

Ilona REGULSKI & Susanne BECK

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in

Crossing Boundaries (ed.), *New Kingdom Hieratic Collections From Around the World*, Vol. 1, Liège, Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2024 (= *Ægyptiaca Leodiensia*, 13.1), p. 275–311.

DOI 10.25518/978-2-87562-416-1.19

New Kingdom Hieratic Material at the British Museum

Unedited Fragments from a Fake Papyrus Roll in the British Museum (P. BM EA 10720.6 and P. BM EA 10720.4)

Ilona REGULSKI^a & Susanne BECK^b

^aThe British Museum – IANES/Department for Egyptology; ^bUniversity of Tübingen

ABSTRACT

The British Museum holds one of the most significant collections of written culture from Ancient Egypt and Sudan, including the famous Rhind Mathematical Papyrus, a large collection of *Book of the Dead* papyri and copies of the best-known pieces of ancient Egyptian literature and poetry. The collection has been the focus of numerous publications and national and international touring exhibitions, but only a minor part of it is on permanent display.

Addressing the requirements outlined in the call for papers, the current article focuses on the hieratic material from the New Kingdom—excluding the *Book of the Dead*. The amount of available material is still vast; hence this contribution can only present an overview of the larger contexts while occasionally highlighting individual objects. Specific dates and references to object publications have been kept to a minimum. Such metadata can be found through the British Museum’s online database: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection>. Easy access to the relevant material discussed in this paper can be gained by searching for ‘hieratic’ as general keyword and subsequently specifying ‘New Kingdom’ in the field ‘Culture/period/dynasty’.

The case study presents several hieratic papyrus fragments (P. BM EA 10720.4 & 6) for the first time. They form part of a fake papyrus roll that entered the British Museum in 1935. The different fragments date from the New Kingdom to the Third Intermediate Period. Their content is difficult to determine, but most of them seem to contain religious or magical texts, except for P. BM EA 10720.6b, which reflects a very early fragmentary version of the Onomasticon of Amememope.

1. HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION OF NEW KINGDOM HIERATIC TEXTS [I. R.]

1.1. Acquisition history

Objects from Egypt have formed part of the British Museum collection since its foundation

in 1753. Papyri and ostraca were not part of the core holdings but entered the museum from the 1820s onwards. Henry Salt (1780–1827), then consul-general in Egypt, collected papyri¹ and ostraca², which were later purchased by the British

1 E.g., P. BM EA 10190, EA 10326, EA 10417, EA 10055, EA 10341+EA 10118.5, EA 10401, EA 10375, EA 10430. The references to the individual frames are only provided when necessary to distinguish texts.

2 E.g., EA 5623, EA 5634, EA 5641, EA 5644.

Museum as part of his first and third collections, in 1821 and 1835.

William John Bankes (1786–1855) travelled in Egypt in 1815–1818 and is known to have collected papyri at Thebes on his second journey to Upper Egypt (1818). Bankes' always astute scrutiny led him to recognise that one of his papyri (EA 75025) was a palimpsest and he noted on it that this implied that 'papyrus was either not very abundant or not very cheap' (Usick 2005: 4). A substantial group of *Late Ramesside Letters* (also referred to as the 'Bankes papyri') were transferred to the British Museum for specialist care and storage by the National Trust in the 1950s and 1990s when they were identified among the papers of Bankes.³ The latter batch of documents discovered in the library of Kingston Lacy, the stately home bequeathed to the National Trust by Walter Ralph Bankes (1853–1904) in 1981, entered the British Museum collection in 1996 (Edwards 1982: 126; Quirke 1996: 16–17; Demarée 2005: 1).

The largest and most famous papyrus series arrived at the British Museum in the early 1800s and throughout the middle of the 19th century when the Department of Antiquities was headed by Samuel Birch (1813–1885) (James 1981: 14–22). The acquisitions were attributed a modern title, referring to the name of the collector or collection, followed by a number or letter referring to the specific papyrus in that collection, e.g., P. Chester Beatty 8.

The Greek merchant Giovanni Anastasi (1780–1860) is particularly associated with a large number of important papyri now distributed between Leiden, London, and Paris. Serving as the Swedish-Norwegian Consul in Egypt between 1828 and 1857, Anastasi conducted a large trade in antiquities, buying objects directly from the inhabitants of Saqqara and Thebes. His second collection, including hundreds of papyrus fragments, was sold to the British Museum in September 1839 (Taylor 2009: 561–562). These included

more than 50 papyri, including the eight famous hieratic papyri from the New Kingdom that bear his name: P. Anastasi I–VIII (EA 10222, EA 10243–EA 10249). The British Museum acquired more objects from his collection at an auction in 1857, including two hieratic letters (EA 10101, EA 10104).⁴

The year 1857 was significant for the British Museum papyrus collection as also the P. Abbott (EA 10221) and the d'Orbiney papyrus (EA 10183) were acquired then. The Anastasi papyri were catalogued and enumerated together with the Sallier papyri, which had been acquired by the British Museum in the same year as the first Anastasi batch (1839). François Sallier (1764–1831) was a collector of Egyptian antiquities, and at the time of his death in 1831, had a small but excellent collection. The gems were the papyri consulted by Jean-François Champollion (1790–1832) in Aix-en-Provence; most famously the hieratic documents known as Sallier I–IV (EA 10181–EA 10182, EA 10184–10485) dating to the New Kingdom.

In the winter of 1854–1855, many important papyri, including a batch relating to the Theban tomb-robberies, were disposed of by native and other dealers. A considerable part was bought by Anthony Charles Harris (1790–1869), a merchant based in Alexandria, including the New Kingdom masterpieces that are now known as the Great Harris Papyrus (EA 9999), the literary P. Harris 500 (EA 10060), the Harris Magical Papyrus (EA 10042), and some judicial documents dealing with tomb robberies (EA 10052–EA 10054). Some other papyri of the tomb-robbery series were purchased by Luigi Vassalli (1812–1887) on the same occasion, but sold to the British Museum in 1856 (EA 10068 and EA 10383). In the same year, another papyrus from the same find bearing the name of Vanbrugh was presented to the British Museum (EA 10403). Harris had left his property under the terms of his will to Ms. Selima Harris (c. 1827–1899), who agreed to sell her adoptive

³ E.g., EA 10302+EA 75019, EA 75015–EA 75029, EA 75039.

⁴ An early *Book of the Dead* (18th Dynasty) was also included in this group (EA 10281).

father's antiquities but only as an entire collection. In 1872, the Trustees of the British Museum agreed upon a price that satisfied the vendor and the whole collection was handed over to Birch (Dawson 1949: 164; Bierbrier 2019: 208).

During the years between the two World Wars, the papyrus collection received quite exceptional additions which extended its range in time and breadth (James 1981: 28). In 1930, a collection of literary, religious and medical texts from Thebes, including the remarkable *Dream Book*, was presented by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Chester Beatty (1875–1968). In antiquity, this group of over forty papyri were gathered over more than a century by successive owners until it was deposited in a tomb-chapel. Many of the manuscripts, now named after their first modern owner, were scattered after their discovery. Most came to the British Museum (EA 10682–EA 10699), but others are in the Chester Beatty Library and Gallery in Dublin, the French Archaeological Institute in Cairo, and the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

The museum continued to attract significant acquisitions of papyri, principally by individual purchases, gifts and bequests. For example, the two hieratic administrative texts from the New Kingdom EA 10333 and EA 10400 were purchased in 1841 after the collection of the English classical scholar and religious official Rev. Samuel Butler (1774–1839) was made available, EA 10731 and EA 10732 were donated by Mrs. Essie Winifred Newberry (1878–1953) in 1950, EA 10950 was purchased from Rev. T.S. Nevill in 1978, and EA 73666–EA 73668 were acquired from the heirs of Hugh Algernon Percy, 10th Duke of Northumberland (1914–1988) in 1991. The tradition of naming the papyri after the donor continued when desired, such as the Baldwin papyrus from Asyut, donated by the British lawyer Edward Thomas Baldwin (1846–1937) in 1882, or P. Lansing (EA 9994), purchased from the American missionary Rev. Dr. Gulian Lansing (1925–1892) in 1886.

Some papyri went through several hands before they ended up at the British Museum, such as the liturgical papyrus EA 10819. Originally in the possession of the Italian mathematician and collector Count Guglielmo Libri (1803–1869; Quirke 1993: 10), it was purchased from Mrs. L.D. Feldman (unknown), who sold papyri to the museum in 1969, with contribution from Sir Alan Henderson Gardiner (1879–1963; Černý 2001). Gardiner was instrumental in expanding the collection having donated some of his own papyri and ostraca to the museum in 1958⁵, but also bringing new potential acquisitions to the attention of the museum (Gardiner 1962: 48, 50–51). For example, the Chester Beatty papyri were presented to the British Museum by Gardiner.

The late 19th–early 20th century system of ‘partage’ whereby foreign missions were permitted to ship abroad a share of the finds made during their excavations (Stevenson 2015: 4), had little impact on the enlargement of the papyrus collection, but other hieratic material from the New Kingdom entered the museum in this way.

Many hundreds of ostraca or inscribed vessel fragments arrived at the museum via this route during the first half of the 20th century, as they were excavated by the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF), later renamed the Egypt Exploration Society (EES). As many institutions, the British Museum paid a subscription to the EEF on the explicit understanding that it would receive objects from the Fund's excavations in return. After excavation, the finds were accrued to the EEF and subsequently distributed to the many institutions and individuals who had subscribed. A close link with the EEF was forged by Henry R.H. Hall (1873–1930), assistant and later Keeper at the British Museum, who joined the Fund's excavations at Deir el-Bahari in 1903. This secured the return in objects to the museum. Hieratic material acquired this way include the many inscribed jar fragments from Amarna, ostraca excavated by Petrie at the Ramesseum, and the wall fragments and ostraca

5 EA 10568, EA 10775–EA 10780.

from Deir el-Bahari. In 1891, further fragments of inscribed wine-jars from Amarna were purchased from George Willoughby Fraser (1889–1923), who was attached to the EES. Ostraca from Nubia were donated by the EES to the British Museum later, such as material from Buhen in 1958–1959, Sesebi in 1988, and Amara West as late as 2016. Several inscribed ostraca from Matmar were acquired in a more direct way in 1930, as the result of the British Museum’s own excavations by Guy Brunton (1878–1948).

The acquisition approach more common for papyri, i.e., purchase or donation through dealers or private individuals, also applied to the acquisitions of some ostraca although on a smaller scale. To list just a few examples: the administrative text recording a dispute over a tomb (EA 5624) was purchased from Giovanni d’Athanasia (1798–1854) in 1837; four ostraca were bought from Robert James Hay (1799–1863) in 1868; a group of ostraca from Karnak were purchased from Sir Ernest A.T. Wallis Budge (1857–1934) in 1887, assistant-curator and later Keeper at the British Museum; a hieratic letter to the scribe Karu was donated by Thomas Garnet Henry James (1923–2009) in 1963 (EA 66587). A number of ostraca from Deir el-Medina came to the museum at the end of the 19th century through private donations.

Mohammed Mohassib (1843–1928) and William Talbot Ready (1857–1914) were two important dealers, who sold ostraca to the museum in the early 20th century. Mohassib was an Egyptian antiquities dealer from Luxor (Hagen & Ryholt 2016: 245). Active from the early 1880s, many important antiquities now in European collections passed through his business, although the items he traded included some notorious forgeries. He was extensively used as a source of

material by Budge. For example, many of the Deir el-Medina ostraca were purchased from him in 1912. Ready was employed by the British Museum as repairer and cleaner of antiquities, particularly in the Egyptian and Assyrian Department, until about 1884 after which he appears to have specialised as a dealer. His sales to the Museum begin in 1886, but the museum acquired about 22 New Kingdom ostraca from Thebes through him in 1907.⁶ Scholars who worked in Thebes for extended periods of time, such as Norman de Garis Davies (1865–1941), would pick up inscribed ostraca. Their collections were often donated to the British Museum later as part of heritage-related agreements.

1.2. Cataloguing and conservation history

Following the system devised by Champollion for the Musée Charles X—later the Louvre—in 1826, many museum collections classified their objects by type, and assigned inventory numbers accordingly.⁷ As a result, inventory numbers of papyri and ostraca often follow each other as large batches were catalogued together. Objects from a single acquisition were usually kept together, which is reflected in later revisions of inventory numbers.

All Egyptian papyri were kept in the Department of Manuscripts until 1840, when those in hieroglyphic, hieratic and demotic scripts were transferred to the Department of Antiquities, the predecessor of the current Department of Egypt and Sudan. Samuel Birch had instituted a ‘slip’ catalogue in the late 1830s with numbers running to 10,000 (Usick 2009: 108). These included a large number of ostraca and other hieratic inscriptions, but there appears to have been some delay in incorporating papyri into that

⁶ And a much larger number of demotic ostraca.

⁷ Samuel Birch who introduced a consistent system of inventory numbers for Egyptian objects in the British Museum in the mid-1830s (Usick 2009: 108) acknowledged his debt to Champollion’s system in a note at the beginning of his ‘Egyptian Room [Catalogue]’: AES Ar.15.

numerical sequence.⁸ Regarding papyri, Birch at first cited them by reference to their source; Salt, Anastasi, John Barker (1771–1849), d’Athnasi, with numbers relating specifically to those collectors or auction lot numbers. Some papyri from the Anastasi collection were numbered at purchase, but renumbered when studied or published in facsimile (Quirke 1993: 3). Birch was not a great collector, but he catalogued the collection in great detail.

The blue paper slips often mention whether the papyrus is glazed or placed ‘in a portfolio’; not all of them were mounted between sheets of glass then. The papyri became only firmly associated with catalogue numbers in the 1850s–1860s when they received the numbers 9900 to 10142 and 10181 to 10999. After that, the remaining 25% of papyrus fragments was registered more randomly among other objects, hence the numbers do not follow in large batches (with new numbers into the 76000s). These numbers, immediately following an ‘EA’ prefix (for ‘Egyptian Antiquities’), are known as the ‘big numbers’ and are used in publications by staff and external scholars.

The process of framing papyri can be traced back to 1887 when the Board of Trustees reports:

[...] deterioration being noticed in the papyri exhibited on the walls of the North West staircase, they had been taken down and many of them cut into lengths and mounted under glass for arrangement on shelves: two specimens of each sort being preserved for the use of students to be exhibited in the present Etruscan Room. Mr Renouf [then Keeper] recommended that the more important of the unpublished texts be reproduced by autotype.⁹

Consequently, shorter parts of papyrus rolls are now kept in individual frames; a sequential frame number follows the main number. For example, EA 9999,3 is the third frame (out of 79). This cataloguing system suits practical purposes, but does not reflect ‘ancient’ information as the frames do not correspond with the original sheets of a papyrus roll. The discrepancy is often forgotten, however, and ‘frames’ are mixed up with ‘sheets’, giving the false impression that the original roll consisted of an equal number of sheets.

Many museum collections now follow a system where the date of acquisition or registration is part of the number. In this case, the number yields useful information about the history of the collections. For example, the British Museum ‘composite registration number’ 1889,0511.7 means the object was registered in 1889 although it could have entered the museum earlier. This system is used throughout the British Museum, but the Department of Egypt and Sudan retained the older ‘big’ numbers as prime identifier of objects when revising the system. For example, ostrakon EA 26867 also has the registration number 1891,0716.66 referring to its acquisition year (1891). In publications, the objects would be referred to as EA 26867.¹⁰

Egyptological and papyrological publications, in particular text editions, frequently add ‘p’ for ‘papyrus’ in front of the catalogue number BM EA prefix, for example pBM EA 10071 or, shorter, pEA 10071. The same can sometimes be seen for ostraca; oEA 24563, although this is less common. As our entire collection is easily accessible online, we refrain from using this addition. Papyri and ostraca should be considered objects alongside other type categories, i.e., we do not add a letter ‘s’ to a number of a stela (in for example s1172).

8 This information was developed in discussion with John Taylor (spring 2022), who will publish his research on the history of inventory numbers.

9 Minutes of the meeting of the board of Trustees. Letter dated 10 December 1887.

10 The attribution of registration numbers has not been carried out consistently, however, and many papyri never received a date related number.

2. THE NEW KINGDOM HIERATIC MATERIAL

2.1. Number of papyri, ostraca, and other hieratic material

The British Museum database yields 1432 objects from the New Kingdom that have been provided with a hieratic inscription. Anyone who has worked with museum databases will realise that this number is unreliable due to tricks and faults in search engines, inconsistencies, and potentially missing information.¹¹

The largest group (785) consists of inscriptions and dipinto on sherds of pottery vessels and limestone flakes (ostraca). Shorter hieratic annotations on complete vessels, bowls and amphorae should be added to this group. Many are small fragments with only a few signs. The ostraca have been less well documented and researched than the papyri, but their preservation and cataloguing has been more straightforward.

The database yields 372 records for hieratic papyri from the New Kingdom—excluding *Book of the Dead*.¹² This number is not very representative, however, as individual papyrus frames appear as separate records even when they belong to a larger roll, and some frames contain several fragments that originally did not belong together but were grouped for other reasons. Too fragmentary or small, they may not have merited the usage of separate frames. Fragments that entered the museum around the same time or were acquired as part of the same batch were mounted together regardless of their content. Hence, the number of

hieratic papyri from the New Kingdom must be lower; probably around 120 (at least).

Several small boxes house numerous tiny fragments, which cannot be attributed with certainty. They are not all related to the same context or manuscript and acquisition details are unknown. Some of them were conserved and mounted between glass in 2013 maintaining the groupings as they appeared in the boxes. For example, EA 76450r includes fragments that yield New Kingdom hieratic, which has been identified by Stephen Quirke as ‘New Kingdom literary similar to Anastasi papyri in hand and condition (16/1/92).’ These fragments appear under one number. Until further research takes place and the exact content of those fragments and their potential link becomes clearer, they will appear with the same inventory number.¹³ The collection also holds a few intact ancient papyrus rolls, in one case sealed with two oval clay seals (EA 36831).

Other examples of New Kingdom hieratic in the British Museum collection include inscriptions or dipinti on statuettes and shabtis, jar sealings, magical bricks, mummy labels and mummy wrappings, scribal palettes, stelae, writing boards, wall fragments, a stool, a sandal and a wooden headrest. These will not be discussed in more detail here but can be consulted on Collections Online.

2.2. Findspots¹⁴

The original findspot of many New Kingdom hieratic papyri in the British Museum is unclear; about half of the collection has no recorded

11 It was not possible to check all the information in the context of drafting this article.

12 Most of the *Book of the Dead* papyri in the British Museum collection are of later date or cannot be dated more precisely.

13 Until proper identification has taken place and fragments can be re-housed accordingly, potentially unrelated fragments in a single frame can be further distinguished by letters: ‘a’, ‘b’, ‘c’, etc. (This is the method used at the University of Michigan: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/apis/tech/listdef.htm>). Colleague John Taylor is currently preparing a paper on the history of museum numbers. Some of these fragments relate to others that were bundled together in new rolls upon discovery (e.g., EA 76548). These modern ‘made-up’ rolls are kept as examples of the phenomenon common in the early 20th century to roll small, dispersed fragments into a fake bundle to increase their sale value.

14 ‘Findspot’ is more specific than ‘provenance’, which is also used for information on (more recent) acquisition.

origin within Egypt. Many of the manuscripts were bought by individuals rather than excavated, so their archaeological context is now lost. Those that have a recorded provenance mostly come from Thebes while a much smaller number of papyri is registered as coming from Memphis, Kom Medinet Ghurab, and Asyut. The largest groups of ostraca come from Thebes and Amarna, followed by Matmar, and a few individual pieces from Aswan, Elephantine, Abydos, and Armant. Ostraca from Nubia come from Buhen, Sesebi, and Amara West. When considering all hieratic material from the New Kingdom, more places in Egypt are represented.

The Theban material comes overwhelmingly from Deir el-Bahari, Deir el-Medina, and Karnak. Thebes was one of the sites most targeted by collectors and explorers during the 19th and 20th centuries. It was also a central place for antique dealers to set up shop, most of them in connection with consular agents. The centre of their operations was around Luxor temple and in or near hotels, such as the Winter Palace as well as at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna (Hagen & Ryholt 2016: 102–115). As archaeological context was often unclear, papyri and ostraca that were purchased in Thebes could theoretically have come from elsewhere. The Theban provenance of hieratic inscriptions that were discovered during excavations is more reliable. For example, wall fragments with graffiti and dipinti and more than a hundred ostraca from Deir el-Bahari were excavated by the Egypt Exploration Fund.

Despite the lack of clear context, large groups of papyri and ostraca have been attributed to a place by the appearance in the texts of well-known individuals, their handwriting, or other typological considerations. This is especially true for the Deir el-Medina material, and its ostraca, most of which have been attributed to this site by internal reference. The Chester Beatty papyri

IV, V and XVIII almost certainly belonged to the archive of Qenhershepsef and his extended family at Deir el-Medina (Pestman 1982: 155). The *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* have been thought to come from Thebes or Memphis (Hagen 2006: 93). We must remain cautious, however, in attributing texts to well-known sites because certain types of manuscripts have not been found elsewhere. For example, the authorship of the *Loyalist Instruction* of Kaires was only recently confirmed by a copy from the Asyut necropolis, a site that had hitherto not yielded a copy of this text.¹⁵



Fig. 1. Inscribed vessel fragment from Amarna, EA 59337.
Amarna, 18th Dynasty, 1550–1295 BCE
(© British Museum)

The largest group of inscribed pottery fragments come from Amarna (more than 400), for the most part hitherto unpublished (fig. 1). Archaeological excavations at Amarna began in 1891–1892 with William F. Petrie (1853–1942), proceeded in 1896

15 A New Kingdom copy is known from nearby Rifeh (UC 32781: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/rifeh/uc32781.html> [accessed 24.04.2022]); Verhoeven (2009: 87–98).

with Alessandro Barsanti (1858–1917), and in 1907–1914 with Ludwig Borchardt (1863–1938). Subsequently, new excavation seasons were funded by the EES from 1921 to 1936.

The letters, administrative and literary papyri from Kom Medinet Ghurab were excavated by W.M.F. Petrie between 1888 to 1890, hence their provenance is reliable (Hagen & Soliman 2018: 105–108). Most of the Ghurab papyri went to the Petrie Museum, but 18 fragments (EA 10775–EA 10780) were given to the British Museum by Gardiner and catalogued in 1958. The settlement context is unique; the best-preserved papyri from the pharaonic period were found in tombs or temples located in desert conditions.

A smaller part of another New Kingdom palace archive from Memphis was acquired in Egypt in the early 1890s by Lord Warkworth (EA 73666–EA 73668; Barns 1948). Other papyri from Memphis are the *Tale of the Two Brothers* (P. D’Orbiney, EA 10183), the records of a royal dockyard of Thutmose III (EA 10056,1–4), and P. Anastasi II (EA 10243).

P. Baldwin (EA 10061) seems to have been found at Asyut, probably in a tomb. The large roll was torn into two pieces by the modern looters before it was sold. One part was acquired by the British Museum in 1882, but it was only realised in 1994 that it is the bottom half of the (upper) part now in the Musée de Picardie in Amiens (P. Amiens; Janssen 2004).

2.3. Genres

By the New Kingdom, both writing and types of written texts proliferated; most genres are known by this period. Some of the best-known literary works date from the 19th and 20th Dynasties. The genres displayed are surprisingly varied: literary, dedicatory, educational, epistolary, funerary, legal, religious, magical, medical, mortuary, royal,

satire, administrative (including financial), and mathematical (Edwards et al. 1964: 86–111). The distinction between categories is not always easy to make as there is overlap between the genres, and different types of text can appear on the same object. Many papyri and ostraca have been reused, with traces of palimpsest hampering legibility.

2.3.1. Literature and poetry

When Champollion discovered Pentaour’s poem recounting *The Battle of Qadesh* (EA 10181,1–11) and *The Teaching of King Amenemhat* (EA 10182,1) in the Sallier collection in 1828, he failed to recognise the literary character of the texts. He realised that the collection contained ‘non-funerary’ manuscripts, including ‘odes or litanies in praise of a pharaoh’ (Champollion 1868: 18; Sallier 1828), but for him the importance lay in their historical information. The *Teaching of King Amenemhat*, in which the dead king Amenemhat I describes to his son how he was murdered, was composed in Middle Egyptian, but the surviving versions date to the New Kingdom. Apart from the Sallier papyrus, other versions of this tale appear on ostraca.¹⁶ Despite the focus on royal names and chronological interest, early engagement with these manuscripts encouraged reconsideration of ancient literature among Egyptologists, including poetry (Parkinson 2022). Over 200 copies of this text have now been found at sites all over Egypt, suggesting it was a standard component of the New Kingdom syllabus. Recently identified examples of the text on ostraca from Amara West in present-day northern Sudan present evidence for literary classics being copied and read outside Egypt.¹⁷

The *Tale of the Two Brothers* (and a flirtatious wife) on P. D’Orbiney (EA 10183) was the first text described as ‘literature’ by modern Egyptology (1852). The French Egyptologist Emmanuel de

¹⁶ E.g., EA 5623; EA 5638; EA 43471; EA 57458; EA 57478; EA 57479; EA 65598; EA 66407; EA 85612, EA 85613.

¹⁷ EA 85612–EA 85613; Parkinson & Spencer (2017).

Rougé (1811–1872) referred to Inene’s copy as ‘the first sample of Egyptian genius in a purely literary genre’, and ‘a work of pure imagination’ (de Rougé 1908: 303–319; Posener 1974: 1–5; Parkinson 2022). It has been variously interpreted as a fairy tale, a historical allegory, and a political satire, among others. New Kingdom versions of other masterpieces of Egyptian poetic literature, such as *The Tale of Sinuhe*, are attested on ostraca of the British Museum collection.¹⁸

Authorship was rarely attributed in pre-classical antiquity, but one of the texts from a private library at Deir el-Medina (EA 10684,5) commemorates eight ‘great’ authors of the past. These learned scribes foretold the future and their sublime writings caused them to be remembered:

Is there any here like Hordedef? Is there another like Imhotep? There have been none among our family like Neferti and Khety, their leader. Let me remind you the names of Ptahemdjedhuty and Khakheperreseneb. Is there another like Ptahhotep or Kaires? (Parkinson 1991: 149–150.)

Most of these scribes are known from other sources. The *Words of Khakheperreseneb* are preserved on a wooden writing-board from the early to mid-18th Dynasty, inscribed with ‘The collection of words, the gathering of verses, the seeking of utterances with heart-searching’ (EA 5645; fig. 2). The poem addresses the wickedness of men and the corruption of society. Further copies have



Fig. 2. Writing-board inscribed with the *Words of Khakheperreseneb*, EA 5645. Egypt, early to mid-18th Dynasty, 1550–1350 BCE (© British Museum)

¹⁸ E.g., EA 5632 and EA 5629. At the British Museum, the famous *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* is only preserved on a Middle Kingdom papyrus (EA 10274).

recently been identified on other writing boards (Hagen 2019: 177–208), showing that the text had been an established part of the literary canon.

The other scribes mentioned are well known from so-called Teachings or Instructions. These didactic works, mostly ascribed to famous sages, discuss general matters of life and moral principles in the form of short sayings and warnings. The *Teaching of Khety*, commonly known as the *Satire of Trades*, is the best represented example of the genre in the British Museum collection and appears on several ostraca¹⁹ and papyri²⁰. Some of the latter (EA 10775 and EA 10778) from Kom Medinet Ghurab also contain the *Teaching of Hordjedef*, a text dealing with the provision for the hereafter and the behaviour within the family, society, and household.²¹ The related *Teaching of a Man for his Son* is further preserved on ostrakon EA 65934 and the leather roll EA 10258. The text deals with royal ideology, loyalty, and topics that are relevant for senior officials who still want to pursue a career at the court or in the judiciary. The *Instruction of Amennakht* is preserved on ostrakon EA 41541.

The Teachings vary in their tone and didactic emphasis, one of the most provocative being the *Loyalist Instruction* of Kaires (Posener 1976; Parkinson 1997: 235–245; Verhoeven 2009: 92). His Teaching, preserved on an ostrakon from Deir el-Medina (EA 5632), stresses Egyptian hierarchy and the dependence of the elite on their servants and subordinates: field-labourers should not be overworked lest they run away; a harsh master ultimately undermines his own prosperity. The ostrakon contains six faint lines of a duplicate text of the *Tale of Sinuhe* on the back.

Love poems provide similar intimate glimpses into ancient everyday life, as they are surprisingly

direct about love and romance. The love poems preserved on P. Harris (EA 10060) were probably sung, using the elements of the natural world—growing fruit, capturing birds, swimming in the Nile—as metaphors to talk about affection and desire. Similar evocations to nature can be found in hymns. The longest surviving *Hymn to the Inundation* is a literary composition believed to have been composed in Middle Egyptian, although surviving (rather corrupt) copies date from the New Kingdom.²² The combination with miscellanies, magical texts and some jottings on the same papyrus rolls stresses the flexibility with which the ancient Egyptians archived their literature. P. Harris 500 also yields the well-known stories *The Doomed Prince* and *The Capture of Joppa*. The latter refers to the Palestinian campaign of Thutmoses III. After having failed to take Joppa by direct assault, his general Djehuty achieved victory by a manoeuvre of infiltrating the city by hiding two hundred soldiers in baskets. Literary works in the extensive Chester Beatty corpus include the *Tale of Truth and Falsehood* (P. Chester Beatty 2–3; EA 10682,1) and the *Scribal Controversy*, a satirical letter by Hori (P. Chester Beatty 17; EA 10697). The most complete version of this satirical letter survived on the P. Anastasi I (EA 10247), probably from Memphis. A copy of part of P. Anastasi I, 3 is attested on ostrakon EA 65603. The satirical letter employs sarcasm and irony in its attempt to improve the quality of the student's mind above the level of mere memorising facts, places, or terms of the natural world (Fischer-Elfert 1986: 290). It resembles compositions in the Late Egyptian Miscellanies dealing with the inattentive student and has been characterised as a self-mockery or learned joke (Parkinson 2022: 277).

19 E.g., EA 47896+EA 41650; EA 65943; EA 65597; EA 29550.

20 P. Anastasi 7, EA 10222,1–4; P. Chester Beatty 19, EA 10699,1–10; Sallier papyri, EA 10182; EA 10775 and EA 10778. J.F. Quack notes (pers. comm. 2013) that EA 10775e directly joins to P. Amherst XIV (Pierpont Morgan Library), which has rubrics.

21 For the relationship of this text with the *Teachings of a Man for his Son*, see the summary in Verhoeven (2020: 247–255).

22 E.g., P. Anastasi VII, EA 10222,5–6; the Sallier papyri II–III, EA 10182,11–14; P. Chester Beatty V, EA 10685,1–7.

Public structures were criticised and ridiculed in social satire in which the known world is turned upside-down or officials are mockingly portrayed as animals. As they have left little trace in the formal monumental record, it is difficult to grasp the original cultural context in which such concepts emerged. A literary praise (eulogy) in honour of Sety I at the Afterlife-tribunal on the recto of P. Northumberland Nr. III (EA 73667) is combined with a ‘secularised’ version (or parody) of the weighing of the heart ceremony (verso). Similar pessimism concerning the next life is reflected in the so-called *Song of the Harper* on P. Harris 500 (EA 10060), in which the ephemeral of life and a hedonistic attitude towards the present life is revealed.

The *Book of Kemit* is not of a strictly literary character, but it is often incorporated into the literary genre because of its wide distribution and usage as a school text in Deir el-Medina (Petersmarck 2012; Verhoeven 2020: 242). Seven attestations of the *Book of Kemit*, or model letters similar to it, appear on ostraca.²³

2.3.2. *Miscellanies*

Many of the previously discussed text genres reappear in a corpus of texts known as the *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* (often referred to as LEM), typical of the 19th and 20th Dynasty (Gardiner 1937, xii–xxi). The manuscripts contain—as the English term indicates—a miscellaneous collection of didactic classical works such as the historical *Story of Apophis and Seqenenre* (P. Sallier I; EA 10185) combined with other types of texts such as hymns²⁴, model letters²⁵, magical texts²⁶ and administrative writings²⁷ or simple jottings.²⁸ The

diversity of texts preserved on one roll has been appreciated by modern scholars as can be seen in their cataloguing of the content of P. Anastasi V (EA 10244²⁹): Reproaches to an idle and incompetent scribe (6.1–7.5); The sorry plight of the soldier in summertime (7.5–8.1); Advice to a youthful scribe (8.1–9.1); Prayer to Thoth for skill in writing (9.2–10.2); Be a scribe for the soldier’s lot is hard (10.3–11.1); Reprimand for failure to execute an order (11.2–11.6); Congratulations to a military officer upon promotion (11.7, 12.1–13.1); Letter about a bull (13.2–13.7); Letter about a bull (14.1–14.6); Good Wishes (14.7–15.5); The scribe is not taxed like the peasant (15.6–17.3); I too was once an idle scribe (17.3–18.5); Fetch the Medjai (18.6–19.2); Enquiries about two runaway slaves (19.2–20.6); A letter asking for news (20.6–21.8); A letter to a quarryman (21.8); A letter to a quarryman (22.1–22.6); I have sent thee to school, be industrious there (22.7–23.7); A letter concerning three stelae (23.7–23.8); A letter concerning three stelae (24.1–25.2); A letter of reproof (25.3–27.3); Complaint against excessive tax (27.3–27.7).

The compilations are usually copied by a single individual, probably as reference works or textual resources for fully trained scribes (Hagen 2006). The different texts may have had different functions, however, and no single function is applicable to all manuscripts. The distribution of the different compositions varies considerably from manuscript to manuscript. For example, most of P. Anastasi II (EA 10243,1–4) is taken up by hymns and praises while P. Sallier I (EA 10185) balances model letters, hymns, praises and wisdom sayings equally. Among the most popular pieces are variations on the theme of superiority

²³ E.g., EA 5640–EA 5641, EA 21216, EA 21186, EA 21284, EA 29548, EA 65597.

²⁴ E.g., P. Chester Beatty IV; EA 10684, and V; EA 10685.

²⁵ E.g., P. Chester Beatty V; EA 10685.

²⁶ E.g., P. Chester Beatty XVIII; EA 10698 and Papyrus EA 10085 + EA 10105.

²⁷ E.g., P. Sallier IV; EA 10184; P. Anastasi III.

²⁸ E.g., P. Anastasi VI; EA 10245,2.

²⁹ Unpublished small fragments apparently from this manuscript are now EA 76453.

of the scribal profession, echoing the classical Middle Kingdom composition of the *Teaching of Khety*.³⁰ Letters with the well-known literary *topos* of the inattentive student³¹ also appealed, perhaps especially to fully trained scribes (Hagen 2006: 87). A further unfinished example can be found on ostrakon EA 65945.

2.3.3. Administrative

The largest number of administrative texts concern accounts, deliveries and transportation of commodities,³² perhaps for taxation purposes³³, calculations of salaries or distribution of rations to the work-force,³⁴ and lists of personnel³⁵. One part of the *Satirical Letter of Hori* (P. Chester Beatty XVII; EA 10697) concerns the problem of provisioning for a group of five thousand soldiers. EA 10401, for example, deals with types of commodities that are being collected as taxes from six temples in Upper Egypt, including gold, copper, textiles, fruits, millstones, cattle, and bread (Janssen 1991b: 79–94).

The pottery jar labels from Amarna identify the original content of the jar as meat, honey, oil, incense, and linen, followed by information on the year, the provenance/place of production of the commodity, and often the title and name of the supervisor of production. Such labels are important pieces of evidence for different aspects of commodity production, as well as valuable sources to reconstruct economic and social relations during the Amarna period. EA 57458 combines such administrative information with a version of the *Teaching of Amenemhat*.

The absence and presence of workmen is a topic particularly popular in Deir el-Medina.³⁶ One ostrakon (EA 5634) dated to the 40th year of the reign of Ramesses II contains a register of the names of some workmen engaged in work on the royal tomb, each name being followed by a note of the days on which the man was absent from work and the reason for his absence; among the reasons given are sickness, caring for another workman who was sick, brewing beer, and other domestic hindrances.

Many administrative texts relate to fleets, shipyards, or the movement of people and goods over the river.³⁷ The papyrus records of a royal dockyard of Thutmose III (EA 10056,1–4) shed light on a shipyard at a location called Perunefer, perhaps near Memphis (Bietak 2009a–b; Gundacker 2017). The text deals with the building and repair work on several ships in the Egyptian navy. A particular concern is tracking the movement of goods. The later P. Baldwin (EA 10061 + P. Amiens) relates to a fleet of ships and records the journey of 21 grain barges from the great temple of Amun-Re at Thebes (Janssen 2004). The handwriting is speedy with extremely abbreviated signs, and difficult to read. Many of the place names mentioned are obscure because the papyrus records information about a region otherwise little known from documents – Asyut.

Most of the papyri from Kom Medinet Ghurab contain regnal years in the headings securing a Ramesside date (c. 1250–1200 BCE). Some fragments show notations of where the king is, a common feature in many administrative documents relating to the royal court (Hagen

30 E.g., P. Lansing; EA 9994, 1–7.

31 E.g., P. Anastasi III, Sallier I, P. Lansing; EA 9994,7.

32 E.g., EA 5630, EA 50740, EA 65937. Ostrakon EA 50738 contains a list of workmen receiving lamps.

33 E.g., EA 10447; EA 10341+ EA 10118.5, EA 63510.

34 E.g., EA 5635, EA 50726, EA 50744, EA 50728, EA 66302, EA 50733, EA 66409, EA 50739, EA 50736, EA 73668.

35 EA 10341+EA 10118.5.

36 E.g., EA 50729, EA 50745, EA 50730.

37 E.g., EA 66412.

2016). The broad range of entries resembles that of daybooks from temple archives; accounts of deliveries received, goods distributed, and letters sent (Hagen & Soliman 2018: 106). The management of resources is a recurring theme, echoing that of other institutional archives.³⁸ Some papyri are simple lists of names, such as EA 10776–EA 10777 (Politi 2001: 107).

P. Chester Beatty I mentions the handing over of a box, perhaps containing administrative accounts, on two separate occasions (Donker van Heel & Haring 2003: 9–10). The records from Deir el-Medina also sporadically mention the arrival of actual (copies of) letters sent to the vizier.³⁹ Some texts touch upon royal matters: EA 50722 records the arrival of the vizier to announce the accession of Ramesses VI while EA 65944 yields an administrative text recording measurements of elements of a royal tomb, almost certainly that of Ramesses VI in the Valley of the Kings.

The Great Harris Papyrus (EA 9999,1–79) was originally one of the longest to survive from ancient Egypt; the full roll was forty-two metres long. The first three sections describe the donations made by King Ramesses III (1184–1153 BCE) to the gods and temples of Thebes, Memphis, and Heliopolis. The amounts were colossal: the list relating to Thebes alone includes 309,950 sacks of grain and large quantities of metals and semi-precious stones. The next section of the papyrus deals with several minor temples. The final section recounts the historical events of the reign and lists the possessions of all the great temples at the time of the king's death. The text presents the chaos at the beginning of the 20th Dynasty (about 1186–1069 BCE) including military battles with the Sea Peoples, Libyans and Meshwesh, and other foreign expeditions. This section is clearly idealised, glorifying the king rather than presenting a

trustworthy historical narrative. The account ends with the death of Ramesses III and the accession of his son Ramesses IV (1153–1147 BCE).

Inscribed papyri are occasionally re-used for administrative purposes, hence accounts appear in combination with literary pieces, such as EA 10246 or P. Chester Beatty XVI (EA 10696), or they are palimpsests, which makes them hard to read. For example, the few traces on EA 75039 are calculations of average arable land, hence sufficient to identify it as a tax assessment account (Demarée 2005: 28).

2.3.4. *Business and legal*

Many business texts, especially those on ostraca, deal with individual transactions and matters which were purely ephemeral: a list of priced objects given by the workman Amenwa (EA 5636), quantities of water supplied by various carriers (EA 5638), payments for the construction of beds (EA 5644, EA 50737), a business text containing a list of articles taken to the prospective bride's(?) house by an unnamed man, who was rejected for a second time (EA 65936), a payment in kind given by the workman Paneb to the coppersmith Amenemwia for engraving on a cauldron and to another coppersmith for finishing the work (EA 65935). Such administrative records frequently shed valuable light on the economic and social conditions of their time. Some of them are written in letter form and overlap with the epistolary genre.⁴⁰

The evidence for crime in ancient Egypt is diverse and can be found in royal decrees, administrative texts, such as court proceedings, and private writings (Müller-Wollermann 2015: 228–235). A special problem that occurred widely was the plundering of tombs, those of ordinary people as well as kings (Peet 1930). Looting royal tombs

38 E.g., EA 10777, EA 10779.

39 E.g., P. Chester Beatty III, EA 10683.

40 E.g., EA 50711, EA 63505. EA 65933 containing a letter to the vizier(?) by the foreman Hay, which is a record (*snnj*) of wooden objects to be made for a superior by the foreman Khonsu.

was punishable by death, but there seems to have been no such penalty for plundering private tombs. Several judicial documents deal with tomb robberies during the reigns of Ramesses IX and XI in the 20th Dynasty and testimonies of several tomb robbers (EA 10052–EA 10054, EA 10068, EA 10383, EA 10403). The Abbott papyrus (EA 10221) contains the official report on tomb-robbing in the reign of Ramesses IX (1142–1077 BCE). EA 10403 concerns the theft of the copper fittings from a portable chest belonging to Ramessesnakht, High Priest of Amun, during the late part of the reign of Ramesses XI. A porter and possible witness, Ahautinufer, was forced to give the names of all the men he had seen go into ‘this place and do damage to the fittings of this portable chest’. He suggested that Pentehetnakht, who allegedly knew about the affair, should be questioned, and added quite incidentally that the culprits were the same group who damaged the portable chest of Ramesses II and the *gs-pr* (probably also a chest) of Sety. Pentehetnakht was brought forward and described the attack in detail. Depositions were taken from the thieves in the temple by the scribe of the Necropolis Nesamenope, who is known from other similar cases.

In a legal proceeding, the plaintiff was required to bring the complaint against the defendant, who was then given the court order by a tribunal. The parties were not represented by lawyers but spoke for themselves and presented any relevant evidence. The writer of an ostrakon (EA 5631) mentions that he had been condemned to a term of forced labour for embezzlement, but his father had appealed to the king and had obtained his release. Ostrakon EA 65930 describes the trial and condemnation of the woman Heria accused of stealing a workman’s spike, and subsequent report to the vizier. P. Salt 124 (EA 10055) describes a series of charges by Amennakht to the vizier about the actions of a chief foreman Paneb.

Many disputes concerned matters of property or inheritance.⁴¹ EA 10568 is an account of a session of the local *qnb.t*-council at the town of Kom Medinat Gurab dealing with a conflict between some individuals, who together inherited some slaves, and thus each owned a share in their work.

Disputes over property could also be settled by consulting an oracle. A 20th dynasty papyrus (EA 10335) narrates the oracular proceedings which led to the identification of a thief who had stolen five garments from a certain Amenemuia, a keeper of a storeroom. In a letter addressed to an oracle (EA 10950), the anonymous writer requires the god (or priest of the oracle) to decide in the matter of some garments for which he is unable to account to the vizier. Having failed to engage the god before, he now entrusts this letter with someone who would be admitted to the sanctuary.

The highest offices in the land, even kingship, were occasionally filled by oracular revelation. Ostrakon EA 5624, for example, describes how the deified king Amenhotep I decided over the ownership of a tomb in favour of a workman in the Theban necropolis named Amenemope. In another ostrakon (EA 5625), the occupation of a house at Thebes is disputed, and the same deity was asked to settle the case.

2.3.5. *Epistolary*

Of the numerous letters that survive from the New Kingdom, some of the most interesting are those from Deir el-Medina. The letters occasionally mention incidents in the lives of the members of this community which can be confirmed from other documents. The largest consistent corpus—23 papyri—concerns the *Late Ramesside Letters*, an extensive correspondence between well-known inhabitants of Thebes. A large number of letters are by and to Dhutmose and Butehamun and address day to day concerns such as household maintenance, farming instructions, and inquiries

41 E.g., EA 50734.

about work.⁴² In one of the most beautiful letters, Butehamun expresses concerns about his father Tjaroy (i.e., Dhutmose), who is about to go on a long trip (EA 10284).

Butehamun reappears in the so-called Bankes papyri, an exceptional group of Late Ramesside Letters that include previously unknown letters by well-known Ramesside correspondents and the missing half of an already published letter (Janssen 1991a). Among the documents discovered in the early 1990s in the library of Kingston Lacy (EA 75015–EA 75018, EA 10302+EA 75019, EA 75020–EA 75025, EA 75039), several were immediately recognised as belonging to the private papers of a family of scribes attached to the Theban necropolis administration of the Late Ramesside Period. The topics covered are very diverse, from disputes about the handling of servants (EA 75015) and a plot of land in the Sobek temple complex at Gebelein (EA 75016) to a unique correspondence between female inhabitants of Deir el-Medina regarding assistance on agricultural matters and the manufacture of clothes (EA 75018).

A smaller private dossier is the correspondence on papyrus of Ahmose of Peniat, probably from Thebes. Ahmose worked during the mid-18th Dynasty and is known from other sources. In the four letters kept at the British Museum (EA 10102–EA 10104 and EA 10107)⁴³, different people write him regarding domestic affairs: instructions about the construction of a house, the price for a bed and the order of wood (EA 10102; fig. 3), a maidservant (EA 10107), or just to say hello (EA 10103).

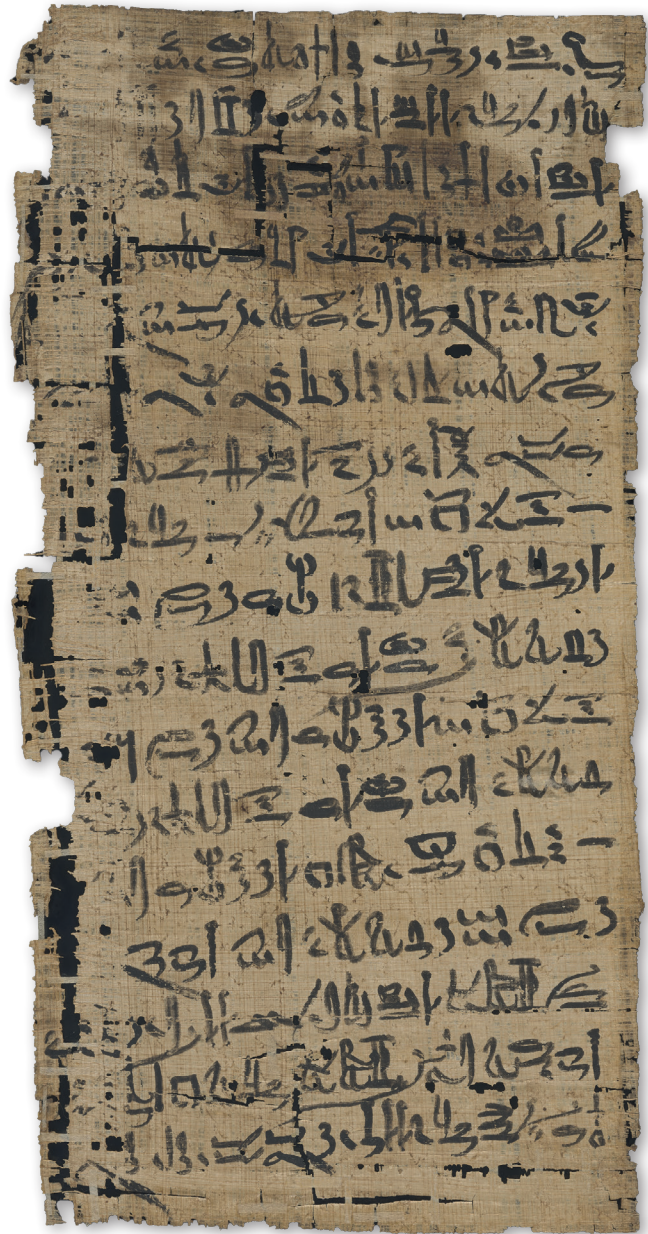


Fig. 3. Letter by Mentuhotep to the scribe Ahmose of Peniat with instructions about the construction of a house, including the height of the walls in cubits, EA 10102. Thebes, 18th Dynasty, 1550–1295 BCE (© British Museum)

⁴² E.g., EA 10326, EA 10419, EA 10440, EA 10375, EA 10411.

⁴³ The remaining two are in the Louvre; P. Louvre 3230; for a detailed discussion of the entire group, see Glanville (1928: 294–312).

Other letters reveal individual communications between workmen (EA 10248, EA 50734) or priests (EA 5627), or are addressed to scribes (EA 66587) or the vizier (EA 50723, EA 65933). Some concern outstanding payments and relate to the genre of business texts.⁴⁴ The scribe Meh adds a request for a papyrus roll and ‘some good ink’ (EA 73666). Others combine such letters with literary pieces such as the *Prophecy of Neferti* (EA 5627). But many have not yet been identified in greater detail, partly because they are too fragmentary, or are under study.⁴⁵

2.3.6. Religious

Apart from the *Book of the Dead*, New Kingdom religious literature in hieratic include liturgical texts and poetical compositions that are more intimate and resemble psalms of the Old Testament, e.g., a praise to Amun.⁴⁶ The principal ritual text of the extensive Chester Beatty corpus is for the daily cult of Amun and the dead king Amenhotep I (P. Chester Beatty IX; EA 10689,1–8). The text is combined with a book of invocations. Prayers to Amun are also found on ostraca⁴⁷ as is a hymn to a goddess (Seshat?) in her many different names (EA 41542).

One of the most important examples of this genre in the British Museum collection is the liturgical text of Paa (EA 10819), which must once have served the lector priest to perform his mortuary service (Assmann 2005: 152–153). The mortuary liturgy is shown here in the actual context in which it was used—on a papyrus—and not in its usual displaced position in coffin or tomb decoration. Many of the spells reappear on the

walls of Theban tombs (TT 29, TT 50, TT 100, and TT 353).

Other texts have been labelled ‘religious’ (or magical) without being able to identify the nature of the text, such as P. Chester Beatty 14 (EA 10694).⁴⁸

2.3.7. Magical/medical

Since many ailments were thought to be caused by evil demons, magic was considered the most effective method of treatment; spells suitable for use in such cases were therefore interspersed with prescriptions of drugs and were intended to be recited while the drugs were being administered. The most elaborate medical/magical handbooks in the British Museum collection are the London Medical papyrus from the 18th Dynasty (EA 10059), the Chester Beatty Medical Papyrus (EA 10686), and further papyri in the Chester Beatty series from the 19th Dynasty.⁴⁹ Besides magical books such as the Harris Magical Papyrus (EA 10042), there are many collections of magical spells dedicated to specific diseases and other misfortunes. Incantations against snake bites and scorpions were particularly common.⁵⁰ Papyri of this kind could be dedicated to the protection of someone and should be kept close or worn as an amulet by its owner. For example, the amulet papyrus EA 10732 is written for the protection of Amennakhte, born of Tarekhânou, against the *sr*-inflammation (fever).

For the ancient Egyptians, every day of the year had significance and calendars were drawn up in which each day was specified as lucky or unlucky, good or bad. In Egypt, many days in the

44 E.g., EA 50711, EA 63505, EA 65933.

45 E.g., EA 5626, EA 14009, EA 10287 + EA 10418, EA 10069, EA 10779, EA 29551, EA 66300, EA 71507.

46 E.g., P. Anastasi II, EA 10243; EA 10780.

47 E.g., EA 50719, EA 50720, EA 14124.

48 Pers. comm. S. Beck, who is studying this papyrus.

49 EA 10690–EA 10693, EA 10695–EA 10696, EA 10698–EA 10689.

50 E.g., EA 9997,1–2, EA 10085+EA 10105, EA 10309, EA 10687.

year were anniversaries of events in the mythological history of the gods and thus acquired a happy or unhappy reputation. The papyrus Sallier IV (EA 10184,6) is one of the most extensive calendars to survive from ancient Egypt. To designate a day as good or bad, the author of the papyrus labels it as *nfr* 'good' in black ink or '*ḥ*' 'bad' in red ink (underlined in the example below). In EA 10184,6, each day is considered as consisting of three equal parts, and may be entirely good, entirely bad, or partly good and partly bad. A day of which the first two-thirds were good and the evening bad was marked *nfr nfr ḥ*, and so on.

2nd month of the inundation, day four: bad, good, bad. You shall not come forth from your house in any way on th[is day] y. Everyone, who is born on this day, will die of an epidemic on this day! (Leitz 1994: 66–67.)

Whereas the outlook for an individual's day could be consulted in the calendar of lucky and unlucky days, it was believed that dreams could reveal the future. P. Chester Beatty III (EA 10683,1–4) contains parts of a dream book used to determine a person's fate, written in the unmistakable handwriting of the famous scribe Qenherkhepshef from Deir el-Medina (Szpakowska 2011: 509–517). The beginning and ending of the manuscript are lost; the rest is divided into columns starting with 'If a man sees himself in a dream' followed by a list of actions. Then, it is stated whether this is a good or bad omen and how the dreamer would benefit or suffer from it. Furthermore, the dream book distinguishes different personalities, including a description of the most typical aspects of their nature.

If a man sees himself in a dream fetching vessels from the water: good—the finding of increased life in his house.

If a man sees himself in a dream, seeing his penis erect: *bad*—this means victory for his enemies.

The genre is less well attested on ostraca from the New Kingdom. The earlier mentioned list of absentees (EA 5634) includes illnesses as reasons for absence of work and one specific man served the community as a doctor. This unique example does not yield the elaborate treatments we find on papyri, however.

3. PUBLISHED VS UNPUBLISHED

From the 1840s onwards, Samuel Birch was made responsible for making available as much texts as possible to specialists. He and his immediate successors focussed on papyri. This led to *Select Papyri in the Hieratic Character from the Collection of the British Museum*, in which numerous important manuscripts were presented as hand-coloured images: P. Sallier 1–3 in 1841 (vol. I); the Anastasi papyri 1–4 in 1842 (vol. II); the Anastasi papyri 5–8 and P. Sallier 4 in 1844 (vol. III) and P. Abbott and d'Orbiney in 1860 (vol. IV), see Birch 1841, 1842, 1844, and 1860. Other texts from the New Kingdom were incorporated in more focussed publications, for example: *Inscriptions in the Hieratic and Demotic Character from the Collection of the British Museum* (Birch 1868), which included ostraca; *Facsimile of an Egyptian Hieratic Papyrus of Ramses III, now in the British Museum* (Birch 1876), *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum. Third Series: the Chester Beatty gift* (Gardiner 1935) and *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum. Fourth Series. Oracular Amuletic Decrees of the Late New Kingdom*, edited with texts from other collections, by Iorwerth E.S. Edwards (1960).

Many hieratic texts on papyri and ostraca were collated and published by Gardiner, regularly in collaboration with another scholar and encouraged by his work on the great dictionary in Berlin (Gardiner 1962: 46). In view of Gardiner's mastery of hieratic, his scholarship was often sought when new papyri appeared (Černý 2001: 146). When Mr. and Mrs. Chester Beatty presented a series of Egyptian papyri to the British Museum, Gardiner had already studied the texts, and had himself

provided for the skilled assistance of Hugo Ibscher (1874–1943) in Berlin in arranging and mounting the papyri. The publication of these documents was entrusted to Gardiner by order of the trustees and appeared as *Third Series: the Chester Beatty gift* in 1935. Hieratic texts on ostraca were the subject of *Hieratic Ostraca* by J. Černý and A.H. Gardiner (1957).

The series *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum* continued with *Late Ramesside Letters and Communications* by Jac.J. Janssen as volume VI (1991a). This catalogue of Late Ramesside correspondence is primarily devoted to the documents that were omitted from J. Černý's *Late Ramesside Letters* (Brussels 1939). Volume VII, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum: Magical and Medical Papyri of the New Kingdom* by Christian Leitz (1999) is devoted to five hieratic documents which may be broadly categorised as magical and medical texts including the well-known Magical Papyrus Harris and the London Medical Papyrus. Jac.J. Janssen's *Grain Transport in the Ramesside Period: Papyrus Baldwin (BM EA 10061) and Papyrus Amiens* is volume VIII (2004) and the last one devoted to New Kingdom manuscripts. British Museum publications go on to feature new papyrus finds such as the *Bankes Late Ramesside Papyri* by Robert J. Demarée (2005) while updating older publications with Demarée's *Ramesside Ostraca* (2002). Significant parts of the collection have been studied and disseminated outside British Museum series, such as the famous literary pieces and poetry by Richard Parkinson (1991; 1997).

In 2014, *The British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan* (BMPES) was established. Dedicated to research related to the cultures of Egypt and Sudan and collection centred, this

peer-reviewed series will include treatises of written culture.⁵¹

However selective, the above overview illustrates that most of the British Museum papyri and, to a lesser extent, the ostraca, have been the subject of numerous books and journal articles. Only 11 papyrus fragments have never been published or cited (fig. 4).⁵² In many of the publications, the written sources have appeared alongside parallels from other collections in support of the translation and interpretation of a text. Fischer-Elfert's *Die satirische Streitschrift des Papyrus Anastasi I* (1992) and Leitz's publication of the *Calendar of Lucky and Unlucky days* (1994), or the inclusion of literary works in general books on ancient Egyptian literature, are just a few examples. Dedicated text editions with a commentary such as Leitz's 1999 book of magical and medical papyri, are less common. Comprehensive treatises that also consider material aspects, palaeography, provenance, and collection history of papyri are few and far between.

Many famous papyrus series and large numbers of ostraca could be revisited and published in a more comprehensive matter (see the case study below). For example, the important group of the Gurob palace archive papyri were never fully published. Apart from early transcriptions of some of the fragments, only a few pieces have been translated (Griffith 1898; Gardiner 1948: 14–35; Gardiner 1953; Helck 1961–1969).⁵³ The c. 400 inscribed fragments of pottery vessels from Amarna were photo-documented in 2017 awaiting further treatment. Nonetheless, the collection is well known and various corpuses are studied by scholars across the globe.⁵⁴ Numerous New Kingdom ostraca from Thebes are under study by Malte Römer (18th Dynasty material) and

51 Such as The Greenfield Papyrus (EA 10554) by Giuseppina Lenzo (2023).

52 These are mostly very small fragments and it is expected that they at least some belong to already known manuscripts; EA 10101, EA 10566, EA 10749, EA 71507, EA 10118.5 + EA 10341, EA 10069, EA 10189, EA 10204, EA 10400, EA 71508.

53 Some literary documents were published by Fischer-Elfert (1998: 85–92).

54 E.g., EA 10118.5 + EA 10341 and EA 71507.



Fig. 4. Unpublished fragment EA 71507. Egypt, 20th Dynasty, 1186–1069 BCE (© British Museum)

Robert J. Demarée and colleagues from the NINO in Leiden (end 20th–beginning 21st Dynasty).⁵⁵ Aurore Motte is examining the attestations of the Kemit-book while Frederik Hagen is revisiting some of the Teachings and the above mentioned Gurob papyri.

In-house efforts of dissemination focus on digitising the papyrus and ostraca collection to support the records online with an image. As a result, about 80% of the papyrus collection has been digitised in recent years.⁵⁶ Many of the British Museum’s written sources have been used

in large scale lexicographic and palaeographic projects, such as the TLA (<https://aew.bbaw.de/ta/index.html>) and AKU (<https://aku-pal.uni-mainz.de/>). In 2014, the British Museum records were linked with Trismegistos; an interdisciplinary portal of papyrological and epigraphical resources from Egypt and the Nile valley (800 BCE–800 CE), now expanding to the Ancient World in general (<https://www.trismegistos.org/>). Updating Collections Online will remain a curatorial priority with a future focus on the ostraca collection.

⁵⁵ Summarising only the larger groups; information on ongoing work is indicated as such on Collections Online under the respective record entry.

⁵⁶ Many *Book of the Dead* papyri remain to be digitised as colour demands more complicated imagery procedures.

4. CASE STUDY: P. BM EA 10720.6 AND P. BM EA 10720.4 [S. B.]

4.1. Introduction

Two plates of papyrus fragments with the inventory numbers P. BM EA 10720.4 (registration no. 1935,0511.1.4) and 10720.6 (registration no. 1935,0511.1.6) entered into the collection of the British Museum in 1935.⁵⁷ They originally belonged to John Lee (1783–1866),⁵⁸ and were apparently left at the Solicitors' Rutter and Marchant after Lee's death. The fragments appear to form part of a fake papyrus roll.⁵⁹ A more general statement about the plates is given on P. BM EA 10720.6: 'Fragments of papyri from Hartwell House, opened by Mr. Lee and Mr. Bonomi.⁶⁰ The notes are by Lee.' On the same plate, an additional note reads (from right to left, top to bottom): 'No 3. It was found within No 2 but rolled round the interior part of it.'⁶¹ Below fragment 10720.6b, a note reads: 'No 1. or the outer piece of the roll which was opened by Mr. Lee on the 22nd July, 1845' and 'It is supposed to be ancient Enchorial by Mr. Bonomi. Hartwell 31 August, 1847.' The label on the left side states: 'No. 4. This was within No. 3 and it was found rolled round the mass of Blank Papyrus within it.' Further information is to be found on plate P. BM EA 10720.4a–e which says: '1847, 31 August: These pieces were within a Roll which was No. 1 and were rolled round the two ends of the Roll—lengthways.'

Putting all of this information together, it becomes possible to state the following: our object originally consisted of a blank papyrus roll (no. 1) in which the fragments a–e in plate BM EA 10720.4 were rolled lengthways. Fragment 10720.6c (no. 4) was rolled around this blank papyrus roll, and

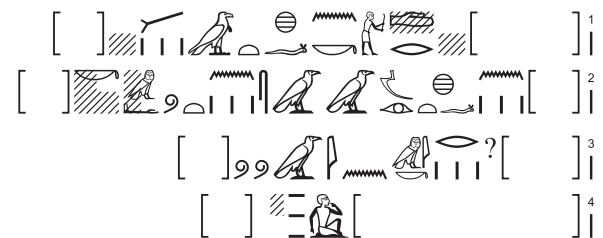
covered by fragment 10720.6a (no. 3). The outer piece of this construct was apparently fragment 10720.6b (which is also labelled no. 1). Note that none of the pieces actually was labelled as no. 2.

All of the fragments carry hieratic writing dating to different periods; the fragments are also in different states of preservation (see below). The oldest fragment dates to the New Kingdom (18th/19th Dynasty) and the youngest fragment to the Third Intermediate Period (22nd/23rd Dynasty).

4.2. Editions

4.2.1. P. BM EA 10720.6a

The fragment P. BM EA 10720.6a measures approx. 13.0 × 7.8 cm. The remains of an inscription in four lines appear on the (real) recto. The height of the script is approximately 1 cm and the space in between the lines is approximately 2.5 cm. The hieratic writing reflects a trained hand. Palaeographically, the manuscript can be dated to the Ramesside Period, though the lack of surviving signs mean that it is not possible to provide a narrower dating. The content of the text is not entirely clear, though the surviving text suggests a group of people (suffix =sn) acting on behalf of somebody else (suffix =k).



⁵⁷ My deepest thanks go to Patricia Usick, Archive Department Egypt and Sudan, for the background information and for helping to read the notes on the plates.

⁵⁸ Bierbrier (2019: 270).

⁵⁹ Compare Leach & Tait (2000: 243).

⁶⁰ For Joseph Bonomi (1796–1878), see Bierbrier (2019: 58).

⁶¹ Below fragment P. BM EA 10720.6a.



Fig. 5. P. BM EA 10720.6

- (1) [... d]r² n=k [h]ft.jw [...] ^a
 (2) [...=s²]n^b hft m³³=sn tw m[k^c ...]
 (3) [...r².w] jm=k^d n j³w.w^e[...]
 (4) [...].w [...]

- (1) [...] the enemies [are repel]led² for you [...]
 (2) [... th]ey² [...] while they watch you [...]
 (3) [...] with/in you for/because of [...]
 (4) [...]

Commentary

- a** [... d]r² n=k [h]ft.jw [...]: A verb is to be expected at the beginning of the line. The surviving signs make more than one lemma possible. Other possibilities—beside *dr* “to repel” (*Wb.* 5, 374.5–10), which is widely used in combination with the word *hft.jw* “enemies” (*Wb.* 3, 276.12–277.5)—would be *ndrj* “to seize” ([...] the enemies [are seiz]ed for you [...]; *Wb.* 2, 383.6), *skr* “to strike” ([...] the enemies [are stru]ck for you [...], *Wb.* 4, 308.4) or *dr* “to repel” (*Wb.* 5, 595.5–9) as a synonym for *dr*. The lemma *ndrj* is mostly but not exclusively attested with *sbj*. One would expect *j* and *w* before 𓂏 —the typical spelling used during the 19th and 20th Dynasties—but the surviving hieratic text argues against this interpretation. The form *ndrj* is not attested for *ndrj*, and this word is thus rather unlikely. The same can be said for *dr*. The lemma *skr* is not well attested during the New Kingdom and the expected writing of this word differs from the signs visible on the papyrus; see *Wb.* 4, 308.4, Lesko (1987, III: 103). As such, the most likely choice is the verb *dr*. Other possible translations are ‘[They will re]pel² you. The enemies [...]’ or ‘[and they have repel]led² you. The enemies [...]’ (suggested by M. Müller).
- b** [...=s²]n: The addition of *s* at the beginning of the line is implied by the suffix =*sn* after *m³³* in the same line.
- c** m[k ...]: The surviving signs are inconclusive. The graph *m[k]* might stand for the lemma *mkj*

“to protect” (*Wb.* 2, 160.1–21). It might reflect the beginning of a new sentence, or it might be a stative qualifying the previous pronoun *tw*. Yet, it could also be the beginning of the noun *mkw.t* “protection” (*Wb.* 2, 160.22–161.4). Alternatively, it might be the particle *m=k* “behold” and mark the start of a new phrase. Other readings are also possible—see (*Wb.* 2, 160–161)—but it is difficult to decide which is most likely without context.

- d** [...r².w] jm=k: 𓂏 is visible at the beginning of the line, probably the remnants of a noun. The *jm=k* that follows appears to finish the statement.
- e** n j³w.w: The preposition *n* is probably the beginning of a modal clause. The following word has to be some sort of substantival expression like a noun, infinitive, or substantival *sdm=f*-form. The remaining signs leave too many options for interpretation.

4.2.2. P. BM EA 10720.6b: Another Attestation of the Onomasticon of Amenemope

Papyrus BM EA 10720.6b consists of two fragments. The largest measures approx. 10.5 × 6.9 cm and bears a four-line inscription on the (real) recto. The height of the line is approximately 0.7 cm and the distance between the lines is also 0.7 cm. The smaller fragment (circa 4.4 × 7.4 cm) has no direct joint to the larger but it continues the text. The verso of both pieces is blank. The manuscript reveals traces of a palimpsest on the recto and partly on the verso. The text is the well-known ‘Onomasticon of Amenemope’ and it is thus possible to estimate the approximate length of the column. Only one square appears to have broken off (lines 1–2) at the beginning of the text. Two or two and half squares are missing from the lost space between the surviving fragments. Three to four squares of writing have been lost from the end. As such, the column would have been approximately 19 cm long. The surviving text belongs to

the section ‘Sky, water, earth’ (part II),⁶² which forms part of the beginning of the ‘Onomasticon,’ but it does not belong to the ‘Introductory heading’ (part I).⁶³ Because there are no traces of ink above the first line—though the height of the line is higher than expected—it can be assumed that there was another column before this one.







The Onomasticon of Amenemope survives in the following attestations (in chronological order):⁶⁴

- R:** The Ramesside papyrus fragments: 20th Dynasty (Ramesseum/Thebes)⁶⁵
- G:** The Golenischeff Onomasticon (= P. Pushkin 169): end of the 20th Dynasty (Ramesses XI; el-Hiba)⁶⁶
- L:** Leather roll (= BM EA 10379): very end of the 20th Dynasty (Memphis?)⁶⁷
- OC:** Cairo ostrakon J. 67100: end of the 20th/beginning of the 21st Dynasty (Thebes)⁶⁸
- H:** P. Hood (= P. BM EA 10202): early 21st Dynasty (provenance unknown)⁶⁹
- B1–B2:** P. Boulaq IV: Middle of the 21st Dynasty⁷⁰

BT: P. BM EA 10474.4 v^o; 22nd Dynasty (Thebes)⁷¹

W-b: Wooden writing board (= BM EA 21635): 23rd Dynasty or later (provenance unknown)⁷²

OR: Ostrakon: (Ramesseum/Thebes)⁷³

The papyrus is written in a beautiful, even Ramesside Period hand. Because the number of the used signs is limited, a more precise dating of the fragmentary manuscript is hard to come by. Nonetheless, the hieratic is very similar to the hieratic on papyrus Harris I (= P. BM EA 9999); the hand here is especially similar to the hands from Heliopolis (frame 25–42) and Memphis (frame 44–56).⁷⁴ Differences occur in the signs  (D19),  (D46),  (F22),  (G1),  (I3), and  (S36). It can thus be assumed that the papyrus fragments date to the 20th Dynasty, and more specifically to the reign of Ramesses IV (approx. 1153–1147 BC). The only other document dating to the same time are fragments from the Ramesseum in Thebes (attestation **R**). Unfortunately, these fragments are only available

⁶² See Gardiner (1947, I: 37, 4*–13*); Herbin (1986: 189–195).

⁶³ See Gardiner (1947, I: 37, 1*–3*); Herbin (1986: 188–189).

⁶⁴ The abbreviations introduced by Gardiner (1947, I: 26), are used here as well.

⁶⁵ Spiegelberg (1898, pl. XLIII–XLV, XLVII); Gardiner (1947, I: 32–34); Herbin (1986: 188). The 19th–20th Dynasty date given by Herbin (1986: 188), probably following the statement by Spiegelberg (1898) on the plates, is slightly off; Gardiner (1947, I: 24–25) writes that the earliest possible date for the development of the text is under Ramesses III. As such, a 20th Dynasty date is estimated.

⁶⁶ Gardiner (1947, I: 27–29); Herbin (1986: 188).

⁶⁷ Gardiner (1947, I: 30–32); Herbin (1986: 188). Following Glanville (1926: 173), Fr. Herbin (1986: 188) dates the manuscript to the 19th–20th Dynasty. Gardiner (1947, I: 31) argues convincingly against Glanville’s dating. The provenance is not stated in the BM’s database, but Gardiner (1947, I: 30) mentions that it was stated on the original frame that the object came from Memphis. This cannot be verified, as the object was re-framed at some point.

⁶⁸ Gardiner (1947, I: 34); Herbin (1986: 188).

⁶⁹ Gardiner (1947, I: 29–30); Herbin (1986: 188).




⁷⁰ Gardiner (1947, I: 35); Herbin (1986: 188).

⁷¹ Posener (1945: 112); Herbin (1986: 187). The abbreviation BT is based on the source of the acquisition (E.A.T. Wallis Budge) and the find spot (Thebes).

⁷² Gardiner (1947, I: 34).

⁷³ Spiegelberg (1898, pl. II); Gardiner (1947, I: 35). Dating the object is difficult due to the few visible signs on the ostrakon in the facsimile.










⁷⁴ Compare Möller (1909, column “Harris H. M.”).

in facsimile, though they still bare a strong resemblance to P. BM EA 10720.6b. Particularly striking is the similarity between the sign  – the upper curve has a particular swing⁷⁵—and the ligature ,⁷⁶ though the sign  is shaped in entirely different fashion.⁷⁷ The height of the lines and the distance in between the lines is also the same. Overall, the similarity is remarkable and it can be assumed that the fragments from the Ramesseum date from approximately the same time. Consequently, the Ramesseum papyrus fragments and the piece presented here would seem to be the oldest known attestations of the Onomasticon of Amenemope.⁷⁸

- (1) $[nh]t(jw)^a r(y)r(yj.t)^b$
 $krr(wjw)^c h^3h^3(.tj)^d [s:hd-t^3] kk.wj [šw]^e$
- (2) $[h^3b]^f k^3h^3(.tj)^g sty jtn(w)^h j^3d.t^i$
 $[^3wd.t s]^3k(w) [srm.t]^j$
- (3) $[nn.w] mt(r)^k j^3r.t^l jj(w)m(^c)^m h^3n.w^n$
 $[...H]nw(.t)^o šp [hnm.t]$
- (4) $[hnm.t]^q h[n]n[y]n[y]^r nw(.y)^s b(p^3)[r]k^3(tj)^t$
 $hnt.j^u ph.w [šd.t^2]^v$
- (1) [“the strong” one], “sow/hippopotamus”, storm, tempest, [dawn] darkness, [light]
- (2) [shad]ow, sunlight, ray of the sun, dew, [..., sn]ow?, [a body of water]
- (3) [Nile], flood, river, sea, wave, [lake], pond, [well]
- (4) [basin?], irr[iga]tion [ba]sin, water, p[ool, (southern) part], (northern) par[t, well?]



Commentary

- a** $[nh]t(jw)$: Only the last few signs of the word $[nh]t(jw)$ have been preserved. The “strong one” is a star constellation; see Gardiner (1947, I: 5* [no. 8]); Herbin (1986: 190 [no. 8]).
- b** $r(y)r(yj.t)$: The word $rr.t$ can also mean a star constellation known as “sow” or “hippopotamus”. The writing of the word here differs slightly from its attestation in the other sources. The determinative at the end is more likely a pig  (E12) than a hippopotamus  (E25). More interesting is the spelling of the lemma:   . The reading is certain. Compare the // in <s>ty (l. 2). See Gardiner (1947, I: 5*, no. 9); Vernus (1976: 136 note x); Herbin (1986: 190, no. 9).
- c** $krr(wjw)$: See Gardiner (1947, I: 5*, no. 10); Herbin (1986: 190, no. 10).
- d** $h^3h^3(.tj)$: The writing here differs from this word’s other attestations in the sources. See Gardiner (1947, I: 5*, no. 11); Herbin (1986: 190, no. 11).
- e-f** $[s:hd-t^3] kk.w(j) [šw]^{R:2}[h^3b]w$: Only the determinative of $s:hd-t^3$ after $h^3h^3.tj$ has been preserved here. The gap after the expected  and before  is approx. four and a half to five squares long. The determinative  implies that only $s:hd$ was written in the gap but the space is too large to house only the determinatives of $h^3h^3.tj$ and $s:hd$. It could be that 

⁷⁵ Compare e.g., Spiegelberg (1898, pl. XLIV.M1, XLVII.50, 77).

⁷⁶ Compare e.g., Spiegelberg (1898, pl. XLIV.M2, 7).

⁷⁷ Compare e.g., Spiegelberg (1898, pl. XLIII.B1 [l. 3], XLV.N [l. 2]).

⁷⁸ According to Gardiner (1947, I: 25), the titles that appear in the text are typical of the Ramesside period, becoming common under Ramesses III and later, though the cities named in the text point to a later date. All the attestations of city names are considered duplicates, but they are not identical. It could be that these city names are later additions to the onomasticon.

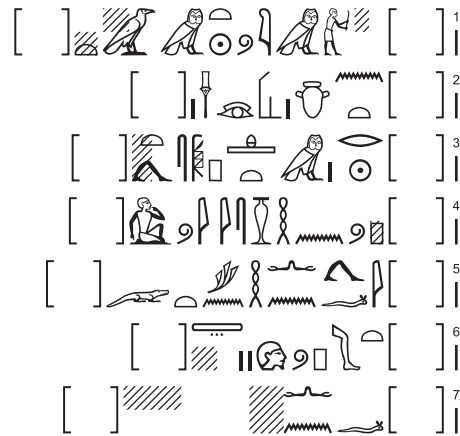
- functioned as the determinative for the entire group. In addition, *s:hḏ-tʿ* and *hʿhʿ.tj* were finished with . Only the beginning of *kk.w(j)* “darkness” is still visible. At the beginning of the fragment, only one square seems to be missing from each line, while the end of the word [*hʿb*]*w* is still legible. It can therefore be assumed that the lemma [*šw*] is to be reconstructed at the end of this line. For further information on these words, see Gardiner (1947, I: 5*–6*, no. 12–15); Herbin (1986: 190, no. 12–15).
- g** *k(ʿ)h(ʿ)*: See Gardiner (1947, I: 6*, no. 16); Herbin (1986: 190, no. 16).
- h** *sty jtn(w)*: The graph at the beginning of the word is difficult to read due to both a tear in the papyrus and the palimpsest below. Nevertheless, the signs appear to be *znk*—a typical hieratic form for that came into use under Ramesses IV; see Möller (1909: 14, no. 167), especially Harris H.M. Compare also the writing in G and Lesko (1987, III: 115). See Gardiner (1947, I: 6*, no. 17); Herbin (1986: 191, no. 17).
- i** *jʿd.t*: See Gardiner (1947, I: 6*, no. 18); Herbin (1986: 190, no. 18).
- j** [*ʿwd.t s*]*ʿk(w)* [*srn.t*]: Only the determinatives of the word [*ʿwd.t*] have been preserved and the estimated space of two to two and half squares fits the reconstruction nicely. The beginning of [*s*]*ʿk(w)* is also partially destroyed. After the usual determinatives the lemma *srn.t* should be restored. For these words, see Gardiner (1947, I: 6*, no. 19–21); Herbin (1986: 191, no. 19–21).
- k** [*nn.w*] *mt(r)*: At the beginning of the line, the word *nn.w* “Nile” can be reconstructed, of which only parts of the determinatives have been preserved. The list continues with *mt(r)* “flood”. See Gardiner (1947, I: 6*–7*, no. 22–23); Herbin (1986: 191, no. 22–23).
- l** *j(ʿ)r.t*: This writing of the lemma *jtr.w* is not known from any of the other attestations of the Onomasticon. Similar spellings without the can be found in H () and G (); see also Lesko (1982, I: 60). The scribe was probably thinking of another word and wrote an *ʿ* after the initial *j*. See Gardiner (1947, I: 7*, no. 24); Herbin (1986: 191, no. 24).
- m** *jj(w)m(ʿ)*: The writing of the word “sea” here is the same as in the other attestations. See Gardiner (1947, I: 7*, no. 25); Herbin (1986: 191, no. 25); Hoch (1994: 52, no. 52).
- n** *hʿn.w*: The determinatives of *hʿn.w* “wave” are lost in the gap. See also Gardiner (1947, I: 7*, no. 26); Herbin (1986: 191, no. 26).
- o** [... *H*]*nw(.t)*: The initial which would be expected here, has not been preserved. None of the other attestations of the text has I3 as additional determinative to the usual ; see Gardiner (1947, I: 7*, no. 27); Herbin (1986: 192, no. 27). It might be the case that the similar sounding word *hntj* “to be greedy” (*Wb.* 3, 121.12–13), which can also be used to describe crocodile shaped enemies (*LGG* 5, 228, *Wb.* 3, 121.14), caused the scribe to use the crocodile (I3) as a determinative as well.
- p** *š*: The expected final determinative has not been preserved. For this lemma, see Gardiner (1947, I: 7*, no. 28); Herbin (1986: 192, no. 28).
- q** [*hnm.t*]^{R:4}[*hnm.t*]: As mentioned before, three to four squares are missing at the end of the line and approx. four at the beginning of line four. The word *hnm.t* was presumably written at the end of the line and *hnm.t* at the beginning of the next. The available space suggests that a short version of the latter was employed here, as in BT (no. 30). See Gardiner (1947, I: 7*, no. 29–30); Herbin (1986: 192, no. 29–30), too.
- r** *h[n]n[y]n[y]*: The lower part of the line is broken off and the lemma *hnnyny* is only partly preserved. For this word, see Gardiner (1947, I: 7*–8*, no. 31); Herbin (1986: 192, no. 31).
- s** *nw(.y)*: The same/a similar writing of the word *nw.y* “water” is used in H (and) and G (and). See Gardiner (1947, I: 8*, no. 32); Herbin (1986: 192, no. 32).

- t** *b(p³)[r]k(³)t(j)*: The middle of the word is lost in the space. The writing differs in all of the attestations. It is thus difficult to say how the graph for “r” should be reconstructed. For the word, see Gardiner (1947, I: 8*, no. 33); Herbin (1986: 192, no. 33); Hoch (1994: 106–107, no. 131).
- u** *hnt.j*: See Gardiner (1947, I: 8*, no. 34); Herbin (1986: 192, no. 34).
- v** *ph.w*: The ending of the word is missing and the spellings vary in the different sources; see Gardiner (1947, I: 8*, no. 35); Herbin (1986: 192, no. 35). It cannot be proved, but it is likely that the beginning of the next word [*šd.t*] “well” was written at the end of this line.

4.2.3. BM EA 10720.6c




P. BM EA 10720.6c measures circa 14.5 × 4.5 cm. The remains of an inscription of seven lines are to be found on the (real) recto. The verso is blank. The height of the lines is approximately 0.7 cm and the height between the lines is circa 1.0 cm. It was written by a skilled scribe and the hieratic can be dated palaeographically to between the 21st and 22nd Dynasties. Certain hieratic graphs are not attested before the 21st or 22nd Dynasty (e.g., [D6], [T18]) or are written differently after that period (e.g., [D56]). Nonetheless, the few remaining signs make it difficult to date the text more precisely. The content of the fragment is hard to determine. A third person singular masculine line (suffix =f) appears several times.

- (1) [...] *m šw.t m ³[t ...]*^a
- (2) [...] *n.t jb^b rs šhm^c [...]*
- (3) [...] *r hrw m htp^d šms.t^e [...]*
- (4) [...] *pw n ḥs.jjw [...]*^f
- (5) [...] *yj]j=ʃ^g nn hnt.t [...]*^h
- (6) [...] *t] pw tp-t[³ ...]*ⁱ
- (7) [...] =f nn [...]^j



- (1) [...] in the shadow, with the [...]
- (2) [...] of the heart, while the (divine) power (a)wakes [...]
- (3) [...] to the day in peace. Maidservant² [...]
- (4) [...] for the praised one[s² ...]
- (5) [...] while] he [co]mes. There is no greedy one² [...]
- (6) [...] is life ti[me² ...]
- (7) [...]

Commentary

- a** [...] *m šw.t m ³[t ...]*: The sign , the determinative of the previous word, is visible at the beginning of the line. This is followed by an adverbial phrase. As the determinatives are missing for ³t, several translations are possible: “at the moment” (*Wb.* 1, 1.16), “in <his> moment” (*Wb.* 1, 2.1) or “with the strength” (*Wb.* 1, 2.3–4), or shortened forms of “place, mound” (*Wb.* 1, 2.5, 26.9–15), “spine” (*Wb.* 1, 2, 26.3–6) or “standard” (*Wb.* 1, 2, 26.7).
- b** [...] *n.t jb*: The word before the *nisbe n.t* has not been preserved. The *nisbe* was probably attached to a feminine noun, though the *nisbe*’s *t*-ending may also have a purely graphemic function, i.e., as a hieratic filling feature.
- c** *rs šhm [...]*: The sign after the word *rs* is clearly a kind of scepter or standard, though it has more than one possible meaning in hieratic:  (*šhm*, *hrp*, ‘b³) or  (‘h^c); see Verhoeven

- (2001: 172, 182). Nevertheless, the reading *šhm* “(divine) power” (*Wb.* 4, 243.5–245.2) makes the best sense here (*ḥ* “mast” [*Wb.* 1, 128], *hrp* “sceptre” [*Wb.* 3, 326.6], *hrp* “director” [*Wb.* 3, 328.2–19], *b* “sceptre” [*Wb.* 1, 176.17–18]). The translation ‘while the (divine) power (a)wakes [...]’ is given here, but there are other options. *rs* could be an imperative: ‘wake (up) power [...]’, or it may be read as a participle in the *nfr-sw*-construction (“watching/waking of power”).
- d** [...] *r hrw m ḥtp*: The signs here are well preserved, but the meaning is somewhat obscure. The remains of a tiny curve below the lines are visible at the beginning of the line; it is possible that these belonged to *w*-rope, *f* or *m*.
- e** *šms.t*: Again, the reading is clear, but the connection of *šms.t* to the previous phrase is obscure. The *t*-ending implies a feminine participle or relative form but the reference to *r hrw m ḥtp(.w)* is not congruent with the preceding phrase. The lemma *šms.t* may also be read as the noun “maidservant” (*Wb.* 4, 487.1); in this case, it would represent the start of a new sentence. The word is barely attested, though it usually refers to a maidservant of a deity.
- f** [...] *p.w n ḥs.jjw* [...]: The remains of the word at the beginning of the line cannot be reconstructed. The lemma *n* could be the preposition *n*, which would then be translated as an indirect object, or as “for”, “because of”, etc.; see *Wb.* 2, 193.3–194.10. Alternatively, it could be interpreted as a *nisbe* for the indirect genitive construction. It cannot be stated with certainty if the word *ḥs.jjw* is plural or not; it has to be some kind of substantival expression because it is used after *n*.
- g** [...] *j=f*: The first sign on the right seems to be *j*. As such, the reading *yjj=f* “[...] while] he [co]mes” is likely, though other translations are possible depending on the words in front of it.
- h** *nn ḥn.t* [...]: The reading of the sign after the crocodile is not certain. The negation implies either a non-existence clause or a negated future tense. As such, it could also be translated as ‘[...] won’t be greedy [...]’. Compare also the same phrasing in line r° 7.
- i** [...] *pw tp-tʿ* [...]: The first two signs in this line could also represent the ending of different words related to body parts: *jns.t* “lower leg, shin” (*Wb.* 1, 99.18–20), *gʿ.t* “hoof” (*Wb.* 1, 168.5–6), *wʿr.t* “leg” (*Wb.* 1, 287.4–8), *pʿd-mʿs.t* “knee cap” (*Wb.* 1, 500.7–8), *mʿs.t* “knee” (*Wb.* 2, 32.4–13), *mn.t* “thigh, haunch” (*Wb.* 2, 68.8–15), *mn.t* “lap” (*Wb.* 2, 68.10), *ḥfʿ.t* “coiling” (*Wb.* 3, 73.8), *sbk.t* “leg” (*Wb.* 4, 94), *sst* “calf (of the leg)” (*Wb.* 4, 279.5), and *st* “leg (especially of Osiris)” (*Wb.* 4, 325). Other possibilities are *wʿr.t* “flight” (*Wb.* 1, 287.1–2), *tp.t-rd* “task?” (*Wb.* 5, 290.6)—only attested for the Old Kingdom—and *tp-mʿs.t* “head on knee (attitude of mourning)” (*Wb.* 5, 285.6–8). The lemma *tp-tʿ* may be read either as “earthling, living one” (*Wb.* 5, 292.5–11) or “lifetime” (*Wb.* 5, 274.29), which leaves *pw* to be read as a copula or demonstrative pronoun. It is difficult to arrive at a meaningful translation.
- j** [...] *=f nn* [...]: Too little of the text has been preserved here to make any sense of this line. See the commentary to line r° 5, which seems to have the same structure.

4.2.4. P. BM EA 10720.4a

This papyrus fragment, along with the other fragments mounted in frame 4, was part of the inner piece consisting of the blank papyrus roll. The fragments were used at both ends to give the roll a more authentic appearance.⁷⁹ Papyrus BM EA 10720.4a originally represented the beginning of a column, of which only eight lines remain. The fragment measures circa 10.5 × 4.5 cm. The height of the lines is 0.8 cm and the space in between

79 See also 4.1. Introduction above.



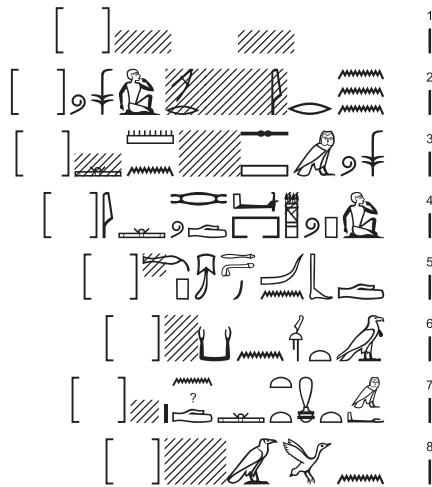
1847. August 31
These pieces were written a Roll which was 20/1
and were rolled over the two ends of the
Roll - lengthways

Fig. 6a: P. BM EA 10720.4



Fig. 6b: P. BM EA 10720.4


the lines is approximately 0.5–0.6 cm. The hand is trained but the writing is somewhat sloppy. Palaeographically, the fragment can be dated to the 18th to 19th Dynasty. Too little of the text remains to make sense of the lines.





- (1) [...] ^a
- (2) *mw r* [...] *mr* *sw* ^b
- (3) *sw m zš*[...] *mn* [...] ^c
- (4) [...] *pw ḥ* ‘*d(w) j*[...] ^d
- (5) *db n(j) ʿ(t) kʿp*[...] ^e
- (6) [*ms*].*tj(w) jmn(t).j n kʿ* [...] ^f
- (7) *m-ʿ=t mj.t(j)t ndʿ* [...] ^g
- (8) *n pʿ* [...] ^h

- (1) [...]
- (2) water to [...] love² him
- (3) him with/in [...] remain [...]
- (4) [...] palace, while the f[orm²] is perceived [...]
- (5) horn of a (female) donkey, [...]
- (6) western [off]spring of [...]
- (7) together with you² likewise. [...]
- (8) for the djed-pil[lar ...]

Commentary

- a** [...]: Only part of the lower part of the line remains; it is not possible to make out any of the signs with any certainty.
- b** *mw r* [...] *mr* *sw*: In addition to the reading “water”, the sign  may simply be a

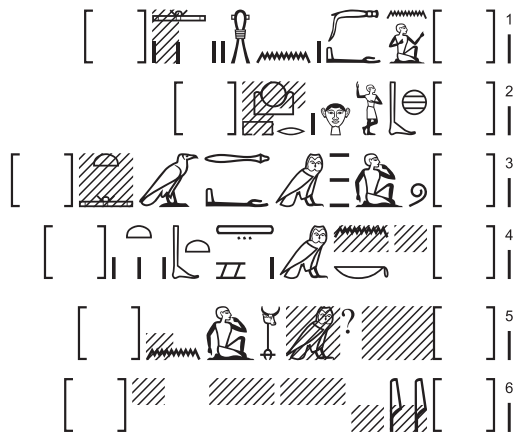
determinative for some kind of water. The following group of signs is not entirely clear, though it seems to end in *mr* (suggested by R. Pietri).

- c** *sw m zš*[...] *mn* [...]: In addition to the translation “him with/in” (reading *sw* as the direct object with the preposition *m* opening an adverbial expansion), the two words here could also be interpreted as “He is in/as/with...”. These signs are followed by *zš*[...], but the subsequent signs are barely visible. Only the word *mn* remains after the gap in the text.
- d** [...] *pw ḥ* ‘*d(w) j*[...]: The sign  is clearly visible at the beginning of the line. It has to be a determinative for a word on the previous line, now lost. The following *pw* (reading suggested by M. Müller) suggests either a nominal sentence (di- or tripartite nominal sentence) or—less likely—a demonstrative pronoun for the previous word. The verb ‘*d* “to perceive” (*Wb.* 1, 238.14) is often connected with the shape of one of these. The final *j* could potentially be amended to *j[r.w]* “form, creation” (*Wb.* 1, 113.13–15).
- e** *db n(j) ʿ(t) kʿp*[...]: The reading is more or less certain (partially suggested by M. Müller and R. Pietri), though the meaning is obscure.
- f** [*ms*].*tj(w) jmn(t).j n kʿ* [...]: The  and *t* make one reading most likely: *mst.w* “offspring” (*Wb.* 2, 151.10–12). This lemma can be expanded by an attribute. The spelling of *jmnt.j* “western” (*Wb.* 1, 86.15) is unexpected. The word *mst.w* is often used with an indirect genitive construction that refers to the subject that this offspring belongs to. Unfortunately, it is not entirely clear who this is in the present context.
- g** *m-ʿ=t mj.t(j)t ndʿ* [...]: Besides *m-ʿ=t mj.t(j)t* “together with you² likewise,” the reading *m=t mj.t(j)t* “behold, likewise” is also possible, though the former seems more likely. The following group of signs begins a new sentence; not enough remains of the text to make any sense of it.

h $n p^3$ [...]: The last line is as mysterious as the others and does not provide any insight into the content of the original text. The sign 𓏏 is poorly made but the following 3 confirms the reading.

4.2.5. P. BM EA 10720.4b

This fragment was also part of the inner piece of the fake papyrus roll. It is approximately 9.1 cm high and 3.0 cm wide. The lines are 0.7 cm high and the space in between them 0.9–1.0 cm. The remains of six lines survive on the (real) recto—the verso is blank—but only five are legible. It is not entirely clear whether line 1 was the actual first line. The papyrus can be dated palaeographically to the end of the 21st or the 22nd Dynasty.⁸⁰ The content is not clear, but the vocabulary suggests that the fragment was part of a magical or religious text.



(1) [... $n=j$ $m\dot{h}$ n z^3 [.w...]^a

(2) [... hb hr 3h [.t...]^b

(3) [...].w m 3 [.t...]^c

(4) [... $n=k$ m t^3 $tb.wt$ [...]^d

(5) [... m^2] $hty(.t)^2$ $n(.j)$ [...]^e

(6) [...] jj [...]^f

(1) [...] for me² the (fore)arm for protection[s ...]

(2) [...] dancer above the horiz[on ...]

(3) [...] with the great ...]

(4) [...] for you on earth. Reward [...]

(5) [...] in the throat of fm[...]

(6) [...]

Commentary

a [...] $n=j$ $m\dot{h}$ n z^3 [.w...]: The $n=j$ may be read as either the remains of a $sdm.n=f$ -form or as the indirect object. The determinative of $m\dot{h}$ implies the reading “arm” (*Wb.* 2, 120.1).

b [...] hb hr 3h [.t...]: The “dancer above the horizon” is otherwise unattested. It is also possible to read “[...] while dancing above the hori[zon ...]” or the like here.

c [...].w m 3 [.t...]: Two determinatives of the previous word survive at the beginning of the line. These are not meaningful enough though to narrow down potential additions. The same may be said about $^3.t$. Because only the determinative 𓏏 has been preserved, it is not possible to choose from the many potential lemmata that are written down here.

d [...] $n=k$ m t^3 $tb.wt$ [...]: $n=k$ is interpreted as an indirect object here, but it could also form the remains of a $sdm.n=f$ -form. The lemma $tb.wt$ “payment, reward” (*Wb.* 5, 261.3) cannot be convincingly connected with the previous phrase; it is interpreted here as the beginning of a new sentence.

e [... m^2] $hty(.t)^2$ $n(.j)$ [...]: The subsequent n indicates that the one possessing the throat (?) was named in the text. The ink of the papyrus is faded before [... m^2] $hty.t$ (m suggested by R. Pietri).

f [...] jj [...]: Only the remains of the signs have been preserved here.

4.2.6. P. BM EA 10720.4c

This rather long fragment was also part of the inner piece of the fake papyrus roll. It measures circa 13.2 × 2.5 cm. The script has a height of 0.7 cm and the distance between the lines is approximately 1.0–1.1 cm. Eight lines of an inscription have been

⁸⁰ The more distinct signs in the text share a great likeness to the graphs used in the so-called “Takelothis” papyri; see Verhoeven (2001: passim).

preserved. The few remaining signs can perhaps be dated palaeographically to the 21st to the 22nd Dynasty. Only a few words survive, and the content is obscure.

1a: or ↓



- (1) [...]w n [...]^a
 (2) [...] = j (hr)² dhn [...]^b
 (3) [...]z³.w (hr) jt.y r [...]^c
 (4) [...] tr² ph.w(j)² [...]^d
 (5) [...]wy jw w^c [...]^e
 (6) [...]j jw [...]^f
 (7) [...]jj jw hpr [...]^g
 (8) [...]sp]r.tj r dm[j ...]^h

- (1) [...]
 (2) [...] I² appoint² [...]
 (3) [... the guar]dian² takes to [...]
 (4) [...]
 (5) [...] while/the one [...]
 (6) [...] while [...]
 (7) [...] while develop [...]
 (8) [...]cam]e to the to[wn ...]

Commentary

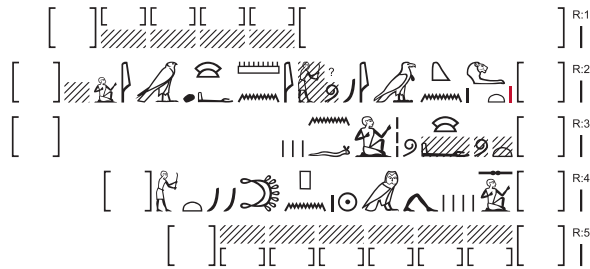
a [...]w n [...]: The group 𓂏𓂐 can also be reconstructed as, e.g., *wrš.w* “guardian” (*Wb.* 1, 366.7–13), *nw* “time” (*Wb.* 2, 219.1–15), *hrw* “day” (*Wb.* 2, 498–500.24) or *dw³.w* “morning” (*Wb.* 5, 244.4–15). The other signs are more or less clear, though it is difficult to make sense of them.

- b** [...] = j (hr)² dhn [...]: The verb *dhn* means “to appoint” (*Wb.* 5, 479.6–21). It is not clear who is appointed here. Other translations are also possible.
- c** [...]z³.w (hr) jt.y r [...]: For the combination *jt r*, see *Wb.* 1, 149.14.
- d** [...] tr² ph.w(j)² [...]: The reading is clear, but does not provide enough information to make sense of it.
- e** [...]wy jw w^c [...]: Only the remains of the previous word survive at the beginning of the line. The subsequent particle *jw* initialises either a main clause or a secondary clause.
- f** [...]j jw [...]: The first group of signs may be reconstructed as: *bt³* “to run” (*Wb.* 1, 484.15), *mrj* “groom” (*Wb.* 2, 100.5, Hoch 1994: 132–134 [173], Lesko 1982, I: 226–227), *hfd* “to rush, to flee in terror” (*Wb.* 3, 75.14, Hoch 1994: 225–226 [310], Lesko 1984, II: 110), *sg* “to open a way, to break a trail” (*Wb.* 4, 320.4, Hoch 1994: 269 [382]), *ktn* “charioteer” (*Wb.* 5, 148.12–17, Hoch 1994: 341–345 [506]), *twh³* “to withdraw” (*Wb.* 5, 255.5), *tkšš* “to trample” (*Wb.* 5, 336.1), *th³* “lame one” (*Wb.* 5, 388.10, Lesko 1989, IV: 133), or *dg³* “to walk” (*Wb.* 5, 499.15). Because the particle *jw* follows immediately afterwards, a noun seems more likely here than a verb, though a verb is also possible. The particle might also begin a new sentence.
- g** [...]jj jw hpr [...]: The ending 𓂏𓂐𓂑 is most likely the ending of a previous noun. The determinative is not specific enough to reconstruct the lost word from the many potential options.
- h** [...]sp]r.tj r dm[j ...]: The remains of the beginning of the line suggest *spr* (*Wb.* 4, 102–103) here; this usually appears with the preposition *r*. This is followed by *dm[j ...]* (suggested by R. Pietri).

4.2.7. P. BM EA 10720.4d

Fragment d measures approximately 3.2 × 5.7 cm. The lines have a height of 0.6 cm and the space in between the lines is approximately 0.4–0.6 cm. Of the first and fifth line of a five-line inscription only parts survive on the recto. A number (?) in

red can also be read in the second line (R: 2). The verso carries three lines of a text, but these are too poorly preserved to make any sense of them. The fragment can palaeographically be dated to the 21st Dynasty.



- R: 1 [...] ^a
 R: 2 [...] 1 ḥ³.t ḳn.tjw Jmn-ḥ^c.w ḥr.j [...] ^b
 R: 3 [...] tw ḥ^c.w=j n=f 3^c
 R: 4 [...] z 4 jw(.w) m hrw pn ḥ.wt(y) [...] ^d
 R: 5 [...] ^e
 V: 1–3 [...] ^f

- R: 1 [...]
 R: 2 [...] 1, beginning [...], Amun-kha (and) Hori [...]
 R: 3 [...]
 R: 4 four men came on this day, tenant? [...]
 R: 5 [...]
 V: 1–3 [...]

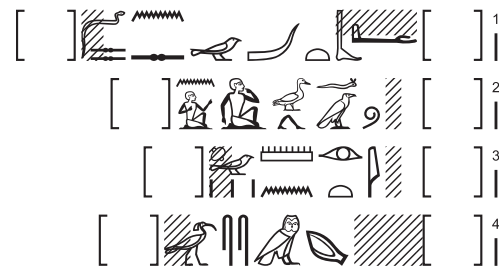
Commentary

- a** [...]: All that survives here are the remains of some black ink in the upper left corner of the fragment.
- b** [...] 1 ḥ³.t ḳn.tjw Jmn-ḥ^c.w ḥr.j [...]: The number one (?), written in red ink, is visible at the beginning of the line. What was counted has not been preserved. The meaning of the subsequent phrase is not entirely clear. The graph could either be read ḥ³.t as given above (confirmed by H.-W. Fischer-Elfert) or, alternatively, ḏr.t (suggested by R. Demarée). The names Jmn-ḥ^c.w (PN I: 30.19) and ḥr.j (PN I: 251.8) were suggested by M. Müller and R. Pietri.
- c** [...]: This line is extremely faded. Only single signs written in black ink are partially legible.

- d** [...] z 4 jw(.w) m hrw pn ḥ.wt(y) [...]: The reading was suggested by M. Müller and R. Demarée.
- e** [...]: Only the remains of the upper part of the line have survived.
- f** [...]: The verso carries three lines of an inscription that are too poorly preserved to be read with any certainty.

4.2.8. P. BM EA 10720.4e

The remains of four lines of text survive on the (real) recto of this fragment. The verso is blank. The fragment measures approximately 7.3 × 3.2 cm. The height of the lines is 0.7–0.8 cm and the space in between the lines is 1.0–1.1 cm. The manuscript can be dated palaeographically between the end of the 18th to the beginning of the 19th Dynasty. The text is about a woman who apparently (ritually) defiled herself. She is subsequently supported by an anonymous first person (suffix =j). Someone or something then suffers, before the female speaker is somehow purified at the end.



- (1) [...] ḥ^b(t).n=z^a dz=z [...] ^b
 (2) [...] wβ.n=j [...] ^c
 (3) [...] j jr.t mn.w [...] ^d
 (4) [...] sḏm=s s³[ḥ.w ...] ^e
- (1) [...] after she [def]iled herself [...]
 (2) [...] I supported [...]
 (3) [...] make/made sufferings [...]
 (4) [...] she listens to the (ritual) recitat[ions...]

Commentary

- a** [...] ḥ^b(t).n=z: The word ḥ^b “to dirty, to pollute, to be impure” (*Wb.* 1, 176.1) is often used in

- combination with the lemma *w^b* or *'b* “to be pure, to purify” (*Wb.* 1, 175.4–10, 280.12–282.5) and seems to be connected to Sakhmet (who can inflict these kinds of impurities). See, amongst others, Edel (1944: 4–6), *GdM* VII.1: 137, Cauville (1997: 81), and the discussion in Wilson (1998: 143–144, with further literature), as well as Rizzo (2007: 123–135, especially 123–124, 128–130). The text is interpreted here as a secondary clause “[...] after she [def]iled herself,” but it is also possible to interpret the phrase as a main clause: “[...] she [def]iled herself” or as a passive voice: [... *'b*].*tw n=z* “[...] (it) was def]iled for her” or the like.
- b** *dz=z* [...]: Reading suggested by M. Müller.
- c** [... *wf³.n=j* [...]: The determinatives of *wf³* “to discuss, to support” (*Wb.* 1, 306.4) are unexpected here. The walking legs (𐀀 [D54]) probably belong to the verb *z³* “to betake oneself (to, under)” (*Wb.* 3, 413.1–2) or *z³j* “to linger, to creep” (*Wb.* 3, 418.15–419.3). It is also possible to read the text as a secondary clause here: “[...] after I supported [...].”
- d** [...]*j jr.t mn.w* [...]: The beginning of the line is lost. It is thus difficult to say who or what suffers or let suffer.
- e** *sdm=s s³[h.w ...]*: The last sign in this line is slightly odd, but it seems to be 𐀀 (G25). For *s³h.w*, see *Wb.* 4, 24.1–10.

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