other terms for violence, the use of *aikia* attempts to elicit a much stronger reaction like moral disgust from the reader of the petition.¹⁵ We may take the verb *κατακόπτειν*, 'beat up, wound', for the sake of comparison. Its usage is focused more on the physical damage or wounds suffered from the attack, not necessarily the moral and social transgression of the attack. For example, in *P. Col.* VII 171 (Karanis, 324 CE) the petitioner explains that his assailants 'beat [him] up with blows' (l. 11: *πληγαῖς κατέκοψαν*) and that he wants the *praepositus pagi* to do something about this act of *hybris* (ll. 18–19: *περὶ τῆς ὕβρεως τηρεῖσθαι*). In this case, and in many others, the physical assault and *hybris* are used in much the same way to describe a general act of physical violence that needs to be punished. The petitions describing *aikia*, such as that of Sarapous or Aurelius Sarapion above, do not equate *aikia* with *hybris*, but draw a distinction between the two: while *hybris* inhabits the abstract

¹⁴ Cf. *SB* I 5238 and 5235, two petitions concerning theft and violence written by the same person about the same crime. *SB* I 5238 is the only petition to use the substantive form of *aikia* (l. 22: τὰς [αἰ]κ[ε]ίας ἀδικίας) and uses the language of *hybris* as well. *SB* I 5235 only uses the language of *hybris* (both mention *πληγαῖ*). The reason for this is unclear, though it may have something to do with the officials to whom they are issued, *SB* I 5238 being sent to the centurion, and *SB* I 5235 to a different official.

¹⁵ For a comprehensive list of terms relating to violence, see BRYEN, *Violence in Roman Egypt* (cit. n. 2), pp. 55–56.

realm of legal terminology, *aikia* delivers the lived experience of the petitioner, often throwing into stark contrast the imbalance of power between attacker and victim and the morally disgusting nature of the attack.

AIKIA IN LITERATURE AND PTOLEMAIC PAPYRI

There are a number of possible sources for the language of *aikia* in petitions of Roman Egypt. Furthermore, that *αἰκία* and its verbal derivatives have appeared in Greek literature since its beginnings suggests that it was not a mere dialectal feature of Egyptian Greek. It is more likely that petitioners adopted these words to harness their poetic, rhetorical and legal associations, which offer a strong rhetorical backing to its meaning of brutal, degrading violence.

Another solution may lie in Classical, Hellenistic, and Imperial Greek literature that was being read in Egypt. The verb *αἰκίζεσθαι* and its derivatives are first attested in Homer and Herodotus in the epic forms *ἀεικίζω* and *ἀεικία* (or *ἀεικίη*). Subsequently they are found in the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.¹⁶ It appears with infrequency in prose writers such as Thucydides, Isocrates, Andocides, and Demosthenes as well as the works of Plato and Aristotle, usually in the noun form and not the verbal form.¹⁷ Aristotle is the only classical author who uses the word *πληγαῖς* in conjunction with the verbal form, as it often appears in the petitions.¹⁸ Book 9 of Plato's *Laws* uses the noun form six times in a discussion of punishment for cases of *aikia*. Given that a frag-

¹⁶ Aesch. *Prom.* 168, 195, 227, 256; Eur. *Med.* 1130, *Orest.* 388; Soph. *Trach.* 839, *Antig.* 206, 419, *Ajax* 65, 111, 300, 402, *Oed. Tyr.* 1153.

¹⁷ Isoc. 4.123, 4.154, 5.103, 20.5, 15; Xen. *Oec.* 1.23, *Anab.* 2.6.29, 3.1.18, 3.4.5; Dem. 47.7–8, 47.10, 47.40, 47.45, 47.47, 54.1, 54.18; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 18.4, *Pol.* 1311b, *Rhet.* 1373a. The prose writers seem to prefer the noun *αἰκία* to its verb form.

¹⁸ Arist. *Pol.* 5.1311b: πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ διὰ τὸ εἰς τὸ σῶμα αἰκισθῆναι πληγαῖς ὀργισθέντες οἱ μὲν διέφθειραν, οἱ δ' ἐνεχείρησαν ὡς ὑβρισθέντες, καὶ τῶν περὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ βασιλικὰς δυναστείας.

ment of Book 9 of the *Laws* from the third century CE was found at Oxyrhynchos (*P. Oxy.* I 23), it is not unreasonable to connect Roman Egyptian jurisprudence to readership and study of Plato and Aristotle.

In the Roman period, however, we see a surge in the usage of the verbal form of the word in the work of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (especially the *Antiquitates Romanae*), Plutarch, and Appian. Curiously, the increase in use in Greek literature under the Roman Empire coincides with its seemingly sudden appearance in the papyri of Roman Egypt, possibly suggesting that the people (most likely the scribes) writing these petitions were readers of these authors, if not other authors who use the language of *aikia* such as Plato, Aristotle, or the orators. The Leuven Database of Ancient Books (LDAB) records that at least fifteen of the eighteen literary papyri containing texts of Plutarch were copied in the second and third centuries CE, when the petitions containing the verb *αἰκίζεσθαι* appear most frequently. Likewise, we have a third century CE papyrus from Oxyrhynchos containing a text of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Antiquitates Romanae* (*P. Oxy.* LXXIII 4946), though this papyrus only contains an excerpt from Book 4, in which there are no occurrences of the verb *αἰκίζεσθαι* or its derivatives. Unfortunately, none of the extant literary papyri from Plutarch contain attestations of *aikia* vocabulary, but at least three of the papyri contain passages from works in which the verb *αἰκίζεσθαι* appears.¹⁹ The historian Appian, who uses the verb *αἰκίζεσθαι* with similar frequency to Plutarch and Dionysius, presents an even more compelling case as an author from Roman Egypt writing in Greek. Unfortunately, no papyri containing his works are extant from Egypt, so it is impossible to measure what amount, if any, of influence their work may have had on the language of petitions. Nevertheless, he, too, takes part in the trend of using the verb *αἰκίζεσθαι* in Greek prose of the Roman

¹⁹ These papyri are P. 17027 in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin (4th cent. CE), *P. Köln Gr.* XIII 499 (2nd–3rd cent. CE), *P. Oxy.* LXXVIII 5155 (3rd–4th cent. CE). P. 17027 contains *De sera numinis vindicta* 565E, in which work at 567A Plutarch uses the noun form *αἰκίαν*. *P. Köln Gr.* XIII 499 contains the *Vita Caesaris* 1–2.2, 33.6–35.1, 59.2–61.5; at 29.2 Plutarch uses the verb form *ἠκίσσατο*. *P. Oxy.* LXXVIII 5155 contains the *Moralia* 191E–F (*Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata*), in which work Plutarch uses the participle form *αἰκισάμενος* at 173A.

Empire. Again, this data should not give us the impression that the verb *αἰκίλλεσθαι* and its derivatives were particularly common words in literature or the petitions, nor that a reader of any of these authors would necessarily be familiar with all of their texts or the language of *aikia* used in them. Still, it is conceivable that readership of Plutarch, Appian, or Dionysius of Halicarnassus, as well as the classical authors mentioned above, could have contributed to the sudden appearance of *aikia* in the petitions, as the petitioners in the villages (or their scribes) may have used such literary language to appear more sophisticated in their narration of the crimes committed.

Another possibility is that petitioners adopted the language from law itself. We know, for example, that Athenian law distinguished between cases of *hybris* and cases of *aikia*. Though the crimes themselves may not have differed much in their execution, the way the cases were tried and their penalties did. An act of *aikia* in Classical Athens entails a private trial (*δίκη αἰκείας*) and a lighter punishment, whereas an act of *hybris* would be tried in a public trial (*γραφὴ ὕβρεως*) and enjoins a death sentence on a guilty defendant. Demosthenes, in speech 21 (*Against Meidias*), refers to three different laws against violence: ‘the law of damage – an old one; the law of battery (*ὁ τῆς αἰκείας*); and the law of assault’.²⁰ Other speeches, such as Dem. 54 (*Against Conon*) and Isocrates 20 (*Against Lochites*), concern *δίκαι αἰκείας*. The Athenian legal system did in fact have some measurable influence on the legal system of Ptolemaic Egypt, so it would come as no surprise to see its influence on the language concerning violence through the Roman period.²¹ And as widely read as orators such as Demosthenes and Isocrates were by later generations, it is possible that their language was used by and adapted to the Egyptian legal system.²²

²⁰ Dem. 21.35: ἤν ὁ τῆς βλάβης ὑμῖν νόμος πάλαι, ἤν ὁ τῆς αἰκείας, ἤν ὁ τῆς ὕβρεως.

²¹ Cf. M. A. H. EL-ABBADI, ‘The Alexandrian citizenship’, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 48 (1962), pp.106–123, and D. DELIA, *Alexandrian Citizenship in the Roman Principate*, Oxford 1990, p. 5.

²² There are 210 papyri containing texts from Demosthenes from the third century BCE to the seventh century CE. Sixteen of these are fragments of *Against Meidias*, though none contain this exact passage. There do not appear to be any extant papyri containing Dem. 54.

Whether such a law against battery existed in Egypt is a more difficult question to answer. There is potential, though problematic, evidence for a law concerning battery in *P. Hal.* 1, which contains a number of city laws from Alexandria, dated to the mid-third century BCE. One of these laws refers to what seems to be *δίκαι αἰκισμοῦ*, or cases of battery. Unfortunately, the only instance of this word in the entirety of the papyrus is a restoration, and not an entirely secure one. The restored clause is as follows (ll. 117–120):

ὄσοι δ' ἂν | γρ[αψάμενοι δίκας ἢ αἰκ]ισμοῦ ἤσσηθῶσι, προσαπο-
 τινέτωσαν τοῖς νικήσασιν τὸ πέμπτον μέρος | το[ῦ τιμήματος τῆς δίκης,]
 πραξάτω δὲ ὁ πράκτωρ ἢ ὁ ὑπηρέτης ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων καθάπερ ἐγ
 δι[κῆ]s, ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἐκποιήῃ, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ] σώματος.

Anyone who, after bringing suit for [assault or] bodily harm, is defeated shall pay to the winner an additional fifth of the [value of the suit], and the *praktor* or his assistant shall exact payment from his property in accord with a court decision, [and if he does not completely do this, from his] person as well. (trans. R. S. Bagnall and P. Derow)

J. Patsch had already in 1920 doubted the restoration [*αἰκ*]ισμοῦ on the grounds that it had no significance in Attic legal terminology, and the act of *aikismos* itself would fall under the *δίκη πληγῶν* (possibly mentioned in line 115 of the document) or *αἰκίας*.²³ Indeed, the word *αἰκισμός* rarely, if

W. SCHUBART, 'Das Gesetz und der Kaiser in griechischen Urkunden', *Klio* 30 (1937), pp. 54–69, has noted the influence of Greek oratory on the language of petitions from Roman Egypt. Likewise, J.-L. FOURNET, 'Entre document et littérature: la pétition dans l'antiquité tardive', [in:] D. FEISSEL & J. GASCOU (eds.), *La pétition à Byzance*, Paris 2004, pp. 61–74, though dealing with late antique petitions, has detailed the extent to which literary language, especially that of poetry, influenced the wording of petitions.

²³ J. PARTSCH, 'Die alexandrinischen Dikaiomata', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 6 (1920), pp. 34–76: 'Die Ergänzung *αἰκ*]ισμοῦ ist bedenklich, weil sie ein Wort zum Terminus prägt, das keinen spezifischen juristischen Sinn im System der attischen benannten Klagen hat und überhaupt als Name für einen gesetzlichen Tatbestand nicht nachgewiesen werden kann. *αἰκισμός* ist für Hesych nichts anderes als Auspeitschen, Schläge, fällt also schon unter die *δίκη πληγῶν* oder *αἰκίας*, und mit literarischen Belegen wie Dem. 8.51. Plut. *de lib. educ.* 12, p. 8 F. ist kaum etwas erwiesen' (p. 75).

ever, occurs in a jurisprudential context.²⁴ Despite Partsch's objection, the restoration has been generally accepted in subsequent editions and translations of the papyrus.²⁵ I would like to suggest that this restoration be rejected altogether for both the reasons Partsch suggests above, as well as the following: not only is the semantically valuable part of the word a (dubious) restoration, but if the restoration is indeed accurate, it would be the only time the phrase *δίκη αἰκισμοῦ* ever appears in any extant literary, epigraphical, or papyrological source.²⁶ In addition, in the Ptolemaic period, the words *ὑβρις* and *ὑβρίζειν* are the most frequently used legal descriptors of general violence against persons. If such a law for *αἰκισμός* were to exist, it is not attested in any capacity in the extant petitions, not even through the language of *aikia*, which we find with significant frequency in the Roman period. Of course, it is possible that the *δική αἰκισμοῦ* is an idiosyncrasy of the local Alexandrian legal system of Ptolemaic Egypt, but this is unlikely.

In only one other pre-Roman papyrus does *aikia* appear, in the verbal form *κατακίσατο* (< *κατακίζεσθαι*). This papyrus, *P. Diosk.* 6 (Herakleopolites, 146 BCE), is a petition from Artemidoros and Protarchos to the *hegemon* and *phrourarch* Dioskourides. Artemidoros and Protarchos were traveling with some companions when they were suddenly attacked for seemingly no reason by a group of people, including a certain Koson and Thymoleon, who were evidently drunk. The attack was rather savage: the

²⁴ Dem. 8.51 seems to be the only relevant Greek 'legal' text that predates this papyrus, in which Demosthenes states that 'for a slave [necessity] means blows and beating of the body' (*δοῦλῳ δὲ πληγαὶ καὶ ὁ τοῦ σώματος αἰκισμός*). In this context, Demosthenes is discussing what motivates people to do their duty. Shame (*αἰσχύνη*) is what motivates free men, but physical harm (*αἰκισμός*) motivates slaves. Cf. an edict of Aurelius Herodes, *praeses* of the Thebaid, from the fourth century CE (*P. Oxy.* IX 1186), in which he says that *aikia* is a kind of violence only to be committed upon slaves and that free men are not to endure.

²⁵ *Sel. Pap.* II 201 retains this restoration, as does the translation in R. BAGNALL & P. DEROW, *The Hellenistic Period: Historical Sources in Translation*, Oxford – Malden, MA 2004, p. 208, quoted above.

²⁶ According to the TLG and papyri that are searchable in the DDbDP. Likewise, the (admittedly, incomplete) PHI Greek Inscriptions database records no instance of the use of this phrase, or even the word *αἰκισμός*.

assailants used rocks, bricks, hands, feet, and even their teeth in the attack. Koson and Thymoleon were taken to the *phrouarch*, but then (ll. 24–26):

ἐπεκπηδήσασα Ἀμμωνία τίς τινα μὲν ὄν περιεβεβλήμεθα | ἱματίων κατα-
κίσατο, ἐν δὲ τῷι θορύβῳι καὶ τὸ τοῦ Ἀνδρονίκου | ἱμάτιον ἀπηλλάγη
ἔχουσα.

A certain Ammonia jumped up and mistreated some of the *himatia* that we were wearing, and in the confusion she also grabbed Andronikos' *himation* and took off with it.

While the explicit meaning of this description of Ammonia's treatment of the cloaks is unclear, we can safely infer that it has something to do with damaging and probably defiling them. This may mean she tore them up or covered them in dirt. Or, if we wish to read into the emphatic sense of the prefix *κατ-* and the generally euphemistic tendencies of ancient Greek speakers, she may have covered them in some kind of unsavoury substance or bodily fluid. Whatever the case may be, we can see that the use of the word here is highly rhetorical and only applies to the cloaks. The description of the treatment and theft of the cloaks emphasizes the savagery of the attack and augments the indignation suffered by the victims. However, the language of bodily harm is confined to *βία*, *ἐπιθεσις*, and more specific actions such as whipping, biting, punching, kicking, and throwing rocks and bricks (ll. 18–20). Abuse and theft of cloaks was a relatively serious crime in the ancient world, so it makes sense that the language of *aikia* would be applied to such a socially transgressive act, even though at this point it had yet to extend to severe mistreatment of the human body itself.

AIKIA IN ROMAN EGYPT

Why, then, does *aikia* begin to appear with relative frequency in the Roman period? Understood through the model of social control discussed above, we can see that this language evolved from both the need to deal with the inefficiency of the Roman Egyptian justice system and a

concern for social stability in the smaller communities of Egypt. A papyrus from the mid-first century CE, *P. Mich.* VI 421 (Karanis, 41–54 CE), tells a harrowing tale of a man who went to search for his stolen donkeys with the *archepodos* of Karanis.²⁷ Having ended up in Bakchias and about to capture the thieves, they were imprisoned and assaulted by the *archepodos* of Bakchias and his guards, and their food, water, and supplies were stolen (ll. 23–26):

ἔπειτα ἀπενεγκάμενοι ἡμῶν σαγὰς δύο καὶ τοὺς | ἄρτους καὶ μηλωτὴν καὶ
χιλωκτὰ δύο καὶ καδί|κισάν με πληγαῖς καὶ εἰπων ὁ κωμογραμματεὺς καὶ
(οἱ) | πρεσβύτεροι ἀνήγκασαν ἡμᾶς ἀπολυθῆναι.

Then, after taking two packsaddles, our bread, a sheepskin, and two feed bags from us, they thrashed us with blows until the *komogrammateus* and the elders of the village ordered that we be released.

Once again, we are given a wild tale of unwarranted and random acts of violence exercised in a most degrading way. Even the same verb is used, *καδίκισαν*, though in a morphologically intriguing way. This verb form is a *hapax legomenon* and seems to be a morphological (or phonological) mashup of *καταικίζειν* and *ἀδικεῖν*. Interestingly, the verb *καταικίζειν* or *καταικίζεσθαι* is not used in any extant petition after this one. The simplex form *αἰκίζεσθαι* instead comes into use exclusively and apparently falls into a standard formulation (see below). While the original complaint was about donkey theft, the violence and degradation he suffered at the hands of the *archepodos* of Bakchias becomes a means to augment the severity of the crime and urgency of the case. These accusations imply that the violent and corrupt official will harm not just the individual victims but the community as a whole. This is an early example of a phenomenon in the papyri of Roman Egypt where the description of violence accompanies other crimes (usually theft), which will be discussed below. The language of *aikia* highlights the inhuman treatment the victims received at the hands of a public official from another village, the

²⁷ For a recent discussion of this petition, see R. MASCELLARI, ‘Guardie o ladri? Alcuni equivoci linguistici nel racconto di *P. Mich.* VI 421’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 207 (2018), pp. 173–178.

extreme nature of the crime, and the danger posed to the communities of both Bakchias and Karanis by allowing such a person to hold an office in the village. It also responds to the inefficacy of the justice system in Roman Egypt, using violence in this case toward a more rhetorical and less legal end.

Where this papyrus differs from *P. Diosk.* 6 is the use of the word *πληγαῖς* as complementary to the verb *καδίκισαν*, ‘brutalized *with blows*’. This is significant because the specification of being abused ‘with blows’ becomes the standard for descriptions of violence of this type. Every petition from the second quarter of the second century CE and onward that uses the verb *αἰκίζεσθαι* pairs it with the word *πληγαῖς* (or *πληγῶν*) invariably.²⁸ And whereas in earlier petitions the phrase usually also includes an adjective of quantity to describe *πληγαῖς* such as *πολλαῖς* or *πλείσταῖς*, eventually by the mid-third century CE the quantitative adjectives drop out too, leaving us with a standard formulation *πληγαῖς αἰκίζεσθαι* (with this same word order).²⁹ Such a phrase is the product of its continued and regular use by scribes in petitions concerning violence in Roman Egypt. The formulation of this phrase seems to coincide with the rise of jurisprudence in the third century CE, and the two may be related.

Only one other petition does not use the complementary *πληγαῖς* with the verb *αἰκίζεσθαι*. *P. Giss.* 61, a petition from 119 CE, details the abuses from a *komogrammateus* suffered by the people of his village Nabooi (ll. 5–9):³⁰

²⁸ In chronological order: *P. Oslo* II 22 (= *Pap. Choix.* 5); *BGU* I 256; *P. Amb.* II 77; *P. Sijp.* 16; *P. Oxy.* L 3561; *P. Fay.* 108; *P. Oxy.* XXXI 2563; *Chr. Mitt.* 116; *P. Mich.* VI 425; *SB XX* 14975; *BGU* I 45; *P. Flor.* I 59; *P. Oxy.* XXXVIII 2853r; *SB* IV 7464; *P. Dubl.* 18; *P. Cair. Isid.* 63; *Chr. Mitt.* 63. The pairing of these words occurs very rarely in literary sources, most notably in the passage from Aristotle’s *Politics* cited above (n. 17) and Philo’s *In Flaccum* 84.

²⁹ *P. Flor.* I 59 (225–279 CE): *πληγαῖς ἠκίσατο*; *P. Oxy.* XXXVIII 2853r (245/6 CE): *πληγαῖς ἠκίσαντο*; *SB* IV 7464 (248 CE): *πληγαῖς με ἠκίσατο*; *P. Dubl.* 18 (257–259 CE): *πληγαῖς αἰκίζων*; *P. Cair. Isid.* 63 (297 CE): *με πληγαῖς ἠκίσαντες*; *Chr. Mitt.* 63 (307 CE): *ἀναξίαις πληγαῖς ἠκίσαντο*. For a complete list of the descriptions of *aikia* in these petitions, see Appendix.

³⁰ For a brief commentary on this petition, see A. C. JOHNSON, *Roman Egypt to the Reign of Diocletian*, Baltimore 1936, p. 496.

πολλὰ [αἰ̄]|κι[σθ]έ[ν]τες ὑπὸ Ψάιτος κωμογρ[αμ]ματέως | Ναβοοὶ
ἀναγκαίως μηνυοντ[ες] ἀ[ῶ̄]|τὸν λογίαν πε[π]οιηκέναι ἐπὶ τῆς κώ|μης
Ναβοοῦ.

Having been mistreated much by Psais, the *komogrammateus* of Nabooi, we are forced to relay an information that he has levied contributions on the village of Nabooi.

The use of the participle αἰκισθέντες in lines 5–6 does not necessarily indicate physical violence on the part of Psais, the *komogrammateus*, though it would not be out of the question that Psais did use violence or the threat of violence to extort money from the villagers.³¹ As the petitioner tells us (ll. 10–11), Psais was extorting money from certain members of the village. Without the presence of the determinant πληγαῖς, the verb αἰκίζεσθαι can indicate a figurative sense of abuse, which may have involved some kind of imminent threat or scare tactics, whether verbal or physical. In any case, the petition seems more concerned with scrutinizing the fisc than the particular abuses of the *komogrammateus*. Nevertheless, we can also infer that the petition aims to bring attention to the harm Psais is doing to the community by bringing into focus his abuse of the power of his office, as with the *archepodos* of Bakchias in *P. Mich.* VI 421.

In almost every petition involving *aikia*, the violent act committed is presented as hyperbolic, outrageous, or senseless and causes some amount of indignation, humiliation, or shame on the part of the victims. As noted above *aikia* is often associated with the corporal punishment of slaves, and the fourth century CE edict of the *praeses* Aurelios Herodes (*P. Oxy.* IX 1186) seems to corroborate this association in Roman Egypt, adding a further dimension of dehumanization to the meaning of this particular word for violence. It is thus used to heighten the severity of the case and the importance of the petition, especially when the petitioner is trying to bring a case for a separate crime with a tangible form of restitution, such as theft or damage to property; though as we saw with *P. Oslo* II 22, the claim of *hybris* can be further illustrated by *aikia* as well. The

³¹ Cf. *P. Mich.* VI 425, in which the petitioner, Gemellos, claims that he was beaten at the behest of the local tax collector, even though he owed nothing to the fisc.

separation of *hybris* and *aikia* as distinct events indicates that, though *aikia* does not bear the legal force of *hybris*, it nevertheless retains its rhetorical force as an act of outrage.

Another example of this effect is *SB IV* 7464 (Arsinoites, 248 CE), the petition with which I opened this article. A veteran Arab archer in his eighties named Aurelios Sarapion writes that one of his daughter's piglets was said to have been taken by a soldier named Iulios. Aurelios, with a strong rhetorical flourish (inspired by Demosthenes, perhaps?), opens his petition with the sententious statement: 'than *hybris* there is nothing more terrible or harsher' (l. 3: ὕβρεως οὐδὲν οὔτε δειώτερον οὔτε χαλεπώτερον).³² He then proceeds to describe the incident: upon being asked to swear an oath that he did not steal the piglet, Iulios savagely assaulted the elderly petitioner 'as if there were no laws' (ll. 10–11: ὡς οὐκ ὄντων νόμων, πληγαῖς με ἠκίσατο). The description of the physical assault is not only necessary to specify the kind of *hybris* that he suffered, but also augments the excessive violence used on him through emphasis on his old age and the soldier's contempt for the laws and oaths.

The transgression of societal and institutional norms is thus central to the use of *aikia* in these petitions. Just as Aurelios Sarapion describes Iulios as acting 'as if there were no laws', the author of *Cbr. Mitt.* 63 (Kysis, 307 CE) makes a similar claim. The petitioner, Syros, claims that a certain man enslaved his wife (a free Egyptian woman) and their children, and assaulted Syros. In this petition the verb αἰκίζεσθαι appears twice (l. 14: ἀ[ναξίαι]ς πληγαῖς ἠκίσαντο, 'he brutalized me with unwarranted blows'; l. 19: ἐμ[οὶ ὑ]π' αὐτῶν αἰκίζο[μένω] καὶ τυπτομένω, 'me being brutalized and struck by them'). Before the description of the violence, Syros describes the wrongful enslavement of his family as 'an act unworthy of the *paideia* obligated of everyone' (ll. 7–8: ἔργον ἀνάξιον τῆ[ς] ἅπασι πρυτανε[νομένης] παιδείας). Of course, this description downplays the extremity of the situation to some extent, and we can safely assume that the unlawful enslavement of an entire family is more than a result of miseducation. But it taps into a prevailing cultural consciousness and

³² Cf. Dem. 21.46: οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν, οὐκ ἔστιν, ὧ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τῶν πάντων οὐδὲν ὕβρεως ἀφορητότερον, οὐδ' ἐφ' ὅτῳ μᾶλλον ὑμῖν ὀργίζεσθαι προσήκει.

judgment of good behaviour which such petitions aim to reinforce, transforming a private dispute into a public concern. By appealing to the violation of shared norms, the petitioner thus suggests that a quick and effective resolution to this conflict is in the interest not just of the petitioner but of the community at large.

There were a number of other ways petitioners could characterize the extremity and excess of the violence they suffered. In some petitions, the authors may mention that they were beaten nearly to death to drive the point home, such as in *P. Oxy.* L 3561 (Arsinoites, 165 CE), in which the petitioner was beaten ‘to the point of risking his life’ (ll. 11–12: ὥστε τῶ ζῆν κινδυνεῦσαι), and then stripped naked and robbed.³³ Still others describe their attackers as ‘unsatisfied’ (μὴ ἀρκεσθεῖς)³⁴ with the violence they have committed, highlighting the frightening and unnatural impulse to excessive violence and perhaps implying that the attacker may return to commit the same crime again. Often the petitioners mention that their family, friends, or associates were also attacked, perhaps in order to emphasize the extent of the attacker’s impact in social fabric of the community. Some even provide narratives of almost unbelievable adversity, such as *P. Mich.* VI 425, in which the petitioner, a functionally blind man, and his elderly mother are harassed and beaten in public by a tax collector who, after failing to extort money from them, destroyed all the doors to the petitioner’s house.³⁵ A priest named Satabous wrote at least five petitions about multiple attacks and robberies committed against him by another priest named Nestnephis, and desperately asks for relief from τὰς [αἰ]κ[ε]ίας ἀδικίας he was suffering.³⁶ Transgression of morality and

³³ We should note here that none of these petitions end in the death of any victim of crime, but rather the possibility of death. In some cases, the stripping of clothing may refer to a sexual crime; see J. E. G. WHITEHORN, ‘Sex and society in Roman Egypt’, [in:] *PapCongr.* XV, pp. 240–246.

³⁴ *P. Amb.* II 77, *P. Dubl.* 18.

³⁵ For more on this particular petitioner, Gemellos, see A. BRYEN & A. WYPUSTEK, ‘Gemellus’ evil eyes (*P. Mich.* VI 423–424)’, *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 49 (2010), pp. 535–555.

³⁶ *SB* I 5238, l. 22. For Satabous and his disputes, see KELLY, *Petitions* (cit. n. 2), pp. 1–6 and *passim*, with notes and bibliography.

norms and personal or social degradation are thus the central components of the concept of *aikia*.

Another feature of the language of *aikia* is that of ‘senseless’ or ‘random’ acts of violence. A clear example of this is *P. Oxy. XXXVIII 2853r* (Herakleopolites, 245/6 CE), in which the foremen in charge of the construction of a dyke were assaulted by two of their workers, Soter and his unnamed brother:

Ἰουλίῳ Ἀμμωνίῳ τῶι καὶ Εὐαγγελ[λίῳ] στρα . | παρὰ Αὐρηλίῳν Ἀρείῳν
 Τριαδέλφου καὶ Ἀμ|μωνίου Διονυσίου ἐπιμελητῶν διώρυγος (Χιλιαρου-
 ρῶν). | σήμερον ἦτις ἔστιν Τύβι εἰ προσεληλύθαμεν | Σωτήρι καὶ ἀδελφῶ
 αὐτοῦ καὶ ὡς χρηματίζουσιν | ἀξιοῦντες αὐτοὺς τὸ ἐπιβάλλον αὐτοῖς μέρος
 τῆς | διώρυγος ἐργάσασθαι. οἱ δὲ μηδενὶ λόγῳ χρησάμενοι ἐπῆλθον ἡμῖν
 καὶ πληγαῖς ἠκίσαντο. | ὅθεν ἐπιδίδομεν τόδε τὸ βιβλίδιον ἀξιοῦν|τες
 πρῶτον μὲν τῆς δεούσης ἐκ[δ]ικίας τυχεῖν, | ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ τὸ μέρος αὐ[τ]ῶν
 τῆς διώρυγος ἐρ[γά]σασ[θ]αι πρὸς τὸ δύν[ασθαι ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἄλλοις (?)] |
 μέρεσι προσευκ[αιρεῖν. -c. ?- διευτύχει].

To Ioulios Ammonios, also called Euangelios, *strategos*. From Aurelios Areios, son of Triadelphos, and Aurelios Ammonios, son of Dionysios, both in charge of the canal called Chiliarouras. Today, that is the 5th of Tybi, we came upon Soter and his brother, or however they call themselves, and we asked them to do the work on the canal which they are obligated to do. But for no reason they attacked us and brutalized us with blows. Therefore, we submit this petition asking first of all they receive the necessary punishment, and then that they do their share of the canal-work so that we may be able to attend to the other parts. (trans. A. Bryen, slightly modified)

This complaint is interesting for several reasons. First, we should notice that the narrative is sparing of details, save for the fact that Soter and his brother physically assaulted their managers (l. 8: *πληγαῖς ἠκίσαντο*) ‘for no reason’ (or ‘not being rational’ [l. 7: *μηδενὶ λόγῳ χρησάμενοι*]). But that is the end of the description of the violence, and no other crime is mentioned. The petitioners simply want their workers to finish their job so they can move on to other parts of the dyke. Instead of using the language of *hybris*, which would likely involve them in a complicated legal procedure and thus delay work on the dyke, the petitioners use the lan-

guage of *aikia*. The petitioners do not appear to want to go to court with this case, given their request to force Soter and his brother to get back to work. Rather, their petition attempts to use recourse to the local legal institutions to force their employees back into their social station after they have transgressed the norms surrounding both their interpersonal and professional relationships with the foremen. In fact, the petitioners almost seem to be asking the *strategos* to sentence Soter and his brother to labour on the dyke that they were already working on! In any case, the wording of the petition lays emphasis on the transgression of the power dynamic between the foremen and the workers, as well as the neglect of the obligations of the workers. The description of this violence as *aikia* is founded not just in the physical assault but in the indignation and extreme disrespect suffered by the victims as the hierarchically superior members of the relationship with the workers.

Now, it is highly likely that the attack on the foremen is not random and is related to some prior incident that the petitioners do not divulge.³⁷ Their insistence that they do not know with certainty the names of the two workers suggests that they may be trying to distance themselves from some prior association with the two men. Soter and his brother may have a personal vendetta against the foremen, or the foremen may have been abusing their workers themselves. Indeed, it seems that the foremen only want to get back to work. Writing off the attack as senseless or unreasonable might suggest that they are hiding something, such as mistreatment of their workers. If this is the case, we can see how the use of *aikia* in the petitions can also manipulate the broader context of a crime.

Another petition, *BGU* I 45 (Soknopaiou Nesos, 203 CE), brings together the features of disruption of the social order and ‘random’ acts of violence explored above. In this petition, a man named Herieus is writing on behalf of his son Pekysis, who was assaulted by a man named Stoetis (Kalabelis), his son, and a man named Moros (ll. 3–22):

³⁷ For comparanda that do not involve *aikia*, see BRYEN, *Violence in Roman Egypt* (cit. n. 2), pp. 93ff. Often petitioners who insist that the attack on them was random or senseless unwittingly reveal some culpability on their part to an action that might prompt an attack from someone else.

ἐκθὲς ἦτις | ἦν [ζ τ]οῦ ὄντος μηνὸς Φαῶφι τοῦ | υἱ[οῦ μου] Πεκύσεως ἐργα-
 ζομέ[ν]ου | τὸ ὑπάρχον μοι σιτικὸν | ἔδα[φος] ὃν περὶ τὴν αὐτὴν κώ[μην]
 Στοτόητις, | ἐπικαλούμενος Κα|λάβελις, ἀπὸ κώμης Ἡρακλίας | ἀνὴρ βίαιος
 ὑπάρχων μὴ λειτουργ[ῶν], τῇ βίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἐπήλθεν αὐτῷ, ἐπαγαγὼν | σὺν α[ὐ]τῷ
 τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν καὶ Μῶ[ρ]ο[ν] τ[ι]να, πληγαῖς πλείσταις αὐτὸν | ἤκισαν καὶ ἐκ
 τούτου κλεινῆρη | γεγονέναι. ὅθεν ἐπιδίδωμι καὶ ἀξιῶ | τούτου τὸ ἴσον ἐν
 καταχωρισμῷ γε[νέ]σθαι πρὸς τὸ μένιν μοι τὸν λόγον | πρὸς αὐτούς, μὴ ἄρα
 ἀνθρώπινόν τι | τῷ [υἱῷ] μου συμβῆῖ ἢ ἐπήρεά τις | τοῖς προτέροις γένηται καὶ
 περὶ τῶν | βεβατ[ευ]μένων ὑπ' αὐτῶν Ἐοιδίου | ὑπε[ρ]μα. Διευτύχει.

Yesterday, which was the 7th of the present month of Phaophi, my son Pekysis was working at the grain field which I own near the same town. A man named Stotoetis, who is also called Kalabelis, from the town of Herakleia – a violent man who through force does not perform his liturgies – along with his son and a man named Moros, attacked my son and thrashed him with many blows. Because of this he is laid up. Therefore, I submit this petition and ask that a copy of it be kept on file so that I can bring a claim against them lest my son's injury prove mortal or if there be some threat to my family, and also concerning the things destroyed by them ... Farewell. (trans. A. Bryen, slightly modified)

Stotoetis is apparently familiar to the petitioner, as he explains that Stotoetis is a violent man who uses force to avoid performing his liturgies. The petitioner thus paints a portrait of Stotoetis as a man who transgresses societal expectations of the citizens of Egypt and needs to be controlled through legal institutions before even describing the act of violence. It is this detail that lets us know that while this attack was seemingly random, it was likely revenge for something that Herieus or Pekysis did (or failed to do) to Stotoetis and his family. In any case, it is a preliminary petition³⁸ that is concerned not just with the assault but also the fact that Pekysis cannot work (ἐκ τούτου κλεινῆρη γεγονέναι) and the damage Stotoetis and Moros caused to Herieus' property (περὶ τῶν βεβατ[ευ]μένων ὑπ' αὐτῶν). Herieus files this complaint to protect his family and especially his son, whose injuries are made out to be potentially fatal. By keeping the petition on file, Herieus shows that he does not plan on prosecuting Stotoetis for *hybris*, but rather murder, in the case of his son's

³⁸ On which see KELLY, *Petitions* (cit. n. 2), pp. 86ff.

death. More importantly, he wants to control Stotoetis' behaviour through institutional means. In addition, behind the concern for bodily security, it seems that economic concerns also prevail, as suggested by the numerous references to the family's farming activity and the disruptions Stotoetis' attack has brought to it. The narrative of violence then serves to bring importance and urgency to this case and highlights Stotoetis' threat to the community at large.

From this and other instances of this language we can make a broader inference that the formulation *πληγαῖς αἰκίζεσθαι* becomes a way to express what we might call 'symptomatic' violence. That is, the petitioners do not seem to be prosecuting for the assault itself but for another crime in which violence plays a part.³⁹ In most of these cases, the victim is beaten up and then robbed: of clothing,⁴⁰ jewellery,⁴¹ pigs,⁴² donkeys,⁴³ camels,⁴⁴ saddlebags,⁴⁵ or, more abstractly, inheritance⁴⁶ and even peace of mind.⁴⁷ We may take, for example, *Cbr. Mitt.* 116 (Karanis, 187/8 CE), in which a man named Antonios wanted camels from the petitioner, so he took them by force, assaulted the petitioner, and demanded money from the petitioner's son. While the petitioner describes this violence as *μη ὑπακούσαντός μου [πλ]ηγαῖς πλίσταις με [ῆ]κ[ε]ίσατο* (ll. 7–8), and even uses the language of *hybris* to describe how Antonios came back to assault

³⁹ For an overview of crimes perpetrated in the petitions from Egypt, see B. BALDWIN, 'Crime and criminals in Graeco-Roman Egypt', *Aegyptus* 43 (1963), pp. 256–263, though one should be wary of his claim that these petitions justify the Roman evaluation of Egypt as being overrun with criminals and outlaws.

⁴⁰ *P. Strash.* VI 521; *P. Oxy.* L 3561; *P. Flor.* I 59. For the possible implications of stripped clothing as a sexual crime, see WHITEHORN, 'Sex and society' (cit. n. 35).

⁴¹ *P. Sipp.* 16.

⁴² *P. Fay.* 108; *SB IV* 7464. For a recent discussion of *P. Fay.* 108, see R. MASCELLARI, 'Note di lettura a papiri documentari', *Comunicazioni dell'Istituto Papirologico 'G. Vitelli'* 13 (2019), pp. 35–38.

⁴³ *P. Mich.* VI 421.

⁴⁴ *Cbr. Mitt.* 116.

⁴⁵ *P. Mich.* XXI 838r.

⁴⁶ *P. Cair. Isid.* 63; *P. Oxy.* XXXI 2563.

⁴⁷ *P. Oslo* II 22 (discussed above).

him again, at the end of the petition it is manifestly clear that the petitioner is more immediately concerned with the theft (l. 24: ἐξ οὗ φαίνεται αὐτοῦ ἡ κλοπή), since it is easier to compensate a victim of theft (by returning the stolen items) than a victim of violence. Even *P. Giss.* 61 (quoted above), which involves no explicit physical violence, follows a similar pattern. The petitioner mentions the ‘abuse’ suffered by the villagers before going into detail about who is being wrongfully forced to pay money to the *komogrammateus* and how this might affect the fisc. In the case of ‘random acts of violence’, such as that suffered by the foremen in *P. Oxy.* XXXVIII 2853r (see above), the petitioners seem more concerned with the collateral effects of the violence (e.g. delayed work on a dyke) than the violence itself. The descriptions of violence thus serve more as rhetorical support for petitions concerning other crimes than they serve to punish the violent act itself.

CONCLUSION

To be able to manipulate violent actions into auxiliary support for another crime is a sophisticated and useful recourse in the process of creating a petition and exacting justice for a crime. We might wonder whether the relative scarcity of this kind of violence compared to *hybris* may also have to do with extra-legal modes of dispute settlement, being a manifestation of a discourse of violence that likely would have existed outside of petitions, as Hobson and Kelly have suggested.⁴⁸ But such a hypothesis remains impossible to test without other non-legal documentary sources.

There are several common features of the papyri containing the language of *aikia*. First, descriptions of *aikia* were used to emphasize the injustice, indignation, and extremity of violence or another related crime. It self-consciously takes as its central axis disgust and the violation of one’s standing in the social *kosmos*. Its association with the kind of violence committed as punishment for slaves also likely deepened sense of degradation and dehumanization associated with this kind of violence.

⁴⁸ HOBSON, ‘Impact of law’ (cit. n. 2), and KELLY, *Petitions* (cit. n. 2).

This word thus served to add potent urgency and a visceral moral appeal to a petition that otherwise would likely go unresolved or unnoticed by the convoluted and often ineffective justice system of Roman Egypt. It is also possible that this language was aimed at forcing a settlement outside of court. In cases where the violence is recorded as happening for no apparent reason, usually we can perceive an ulterior motive on the part of the petitioner, who is using the legal system not necessarily for adjudication but for the negotiation and reconciliation of a rupture in a certain relationship, for purposes of social control, or perhaps for vengeance. By the end of the second century CE, *πληγαῖς αἰκίζεσθαι* seems to have become a set formula for describing such violence, usually disposing of adjectives (*πολλαῖς, πλείσταις*) in the mid-third century and sometimes omitting the direct object of the verb. The geographical distribution of the petitions suggests that this language was put to use especially in villages, as about half of the petitions in question come from the Arsinoite nome, especially Karanis. From this we can see that *aikia* became yet another tool at the disposal of petitioners in their (sometimes endless) quest for justice.

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APPENDIX
INDEX OF PETITIONS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

<i>Siglum</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Description of aikia</i>
<i>BGU I 45</i>	203 CE	Soknopaiou Nesos	assault and property damage	πληγυαῖς πλείσταυς αὐτὸν ἤκισαν (ll. 13-14)
<i>BGU I 256</i>	137-142 CE	Karanis	assault	[πληγυαῖς αικί σ]άμενος πλείσταυς (l. 20)
<i>Chr. Mitt. 63</i>	307 CE	Kysis (Oasis Magna)	unlawful enslavement and assault	ἀ[ναξίαι]ς πληγυαῖς ἠκίσαντο (l. 14)
<i>Chr. Mitt. II 6</i>	187/8 CE	Karanis	assault on two occasions and theft	[πλ]ηγυαῖς πλίσι ταις με [ἤκ]είσατο (ll. 7-8)
<i>P. Amb. II 77</i>	139 CE	Soknopaiou Nesos	fraud and assault	πλείσι τ]α[ι]ς πληγυαῖς με ἠκίσαστο (ll. 18-19)
<i>P. Cair. Isid. 63</i>	297 CE	Karanis	theft of inheritance and assault	με πλ[ηγυα]ῖς ἠκίσαντες (l. 24)
<i>P. Diosk. 6</i>	146 BCE	Herakleopolites	assault and theft of <i>bimation</i>	Ἀμμωνία τίς τῶνα μὲν ὄν περιεβελήμεθα ἱματίων κατὰκίσατο (ll. 24-25)
<i>P. Dubl. 18</i>	257-259 CE	Hermopolites?	assault	πληγυαῖς αἰκίλω(ν) (l. 12)
<i>P. Fay. 108</i>	169/70 CE	Ptolemais Euergetis	theft and assault; abuse of <i>kiton</i>	πληγυαῖς ἡμᾶς πλίσταυς ἠκισαν (ll. 13-14)
<i>P. Flor. I 59</i>	225-279 CE	unknown	assault	[πληγυ]αῖς ἠ[κί]σατο (l. 2)
<i>P. Griss. 61</i>	119 CE	Karanis (Naboo)	mistreatment of villagers by <i>kogrammateus</i>	πολλὰ [αἰ]κί[σθ]έ[ν]τες ὑπὸ Ψύτος κωμογρ[αμ]ματέως (ll. 5-6)

<i>Siglum</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Description of aikia</i>
<i>P. Mich.</i> VI 421	41–68 CE	Karanis	theft and assault	καδὲ κισάν με π λ γγαῖς (ll. 24–25)
<i>P. Mich.</i> VI 425	198 CE	Karanis	theft and assault by <i>archepodos</i> and guards of Bakchias	καδὲ κισάν με π λ γγαῖς (ll. 24–25)
<i>P. Mich.</i> XXI 838r	76–125 CE	Karanis	theft and assault	[ἡ κί- σαντο ἀ π[ο]ῦς π λ γγαῖς (ll. 5–6)
<i>P. Oslo</i> II 22 [= <i>Pap. Choix.</i> 5]	127 CE	Theadelphia	verbal and physical assault	[π λ γγαῖς] αἰκισό μενος (ll. 9–10)
<i>P. Oxy.</i> XXXI 2563	170 CE	Oxyrhynchos	assault and theft of inheritance	ἡ κίσατο ἀ π τοὺς π λ γγαῖς (ll. 33–34)
<i>P. Oxy.</i> XXXVIII 2833r	245/6 CE	Thinites or Herakleopolites	assault	π λ γγαῖς ἡ κίσατο (l. 8)
<i>P. Oxy.</i> L 3561	165 CE	Arsinoites	preliminary petition concerning theft and assault	πολλ αῖς με π λ γγαῖς ἡ κίσατο ll. 10–11)
<i>P. Sijp.</i> 16	155 CE	Narmuthis	theft and assault	με ἡ κίσατο π λ είσταῖς π λ γγαῖς (ll. 8–9)
<i>P. Strasb.</i> VI 521	1st c. CE	unknown	assault and theft of <i>himation</i> ?	π λ είσταῖς π λ γγαῖς με ἡ κίσατο (ll. 7–8)
<i>SB</i> I 5238	14 CE	Soknopaiou Nesos	theft of mortar stone; retaliatory assault	οὐ δυνά μει τος ὑποφ ρεω τὰς [αἰ] κ[ε]ῖ σας (ll. 21–22)
<i>SB</i> IV 7464	248 CE	Arsinoites	theft and assault	π λ γγαῖς με ἡ κίσατο (l. 11)
<i>SB</i> XX 14975	2nd cent. CE	Oxyrhynchos	assault, destruction of property by debtor to petitioner	ἐ μὲ δὲ σὺν τοῖς ἐ μοῖς αἰκίσασθαι π λ γγαῖς ὡ[s] ἐπ' ἀπ ωλεῖ α (ll. 15–17)

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Joshua ALLBRIGHT

The rhetoric of aikia in petitions from Roman Egypt

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Abstract: This article discusses the rhetorical usage of the verb *αἰκίζεσθαι* ('abuse', 'thrash', 'brutalize') and its derivatives in petitions from Roman Egypt. Curiously, this description of violence only appears in petitions from the Roman period. Using theories of conflict resolution and social control, it is argued that the writers of these petitions, the majority of whom lived in villages in the Arsinoite nome, used the concept of *aikia* in an attempt to overcome the inefficiency of the Roman Egyptian legal system by augmenting the severity of the crimes they suffered. The usage of the verb *αἰκίζεσθαι* (often paired with the noun *πληγαῖς*) emphasized the brutality and socially transgressive nature of the attack and presented it as something that needed to be addressed by the authorities immediately, as it affected the entire social order. Over time the phrase *πληγαῖς αἰκίζεσθαι* became formulaic in its expression, suggesting that it was not just contained to a handful of petitions. Rather it was a linguistic phenomenon in itself that reveals the effects of the social and legal environment of Roman Egypt on the language of petitions.

Keywords: Roman Egypt, violence, *aikia*, petitions, social control, rhetoric, Greek law, Roman law.

Grażyna BĄKOWSKA & Adam ŁAJTAR

ΜΕΓΑ ΤΟ ΟΝΟΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΣΑΡΑΠΙΣ:

An inscribed bronze ring from Marina el-Alamein

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Abstract: The article offers the publication of a bronze ring discovered during the archaeological work on the site of Marina el-Alamein, located on the

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Keywords: Marina el-Alamein, Roman jewelry, Sarapis, religious acclamations, 'megatheism', Greek inscriptions.

Lucia C. COLELLA

Riedizione del verbale di apertura di testamento latino

conservato in P. Berol. inv. 7124 = ChLA X 412

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Abstract: This paper proposes a re-edition of the opening protocol of M. Sempronius Priscus' will from AD 131 (P. Berol. inv. 7124 = ChLA X 412 = CPL 220). The testament is written in Latin, with the testator's signature in Greek, but in the Latin text itself some interference phenomena from Greek are noteworthy. New readings shed light on the objects of legacies, in particular concerning the bequeathing of land parcels. In the fideicommissary section the phrase *volo et iubeo*, rare in this period, is to be noted, together with a disposition concerning the *pupillae* Herais and Tamystha and another one ordering the testators' daughters not to litigate in court against each other. The place in which the will was opened was most probably Arsinoe, since this toponym seems not to have been crossed out, as was previously believed. All the names of the witnesses are now known.

Keywords: Roman will, M. Sempronius Priscus, P. Berol. inv. 7124, ChLA X 412, CPL 220.

Federica NICOLARDI

Vocabulary and practices of manumission

in a fragment of the Life of Philonides (P. Herc. 1044)

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Abstract: The biographical work on Philonides of Laodikeia on the Sea in Syria (P. Herc. 1044+1715+1746) is not merely a source of information about the life of the philosopher, it also bears witness to both well-known and lesser-known aspects of Hellenistic history and civilization, not to mention the fact that it is an extremely rare and precious example of Hellenistic biography. This paper presents a new edition of a passage of the text in which references to vocabulary and procedures of Greek manumission can be detected, which suggest a parallel with papyrological and epigraphic documentary sources. This

parallelism allows, in turn, to understand better the text of the papyrus and to supplement a technical term referring to relatives' consent to the manumission of slaves.

Keywords: Philonides of Laodikeia on the Sea, Herculaneum papyri, Greek manumission, ἀπελευθερώω, εὐδοκεῖν.

Joanna WEGNER

Monks and monasteries in Egypt between household and estate.

A case study from Bawit 83

Abstract: The article attempts to explore the applicability of the household model to the monastery of Bawit in Middle Egypt as seen through the papyrological documentation. By focusing on features and functions of household underscored in definitions used by sociology and economy, it defines the monastery as a unit where material and symbolic value was produced and transmitted, and brings to light connections between people, materialities, and labour.

Keywords: Bawit, Egyptian monasticism, monastic economy, household.

Ewa WIPSZYCKA

What can the lives of saints tell us about history?

The case of the Coptic Life of Aaron 105

Abstract: The excellent work done by Jitse Dijkstra and Jacques van der Vliet, who edited an important hagiographic text with a huge introduction and a huge commentary, prompted the author of the present paper to walk in their footsteps and to propose some corrections or supplements concerning the date of the composition of the text, the procedure of the election and ordination of bishops, the beginnings of monasticism in the region of the First Cataract. The *Life of Aaron* is a reliable source for the history of the Church of the sixth century (or rather the last part of it), not of the fourth century, as the anonymous author would suggest. On the other hand, its picture of monasticism is made up of stereotypes derived from literary works concerning monks. From it we cannot learn anything about monks living near Syene.

Keywords: Athanasius, bishops of Philae, ceremonies of episcopal ordinations, end of paganism, Nubians.

Marzena WOJTCZAK

How to become a monastic superior? Legal and mundane sine qua nonis 119

Abstract: The literary portrayal of the charismatic founders of monastic communities, and of their successors, abounds in descriptions of ascetic

practices and devotion. However, the *begoumenoi* also needed to be individuals of the right standing and competence, as it was only such people who could properly represent the communities in relations with both lay and ecclesiastical authorities, secure the obedience of all the brethren, as well as efficiently manage the community and its assets. The nature and the exact procedure of superior's appointment became increasingly relevant and began to interest both the church and the secular authorities once the monastic movement reached such a magnitude that it could no longer be left without proper institutional surveillance. In parallel, there was a growing awareness among monks themselves of the need to standardise the existing practices and experience.

In this article I focus on the legal conditions delimiting the transfer of headship over monastic communities and their reflection in mundane reality. My aim is to see how documents of legal practice relate to the imperial legislation dealing with the appointment of the people in charge of the monasteries. The analysis of the superior selection process will allow for commenting on both the legal framework within which the monastic communities functioned, and the much broader issue of imperial policy towards the emerging holy houses. It should also enable some conclusions on the legal status of monastic communities and how it may have influenced the realities of appointing their administrative and spiritual heads.

Keywords: monks, monasteries, Late Antiquity, papyri, legal practice, *proestos*, abbot, *begoumenos*, monastic legal capacity, Justinian, imperial legislation.

Uri YIFTACH

Olim tradita fuerunt?

On the obsolescence of the sollemnia verba in Inst. 3.15pr.

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Abstract: According to the classical dogma, the act of *stipulatio* was performed through the exchange of *sollemnia verba*, which were, according to my working hypothesis, verbs introducing the duty to perform a future act, a concept lucidly displayed by Pomponian (*Dig.* 45.1.5.1), hence the 'Pomponian tenet'. Documents preserved on papyrus, composed by 'new-Romans' after the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, exhibit a completely different concept: a stipulation-clause confirming a past, contractually significant activity. It is asked (but not conclusively answered) to what extent this alternative formulation has paved the way to the abandonment of the 'Pomponian tenet' by the emperor Leo in 472 CE (*CJ* 8.37.10). As we draw from Justinian's interpretation of *CJ* 8.37.10 in *Inst.* 3.15.1, the *sollemnia verba*, the use of which became outdated after Leo, was not the language of the stipulation-clause as incorporated in the written documentation of the contract, but that of the act of *stipulatio*, which, as before, was meant in the keep verbal.

Keywords: Greco-Roman Egypt, *homologia*, Justinian, Leo, stipulation.