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The teaching of Khety and its use as an educational tool in ancient Egypt

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PART ONE

TEXT

1 Introduction to the text

1.1 Previous research on *The Teaching of Khety*

1.1.1 Early scholarship

In 1839 an auction was held in London, where a large amount of Egyptian antiquities was put up for sale. At the auction the British Museum acquired, amongst other things, pAnastasi VII, now known to contain a near-complete copy of *The Teaching of Khety*. The papyrus was originally bought around 1818 in Egypt by Giovanni Anastasi (1780–1860), a well-known trader in antiquities. In 1838 Karl Richard Lepsius, the famous German Egyptologist, had examined the Anastasi papyri and had stated their importance. This in fact had encouraged the British Museum to purchase Anastasi's entire collection at the auction.¹

In the same year the British Museum also purchased some papyri from the legal representatives of François Sallier (1764–1831), a French collector of Egyptian antiquities who had died a few years earlier. One of the papyri bought was pSallier II, the only source with the complete text of *The Teaching of Khety* up to the present day. It also contains *The Teaching of Amenemhat* and *The Hymn to the Nile*. The value of the Sallier papyri had already been established by Champollion, who had examined them twice at the home of Sallier in Aix-en-Provence.² At his first visit (1828) Champollion was much surprised when Sallier showed him several non-funerary papyri just on the evening before he was bound for Egypt. Although he had limited time to study them, he immediately became enthusiastic, even recognizing the contents of one of the papyri (pSallier III containing the *Poem of the Battle of Kadesh*). He described the contents of pSallier II and pSallier IV two days later in a letter to his brother as ‘des espèces d’odes ou litanies à la louange du Pharaon Amenhemdjom (Psammis), fils d’Osortasen’.³ At his second visit (1830) Champollion apparently divided pSallier II into fourteen single pages and stuck them onto squared sheets.⁴ This was how the papyrus arrived at the British Museum.

A few years after the purchase both papyri were published in facsimile in the series *Select Papyri in the Hieratic Character from the collection of the British Museum*, first pSallier II in 1841, followed by pAnastasi VII in 1844.⁵ The texts on pSallier II were now identified as “the Eulogy of King Amenemhe I” and “adorations to the god Hapimouu or Nile”,⁶ but the literary nature of the middle part containing *The Teaching of Khety* was not yet recognized. This section of the papyrus was instead described as “a long series of documents, partly religious”.⁷ It was noted that pAnastasi VII contained a duplicate text of this “partly religious, partly historical” portion of the text on pSallier II.⁸

Both papyri were now available for scholars to study. Yet it would take more than a decade before the first (partial) translation of *Khety* was published. In 1858 C.W. Goodwin wrote an article entitled *Hieratic Papyri*, in which he introduced the reader to the hieratic literary texts known at the time. The article appeared among other non-Egyptological essays written by members of the University of

¹ Maspero 1912: v; Hawkins 1841–1844: 5–6; Dawson 1949: 158–160.

² Dawson 1949: 160.

³ Hartleben 1909: 11. Sallier himself reported on this visit during a gathering of the Société Académique d’Aix, see *Bulletin des sciences historiques, antiquités, philologie* 10: 201–202.

⁴ Hartleben 1909: 479; Parkinson 1999a: pl. 8.

⁵ Hawkins 1841–1844: pls X–XXIII, CXXVIII–CXXXIX.

⁶ Hawkins 1841: notice; Hawkins 1844: 3.

⁷ Hawkins 1841–1844: 3.

⁸ Hawkins 1841–1844: 11.

Cambridge, such as *Newspapers and their Writers* and *The National Defences and Organization of the Militia of the United Kingdom*. As regards the text of *Khety* on pSallier II, Goodwin rightly recognized that the object of the work was “to extol the profession of the scribe, whose position is compared with that of men of various other classes”.⁹ Knowing his limitations, Goodwin refrained from giving a translation of the entire text, but instead translated only a few sections and gave a brief summary of the others. To give an impression of the character of his translation, here follows his rendering of the first lines:

The beginning of the instructions given by a certain functionary named Sbauf-sa-kharta, to his son named Pepi, when he returned from Khennu [Silsilis], where he had dwelt in the school of literature. The sons of the elders [or chiefs], they who are of Khennu, did not equal [?] him.

Then he said to him, Behold me how I urge thee ; give thy heart to letters. Look at me who am freed from servile works. Surely there is nothing superior to literature. It is like the waters, plunge [?] thyself to the bottom of the pool of letters. Thou shalt find this counsel regarding it, namely, if the scribe is well established in Khennu, he shall not be humiliated.¹⁰

His translation is now outdated, of course, but nonetheless admirable, considering the fact that Egyptian philology was still in its infancy. At the end of the article Goodwin expressed his “crying want for more papyri”, so that “these [...] utterances will be plainer to us than they are yet”.¹¹

Goodwin must have been delighted that several years later an ostrakon from the British Museum was published containing a large excerpt of *The Teaching of Khety*.¹² Another ostrakon came to light in 1872, published in facsimile by F. J. Lauth, a professor at the University of München.¹³ He also included a translation and brief commentary of the teaching of “Papi” for his son “Chroti”, confusing the names of the father and the son.¹⁴ Lauth was the first to suggest that pSallier II and pAnastasi IV originated from an educational context, namely the “Hochschule zu Chennu” (see *Khety*: chapter §1,3), which according to him was a kind of university. The two known ostraca were apparently the work of poorer students who could not afford papyrus.¹⁵

Unaware of Lauth’s work and the München ostrakon, G. Maspero published the *editio princeps* of the poem in the same year (1872) as part of his doctoral thesis *Du genre épistolaire chez les Égyptiens de l’époque pharaonique*. Although his dissertation focused on the *Miscellanies*, Maspero dedicated almost a quarter of the book to *Khety*, because he recognized that this “petit traité, j’allais dire une brochure, dédiée par un scribe à son fils” had a similar theme to that of the *Miscellanies*, namely the superiority of the scribe.¹⁶ Maspero presented a hieroglyphic rendering of the text along with a

⁹ Goodwin 1858: 272. Goodwin was also familiar with the duplicate text on pAnastasi VII, but only mentions this papyrus in passing (page 246).

¹⁰ Goodwin 1858: 272.

¹¹ Goodwin 1858: 282.

¹² oBM EA 29950 in Birch 1868: pl. XI.

¹³ oMünchen ÄS 396 in Lauth 1872.

¹⁴ Lauth 1872: 37–66.

¹⁵ Lauth 1872: 32–36.

¹⁶ Maspero 1872: 48–73. Citation on page 48. Maspero would later name the poem “les Enseignements d’Akhtoés” or “les Instructions d’Akhtoés” (Maspero 1912: XLIX). B. van de Walle stated that it was Maspero, in his *Du genre épistolaire*, who gave the work the name *Satire des Métiers*, by which it has become known ever since (see also Lichtheim 1973: 184). When one turns to Maspero’s book oneself, however, one searches in vain for the title *Satire des Métiers*. The earliest reference mentioning the *Satire des Métiers* that I have been able to find is a journal article announcing the courses for the first semester

translation and some brief comments. His translation was a great improvement over Goodwin's and some of the solutions he proposed are followed even today.¹⁷ Maspero himself, however, was modest, even admitting to the reader doubts about his decision to translate the text in its entirety:

M. Goodwin, qui l'a étudié avant moi, a renoncé à le traduire et s'est borné à l'analyser d'une manière sommaire. Peut-être aurait-il été plus prudent pour moi de suivre son exemple: le texte est tellement corrompu, le nombre des mots techniques et des tournures archaïques qu'il renferme tellement considérable, qu'en certains endroits, il est difficile de suivre le fil de l'idée.¹⁸

Notwithstanding Maspero's modesty, the time was deemed ripe to make the text known to a wider audience. The book series *Records of the Past* presented English translations of Assyrian and Egyptian texts to the general public. The eighth volume of the series contained a translation of *Khety* by S. Birch, who gave the poem the attractive title "The Praise of Learning". Birch freely admitted that his rendition of the text followed Maspero "in nearly all the passages".¹⁹ A series, similar to *Records of the Past*, was titled *Library of the World's Best Literature*. It was also aimed at the popular market and offered to the reader an anthology of ancient and contemporary literature from all over the world. In the thirteenth volume of the series (1897) an entire section was devoted to Egyptian literature, translated by F. Ll. Griffith. Therein the reader was introduced to an excerpt, albeit very small, of the "Instruction of Dauf", as was the title given there.²⁰ In the meantime (1889) V. Loret had made a partial translation of the text, which was copied almost verbatim by M. Dunan in a textbook to be used in secondary education in France.²¹

In the early 1900's there followed two more translations, one by Budge and the other by Erman, both appearing in the same year (1923).²² Budge's work was indispensable for scholars as it also contained the first photographic record of pSallier II. His translation of "the Teaching of Tuaufsakhartai", however, was dismissed by scholars on account of being too free, or in the words of H. Brunner:

Die Übersetzung von BUDGE [...] kann nicht als eine ernsthafte Bearbeitung angesehen werden. Die äußerst fantasievolle Übersetzung stützt sich weitgehend auf Maspero und tut im übrigen dem Text so viel Gewalt an, daß sie in keinem Falle weiterführt oder gar als zuverlässig gelten kann.²³

Brunner judged Erman's translation of "die Lehre des Duau" more favourably, considering it a major step forward since Maspero despite the fact that Erman left a total of one-third of the text untranslated.²⁴

1883–1884 at the *Collège de France*. Maspero and Grébaut conducted a course that included a study of the "Satire des métiers" (<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6224383s/f8.image.r> [accessed 31.12.2022]; see also Masson 1883: XXX and 4). Other early references all present the title as common knowledge without explicitly stating that it was Maspero who coined the term. It could be that Maspero used it only among colleagues and students, but did not publish it. The earliest references to this title mainly occur in the works of his (former) students: Virey 1889: 56; Dunan: 59 ("un très curieux document datant de l'époque de Ramsès et que l'on appelle la *Satire des métiers*"); Amélineau 1895: 152 ("ce que les Égyptologues appellent la *Satire des métiers*"); Baillet 1905: 201 ("la satire des métiers où Douaouf-si-Khroudi"); Baillet, et al. 1935: 135. The first English reference mentioning the title *Satire of the Trades* is, to my knowledge, Blackman 1937: 247.

¹⁷ Jäger 2004: 10. After the publication of his work in 1872 Maspero made some adjustments to his translation, see Maspero 1875: 123–125 (see also Maspero 1877: 119–121).

¹⁸ Maspero 1872: 48

¹⁹ Birch 1876. Citation on page 145.

²⁰ Griffith 1897: 5225–5344. Its incorporation amongst the world's best literature is somewhat surprising given Griffith's derogatory remarks in the same work (page 5225; see also page 5228): "the educated Egyptian had no more subtlety than a modern boy of fifteen, or an intelligent English rustic of a century ago."

²¹ Loret 1889: 20–23; Dunan 1891: 59–60.

²² Budge 1923: 28–31, pls LXIII–LXXVI; Erman 1923: 100–105. The English translation of Erman's work by Blackman proved to be very popular and was reprinted many times, see Erman 1927: 67 ff.

²³ Brunner 1944: 11 n. 11. See also Piankoff 1933: 53.

²⁴ Brunner 1944: 11.

In the meantime the source material had expanded quite a bit, most importantly with a writing tablet, purchased by the Louvre in 1849 (tLouvre N 693). This tablet was published by A. Piankoff, who was the first to present the text of the “Instructions de Douaf” in a synoptic fashion, making use of the material that was known to him at the time.²⁵ Although being incomplete, the tablet proved to contain the oldest and best text so far, dating from the 18th dynasty. While Piankoff came up with “einige weiterführende Gedanken”,²⁶ a lot of the text remained unclear.

1.1.2 Editions and translations

Khety was brought to prominence in the scholarly community with the publication of H. Brunner’s doctoral thesis *Lehre des Cheti*.²⁷ It would have appeared a few years earlier had not World War II intervened. The thesis had already been accepted by the Universität München in the winter of 1939/1940, but its publication was put on hold, because of the outbreak of the war. During the war years it was impossible for Brunner to access some of the source material abroad, for example the papyri in the British Museum and pAmherst XIV in New York, the originals of which he was eager to study. As the war progressed, he eventually decided to no longer postpone the publication of his *Lehre des Cheti*. After all, it was time a new study appeared:

In Anbetracht der Bedeutung, die die alten Ägypter selbst der Lehre des Cheti zuschrieben, mag es erstaunlich scheinen, daß die neueste bearbeitung des Textes 68 Jahre zurückliegt, während alle sonstigen Literaturwerke Ägyptens uns in zuverlässigen Ausgaben von der Hand neuerer Bearbeiter vorliegen. Der große Meister der französischen Ägyptologie, Gaston Maspero, hat als erster – und bisher einziger – unseren Text zum Gegenstand eingehenderer Untersuchungen gemacht, und zwar in einem Werk, das im Jahre 1872 unter dem Titel “Du genre épistolaire chez les Égyptiens de l’époque pharaonique” in Paris erschienen ist.²⁸

Brunner’s work was very comprehensive, containing not only a synoptic text, translation and philological commentary, but also studies into matters as style, structure and scribal errors. It was well received by the scholarly community, albeit with a little delay. Reviews did not appear until 1949, because it was only then that the work became available outside Germany, due to the chaotic aftermath of the war. Van de Walle praised the courage of Brunner to undertake the task of editing such a difficult text and was impressed by “l’ingéniosité et l’érudition du commentateur”.²⁹ Vandier was equally impressed and noted Brunner’s translation marked “un progrès considérable sur ses devancières”.³⁰ Van de Walle (1949), Wilson (1950) and Bresciani (1969) all made translations based on Brunner’s *Lehre des Cheti*, which now had become the standard edition of this ancient Egyptian text.

Years later, Brunner himself reviewed a book that featured the text he had studied for his doctoral thesis. It concerned Peter Seibert’s *Die Charakteristik*, a study about the language used in ancient Egypt to characterize certain groups of people. In line with this theme a large part of the book was devoted to *The Teaching of Khety*, in particular its description of the various professions. Seibert translated this section of *Khety* anew adding a very detailed philological commentary.³¹ He considered the book a

²⁵ pSallier II, pAnastasi VII, oBM EA 29550, oCairo CG 25217, oDeM 1014, oDeM 1029, oDeM 1037, oUC 32999, oUC 33003, oUC 33006, oUC 33009, oUC 33013, oUC 33014, tLouvre N 693.

²⁶ Brunner 1944: 11.

²⁷ Brunner 1944.

²⁸ Brunner 1944: 11. Brunner knew of 4 papyri, 1 writing tablet and 96 ostraca. He included 71 of the 96 ostraca in his synoptic text, because the others were unavailable to him (see page 18 n. 31). For an overview of the sources, see Brunner 1944: 13–21.

²⁹ Van de Walle 1949: 246.

³⁰ Vandier 1949: 14.

³¹ Seibert 1967: 99–195. Seibert added 12 new ostraca to Brunner’s list. For an overview see Seibert 1967: 110.

preparatory work to be used for later analysis; the first part of a much larger opus that he had in mind, consisting of no less than five volumes.³² In his review, Brunner admitted to the reader that he sometimes found it difficult to follow Seibert's train of thought:

Es fällt dem Verfasser schwer, seine – vor allem in der Einleitung nicht immer einfachen – Gedankengänge verständlich auszudrücken. Der Rezensent muss gestehen, dass er die meisten Absätze mehrmals hat lesen müssen und dass es ihm trotzdem nicht immer gelungen ist, ganz zu folgen.

Brunner was afraid this would deter people from reading the book. In his opinion that would be a shame, because he thought it was an important work, worthy of study. He praised the originality of Seibert's thoughts and considered Seibert's translation an important step forward, notwithstanding the fact that he differed in opinion on some points.³³ Even though the intended next four volumes never appeared,³⁴ Seibert's work was very influential, especially his proposition that the name of the author should be read Dua-Cheti.

In 1970 Wolfgang Helck published a new edition of *Khety* in the series *Kleine ägyptische Texte*, of which he was editor at the time. He gave the book the title *Die Lehre des dw3-ḥtj*, following Seibert's reading of the name.³⁵ Since Brunner's edition the number of known textual witnesses had not increased much, but Helck was able to make use of several sources that were unavailable to Brunner. Helck's synoptic text included 4 papyri, 2 writing tablets and 98 ostraca (28 ostraca and 1 writing tablet more than Brunner).³⁶ He was the first to present the text in 30 chapters with numbered lines (Ia; Ib; Ic et cetera), whereas Brunner had used pSallier II for numbering the text, much to the annoyance of one of his reviewers.³⁷ Helck's designation of the verses became the standard way of referring to the text, because it allowed the text to be cited more precisely.³⁸ Helck also offered a more complete and comprehensible translation than his predecessors, but to come to this, he had to propose a lot of different readings. His emendations are always ingenious and well-thought out, but more than once speculative or unnecessary. Nevertheless Helck's edition replaced Brunner's as the one which was most consulted by scholars. Translations appeared which more or less followed Helck's emendations: Berlev 1963;³⁹ Lichtheim 1973; Simpson 1973;⁴⁰ Lalouette 1984; Brunner 1988;⁴¹ Parkinson 1991; Hoch 1991–1992; Serrano Delgado 1993;⁴² Roccatti 1994; Parkinson 1997; Foster 2001; Vernus 2001;⁴³ Quirke 2004.

³² Seibert 1967: 25 ff.

³³ Brunner 1969. Citation on page 72.

³⁴ In fact, *Die Charakteristik* would remain the only Egyptological work of Seibert. In 2002 J. Assmann wrote that Seibert had not only disappeared from Egyptology for many years, but also from society at large, and that he was not even certain that Seibert was still alive. Assmann, who considered Seibert to be a brilliant author, regretted this very much: "Ich übertreibe gewiß nicht, wenn ich sage, daß die Ägyptologie heute anders da und die altägyptische Kultur uns heute anders vor Augen stünde, wenn es diesem Menschen vergönnt gewesen wäre, das auf fünf Teile angelegte Projekt, dessen ersten Teil er als Dissertation veröffentlicht hat, auszuführen." (Assmann 2002: 240 n. 23).

³⁵ Helck 1970. Reviewed by D. Mueller (1973) and W. Schenkel (1977).

³⁶ For an overview of the sources, see Helck 1970: 1–6. For Brunner's sources, see Brunner 1944: 12–21.

³⁷ "Mais, puisqu'il publiait ici une édition standard de la Satire, que n'a-t-il donné une numérotation continue aux différents stiques?" (Van de Walle 1949: 245).

³⁸ For example Brunner's pSallier II 6,4 consists of Helck's XIb, XIc and XIId. Jäger's later edition follows Helck's partition in thirty chapters, but differs slightly in his division of the verses, taking into account the verse structure. Also, for convenience he uses Arabic instead of Roman numerals (Jäger 2004: 4). As a result, there are found in the Egyptological literature three different ways of citing a text passage from *Khety*: for example pSallier II 6,5 (Brunner) = XIe (Helck) = §11,3 (Jäger). For easy reference, see the concordance (appendix B).

³⁹ See also Berlev 1980. For other Russian translations, see Anokhina, et al. 2024: 153 n. 13.

⁴⁰ A revised translation appeared in a later edition of this work, see Simpson 2003: 431–437.

⁴¹ A revised edition of this work appeared in 1991.

⁴² A new enlarged edition appeared in 2021.

⁴³ A second revised and augmented edition of this work appeared in 2010.

In turn, Helck's edition was superseded in 2004 by S. Jäger's edition. It was published not as a stand-alone work, but as part of his doctoral thesis *Altägyptische Berufstypologien*, which discussed how various professions were characterized in ancient (Egyptian) texts.⁴⁴ *Khety* was examined in part one, followed by its literary descendants: the *Miscellanies* in part two and *Jesus Sirach* in part three. Although Jäger was inspired by Seibert's work, he did not adopt the term "Charakteristik", but used the term "Berufstypologie" instead. He did, however, follow Seibert's reading of the author's name in calling the work "Die Lehre des Dua-Cheti". Regarding the textual witnesses, these had expanded considerably since Helck's time. Jäger's synoptic text included 9 papyri, 3 writing tablets and no less than 263 ostraca.⁴⁵ Making use of this material, his aim was to reconstruct the original text (*Urtext*), as it was supposedly written by the ancient Egyptian author. In order to do so he created stemmata, although this proved to be not an easy task, as Jäger himself admitted:

Versucht man diese ganze eben dargestellte Methode auf die *Lehre des Dua-Cheti* anzuwenden, so ergibt sich die Schwierigkeit, dass sich für den größten Teil der Textzeugen nicht sagen lässt, wohin sie stemmatisch gehören, da sie zu kurz sind und sich damit ihr Verhältnis zueinander nicht bestimmen lässt; doch auch die Handschriften, die sich einordnen lassen, sind meist so kurz, dass die Stemmata dennoch wenig sichere Ergebnisse liefern kann. [...] Für jeden Schluss, den man aus dem Stemma ziehen will, muss man sich daher vergewissern, ob er das Stemma nicht überinterpretiert.⁴⁶

The result of this stemmatic approach is thus a reconstruction of the text of which it remains uncertain if it does indeed represent the *Urtext* as intended by the ancient author (if any).⁴⁷ Since Jäger's edition new translations have appeared by Vachala 2012; Canhão 2013; Canhão 2014; Dessoudeix 2016; Wilkinson 2016; Fitzenreiter 2018: 123–169; Panov 2021; Mathieu 2022.⁴⁸

1.2 A new synoptic text

Since Jäger's edition (2004) numerous new sources have come to light. These were published recently, turned up during excavations, were sold at auctions, or lay unnoticed in museum collections. This thesis adds 6 papyri, 87 ostraca, 2 writing tablets and 2 dipinti to the list, presenting a total of 14 papyri, 347 ostraca, 4 writing tablets and 2 dipinti, some of which remain unpublished to this day. Sometimes the new sources add much to the textual evidence of a particular chapter, while for other chapters the one or two new texts provide only limited material. Many of the sources offer no alternative readings or merely add variants that do not improve our understanding of the text, which is notorious for being corrupt. In contrast, other sources help to shed light on difficult passages. For example, oCairo SR 1724 is the only source to read *nh* ('guinea fowl') instead of *nhh* ('eternity'), confirming Seibert's emendation

⁴⁴ Jäger 2004. Reviewed by H.-W. Fischer-Elfert 2007.

⁴⁵ For an overview of the sources see Jäger 2004: 5–10. The total includes pTurin CGT 54017 (= pTurin CGT 54019), tAsasif 222 and oBerlin P. 14299 (see note 61), which Jäger mentions but of which no transcription is given in the synoptic text. Furthermore, he lists the joining oRamesseum 68 and 101 (= oUC 32987) separately, and apparently also counts oBM EA 41650 / 47896 as two ostraca. If you take this into account, Jäger has a total of 270 sources instead of 275 (Jäger 2004: 5).

⁴⁶ Jäger 2004: 15.

⁴⁷ Critical of Jäger's approach was Fischer-Elfert in his review: "Die vorhandene Überlieferung Cheti ist ein Paradebeispiel für den Szientismus dieser Methode, der Varianten als messbare Größen zur Rekonstruktion einer „Textgeschichte“ missinterpretiert. Den Kopisten wird dabei jeglicher ästhetische Geschmack und Liberalität im Umgang mit dem Vorgefundenen abgesprochen." (Fischer-Elfert 2007: 309). See also below, page 274.

⁴⁸ Other (partial) translations are being prepared by J. P. Allen and S. Thuault. I thank both authors for sending a copy of their translation prior to publication. Allen's translation is to appear in the book *Middle Egyptian Literature II: Ten Texts from the Literary Renaissance*.

of the text.⁴⁹ oLouvre E 33040 has *h3b ʿ.wj* ('bend the arms'), whereas the other witnesses either offer an incomprehensible variant (*iw bw ʿ.wj*), or the beginning of the word *h3b* falls into a lacuna.⁵⁰ Moreover, four textual witnesses contain a previously unknown sentence.⁵¹ These examples show that the potential importance of even a single find cannot be underestimated.

The reader will notice that the hieroglyphic transcription of the previously known sources sometimes differs slightly from the version of the text found in earlier editions. The reason for this is that I have collated all the sources anew. Jäger himself mostly took over Helck's readings, who in turn could not always make use of photographs and thus had to rely on the work of his predecessors.⁵² Nowadays, many museums have made (part of) their collection available online for consultation, facilitating the research of these objects considerably. I have gratefully made use of such online collections. If no images were available or if the quality of the images proved insufficient, museums often send me good quality photographs or scans of the objects in question. In some cases the work of earlier scholars proved to be indispensable, as collation was not always possible for different reasons. For example, sometimes part of the text on an object is now illegible due to surface deterioration. A few ostraca are lost with no photographs being ever made.⁵³

Collating the sources has proved to be a useful undertaking, even if corrections were not always needed. In several instances I was able to improve the reading. Most of the time it concerned only minor corrections, but occasionally more substantial rectifications were required. For example, collation of the well-known papyri Sallier II and Anastasi VII brought to light several misreadings by modern editors. It concerns false interpretations of the hieratic, incorrectly placed or omitted verse points, rubrics that are not marked as such, wrong lengths of lacunae, and in one instance even the omission of an entire sentence.⁵⁴ Thus, some variants, supposedly written by ancient Egyptian scribes, turned out to not be variants at all, but rather transcription errors by earlier Egyptologists. As a result, collating the textual witnesses has reduced the number of variants, the study of which is important for the transmission history of any literary composition.

Modern scholars who wish to study textual variants or make a translation, for example, often rely on synoptic text editions as their main source of information. I hope that the synoptic text in this dissertation will provide an up-to-date, reliable starting point for further studies. A translation and commentary accompanying the synoptic text is planned for by the present author to appear in the series *Egyptologische Uitgaven* (Leiden).

⁴⁹ *Khety*, chapter §13,1. Seibert 1967: 160–161.

⁵⁰ *Khety*, chapter §24,2.

⁵¹ pTurin CGT 54019; oBerlin P. 14934; oBrussels E 6452; oLouvre E 32896. oDeM 1576 and oTurin CGT 57082 also preserve previously unrecognized remnants of this phrase. pBerlin P. 15738f and the unpublished ostrakon oANash.Mus.H.O.1015 also once contained this verse, although it is now lost.

⁵² Helck 1970: 1–7. Fischer-Elfert, who reviewed Jäger's work, criticized Jäger for failing to collate the sources included in his synoptic text (Fischer-Elfert 2007: 314).

⁵³ It concerns oMünchen ÄS 3787 and oWilson 62. The former was destroyed in World War II due to a bombardment (Helck 1970: 7). The latter "disappeared" in Luxor, when it was moved from the old to the new Chicago House (personal comment Susan Allison, Oriental Institute). For oMünchen ÄS 3787 I copied the transcription from Brunner's edition. For oWilson 62 I consulted Wilson's transcription of the object, which was kindly provided to me by the Oriental Institute. For oAbydos, oMichaelides 45, oSaqqara, oRamesseum 69, and oCairo SR 1838 (the left piece) I was also not able to consult photographs, because it proved impossible to trace the current location of the object in question. Therefore I had to rely on the published facsimiles for collation purposes, or in the case of oCairo SR 1838 on Černý's notes. This also applies to oEg.Exp.23001.55, because no photograph was available to me at the time of writing. The transcription of the ostraca o2004.STO.011, o2007.APS.027, o2007.APS.050 and o2007.APS.087 is based on facsimiles made by Christophe Barbotin. I am grateful to him for allowing me to study them ahead of publication.

⁵⁴ The omitted sentence (by both Helck and Jäger) concerns pAnastasi VII, column IV, line 4–5 (*nn hr wnn=f m nhw*).