

The “*Divi Adriani sententiae et epistulae*” (*AS*), preserved only in two MS recensions of the *Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana* (*HP*), a third-century (?) bilingual schoolbook, purport to be a collection of pronouncements and other writings of the emperor Hadrian. Beginning with Dirksen (1857 = ed. 1871) and continuing to the present day, these texts have been considered spurious, with rare exceptions (Millar 1977; Ibbetson 2005). Even as scholars have remained skeptical of *AS* (Krüger 1912; Lewis 1991; ed. Sallmann 1997: 62; cf. 94), Schiller (1971) and Volterra (1971) advanced the case for restoring them to the legal corpus. Unfortunately, their efforts overlooked the complex textual transmission of this material. In this paper, I avail myself of the first critical edition of the *recensio plenior* (r. *Leidensis*) of *HP* (Flammini 2004) to note how MS variants between the two recensions impact the meaning of the text. I argue that at least twelve of the *AS* preserve the record of real legal proceedings between subject and emperor, resulting from the submission of petitions and ending with the issue of an imperial decree or rescript. These brief texts are important because very few ancient collections of imperial constitutions dating before Diocletian’s codification survive. The presence of genuine imperial decisions in an ancient schoolbook for lower grades poses the question of what motivated their inclusion and what their source was. More generally, I investigate the *AS* against the wider context of Hadrian’s legacy in the realm of law and other areas of imperial life.

In the first part of my paper, I address the problem of the current form of the *AS*. I argue that the absence of imperial titulature, of the names of petitioners, and of the date does not necessarily prove their fictional character (Dirksen ed. 1871; cf. Schiller 1971). I draw on current knowledge of *interlocutiones de plano* or *in transitu*, imperial sentences laid down without the formalities attendant upon a magistrate ascending the bench (Düll 1932; Nörr 1983). I also treat of imperial bureaucratic practice as it emerges from various sources including papyri (cf. Coles 1966), focusing on instances of cases recorded by clerks in shorthand and filed away for future reference.

Next, I analyze the individual *AS*. Here, I tackle the notion that several *AS* involve extra-legal or administrative issues. In fact, far from seeming based on fiction, the *AS* reveal special areas of imperial intervention, such as, broadly, the control of credit and business practices (*AS* 4 and 7), the distribution and allotment of *congiarium* (*AS* 2; 10; 11; 13), the supervision of military matters (*AS* 1 and 12), and the oversight of the status of individuals (*AS* 5; 6; 8; 9). In several cases, we can be fairly confident of parallels from legal and historical sources.

I conclude with a consideration of *AS* 3, 14, and 15, which are extra-legal in their content. They offer scope for the final part of the paper, where I compare their style with other examples of Hadrian’s writings. I explore the reasons which led to the inclusion of the *AS* in a schoolbook. I suggest that this circumstance is due partly to the increasing value of legal education as a way to enter the cadres of the imperial administration from the second century onwards.