



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

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

Jurjens, J.

Citation

Jurjens, J. (2024, October 23). *The teaching of Khety and its use as an educational tool in ancient Egypt*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4105205>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4105205>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Section one:

Paratextual features

Publication note

Jurjens. J. 2021a. Dates on Literary Ostraca: A Case Study, *ZÄS* 148 (1): 83–91.

Judith Jurjens

Dates on Literary Ostraca: A Case Study

<https://doi.org/10.1515/zaes-2021-0103>

Summary: This paper presents an analysis of the dates found on ostraca containing the literary composition *The Teaching of Khety*, also known as *The Satire of the Trades*. Various aspects of these dates are discussed, for example the palaeography and the placement of the dates on the ostrakon, for the purpose of outlining some scribal practices in ancient Egypt. From the dates themselves can be deduced that scribes conducted their literary activities all year round, both during the working week and at the weekend. Finally, the presumed educational context of the ostraca is discussed. The high percentage of dates on ostraca with *Khety*, in comparison to other literary compositions, suggests *Khety* was the most popular text used in the training of scribes.

Keywords: dates – education – Instruction of Khety – ostrakon – scribal practices

1 Introduction

Little or no work has been done on the dates which are found on literary ostraca since Andrea McDowell's article¹. In most text editions no attention is paid to these dates, if they are mentioned at all, because editors are usually only concerned with the text itself. This is the case, for example, in the editions of *The Teaching of Khety*. Brunner (1944) omits the dates from his synoptic text edition. Helck (1970) does include them, but otherwise pays no attention to them. Jäger (2004) omits all but a few. Another reason why little attention is paid to these dates may be that they are unusable for exact dating because they only mention the day and month, rarely a year, and never a king's name. This paper tries to show that these dates are important, since they can offer information about scribal practices in ancient Egypt. The analysis of the dates in this paper is intended to help researchers recognize and interpret dates they may come across on literary ostraca.

¹ McDowell 1996.

2 The corpus

In this paper *The Teaching of Khety*, also known as *The Satire of the Trades*, is used as a case study. It was one of the most popular wisdom instructions of the time, as can be seen from the multitude of ostraca bearing extracts from this literary composition. In fact, *Khety* is the most attested wisdom instruction on ostraca from Deir el-Medina². For my PhD project³ I have gathered together all known examples, both published and unpublished, which amount to a total of no fewer than 323 ostraca. Of these, 48 bear dates, so 15 %⁴. This percentage would be even higher if we count ostraca where dates are no longer preserved but where there is a good possibility they were once there. For example, on some of the ostraca traces of red ink are still visible. Because dates were mostly written in red ink, these traces are very probably the remnants of a date, especially because they occur in the right place for a date (see below)

² Hagen 2012, 84.

³ Being and becoming a scribe: *The Teaching of Khety* and its use as an educational tool in Ancient Egypt (Universiteit Leiden), funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) [project number 023.008.011].

⁴ oBM EA 65597, oBM EA 65943, oBM EA 29550+oDeM 1546 (Demarée 2002); oBM EA 41650/47896 (Parkinson 1999); oCairo 25217 (Daressy 1901; Helck 1970); oColin-Campbell 12 (= oGlasgow D.1295.77 in McDowell 1993); oDeM 1013, oDeM 1015, oDeM 1037, oDeM 1039, oDeM 1043, oDeM 1087 (Posener 1938); oDeM 1179+oTurin 6622 (Posener 1951–1972); oDeM 1497, oDeM 1520, oDeM 1523, oDeM 1536, oDeM 1539, oDeM 1557, oDeM 1571, oDeM 1575, oDeM 1579, oDeM 1581 (Posener 1977–1980); oGardiner 47 (Helck 1970); oGardiner 311 (= HO 94,1 in Černý, Gardiner 1957); oGardiner 344 (= HO 102,3 in Černý, Gardiner 1957); oGardiner 491, oGardiner 576, oGardiner 632 (unpublished; current location: Ashmolean Museum); oGeneva 012551 (= oGenf 12551 in Helck 1970); oMerenptah (= Kat. Nr. 6 to be published by Matthias Müller, cf. Müller 2014); oToronto A3 (Gardiner, Thompson, Milne 1913); oThutmosis 15685, oThutmosis 20840 (unpublished; temporary numbers); oTurin 57244; oTurin 57298 (López 1980); oUC 31951 (unpublished; current location: Petrie Museum); oUC 32000 (= oPetrie 70 in Helck 1970); oUC 32266 (= HO 10,1 in Černý, Gardiner 1957); oUC 32986 (= oRamesseum 66 in Spiegelberg 1898); oUC 32995 (= oRamesseum 76 in Spiegelberg 1898); oUC 32998 (= oRamesseum 79 in Spiegelberg 1898); oUC 33008 (= oRamesseum 88 in Spiegelberg 1898); oUC 33013 (= oRamesseum 94 in Spiegelberg 1898); oUC 39639 (= HO 13,1 in Černý, Gardiner 1957); oUC 39675 (= HO 12,3 in Černý, Gardiner 1957); oVarille (Vente Archéologie, Arts d'Orient, Extrême-Orient, Auction Catalogue, 27 Apr–28 Apr, Pierre Bergé & Associés, Paris, 2007, no. 420); oWilson 106 (Helck 1970).

and no rubrics are otherwise present on these ostraca⁵. If we include these, a total of 16 % of the *Khety* ostraca bear dates. Again, this percentage could be higher still, since there are also some ostraca in my corpus which break off before the completion of a chapter, and some of these may also have once contained a date at the end.

In her article A. McDowell presents a large sample of approximately 100 ostraca with dates⁶. Of these, 25 contain extracts from *Khety*. Others bear passages from other literary compositions like *The Teaching of Amenemhet*, *The Hymn to the Nile* and *Die Satirische Streitschrift des Papyrus Anastasi I*. There are also hymns and even a magical text amongst her examples. McDowell gathered her corpus from a number of sources and did not focus on a single text⁷. For example, not all ostraca with dates inscribed with *The Teaching of Amenemhet* were included. This is also the case for *Khety*. This paper presents a further 23 ostraca, over and above the 25 already collected by McDowell. From her corpus she concluded that “fewer than 1/10” of the ostraca bear dates and that the practice of adding dates was therefore “idiosyncratic to a few instructors or students”⁸. As we have seen above, around 15 % of the ostraca with *Khety* bear dates, which is higher than the percentage deduced by McDowell. Apparently, the practice of adding dates was more common when writing *Khety* and less so for other texts. To be certain of this, this study would have to be repeated for every text separately, gathering all the material relating to a single text and then looking at the number of ostraca with dates, as has been done here for *Khety*. For the time being, because dates are often seen as proof of an educational context (see below), it seems that *Khety* was more often used in an educational context than other literary texts.

3 The position of the date on an ostracon

The majority of the dates (74 %) in the corpus conclude a chapter. When an ostracon ends not at the end of a chapter but with the first line of the next chapter, the date is often written not at the end of the chapter but after this first line (16 %). In rare cases (8 %) the date stands alone and seems to date the text on the ostracon itself rather than a chapter (see below). In one instance a date is added in the middle of a chapter, at the end of the ostracon⁹.

Most dates (42 %) are written directly between two chapters, with little or no spacing in between (Fig. 1). The punctuation sign (*grh*) is sometimes added in front of the date. In some cases, the date is also written directly following a chapter, but then the text does not immediately continue, as in the examples above. Instead, the space behind the date is left blank and the next chapter starts on the next line (21 %) (Fig. 2), or the date marks the end of the ostracon (12 %) (Fig. 3). In other cases, the date is written on the next line and stands by itself at the bottom of the ostracon (21 %) (Fig. 4). If this is the case, the date is often written parallel to the rest of the text, sometimes at an angle. In rare cases (3 %) the date is placed somewhere different than the above-mentioned positions¹⁰.

It seems the observation by McDowell that the dates are “often written out of line with the copied passage, across the bottom of the ostracon or at an angle”¹¹, does not apply to my corpus.

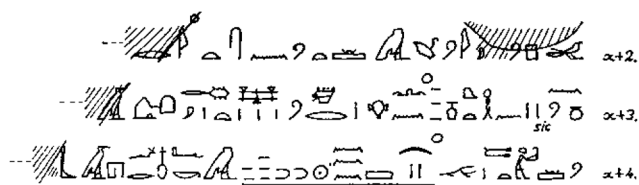


Figure 1: oDeM 1581: end chapter 28, date, start chapter 29 (l. x+4). Posener 1977–1980, pl. 44.

5 oDeM 1532 (Posener 1977–1980); oDeM 1548 (Posener 1977–1980); oGardiner 1031 (unpublished; current location: Ashmolean Museum); oDeM 1104 (rubrics uncertain) (Posener 1938).

6 McDowell 1996, 603.

7 McDowell 1996, 601, n. 1.

8 McDowell 1996, 605. McDowell regards the ostraca from Deir el-Medina as student's exercises, thus all stemming from an educational context.

9 oGardiner 344. Compare also oBM EA 29550+oDeM 1546 which also ends in the middle of a chapter but has no date there.

10 oUC 31951: by itself on the verso, while the text is on the recto; oGeneva 012551, v° l. 1: by itself above the text.

11 McDowell 1996, 604.

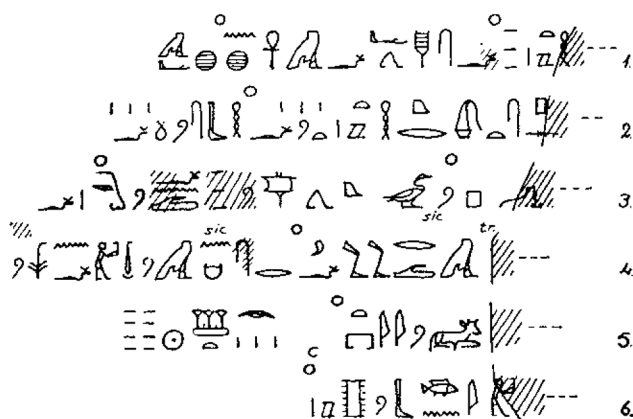


Figure 2: oDeM 1520: end chapter 9, date (l. 5); start chapter 10 (l. 6). Posener 1977–1980, pl. 36.

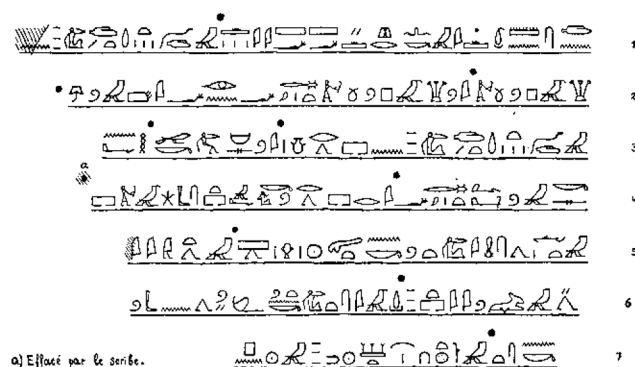


Figure 3: oDeM 1039: end chapter 26, date (l. 7). Posener 1938, pl. 22.

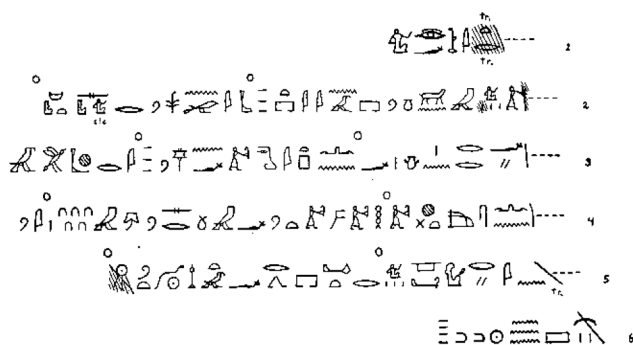


Figure 4: oDeM 1037: end chapter 14 (l. 5); date (l. 6). Posener 1938, pl. 20.

4 When was the scribe at work?

So, when were the scribes at work, writing down extracts from *The Teaching of Khety*? To answer this question, we must take a look at the dates themselves, which are the following:

1. I *3ht* 5 (oBM EA 41650/47896)
2. II *3ht* 8 (oUC 32995)
3. Year 10, I *3ht* 13 *m hrw pn* (oDeM 1039)
4. II *3ht* 12 (oGardiner 311)
5. II *3ht* 24 (oDeM 1523)
6. III? *3ht* 7 (oDeM 1557)
7. III *3ht* 8 (oDeM 1520)
8. III *3ht* 14? (oBM EA 29550+oDeM 1546)
9. III *3ht* 15 (oMerenptah)
10. III? *3ht* 16 (oDeM 1539)
11. III *3ht* 21 (oDeM 1536)
12. III *3ht* 21? (oBM EA 29550+oDeM 1546)
13. III *3ht* 24 (oBM EA 29550+oDeM 1546)
14. IV *3ht* 11 (oToronto A3)
15. IV *3ht* 21 (oBM EA 29550+oDeM 1546)
16. IV *3ht* 22 (oDeM 1497)
17. IV *3ht* 25 (oUC 39639)
18. IV *3ht* 29 (oDeM 1497)
19. [...] *3ht* 4 (oBM EA 29550+oDeM 1546)
20. *3ht* 8 (oBM EA 29550+oDeM 1546)
21. II *prt* 5 (oGeneva 012551)
22. II *prt* 12 (oDeM 1179+oTurin 57316)
23. II *prt* 16 (oDeM 1179+oTurin 57316)
24. II *prt* [...] (oGeneva 012551)
25. II *prt* [...] (oGardiner 344)
26. III? *prt* 1 (oColin-Campbell 12)
27. III *prt* 4 (oGeneva 012551)
28. III *prt* 25 (oUC 32266)
29. III *prt* [27] (oUC 32266)
30. III? *prt*? 29 (oDeM 1575)
31. IV *prt* 2 (oBM EA 65943)
32. Year 16, IV *prt* 20 (oUC 39675)
33. Year 16, IV *prt* [...] (oGardiner 47)
34. IV *prt* 21 (oUC 32000)
35. IV *prt* [...] (oUC 31951)
36. IV *prt* [...] (oGardiner 491)
37. [...] *prt* 10 (oVarille)
38. [...] *prt* 13 (oDeM 1579)
39. [...] *prt* 14? (oDeM 1571)
40. I *šmw* 2 (oDeM 1087)
41. I *šmw* 13 (oDeM 1013)
42. I *šmw* 19 (oDeM 1013)

I *šmw* [...] (oUC 32998)
 II *šmw* 5 (oTurin 57244)
 II *šmw* 20 (oThutmosis 15685)
 II *šmw* 24 (oCairo 25217)
 II? *šmw* 24 (oDeM 1037)
 II *šmw* 25 (oDeM 1581)
 III *šmw* 3 (oTurin 57298)
 IV *šmw* 13(?) (oDeM 1043)
 IV *šmw* [...] (oGardiner 576)
 IV? *šmw* [...] (oGardiner 576)
 [...] *šmw* 9 (oUC 32986)
 [...] *šmw* 11? (oDeM 1015)
 [...] *šmw* 22 (oWilson 106)
 [...] *šmw* [...] (oGardiner 632)

I [...] (oUC 33013)

[...] 19? (oDeM 1013)
 [...] 26 (oThutmosis 20840)
 [...] 24 (oUC 33008)

[...] *hrw? mswt-Wsjr* (oBM EA 41650/47896)

[...] (oBM EA 65597)
 [...] (oUC 32266)
 [...] (oDeM 1497)
 [...] (oDeM 1497)
 [...] (oGardiner 576)

First of all, there doesn't seem to be much difference between the seasons, since they are fairly evenly distributed throughout the material. So, scribes conducted their literary activities all year round. What about the days? If scribes wrote during the week (days 1–8, 11–18, 21–28), as well as at the weekend (days 9–10, 19–20, 29–30), then 80 % of the dates would be mid-week dates and 20 % weekend dates. If we take a look at the dates above, 42 dates fall in the working week and 8 dates fall in the weekend, so 84 % mid-week and 16 % weekend dates. These figures deviate a bit from those of McDowell, who counted 89 % mid-week and 11 % dates at the weekend¹². She based the following conclusion on her figures: because the dates fall more often during the working week, lessons would have taken place during the working week, on days when the crew were not at work. However, looking at my figures, the division is not so clear; the 16 % of weekend dates does not deviate much from the expected 20 %, so I do not see a real “aversion to practicing writing on the weekends”¹³. In

fact, one scribe was even at work on the Birthday of Osiris, the first epagomenal day of the year¹⁴. Apparently scribes wrote down literary texts or (in the case of an educational context) children were being educated both during the working week and at the weekend. This conclusion is supported by ostraca with multiple dates. Some of these contain dates which fall both during the week and at the weekend¹⁵, so clearly the scribe did not stop his literary activities because of the weekend.

5 Multiple dates

Especially interesting are ostraca which bear multiple dates because they can give us information about how scribes progressed. This was already noted by Charles Maystre in his article about oGeneva 012551¹⁶. Unfortunately, oGeneva 012551 was the only ostrakon known to him containing more than one date, so he was unable to make comparisons¹⁷. Nowadays more are known: 19 % of the ostraca with dates in my corpus bear multiple dates¹⁸. Again, this percentage could well be slightly higher because some ostraca (at least 5) have a single date but then break off in the middle of the following chapter. It is possible that a second date may have been present after this chapter but is now no longer preserved.

As seen above, most dates conclude a chapter, and this is also the case with ostraca containing multiple dates: after each chapter a date was added. Apparently, the scribe wrote chapter by chapter, putting the ostrakon aside for a while before taking up his assignment again¹⁹. The number of days between writing sessions differs widely, from 2 to 10 days in between chapters. This kind of variation is possible even on a single ostrakon. For example, on oBM EA 29550+oDeM 1546 the chapters are respectively 7(?), 3(?), 10, 4 and 13 days (for 2 chapters) apart. This is a broader range than the 3 or 4 days apart which was observed earlier²⁰. Why there were so many days in between writing chapters is not known²¹. The difference

¹⁴ oBM EA 41650/47896 (see Parkinson 1999, 50, n. e).

¹⁵ oDeM 1013: I *šmw* 13 and I *šmw* 19; oDeM 1497: IV *šht* 2 and IV *šht* 29.

¹⁶ Maystre 1938.

¹⁷ Maystre 1938, 68.

¹⁸ oDeM 1013; oDeM 1179+oTurin 6622; oDeM 1497; oUC 32266; oGardiner 576; oBM EA 41650/47896; oBM EA 29550+oDeM 1546; oGeneva 012551; oCairo 25217.

¹⁹ The practice of inscribing sherds over a period of time is also known for non-literary ostraca (Lougovaya 2018, 56).

²⁰ McDowell 1996, 606.

²¹ Brunner 1957, 76.

¹² McDowell 1996, 605.

¹³ McDowell 1996, 606.

in number of days cannot be accounted for by the length of the various chapters. They do not differ so much in length that a scribe would have taken a day longer (or even more) to write down one chapter than another. Instead, the scribe interrupted his work for a couple of days before taking up his assignment again. Perhaps, he needed time to study and memorize the next chapter before writing it down²². A. McDowell saw in the difference in number of days between chapters proof that students received tuition at irregularly spaced intervals, on days when the gang from Deir el-Medina was not at work²³.

6 Scribal practices

6.1 Two chapters in one go

As noted above, a scribe usually wrote one chapter at a time, but from the evidence it can be deduced that sometimes he wrote not one, but two chapters. On oBM EA 29550+oDeM 1546 dates follow chapters 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 20, but not chapter 19, although the end of this chapter is marked by the punctuation sign (*grh*). Apparently, the scribe wrote chapters 19 and 20 in one go. The same applies to oDeM 1013. Here the scribe added dates after chapters 23 and 25 but not after chapter 24.

This phenomenon occurs not only on ostraca with multiple dates but also on ostraca with single dates. oGardiner 47 and oDeM 1039 (Fig. 3) contain two chapters each, but in both instances only the last chapter is dated, which indicates the scribes wrote the two chapters at the same time. On both ostraca the date also coincides with the end of the ostrakon. Apparently, the scribe wrote his chapters until there was no space left, and then added the date as a sort of concluding remark. That the date in these cases marks the end of the text itself rather than the end of a chapter is apparent from oGardiner 344. The scribe of this ostrakon wrote chapter 1 of *Khety*, followed by chapter 2, without putting a date in between. He did not have enough space left to complete the chapter, so at the end of the ostrakon he stopped, right in the middle of chapter 2, and then scribbled down a date in the small space left at the bottom.

The same applies to some of the stand-alone dates found on ostraca: they date the text on the ostrakon itself, i. e. the finished assignment on it, rather than the end of a

chapter²⁴. Interesting in this respect are two ostraca which have a separate date immediately following another date. oDeM 1013, mentioned above, has a date written directly after the end of chapter 25, as can be expected. Then, on the following line, there immediately follows another date, perhaps written in a different hand, as if to mark the end of the ostrakon or indeed the completion of the entire task (the ostrakon contains three chapters in total).²⁵ A parallel is oGardiner 576, which contains only one chapter but no fewer than three dates. The scribe wrote the chapter on two sides of the ostrakon. At the bottom of the recto there are the remnants of a stand-alone date, written at a bit of an angle to the rest of the text. Clearly this date does not mark the end of a chapter, because the scribe had not finished writing it yet, but rather the end of the text on the recto. When the scribe completed the chapter on the verso, another date, now lost, was added²⁶. Then, after this date, there immediately follows another one, written by itself on the next line, marking the end of the completed task, as is the case with oDeM 1013. Since both ostraca also contain corrections it is possible that the final date was added after the entire text had been revised.

6.2 When were the dates added?

It is not known when exactly the dates were added. Were they added during the process of writing, immediately after a scribe had copied down the text? Or were they added later than the text itself, for example after revising the entire text? My corpus contains some interesting features which seem to suggest that, at least in some instances, the latter was the case²⁷. To be precise, on some ostraca the date overlaps with the first words of the next chapter²⁸. It seems that, during copying, the scribe left a blank space for a date to be added later, but that in these instances the available space was too small to put the entire date in, hence the overlap. This practice is also apparent on another ostrakon (oVarille), on which the blank space is

²² Brunner 1957, 76; van de Walle 1948, 24.

²³ McDowell 1996, 605–606.

²⁴ E. g. oGeneva 012551, v^o l. 1; oWilson 106.

²⁵ Cf. also oTurin 57539 (López 1978–1984), pl. 174, 174a.

²⁶ There are traces of red ink visible at the end of the chapter. Since the text on the ostrakon is written in black ink and contains no rubrics, these traces are very probably the remnants of a date.

²⁷ The observations made below can also be seen as regards to rubrics on papyri, which were sometimes later added by the scribe. Posener suggested as a possible reason that the scribe did not want the distraction of having to change brushes to interrupt his attention while writing his text, cf. Posener 1951, 75–76. For an example of red *grh* signs being added later, see Clère 1939, 20, n. 4.

²⁸ oDeM 1557; oUC 32266, r^o 2; oGeneva 012551, r^o 3.

still visible because for some reason it was never filled in. It occurs just before the start of a new chapter, so it looks like the scribe left this space intentionally empty for the later insertion of a date. This is supported by the presence of another date on the same ostrakon, which is found a couple of lines earlier in a similar position, just before the start of a new chapter.²⁹ The opposite can be seen on oBM EA 29550+oDeM 1564, an ostrakon which contains multiple dates. Apparently, after copying his first chapter, the scribe forgot to leave room for a date because the date can be seen scribbled above the line. He did not make the same mistake again though: the other dates are written neatly in between the chapters, just where they are supposed to be.

From her evidence A. McDowell also concluded that the dates were added later, presumably after revision of the text³⁰. Her argument, however, that the dates are a later addition because they are written out of line with the copied passage, across the bottom of the ostrakon or at an angle, is not valid for my corpus, where this is seldom the case (see above). The question, therefore, is if this conclusion can be applied to all ostraca with dates, since in most cases the dates are a perfect fit: they are written between chapters without any overlap or spacing. This would seem to suggest the date was added during the process of writing rather than afterwards. On the other hand, it could also mean that most scribes were skilled enough to make the dates fit. On one of the ostraca with an overlapping date (oUC 32266, r° 2), it is apparent the scribe did his best to make the date match the available space because the date is written in a smaller hand than the rest of the text. In this case, it was a failed attempt, but one can imagine that using smaller handwriting would have been a perfect solution to make the date match the available space, and there are indeed some other examples where this is the case³¹. The opposite also occurs, however. If a scribe had plenty of room (which is often the case on ostraca where the next chapter starts on the next line), he sometimes made good use of it by writing the date not directly following the chapter, without any spacing, as normal, but leaving some room before adding the date³².

All in all, it seems likely that in some instances the date was added not during copying but at some moment later in time. Whether or not this was always the case is difficult to say for certain as the evidence remains inconclusive regarding most ostraca.

6.3 Who added the dates?

Opinions differ as to whether the date was added by the same scribe who wrote the text or by someone else, for example a teacher. Some scholars think the dates were written by the copyist himself³³, others that they were added by someone else³⁴. To answer this question a thorough palaeographical analysis of the handwriting of the date and the text itself would be needed to establish whether or not they were written in the same hand. However, one immediately runs into difficulties when one tries to compare the two. First of all, signs occurring in dates (for example N5, N37, O1) are more often than not lacking in the rest of the text, or only occur sporadically which makes a comparison between the two virtually impossible. Secondly, signs in dates are sometimes written in an abbreviated form, as is the case with *sw* and *ḥt*³⁵, so they can for that reason differ from the same signs in the text itself. Thirdly, a scribe will not write a single sign exactly the same every time; there is usually some variance in the handwriting of the same scribe³⁶. Therefore, it is often difficult to say whether signs differ due to being written by a different scribe or due to this variance in the handwriting of a single scribe (Fig. 5), especially when there are so few signs, if any, to compare. Lastly, because the dates are often written in red ink, they are sometimes faded beyond the point of palaeographical analysis. Because of these difficulties, there are only one or two ostraca in my corpus where I was able to establish with relative certainty that the date was written by the copyist himself, not by another scribe (Fig. 6). Whether this is also the case for the other ostraca remains impossible to say for certain³⁷.

²⁹ Similar blank spaces can be found on oDeM 1047 (Posener 1938), oDeM 1493 (Posener 1977–1980) and oBM EA 65943 (Demarée 2002). In the case of the latter, a date has been added below the blank space, probably because the scribe foresaw there was not enough room in the blank space to insert the date there.

³⁰ McDowell 1996, 604.

³¹ E. g. oDeM 1179+oTurin 6622, l. 4; oUC 32000; oBMEA 41650/47896, l. 3; oVarille, l. 5.

³² oDeM 1520 (Fig. 2); oDeM 1087; oCairo 25217. On oBM EA 41650/47896, l. 6 the scribe did add the date immediately after the chapter, but then left some spacing before the start of the next chap-

ter. This, however, could also be due to a ridge on the surface of the ostrakon (Parkinson 1999, 51, n. k).

³³ Maspero 1914, ix; Brunner 1957, 76.

³⁴ Erman 1925, 8–9; McDowell 1996, 604.

³⁵ *sw*: Möller 1927, n° 303 and n° 303B; *ḥt*: Möller 1927, n° 274 and n° LX.

³⁶ van den Berg, Donker van Heel 2000.

³⁷ Cf. Hagen 2012, 94.






	hieroglyph	date	text
oDeM 1013		 r° 8  v° 9	 r° 7  v° 4

Figure 5: The palaeography of the sign N37, appearing both in the date and the text itself of oDeM 1013, to serve as an illustration of the different forms a single sign can take on a single ostrakon.










	hieroglyph	date	text
oCairo 25217		 r° 5	 r° 1
		 r° 5	 r° 5
oDeM 1037		 l. 6	 l. 5

Figure 6: The palaeography of the signs N5 and N37 on oCairo 25217, and the sign N5 on oDeM 1037. In both cases these signs seem to have been written by the same hand.

7 A school context?

Since Adolf Erman's influential article on ancient Egyptian school texts, ostraca with literary texts have often been regarded as school exercises³⁸. One of the criteria to mark them as stemming from an educational context has been the occurrence of a date on the ostrakon. According to Erman, these dates were tutor's check marks, added by a teacher after revising the lesson of his student³⁹. Although this particular conclusion was not necessarily accepted by everyone, many scholars since have interpreted the purpose of the dates in the light of an educational context. It is thought the dates were added by a student after finishing his daily pensum⁴⁰, or before continuing with his next assignment⁴¹.

Fredrik Hagen, however, was the first to caution that the occurrence of a date on an ostrakon does not necessarily have to imply an educational context: "it seems dogmatic to classify a literary ostrakon as an exercise solely

on the basis of the presence of dates in a text when their purpose is not properly understood"⁴². For example, one could imagine a scenario where a professional scribe, during a break from his official duties, wrote down a literary text for his own pleasure, adding a date to mark the occasion⁴³. Even so, Hagen also states that "the high number of sources for *Khety* [...] is perhaps an indication that, from a statistical point of view, these ostraca are the most likely to represent copies produced during the education and training of scribes"⁴⁴.

So, until further research proves otherwise, most ostraca with *Khety* are assumed to stem from an educational context, although it remains difficult to demonstrate for every individual ostrakon that it was used in this way, and this can certainly not be established solely on the basis of a date alone. Whether a particular ostrakon stems from a school context or not, apparently it was sometimes important to remember the exact day and month a text was written, hence the addition of a date. The date served as an aide-mémoire⁴⁵, be it for a teacher as a reminder of when his student handed in his homework, or for a professional scribe to keep track of copied passages, for example when a longer text occupied several ostraca. In this way the dates functioned as a sort of organizing principle⁴⁶.

8 Conclusions

The present research has shown that some earlier conclusions regarding dates on literary ostraca must be revised somewhat. In sum, dates are most often found at the end of a chapter except when an ostrakon ends with the first line of the next chapter, in which case the date is sometimes put after this first line. If an ostrakon contains multiple chapters, then dates, if present, are written in between the chapters, without any spacing. Most of the dates in my corpus are written in line with the copied passage and not out of line with the rest of the text or at an angle, as A. McDowell asserted. There is some evidence that dates were added later, seemingly by the same scribe, but the evidence is sparse, and it is difficult to say whether this applies to all ostraca. Ostraca with multiple dates reveal that scribes usually wrote one chapter at a time, some-

³⁸ Erman 1925, 9, 23.

³⁹ Erman 1925, 8–9; followed by McDowell 1996, 604.

⁴⁰ Maspero 1914, ix; van de Walle 1948, 21, 24, 27; Gasse 2005, 68.

⁴¹ Gasse 2005, 68.

⁴² Hagen 2012, 94. Cf. also Hagen 2006, 86; Hagen 2007, 39; followed by Widmaier 2013, 497, n. 57, 510.

⁴³ Hagen 2006, 92–93; Parkinson 2009, 111.

⁴⁴ Hagen 2012, 85.

⁴⁵ Gardiner, Thompson, Milne 1913, 4.

⁴⁶ Posener 1975, 108.

times two. The days in between writing vary from 2 to 10 days (instead of the 3 or 4 days previously assumed), and scribes sometimes interrupted their work for a period of time. They conducted their literary activities both during the working week and at the weekend, without a real preference for one or the other; there is no evidence for an aversion to writing at the weekend, as McDowell suggested.

The purpose of the date was to serve as a memorandum to keep track of when a certain passage was written. Why this was considered important is unclear. The question of why dates were added has often been answered as being due to the supposed educational context of the ostraca and often fall within a teacher-student scenario. In fact, the occurrence of a date on an ostrakon has become one of the criteria to mark an ostrakon as a student's exercise. However, we should be careful when making this assumption solely on the basis of the presence of a date. Assuming that most ostraca with *Khety* stem from a school context and that dates are associated with scribal training, the evidence from this study suggests that *Khety* was the most popular text in the education of ancient Egyptian scribes, since the practice of adding dates was more common when writing *Khety* than in other texts; some 15% of the ostraca with *Khety* contain dates compared to the less than 10% found by McDowell. To confirm this, more research is needed, and it would be interesting to repeat this study for other literary texts.

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank Rob Demarée for drawing my attention to the unpublished ostraca in my corpus. I am also grateful to Olaf Kaper and Jacobus van Dijk for their useful comments on first drafts of this paper. In loving memory of Julia Harvey, who reviewed and corrected the English of this article.

Bibliography

- Brunner, H., 1944, *Die Lehre des Cheti, Sohnes des Duauf*. ÄgForsch 13.
- , 1957, *Altägyptische Erziehung*, Wiesbaden.
- Černý, J., Gardiner, A. H., 1957, *Hieratic Ostraca*, vol. 1, Oxford.
- Clère, J. J., 1939, "Three New Ostraca of the Story of Sinuhe", *JEA* 25, 16–29.
- Daressy, G., 1901, *Ostraca*, CGC nos. 25001–25385, Cairo.
- Demarée, R. J., 2002, *Ramesside Ostraca*, London.
- Erman, A., 1925, *Die ägyptischen Schülerhandschriften*. APAW 2.
- Gardiner, A. H., Thompson, H., Milne, J. G., 1913, *Theban ostraca*. Edited from the originals, now mainly in the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, Toronto, and the Bodleian Library, Oxford, UTS, London.
- Gasse, A., 2005, *Catalogue des ostraca littéraires de Deir al-Médina*, vol. V: Nos. 1775–1873 et 1156. DFIFAO 44.
- Hagen, F., 2006, "Literature, transmission, and the Late Egyptian Miscellanies", in: R. J. Dann (Hg.), *Current research in Egyptology 2004*. Proceedings of the fifth annual symposium which took place at the University of Durham January 2004, Oxford, 84–99.
- 2007, "Ostraca, literature and teaching at Deir el-Medina", in: R. Mairs, A. Stevenson (Hgg.), *Current research in Egyptology 2005*. Proceedings of the sixth annual symposium, University of Cambridge, 6–8 January 2005, Oxford, 38–51.
- 2012, *An Ancient Egyptian Literary Text in Context*. The Instruction of Ptahhotep. OLA 218.
- Helck, W., 1970, *Die Lehre des Dw3-Htj*. KÄT 3.
- Jäger, S., 2004, *Altägyptische Berufstypologien*. *Lingua Aegyptia. Studia Monographica* 4.
- López, J., 1974–1984, *Ostraca ieratici*. *Catalogo del Museo Egizio di Torino*, serie seconda, Milan.
- Lougovaya, J., 2018, "Writing on ostraca: considerations of material aspects", in: F. A. J. Hoogendijk, S. van Gompel (Hgg.), *The materiality of texts from ancient Egypt*. New approaches to the study of textual material from the early Pharaonic to the Late Antique period, Leiden, Boston, 52–61.
- Maspero, G., 1914, *Les enseignements d'Amenemhaît I^{er} à son fils Sanouasrît I^{er}*, BdE 6.
- Maystre, C., 1938, "Un exercice d'écolier égyptien sur un ostrakon du Musée d'Art et d'Histoire", *Genava* 16, 66–71.
- McDowell, A. G., 1993, *Hieratic Ostraca in the Hunterian Museum*, Glasgow, Oxford.
- 1996, "Student Exercises from Deir el-Medina: The Dates", in: P. Der Manuelian (Hg.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, vol. 2, Boston, 601–608.
- Möller, G., 1927, *Hieratische Paläographie*. Die ägyptische Buchschrift in ihrer Entwicklung von der fünften Dynastie bis zur römischen Kaiserzeit, vol. 2, 2nd ed., Leipzig.
- Müller, M., 2014, "Ostraka aus dem Totentempel des Merenptah in Theben", in: J. Toivari-Viitala, T. Vartiainen, S. Uvanto (Hgg.), *Deir el-Medina studies*. Helsinki, Juni 24–26, 2009. Proceedings, Vantaa, 144–153.
- Parkinson, R. B., 1999, "Two or three literary artefacts: British Museum EA 41650/47896, and 22878–9", in: W. V. Davies (Hg.), *Studies in Egyptian Antiquities*. A Tribute to T. G. H. James, London, 49–57.
- 2009, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry*. Among Other Histories, Chichester.
- Posener, G., 1938, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh*, vol. I: Nos. 1001 à 1108. DFIFAO 1.
- 1951, "Sur l'emploi de l'encre rouge dans les manuscrits égyptiens", *JEA* 37, 75–80.
- 1951–1972, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh*, vol. II: Nos. 1109 à 1266. DFIFAO 18.
- 1975, "Les ostraca numérotés et le Conte du Revenant" in: I. S. Katsnelson (Hg.), *K semidesyatipyatiletu akademika M.A. Korostovtseva* [Festschrift M.A. Korostovtsev], *Drevnii Vostok*, Sbornik I, Moscow, 105–112.
- 1977–1980, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh*, vol. III: Nos. 1267 à 1675. DFIFAO 20.
- Spiegelberg, W., 1898, *Hieratic Ostraca and Papyri found by J. E. Quibell in the Ramesseum*, 1895–6, London.

van den Berg, H., Donker van Heel, K., 2000, “A Scribe’s Cache from the Valley of Queens? The Palaeography of Documents from Deir El-Medina: Some Remarks”, in: R. J. Demarée, A. Egberts (Hgg.), *Deir el-Medīna in the Third Millennium AD. A Tribute to Jac. J. Janssen*. *EgUit* 14, 9–49.

van de Walle, B., 1948, *La transmission des textes littéraires égyptiens*, Brussels.

Widmaier, K., 2013, “Die Lehre des Cheti und ihre Kontexte: zu Berufen und Berufsbildern im Neuen Reich”, in: G. Moers, K. Widmaier, A. Giewekemeyer, A. Lümers, R. Ernst (Hgg.), *Dating Egyptian Literary Texts. Lingua Aegyptia. Studia Monographica* 11, 483–557.

Publication note

Jurjens, J. 2020. The Scribes Who Wrote Khety: Some Remarks on Colophons and Scribal Education, *CdE* 95 (190): 220–235.

The Scribes Who Wrote Khety: Some Remarks on Colophons and Scribal Education

INTRODUCTION

The Teaching of Khety, also known as *The Satire of the Trades*, was one of the most popular wisdom texts in the Ramesside Period. Many copies of this Middle Egyptian text have been found, most of them in the workmen's village of Deir el-Medina, but also across Egypt. ⁽¹⁾ The aim of this paper is to explore the question who were the people writing this text. There has been much scholarly debate concerning the matter. The long held opinion that these were students who wrote down excerpts of *Khety* as part of their scribal training has recently been debated. This paper will add to the discussion by considering the identities of the scribes writing these texts. The names of these scribes can sometimes be found on the material on which they wrote (papyri, ostraca, writing boards). They named themselves in colophons, but also employed other ways to sign their work. Based on the evidence from these paratextual features an attempt is made to reconstruct the identities of these scribes and their literary surroundings.

PAPYRI

There are four papyri on which the ending of *The Teaching of Khety* has been preserved: P. Berlin 15738g (recto), P. Turin CGT 54019, P. Sallier II and P. Anastasi VII. ⁽²⁾ These papyri all contain a colophon, which follows directly after the last words of the final chapter, as was usually the case. ⁽³⁾ The colophons on all four papyri contain the formula *iw=s pw nfr m htp* ('it has come well and in peace') (although not always preserved in full),

(1) The text and its context is the object of a study conducted by the author as PhD-project (working title: *Being and becoming a scribe: The Teaching of Khety and its use as an educational tool in Ancient Egypt*). The project is funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) [project number 023.008.011]. I would like to express my gratitude to Jacobus van Dijk, Olaf Kapér and Joachim F. Quack for making useful suggestions on an earlier draft of this paper.

(2) P. Berlin 23045 and P. Chester Beatty V also contain the last chapter of *Khety*, but in both cases the last words of this chapter and possible colophon have not been preserved (QUACK, J. [2003]. Aus einer spätzeitlichen literarischen Sammelhandschrift [Papyrus Berlin 23045]. *ZÄS*, 130, pp. 182-85; n. 14). Publications of the papyri mentioned: P. Berlin 15738g (recto): unpublished, picture in FISCHER-ELFERT, H.-W. (1999). *Die Lehre eines Mannes für seinen Sohn: Eine Etappe auf dem "Gottesweg" des loyalen und solidarischen Beamten des Mittleren Reiches*. ÄA 60. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, Tafelband, pl. VIII, nr. 2; P. Turin CGT 54019: unpublished (publication in preparation by the author); P. Sallier II: HAWKINGS, E., ed. (1841-1860). *Select Papyri in the Hieratic Character from the Collections of the British Museum*. London: Nicol, pl. X-XXIII (photographs in BUDGE, E. [1923]. *Facsimiles of Egyptian hieratic papyri in the British Museum*. HPBM 2. London: British Museum, pl. LXIII-LXXVI); P. Anastasi VII: HAWKINGS, *Select Papyri*, pl. CXXVIII-CXXXIX.

(3) LUISELLI, M. (2003). The Colophons as an Indication of the Attitudes towards the Literary Tradition in Egypt and Mesopotamia. In: S. Bickel and A. Loprieno, eds, *Basel Egyptology Prize 1: Junior Research in Egyptian History, Archaeology, and Philology*. Basel: Schwabe and Co AG, p. 348.

indicating that the text had come to an end. This was the standard phrasing of the colophon in the New Kingdom. ⁽⁴⁾ It is an abbreviated form of the older *iw=f pw h3.t=f r ph.wy=fy mj gm.yt m ss* ('it has come from its beginning to its end as found in writing'). The phrasing implies that the scribe originally copied his text directly from a model. ⁽⁵⁾ It seems likely that this was also the case in the New Kingdom. However, as Michela Luiselli warns us, one must be careful to draw conclusions about the process of text transmission (i.e. whether the text was copied from a model, from memory or under dictation) based on the colophons alone, for they are used as a kind of symbol to mark the completeness of a text, and are therefore very formulaic. ⁽⁶⁾ On the other hand, a colophon of a Book of the Dead from the time of Amenhotep III (P. Cairo CG 51189) embellishes on the standard formula and reads: 'It is found from its beginning to its end as found in writing, copied, collated, examined and corrected sign by sign (for) the god's father Youia, true of voice'. ⁽⁷⁾ It seems certain that in this case at least the scribe had a model in front of him from which he copied the text. In the New Kingdom the formula *iw=s pw nfr m htp* was often followed by *(i)n k3 (n)* ('for the ka of') followed by the name of the person to whom the text was dedicated. ⁽⁸⁾ The name of the copyist himself, if mentioned, occurs at the end of the colophon, sometimes preceded by the words *ir.n* ('made by'). ⁽⁹⁾

On two of the four papyri with *Khety* the copyists in question cannot be identified due to the preservation status of the colophons in question. On P. Berlin 15738g (recto) only the beginning of the colophon has been preserved: *IW=S* ('IT HAS COME'). The colophon of P. Turin 54019 (column 3, line 9-10) reads: *IW=S PW nfr m htp i(n) k3 n [...] | t3 [hw.t nsw] bity (wsr-m3'.t-r' mry-imn) '-w-s m pr [imn]* ('IT HAS COME well and in peace. For the ka of [...] | the [temple of the King of Upper] and Lower Egypt, Usermaatra Meryamon, l.p.h. in the domain of [Amun]'). Although the names of the individuals are not preserved, the mention of the memorial temple of Ramesses III (Medinet Habu) suggests that the scribe probably wrote this papyrus there, for schools and scriptoria are often associated with temples. ⁽¹⁰⁾

(4) LENZO MARCHESE, G. (2004). Les colophons dans la littérature égyptienne. *BIFAO*, 104 (1), p. 364; LUISELLI, The Colophons, p. 347.

(5) LENZO MARCHESE, Les colophons, pp. 360-61.

(6) LUISELLI, The Colophons, pp. 348-49.

(7) LENZO MARCHESE, Les colophons, 369.

(8) When *in* is used it concerns the initial form of the preposition *n* (POSENER, G. [1950]. Section finale d'une sagesse inconnue [recherches littéraires, II]. *RdE*, 7, p. 72, n. 3; GARDINER, A. (1935). *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum: Third Series: Chester Beatty Gift*. London: British Museum, p. 31, n. 2). For a possible alternative interpretation (*in* as a shortened form for *iw n* 'it is for'), cf. FISCHER, H. (1989). Occurrences of $\overline{\text{I}}$, agential and dative. *GM*, 107, pp. 69-76. The use of the word 'ka' may suggest that the colophons originate from a funerary context (Parkinson, R. [1991]. *Teachings, Discourses and Tales from the Middle Kingdom*. In: S. Quirke, ed., *Middle Kingdom Studies*. New Malden: SIA, p. 95; cf. Posener, Section finale, p. 72, n. 3. *Reservations made by Luiselli, The Colophons*, p. 346).

(9) POSENER, Section finale, p. 74, n. 1; LENZO MARCHESE, Les colophons, pp. 365-66; LUISELLI, The Colophons, pp. 347, 354. *ir.n* should be interpreted as a relative form, literally 'what.... has made', more freely translated here as 'made by' (cf. Dorn, A. [2017]. The *iri.n* Personal-Name-Formula in Non-Royal Texts of the New Kingdom: A Donation Mark or a Means of Self-Presentation? In: T. Gillen, ed., *(Re)Productive Traditions in Ancient Egypt: Proceedings of the Conference Held at the University of Liège, 6th-8th February 2013*. Liège: Presses Universitaires de Liège, p. 593).

(10) KAPER, O. (2010). A Kemyt Ostrakon from Amheida, Dakhleh Oasis. *BIFAO*, 110, pp. 125-26.

The identity of the scribe of the other two papyri (P. Sallier II and P. Anastasi VII) is known. As can be learned from the colophons, they are both written by Inena (see **TABLE 1**). ⁽¹¹⁾ P. Sallier II contains three texts (*Amenemhat*, *Khety*, *Hymn to the Nile*) and Inena has concluded each text with a colophon. Noticeably the third colophon is considerably shorter than the other two. This has to do with spacing. Inena took care to start each literary text on a new line. He made the preceding colophon as long as necessary to be able to do this. After he had finished writing the *Hymn to the Nile* he only had a short space left for the colophon before the line would come to an end. As such he had to shorten it by leaving out some of the honorary epithets of his dedicatory Qageb which he had used in the previous colophons. It must have been to his disliking that even this shortened colophon did not fit and he had to write beyond the line right until the margin of the papyrus. The same concern for spacing is observable in P. Anastasi VII, containing a duplicate text of both *Khety* and the *Hymn to the Nile*. Again, the last colophon concluding the *Hymn to the Nile* is considerably shorter, because there was only a small space available before the end of the line. This time the scribe filled out the line and then stopped. Although there was enough room left on the papyrus, he decided not to continue the colophon into a next line, perhaps for aesthetical reasons or because he wanted to add another literary text on the papyrus at some point in time, thus making sure he could start this potential text on a new line.

So Inena comes across as a conscientious scribe which is confirmed by his numerous corrections and beautiful handwriting. The only source of information on his person is the papyri, in particular their colophons. Luckily Inena was a productive scribe. The papyri Anastasi IV, Anastasi VI, d'Orbiney and Koller are all attributed to him, in addition to the above mentioned P. Sallier II and P. Anastasi VII. ⁽¹²⁾ He conducted his literary activities under Merenptah and Seti II (see below). He may have lived in Lower Egypt, because the papyri in question are likely to be of Memphite origin, although the exact provenance is unknown. ⁽¹³⁾

Inena dedicated all his texts to the Scribe of the Treasury Qageb (see **TABLE 1** and **2**), who was his superior (*nb=f*, see P. Anastasi VI) while he himself is indicated as an assistant (*hry-ʿ*) in one instance (P. Anastasi IV). These terms led Adolf Erman to believe that Inena was a student, who dedicated his work to his teacher Qageb. According to him the Miscellanies (in the case of Inena it concerns P. Anastasi IV and VI) were school texts, written by advanced students as exercises. ⁽¹⁴⁾ More recently this has been questioned by Fredrik Hagen

(11) Despite the statement in the colophon, Ch. Ragazzoli considers it a possibility that P. Anastasi VII was not written by Inena himself, as there are some differences between the palaeography of this manuscript and the other papyri by his hand. On the other hand, the handwriting of Inena may have evolved over time, which would explain the dissimilarities (RAGAZZOLI, CH. [2012]. Un nouveau manuscrit du scribe Inéna? Le recueil de Miscellanées du Papyrus Koller [Pap. Berlin P. 3043]. In: V. Lepper, ed., *Forschung in der Papyrussammlung: Eine Festgabe für das Neue Museum*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, pp. 227-230).

(12) GARDINER, A. (1937). *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*. Brussels: Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, p. XV; RAGAZZOLI, Un nouveau manuscrit, pp. 207-39. For an overview of the papyri and their publications, see HAGEN, F. (2019). Libraries in Ancient Egypt, c.1600-800 BCE. In: K. Ryholt and G. Barjamovic, eds, *Libraries before Alexandria: Ancient Near Eastern Traditions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 276.

(13) QUIRKE, S. (1996). Archive. In: A. Loprieno, ed., *Ancient Egyptian literature: history and forms*. Leiden: Brill, p. 391; ALLON, N. and NAVRATILOVA, H. (2017). *Ancient Egyptian Scribes: A Cultural Exploration*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 104-05; cf. ERMAN, A. (1925). *Die ägyptischen Schülerhandschriften*. APAW 2. Berlin, Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 20-21.

(14) ERMAN, *Schülerhandschriften*.

and Chloé Ragazzoli. They have convincingly shown that the Miscellanies, although used in the training of scribes, are primarily scholarly texts, rather than school exercises, composed by scribes as part of their identity as a literate person.⁽¹⁵⁾ The term *hry-ʿ* indicates that these scribes were not simply students, but had come to the end of their training and were just starting their professional careers.⁽¹⁶⁾ This is also suggested by the fact that Inena refers to himself as *sš* ('scribe') in the colophons, implying he already worked as one.⁽¹⁷⁾ Thus Qageb was more of a mentor or supervisor to Inena than a teacher in the true sense of the word. Even when a scribe was no longer an assistant he still may have had a superior; a jotting on the verso of P. Anastasi VII reads: *sš in-n3 hr swd3-ib n nb=f sš pr-hd* ('The scribe Inena writes to his master, the Scribe of the Treasury'). Thus, the fact that Inena dedicated his texts to Qageb was not because Qageb was a teacher setting an assignment. The dedication formula was simply honorific 'similar to those found in modern books ("Dedicated to my teacher N.", "For my father", etc.)'.⁽¹⁸⁾

Qageb is not the only person to whom Inena dedicated his texts. The papyri d'Orbiney, Sallier II (*Amenemhat*) and Anastasi VII are all dedicated to multiple persons (see TABLE 1). This was not uncommon. It has been suggested by scholars assuming an educational setting that these were the fellow students of the scribe in question.⁽¹⁹⁾ As for Inena, this is clearly not the case. The people mentioned in the colophons are all referred to as scribes. Hori is even explicitly called a Scribe of the Treasury (P. Sallier II, *Amenemhat*) and thus he already functioned as an official. Furthermore Qageb, Hori and Meremope appear in a list of Scribes of the Treasury written on the verso of P. Anastasi IV.⁽²⁰⁾ Curiously enough Inena himself features on this list. So on the same papyrus which mentions him as a *hry-ʿ* he is also mentioned as a Scribe of the Treasury. I do not think that he put his name on the list because he aspired to be one.⁽²¹⁾ A possible explanation is that the jotting on the verso dates from a later period in the life of the papyrus and Inena held this position at one point in time. Hori, who is called a scribe in P. d'Orbiney, had apparently made promotion to Scribe of the Treasury, when P. Sallier II was written. The same could apply to Inena (and Meremope). Another possible explanation is that Inena uses the term *hry-ʿ* (and *nb* for Qageb) because of literary conventions. These are terms which appear more often (although not exclusively,

(15) HAGEN, F. (2006). Literature, Transmission, and the Late Egyptian Miscellanies. In: R. Dann, ed., *Current Research in Egyptology 2004: Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Symposium Which Took Place at the University of Durham January 2004*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp. 84-99; RAGAZZOLI, Un nouveau manuscrit, pp. 214-15; RAGAZZOLI, CH. (2019). La littérature de scribe au Nouvel Empire ou pourquoi les Miscellanées ne sont pas des textes scolaires. *BSFE*, 201, pp. 44-78.

(16) RAGAZZOLI, CH. (2019). *Scribes: les artisans du texte en Égypte ancienne*. Paris: Belles Lettres, pp. 123-131. On the tasks Inena performed while being an assistant to Qageb, see RAGAZZOLI, *Scribes*, pp. 147-51.

(17) One must, however, be careful to draw conclusions about whether a person worked as a scribe or not based on the title *sš* alone, for it is a rather vague term. For example, in Deir el-Medina in the Late Ramesside Period it could refer to a true scribe, but also to a simple workman who could write his own name (HARING, B. [2017]. *From single sign to pseudo-script: An ancient Egyptian system of workmen's identity marks*. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 93. Leiden: Brill, p. 137).

(18) HAGEN, *Miscellanies*, p. 90.

(19) ERMAN, *Schülerhandschriften*, p. 11; McDOWELL, A. (2000). Teachers and Students at Deir El-Medina. In: R. Demarée and J. Egberts, eds, *Deir El Medina in the Third Millennium AD: A Tribute to Jac. J. Janssen*. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, p. 230.

(20) GARDINER, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, p. 55.

(21) ALLON and NAVRATILOVA, *Ancient Egyptian Scribes*, p. 108.

see below) in the Miscellanies and its model letters, and are closely associated with these texts. In the case of Inena, it is noticeable that it is only used in the Miscellanies and not in his copies of literary works, although some of these were written earlier (for the chronological order of the works, see below). In short, Hori, Meremope, Paheripedjet, Iuti and Meryre were probably Inena's colleagues rather than his school mates. Their appearance in the dedicatory formula could have been an 'Akt der Höflichkeit' ⁽²²⁾ on the part of Inena.

If it is possible to determine when Inena wrote which text (for example when he was still an assistant or not), it could tell us something about the place of these texts in the training of ancient Egyptian scribes. The chronological order of Inena's works is unfortunately difficult to establish, and also at what point in time Inena ceased to be an assistant. The dating of the manuscripts is based on information extracted from the colophons and/or jottings on the verso. Scholars agree on the dating of three of the manuscripts: P. d'Orbiney was written while Seti II was still a crown prince; P. Anastasi IV in year 1 of Seti II; and P. Sallier II also in year 1 of Seti II. ⁽²³⁾ On the others opinions differ. ⁽²⁴⁾ The fact that these manuscripts cannot be dated with certainty makes it difficult to ascertain when Inena wrote which literary work. Two things however can be said. Inena wrote the *Tale of the Two Brothers*, a Late Egyptian story, early in his career, possibly when he was still an apprentice (he is called a *hry-* in P. Anastasi IV which comes later). Both P. Anastasi IV and P. Sallier II were written in year 1 of Seti II: P. Sallier II is dated in year 1, first month of winter, day 20; P. Anastasi IV in year 1, fourth month of summer, day 15. So P. Sallier II (containing *Khety*, *Amenemhat*, *Hymn to the Nile*) was written before P. Anastasi IV (Miscellanies), just a few months earlier. This is too close to conclude that the Miscellanies on the one hand and the Middle Kingdom classics on the other hand represent various stages in the education of ancient Egyptian scribes. Inena did not for example start with Late Egyptian texts and then moved on to the more difficult classics in Middle Egyptian. Rather both types of work stood on a par concerning their level of importance in the ancient Egyptian literary tradition. Indeed, both Miscellanies and literary texts are sometimes found on the same papyrus. ⁽²⁵⁾

From the colophons can be extracted one last piece of information, the fact that Inena could own manuscripts himself. In P. d'Orbiney he calls himself himself *nb n p3y sš* ('the owner of this manuscript') and in another instance (P. Anastasi VII) *p3 nb n t3 sb3yt* ('the owner of the teaching'). In fact, Inena owned a private library, which also indicates he

(22) ERMAN, *Schülerhandschriften*, p. 11.

(23) GARDINER, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, pp. IX, XV; ERMAN, *Schülerhandschriften*, p. 20, n. 2; JÄGER, S. (2004). *Altägyptische Berufstypologien*. Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographica 4. Göttingen: Seminar für Ägyptologie und Koptologie, pp. 6-7; HELCK, W. (1969). *Der Text der "Lehre Amenemhets I. für seinen Sohn*. KÄT 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, p. 105; RAGAZZOLI, Un nouveau manuscrit, p. 226.

(24) Anastasi VI: Merenptah (ERMAN, *Schülerhandschriften*, p. 20, n. 2) or Seti II (GARDINER, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, pp. XVI-XVII; RAGAZZOLI, Un nouveau manuscrit, p. 226); Anastasi VII: Merenptah (ERMAN, *Schülerhandschriften*, p. 20, n. 2; RAGAZZOLI, *Scribes*, p. 101) or Amenmesse (?) (HELCK, *Lehre Amenemhets I*, p. 105) or Seti II (JÄGER, *Berufstypologien*, pp. 6-7). Papyrus Koller stems from the Ramesside Period, but has no exact dating (RAGAZZOLI, Un nouveau manuscrit, p. 207).

(25) P. Chester Beatty V; P. Sallier I. Cf. also DORN, A. (2009). Ein Literatenwettstreit und das Ende der Diglossie als sprachgeschichtliche Schwelle. Essayistische Gedanken zur Literatur des Neuen Reiches. In: D. Kessler et al., eds, *Texte—Theben—Tonfragmente. Festschrift für Günter Burkard*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, pp. 70-82.

was more of a scholar than a student. ⁽²⁶⁾ The difference in wording (*p3y sš* as opposed to *t3 sb3yt*) shows that Inena had a sense of genre. He uses ‘this manuscript’ referring to P. d’Orbiney containing a Late Egyptian story, while he employs the word ‘teaching’ to refer back to *Khety*, a text belonging to the wisdom literature (*sb3yt*).

OSTRACA

The ostraca with *Khety* ⁽²⁷⁾ on which the ending of the last chapter (chapter 30) has been preserved all contain a colophon (see TABLE 3). When comparing the colophons of the ostraca to those of the papyri the similarities are striking. The colophons are also found directly after the closing chapter. They also start with *iw=s pw nfr m htp* (‘It has come well and in peace’). In some case (part of) this formula has been written in red ink, which is seen on papyri as well. ⁽²⁸⁾ Furthermore the colophons contain verse points. A difference is that the following formula (*i)n k3 (n)* (‘for the ka of’) does not occur. In the one example where the start of the dedication is preserved it simply says *in* followed by the name of the dedicatory (O. DeM 1204). This is common practice on ostraca. ⁽²⁹⁾ In general, the colophons on ostraca are less elaborate than those found on papyri. This is no doubt due to the limited amount of space available on this type of material.

Sometimes scribes felt the need to mark an ostrakon with their name, even when it did not contain the closing chapter and there was thus no need for a colophon: ‘This might seem unnecessary or superfluous, but [...] personalized compilations or copies were certainly a legitimate exhibition of one’s literate and cultivated character’. ⁽³⁰⁾ On the other hand, it might simply have had practical purposes, marking an ostrakon among many others as one’s own. Scribes signed their work more often than previously assumed. ⁽³¹⁾ Examples from ostraca with *Khety* can be found in TABLE 4. Since this practice was less formal than adding an official colophon, there is more variation in the way scribes personalized their work. The scribe could use the formula *ir.n* (‘made by’) followed by his name. Or he could simply write down his name with or without title. Sometimes the scribe added a filiation, so others could easily identify him.

(26) HAGEN, Libraries, pp. 274-76.


(27) Publications of the ostraca mentioned: O. BM EA 41650/47896: PARKINSON, R. (1999). Two or three literary artefacts: British Museum EA 41650/47896, and 22878-9. In: W. Davies, ed., *Studies in Egyptian Antiquities: A Tribute to T. G. H. James*. London: British Museum Press: pp. 49-57; O. DeM 1014, O. DeM 1022, O. DeM 1037, O. DeM 1042: POSENER, G. (1938). *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh, vol. I: Nos. 1001 à 1108*. DFIFAO 20. Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale; O. DeM 1204: POSENER, G. (1951-1972). *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh, vol. II: Nos. 1109 à 1266*. DFIFAO 18. Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale; O. DeM 1536, O. DeM 1560: POSENER, G. (1977-1980). *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh, vol. III: Nos. 1267 à 1675*. DFIFAO 20. Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale; O. Cairo 25217bis: DARESSY, G. (1901). *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire: Nos. 25001 à 25385*. Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale; O. UC 32266: (= HO 10,1) ČERNÝ, J. and GARDINER, A. (1957). *Hieratic Ostraca, vol. I*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

(28) LUISELLI, The Colophons, p. 348.

(29) POSENER, Section finale, p. 72, n. 3.

(30) ALLON and NAVRATILOVA, *Ancient Egyptian Scribes*, p. 117.

(31) MCDOWELL, Teachers and Students, p. 228.

The placing of these ‘signatures’ also varies. They could be added directly after the text just like on papyri (O. DeM 1536); or above the text, at the top of the ostrakon (O. DeM 1037); or beneath the text, at the bottom of the ostrakon (O. DeM 1022, O. DeM 1042); names of scribes are also found on the verso of the ostrakon. In these last instances it can be difficult to establish the exact relationship of the names on the verso with the excerpt from *Khety* on the recto. In the case of O. DeM 1560 the scribe (Hay) uses the formula ‘made by’ (*ir.n*), but because the signature is placed beneath a drawing on the verso, it is not to say for certain whether Hay was the maker of the drawing or the writer of the text on the recto instead.⁽³²⁾ Since Hay was a literate person (he calls himself a scribe) it is of course always a possibility he was the maker of both the text and the drawing. The verso of O. Cairo 25217bis contains the phrase . If the interpretation of a signature is correct (see below, TABLE 3), it must refer to the text on the recto, since there is nothing else written or drawn on the verso.⁽³³⁾ The verso of O. BM EA 41650/47896 contains the remnants of two lines of large hieratic signs written in black ink. On the second line the name of the scribe Mery[...] can be read. Since the ostrakon is complete, it could be that Mery[...] signed his work on the verso. Unfortunately this cannot be verified as the first line is no longer legible. In the case of O. UC 32266 the verso mentions the names of several scribes and not just the one as in the cases above. The palaeography suggests that these names were written by a different scribe than the one writing the excerpt from *Khety* on the recto. So it seems that on this ostrakon there is no direct relationship between *Khety* and the names on the verso. Instead the ostrakon was reused to support an administrative text (i.e. a name list) or vice versa.

The titles of the people mentioned in the colophons on ostraca are for the most part the same as the ones occurring in the colophons on papyri. The title most often preserved is *sš* (‘scribe’). The scribe of O. Cairo 25217bis is the only one without any title attached to his name (he is simply called Sa), so he might still have been a student at the time. The title Overseer of the Storehouse, which occurs in one instance, implies that the scribe of the ostrakon in question (O. DeM 1536) had professional duties and was no longer an apprentice. However, the title appears in a broken context, so it is not certain that it really belonged to the scribe. It is likely though, because the title follows immediately after the text and is not preceded by *in* (*k3 n*). From other sources we know that scribes sometimes copied literary texts for their own pleasure and this is what the Overseer of the Storehouse may have done.⁽³⁴⁾ The title *hry-* (‘assistant’) also occurs in one instance, but more examples are known from other ostraca with literary texts.⁽³⁵⁾ The title also appears in colophons on papyri (see above), which suggests that at least some of the scribes who wrote on ostraca had the same level of experience as the ones writing on papyri. The similarities between the Miscellanies on papyri on the one hand and the literary ostraca on the other have already been pointed out by Andrea McDowell. Assuming the Miscellanies were school texts, she concluded that the ostraca were for the most part written by advanced students (instead of

(32) A. McDowell assumes he is the writer of the text on the recto (MCDOWELL, *Teachers and Students*, p. 227). G. Posener considers it to be the ‘signature du dessinateur’ (POSENER, *Catalogue III*, p. 69).

(33) DARESSY, *Catalogue général*, p. 48.

(34) MCDOWELL, *Teachers and Students*, p. 230.

(35) For other examples of the title *hry-* in colophons on ostraca, see MCDOWELL, *Teachers and Students*, pp. 222, 224, 227.

beginners as was previously suggested).⁽³⁶⁾ Given that the Miscellanies are no longer considered to be school exercises (see above), it can now be said that the assistants named on these ostraca were one step above advanced students, already in the early stages of their career.

The scribes who personalized their work by adding their name (see **TABLE 3** and **4**) can sometimes be identified even today. Andrea McDowell has discovered the identity of the scribes of some of our examples. They all lived in Deir el-Medina, where the people are well documented. Their identifications as described below are based on her work.⁽³⁷⁾ To these are added the remaining persons mentioned in the other colophons. An attempt is made to also identify them.

O. DeM 1204

This ostrakon is dedicated to the draughtsman Pay (I) by his grandson Nebnetjeru. Nebnetjeru's father was Prehotep, also a draughtsman. The ostrakon is dated to the second half of the reign of Ramesses II.

O. DeM 1014

This ostrakon is dedicated to the scribe Nebnefer, who can probably be identified as the chief workman Nebnefer (I). The text is dedicated to him by his son Neferhotep (II), also a chief workman at one point in time, but still called an assistant here. He lived in the early to middle part of the reign of Ramesses II.

O. DeM 1560

This ostrakon dates to the reign of Ramesses III. It was written by Hay, who later worked as a deputy. He calls himself the son of the chief workman Hay, but from other sources we know his real father was Amennakhte. At one point in time Hay had an apprentice of his own, since another ostrakon (O. BM 29549) is dedicated to him. Since the name of the scribe is not mentioned, no identification is possible.


O. DeM 1022/1042

The scribe Itnefer occurs on one other ostrakon which he made while working as a scribe. It contains an administrative text which explicitly states it was made by him. He is there called the son of Hori. The name Hori is very common, so his identity remains obscure. Since there is no other scribe called Itnefer known from the sources, it has been suggested that he was the workman Itnefer who lived during the reigns of Ramesses IV, V and VI. Apart from the two ostraca containing *Khety* he also is named on an ostrakon with the *Hymn to the Nile* (O. DeM 1027): 'Made by [...] Itnefer for Hori [...] Pharaoh'.

(36) McDOWELL, *Teachers and Students*, pp. 220-23.

(37) McDOWELL, *Teachers and Students*, pp. 223-28, with references. Cf. MATHIEU, B. (2003). La littérature égyptienne sous les Ramsès d'après les ostraca littéraires de Deir El Médineh. In: G. Andreu, ed., *Deir El-Médineh et la Vallée des Rois: La vie en Égypte au temps des pharaons du Nouvel Empire. Actes du colloque organisé par le Musée du Louvre, les 3 et 4 mai 2002*. Paris: Khéops, pp. 136-37.

O. Cairo 25217bis

The name Sa () is not otherwise attested in Deir el-Medina, the place from which this ostrakon probably stems. ⁽³⁸⁾ Since the Sa on our ostrakon was in all probability only a student (see above), it could be that he used here an abbreviated form of his name. Since none of the possible longer names (see Ranke I, 299.3-10; 302.2-3) occur in Deir el-Medina, his identity remains obscure.

O. DeM 1037

The first part of the name mentioned on O. DeM 1037 has been lost due to a breakage of the ostrakon. There are various reconstructions possible. The name may simply be Petref (Ranke I, 138.5), but since this name is not otherwise attested in Deir el-Medina this is not likely. The same applies to the name *s3.j-m-ptj=f* (Ranke I, 299.9). Therefore, the most probable candidate is Reshpetref, who worked in Deir el-Medina under Ramesses III and IV. ⁽³⁹⁾ He was the grandson of Neferhotep (II), who is mentioned in the colophon of O. DeM 1014 (see above). On the latter Neferhotep (II) is still an assistant, dedicating the text to his father (and possibly tutor) Nebnefer, the great-grandfather of Reshpetref. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ Although there is no dedication on O. DeM 1037, Reshpetref might also have been an assistant to a family member, as was his grandfather Neferhotep (II).

O. DeM 1536

There is only one Montuemwia known in Deir el-Medina, a wood-cutter (*š'd-ht*), living under Ramesses III and his successors. ⁽⁴¹⁾ As a wood-cutter he belonged to the *smd.t*, the personnel of the workmen in Deir el-Medina, providing them with wood for their fires. It is hard to think that such a person was literate and consequently the scribe of this ostrakon. ⁽⁴²⁾ It is far more likely the scribe in question is an otherwise unknown person called Montuemwia, probably an Overseer of the Storehouse (see above). The occurrence of another name below Montuemwia remains inexplicable due to the broken context of this ostrakon. It could be the second name is part of a filiation. Looking closely at the hieratic, ⁽⁴³⁾ it seems that the sign for *s3* 'son' has been written between the two names. It is seemingly not a part of

(38) JÄGER, *Berufstypologien*, p. 8.

(39) DAVIES, B. (1999). *Who's Who at Deir El-Medina: A Prosopographic Study of the Royal Workmen's Community*. EgUit 13. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, p. 248.

(40) McDOWELL, *Teachers and Students*, p. 226. For the family tree of Reshpetref, see DAVIES, *Who's Who*, chart 6 and chart 20.

(41) ČERNÝ, J. (2001). *A Community of Workmen at Thebes in the Ramesside Period*. 2nd ed. Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, p. 186; GUTGESELL, M. (1983). *Die Datierung der Ostraka und Papyri aus Deir El-Medineh und ihre ökonomische Interpretation. Teil I: Die 20. Dynastie*. HAeB 18-19. Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, pp. 121, 238, 278, 385, 407; GABLER, K. (2018). *Who's Who around Deir El-Medina: Untersuchungen zur Organisation, Prosopographie und Entwicklung des Versorgungspersonals für die Arbeitersiedlung und das Tal der Könige*. EgUit 31. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, p. 613, Abb. 13.

(42) The possibility is not to be excluded, however, since there is an example known of a student who probably worked as a stone cutter later in life (McDOWELL, *Teachers and Students*, pp. 224-25, 230). If this is the case, Montuemwia would be another example of someone of lower rank who was literate.

(43) A picture is available at <http://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/archives/ostraca/?id=19995> [Accessed 27 Apr. 2020].

the first sign of the second name as Posener's transcription suggests (see **TABLE 4**). This would solve the problem of the two names on one ostrakon, for if this is the case, the scribe of the ostrakon is to be identified as 'Montuemwia, son of [...]'.⁽⁴⁴⁾

O. UC 32266

Several persons are named on the verso of this ostrakon. User-setet can be identified as the scribe User-setet, the son of the chief-workman Pashedu, who lived in Deir el-Medina during the reigns of Seti I and Ramesses II.⁽⁴⁵⁾ The name Irynefer occurs multiple times in the New Kingdom,⁽⁴⁶⁾ but only one of these mentions the title scribe. The person in question is Irynefer, the owner of the tomb TT290. He is also mentioned on another ostrakon which is dated in year 2, probably of Ramesses II or even Seti I,⁽⁴⁷⁾ which coincides with the period when User-setet was living. There is another connection between these two persons. The tomb of User-setet's father Pashedu was prepared by the same craftsman as the one who made the tomb of Irynefer.⁽⁴⁸⁾ On the other hand, Irynefer's nickname Teri occurs only on this ostrakon, so the possibility should not be excluded that our 'Irynefer called Teri' is an otherwise unknown person who also happened to live in the same period. The family of Iry, also mentioned on the ostrakon, is to my knowledge not known from other sources. The name Iry does occur elsewhere, but it does not concern the person in question.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The name Peniati is not otherwise attested in the Ramesside Period. Neferhotep, on the other hand, is a very common name in this period, but it never occurs elsewhere in correlation with the names of his father and grandfather, making a positive identification difficult.⁽⁵⁰⁾ All in all, the link between the persons mentioned on the verso is not apparent, other than that they were all scribes,⁽⁵¹⁾ nor is it clear why exactly they are mentioned together on this side of the ostrakon. As we have seen above, there seems to be no direct link between these people and the text of *Khety* on the recto. The ostrakon, however, can now be dated as stemming from the period of Seti I or Ramesses II.

Looking at the examples above, the following picture emerges.⁽⁵¹⁾ In all cases where a dedication is present the text is dedicated to a family member of the scribe, being the father or grandfather. That this is not always simply to honour the person, is made apparent by the fact that Neferhotep calls himself the assistant of his father and may have written the text in that capacity. It is likely that also in some of the other cases the dedication goes beyond being honorific and the scribe in question worked as an apprentice for a older family

(44) DAVIES, *Who's Who*, pp. 182, 223.

(45) DAVIES, *Who's Who*, p. 263; ČERNÝ, *A Community of Workmen*, p. 293; GUTGESELL, *Die Datierung*, p. 387; JANSSEN, J. (1975). *Commodity Prices from the Ramessid Period: An Economic Study of the Village of Necropolis Workmen at Thebes*. Leiden: Brill, p. 26; GABLER, *Who's Who*, pp. 103, 610.

(46) ČERNÝ, *A Community of Workmen*, p. 293.

(47) ČERNÝ, *A Community of Workmen*, p. 293.

(48) In one instance he is a woodcutter living under Ramesses III (GUTGESELL, *Die Datierung*, p. 121), while on our ostrakon he is associated with a funerary workshop. In another he belongs to a different family (DAVIES, *Who's Who*, chart 29).

(49) An Iry and a Neferhotep are both mentioned on the Turin Strike Papyrus among many other names (GUTGESELL, *Die Datierung*, pp. 121-22), but it concerns here the woodcutter Iry.

(50) ČERNÝ, J. and GARDINER, *Hieratic Ostraca*, p. 3.

(51) Cf. McDOWELL, *Teachers and Students*, p. 230.

member, perhaps also receiving some form of tuition.⁽⁵²⁾ That these family members were themselves literate, is shown by the titles of high rank they bear (draughtsman, chief workman). Some scribes later in life had assistants of their own, as the case of Hay shows.

WRITING TABLETS

Louvre N 693⁽⁵³⁾ is the only writing tablet which contains the last chapter of *Khety*, but it breaks off before the final words and thus a colophon has not been preserved. There is however another writing board on which a different sort of ‘colophon’ has been preserved. This is Louvre E 8424, which contains the beginning of *Khety*, written at the right hand side of the writing board. To the left of this text are written two names. Serge Sauneron, who published the tablet, observed that the handwriting of both columns differed. According to him *Khety* was written in a hand stemming from the New Kingdom, but the names were from the Late Period, thus making a direct link between the two persons and *Khety* impossible.⁽⁵⁴⁾ His conclusion was opposed by Peter Seibert who argued that the writing board, including the text of *Khety*, stemmed in its entirety from the Late Period, which has now been generally accepted.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The two persons (as transcribed by Seibert) are *p(3)-dj-<hrj->š=f* and *wḏ3-<hrw->sm3-t3.wj*. Both names are attested only once.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Both attestations date from the Ptolemaic Period, while the tablet is dated to the Saitic Period, so these are not the persons in question and their identity remains obscure. The exact relationship between Padi<hery>shef and Udjasematawy is not known. They cannot both be the scribes of the excerpt of *Khety* on the right. To solve this problem Seibert suggested the two names constituted some sort of filiation (‘son of’), in which case it would concern only one person and this must have been the scribe of the text. The scribe was probably a student, for writing boards are often (although not exclusively) associated with an educational context.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Even in the Late Period *Khety* was still being used to train school boys in the hieratic script.

(52) For other examples of sons or grandsons who were assistant to their father or grandfather, see McDOWELL, *Teachers and Students*, p. 224; RAGAZZOLI, *Scribes*, p. 127. Assistants could also be unrelated to their mentor (McDOWELL, *Teachers and Students*, pp. 223-30).

(53) First published by PIANKOFF, A. (1933). Quelques passages des ‘Instructions de Douaf’ sur une tablette du Musée du Louvre. *RdE*, 1, pp. 51-74.

(54) SAUNERON, S. (1950). Le titre de l’enseignement de Khéti sur une tablette du Louvre. *RdE*, 17, p. 186.

(55) SEIBERT, P. (1967). *Die Charakteristik: Untersuchungen zu einer altägyptischen Sprechsitte und ihren Ausprägungen in Folklore und Literatur. Teil I: Philologische Bearbeitung der Bezeugungen*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, pp. 100-02; HAGEN, F. (2012). *An Ancient Egyptian Literary Text in Context: The Instruction of Ptahhotep*. OLA 218. Leuven: Peeters, p. 80; ALTENMÜLLER, H. and EL BIALY, M. (2009). Eine spätzeitliche Topfscherbe aus Saqqara mit dem Anfang der ‘Lehre Des Dua-Cheti’. In: D. Kessler, R. Schulz, A. Verbovsek, S. Wimmer and M. Ullmann, eds, *Texte - Theben - Tonfragmente: Festschrift für Günter Burkard*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, p. 21; QUACK, J. (2020). Eine spätzeitliche Handschrift der Lehre des Cheti (Papyrus Berlin P 14423). In: Sh.-W. Hsu, Shih-Wei, V. Laisney, and J. Moje, eds, *Ein Kundiger, der in die Gottesworte einge- drungen ist: Festschrift für den Ägyptologen Karl Jansen-Winkeln zum 65. Geburtstag*. Münster: Zaphon, p. 240.

(56) Ranke I, 125.18; LÜDDECKENS, E., BRUNSCH, W., THISSEN, H.-J., VITTMANN, G. and ZAUZICH K.-Th. (1980-2000). *Demotisches Namenbuch I*. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, p. 135.

(57) HAGEN, F. (2013). An Eighteenth Dynasty Writing Board (Ashmolean 1948.91) and the Hymn to the Nile. *JARCE*, 49, pp. 82-85; HAGEN, F. (2019). New copies of old classics: early manuscripts of *Khakheperreseneb* and *The instruction of a man for his son*. *JEA*, 105, p. 240.

A GRAFFITO

Tomb N13.1 in Asyut, discovered in 2005, belonged to a local ruler from the First Intermediate Period. It is a unique tomb, for its walls are covered in all kinds of graffiti dating from the New Kingdom, including excerpts from well-known literary texts like *The Teaching of Khety*, *The Hymn to the Nile* and *Kemyt*. Apparently, the tomb was visited by many who enjoyed its secluded spot and wonderful view. The titles mentioned in the graffiti show that various people came to visit, from the local elite, to priests and scribes. The tomb may even have been used by teachers and their students who made use of the walls to practice their skills.⁽⁵⁸⁾ One of these visitors to the tomb was the scribe Men. There are many graffiti naming him (assuming it all concerns the same person), even one with a sexual connotation which may have been written about him, if not written by him.⁽⁵⁹⁾ He is also the scribe responsible for an excerpt of *Khety* found on the West wall which has his signature underneath: ‘The scribe Men, son of the wab-priest of Wepwawet Wepwawet, born by the lady of the house Nut, while his brother is named Duau.’⁽⁶⁰⁾ Another signature of his can be found beneath an excerpt from *The Teaching of Amenemhat*, which shows that Men had mastered at least two literary texts. Besides the names of his family, we know that he lived in the 18th Dynasty, more specifically under Amenhotep III, for this king is mentioned in one of Men’s graffiti containing a date.⁽⁶¹⁾ His graffiti can often be found close to those of the scribe Chaemwaset, which may have been his friend. One of the graffiti mentioning Men is worth quoting in full:

Then the scribe Men came,
 having come to see the beautiful temple of Hathor,
 Lady of Medjeden. He found it
 more beautiful in his heart [than] any other beautiful temple. Then
 he said: May the king give an offering to Osiris, Lord of Ta-anekh, and Anubis, Lord of
 Ra-qe[reret]. Made by the truly able scribe, the true
 silent one, with [able] character, the humble one, beloved by the people
 for the Ka of the scribe Men, son of the wab-priest of Wepwawet Wepwawet,
 born by the lady of the house Nut. His brother (is) Duau.⁽⁶²⁾

This typical visitor’s graffito was made by Men, who calls himself ‘a truly able scribe’ amongst other things. He has dedicated the fragment to himself, perhaps in a jokingly fashion, using the standard formula (‘for the ka of’) found in colophons. All in all one gets the impression Men had a playful character.

(58) KAHL, J. (2006). Ein Zeugnis altägyptischer Schulausflüge. *GM*, 211, p. 29; VERHOEVEN, U. (2012). The New Kingdom graffiti in tomb N13.1: an overview. In: J. Kahl, M. El- Khadragey, U. Verhoeven and A. Kilian, eds, *Seven seasons at Asyut: first results of the Egyptian-German cooperation in archaeological fieldwork. Proceedings of an international conference at the University of Sohag, 10th – 11th of October, 2009*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, p. 55; VERHOEVEN, U. (2013). Literatur im Grab - der Sonderfall Assiut. In: G. Moers, K. Widmaier, A. Giewekemeyer, A. Lümers, and R. Ernst, eds, *Dating Egyptian Literary Texts*. Hamburg: Widmaier, pp. 142, 144.

(59) VERHOEVEN, U. (2009). Die wie Kraniche balzen: Männerphantasien zur Zeit Amenhoteps III. in Assiut. In: Kessler, et al., eds., *Texte - Theben - Tonfragmente*, 434-41. For an overview of all graffiti by Men, including drawings, see VERHOEVEN, U. (2020). *Dipinti von Besuchern des Grabes N13.1 in Assiut*. The Asyut project 15. Berlin: Harrassowitz, pp. 268-72.

(60) VERHOEVEN, Literatur im Grab, p. 144.

(61) KAHL, Schulausflüge, p. 29; VERHOEVEN, The New Kingdom graffiti, p. 50; VERHOEVEN, Männerphantasien, p. 435.

(62) VERHOEVEN, The New Kingdom graffiti, pp. 52-53.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Who were the scribes writing literary abstracts from *Khety*? From the colophons and other identity markers, however short or fragmentary they are, information can be extracted to help answer this question. The identity of the scribe of two of the papyrus manuscripts containing *Khety* is easily recognized, for he mentions his name (Inena) in the colophons, sometimes preceded by *ir.n* ('made by'). He was an assistant to the Scribe of the Treasury Qageb to whom all manuscripts are dedicated. He presumably wrote some of these manuscripts while he was still an apprentice. Others may have been written early in his career when he was a not yet a Scribe of the Treasury, but just a scribe. In the latter cases the dedication to Qageb may simply have been honorific. Inena comes across as a conscientious and accomplished scribe, who even owned manuscripts himself. He was certainly not a student as has been suggested previously and his works are not school exercises, but rather the product of a scholarly person working in a literary environment. This applies to both the Miscellanies and the Middle Kingdom classics he copied. As the dates mentioned in the colophons show, Inena wrote P. Sallier II (classics) and P. Anastasi IV (Miscellanies) just a few months apart. Therefore the evidence does not suggest that scribes were first trained in the Miscellanies before moving on to the more difficult Middle Kingdom literary texts.

The colophons on ostraca take on a similar form as the ones on papyri, which shows they had the same function: ⁽⁶³⁾ indicating that the text had come to an end, but also making known the identity of the scribe in question and the individual(s) to who(m) he might have dedicated his text. Even when no colophon was necessary, scribes sometimes felt the need to personalize their work, hence the occurrence of names on ostraca outside the context of official colophons. Examples are known where a scribe has added his name above or below the text or on the verso of the ostrakon. This practice was more widely spread than was previously assumed. The people mentioned on these ostraca, in colophons or otherwise, are scribes and assistants, just like on the papyri, suggesting that they as well were no longer simple students, but were at the same stage in their education or career as the ones writing on papyri. In only one instance a scribe did not attach a title to his name, so he may have been a student at the time when he wrote down his literary excerpt of *Khety*. ⁽⁶⁴⁾ The identities of these scribes can sometimes be reconstructed while others remain more obscure. The identified scribes all worked in Deir el-Medina in the Ramesside Period. Some of them dedicated their work to their father or grandfather. The case of Neferhotep shows these dedications were not always simply honorific, for he mentions he was the assistant of his father. Therefore, older family members could act as mentors to their sons or grandsons.

Writing tablets stemming from an educational context could also be signed. One of the four writing boards containing an excerpt from *Khety* contains two names. The exact relationship between these names on the left and the text on the right remains unclear.

The various graffiti left on the walls of tomb N13.1 by Men show that he was a person well-educated in the Middle Kingdom classics, that he was familiar with the usual format of visitor's graffiti, and that he had basic drawing skills.

(63) Contra LUISELLI, The Colophons, n. 31.

(64) For an example of an ostrakon with an excerpt of *Khety* used as a school exercise, see JURJENS, J. (2019). The Teaching of *Khety* Twice – A New Reading of oBM EA 65597 as a School Exercise. *JEA*, 105, pp. 127-34.

It seems that the scribes who wrote *Khety* came in a variety of shapes. Some were (advanced) students, some were assistants, some were professional scribes. This paper shows that their identities differ much more than has been previously assumed, and they were certainly not all students training to become scribes.

Leiden University

Judith JURJENS

Papyrus	Colophon	Translation	Text
P. d'Orbiney (19.7-10)	<i>İW=S PW nfr m htp in k3 n sš pr-ḥd k3g3bw n pr-ḥd n pr-ʿ3 ʿw-s sš ḥri sš mr-m-ip.t ir.n sš in-n3 p3 nb n p3y sš ir p3 nty iw=f ḥr mdt m p3y sš ir n=f dḥwty iry ḥ3wty</i>	IT HAS COME well and in peace. For the ka of the scribe of the Treasury, Qageb, of the Treasury of Pharaoh, l.p.h., the scribe Hori and the scribe Meremope. Made by the scribe Inena, the owner of this manuscript. As for the one who will speak against this manuscript, may Thoth become an opponent to him.	<i>The Tale of the Two Brothers</i>
P. Sallier II (III, 7-8)	<i>İw=s pw nfr m htp • in k3 ḥsy ikr nfr m bi3.t • sš pr-ḥd k3g3bw • sš pr-ḥd ḥri • sš in-n3 m rnpt-zp 1 3bd 1 prt sw 20 •</i>	It has come well and in peace. For the ka of the greatly praised, the wonderfully good, the scribe of the Treasury Qageb and the scribe of the Treasury Hori. The scribe Inena, in year 1, first month of winter, day 20.	<i>The Teaching of Amenemhat</i>
(XI, 5)	<i>İw=s pw • nfr m htpw • in k3 ḥsy ikr • nfr m bi3.t • sš pr-ḥd k3g3bw • n pr-ḥd n pr-ʿ3</i>	It has come well and in peace. For the ka of the greatly praised, the wonderfully good, the scribe of the Treasury Qageb of the Treasury of Pharaoh.	<i>The Teaching of Khety</i>
(XIV, 11)	<i>İW=S PW NFR M HTP • in k3 n sš pr-ḥd k3g3bw •</i>	IT HAS COME WELL AND IN PEACE. For the ka of the scribe of the Treasury Qageb.	<i>The Hymn to the Nile</i>
P. Anastasi VII (VII, 4-6)	<i>İW=S PW NFR m htp • in k3 n sš [pr-ḥd] k3[g3bw] • [sš] p3-ḥrj-pd.t • sš iwti • sš mry-r • ir.n sš in-n3 p3 nb n t3 sb3y.t • m rnp.t-zp 6 3bd 2 šmw sw 15 • İw=tw m pr-(r'-msj-sw mry-İmn) ʿw-s p3-k3-[ʿ3]-n p3-r'-ḥrw-3ḥtj •</i>	IT HAS COME WELL and in peace. For the ka of the scribe of [the Treasury] Qa[geb and the scribe Paheripedjet and the scribe] Iuti and the scribe Meryre. Made by the scribe Inena, owner of the teaching, in year 6, month 2 of summer, day 15, while One was in Per-Ramesses.	<i>The Teaching of Khety</i>
(XII, 3)	<i>İw=s pw nfr.t</i>	It has come well.	<i>The Hymn to the Nile</i>

TABLE 1. — Colophons by Inena.

Papyrus	Colophon	Translation	Text
P. Anastasi IV (1a,1)	<i>[ḥ3.t-ˁ m sb3yt šˁ.t ḥr.n sš pr-ḥd ḳ3g3bw n ḥry-]ˁ=f sš ḥn-n3 • m rnpt-zp 1 3bd 4 šmw sw 15</i>	[Beginning of the teaching in letter-writing. Made by the scribe of the Treasury Qageb for] his assistant the scribe Inena, in year 1, fourth month of summer, day 15.	<i>Miscellanies</i> (title)
(7,9)	<i>sš pr-ḥd ḳ3g3bw <r> dd n sš ḥn-n3</i>	The scribe of the Treasury Qageb says to the scribe Inena.	<i>Miscellanies</i> (start letter)
(10,1)	<i>sš ḥn-n3 ˁn tw ḥr r3 n ndm wˁ.w (r) sš ⁽⁶⁵⁾</i>	Scribe Inena, turn back from the proposition that a soldier is better off than a writer.	<i>Miscellanies</i> (at the end of a passage)
P. Anastasi VI (7)	<i>sš ḥn-n3 ḥr swd3-ib n nb=f • sš pr-ḥd ḳ3g3bw •</i>	The scribe Inena writes to his master, the scribe of the Treasury Qageb.	<i>Miscellanies</i> (start letter)
(51)	<i>sš ḥn-n3 • ḥr swd3-ib n nb=f • sš pr-ḥd ḳ3g3bw •</i>	The scribe Inena writes to his master, the scribe of the Treasury Qa[geb]	<i>Miscellanies</i> (start letter)
(62)	<i>sš ḥn-n3 ḥr swd3-ib n nb=f [sš] pr-ḥd ḳ3g3bw</i>	The scribe Inena writes to his master, [the scribe] of the Treasury Q[ageb]	<i>Miscellanies</i> (start letter)

TABLE 2. — Inena named in the Miscellanies.

Ostrakon	Colophon	Translation	Text
O. Berlin P 14288 (l. 4)	<i>ḥW=S PW nfr [...]</i>	IT HAS COME well [...]	<i>Khety</i> 30.4-30.6 colophon
O. DeM 1585 (l. 4)	<i>ḥw=s pw [...]</i>	It has come [...]	<i>Khety</i> 30.3-30.6 colophon
O. DeM 1204 (l. 6)	<i>[...ḤT]P • ḥn sš p3y • sš nb-nṯr.w • ḥt sš-ḳdwt p3-rˁ[...]</i>	[...PE]ACE for the scribe Pay, the scribe Nebnetjeru, (his) father (is) the draughtsman Pre[...]	<i>The Teaching of Amenemhat</i> colophon <i>Khety</i> 2.1-12.4 <i>Khety</i> 16.1-17.1
O. DeM 1104 (l. 7-9)	<i>ḥw [...] [...] [mt]y [...] ⁽⁶⁶⁾ [...] • [...]</i>	It [...] [...] precise [...] [...] [...]	<i>Khety</i> 29.1-30.6 colophon
O. DeM 1014 (col. II, l. 6-7)	<i>ḥw=s pw • nfr m ḥtp [...] [...] sš nb-nfr • ḥry-ˁ=f nfr-ḥtp</i>	It has come well and in peace [...] [...] the scribe Nebnefer, his assistant Neferhotep	<i>Khety</i> 1.1-6.2 <i>Khety</i> 30.1-30.6 colophon <i>Khety</i> 29.1-29.5

TABLE 3. — Colophons on ostraca containing *Khety*.

(65) I follow the emendation made by R. Caminos reading *wˁ.w (r) sš* instead of *sš (r) wˁ.w* (CAMINOS, R. [1954], *Late-Egyptian miscellanies*. BEStud 1. London: Oxford University Press, p. 170).

(66) FISCHER-ELFERT, H.-W. (2000). Ostrakon hier. Straßburg H. 108: Brouillon eines Stiftungsvermerks oder Teil eines literarischen Kolophons des Schreibers Pasched. *GM*, 176, p. 112.

Ostrakon	Colophon	Translation	Text
O. BM EA 41650/47896 (verso)	<i>sš mri[...]</i>	The scribe Mery[...]	<i>Khety</i> 6.1-8.1 (recto)
O. DeM 1560 (verso)	<i>ir.t.n sš ḥzy sš ʿ3 n is.t ḥzy</i>	Made by the scribe Hay, the son of the chief workman Hay.	<i>Khety</i> 21.1-21.5 (recto)
O. Cairo 25217bis (verso)	<i>ir n=f sš</i>	Made by Sa for him. ⁽⁶⁷⁾	<i>Khety</i> 4.1-6.2 (recto)
O. DeM 1037 (l. 1)	<i>[...p]tr=f</i>	[...p]etref	colophon <i>Khety</i> 14.1-14.4 date
O. DeM 1536 (l. 6-8)	<i>imy-r s.t [...] mntw-m-wi3 𓆎 𓆏 𓆐</i>	The Overseer of the Storehouse [...] Montuemwia another name (illegible) ⁽⁶⁸⁾	<i>Khety</i> 13.1-13.6 date colophon
O. DeM 1042	<i>sš it-nfr</i>	The scribe Itnefer.	<i>Khety</i> 3.1-3.6 colophon
O. DeM 1022	<i>sš it-nfr</i>	The scribe Itnefer.	<i>Khety</i> 10.1-10.5 colophon
O. UC 32266 (verso)	<i>[...]yw[...] =f [...] [...] =f sš iry-nfr dd n=f trj [...]wsr-s]tj.t [...] imnt.t w3s.t wsr-stj.t [...] n pr-nfr iry s3=f sš p3-n-i3tj s3=f sš nfr-ḥtp</i>	[...] his [...] [...] his [...] the scribe Irynefer called Teri. [...]User-s]etet. [...] West of Thebes User-setet. [...] of the funerary workshop Iry, his son (is) the scribe Peniati, his son (is) the scribe Neferhotep.	<i>Khety</i> 1.2-3.6 (with dates) (recto)

TABLE 4. — Names of scribes on ostraca containing *Khety*.

(67) The sentence as it stands is difficult to interpret. For this translation cf. Wb I.111.6, 8. It is unclear to whom the =f refers and it seems odd this is not further specified. Alternatively it may concern a suffix-pronoun followed by a noun in apposition (GARDINER, A. [1957]. *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, §90, §507.1). If so, the =f would then refer to Sa himself (*ir.n=f sš* ‘what he, [namely] Sa, has made’). But then the question comes to mind why Sa did not simply write *ir.n sš* (‘made by Sa’).

(68) Transcription POSENER, *Catalogue III*, pl. 39.

Publication note

Jurjens. J. 2021b. The Educational Context of a Literary Text: Some Notes on Writing Exercises and Drawings as Found on Material Containing The Teaching of Khety, *JARCE* 57: 175–196.

The Educational Context of a Literary Text: Some Notes on Marginalia and Drawings as Found on Material Containing The Teaching of Khety

JUDITH JURJENS
Leiden University

Abstract

This article presents an analysis of two paratextual features which are occasionally found on material objects (ostraca and papyri) containing The Teaching of Khety, namely drawings and marginalia, in other words, hieratic signs written in the margin representing writing exercises or corrections. Inspired by Material Philology, the various examples are discussed in order to gain insights into the scribal environment in which Khety was produced. The paper focuses especially on the educational context of this literary text.

مُلَخَّص

يقدم هذا المقال تحليلاً لسمتين من سمات خوارج النص أو النص المحاذي والتي توجد أحياناً على آثار (أوستراكا وبرديات) تحتوي على «تعاليم خيتي»، أي الرسومات والهوامش أو بعبارة أخرى العلامات الهيراطيقية المدونة في الهامش والتي تمثل تمارين على الكتابة أو تصويبات. يتناول هذا المقال من منطلق علم فقه اللغة المسجلة على الآثار الأمثلة المتنوعة لهذه السمات من أجل الحصول على معلومات عن بيئة الكتابة التي أنتجت فيها «تعاليم خيتي». يركز المقال بوجه خاص على السياق التعليمي لهذا النص الأدبي.

In the The Teaching of Khety, also known as The Satire of the Trades, a man called Khety travels with his son to the Residence to place him in the scribal school there.¹ While travelling, he describes to his son various laborious professions whose practitioners endure many hardships, contrasting these with the leisurely life of a scribe. His goal, of course, is to make the young boy enthusiastic about becoming a scribe, so he will do his best at school. The Teaching of Khety was one of the most popular literary texts in ancient Egypt, as the vast amount of source material with this text (or excerpts from it) shows.² Nowadays more than 300 ostraca are known, along with twelve papyri, four writing boards and two graffiti.³ Much of this material is thought to stem from a school

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) that supported this work (project number 023.008.011). I would also like to thank Dr. Jacobus van Dijk, Dr. Olaf Kaper and the anonymous reviewer(s) for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I am also grateful to Dr. Ben Haring and Dr. Rob Demarée for discussing some of the marginalia with me.

² A. Gasse, “Les ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el-Medina: nouvelles orientations de la publication,” in R. Demarée and A. Egberts (eds.), *Village Voices: Proceedings of the Symposium “Texts from Deir el-Medina and Their Interpretation,”* Leiden, May 31–June 1, 1991 (Leiden, 1992), 53; B. Mathieu, “La littérature égyptienne sous les Ramsès d’après les ostraca littéraires de Deir el-Médineh,” in G. Andreu (ed.), *Deir el-Médineh et la Vallée des Rois: la vie en Egypte au temps des pharaons du Nouvel Empire: Actes du colloque organisé par le Musée du Louvre, les 3 et 4 mai 2002* (Paris, 2003), 121–22, 134; F. Hagen, *An Ancient Egyptian Literary Text in Context: The Instruction of Ptahhotep*, OLA 218 (Leuven, 2012), 84.

³ S. Jäger, *Altägyptische Berufstypologien*, LingAeg Studia Monographica 4 (Göttingen, 2004), 5–11; H.-W. Fischer-Elfert, “Review of Jäger, *Altägyptische Berufstypologien*,” *LingAeg* 15 (2007), 308–309; K. Widmaier, “Die Lehre des Cheti und ihre Kontexte: Zu Berufen und Berufsbildern im Neuen Reich,” in R. Ernst, G. Moers, K. Widmaier, et al. (eds.), *Dating Egyptian Literary Texts* (Hamburg, 2013), 506–508.

environment. This assumption goes back to A. Erman who considered them to be school exercises, made by students for their teachers.⁴ However, this idea has been questioned recently.⁵ Literary texts may, for example, also have been produced for other reasons, like writing for one's own pleasure.⁶ The purpose of this paper is to add to the discussion by asking the question to what extent the material with Khety should be considered as school exercises. To do so, I will employ the methods of Material Philology.⁷ Material Philology, or New Philology, propagates to look beyond the text at the material object upon which the text was applied. Studying the objects themselves will yield information about the social and historic context in which the text was used. In our case it may provide insights into the supposed educational context of Khety. Because the source material for this text is so abundant, it provides a good starting point for such studies. In this paper I will discuss two features occasionally found on material objects containing Khety: marginalia (hieratic writing found in the margins of papyri and similar writing on ostraca) and drawings. In text editions of Khety such paratextual features are often disregarded, if they are even mentioned at all.⁸ Since these works focus on presenting only the text, the material object upon which the text occurs is not taken into consideration. This paper aims to fill this lacuna, and thus shed some light on the *Sitz im Leben* of this literary text.⁹

Writing in the Margins of Papyri

Both on papyri and ostraca with Khety occasionally single signs or combinations of signs occur which are often larger in size than those of the main body of text on the same object. On papyri they often appear in the margin above the text (fig. 1). On ostraca they appear below the text or on the verso (figs. 2–5).

This kind of writing on papyri was first studied by A. Erman who thought the large signs in question were made by a teacher to correct his student's handwriting. At the same time, Erman observed that the corrected signs were not written erroneously by the student. To the modern eye there seems to be little difference in quality and shape between the signs written by both teacher and student. He concluded that teachers were apparently very particular in the way a sign had to be written, hence the "correction."¹⁰ Erman's idea was contested by later scholars, who argued that many of the so-called marginalia were made by the scribe himself without the involvement of a teacher.¹¹ In this section I will discuss two of the papyri with (extracts from) Khety which also contain such marginalia in order to establish to what extent they stem from an educational context. They are P. Sallier II and P. Chester Beatty V.¹²

⁴ A. Erman, *Die ägyptischen Schülerhandschriften*, APAW 2 (Leipzig, 1925). Followed by many scholars, e.g., B. van de Walle, *La transmission des textes littéraires égyptiens* (Brussels, 1948), 12–16; A. McDowell, "Teachers and Students at Deir El-Medina," in R. Demarée and J. Egberts (eds.), *Deir El Medina in the Third Millennium AD: A Tribute to Jac. J. Janssen*, EgUit 14 (Leiden, 2000), 217–23; Hagen, *Plahhotep*, 85.

⁵ Hagen, *Plahhotep*, 93–98; H. Simon, "Textaufgaben": *Kulturwissenschaftliche Konzepte in Anwendung auf die Literatur der Ramessidenzeit*, SAK Beihefte 14 (Hamburg, 2013), 193; Widmaier, "Die Lehre des Cheti und ihre Kontexte," 492–502.

⁶ E.g., R. Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among Other Histories* (Chichester-Malden, 2009), 111.

⁷ On Material Philology, see Hagen, *Plahhotep*, 26–27, 216–17; R. Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among Other Histories* (Oxford, 2009), 6–7, 272–76; V. Lepper, *Untersuchungen zu pWestcar: eine philologische und literaturwissenschaftliche (Neu-)Analyse*, ÄA 70 (Wiesbaden, 2008), 6–7. See also E. Maynard, "Texts, Materiality and Agency in Middle Kingdom Literature," in E. Maynard, C. Vellozo and R. Lemos (eds.), *Perspectives on Materiality in Ancient Egypt: Agency, Cultural Reproduction and Change* (Oxford, 2018), 55–63.

⁸ H. Brunner, *Die Lehre des Cheti, Sohnes des Duaf*, ÄgForsch 13 (Glückstadt, 1944); Helck, *Die Lehre des dw3-Htj*, KÄT 3 (Wiesbaden, 1970); Jäger, *Berufstypologien*. See also Maynard, "Texts, Materiality and Agency," 57.

⁹ A similar approach is used by the Crossing Boundaries project that studies the heterogeneous papyri in Turin, i.e., papyri combining different types of texts and/or drawings. For more information on this project, see S. Polis, K. Gabler, C. Greco, et al., "Crossing Boundaries: Understanding Complex Scribal Practices in Ancient Egypt (with a 2019 Progress Report)," *Rivista del Museo Egizio* 4 (2020), 1–15.

¹⁰ Erman, *Schülerhandschriften*, 6–8.

¹¹ A. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum: Third Series: Chester Beatty Gift* (London, 1935), vol. 1, 45; A. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, BiAeg 7 (Brussels, 1937), xv; H. Brunner, *Altägyptische Erziehung* (Wiesbaden, 1957), 67–68; F. Hagen, "Literature, Transmission, and the Late Egyptian Miscellanies," in R. Dann (ed.), *Current Research in Egyptology 2004: Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Symposium Which Took Place at the University of Durham January 2004* (Oxford, 2006), 87–88. C. Ragazzoli, *Scribes: Les artisans du texte en Égypte ancienne (1550–1000)* (Paris, 2019), 57–62.

¹² P. Turin CGT 54019, to be published by the author, has traces of writing in the margin, but the remnants are too damaged to be included in the present discussion. P. Berlin 23045, containing both Amenemhat and Khety, is also not taken into consideration here, although



Fig. 1. Marginalia on P. Sallier II (recto, 2) with rectangles indicating the position of the corresponding signs in the text. The signs corresponding to the group at the top right are found on the previous page. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

P. Chester Beatty V

Opinions differ as to who wrote the marginalia of P. Chester Beatty V.¹³ According to Gardiner, they were definitely executed by the same scribe: “Corrections at the top of the page [...] consist almost entirely of efforts to improve the shapes of the rarer signs, some of which are repeated over and over. The peculiar character of the hand enables us to affirm with certainty that these corrections are all due to the same scribe as the texts themselves.”¹⁴ Contrary to Gardiner, C. Ragazzoli notes that the signs in the margin of P. Chester Beatty V form pairs. The first of the pair, clumsily written, has been corrected by a more experienced scribe, possibly a teacher.¹⁵ This difference in interpretation needs to be investigated further by looking at the papyrus in its entirety. Many of the columns on the recto have writing in the margins above the text. Contrary to other marginalia, they are not larger, but are the same size as the text below. It becomes immediately clear that these were written by the scribe himself due to the “peculiar character of the hand,” as Gardiner put it. Only occasionally signs or words have been written multiple times (see Table 1). Above column 7, the ꜥ-k-bird has been written over and over again. The corresponding ꜥ-k-bird in the main text has been written on top of a washed out area. Apparently the



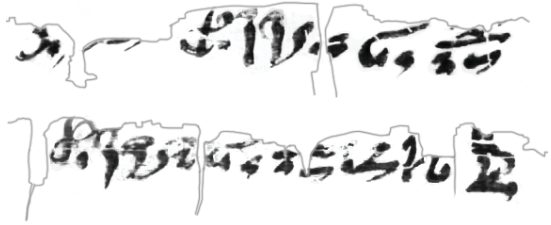

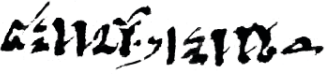






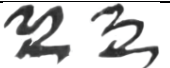




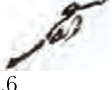
there are some traces of ink visible in the lower margin of this papyrus. J. Quack suggested these traces might represent two hieratic signs of striking men (A24) (J. Quack, “Aus einer spätzeitlichen literarischen Sammelhandschrift [Papyrus Berlin 23045],” *ZÄS* 130 [2003], 183), but to me they rather appear to be accidental blots of ink. A picture is available at <https://elephantine.smb.museum/record/ID100747/> (accessed 8 March 2021).

¹³ Published by Gardiner, *Chester Beatty Gift*, vol. 1, 45–52, vol. 2, pls. 23–29. The excerpt of Khety on the latter was identified by J. Quack (Quack, “Aus einer spätzeitlichen literarischen Sammelhandschrift,” 183–184, n. 14). Pictures of the papyrus can be consulted in the online database of the British Museum: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection>.

¹⁴ Gardiner, *Chester Beatty Gift*, 45.

¹⁵ Ragazzoli, *Scribes*, 61–62.

Table 1. Signs that have been written multiple times in the margins of P. Chester Beatty V and their counterparts in the main text.

Margin	Main text
 4	 4,5 not in text
 5	
 6	 6,4
 6	 6,13
 6	 6,1
 6	 6,1
 6	 6,1
 6	 6,7
 7	 7,6

P. Sallier II and P. Anastasi IV

Comparing the palaeography more closely (see Tables 2 and 3), the differences between the signs in the margin and the signs in the main body of the text become apparent. Most noticeable are the bird signs (straight back versus more curved; legs with a different shape), but compare for example also the *ductus* of the *h3*-sign. Overall, the signs in the margin have a rather more detailed, more elegant appearance. The palaeographical differences

²² Gardiner, *Miscellanies*, 42a, 46a; R. Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, Brown Egyptological Studies 1 (London, 1954), 178.

Table 2. The marginalia of P. Sallier II and the corresponding signs in the text.












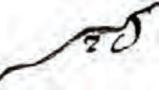
Margin	Main text	Nature of correction
 1	 1,2	calligraphy
 1	 1,8 1,8	calligraphy
 2	 1,10	calligraphy
 2	 2,5	calligraphy
 2	 2,1	calligraphy
 2	 2,10	calligraphy

Table 3. The marginalia of P. Anastasi IV and the corresponding signs in the text.









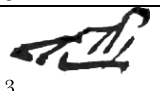








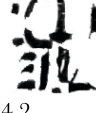
Margin	Main text	Nature of correction
 1a	lost in lacuna	?
 1a	lost in lacuna	?
 1a	lost in lacuna	?
 1b	lost in lacuna	?
 1b	 1b,7	calligraphy
 3	 3,4	calligraphy
 3	 3,2	calligraphy
 3	 3,11	calligraphy
 3	 4,1	calligraphy
 4	 4,10	?
 4	 4,11	determinative
 4	 4,2	determinative / ordering of hieroglyphs

Table 3, *continued*





















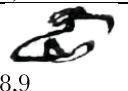





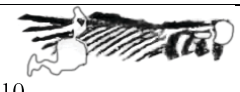



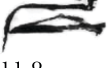







 4	 4,7	grammatical
 5	 5,8	calligraphy
 5	 5,10	ordering of hieroglyphs
 6	 6,8  6,9  6,10	calligraphy
 6	 6,4	calligraphy
 7	 7,10	word
 8	 8,11	calligraphy

Table 3, *continued*

 8	 8,2  8,5	calligraphy
 8	 8,9  8,9	calligraphy
 9	 9,2	calligraphy
 10	 9,6	calligraphy
 10	 10,4	calligraphy
 11	 11,6  11,8	calligraphy
 11	 10,11	word
 11	 11,9	calligraphy
 11	 11,7  11,11	calligraphy

make it likely they were executed by a different scribe. However, because there are only few signs to compare, one should be careful not to rely too much on the palaeography. The *3h*-bird serves as an illustration. It occurs twice in the margin (P. Anastasi IV, column 1b and 8), but both times the legs are shaped differently. Moreover the signs in the margin are often larger, allowing for more detail. Therefore, the possibility that Inena was responsible for them should not be excluded. The palaeographical differences would then be explained by him taking more care writing these signs, while experimenting with the calligraphy.

However, as noted, it is more likely a different scribe was responsible. This particular person was responsible for the writing in the margins of both P. Sallier II and P. Anastasi IV. The *gm*-bird, which occurs in both manuscripts (P. Sallier II, column 2; P. Anastasi IV, column 11), has been written exactly the same, thus by the same person. The most likely candidate for the identity of this person is Qagebu, a Scribe of the Treasury, who is mentioned in both papyri.²³ While Erman interpreted the relationship of both men as a teacher-student one, this has been questioned recently.²⁴ Inena was not learning to become a scribe, but already worked as one, assisting his mentor Qagebu.²⁵ Apparently Qagebu read both papyri and corrected some of Inena's faults.²⁶ As regards the marginalia that are calligraphic in nature, it is likely they should also be considered corrections, as the other ones clearly are. Qagebu was showcasing an alternative, or perhaps rather an improved version of the sign in question in the margin, while at the same time practicing his own skills.²⁷ As Erman already noted, he apparently had an eye for detail, because Inena's calligraphy of the signs in question was not faulty.²⁸

The Same Phenomenon on Ostraca

In comparison to the marginalia on papyri, the same phenomenon on ostraca has been studied only rarely.²⁹ In the section below, I will discuss such writing as found on ostraca containing Khety. On some ostraca, signs on the verso have been written over each other again and again, resulting in an illegible mess. This is especially the case when pottery was used as a basis for writing, for it was not easy to erase previously applied text on this type of material.³⁰ Because of the difficulty reading such ostraca (for example to study the palaeography), these are left out of the following discussion.³¹

²³ P. Anastasi IV, 1a, 1: "[Beginning of the teaching in letter-writing. Made by the scribe of the Treasury Qagebu for] his assistant the scribe Inena, in year 1, fourth month of summer, day 15." P. Sallier II, 3, 7–8: "It has come well and in peace. For the ka of the greatly praised, the one excellent of character, the scribe of the Treasury Qagebu and the scribe of the Treasury Hori. The scribe Inena, in year 1, first month of winter, day 20"; 11, 5; 14, 11.

²⁴ Erman, *Schülerhandschriften*. Reservations made by Hagen, "Literature, Transmission, and the Late Egyptian Miscellanies"; C. Ragazzoli, "Un nouveau manuscrit du scribe Inéna? Le recueil de Miscellanées du Papyrus Koller (Pap. Berlin P. 3043)," in V. Lepper (ed.), *Forschung in der Papyrussammlung: Eine Festgabe für das Neue Museum* (Berlin, 2012), 214–15; C. Ragazzoli, "La littérature de scribe au Nouvel Empire ou pourquoi les Miscellanées ne sont pas des textes scolaires," *BSFE* 201 (2019), 44–78; J. Jurjens, "The Scribes Who Wrote Khety: Some Remarks on Colophons and Scribal Education," *CdÉ* 95 (2020), fasc. 190, 220–35.

²⁵ For an overview of the tasks performed by Inena as Qagebu's assistant (*hry*-ḥ), see Ragazzoli, *Scribes*, 147–51.

²⁶ Compare the marginalia on P. Bologna 1094 that were applied by a more experienced hand than the one writing the main text (Ragazzoli, *Scribes*, 61).

²⁷ This is shown by the bird in the margin besides column 5 of P. Anastasi IV. The scribe began to write the head of the bird, was not content, abandoned his attempt, and rewrote the entire bird below this (see Table 3).

²⁸ Scribes could be very particular about the shape of a sign as shown by P. Anastasi V where two *gm*-birds occur in the margin above column 8. The first one, similar in shape to the one in the main text, has been crossed out with a horizontal line, as if someone thought it to be faulty. Next to it a second bird was written, with a shape that differs slightly from the first one. Picture available at https://www.british-museum.org/collection/object/Y_EA10244-3 (accessed 8 March 2021).

²⁹ A collection of examples has been studied by I. Venturini, "Recherches sur les exercices scolaires sur ostraca et tablettes hiéroglyphiques et hiératiques dans l'Égypte pharaonique," (PhD dissertation, Université de Montpellier, 2007). I would like to thank Isabelle Venturini for giving me access to her unpublished PhD thesis.

³⁰ C. Barbotin, "Les ostraca hiératiques de l'école du Ramesseum," *Memnonia* 24 (2013), 78.

³¹ Examples with Khety on the recto are O. UC 32995 and O. UC 33006 in A. Charron and C. Barbotin, *Khâemouaset, le prince archéologue: Savoir et pouvoir à l'époque de Ramsès II* (Arles, 2016), 166–67. Pictures are available in the online catalogue of the Petrie Museum at <http://petriecat.museums.ucl.ac.uk/search.aspx> (accessed 8 March 2021).

O. UC 32986 and O. CGC 25217

Bulls have been drawn beneath the text on both ostraca. On O. CGC 25217, there is a single bull, roughly drawn, while the scribe of O. UC 32986 has written the hieratic sign for bull two times with more attention to detail (fig. 2).³² In neither case is there a connection between the drawings and the main text (Khety 1,4–2,1; 13,1–14,1): no bulls are mentioned, and the sign in question does not occur in the text. Bulls, however, are a recurring motif in writing exercises. In fact, they are the most commonly practiced sign after *nb*-signs (which are often incised) and bird-signs.³³ They even occur on papyri as writing exercises.³⁴ Some are drawn very schematically, others could be mistaken for a drawing rather than a hieratic sign.³⁵ B. van de Walle considered them a decorative element,³⁶ but their occurrence in other exercises of single signs³⁷ makes it more likely they should be regarded as writing exercises meant to practice the calligraphy of the sign. Another ostrakon on which a bull has been drawn twice³⁸ gives us a clue as to why bulls were such a popular sign. The second one is accompanied by the hieratic sign for “striking arm” (D40) and the combination thus reads *k3 nht* “strong bull,” a common introduction to the king’s Horus name. Signs of the royal titulary were frequently practiced by students,³⁹ but it is striking how often the bull occurs compared to the other signs. Perhaps the bull sign was considered to be more difficult to write, hence the need to practice it often, but this only explains its popularity partially, for bulls also outnumber equally complicated signs found in the royal titulary, for example *bity*. The symbolic meaning of the bull representing strength and masculinity may have prompted the young scribes to practice it often.



Fig. 2. O. UC 32986. Courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, UCL.

O. Turin 57403

On the recto, beneath the extract from Khety (chapters 11 and 12,1), occur two large *hnw*-signs, written at an angle of 90 degrees to the text above (fig. 3). The verso contains more writing exercises: a *nbw*-sign and two

³² O. CGC 25217 in G. Daressy, *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire; Nos 25001–25385; Ostraca* (Cairo, 1901), 47, pl. XLII; O. UC 32986 in W. Spiegelberg, *Hieratic Ostraca and Papyri Found by J. E. Quibell in the Ramesseum, 1895–6* (London, 1898), pl. VIII, no. 66.

³³ Venturini, “Recherches sur les exercices scolaires,” 53.

³⁴ E.g., Ragazzoli, *Scribes*, 91–92.

³⁵ Depictions of bulls are also common on figured ostraca. For a parallel of O. UC 32986, see for example O. MM 14 089 in B. Peterson, *Zeichnungen aus einer Totenstadt: Bildostraka aus Theben-West, ihre Fundplätze, Themata und Zweckbereiche, mitsamt einem Katalog der Gayer-Anderson-Sammlung in Stockholm*, Medelhavsmuseet Bulletin 7-8 (Stockholm, 1973), pl. 52, no. 102.

³⁶ van de Walle, *La transmission*, 16, n. 3.

³⁷ See for example O. Wirz 14 verso in A. Dorn, M. Müller, and M. Sherif Ali, “Unbekannte und unerkannte literarische Ostraka des Neuen Reiches,” in M. Brose, P. Dils, F. Naether, et al., *En Détail - Philologie und Archäologie im Diskurs: Festschrift für Hans-Werner Fischer-Elfert* (Berlin, 2019), 323–24. The recto of this ostrakon contains an excerpt from the Hymn to the Nile.

³⁸ O. DeM 1783 in A. Gasse, *Catalogue des ostraca littéraires de Deir al-Médina: Nos 1775–1873 et 1156 (tome V)*, DFIFAO 44 (Cairo, 2005), 20. Compare also oDeM 3355 in A. Gasse, *Catalogue des ostraca figurés de Deir el-Médineh: Nos 3100–3372 (5e fascicule)*, DFIFAO 23 (Cairo, 1986), pl. XXXVIII.

³⁹ Gasse, *Catalogue des ostraca littéraires*, 9.

other signs that J. López identified as faience pectorals (S15), but Venturini as vines (M43).⁴⁰ While the signs *hnw* and *nbw* do not appear in the corresponding chapters of Khety written on the recto, the hieratic sign for vine is used in the text to determine the word “gardener” (Khety, 12.1). If Venturini’s reading of the sign is correct, it is tempting to think the scribe practiced the sign on the verso before writing on the recto. Unfortunately, the sign in question is lost in the text itself, which makes a palaeographical comparison impossible. However, the hieratic sign for vine⁴¹ is commonly written with two “legs,” while the two signs on the verso both have three, making López’ identification more plausible. All in all, it rather seems there is no direct relationship between the writing exercises and the text. The ostrakon was first written upon and later reused to practice writing.⁴²



Fig. 3. O. Turin 57403 (recto and verso) with writing exercises indicated in rectangles. Photo by Nicola Dell’Acquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio.

O. DeM 1581

This ostrakon (fig. 4) has two hieroglyphic signs on the back, one of which is partly incised, an interesting feature, since carved signs are almost exclusively baskets (*nb*) (see above).⁴³ One of the figures represents a standing man with a basket on his head (A9B),⁴⁴ while the other shows an armed man, holding a spear and shield (A206). In both cases the bodies of the men have been replaced with those of quail chicks. Perhaps the inspiration for the latter figure came from the occurrence of the *ḥ3*-sign (D41) in line 2 of the text on the recto. The imagery

⁴⁰ J. López, *Ostraca ieratici*, Catalogo Del Museo Egizio Di Torino: Serie Seconda - Collezioni (Milan, 1978–1984), pl. 130a; Venturini, “Recherches sur les exercices scolaires,” 71.

⁴¹ G. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie: Die ägyptische Buchschrift in ihrer Entwicklung von der fünften Dynastie bis zur römischen Kaiserzeit, I–III* (Leipzig 1909–1912), no. 267.

⁴² Compare O. DeM 1776 that has a royal eulogy written in a neat hand on one side, while on the other side four *hnw*-signs have been written in a rather clumsy hand (Gasse, *Catalogue des ostraca littéraires*, 11–12).

⁴³ Published by G. Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh 3: Nos 1267 à 1675*, DFIFAO 20 (Cairo 1977–1980), pl. 44.

⁴⁴ The sign A9B normally has a single arm raised to the basket, but in this case two arms support the basket, a feature not otherwise attested before the Ptolemaic period. See J. Hallof, *Verzeichnis der hieroglyphischen Schreibungen der Szenentitel in den griechisch-römischen Tempeln Ägyptens*, Studien zu den Ritualszenen altägyptischer Tempel 2 (Dettelbach, 2008), 26. For the standing man of A9B as a rare variant for the seated man (A9) before the Late Period, see sign-list in J.F. Borghouts, *Egyptian: An Introduction to the Writing and Language of the Middle Kingdom*, EgUit 24 (Leiden-Leuven, 2010), 13, n. 4.

is completely unique, for quail chicks seem never to have been used in cryptographic writing, and are rare in other graphic uses, such as religious iconography, although they do sometimes occur in writing exercises.⁴⁵ The drawings themselves are reminiscent of the so-called fables depicted on figured ostraca, showing various animals engaged in human activities. The images on this ostrakon should be interpreted more in the light of these depictions than as actual writing exercises.⁴⁶



Fig. 4. O. DeM 1581 (verso), © IFAO.

O. Turin 57430

On the verso of this ostrakon occurs the hieratic sign for “arm” immediately followed by a rather badly written hieroglyphic vulture.⁴⁷ Through the latter runs a thin black line ending in a dot as if the scribe was trying out his pen. Other pen trials are visible on the verso (three lines in red ink), which makes it likely the signs in question should also be considered pen trials rather than exercises in calligraphy.⁴⁸ Moreover, the signs bear no relation to the text on the recto (Khety, chapter 9), for the vulture is not found in this particular chapter. The ostrakon was originally larger; the text has been broken off at the top. Considering the position of the signs on the verso (right in the middle), the already broken piece was reused by a scribe trying out his brush.

A Potsherd from the Late Period

This ostrakon contains the opening words of Khety, beneath which occur some large, rather clumsily written signs,⁴⁹ probably the work of the same scribe. One of the signs practiced superimposes the text, revealing that it was applied after the text had been written. The signs represent a star (N14),⁵⁰ three recumbent jackals (E15), two falcons wearing the crown of Upper and Lower Egypt (G106), and two *wr*-birds or *hrw*-birds.⁵¹ According to

⁴⁵ Venturini, “Recherches sur les exercices scolaires,” 58.

⁴⁶ In fact, both A. Gasse and G. Posener refer to them as drawings (A. Gasse, “Ostraca littéraires de Deir el-Medina conservés à l’IFAO: Du calame à l’ordinateur,” in U. Verhoeven (ed.), *Ägyptologische „Binsen“-Weisheiten I-II: Neue Forschungen und Methoden der Hieratistik: Akten Zweier Tagungen in Mainz im April 2011 und März 2013* [Mainz, 2015], 223; Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires* 3, 74).

⁴⁷ López, *Ostraca ieratici*, 33–34, pl. 138, 138a.

⁴⁸ Cf. Ragazzoli, *Scribes*, 59 (“essais de plume”).

⁴⁹ H. Altenmüller and M. El Bialy, “Eine Spätzeitliche Topfscherbe aus Saqqara mit dem Anfang der „Lehre Des Dua-Cheti“,” in D. Kessler, R. Schulz, A. Verbovsek, et al. (eds.), *Texte - Theben - Tonfragmente: Festschrift für Günter Burkard* (Wiesbaden, 2009), 21–26.

⁵⁰ I disagree with Altenmüller and El Bialy that the star represents the first sign of the name *dwꜣ*[=*f sꜣ hty*], as found in chapter 1.2 of *Khety* (Altenmüller and El Bialy, “Eine Spätzeitliche Topfscherbe,” 23). In my opinion, the sign should also be considered a writing exercise because of its large size and position on the ostrakon. Compare also O. Turin CGC 57353 on which similar signs have been practiced: a falcon (G5), the head and neck of a jackal (F12), a star (N14), and a chest (Q5) (López, *Ostraca ieratici*, pl. 104, 104a).

⁵¹ In hieratic these two birds (Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, nos. 184 and 198) are not always easy to distinguish. As a result, opinions sometimes differ as to which bird is depicted, as the following example demonstrates. O. LACMA M.80.203.209 has a wisdom text on the recto and writing exercises on the verso, consisting of five identical hieratic birds. I. Venturini identifies them as falcons (Venturini, “Recherches sur les exercices scolaires,” 58), while K. Cooney identifies them as *wr*-birds: K. Cooney, “Apprenticeship and Figured Ostraca from the

the editors, the religious nature of the signs may have something to do with the educational demands of a school attached to a House of Life associated with a temple. However, as the authors themselves admit, this theory is not supported by the archaeological find spot of the piece—a group of small chambers, some of which were later reused as tombs in the wādi separating the pyramid plateau of Pepi I and Djedkare-Izezi at South Saqqara.⁵² A more probable explanation is that the signs in question were practiced because they were part of the repertoire of scribes and draftsmen, for religious texts and imagery are a common occurrence on stelae and in tombs. In fact, the same signs can also be found as drawings on figured ostraca.⁵³ It shows the existence of a close connection between drawing and writing (see below), not only at Deir el-Medina, but also at Saqqara.

Marginalia on Ostraca and Papyri: A Comparison

Comparing the marginalia on papyri and on ostraca, there are similarities, but also differences. On both types of material the signs in question are often larger in size than those of the text proper. Similar signs are practiced on both ostraca and papyri. For example, the crocodile on P. Sallier II is also found on several other ostraca.⁵⁴ Bird signs that are practiced a lot on ostraca (see above) also occur on P. Sallier II. Apparently, scribes writing on papyri and those on ostraca considered the same signs difficult to write. While the bird signs may at first sight not seem very complicated, it is a fact that there are many of them in the Egyptian script, all having their own particular shape in hieratic. Therein lay the difficulty for the ancient scribes.⁵⁵ A noticeable difference is that the marginalia on P. Sallier II actually appear in the text on the same page, which is never the case on the ostraca discussed above. Instead, the marginalia on ostraca bear no relation to the text at all. They were often made by different scribes, who simply made use of the material that was at hand.⁵⁶ The latter also applies in a way to scribes using papyri. For them the margins were the most readily available space and thus used for practicing or correcting signs. Apparently these scribes adhered to the scribal practices that they had learned as students writing on ostraca.

The Educational Context of the Marginalia

To what extent can the examples discussed above be linked to an educational context? A distinction must be made between the marginalia found on papyri and the ones on ostraca. As P. Sallier II, P. Anastasi IV, and P. Chester Beatty V exemplify, the marginalia on papyri are found both in and out of an educational context. The margins of a papyrus could be used either by the same scribe correcting his own work or practicing signs in the margin before writing them in the text, or by a different, more experienced scribe offering corrections and showcasing alternative shapes of signs. The example of P. Sallier II shows that Khety was used within a scholarly environment, where one scribe corrected the work of the other. While the marginalia may have been part of In-ena's training, their origins would seem to lie in scribal practices in general rather than in an educational context.

As regards ostraca, an educational context is more apparent, and the majority of cases can be regarded as writing exercises, especially when multiple signs have been practiced, or a single sign has been written multiple

Ancient Egyptian Village of Deir El-Medina," in W. Wendrich (ed.), *Archaeology and Apprenticeship: Body Knowledge, Identity, and Communities of Practice* (Tucson, 2012), 156. For pictures of this ostrakon, see <https://collections.lacma.org/node/221370> (accessed 8 March 2021).

⁵² Altenmüller and El Bialy, "Eine Spätzeitliche Topfscherbe," 22.

⁵³ Falcon with crown: for example J. Vandier d'Abbadie, *Catalogue des ostraca figurés de Deir el Médineh: Nos 2734 à 3053*, DFIFAO 2.4 (Cairo, 1959), pl. CXLIX, no. 2996; Daressy, *CG 25001–25385*, pl. XXXIII, no. 25195; Peterson, *Zeichnungen*, pl. 5. Recumbent jackal: for example R. Demarée, *Ramesseide Ostraca* (London, 2002), pl. 222, no. 69074; Vandier d'Abbadie, *Catalogue des ostraca figurés*, pl. CLI, no. 3005; Peterson, *Zeichnungen*, 80, pls. 24–25, no. 40. The latter is most likely a practice piece. The jackal on the recto is beautifully drawn, while the one on the verso is poorly executed.

⁵⁴ For example O. DeM 1779, O. DeM 1781 in Gasse, *Catalogue des ostraca littéraires*, 15, 17–18; O. MM 14 138 in Peterson, *Zeichnungen*, pl. 79, no. 147; O. Berlin 12610, O. Berlin 21458 in E. Brunner-Traut, *Die altägyptischen Scherbenbilder (Bildostraka) der deutschen Museen und Sammlungen* (Wiesbaden, 1956), 83–84, 128, pl. XXX, no. 85, pl. XLX, no. 163.

⁵⁵ See Ragazzoli, *Scribes*, 60.

⁵⁶ Cooney, "Apprenticeship and Figured Ostraca," 157.

times. There are exceptions, however. As we have seen above, sometimes individual signs on ostraca are pen trials or doodles rather than writing exercises.⁵⁷ Writing exercises on ostraca have no link with the excerpt of Khety that is also found on them. Students reused ostraca, which sometimes contained excerpts of Khety, to practice their calligraphy. Khety was apparently written in an environment where training of scribes also took place. In many cases the extracts from Khety are written in practiced hands, while the writing exercises are not. Therefore A. Gasse concluded that beginners and advanced students were taught side by side and that teachers gathered a group of students of various levels around them.⁵⁸ However, one must be careful not to attribute all of these writing exercises to absolute beginners or students for that matter. For instance, one of the ostraca containing such exercises has been signed *iri.n sš 3ny* “Made by the scribe Any.”⁵⁹ Apparently, the “author” was no beginner practicing his first hieratic signs, but he could already write, his own name at least. Moreover, the practicing of signs was still being done by more experienced scribes, as the case of P. Chester Beatty V has shown.

Writing Exercises, Drawings and Education

Before moving on to the next section about drawings, I would first like to make explicit the close connection between (literary) texts, writing exercises, and drawings within an educational context. To illustrate this, four examples will be discussed briefly. The first, O. MM 14 009, was used as a practice piece on which various elements can be seen: drawings (a king holding a falcon; a falcon with the double crown), cartouches, text (a vertical band with hieroglyphic writing) and writing exercises (single hieroglyphic signs).⁶⁰ On O. CGC 25210 (fig. 5), a student has also practiced both writing and drawing.⁶¹ On the recto of this object a hymn to Nefertum has been written in hieratic. The verso contains four lines of hieratic text, writing exercises and a large cartouche with detailed hieroglyphs which are like drawings in their own right. The third example is O. Qurna TT 85/60 that contains not only an excerpt of The Teaching of Amenemhat in hieratic, but also writing exercises and two drawings of a face.⁶² The fourth, an apprentice’s board from Dra Abu el-Naga, contains both a drawing and a writing exercise.⁶³ On the left hand side of the board appear two figures of a king’s statue drawn in a squared grid, one made by a teacher and the other one by a student copying the teacher’s model. The same principle can be seen on the right hand side of the board, only this time it concerns a writing exercise. The opening words of *Kēmyt*, a school text, were first written by a teacher and subsequently copied twice by the student.⁶⁴ The



Fig. 5. O. CGC 25210, verso (Daressy, *CG 25001-25385*, 6, pl. XXXVIII).

⁵⁷ An altogether different category are the single signs found on ostraca containing oracles, see L. Weiss, “Markings on oracle ostraca from Deir el Medina - conflicting interpretations,” in B. Haring and O. Kaper (eds.), *Pictograms or pseudo script? Non-textual identity marks in practical use in ancient Egypt and elsewhere. Proceedings of a conference in Leiden, 19–20 December 2006* (Leiden-Leuven, 2009), 221–30.

⁵⁸ Gasse, *Catalogue des ostraca littéraires*, 2–3.

⁵⁹ O. DeM 1784 in Gasse, *Catalogue des ostraca littéraires*, 21–22. Compare also O. DeM 1782 in Gasse, *Catalogue des ostraca littéraires*, 19–20.

⁶⁰ O. MM 14 009 in Peterson, *Zeichnungen*, 70–71, pls. 4–5.

⁶¹ O. CGC 25210 in Daressy, *CG 25001-25385*, 6, pls. XXXVII, XXXVIII.

⁶² A. Dorn, “Weitere Fragmente zu Ostrakon Qurna TT 85/60 mit dem Beginn der Lehre Amenemhat I. für seinen Sohn,” *GM* 206 (2005), 25–28. See especially page 28.

⁶³ J. Galán, “An Apprentice’s Board from Dra Abu El-Naga,” *JEA* 93 (2007), 95–116.

⁶⁴ The copying of a teacher’s model was a well-known didactic method. For more examples, see J. Jurjens, “The Teaching of Khety

examples mentioned above demonstrate that writing and drawing stood side by side and that students could be instructed in both.⁶⁵ This is confirmed by recent excavations at the Ramesseum that have revealed remnants of a school.⁶⁶ At this site both figured and written ostraca were found, a large percentage of which contained writing exercises. Not unimportantly, many of the finds were extracts from *The Teaching of Khety*, showcasing its use as an educational tool.⁶⁷

Drawings on Objects with Khety

Drawings occur on both ostraca and papyri with Khety. On papyri they are found amongst other jottings on the verso of the papyrus in question. On ostraca they mostly appear on the verso, but in one case also on the recto below the text. The drawings in question are analyzed in the following section.⁶⁸

P. Chester Beatty XIX

The papyrus is currently housed at the British Museum and is preserved in a very fragmentary state. It has been mounted into several frames. Frame 1 contains some fragments of *The Teaching of Khety*.⁶⁹ Frame 2 holds a fragment with another hieratic text on the recto and a drawing of a geometric pattern in red ink on the verso (fig. 6, left). It consists of two rows of rectangles, in which circles and (square) spirals are alternately drawn. Such spirals also occur on an ostracon which J. Vandier d'Abbadie identified as a sketch for a ceiling “composé d'une sorte de grecque disposée en carrés” (fig. 6, right).⁷⁰ An actual ceiling fragment with “grecques” like these has been found in the tomb of Inyotef.⁷¹ Apparently, the scribe of *P. Chester Beatty XIX* used the back of the papyrus to make a sketch or design for a painted ceiling.

P. Anastasi VII

This papyrus⁷² was also written by Inena, just like *P. Sallier II*, discussed above. On the verso occurs a drawing of a lion marching through the desert (fig. 7, left). It has been suggested that it concerns an informal doodle, illustrating chapter 16 of Khety, as this particular chapter mentions a courier in fear of lions (*m3iw*) as he travels through the desert (*h3s.t*). If this notion is correct, it would be an exceptional case, as literary texts are always

Twice: A New Reading of oBM EA 65597 as a School Exercise,” *JEA* 105 (2019), 132–33. One of the examples mentioned there is a writing board that has the initial lines of *The Hymn to the Nile*, on both recto and verso, probably written by a teacher and a student respectively. Interestingly, the tablet also contains drawings (two grasshoppers and a falcon's head with a sun on top). See F. Hagen, “An Eighteenth Dynasty Writing Board (Ashmolean 1948.91) and *The Hymn to the Nile*,” *JARCE* 49 (2013), 73–91.

⁶⁵ See also B. van de Walle, “Problèmes relatifs aux méthodes d'enseignement dans l'Égypte ancienne,” *Les sagesses du Proche-Orient ancien: colloque de Strasbourg 17-19 mai 1962* (Paris, 1963), 194.

⁶⁶ C. Leblanc, “L'école du temple (ât-Sebaït) et le *per-ankh* (maison de vie): à propos de récentes découvertes effectuées dans le contexte du Ramesseum,” *Memnonia* 15 (2004); Barbotin, “Les ostraca hiératiques.” The identification of the area as a school has been questioned by Hagen, *Ptahhotep*, 79–79, 244; F. Hagen, “Libraries in Ancient Egypt, c. 1600–800 BCE,” in K. Ryholt and G. Barjamovic (eds.), *Libraries Before Alexandria: Ancient Near Eastern Traditions* (Oxford, 2019), 257–58; S. Quirke, “Archive,” in A. Loprieno (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms* (Leiden, 1996), 393–94.

⁶⁷ Barbotin, “Les ostraca hiératiques,” 73, 77.

⁶⁸ Apart from the ostraca mentioned in this section, there are several others with sketches in black or red ink. However, the drawings on those ostraca are incomplete or the ink has become too faded, making it difficult to recognize what is depicted. Therefore such examples are not further discussed in this paper. These faded or incomplete ostraca include O. DeM 1014 in G. Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh 1: Nos 1001 à 1108*, DFIFAO 1 (Cairo, 1938), pls. 9, 10, 10a; and O. DeM 1446, O. DeM 1447 and O. DeM 1469 in Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires 3*, 40–41, 47, pls. 28, 31.

⁶⁹ Only this part of the papyrus has been published, see Gardiner, *Chester Beatty Gift*, vol. 1, 132, vol. 2, pl. 72.

⁷⁰ Vandier d'Abbadie, *Catalogue des ostraca figurés*, 229.

⁷¹ C. Wilkinson and M. Hill, *Egyptian Wall Paintings: The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Collection of Facsimiles* (New York, 1983), 76.

⁷² Birch and E. Hawkins, *Select Papyri*, pls. CXXVIII–CXXXIX.

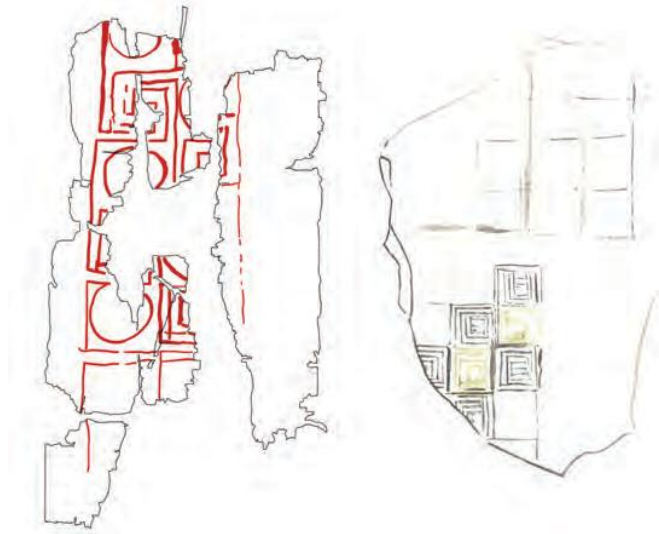


Fig. 6. On the left P. Chester Beatty XIX, frame 2, verso (facsimile by the author). On the right an ostrakon with a similar pattern (Vandier d'Abbadie, *Catalogue des ostraca figurés*, pl. CLIX, no. 3042).

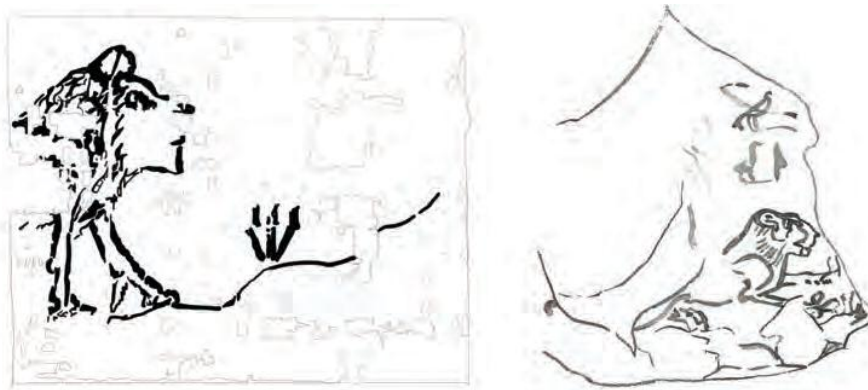


Fig. 7. On the left P. Anastasi VII, verso, 1 (facsimile by the author). On the right an ostrakon depicting a similar lion (Vandier d'Abbadie, *Catalogue des ostraca figurés*, pl. CXI, no. 2815).

unillustrated.⁷³ However, the position of the drawing (verso, col. 1) compared to the line mentioning the lions (recto, col. 2, l. 9) is odd if the purpose of the drawing was indeed to serve as an illustration to the text. Inena's drawing is reminiscent of a figured ostrakon that also depicts a lion in the desert, this time being attacked by a dog (fig. 7, right). In fact, lions in the desert (often in hunting scenes) are a recurring motive on figured ostraca,

⁷³ R. Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, Studies in Egyptology and the Ancient Near East (London-New York, 2002), 74, n.13. C. Ragazzoli suggests that the horses written in the top margin of P. Sallier III containing the Poem of the Battle of Qadesh also serve as an illustration to the text (Ragazzoli, *Scribes*, 95). In my opinion, they are first and foremost writing exercises, the scribe having practiced the uncommon sign for "horse" (which appears several times in the text on the same page) in the margin. However, because they fit the content of the text very well, the scribe may have added a few more.

as are lions in general.⁷⁴ Thus Inena made a sketch of a common iconographical feature, which was part of the standard repertoire of draftsmen. The same applies to the scribe of P. Anastasi II (Miscellanies) who also drew a picture of a lion on the back of his papyrus.⁷⁵ Therefore Inena's drawing, made first and foremost for his own amusement, should not be considered here an illustration to the text, and thus there is no need to consider this an exception. Of course it may be that Inena was inspired by the text to make the drawing in the first place.

O. München 3787

The back of this ostrakon originally also contained a drawing of a lion.⁷⁶ Unfortunately, the ostrakon was lost during the Second World War, making it impossible to know exactly what it looked like, as no picture is available. The drawing is certainly unrelated to the text on the recto (Khety 1–3.1), the content of which has nothing to do with lions.

O. UC 32968

On the back of this ostrakon⁷⁷ the outline of a serpent's head with open jaws and outstretched tongue has been drawn (fig. 8, left). The recto contains two lines from chapter 29 of Khety. Because the ostrakon is incomplete, it may, in theory, also have contained chapter 30 in which mention is made of the snake goddess Renenutet who protects scribes. If so, could it be that someone made the drawing as an illustration to the text, or was perhaps inspired by it? Another scenario is far more likely. Snakes are a common motif on figured ostraca. They often represent the snake-goddess Meretseger, the patron goddess of Deir el-Medina,⁷⁸ although the open jaw with outstretched tongue of our example is uncommon. This feature in combination with the downward position of the head is reminiscent of the vignette illustrating chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead, in which Re is depicted in the form of a cat slaying the snake Apep. A beautiful example occurs in the tomb of Inherkhawy,⁷⁹ but the vignette can also be found in many a Book of the Dead (fig. 8, right). The similarities make it likely that our ostrakon depicts the snake Apep. The drawing may have been a preparatory sketch or simply an informal doodle made by a draftsman who was inspired by his work in the tomb.



Fig. 8. On the left O. UC 32968 (recto). Courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, UCL.
On the right Ra slaying the snake Apep in the tomb of Inherkhawy.

⁷⁴ Peterson, *Zeichnungen*, 22–24, 46–47.

⁷⁵ Ragazzoli, *Scribes*, 94.

⁷⁶ A. Dorn, *Arbeiterhütten im Tal der Könige: Ein Beitrag zur altägyptischen Sozialgeschichte aufgrund von neuem Quellenmaterial aus der Mitte der 20. Dynastie (ca. 1150 v. Chr.)*, AegHelv 23 (Basel, 2011), 47.

⁷⁷ Spiegelberg, *Hieratic Ostraca*, pls. V, Va, no. 48.

⁷⁸ For some examples of figured ostraca with snakes, see Vandier d'Abbadie, *Catalogue des ostraca figurés*, nos. 3011–3027; Peterson, *Zeichnungen*, nos. 35–38; E. Brunner-Traut, *Egyptian Artists' Sketches: Figured Ostraca from the Gayer-Anderson Collection in the Fitzwilliam Museum*, Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 45 (Leiden, 1979), nos. 41–47.

⁷⁹ PM I2 423, (11), 13. The tomb has since been published by N. Cherpion and J. Corteggiani, *La tombe d'Inherkhawy (TT 359) à Deir el-Medina*, 2 vols, MIFAO 128 (Cairo, 2010).

O. DeM 1560

Only the bottom part of the drawing has been preserved on this ostrakon (fig. 9).⁸⁰ It consists of (part of) a foot, painted in a brown color with an outline in black, below which can be seen four horizontal lines, forming what appear to be two horizontal bands, perhaps meant to contain hieroglyphic text, or simply indicating the floor. Below the drawing is written in hieratic *ir.t n sš ḥꜣy sꜣ ʿꜣ n is.t ḥꜣy* “Made by the scribe Hay, the son of the chief workman Hay.” The drawing and the accompanying text are oriented at a 90-degree angle to the excerpt of Khety written on the other side of the ostrakon. A. McDowell does not mention the drawing, but is of the opinion that Hay copied the fragment of Khety and subsequently signed his work on the back.⁸¹ More examples are in fact known of ostraca with signatures on the verso.⁸² Alternatively, Hay could be the person responsible for the drawing, or indeed for both.⁸³ Another possibility is that the formula should not be considered a signature in the first place. The expression *iri.n* is also commonly seen on ostraca used as votive pieces, which depict a person worshipping a god or goddess. In these cases *iri.n* refers to the person who dedicated the object to the god. There are many such ostraca (as well as other objects such as stelae and statuary) and it could well be that this ostrakon should be ranged amongst these. Whether or not this is the case depends much on what was originally depicted. Unfortunately, this can no longer be reconstructed. That it may be a votive piece is reinforced by the existence of another donation ostrakon on which Hay is depicted, worshipping the god Amun-Re. In the register below the drawing can be read “Made by the deputy of the gang Hay, justified, his son the scribe Amennakhte, his son Nebnefer, justified.”⁸⁴ In the case of the workmen of Deir el-Medina, such as Hay, it is likely that the person dedicating the piece was identical with the one who made it. Therefore, in this particular case the *iri.n*-formula can be considered both a dedication mark and a signature at the same time.⁸⁵



Fig. 9. *O. DeM 1560 (verso)*, © IFAO.

O. Ashmolean HO 311

On this ostrakon, the head of a vulture has been drawn beneath an excerpt of Khety, most likely by the scribe himself (fig. 10).⁸⁶ When depicted on figured ostraca, vultures are often associated with the goddesses Mut or Nekhbet.⁸⁷ This religious background is not apparent in our drawing, rather, it is an informal doodle with no religious implications.

⁸⁰ Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires* 3, 69, pl. 42.

⁸¹ A. McDowell, “Teachers and Students at Deir El-Medina,” in Demarée and Egberts (eds.), *Deir el-Medina in the Third Millennium AD*, 227.

⁸² Examples with Khety are O. CGC 25217bis in Daressy, *CG 25001–25385*, 48, pl. XLII, and possibly O. BM EA 41650/47896 in R. Parkinson, “Two or Three Literary Artefacts: British Museum EA 41650/47896, and 22878–9,” in W. Davies (ed.), *Studies in Egyptian Antiquities: A Tribute to T. G. H. James* (London, 1999), 49–57. For a discussion, see Jurjens, “The Scribes Who Wrote Khety,” 226.

⁸³ G. Posener considered it to be the “signature du dessinateur” (Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires* 3, 69). For both, see A. Dorn, “The *iri.n* Personal-Name-Formula in Non-Royal Texts of the New Kingdom: A Donation Mark or a Means of Self-Presentation?”, in T. Gillen (ed.), *(Re)Productive Traditions in Ancient Egypt: Proceedings of the Conference Held at the University of Liège, 6th–8th February 2013* (Liège, 2017), 603.

⁸⁴ O. Leipzig 1644 in Brunner-Traut, *Die altägyptischen Scherbenbilder*, 77–78, pl. XXVIII, no. 77. For the conclusion that the Hay mentioned on both ostraca is in fact the same person, see McDowell, “Teachers and Students,” 227; B. Davies, *Who’s Who at Deir El-Medina: A Prosopographic Study of the Royal Workmen’s Community*, EgUit 13 (Leiden, 1999), 63–73, chart 8.

⁸⁵ Dorn, “The *iri.n* Personal-Name-Formula,” 595–97; Peterson, *Zeichnungen*, 55; C. Keller, “Un artiste égyptien à l’œuvre: le dessinateur en chef Amenhotep,” in Andreu, *Deir el-Médineh et la Vallée des Rois*, 86.

⁸⁶ J. Černý and A. Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca: Volume I* (Oxford, 1957), pl. XCIV, no. 1. The drawing is not included in the publication.

⁸⁷ For example Brunner-Traut, *Egyptian Artists’ Sketches*, 68, pl. XXXII, no. 38.

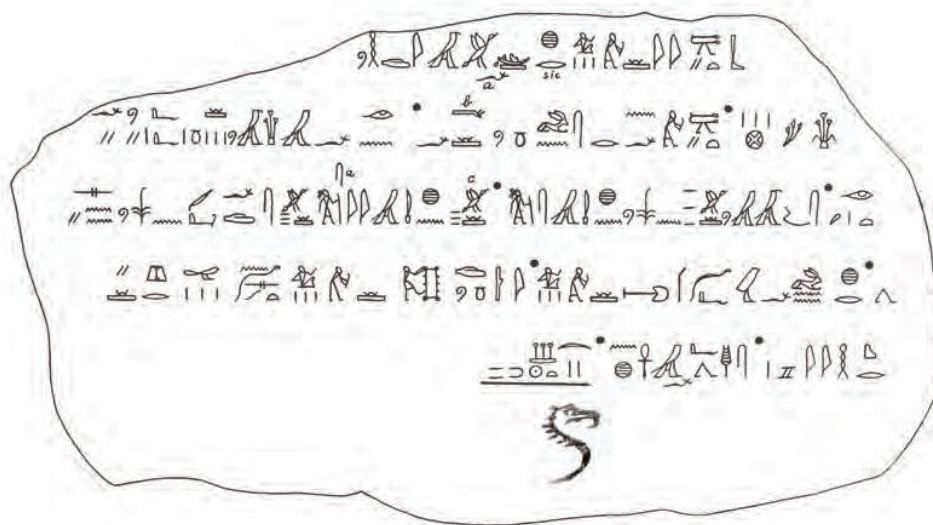


Fig. 10. Gardiner's transcription of O. Ashmolean HO 311 with added drawing
(Černý and Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca*, pl. XCIV, no. 1).

Looking at the examples above it is clear that the drawings found on material objects with Khety do not differ from the ones found on other figured ostraca. They display the same iconography (lions, snakes, birds, human figures, etc.) commonly seen on this type of material.⁸⁸ This includes the drawings on papyri, of which parallels can be found amongst the figured ostraca. The examples discussed above not only show the same limited range of subject matter, but also the same variety in skill. On figured ostraca, all skill levels are present, ranging from very accomplished to unskilled.⁸⁹ This can also be seen in our material, where we find both a very basic outline of a serpent's head and a finely drawn foot. It should therefore be emphasized that the ostraca containing both Khety and drawings have no special status setting them apart from other figured ostraca. This is confirmed by the fact that Khety is by no means the only (hieratic) text found on them.⁹⁰ Moreover, the drawings bear no relationship to the excerpt of Khety found on the same material object. It may be that the person responsible was inspired by the passage from Khety, but the examples are uncertain and not at all clear. It rather seems that scribes or draftsmen simply used the material that was readily available to them, whether an ostrakon or the back of a papyrus, to make a drawing or a sketch. The presence of Khety on the same object is purely coincidental.

⁸⁸ Peterson, *Zeichnungen*, 52; Cooney, "Apprenticeship and Figured Ostraca," 157–58.

⁸⁹ Brunner-Traut, *Egyptian Artists' Sketches*, 3.

⁹⁰ Some examples of other texts: Kemyt: O. EGA.4761.1943 and O. EGA.4758.1943 in Brunner-Traut, *Egyptian Artists' Sketches*, 71–72, pls. XXXIV–XXXV, nos. 41–42, and O. DeM 1829 in Gasse, *Catalogue des ostraca littéraires*, 100–103, and O. BM EA 29548 in Demarée, *Ramesseide Ostraca*, pl. 76; a letter: O. CGC 25234 in Daressy, *CG 25001–25385*, 58, pl. XLVI; a hymn: O. CGC 25210 in Daressy, *CG 25001–25385*, 41, pls. XXXVII–XXXVIII; an invocation to Thoth: O. CGC 25049 in Daressy, *CG 25001–25385*, 11, pls. X–XI; an account: O. EGA.103.1949 in Brunner-Traut, *Egyptian Artists' Sketches*, 59, pl. XXVII, no. 31; Book of the Dead and a donkey loan: O. DeM 1068 in Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires I*, 18, pl. 38, 38a; a legal text: O. BM EA 8507 in Demarée, *Ramesseide Ostraca*, pl. 50–51; an epistolary exercise: O. ÄS 5979 in R. Demarée, "An epistolary exercise behind a royal portrait," in K. Gabler, R. Gautschi, L. Bohnenkämper, et al. (eds.), *Text-Bild-Objekte im archäologischen Kontext: Festschrift für Susanne Bickel* (Hamburg, 2020), 93–99. This list is by no means exhaustive and there are many other examples. It would be interesting to study the distribution of the various texts amongst the ostraca with drawings. Such an analysis may provide further details about the (educational) context of Khety compared to other texts.

Drawings, Khety, and Education

As we have seen above, the drawings bear no relation to the excerpt of Khety found on the same material object. They provide little information about the way people interacted with the literary composition that was The Teaching of Khety, other than that the material upon which the excerpt was written was at some time discarded and later reused for drawings. However, the combination in itself is important, as it can provide information about the context in which the text was used.

The drawings found on papyri clearly do not stem from an educational context. The scribes of both P. Chester Beatty XIX and P. Sallier II used the back of their papyri as notepads, in one case to create a trial sketch of an architectural feature, in the latter to make an informal doodle of a lion in the desert. These drawings do not provide evidence that the text on the recto (Khety) was written as a school exercise.

As regards the ostraca, the examples where both drawings and text are found on the same material object illustrate the close connection that existed between writing and drawing. In fact, although figured ostraca and hieratic ostraca have often been found together in the same archaeological context, they are often published separately, obscuring the connection between the two.⁹¹ In the examples discussed above, it is likely that the two sides of the ostraca (usually with text on the recto and drawings on the verso) were used at roughly the same location.⁹² Scribes and draftsmen were part of the same environment, working alongside each other, making use of each other's material, applying the same methods in the creation of a text or drawing. As a consequence, conclusions reached about the production of figured ostraca may also apply to hieratic ostraca (see below).

Various purposes have been attributed to drawings on ostraca, ranging from preparatory sketches to doodles to school exercises.⁹³ This variety of functions is also present in the material under consideration here. Most examples discussed above appear to be informal, fairly simple sketches made for the scribe's own amusement. Only O. DeM 1560 has a different function as a preparatory sketch or a votive piece, and possibly O. UC 32968 as well. None of them seem to be school exercises, at least not at first sight. When we think about education we often think about a teacher-student environment. Amongst figured ostraca there are indeed examples known where a student has copied a teacher's model, although these are few and not always unequivocal.⁹⁴ Such a clear school environment does certainly not apply to the material discussed here. Although the drawings described above should not be considered school exercises, this does not mean they were not part of the learning process. Even informal doodles, whether made by beginners or professional scribes, are in a way practice pieces. Any act of drawing practices your skills. In the words of K. Cooney, "Given the lack of evidence for formal artistic education in Deir el-Medina based on mimetic activity between teacher and pupil, it is more likely that most craft instruction did not happen in a formal setting but, rather, informally, continuously [...], and even unconsciously at the work site and in the craftsmen's village, among small groups of artisans and apprentices who networked diffusely, not linearly."⁹⁵

What then does the occurrence of a drawing on the same ostrakon say about the use of Khety as an educational tool in ancient Egypt? To what extent should these ostraca be considered school exercises? Many circumstances in the production of figured ostraca are also applicable to the hieratic ostraca with Khety: as we have seen above, they were produced in the same social and literary surroundings; in both cases the archaeological context provides no clear evidence for a school environment, and no official school for artists or writers has been

⁹¹ B. Haring, "Material Matters: Documentary Papyri and Ostraca in Late Ramesside Letters," in F. Hoogendijk and S. van Gompel (eds.), *The Materiality of Texts from Ancient Egypt: New Approaches to the Study of Textual Material from the Early Pharaonic to the Late Antique Period*, PLB 35 (Leiden, 2018), 43–44; B. Haring, "The Survival of Pharaonic Ostraca: Coincidence or Meaningful Patterns?," in C. Caputo and J. Lougovaya (eds.), *Using Ostraca in the Ancient World: New Discoveries and Methodologies* (Berlin, 2020), 90, 92. For some examples of find spots, see Peterson, *Zeichnungen*, 11, 26, 29, 57, 58.

⁹² Gasse, "Ostraca littéraires de Deir el-Medina," 223.

⁹³ For a discussion of these functions, see Cooney, "Apprenticeship and Figured Ostraca," 158–63.

⁹⁴ E.g. Brunner-Traut, *Egyptian Artists' Sketches*, 9; Peterson, *Zeichnungen*, pl. 73; A. Dorn, *Ostraka als Bildträger. Funktionen und Kontexte* (2013), 5–6 (available at https://www.academia.edu/4736573/Ostraka_als_Bildtr%C3%A4ger_Funktionen_und_Kontexte/Images_sur_ostraca_Functions_et_contextes). Contra Brunner-Traut, Cooney, "Apprenticeship and Figured Ostraca," 162–63.

⁹⁵ Cooney, "Apprenticeship and Figured Ostraca," 163.

found in Deir el-Medina;⁹⁶ like the figured ostraca, the involvement of a teacher is not apparent from most hieratic ostraca, although there are exceptions.⁹⁷ In this way, Cooney's remark, cited above, could also be applied to the ostraca containing Khety. They should not all be considered formal exercises, assigned to students by teachers. Even so, writing down an excerpt from Khety can be regarded as an exercise in calligraphy and (if writing by heart) memory training, even for experienced scribes. Thus Cooney's observation, applied to the hieratic ostraca, provides a broader view about the context in which these ostraca were produced. They could be part of the training of an ancient Egyptian scribe, even if no formal school context existed. It does away with the anachronistic view that a teacher always has to be part of any training. All ostraca containing Khety are practice pieces, although not in the traditional sense of the word.

⁹⁶ Mathieu, "La littérature égyptienne sous les Ramsès," 119–20.

⁹⁷ For an example, see Jurgens, "The Teaching of Khety Twice."

Publication note

Jurjens. J. 2021c. Corrections on Ostraca: A Look Into an Ancient Egyptian Scribal Practice, *SAK* 50: 189–205.

Corrections on Ostraca: A Look into an Ancient Egyptian Scribal Practice*

Judith Jurjens

(Universität Leiden, Niederlande)

Abstract

The paper presents an analysis of corrections on ostraca containing excerpts from *The Teaching of Khety*, also known as *The Satire of the Trades*, a text used in the scribal training of ancient Egyptian scribes. Several questions are addressed: who made the corrections; which types of mistakes were corrected; which correction techniques were used. Finally, the role of memory in copying and correcting texts is discussed. Many examples of corrections are given throughout to reveal the scribal practices used during this process, and to provide insights into the education of scribes in ancient Egypt.

Around 1100 BC an ancient Egyptian scribe picked up a piece of limestone and wrote on it a chapter of *The Teaching of Khety*, nowadays also known as *The Satire of the Trades*, a popular literary text at the time. While rereading his text, he noticed he had made some mistakes. Already in the first line he had erroneously omitted a suffix pronoun, writing *btj ḥd <r> p3 idḥw*, instead of *btj ḥd=f <r> p3 idḥw* ('the reed-cutter goes <to> the marshes'). He added the suffix pronoun to correct his mistake (see appendix, example 4). In the third line he saw that he had forgotten to write the determinatives of the word *ḥnms.w* ('mosquitoes'), another omission on his part. He decided to add them, squeezing them in the small space available between *ḥnms.w* and the next word. This space was already partially occupied by a verse point and as a result of his action this verse point now stood between the word *ḥnms.w* and its added determinatives (example 10). Apparently this did not bother our scribe. Then, further down the line our scribe had become confused between the words *ḥmy.w* ('sandflies') and *ḥnms.w* ('mosquitoes'). Where he should have written *ḥmy.w* ('sandflies'), he instead wrote *ḥnmy.w*, a kind of mixture of the two words. The scribe noticed something was wrong, but he did not solve the problem, because he "corrected" his mistake by adding an *s* above the line. As a result there now stood *ḥnmys.w*, closer to *ḥnms.w* ('mosquitoes') than the correct *ḥmy.w* ('sandflies') (example 16). Another error occurred in the last line. The scribe again had forgotten to write the suffix pronoun *=f* and he corrected this in the same way as before, adding the sign where it should have been.

Other perhaps less noticeable mistakes escaped the attention of our diligent scribe. In the sentence 'the reed-cutter goes <to> the marshes' mentioned above, he was careful enough to add the *=f*, but he took no notice of the fact that the preposition *r* was also missing. This would have been a less obvious error for our Ramesside scribe, copying a text from the Middle Kingdom, since in Late Egyptian prepositions were very frequently omitted.¹ His Late Egyptian tongue also accounts for the addition of the article *p3* before *idḥw*, where this would not have stood in the original text. Also, it did not trouble our scribe that in the same sentence his *d* in the word *ḥd=f* resembled more an *r* than an *d*, causing the word to be transcribed *ḥr=f*

* This work was supported by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) [project number 023.008.011]. I am grateful to Jacobus van Dijk, Olaf Kaper and Rob Demarée for commenting on an earlier draft of this paper.

¹ A. Erman, *Die ägyptischen Schülerhandschriften*, APAW 2, Berlin 1925, §598.

in modern editions of the text.² More mistakes were left uncorrected in the next lines: another omitted preposition (line 2); the rather awkward shape of the arrow determinative in the word *swn.wt* ('arrows') (line 2); the writing of the word *krhy.w* ('pots') where all other manuscripts have *sh.wt* ('soil') (line 5). This last mistake is no doubt due to the fact that the word *krhy.w* ('pots') appears a little later on in the text which had apparently confused our scribe.

This ostrakon (oGardiner 311) is a typical example of how a scribe went about correcting his mistakes. The present paper will dive deeper into the matter and examine other ostraca with corrections comparable to oGardiner 311. The analysis is limited to ostraca containing excerpts from *The Teaching of Khety*. This Middle Egyptian literary text was very popular in the New Kingdom, so the corpus is large and representative of other literary texts.³ More than 300 ostraca with *Khety* are now known, of which around 15 percent contain corrections.⁴ Throughout this paper ample examples will be given to provide insights into the mind of the ancient Egyptian scribe at work, some of them taken from unpublished material.⁵ They reveal some of the processes of text production and the mechanics of making copies of literary texts on ostraca. Since *The Teaching of Khety* was also used in scribal training, this paper will also touch upon questions concerning the education of ancient Egyptian scribes.

1 Who made the corrections?

First the question must be addressed who made the corrections on ostraca. Until now this question has not been much debated. More has been said on this matter regarding papyri. A. Erman suggested in his influential article *Die altägyptische Schülerhandschriften* that the corrections he saw in the Late Egyptian Miscellanies were executed by a teacher reviewing his

² W. Helck, *Die Lehre des Dw3-Htjj*, KÄT 3, Wiesbaden 1970, 49; S. Jäger, *Altägyptische Berufstypologien*, *Lingua Aegyptia*, *Studia Monographica* 4, Göttingen 2004, XXXII. Both follow the original transcription of the ostrakon by Černý and Gardiner (J. Černý/A. Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca*, vol. 1, Oxford 1957, pl. XCIV, 1).

³ F. Hagen, *An Ancient Egyptian Literary Text in Context: The Instruction of Ptahhotep*, OLA 218, Leuven 2012, 84.

⁴ Compare with ostraca containing fragments of *The Teaching of a Man for his Son*. Of the 68 ostraca with this text housed at the IFAO only 8 contain corrections, so 12 percent (A. Gasse, *Catalogue des ostraca littéraires de Deir Al-Medīna V* [N^{os} 1775–1873 et 1156], DFIFAO 44, Cairo 2005, 57–58).

⁵ The ostraca mentioned in this paper can be found in the following publications: oBM EA 41650/47896: R. Parkinson, *Two or three literary artefacts*: British Museum EA 41650/47896, and 22878–9, in: W. Davies (ed.), *Studies in Egyptian Antiquities: A Tribute to T.G.H. James*, London 1999, 49–57; oBrussels E.6460: unpublished, picture in P. Coremans, *Les rayons infrarouges*, in: BMRAH 3^e série, X^e année, 1938, 89; oDeM 1013, oDeM 1014, oDeM 1015, oDeM 1016, oDeM 1017, oDeM 1019, oDeM 1022, oDeM 1041, oDeM 1058, oDeM 1104: G. Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh I* (N^{os} 1001 à 1108), DFIFAO 1, Cairo 1938; oDeM 1179, oDeM 1204: G. Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh II* (N^{os} 1109 à 1266), DFIFAO 18, Cairo 1951–1972; oDeM 1456, oDeM 1460, oDeM 1466, oDeM 1478, oDeM 1483, oDeM 1490, oDeM 1493, oDeM 1513, oDeM 1535, oDeM 1550, oDeM 1552, oDeM 1559: G. Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh III* (N^{os} 1267 à 1675), DFIFAO 20, Cairo 1977–1980; oGardiner 311: Černý/Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca* (= HO 94,1); oGardiner 367, oGardiner 576, oGardiner 632, oGardiner 1031: unpublished (current location: Ashmolean Museum); oMerenptah: to be published by Matthias Müller (as Kat. Nr. 6), see M. Müller, *Ostraka aus dem Totentempel des Merenptah in Theben*, in: J. Toivari-Viitala/T. Vartiainen/S. Uvanto (eds), *Deir El-Medina Studies*: Helsinki, June 24–26, 2009, *Proceedings*, Vantaa 2014, 144–153; oUC 39639: Černý/Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca* (= HO 13,1); oTT110: unpublished, picture in A. Bednarski, *ARCE's Excavation of the Tomb of Djehuty (TT 110)*, *Bulletin of the American Research Center in Egypt* 203, 2013, 7; oTurin 57079: J. López, *Ostraca ieratici*: N. 57093–57391, *Catalogo del Museo Egizio di Torino*, serie seconda-collezioni, vol. 3, fasc. 2, Milan 1980.

student's work.⁶ A.H. Gardiner on the other hand concluded that the corrections on P. Chester Beatty V and P. Anastasi IV (both containing Miscellany texts) were made by the copyist himself, in the case of P. Chester Beatty V demonstrating that the corrections were made in the same distinctive handwriting as the rest of the text.⁷ This conclusion was later confirmed by H. Brunner.⁸ More recently, scholars like A. Gasse, R. Parkinson and F. Hagen, dealing with various papyri from a non-educational context, also concluded that the ancient Egyptian scribe corrected his own text.⁹

As for the corrections made on ostraca, these have received less attention. From Erman's article it can be deduced that he thought these corrections were also made by a teacher, since he considered the ostraca to stem from an educational context, just like the Late Egyptian Miscellanies.¹⁰ Parkinson in his discussion of the Ashmolean ostrakon which contains almost the entire text of *Sinuhe* (Ashmolean 1945.40) suggests the corrections were made by the copyist himself, probably an apprentice scribe.¹¹ According to A. Gasse it is often difficult to determine if the corrections on ostraca were made by a teacher or by the student himself: "De très rares exemples montrent dans celles-ci une maîtrise de l'écriture supérieure à celle du texte, ce qui semble trahir l'intervention du maître. Par ailleurs, les effacements peu soignés ou les ratures grossières sont probablement dus à l'élève."¹² In the following paragraphs I will try to draw conclusions on this matter, based on the ostraca with *The Teaching of Khety*.

First of all, if the corrections were indeed made by a teacher, one would assume they were made in a different colour ink than the rest of the text, so the student could easily spot his mistakes, just like in modern society a teacher goes over his student's work marking the errors with a red pen for the same reason. For the ostraca in my corpus, which are mostly written in black ink (sometimes with rubrics) this would mean that the corrections would have to be made in red ink. This is, however, only the case for a small proportion of the source material; less than one quarter of the ostraca with corrections contain corrections in a different colour

⁶ Erman, *Schülerhandschriften*, 6–9.

⁷ A. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, Third Series, Chester Beatty Gift*, London 1935, 45; A. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, BAe 7, Brussels 1937, xv.

⁸ H. Brunner, *Altägyptische Erziehung*, Wiesbaden 1957, 67–68. Cf. also J. Winand, *Quand le texte ne suffit plus: éléments de réflexion sur la notion de paratexte dans l'Égypte ancienne*, in: N. Carlig/G. Lescuyer/A. Motte/N. Sojic (eds), *Signes dans les textes: continuités et ruptures des pratiques sribales en Égypte pharaonique, gréco-romaine et byzantine. Actes du colloque international de Liège (2–4 juin 2016)*, Liège 2020, 26. Winand also discusses some examples of corrections on ostraca. For a different viewpoint regarding P. Anastasi IV, see J. Jurjens, *The Educational Context of a Literary Text: Some Notes on Writing Exercises and Drawings as Found on Material Containing The Teaching of Khety*, in: JARCE 57, 2021, 175–196.

⁹ A. Gasse, *Un Papyrus et son scribe (Le Livre des morts Vatican – Museo Gregoriano Egizio 48832)*, Paris 2002, 28; R. Parkinson, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*, Oxford 1991, xix; R. Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among Other Histories*, Chichester 2009, 90–112; Hagen, *Ptahhotep*, 182. See further Ch. Ragazzoli, *Scribes: les artisans du texte en Égypte ancienne*, Paris 2019, 57–62. Regarding the magical papyrus Leiden I 347, which contains many corrections, S. Beck makes the following remark: "The corrections were implemented by only one scribe in two phases. The first revision was done during the writing process. [...] The second phase of corrections started afterwards." (S. Beck, 'Hail you, Horus *jm.j-Šn.wt*?'. First thoughts on Papyrus Leiden I 347, in: M. Peterková Hlouchová/V. Nováková/D. Bělohoubková/J. Honzl [eds], *Current Research in Egyptology 2018: Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Symposium, Czech Institute of Egyptology, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague, 25–28 June 2018*, Oxford 2019, 20).

¹⁰ Erman, *Schülerhandschriften*, 9.

¹¹ Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry*, 198, 200.

¹² Gasse, *Catalogue V*, 2.

ink than the rest of the text (see examples 5, 14, 15, 18, 21). Of these oDeM 1014 is a special case. The scribe of this ostrakon varied between black and red ink while writing his text, using the two colours quite randomly. The same applies to the corrections on this ostrakon. They occur in black ink within a red text (example 21); in black ink within a black passage (example 7); and in red ink within a red text (example 20). One gets the impression that there is not really a purpose behind the use of a different colour ink in these cases. Rather, it seems that the scribe simply used whichever pen happened to be in his hand, not bothering about switching between black and red brushes. In the same way the scribe of the *Sinuhe* ostrakon later added corrections in red, because he happened to have a red pen in hand to apply verse points to the text.¹³ So even if a different colour ink was used, this does not necessarily have to indicate the involvement of a teacher.

If we want to make sure corrections were made by someone other than the scribe himself, we have to take a look at the palaeography. Were the corrections made in the same hand or not? Unfortunately, in most cases a palaeographical analysis is nearly impossible. Since most ostraca contain only a small amount of text and perhaps only one or two corrections, it is often the case that signs occurring in the corrections are absent in the rest of the text, or only occur sporadically, which makes a comparison difficult. Also, one has to take into account that there is variance in the handwriting of the same scribe.¹⁴ So if a sign appears to have been written a little differently in the correction, this does not have to imply a second hand. Also, corrections are often squeezed in or written above the line, which has an impact on the handwriting. As a result only a few ostraca in my corpus were eligible for palaeographical analysis (see table 1) and this analysis should be considered with the reservations mentioned above in mind.

The table contains two ostraca where the correction was made in a different colour ink: oDeM 1456 and oDeM 1058. Can we conclude on the basis of the palaeography that the correction was made by a teacher in these instances? In the case of oDeM 1456 (example 15) there is unfortunately only one sign to compare, the *w*. The way the *w* in the correction is written clearly differs from the two occurrences of *w* in the rest of the text. Therefore, it seems the correction was made by a different scribe than the one copying the text. Although this conclusion is admittedly based on the palaeography of only one sign, the difference in the way this sign was written is so distinct that the conclusion that two different scribes were at work here seems justified. Is this also the case for oDeM 1058? The correction consists of the words *dbjw r=f* (*Khety* 13,4) written above the line. They correct an omission made by the scribe. Although there are more signs to compare, the evidence seems less conclusive. The variance in the writing of the signs is not so distinct as in the example above and could easily fall within the parameters of the handwriting of a single scribe. However, comparing the palaeography of the *w*, one notices it is written in quite a distinctive manner by the scribe. The *w* in the correction is written in the same way as in the text itself. Therefore it is possible that the scribe in this case corrected his own work. On the other hand, the *w* in the correction

¹³ Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry*, 198. See also, for a similar case on a papyrus, Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry*, 99.

¹⁴ H. van den Berg/K. Donker van Heel, *A Scribe's Cache from the Valley of Queens? The Palaeography of Documents from Deir El-Medina: Some Remarks*, in: R. Demarée/A. Egberts (eds), *Deir el-Medina in the Third Millennium AD: A Tribute to Jac. J. Janssen*, *EgUit* 14, Leiden 2000, 9–49.

is rather cramped and this may be the reason this *w* was written in the way it was. All in all, the evidence seems inconclusive.

Looking at the other examples in the table, there appears to be no clear, strong evidence that the corrections were made by anyone other than the copyist himself, since there is no instance where the handwriting is so different as to conclude the corrections were made by a second scribe. On the contrary, in these examples the handwriting of both the corrections and the rest of the text looks quite similar. Notice especially the distinctive writing of the following signs: the *h* of oBrussels E.6460 (compare G. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie: Die aegyptische Buchschrift in ihrer Entwicklung von der fünften Dynastie bis zur römischen Kaiserzeit*, vol. 2, 2nd edition, Leipzig 1927, nr. 525); the short *r* of oDeM 1013; and the curvature of the back of the crocodile on oGardiner 576 (compare Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, nr. 241). This suggests the corrections were executed by the scribe himself. This conclusion is supported by oDeM 1017 which was certainly corrected by the scribe himself, because the handwriting is exactly the same.






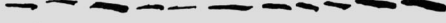









In addition to the palaeographical evidence there are other indications that scribes corrected their own text. The scribe of oDeM 1017 made his correction during the writing process (see below), as did for example the scribe of oDeM 1490. This scribe made a mistake while writing the word *wp.wt*, omitting the *t* and writing the determinative (a cross) instead (example 11). He immediately realized his error and overwrote the cross with the forgotten *t* without even effacing the mistaken determinative. He then wrote the cross determinative underneath the *t*, where it should be. That these corrections were made during the writing process, as the scribe wrote, and not afterwards, is also proof that the scribe made his own corrections, and that in these cases there was no teacher involved who reviewed the text after it had been written down. Furthermore, in some instances there are errors made in the correction itself. We have seen an example above, where the scribe erroneously “corrected” *hnmj.w* to *hnmjs.w*. Another example (example 6) is discussed below. It seems unlikely that these errors would have occurred if a teacher had made the corrections.

All in all, the evidence seems to suggest that in one instance only (oDeM 1456) the correction was made by a second scribe, possibly a teacher. However, for the most part the corrections were executed by the same scribe as the one writing the text. It is noticeable that even less experienced scribes corrected their own work, as the following two examples demonstrate. oGardiner 576 is a school exercise. The handwriting is rather clumsy with large signs which are unevenly aligned, showing the scribe’s inexperience. There is even a messy blot of ink on the verso of the ostrakon. Furthermore, the scribe did not know how to write the determinative of *hrp* (S42) properly in hieratic, for in the two instances where this sign occurs (verso, lines 3 and 4) he wrote it in a different way, both wrong. He corrected some mistakes, but left many uncorrected. He even made a mistake in one of his corrections (see below). All in all, it seems clear that a student was at work here. The palaeography (see table 1) shows that this particular student corrected his own mistakes, which also becomes clear from the error he made in one of his corrections. These corrections therefore were not made by a teacher. The same applies to oTT110. The scribe of this ostrakon seems to be an even less experienced student than the one of oGardiner 576. The handwriting is very irregular; the signs are executed crudely with uneven spacing and alignment. The ostrakon contains

many smudges where signs have been effaced and overwritten with corrections. This is also the reason why this ostrakon is not included in table 1. The smudges are so considerable that it is often difficult to make out the exact shape of the corrected signs, making a palaeographical analysis impossible. However, the ductus of the corrections clearly shows that they were made by the same inexperienced hand.

Tab. 1: The palaeography of signs occurring in corrections compared to the same signs in non-corrected text on a particular ostrakon

ostrakon	hieroglyph	sign (correction)	sign (no correction)
oBM EA 41650/47896			
oBrussels E.64060	 	 	
oDeM 1013			
oDeM 1015			
oDeM 1017	 	 	
oDeM 1022			
oDeM 1058	 	 	
oDeM 1456			
oGardiner 311	 	 	

ostracon	hieroglyph	sign (correction)	sign (no correction)
oGardiner 576			
			
			
			
oGardiner 1031			

2 Corrections and dates

One of the two school exercises described above also contains several dates (oGardiner 576). This confirms the assumption that this ostraca is a school exercise, since dates on ostraca have often been associated with an educational context.¹⁵ In my corpus around 32 percent of the ostraca with dates also contain corrections, while ostraca without dates only have corrections in 12 percent of the cases. So ostraca with corrections are around 60 percent more likely to also contain a date than ostraca without corrections. It is perhaps not surprising that on ostraca where the scribe took the time and trouble to correct his text a date was more often added to mark the occasion. The insertion of a date implies that the ostraca was of special importance and was probably kept for a while. In an educational context a possible scenario is that in these cases students looked more critically at their work (hence the corrections) because they had to hand it in to their teacher. A date was added by the student or the teacher, so that the teacher could keep track of when a certain passage was written by his student.

3 Correction techniques

Scribes in ancient Egypt used various techniques to make their corrections. In this section I will describe some of these strategies. The correction techniques as they appear in my corpus are similar to the ones found on papyri. That students already applied these commonly used techniques on ostraca shows that making corrections was an integral part of their training.¹⁶

First of all, in the case of an omission the scribe could add the forgotten sign or signs above the line in the correct position. Sometimes even entire words were added. For example, the scribe of oDeM 1015 should have written *m=k iry ḥwr=f <r> iry <=f>* ('one is worse

¹⁵ Erman, *Schülerhandschriften*, 8–9; B. van de Walle, *La transmission des textes littéraires égyptiens*, Brussels 1948, 24; A. McDowell, *Student Exercises from Deir El-Medina: The Dates*, in: P. Der Manuelian (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, vol. 2, Boston 1996, 601–8; Brunner, *Erziehung*, 80. Reservations made by Hagen, *Ptahhotep*, 94; K. Widmaier, *Die Lehre des Cheti und ihre Kontexte: zu Berufen und Berufsbildern im Neuen Reich*, in: G. Moers/K. Widmaier/A. Giewekemeyer/A. Lümers/R. Ernst (eds), *Dating Egyptian Literary Texts*, *Lingua Aegyptia. Studia Monographica* 11, Hamburg 2013, 497, 510. For an example of a school exercise with a date, see J. Jurjens, *The Teaching of Khety Twice – A New Reading of oBM EA 65597 as a School Exercise*, in: *JEA* 105, 2020. On dates on ostraca in general, see J. Jurjens, *Dates on Literary Ostraca: a Case Study*, in: *ZÄS*, 148/1, 2021, 83–91.

¹⁶ Gasse, *Catalogue V*, 2. For corrections found on papyri, cf. Gasse, *Un Papyrus et son scribe*, 28 ff.; Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry*, 90–112; J. Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques de Deir el-Médineh I: Nos I–XVII*, *DFIFAO* 8, Cairo 1978, pl. 1–8. For similar corrections on other ostraca, see Gasse, *Catalogue V*, 37–55; Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry*, 198–202.

off <than> the other’),¹⁷ but he became confused by the twofold occurrence of the word *iry*. As a result he wrote *m=k iry hwr=f* in error, omitting the second *iry*. After realizing his mistake the scribe added the word above the line in the same colour ink (example 19). Secondly, the scribe could also add omitted signs by inserting them within the line (or slightly below if necessary) rather than above it. This is most often the case when a single sign has been omitted, but sometimes this strategy was also employed if multiple signs were concerned, as we have seen above in the case of oGardiner 311 (example 10).

Often corrections involve the substitution of one sign or group of signs for another sign or group. In these cases the scribe effaced the mistaken sign(s) by washing out or scratching away the ink. He then wrote the correct text on top of the effaced area. There are some instances where a scribe did not bother to erase the mistake and just wrote straight over the erroneous sign(s). The scribe of oGardiner 576, discussed above, decided to use this technique to correct an omission. He mistakenly wrote *šbn msh.w* instead of the correct *šbn hn^c msh.w* (‘mingling with crocodiles’), omitting the preposition *hn^c*. He washed out the word *msh.w*, leaving a smudge, and wrote *hn^c <n> <n> [m]sh.w* on top. Because an extra word (*hn^c*) had to be fitted in the space where before only *msh.w* had stood, the scribe had to regroup the signs of *msh.w* to make the word more compact (example 6). The correction in turn also contains mistakes: the scribe wrote *hn^c* with an extra *n* and he wrote an *n* instead of an *m* in *msh.w*, perhaps confusing the signs because the preposition *m* was sometimes written *n* in Late Egyptian and vice versa.¹⁸ It shows the inexperience of this scribe, who was a student (see above).

When a scribe wanted to delete signs he could simply do so by crossing them out. This is the case on oDeM 1204 where the scribe crossed out some signs, using a curved diagonal stroke in red ink.¹⁹ On another ostrakon (oTurin 57079) a scribe wrote chapter 9 of *Khety* (recto, line 1) and finished his text with the first line of chapter 10 in red ink (recto, line 2). This last line, however, is crossed out by a thick black line. The reason for this is unclear, since the rubric itself is correct.²⁰ Also, it was not uncommon practice for a scribe to end his text with the opening line of the following chapter.

Lastly, there are some instances where words or passages are retraced with a different colour ink. For instance, the scribe of oDeM 1014 wrote the sentence *[m]šš.n=i knkn.w* (‘I have seen beatings’) in line 4. For some reason he wrote *[m]šš.n=i* in black and *knkn.w* in red ink. He then decided against this and overwrote *knkn.w* in black (example 24). Possibly he thought it was more aesthetically pleasing to have the whole sentence written in black. However, he did not seem to be too bothered about this in the rest of the text. As noted above the scribe used red and black ink interchangeably, with no apparent reason. Another possibility is that he was not content with the calligraphy of the signs and retraced them for that reason, while he just happened to have a black brush in hand. Another ostrakon (oDeM 1466) was broken in two at one time in its existence. On the bottom half of the ostrakon someone

¹⁷ For the emendation and translation, see Jäger, *Berufstypologien*, 104–105, 148–149.

¹⁸ Erman, *Neuägyptische Grammatik*, 2nd revised edition, Leipzig 1933, §599, §608.

¹⁹ Compare oDeM 1799 (Gasse, *Catalogue V*, 49).

²⁰ Compare oDeM 1798, where the rubric of the last line is also crossed out, in this case by a big red cross (Gasse, *Catalogue V*, 47). Cf. also Gasse, *Un papyrus et son scribe*, 33.

retraced all the rubrics in black ink. Since this was done only on the bottom half of the ostrakon, it is likely this was done by someone other than the original scribe, after the ostrakon had broken in two. The purpose behind this retracing is unclear and for that reason it is also uncertain whether or not this should be considered a correction.

4 *Types of mistakes*

Scribes were often not consistent when correcting their texts. They corrected some errors, while leaving others untouched. oGardiner 311, mentioned above, is a good illustration of this practice. The ostraca overall contain so many mistakes and variants that it led J. Foster to make the following remark: “The so-called Satire on the Trades, containing Khety’s instruction to his son Pepi, is one of the most confusing, garbled, and unintelligible literary texts to survive from ancient Egypt.”²¹ In the following section I will describe the types of mistakes which were corrected so as to get an idea what the ancient Egyptian scribe focused on during the correction process.

4.1 *Calligraphy*

Only in a few instances a hieratic character was rewritten to improve its style or form (examples 20, 21 and possibly 22, 24). Actually, the examples in my corpus are largely due to the scribe of oDeM 1014, who seems to have focused more on his calligraphy than other scribes. For example, both the scribes of oGardiner 311 and oGardiner 576 did nothing to correct the erroneous shape of some of their characters (see above). It seems the attention of the ancient Egyptian scribe lay not so much with the calligraphy, but with other types of mistakes.

4.2 *Grammar*

Simple grammatical mistakes were corrected. They include omissions or errors in the use of the suffix pronoun both employed as personal pronoun (examples 1–4) and possessive pronoun (example 5), and prepositions (examples 6, 7). Prepositions were frequently omitted in Late Egyptian and this no doubt accounts for the fact that omissions of prepositions occur relatively often on the Ramesside ostraca and were not always corrected.

4.3 *Orthography*

Orthographical errors constitute the largest category of corrected mistakes. They often involve determinatives. They are wrongly substituted (examples 9, 11) or even omitted altogether (examples 8, 10, 15). Misspellings also occur because signs other than determinatives are omitted in error (examples 13, 14, 16) or are incorrectly used (examples 12, 17). In most cases these involve single signs.

4.4 *Word(s)*

Omissions of entire words (other than prepositions) are also corrected, often by adding them above the line (examples 18, 19). While on papyri larger amounts of forgotten text are

²¹ J. Foster, Some Comments on the Instruction for Little Pepi on His Way to School (The Satire on the Trades), in: J. Larson/E. Teeter, *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente*, Chicago 1999, 121. For another point of view, see M. Fitzenreiter, *Allerhand Kleinigkeiten*, IBAES 20, Berlin; London 2018, 123–169. The many errors cannot all be attributed to the scribes themselves; often their source material was already corrupt (J. Hoch, The Teaching of Dua-Kheti: A New Look at the Satire of the Trades, in: JSSEA 21/22, 1991–1992, 88).

sometimes added, this is not the case on ostraca, no doubt due to the nature of the material. Most ostraca were only able to accommodate a small amount of text. A scribe who used papyrus as a writing material could add a forgotten passage in the margin, whereas a scribe using an ostrakon often lacked the space to do this. Looking at the ostraca with excerpts from *Khety*, in the instances where entire sentences or passages are lacking, this was not corrected by the scribe, assuming he noticed his mistake in the first place.²²

4.5 Verse points

In two or three instances the scribe added a verse point in the wrong place, and subsequently corrected his mistake by effacing it (example 23).²³

4.6 Spacing/Lay-out

The scribe of oDeM 1017 was concerned about a neat and elegant spacing of his text. He had started a new line with the words *nj m33* (*Khety* 4,1). Looking back at his newly written text, he was not content with the spacing between this line and the previous one. He considered it too narrow, since the tail of the horned vipers (=f) in the line above overlapped with the words *nj m33* he had just written. He therefore washed out these words and rewrote them, only this time a little bit lower. Content with his correction, he then continued writing.

4.7 Rubrics

As noted above, in one instance (oDeM 1466) a scribe overwrote rubrics with black ink. Why he did this and whether the scribe considered this to be a correction or not remains unclear. On another ostrakon a scribe retraced black ink with red to mark a rubric (oGardiner 367, line 4). From another source, the Ashmolean Sinuhe ostrakon, we know that scribes paid attention to rubrics. The scribe of this ostrakon wrote a rubric first in black and, realizing his mistake, wrote over it with red ink. In a further instance it was the other way around. He had used his red brush in error and retraced the text in black.²⁴

5 Cause and effect

The ostraca with *Khety* contain many errors and variants. Some of them are mistakes in the true sense of the word, oversights made without thinking, while others are deliberate changes of the text, for example replacing a word which was no longer in use with a more common one.²⁵ Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between one or the other, whether a variant should be considered a real mistake or a purposefully intended variant. However, in the case of corrected mistakes it can be said with certainty that they are actual mistakes, for the ancient Egyptian scribes themselves thought they had to be corrected. This raises the following

²² oDeM 1016, oDeM 1019, oDeM 1466. A possible exception is oDeM 1550, where the scribe squeezed a line between two others. Only the first two words of this line have been preserved due to the incompleteness of the ostrakon, but these may have constituted the start of an entire sentence or sentences.

²³ On oGardiner 576 (example 6) an effaced red dot is visible just before the correction of *msh.w* to *hn<n>* <n>[m]sh.w. This dot probably represents an erroneously placed verse point which has subsequently been erased. Another possibility is that the dot was put there to indicate that the text was corrupt at that point and had to be corrected. After this was done, the scribe erased the dot. Hence it might even be a teacher's mark, even though the text was corrected by the scribe himself. Compare oDeM 1800 (Gasse, Catalogue V, 51).

²⁴ Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry*, 198.

²⁵ G. Burkard, *Textkritische Untersuchungen zu ägyptischen Weisheitslehren des Alten und Mittleren Reiches*, *Ägyptologische Abhandlungen* 34, Wiesbaden 1977, 192.

question: how did these mistakes come about in the first place? There are three possible scenarios. The scribe may have copied his text directly from a model. If he misread something this would have resulted in an error. Secondly, he may have memorized the text and subsequently written it down by heart. If something went wrong during this process, it would cause so-called memory mistakes. Finally, the scribe may have written down his text while taking dictation. In this case errors were caused by mishearing sounds. A survey of the errors made by the ancient Egyptian scribes may give us insight into which of these three scenarios is the most probable.²⁶ In the 1970s such an examination was undertaken by G. Burkard. He analyzed all variants and mistakes occurring in various texts, including *The Teaching of Khety*. In the case of *Khety* he found many reading mistakes (Lesefehler), a few memory mistakes (Gedächtnisfehler) and almost no hearing mistakes (Hörfehler).²⁷ His conclusion differed from those of his predecessors, who had identified many of the mistakes as Hörfehler.²⁸

Since Burkard's study, many more ostraca with excerpts from *Khety* have come to light, and insights have progressed.²⁹ In the following I will present some telling examples of individual mistakes, most of them not included in Burkard's study. My goal is to reconstruct the processes at work behind a particular mistake. As such, each of the examples given will shed light on the issue mentioned above, i.e. whether a scribe copied from a model, from memory or from dictation. Because the examples described below are all corrected errors, discussing these will also provide answers to the additional question of how a scribe eventually noticed his mistakes. It has been suggested he checked his work against a teacher's model.³⁰ So was this indeed the case? In other words, how did the correction process work?

5.1 oGardiner 311

Two of the mistakes the scribe of oGardiner 311 made need to be examined further. The scribe's confusion between the words *hnms* ('fly') and *hmy* ('sandfly'), resulting in a mixture of the two words (see introduction), makes apparent that he copied the text from memory (example 16). Had the scribe copied directly from a model, he would have written the correct *hmy*, or, if he had misread it, *hnms* which appears a few words earlier, but not a mixture of the two. Writing down the text by heart, our scribe got confused between the two words which are similar in sound and meaning. Because the scribe had written the word *hnms* just moments before, this word was still fresh in his mind, causing him to mix up the two words. Eventually he realized he had made a mistake, but instead of correcting the word to *hmy*, he added an *s*, apparently wanting to correct the word to *hnms*. But because he did not erase the *y*, the word was still an erroneous mixture. This "correction" shows that the scribe did

²⁶ O. Goelet, Writing Ramesside Hieratic: What the Late-Egyptian Miscellanies Tell Us about Scribal Education, in: S. D'Auria (ed.), *Servant of Mut: Studies in Honor of Richard A. Fazzini*, Leiden 2008, 105–106.

²⁷ Burkard, *Textkritische Untersuchungen*, 70, 113–114, 143.

²⁸ Burkard, *Textkritische Untersuchungen*, 143.

²⁹ Burkard based his study on Helck's edition of *Khety*, which only contains 98 ostraca (Burkard, *Textkritische Untersuchungen*, 8; Helck, *Lehre des Dw3-Htj*, 1–6). For some critical remarks on Burkard's work, see for example W. Schenkel, *Kritisches zur Textkritik: die sogenannten Hörfehler*, in: GM 29, 1978, 119–126; J. Quack, *Die Lehren des Ani: ein neuägyptischer Weisheitstext in seinem kulturellen Umfeld*, OBO 141, Freiburg; Göttingen 1994, 23–26.

³⁰ Goelet, *Observations on Copying and the Hieroglyphic Tradition in the Production of the Book of the Dead*, in: Sue D'Auria (ed.), *Offerings to the Discerning Eye: An Egyptological Medley in Honor of Jack A. Josephson*, Leiden 2010, 123.

probably not correct his text collating from a copy. If so, we must first assume he mistakenly looked at the word *hnms*, occurring a bit earlier in the sentence, causing him to want to “correct” the mistaken word to *hnms*. Truth be told, this would have been an understandable error, because the word that was to be corrected already erroneously began with *hnm*. However, if he was checking his spelling against a model, he most likely would have written the word one way or the other, instead of it still being a mixture of two words after he made the correction. It is more likely he simply noticed his mistake while rereading, correcting from memory. He saw he had written a nonexistent word, thought no more about it, and just added an *s*, because the word *hnms* was more prominent in this mind than *hmy*. It is unlikely that the correction was made while someone (for example a teacher) was dictating the text a second time, for the scribe then would have misheard the same word (*hmy*) twice, first while writing and then while correcting.

Secondly, where the scribe should have written *hnms.w* (‘flies’), he forgot to write the proper determinatives, resulting in the word *hnms* (‘friend’) (example 10). Again something went wrong during the memorization process. The scribe knew *hnms.w* (‘flies’) was the appropriate word. But when writing it down, he mechanically wrote the word (‘friend’) instead of the homophonous word *hnms.w* (‘flies’). Apparently he had a visual memory of the word belonging to the sound *hnms* in mind and this resulted in the error: without thinking he wrote the more common word ‘friend’.³¹ As regards the correction process, when rereading his text, the scribe realized his mistake immediately, because he knew ‘flies’ was the correct word. He therefore corrected his mistake by adding the proper determinatives. It is equally possible that he collated his text from a model and in this way noticed his mistake. It is less likely that he noticed his mistake during dictation, for an error in determinatives is not so easily spotted while taking dictation.³²

5.2 Example 3

The scribe wrote *ikd.w* (‘builders’) instead of *ikd=f* (‘he builds’). This is no reading mistake, because the determinatives of the word ‘builders’ do not look remotely similar to the suffix pronoun *=f* in hieratic. It is also unlikely to be a Hörfehler, for then the scribe would have

³¹ For O. Goelet’s interpretation of mistakes with determinatives, see Goelet, *Writing Ramesside Hieratic*, 108.

³² Contrary to my findings Burkard describes oGardiner 311 as “ein besonders eklatantes Beispiel” of a text that is copied after a model (Burkard, *Textkritische Untersuchungen*, 70). However, the mistakes he indicates as reading mistakes (Burkard, *Textkritische Untersuchungen*, 49) are in my opinion calligraphical in nature. For example, Burkard, following the transcription of Černý and Gardiner (Černý/Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca*, plate XCIV, 1), suggests the scribe wrote a finger (D51) instead of an arrow (T11) as a determinative in the word *swn.wt* (‘arrows’), due to a “Verwechslung der beiden Zeichen im Hieratischen” (Burkard, *Textkritische Untersuchungen*, 49). When comparing the relevant sign of oGardiner 311 with Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie*, nr. 118 (finger) and nr. 439 (arrow) it shows that the shape of the determinative is neither one or the other. In fact, it is closer to nr. 439, suggesting that the scribe just did not know how to write the arrow determinative properly, as it is not a very common sign. Thus, it is not a reading mistake, but a calligraphical error. Furthermore, there are other mistakes on the ostrakon which Burkard does not describe as reading mistakes, for example the addition of the Late Egyptian article *p3* before *idhw* (Burkard, *Textkritische Untersuchungen*, 189) and the writing of *krhy.w* (‘pots’) instead of *3h.wt* (‘soil’) which he analyses as a “Gedächtnisfehler oder redaktionellen Eingriff” (Burkard, *Textkritische Untersuchungen*, 270). Of the two mistakes described in this paper he only treats the first, which he simply indicates as a slip of the pen without going into much detail (Burkard, *Textkritische Untersuchungen*, 175). It is of course always a possibility that the scribe of oGardiner 311 learned his text after a model and then copied it from memory.

misheard the pronunciation of the quite distinct sound $\neq f$. Rather, it is a memory mistake, one that is easy to explain. Just one verse earlier the scribe had written the word $ikd.w-inb.w$ ('builders of walls'). Having the memory of this word still in his mind, our scribe mistakenly wrote $ikd.w$ ('builders') instead of the correct $ikd=f$ ('he builds'). Whether he corrected his mistake from memory after rereading his newly written text or through collation of a model is impossible to tell.

5.3 Example 6

It seems the scribe did not correct his mistake by collation, but rather from memory or perhaps dictation. If he was checking his text against a teacher's model, the scribe would not have made errors in the correction, but simply would have spelled the words correctly, because he was able compare the text sign by sign if necessary.³³

5.4 Example 13

Our scribe made two errors regarding the word hm . First of all, he substituted the determinative of the more common word hm ('know not') for the determinatives belonging to the word he should have written: hm or hm^c ('demolish') (*Wb* III.282.7). As such he made an error with determinatives similar to the one made by the scribe of oGardiner 311 (see above). So it is likely that he also copied the text from memory. Secondly, being a bit careless, he forgot to write the h of hm . These slips of the pen are called Flüchtigkeitsfehler by Burkard and it is difficult to tell if they stem from direct copying, copying from memory or taking dictation.³⁴ Our scribe corrected his second mistake, adding an h , but left the wrong determinative untouched. This implies the scribe made his correction after simply rereading his text. Looking back the omitted h was easily spotted and corrected. If he had collated from a model, it is likely he would also have noticed that his determinative was wrong.

5.5 Example 17

This error cannot be marked as a true reading mistake, because the ndm -sign (M29) is written very differently than the n and h of nhm ; the signs are not even remotely similar in hieratic. Rather the mistake lies in the fact that ndm and nhm are partially homophonous. One would then perhaps expect a Hörfehler, but this is also not the case. If so, the scribe would have misheard the word being read aloud and without further thinking would have written ndm ('sweet'), spelled with the determinative belonging to this word. However, our scribe did write the correct determinative belonging to nhm (man with stick), an indication that he copied from a model.³⁵ What probably happened was that the scribe, after reading the word, formed the sound in his head (as some people do when silently reading a text) or perhaps

³³ The colophon of a Book of the Dead from the time of Amenhotep III (P. Cairo CG 51189) reads: "It is found from its beginning to its end as found in writing, copied, collated, examined and corrected sign by sign ($smh3=t(j) tj(t) r tj(t)$) (for) the god's father Youia, true of voice." (G. Lenzo Marchese, *Les colophons dans la littérature égyptienne*, in: BIFAO 104, 2004, 369).

³⁴ Burkard, *Textkritische Untersuchungen*, 146. Similar examples of Flüchtigkeitsfehler are examples 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 14 and 18.

³⁵ Cf. Burkard, *Textkritische Untersuchungen*, 67 (his comment on h^cw).

said the word out loud while memorizing the text,³⁶ but erroneously memorized the similar sounding *ndm* instead of *nḥm*. He did intend to write *nḥm*, hence the correct determinatives, but mechanically wrote the sign for *ndm*. Thus the mistake originated from a memorizing step halfway between reading the model and actually copying it, and can be described as a mixture between a reading mistake and a memory mistake.³⁷ The scribe probably corrected his mistake while rereading his copy, and, looking more carefully, noticing there the quite distinct signs of *nḥm*.

5.6 Writing and correcting from memory

The examples above are for the most part memory mistakes. In the time between the memorization process and the actual copying something went wrong in the mind of the scribe, resulting in an error.³⁸ The cases where a determinative is wrongly substituted are good examples of this process. A caveat must be made here however, for it is difficult to say in individual cases how much time lies between memorizing the text and writing it down. It may be that a scribe learned a whole passage by heart, and, having it firmly in his memory, wrote it down an hour, a day, a week later, or perhaps with even more time in between. On the other hand, it is equally possible that a scribe, when reading a text, did not copy it word by word, but instead memorized some words or a whole phrase, and then immediately wrote them down. A mistake slipped in during the short amount of time these words were in the head of the scribe.

Since the examples above just represent a sample taken from a larger corpus, one has to be careful when drawing conclusions. From this preliminary survey, however, it would seem fair to say that memory played a more important role than Burkard assumed.³⁹ It confirms that writing from memory played a considerable role in the training of ancient Egyptian scribes.⁴⁰ The same is true of the correction process. As two of the examples above show, scribes could collate their newly written text from a model. However, in two other examples this seems not to have been the case. I would therefore argue that it is equally possible that scribes corrected their mistakes from memory, while rereading their text. This would also explain why not all mistakes were corrected all the time, and why for the large part only obvious mistakes like omitted signs or words were corrected.

6 Summary

In this paper an analysis has been presented of the corrections found on ostraca containing excerpts from *The Teaching of Khety*, a text used in the scribal training of ancient Egyptian scribes. Around 15 percent of these ostraca contain corrections. The evidence suggests that

³⁶ Cf. F. Contardi, Egyptian Terms Used to Indicate the Act of Reading: an Investigation about the Act of Reading in the Egyptian Society, in: F. Fales/G. Grassi (eds), CAMSEMUD 2007, 13th Italian Meeting of Afro-Asiatic Linguistics, 21–24 Maggio 2007, Padova 2010, 265–268. Cf. also Burkard, Textkritische Untersuchungen, 144–145: “Leicht denkbar ist auch, daß ein Schreiber das (laut) auswendig Gelernte bei der Niederschrift laut vor sich hersagte; auch dabei können phonetische Irrtümer entstehen”.

³⁷ Cf. Schenkel, Kritisches zur Textkritik, 124: “Sofern gelesene Informationen bei der internen Verarbeitung vom Schriftbild gelöst werden, sind sie genau den Decodierungsfehlern ausgesetzt, die im Anschluß an die akustische Aufnahme möglich sind.”

³⁸ Cf. the “Decodierungsfehlern” resulting from the “Verarbeitern/Speichern” process in Schenkel’s model (Schenkel, Kritisches zur Textkritik, especially 119, 121–125).

³⁹ Burkard, Textkritische Untersuchungen, 113–114.

⁴⁰ Brunner, Erziehung, 72; Van de Walle, Transmission, 24–25; Gasse, Catalogue V, 1.





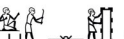





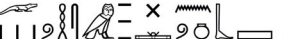
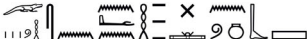










these corrections were for the most part made by the scribe himself and that even inexperienced students corrected their own work. Only in one instance it seems a correction was made by a second person, perhaps a teacher. The involvement of a teacher may also be an explanation for the fact that ostraca with corrections are about 60 percent more likely to contain a date than ostraca that do not; the corrected work of students was marked by adding a date. During their education scribes learned various correction techniques they could later apply in their professional life while writing on papyrus. They were not always consistent in correcting mistakes. For the most part only mistakes that were easy to spot (like omissions) were corrected while others were left untouched. Various sorts of mistakes were corrected with a focus on orthographical errors. An examination of some examples of corrected mistakes shows that memory played a larger role in copying excerpts from *Khet*y than was previously assumed. There is also evidence that in some cases scribes corrected their text from memory rather than checking it against a teacher's model.

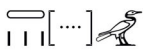













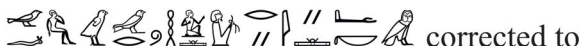




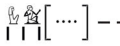


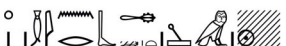


Appendix

The table below contains various examples of corrections made on ostraca containing excerpts from *Khety*. The examples given are by no means exhaustive, but they are representative of the entire corpus.

[...] indicates an area effaced by the scribe in which the original signs are no longer readable.

For the chapters of *Khety*, see Jäger, *Berufstypologien*, I–XCIV.

- 1  corrected to 
oDeM 1013, verso, line 1 (*Khety* 24,3)
- 2  corrected to 
oDeM 1019, line 3 (*Khety* 28,2)
- 3  corrected to 
oDeM 1022, line 3 (*Khety* 10,2)
- 4  corrected to 
oGardiner 311, line 1 (*Khety* 8,1)
- 5  corrected to 
oUC 39639, line 2 (*Khety* 9,3)
- 6  corrected to 
oGardiner 576, recto, line 3 (*Khety* 21,2)
- 7  corrected to 
oDeM 1014 + oDeM 1478, col. I, line 8–9 (*Khety* 3,6)
- 8  corrected to 
oDeM 1179, line 1) (*Khety* 15,1)
- 9 [...]  corrected to 
oDeM 1013, recto, line 8 (*Khety* 23,4)
- 10  corrected to 
oGardiner 311, line 3 (*Khety* 8,2)
- 11  corrected to 
oDeM 1490, recto, line 1 (*Khety* 4,1)

- 12  corrected to 
oDeM 1041, line 3 (*Khety* 3,4)
- 13  corrected to 
oDeM 1513, line 4 (*Khety* 9,6)
- 14  corrected to 
oDeM 1559, line 1 (*Khety* 20,1)
- 15  corrected to 
oDeM 1456, line 2 (*Khety* 1,3/1)
- 16  corrected to 
oGardiner 311, line 3 (*Khety* 8,3)
- 17  corrected to 
oDeM 1493, recto, line 4 (*Khety* 5,2)
- 18 ---  corrected to --- 
oDeM 1483, line 2 (*Khety* 3,3)
- 19  corrected to

oDeM 1015, line 2 (*Khety* 22,2/1)
- 20  corrected to 
oDeM 1014, col. I, line 3 (*Khety* 1,3/2-1,4)
- 21  corrected to 
oDeM 1014, col. I, line 12 (*Khety* 5,2)
- 22  --- corrected to  ---
oGardiner 632, line 5 (*Khety* 27,2)
- 23  corrected to 
oDeM 1535, line 3 (*Khety* 12,3/3)
- 24  corrected to 
oDeM 1014, col. I, line 4 (*Khety* 2,1)

