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FRIENDSHIP AND FRUSTRATION: A STUDY IN PAPYRI DEIR EL-MEDINA IV-VI*

By DEBORAH SWEENEY

Papyri Deir el-Medina IV, V and VI illustrate different problems between friends in the Ramesside Period. This article presents new translations of these texts and discusses them in the context of friendship, social obligation and reconciliation in ancient Egypt. Although these three letters have sometimes been presented as a group, they are probably the work of three distinct correspondents. The hieratic palaeography of these texts is analysed in an appendix.

ALTHOUGH Papyri Deir el-Medina IV, V and VI have been published, translated and included in anthologies of Egyptian texts,¹ their interest is by no means exhausted. Not only do these texts contain interesting observations on friendship, which help us understand how the ancient Egyptians understood this relationship, they also increase our awareness of what the Egyptians actually did when they quarrelled and made up. This study forms part of a wider research project on the themes of sin, forgiveness and punishment in ancient Egypt as reflected in everyday texts such as personal correspondence.

P. DeM IV is concerned with the addressee's failure to keep in touch with the sender, whereas P. DeM V and VI deal with the addressee's failure to respond to a friend's requests to send ointment. A further fragment, P. DeM XXII, has also been mentioned in this connection, since it describes a similar dispute between friends. Hitherto, scholars have tended to assume that these texts form a group or sequence. If that were so, we might be able to see the relationship between the correspondents change or deteriorate. However, this connection is not self-evident.

The document known as P. DeM IV was addressed by the scribe Nakhtsobk² to the

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¹J. Černý (G. Posener (ed.)), *Papyrus hiératiques de Deir el-Médineh I[N^{os} I–XVII]* (Documents de Fouilles 8; Cairo, 1978), 15–19, pls. 19–22a; E. F. Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt* (Atlanta, 1990), 150–1. See also A. McDowell, *Village Life in Ancient Egypt: Laundry Lists and Love Songs* (Oxford, forthcoming). The translations of the texts discussed in this article and McDowell's book owe a certain amount to our discussions in Oxford in the summer of 1996. It has not been possible to re-collate the papyri.

²Nakhtsobk styles himself 'scribe of the Necropolis' in the colophon he wrote to P. Chester Beatty I, where he jotted down a number of love songs (E. Iversen, 'The Chester Beatty Papyrus, No. 1, Recto XVI, 9 – XVII, 13', *JEA* 65 (1979), 78–88). However, Nakhtsobk is poorly attested in Deir el-Medina and may well have lived elsewhere: A. McDowell, 'Contact with the Outside World', in L. H. Lesko (ed.), *Pharaoh's Workers: The Villagers of Deir el Medina* (Ithaca, 1994), 55, suggests that 'it is clear that he is not in the same place as Amen-nakhte, because he urges the latter to write to him by the hand of the policeman Bas (sic)'. Admittedly, this might

crew member Amennakhte,³ whereas the correspondents of the other letters are unknown. In his original publication of the papyri, Černý attributed all three letters to the scribe Nakhtsobk, a position followed by Pestman in his article tracing the ownership of the Chester Beatty papyri archive.⁴ Wente, who included all three letters in his *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, left the issue open by grouping the texts together without attributing P. DeM V and VI to any specific correspondent. McDowell discusses P. DeM IV in the context of the workmen's freedom of movement in and out of the village, but is uncertain whether P. DeM VI belongs together with this letter.⁵ Fischer-Elfert has recently mentioned P. DeM XXII as a possible member of this group,⁶ a suggestion adopted by Quack.⁷ Most of the papyri discovered in Deir el-Medina were found in a cache of documents buried in the necropolis of the village. Posener suggests that 'on peut avec confiance attribuer à cette trouvaille la grande majorité, probablement tous les papyrus publiés dans ce volume'.⁸ This archive was quite extensive, however, spanning more than a century, and including literary works, magical texts and private letters.⁹ Even though P. DeM IV, V and VI probably came from this group, this does not necessarily suggest that they formed a related group.

In order to see whether all four letters were written by the same hand, I have applied the criteria of handwriting analysis for hieratic suggested by Jac. J. Janssen.¹⁰ After consulting modern handwriting experts, Janssen concluded that the best criterion for assessing hieratic texts is a comparison of the commonest words, such as the definite article, which people write almost automatically, taking no especial care to form the signs.

reflect a temporary absence on business; however, if Nakhtsobk did not live in Deir el-Medina, it is unlikely that he was the author of P. DeM VI, since the author of that text does seem to have been based in Deir el-Medina. Pestman is probably correct in his guess that Nakhtsobk gave P. Chester Beatty I to his friend Amennakhte, which is how it came to be in the Naunakhte family archive: P. W. Pestman, 'Who Were the Owners, in the "Community of Workmen", of the Chester Beatty Papyri?', in R. J. Demarée and J. J. Janssen (eds.), *Gleanings from Deir el-Medina* (Egyptologische Uitgaven 1; Leiden, 1982), 155–72. Černý dates P. Geneva MAH 15274 (= KRI VI.144), where Nakhtsobk is also mentioned (vs. 4.2), to Year 6 of Ramesses IV: J. Černý, *A Community of Workmen at Thebes in the Ramesside Period* (BdE 50; Cairo, 1973), 165.

³Amennakhte, son of Khaemnun and Naunakhte, is attested from Year 1 of Ramesses IV to Year 3 of Ramesses V: M. Gutgesell, *Die Datierung der Ostraka und Papyri aus Deir el-Medineh und ihre ökonomische Interpretation. I: Die 20. Dynastie* (HAB 18; Hildesheim, 1983), 43–5, 240–1. He was an ordinary workman at Deir el-Medina (Černý, *Community*, 196–7; Pestman, *Gleanings*, 161). He did, however, learn to read and write since he inscribed his name on his copy of the 'Dream Book', P. Chester Beatty III.

⁴Pestman, *Gleanings*, 161–2. A. Gasse, 'Les ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el-Medina: nouvelles orientations de la publication', in R. J. Demarée and A. Egberts (eds.), *Village Voices: Proceedings of the Symposium 'Texts from Deir el-Medina and their Interpretation' Leiden, May 31–June 1, 1991* (CNWS Publications 13; Leiden, 1992), 67, also follows Černý in attributing P. DeM V to Nakhtsobk.

⁵McDowell, *Pharaoh's Workers*, 161, n. 77.

⁶H.-W. Fischer-Elfert, 'Vermischtes', *GM* 127 (1992), 36–7.






⁷J. F. Quack, *Die Lehren des Ani* (OBO 141; Freiburg and Göttingen, 1994), 172. Strictly speaking, Quack's remarks bracket P. DeM. XXII together with P. DeM IV–VI as examples of disagreement between friends: 'ein relativ gutes Beispiel liefern die pDeM 4–6 und 22, in denen jemand einem alten Freund schreibt, dabei auch über unfreundliches Verhalten klagt ...' It is not entirely clear whether the papyri are claimed to belong to a single group, although one could interpret his remarks in this vein.

⁸In Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques*, vii.

⁹Pestman, *Gleanings*, 165–6.

¹⁰J. J. Janssen, 'On Style in Egyptian Handwriting', *JEA* 73 (1987), 161–7. See also C. J. Eyre, 'A "Strike" Text from the Theban Necropolis', in J. Ruffle et al. (eds.), *Glimpses of Ancient Egypt: Studies in Honour of H. W. Fairman* (Warminster, 1979), 86–7; A. Gasse, *Village Voices*, 51–70.

In the course of writing a text, a person's handwriting may vary considerably,¹¹ so it is important to compare all the occurrences of a given word in the text.

The definite article written in P. DeM V is clearly different from those in P. DeM IV and VI (See Table 1). Once it is written ¹² and once ¹³ but most often ¹⁴. In P. DeM IV¹⁵ the wing-tips of the *p3*-sign are still distinct, ¹⁵, whereas in P. DeM VI¹⁶ they have fused into one single line ¹⁶. On the basis of the *p3*-sign alone, then, P. DeM IV, V and VI are in three distinct hands, although P. DeM IV and VI are closer to one another than either of them is to P. DeM V. Some of the *p3*-signs in P. DeM XXII resemble those of P. DeM IV,¹⁷ some resemble those of P. DeM V,¹⁸ but most resemble neither,¹⁹ so that P. DeM XXII is probably by the hand of a fourth correspondent. A more detailed discussion of the hieratic palaeography of these texts can be found in the Appendix.

I discuss each text separately.²⁰ Instead of following Černý's order of publication, this paper opens with the relatively mild irritations of P. DeM VI, escalating to the angry crescendo of P. DeM IV, where the friendship itself is in jeopardy.

P. Deir el-Medina VI

Translation

(rt.1) As follows: I say every day^a to Ptah, to [Sokar] amidst the secret shrine, and to Pre in the daytime, (rt. 2) 'Give you life, health, [long] life, great old age, whilst you are with me < like > a brother forever when [I am like] (rt. 3) a grown-up orphan^b with you.' Furthermore [...] ^c my message to you yesterday, saying, 'Send (rt. 4) me a *hin* of ointment for your (female?) eating companion.'^d Now look, she/it^e has (rt. 5) arrived and you won't send(?) it.^f If you have none, you are not in the habit of selling (rt. 6) your clothing^g and sending the thing about which I wrote to you. When my letter (rt. 7) reaches you, you shall send the ointment about which I wrote you. Watch it, watch it! (rt. 8) Don't make the man wait^h whilst you [...]

(The woman) [X] has run awayⁱ to the village.^j (vs. 1) Now look, I have taken charge of her. I didn't let her know that I wrote (vs. 2) to you, saying, 'She's here.' It was because

¹¹For example, fatigue may set in towards the end of a long text, so that the scribe forms the signs less carefully.

¹²P. DeM V vs. 3.

¹³P. DeM V rt. 4.

¹⁴P. DeM V rt. 2, rt. 3, rt. 5, vs. 2.

¹⁵P. DeM IV rt. 4 (×2) rt. 5, rt. 6, rt. 11, vs. 1, vs. 2 (×3), vs. 4.

¹⁶P. DeM VI rt. 1 (×2), rt. 3, rt. 6, rt. 7, rt. 8 (×2), vs. 3.

¹⁷P. DeM XXII vs. 1 (×2).

¹⁸P. DeM XXII vs. 2.

¹⁹P. DeM XXII rt. 1, rt. b2, vs. 2, vs. a, vs. b2, vs. b3.

²⁰One could argue that the papyri were composed by the same sender but dictated to different scribes. This is unlikely, however; it is difficult to believe that the scribe Nakhtsobk, the sender of P. DeM IV, would have chosen to dictate his letters rather than pen them himself.

of a dream^k that she came here to consult (the goddess) Nefertari.¹ (vs. 3) Look after her and don't do what you (vs. 4) have usually done! It is I who write to you continually but you never write (vs. 5) to me. May your health be good.

Notes

(a) *rr nb* is generally assumed to continue the initial verb of speech: J. Černý and S. I. Groll, *A Late Egyptian Grammar*³, (Studia Pohl: Series Maior 4; Rome, 1985), 8.9.1.ii. C. Peust, *Indirekte Rede in Neuägyptischen* (GOF IV 33; Wiesbaden, 1996), 77–8, doubts whether this is true, since in Egyptian elements of a formula which introduces speech generally do not follow the quotation. E. F. Wente, *Late Egyptian Letters* (Chicago, 1967), 76 n. b, points out that in LRL 62.6 *rr nb* follows a blessing which is not introduced by a verb of speech. A. M. Bakir, *Egyptian Epistolography from the Eighteenth to the Twenty-First Dynasty* (BdE 48; Cairo, 1970), 56, and H. Grapow, *Wie die alten Ägypter sich anredeten*, III (Berlin, 1941), 81–2, understand *rr nb* as qualifying the contents of the prayer. However, A. H. Gardiner, 'A Protest against Unjustified Tax-demands', *RdE* 6 (1951), 126, points out that this interpretation of *rr nb* does not fit instances where the sender asks the gods to grant the recipient a great and good old age. Peust (*Indirekte Rede*, 77–8) concludes that our present state of knowledge does not allow us to solve this problem. He remarks that it is clear, however, that *rr nb* marks the transition between the complimentary preamble and the body of the letter.

(b) D. Meeks, *ALex* I, 77.2112.

(c) Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 151, restores '[Pay heed to] my communication'.

(d) Cf. J. F. Borghouts, 'A Deputy of the Gang Knows his Business (*Hier. Ost. 67, 1*)', *Gleanings*, 75. In other words, this lady used to share meals with the addressee, which implies that they are friends or family.

(e) Černý and Wente prefer this option, which is more appropriate since the *.t* ending of the stative is far more typical of a third person female subject, although it does appear very occasionally with a male subject: J. Winand, *Études de néo-égyptien*, 1. *La morphologie verbale* (Liège, 1992), 111–17. On the other hand, this would involve reading *sw* as referring to the third person feminine singular, although this does occur sometimes: Winand, *Morphologie*, 428–9. There is a similar confusion between *sw* and *st* as dependent pronouns; see Černý and Groll, *Late Egyptian Grammar*³, 2.3.1.

(f) Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 151, translates: 'You shall not let her be in [need]'.

(g) Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 151, translates this sentence as a rhetorical inflexion question: 'If you are broke, can't you sell your clothes and send that about which I've written you?'

(h) Or 'stand up, accuse'.

(i) An unusual writing of this verb, with metathesis of the final *r* and *r*.


(j) I.e. Deir el-Medina. The text reads *wrr n.s r dmj*, which we can either read as a dative, 'run off for her to the Village', as Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 151, does, or as the reflexive dative following a first present construction: [*st*] *wrr n.s r dmj*. Pestman, *Gleanings*, 162, suggests that the woman ran away to Thebes ('*Nht-Sbk* interested himself, in Thebes, on behalf of one of the women of '*Imn-nhtw*'s family who apparently had run away from home'), but she is said to have run away to *dmj* (Deir el-Medina), not to *Njw.t* (Thebes). Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques*, 19, paraphrases as 's'enfuir chez elle en ville', which might imply that she had returned to her own parents.

(k) Maybe the woman had dreamt a puzzling or frightening dream which she wanted the goddess to interpret. Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques*, 19, and Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 151, translate *ptr.s* as a relative form, 'a dream she had seen', for which she presumably wanted a divine explanation. Alternatively, the woman may have wanted to ask the goddess for a healing or helpful dream. On the whole, however, *ptr s(jj)* is more appropriately translated 'Look after her', since otherwise the conjunctive which follows it is left hanging isolated.

(l) Nefertari was venerated at Deir el-Medina: M. Gitton, 'Ahmose Nofretere', *LÄ* I, 109, n. 52.

Discussion

In this text, the sender complains that the addressee has failed to send him the ointment which he had already requested on the previous day.²¹

Černý reconstructs 'your female eating companion' as the one who is to benefit from this ointment. If so, the sender would be asking for extra rations to help support her while she is in his care.²² The letter is very damaged at this point; however, since the signs  are clear, the text does seem to refer to a woman.

We also learn that this woman has run away to Deir el-Medina. The sender has taken her under his wing and writes to the addressee to let him know where she is. The fact that he has kept this message secret from her, and that he warns the addressee, 'Look after her and don't do what you have usually done!' may indicate that family relations are not particularly happy.

We find a parallel in O. Ashmolean 1945.39²³ in which Khnummose²⁴ reminds Ruty of the favours he has done for him, including providing supplies for Ruty's wife, who had been living in Khnummose's house. Admittedly, the circumstances were not quite the same, since Khnummose was carrying out extensive renovations in Ruty's house and his wife might well have wanted to live elsewhere during the rebuilding. Subsequently, however, Ruty throws her out (i.e. divorces her?) and she lives at Menna's house for a while. During that time, Khnummose also gives her supplies:

²¹ R. J. O' Shaughnessy, 'Forgiveness', *Philosophy* 42 (1967), 343, remarks that an injury can either be an expression of ill-will, or a defect of goodwill, as in this instance. Egyptian wisdom texts stress the importance of generosity and sharing: *The Instruction of Any* B 18.12: 'What is given small returns augmented, / [What is replaced brings abundance]' (M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, II (Berkeley, 1976), 139; I follow the line numbering of Quack, *Ani*); *Any* B 21.3–4: 'Do not eat bread whilst another stands by / Without extending your hand to him' (Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* II, 141); *Any* B 21.5–6: 'One man is rich, another is poor, / But food remains so it may be shared' (see Quack, *Ani*, 111); *The Instruction of Amenemope* 26.11–12: 'Do not refuse your beer pot to a stranger. / Double it before your brothers' (see I. Grumach, *Untersuchungen zur Lebenslehre des Amenope* (MÄS 23; Munich, 1972), 170); *The Teaching of Ptahhotep* (ed. Devaud) 300: 'Beware of the selfish man's deed!'; *Ptahhotep* 318: 'Do not be selfish against your neighbours'; *Ptahhotep* 339: 'Gratify your close friends with what comes to you' (translations from Ptahhotep follow R. B. Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe and other Ancient Egyptian Poems, 1940–1640 BC* (Oxford, 1997), 256, 257); O. Petrie 11 rt. 3: 'Do not sate yourself alone if your mother is a have-not' (J. Černý and A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca*, I (Oxford, 1957), pl. i; translation: M. Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context* (OBO 52; Freiburg and Göttingen, 1983), 7). Cf. P. Lansing rt. 12.5, 14.1, 14.2 and 15.3, with particular reference to helping one's dependents: R. A. Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* (London, 1954), 412–13, 420–1.

²² Fischer-Elfert, *GM* 127, 37, suggests that the sender is asking for a cone of ointment, such as women wore on their heads at banquets during the New Kingdom, but this seems less likely to me, since a specific quantity of ointment is mentioned.

²³ Černý and Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca*, pl. lxxii.1.

²⁴ Ruty is attested from Year 13 of Ramesses III to Year 2 of Ramesses VI (Gutgesell, *Datierung*, 268) and Khnummose from Year 15 of Ramesses III to Year 3 of Ramesses V (Gutgesell, *Datierung*, 246). Another Khnummose and another Ruty appear during the reign of Ramesses IX (Gutgesell, *Datierung*, 246, 248). The text opens: 'For information: everything which Khnummose gave to Ruty'. After a list of objects, the text continues in the first and third persons. Following Černý and Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca*, 21, I assume that the continuation of the text refers to favours which Khnummose did for Ruty, rather than Ruty's work for Khnummose to pay for the objects which Khnummose gave him.

‘And I plastered three places on the top of his house and likewise the staircase of his tomb and his wife spent 40 days dwelling with me in my house and I looked after her and gave her a sack of emmer and ten assorted loaves, and he threw her out again and she spent twenty days at Menna’s house and I gave her $\frac{3}{4}$ (of a sack of) barley, one *jnt*-garment and *ht* for a *stj*-garment.’

This incident might lend itself to a malicious interpretation — maybe Ruty threw her out because she and Khnummose were growing too close. On the other hand, however, if Khnummose were a relative of hers or an in-law, it would not be unusual that the woman would choose to stay with him if the situation at home were strained.

The scenario in P. DeM IV might be imagined as follows: the woman in the letter could be the wife of the addressee, who has run away from home because of her husband’s ill-treatment of her. The sender of this letter, probably a male relative of hers, is now looking after her. He intervenes on her behalf, arguing that the addressee should amend his behaviour, (‘Don’t do what you have usually done!’). He also maintains that her husband should contribute to her upkeep (‘Look after her!’). We might infer that if the husband does not fulfil his husbandly duty of providing for his wife, the force of any request that he might make for her to return to him would be substantially weakened.

The sender remarks that this woman has come to consult the goddess Nefertari because of, or in order to obtain, a dream; we might perhaps connect this to problems in the family. It is conceivable that Nefertari acted as an oracle for women in private matters, parallel to the better-known oracles of her son, the divinised Amenhotep I, but we have no evidence for this. We might place this consultation in the more conventional setting of pilgrimage and personal piety, wherein the worshipper resorts to a favourite deity or a patron of one particular area of concern, such as fertility, to enlist their help with some problem.

P. Deir el-Medina V

Translation

(rt. 1) As follows, I say to all the gods of heaven and earth every day, ‘Give you life and health.’ Furthermore (rt. 2), what’s the matter with you? Please write me your state of mind so that I may enter (rt. 3) into it. Indeed, since I was a child until today, when I am (rt. 4) with you, I can’t understand your character. (rt. 5) Will it be good^a for a man when he has to say something to his friend twice (rt. 6) and he doesn’t listen, like the *hin* of ointment (rt. 7) which I asked from you and you told me, ‘I will send it to you, (vs. 1) and you will not lack’?^b

Write to me how you are instead of^c (vs. 2) the ointment.

May Amun be before you!^d You will find benefit (vs. 3) in it.^e What you have continually done to me isn’t nice at all. Moreover^f — (vs. 4) soak a bit of bread. Send it [to me] quickly, at top speed. (vs. 5) May your health be good.

Notes

(a) Third future, *jw.s* < *r* > *nfr* < *n* > *rmt*, used as an inflexion question. Cf. Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques*, 18; Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 151.

(b) Alternatively, the verb *stjj* may be interpreted as 'to take care', in which case the actor expression refers to the addressee, and this remark is made in criticism of his conduct. Cf. Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques*, 18: 'mais (dont) tu ne t'es pas soucié!'; Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 151: 'but didn't even bother about ...'

(c) D. Meeks, *ALex* II, 78.3224.

(d) Literally, 'Amun is before you'. Cf. *LRL* 22.2; 69.14. I suggest this is a blessing, similar to the wish that Amun will guide (*ṣḥ h3.t n*) the addressee (*LRL* 64.9–10).

(e) I.e. the presence of Amun will benefit the addressee.

(f) Sometimes *kjj dd* introduces a remark which elaborates on preceding subject matter; see Borghouts, *Gleanings*, 54–5.

Discussion

The sender of this letter complains that he has asked the addressee twice for ointment, but despite the latter's promises, he has not sent him any. The sender stresses the importance of friendship. He presupposes that friends care for each other, help one another out and comply with each other's requests²⁵ — especially requests they have promised to fulfil.

Intimacy can prove surprisingly full of misunderstandings. Here, the sender complains that he cannot understand the addressee. More typically, senders of letters remark that the addressee fails to understand them,²⁶ as in *LRL* 68.8–9: 'You don't know my state of mind, that (it) is worried about you, that my desire is to cause you to recall memories of me every day'. In P. Leiden I 371, the sender complains that the addressee cannot tell good from evil. Since he makes this remark whilst reminding her how he has cared for her and treated her well all these years, he implies that she fails to appreciate his concern for her.

The sender may also stress that he has been with the addressee ('since I was a child'). *LRL* 68.6–7 also refers to the lifelong friendship of the correspondents: 'Look, it was when I was in the house that you were born'.

Borghouts conjectures that the sender of P. DeM V eventually suggests that his correspondent send a symbolic gift as a compromise to restore relations:²⁷ 'In comparison with the sizeable item A has first unsuccessfully asked of B, the morsel of bread he is now expecting and going to consume has every chance of possessing a mere symbolic

²⁵The ideal of reciprocity was a familiar one in the correspondents' cultural world (see J. J. Janssen, 'Gift-giving in Ancient Egypt as an Economic Feature', *JEA* 68 (1982), 253–8). Reciprocity is mentioned in several wisdom texts known to the inhabitants of Deir el-Medina: *The Instruction of Any B* 18.7–9: 'Befriend one who is straight and true. / One whose actions you have seen, / when your rightness matches his, / so the friendship will be balanced' (cf. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* II, 138; Quack, *Ani*, 99); *The Teaching of Ptahhotep* 490–2: 'Do not be vile-natured to your friends: they are a riverbank which is fertile, are greater than its riches!'; O. Petrie 11 vs. 6: 'Do not shun your neighbours in the days of their need, then they will surround you in [your moment]'; O. Petrie 11 vs. 7: 'Do not make your feast without your neighbours; then they will surround you with mourning on burial day' (Černý and Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca*, pl. i; Lichtheim, *Wisdom Literature*, 8). The theme of mutual aid and reciprocity is also discussed, for instance, by Lichtheim, *Wisdom Literature*, 31–4 (in a discussion of the Golden Rule) and J. Assmann, *Marat: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im Alten Ägypten* (Munich, 1995), 60–9, 111.

²⁶Cf. Assmann, *Marat*, 73–6, on the art of listening.

²⁷Cf. J. Beatty, 'Forgiveness', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 7 (1970), 246, for the importance of ritual gestures of appeasement, such as the exchange of small gifts or favours, when making up quarrels.

value'.²⁸ In addition, the addressee is asked to resume the correspondence: 'Write to me how you are instead of the ointment'.²⁹

By contrast, in the following letter, P. DeM IV, the correspondence itself is at stake. To some extent, 'the medium is the message' here, since correspondence is not only the channel by which the friendship is communicated, but the sign and proof thereof.

P. Deir el-Medina IV

Translation

(rt. 1) The scribe Nakhtsobk to the crew member Amennakhte, in life, prosperity and health, in the favour (rt. 2) of Amun-Re King of the gods, as follows: I say every day to Amun, Mut, Khons and [all] the gods of Thebes (rt. 3) and every [god] and goddess who [rest]s in the west of Thebes, 'Give you life, give you health, give [you] (rt. 4) long [life] and great old age when you are in the favour of Amunhotep the lord of the [village], (rt. 5) your lord who looks after you.'

Furthermore — Now what? What offence have I done against you?^a (rt. 6) Aren't I your old eating companion?^b Will (rt. 7) the hour come^c that^d you reject your [...]?^e What will I do?^f Please^g write to me (rt. 8) the offence [I] did [against you via] the policeman B[asa].^h Now if (rt. 9) it is only to meⁱ that you don't send anything whatsoever, really this is a (rt. 10) rotten [...] day. < I > won't ask anything from you.^j A man is happy^k (rt. 11) when he is with his old eating companion (rt. 12). Possessions are good new, but friends are better old.^l

When my letter (vs. 1) reaches you, write me how you are via the policeman Basa. Show (vs. 2) me the [...] today. Don't let < them > say to me, 'Don't enter yourⁿ (vs. 3) house and don't (even) make [...] road < to > the interior to the watchposts.^o Run away^p [...] of (vs. 4) the village and don't [...]'^q [...] to me. I will go < to > enter (vs. 5) the^r house and go out from [it]. I will^s enter my own place. May Amun be before you! Will he (vs. 6) live? (Then) I will live. When I die, may Amun still be before you.^t (vs. 7) May your health be good.

Notes

(a) These sentences may be divided either *jjj jh jrjj.j / jh btj < j > r.k*, or *jjj jh Ø / jrjj.j jh < m > btj r.k*. I follow the interpretation of Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques*, 16, and F. Neveu, *La Langue des Ramsès* (Paris, 1996), 215, in order to highlight the similarity with P. DeM XXII rt. 1.

(b) Cf. Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 150, and Fischer-Elfert, *GM* 127, 36. Contra Černý and Groll, *Late Egyptian Grammar*³, ex. 1524, this is an inflexion question.

(c) Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques*, 16, and Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 150, render 'Has the time come?', but since there is no past active *stp.f* form of verbs of motion in Late Egyptian, we would expect to see *tj wnw.t jj.tj*.

(d) Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques*, 16.

²⁸ Borghouts, in *Gleanings*, 55.

²⁹ Conceivably, *h3b n.j c.k hr s.t n p3 sgnn*, 'write to me how you are in exchange for the ointment', might belong to the quotation and be a request made by the addressee. On the other hand, since messages have already been exchanged by this point, presumably the addressee is already informed about the sender of this letter. I understand this remark as part of the sender's scaling down his request to make it easier for the addressee to make some sort of reciprocal gesture: instead of the ointment, he is prepared to settle for a token piece of bread and news of his correspondent.

(e) Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques*, 17, n. f, points out that 'you reject me' would be *j.jrj.k hꜛ* < *j* >. Since *hꜛ* is followed by a short gap and the suffix pronoun *.k*, we expect a very brief noun to fill the gap.

(f) Wenté, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 150.

(g) The particle *mj* is fairly rare in Late Ramesside letters, appearing here and in J. J. Janssen, *Late Ramesside Letters and Communications (Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum VI)* (London, 1991), V rt. 8, *LRL* 68.7 (twice), *LRL* 72.8 and P. DeM V rt. 2.

(h) Basa is also known from the reigns of Ramesses III's successors. See Černý, *Community*, 272. He appears in O. Gardiner 137 rt. 3 (Černý and Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca I*, pl. lvi.3), which Gutgesell attributes to Year 3 of Ramesses V (*Datierung*, 240-1). Given that Nakhtsobk is only attested under Ramesses IV, P. DeM IV is probably a few years earlier than those texts.

(i) Cf. L. Depuydt, 'On Distinctive and Isolating Emphasis in Egyptian and in General', *Ling Aeg* 1 (1991), 38-9; P. Vernus, 'Le rhème marqué: typologie des emplois et effets de sens en Moyen Égyptien (Temps Seconds, Cleft Sentences et constructions apparentées dans les stratégies de l'énonciateur)', *Ling Aeg* 1 (1991), 344-5, for the use of the second tenses in restrictive contexts. The exclusive nuance of the second tense is not picked up by Wenté, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 150, or Černý and Groll, *Late Egyptian Grammar*³, ex. 1618. One of the JEA's referees suggested that *n.j* is not sufficiently marked to be the stressed adverbs here, and that *nfr m-r pw bjn* would be a more suitable candidate. However, *nfr ... bjn* is a common merismus (e.g. *LRL* 3.11-12; P. Nevill vs. 3-4) meaning 'anything at all', and the two terms should probably not be contrasted. I suggest that Nakhtsobk is asserting that Amennakhte has chosen to ignore him whilst pointedly maintaining friendly relations with everyone else and exchanging gifts and information with them.

(j) Initial prospective *stp.f* negated by *bn ... jwnꜛ*. Sarah Groll once suggested to me that this negation was formed by analogy from the second tense *bn... jwnꜛ* and is a second tense transformation of the prospective, stressing that only, or precisely, in circumstances X, or referring to Y, will a given action not apply. For a second tense transformation of the third future, see *LRL* 74.2: *bn jw.j r gr n.k jwnꜛ hr t:jj md.t n nꜛ njw*, 'It is precisely about this matter of the spears that I will not desist from (reminding) you'. Here the writer returns to the topic of the spears after a discussion of other matters and stresses that, by contrast, this particular issue is precisely the one which the writer is eager to have settled. The article of J. Winand, 'La négation *bn... jwnꜛ* en néo-égyptien', *Ling Aeg* 5 (1997), 223-36, reached me too late to include.

Similarly, in O. CGC 25752 rt. 2-vs. 3 (J. Černý, *Ostraca hiératiques*, I (CG; Cairo, 1935), pl. 91), there is a definite contrast between the addressee and the person who has already been appointed to sing: *bn jw.j <r> dj.t jrj.k hs jwnꜛ <hr> Pꜛsn dj.w.f <r> pꜛ hsj n Mr.tsgr*, 'I will not let you do the singing *instead of* Pasen. He has been appointed as the singer of Meretseger'.

(k) I read *nfr rmt*, but Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques*, 16, may be right in assuming a missing *n*: *nfr Ø [n] rmt*.

(l) *nfr nkt ... n mꜛw.t nfr jrj n js*. I paraphrase, following Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques*, 17: 'pour les autres choses il est préférable qu'elles soient neuves, mais un compagnon, il vaut mieux que ce soit un vieil ami'. Similarly Wenté, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 150.

(m) Wenté, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 150, restores 'situation'.

(n) This remark is introduced by a negative causative imperative, so Nakhtsobk is not quoting a real or imaginary remark by Amennakhte in person. We may imagine a scenario where other villagers warn Nakhtsobk against entering Amennakhte's house. In this case, the second person pronouns are adapted to the current communicative context; see Peust, *Indirekte Rede*, 53-9.

(o) See R. Ventura, *Living in a City of the Dead* (OBO 69; Freiburg and Göttingen, 1986), 120-44. In other words, Nakhtsobk is not only being warned to refrain from entering Amennakhte's house, but he is ordered to keep away even from the watchposts which define the outer boundary of Deir el-Medina.

(p) McDowell, *Pharaoh's Workers*, 55, translates 'stay away from the village'.

(q) Wenté, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 151, renders '[turn a deaf ear(?)] to me'.

(r) Following Wenté, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 151, and McDowell, *Pharaoh's Workers*, 55.

Although one could restore '< my > house', I suspect that the text refers to Amennakhte's house, since Nakhtsobk probably did not live in Deir el'Medina (see n. 2 above).

(s) Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 151, suggests 'I must have access [to] ...'

(t) The text reads 'him'.

Discussion


In P. DeM IV, by contrast, the problem is not that Amennakhte has failed to send Nakhtsobk something the latter had requested, but that Amennakhte is giving Nakhtsobk the cold shoulder. Not only is he neglecting him, which is bad enough, but he is actively trying to drive him away, to the extent of trying to bar him not only from his (Amennakhte's) house, but from the entire village. This scenario is reminiscent of P. Salt 124 (P. BM EA 10055), in which Paneb debars his rival from entering his family chapel, makes him swear an oath not to enter it, and even intimidates those rash enough to approach the chapel by hurling missiles at them:³⁰

'Charge about his forcing me to swear < about > the upper part³¹ of the chapel of my mother and my father, saying, "I will not enter it", and he caused the crewman Pashed to come and he started to call out < in > the village, saying, "Don't let (any) member of the chief workman Nebnefer be seen going to sacrifice to Amun their god", so he said. Now when the people went to make sacrifice [on the]³² side [...] they were afraid of him and he began to throw stones at the servants of the village.'

The philosopher Berel Lang³³ points out that there is a qualitative difference between forgiving someone who seems merely to have been negligent (as in P. DeM VI and V) and forgiving someone who has acted in a deliberately malicious manner, such as Amennakhte forbidding Nakhtsobk to enter the village. This step seems a drastic enough action to put their friendship in jeopardy. In P. DeM V and VI, by contrast, it does not seem that the future of the friendship is at stake.

However, Nakhtsobk stresses that Amennakhte's threats do not impress him in the least. Nakhtsobk tries to restore good relations by referring to their past friendship: 'Aren't I your old eating companion?'³⁴ With remarks such as 'A man is happy when he is with his old eating companion', and '[Something] new is good. An old friend is good (too)',³⁵ Nakhtsobk may be quoting proverbs, invoking wider social support for the attitudes he expresses.

³⁰ P. Salt 124 vs. 1.13–17.

³¹ Written *hrjj* , an unusual writing for the preposition. From the determinative, the word might refer to an 'upper part' of the chapel.

³² Following A. Théodorides, 'Dénonciation de malversations ou requête en destitution? (Papyrus Salt 124 = Pap. Brit. Mus. 10055)', *RIDA* 28 (1981), 57.

³³ B. Lang, 'Forgiveness', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 31 (1994), 111–12. Cf. H. J. N. Horsbrugh, 'Forgiveness', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 4/2 (1974), 279.

³⁴ Beatty, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 7/3, 251, describes how offenders may represent the past they have shared with the offended party in a positive light, representing themselves as lovable and forgivable, in order to help the offended party forgive them. In other words, the offender invites the offended party to believe that the offender transcends his or her misdeeds.

³⁵ J. North, 'Wrongdoing and Forgiveness', *Philosophy* 62 (1987), 506, remarks that the injured party may overcome their resentment more easily if they choose to focus on their friend's attractive features rather than their defects. Similarly, C. Calhoun, 'Changing One's Heart', *Ethics* 103 (1992), 87, explains: 'Any story enabling us forgivingly to overcome resentment must portray the wrongdoer as the sort of individual who continues to be an appropriate object of reactive attitudes because she is capable of caring about our well-being'.

Nakhtsobk also seems prepared to admit that he may have done something to offend Amennakhte, since he frequently makes remarks such as, 'Now what have I done; what is my offence against you? Has the hour come that you reject me? ... Please write me my crime against you'. Although in other texts (for example, in P. DeM V above) the sender may pose such questions rhetorically, it seems that Nakhtsobk is quite sincere, since he is prepared to hear Amennakhte's views on the topic.³⁶ He asks the latter to reply via the policeman Basa — perhaps by return post since the same messenger is named when Nakhtsobk says, 'When my letter reaches you, you will write me how you are via the policeman Basa'.

As in P. DeM V, the sender suggests a conciliatory action which the *addressee* should perform in order to make up, rather than the sender offering to perform such an action himself. Note, however, that what is asked in both cases is remedial action, not an appropriate apology.³⁷ In Egyptian terms, this is entirely appropriate: the offense has ruptured the reciprocal exchange of gifts, information and favours which is the basis of Egyptian social life, and these token gestures bridge the gap and allow the exchange to resume. At every level in Egyptian society, giving and receiving mark social solidarity and mutual support.

P. Deir el-Medina XXII

This text is so fragmentary that little information may be gleaned from it, but a translation is included for the sake of completeness.

Translation

(rt. c) [I say to gods X, Y and Z,] 'Give you life and health^a [...] carrying [...] (rt. 1) Now what? As for the message [...] (rt. 2) quarrel. Now what? [...] (rt. 3) the message which I sent to you saying [...] (rt. 4) eating companion < to > say to him^b [...] (rt. 5) Won't^c I know that^d [...] (rt. a) [...] not^e [...] (rt. b) [...] so you said^f to me. You [...] quarrel < about? > the [...] friend [...]

³⁶ A better understanding of the offender's motives and the circumstances surrounding the injury may at times help the offended party forgive, or realise that their resentment is inappropriate — for instance, if the offender acted out of ignorance or under constraint. See R. S. Downie, 'Forgiveness', *Philosophical Quarterly* 15 (1965), 130; P. F. Strawson, *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays* (London, 1974), 7–9.

³⁷ In ancient Egypt, a verbal apology might have been problematic; it could have involved submission and a loss of face to a greater degree than the modern reader understands it. In current Western philosophy, however, it is generally felt that an apology is an essential element of asking for forgiveness. See Strawson, *Freedom and Resentment*, 6; M. P. Golding, 'Forgiveness and Regret', *The Philosophical Forum* 16 (1984–5), 134, and B. Lang, 'Forgiveness', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 31 (1990), 106. However, O'Shaughnessy, *Philosophy* 42, 350, cautions that 'apologising and genuinely asking forgiveness cannot always be safely equated', since one may go through the motions of apologising without the slightest trace of genuine contrition. North, *Philosophy* 62, 503, J. G. Haber, *Forgiveness* (Savage, MD, 1991), 90, 94, and N. Richards, 'Forgiveness', *Ethics* 99 (1988), 87–9, insist that the necessary precondition for forgiveness is that the offender repent. According to Strawson, *Freedom and Resentment*, 6, Haber, *Forgiveness*, 94, and Lang, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 31, 106, it is also essential that the offender promise not to treat the offended party in that way again. The extent to which an unrepentant offender can be forgiven is, of course, a moot point. M. R. Holmgren, 'Forgiveness and the Intrinsic Value of Persons', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 30 (1993), 341–5, gives an attractive description of the process of forgiveness from the victim's viewpoint. When the process has been worked through completely, the victim can, and even should, forgive even unrepentant wrongdoers. However, this process involves the victims reaffirming their self-worth despite the wrong done to them, recognising and opposing this wrong, accepting and working through their feelings of pain and anger, and if appropriate, telling the wrongdoer about them and obtaining suitable redress. This process is certainly not a 'soft option'.

(vs. 1) Now Papa^g is taking [...] (vs. 2) from me. He is the one who will belong^h to the [...] (vs. 3) [send]ⁱ me the bad words again [...] (vs. 4) which Amun gave. Now as for/if [...] (vs. 5) Look, Hori [...] (vs. 6) [May Amun be] before you [...] (vs. c) Now what? If I [...] this^j one *deben* [...] in not^k speaking [...] (vs. a) [...] the [one who] [...] (vs. b) [...] you/your [...] Now [...] to you for^l the man [...]

Notes

- (a) The blessing on the recto of fragment c precedes the body of the letter.
- (b) Or, 'who says to him'.
- (c) Rhetorical question particle. See Neveu, *La Langue des Ramsès*, 285–7.
- (d) Or 'Won't I be able to say?', reading {r}-*dd* as a faulty writing of *dd*.
- (e) Negative second tense.
- (f) Reading [j].*n.k*.
- (g) Perhaps a personal name. Cf. the foreign name *Pṣtṣr*, for which see T. Schneider, *Asiatische Personennamen in ägyptischen Quellen des Neuen Reiches* (OBO 114; Freiburg and Göttingen, 1992), 122, 253.
- (h) Relative third future whose predicate is the dative *n*. Neveu, *La Langue des Ramsès*, 97.
- (i) Verb of motion, from the determinative.
- (j) See J. Winand, review of J. Černý, *Papyrus hiératiques*, II, *CdE* 68 (1993), 85.
- (k) Ibid.
- (l) Ibid.

Discussion

This letter mentions a previous message by the sender of this letter, 'bad words' which were sent to him, and which the sender probably insists he is not prepared to accept again, 'arguments' and an 'eating companion'.

The suggestion of Fischer-Elfert that there is a connection between P. DeM XXII and P. DeM IV–VI³⁸ was probably due to the phrases they have in common. The fragment P. DeM XXII uses *jḥ*-questions,³⁹ as P. DeM IV and V do;⁴⁰ the term ... *ḥṣ.t.[k]*⁴¹ is probably part of the phrase *jmn r-ḥṣ.t.k*, also in P. DeM IV and V.⁴² Like P. DeM IV and VI,⁴³ P. DeM XXII includes the phrase *wnm ṣq.w*.⁴⁴ It shares specifically with P. DeM IV the phrase *jjṣ jḥ*.⁴⁵ The term *jrjj* appears in P. DeM XXII,⁴⁶ but since the papyrus is broken directly after it, it is not clear whether this is part of the phrase *jrjj n wnm ṣq.w*, shared by P. DeM IV and VI, or whether *jrjj* stands alone, as in P. DeM IV rt. 12 and P. DeM V rt. 5.

Discussion

In all these letters, the sender complains of coldness on his correspondent's part, epitomised by his failure to exchange favours and information, and his disregard for the norms of reciprocity. As the philosopher R. J. O'Shaughnessy points out, between people

³⁸ *GM* 127, 36.

³⁹ P. DeM XXII rt. 1, rt. 2, vs. c.

⁴⁰ P. DeM IV rt. 5; V rt. 2.

⁴¹ P. DeM XXII vs. 6.

⁴² P. DeM IV vs. 5; V vs. 2.

⁴³ P. DeM IV rt. 6; VI rt. 4.

⁴⁴ P. DeM XXII rt. 4.

⁴⁵ P. DeM IV rt. 5; XXII rt. 1, rt. 2.

⁴⁶ P. DeM XXII vs. b3.

who are close to one another, 'the mere withdrawal of love can constitute an injury'.⁴⁷ Whereas in P. DeM VI the sender is merely irritated by the addressee's lack of co-operation, in P. DeM V he seems definitely worried, and in P. DeM IV, something has gone seriously awry between the correspondents.

In P. DeM V and especially in P. DeM IV, what is desired is the resumption of the previous friendship.⁴⁸ The sender of the letter wants to be re-accepted.⁴⁹ On the other hand, his friend's conduct makes it impossible for the friendship to continue in its current state. To some extent, we could define these letters as letters of accusation, where the offended party expresses his resentment to the wrongdoer.⁵⁰ However, the resentment is expressed not merely to make the wrongdoer recognise his responsibility,⁵¹ but explicitly to clear the air between the friends, as a move towards reconciliation.

In what setting do the senders of these letters frame their attempts at reconciliation? All the discussions of forgiveness in these letters are completely secular. There is no mention of the gods, *maat*, or divine commandments to forgive. The basis of reconciliation is human solidarity, and old times' sake.⁵² On the basis of their past friendship, the victim may reappraise the offender as basically decent despite his offence, and initiate or accept token gestures which will restore the momentum of reciprocal exchange.

Appendix: Hieratic palaeography⁵³

Certain hieratic groups in these letters, such as *hr*⁵⁴ (Table 2), *n.j*⁵⁵ (Table 3), *h3b*⁵⁶ (Table 4), *ꜥq.w*⁵⁷ (Table 5), *dd*⁵⁸ (Table 6), *jmj*⁵⁹ (Table 7), *snb*⁶⁰ (Table 8), *n.k*⁶¹ (Table

⁴⁷ *Philosophy* 42, 343. Failure to help one's friends is felt to be much more blameworthy than failure to help a stranger: D. B. Annis, 'The Meaning, Value, and Duties of Friendship', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 24 (1987), 352; J. O. Grunebaum, 'Friendship, Morality, and Special Obligation', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 30 (1993), 51.

⁴⁸ Golding, *Philosophical Forum* 16, 134–5.

⁴⁹ P. Twambley, 'Mercy and Forgiveness', *Analysis* 36 (1976), 89, summarizing Aurel Kolnai, 'Forgiveness', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 74 (1973–4), 91–106.

⁵⁰ Beatty, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 7/3, 248, points out that by getting offended the victim can make the offender feel guilty, which to some extent is what the sender is trying to do here. By expressing his resentment, the sender tries to make the other party accept responsibility for his misconduct.

⁵¹ Beatty, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 7/3, 250, remarks that in some cases 'the offended reveals the offense to the offender in the hope that he will deny or affirm it'. Cf. Holmgren, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 30, 343–4, although in this case the explanation forms part of the victim's working through the process of forgiveness, and the wrongdoer's acknowledgement of his wrongdoing is secondary.

⁵² Cf. J. G. Murphy, 'Forgiveness and Resentment', in J. G. Murphy and J. Hampton (eds), *Forgiveness and Mercy* (Cambridge, 1988), 24, and Hampton, 'Forgiveness, Resentment and Hatred', in *ibid.* 84 n. 33. However, Haber, *Forgiveness*, 106, finds this reason inadequate, and Richards, *Ethics* 99, 95, is also dubious. He remarks that it is possible to forgive too much for old times' sake.

⁵³ The signs in these tables are not to scale. Groups which are too fragmentary to yield significant information have been omitted.

⁵⁴ P. DeM IV rt. 8, vs. 3; V rt. 4; VI rt. 4, vs. 1; XXII vs. 4.

⁵⁵ P. DeM IV rt. 9, vs. 2 (×2); V rt. 2, rt. 7, vs. 1; VI rt. 2; XXII rt. b1, vs. 3.

⁵⁶ P. DeM IV rt. 9, vs. 1; V rt. 2, vs. 1; VI rt. 3, rt. 7; XXII rt. 3.



⁵⁷ P. DeM IV rt. 6; V vs. 4; VI rt. 4; XXII rt. 4. The greater similarity is between V and VI, and IV and XXII.

⁵⁸ P. DeM IV rt. 2, rt. 5, vs. 2; V rt. 1, rt. 5, rt. 7, vs. 3; VI rt. 1, rt. 3, vs. 1, vs. 2; XXII rt. 4, rt. 5. P. DeM XXII is most similar to V rt. 1 or IV vs. 2. (The *nk*-group of *nk.t* is included here, since it is not significantly different from the dative *n.k*.)

⁵⁹ P. DeM IV rt. 3 (×3); V rt. 1; VI rt. 2, rt. 3; XXII rt. c1.




⁶⁰ P. DeM IV rt. 3; V rt. 1; VI rt. 2; XXII rt. c1. *snb* is fairly similar in all four cases, but identical in none.

⁶¹ P. DeM IV rt. 3 (×2), rt. 10, rt. 12; V rt. 1, rt. 5, rt. 7, vs. 4; VI rt. 2, rt. 3, rt. 6, rt. 7 (×2), vs. 2; XXII rt. 3, rt. c1, vs. b2.

9), and *nh*⁶² (Table 10), are similar in all four texts. This includes groups which can be written in more than one way, such as *dd*, *n.k* and *n.j*, where similar variants appear in all four texts. In the group *dd*, the cobra-sign may either come to an end level with the base of the hand-sign, or it may have a very long tail; the hand-sign may have a flat base , or it may loop behind underneath itself.⁶³ In the group *n.k*, the tail of the *k*-sign may have either a short sharp slope or a longer, more gradual incline. *n.j* may be written either as a ligature or as two separate signs. In this group, the tail of the -sign in P. DeM XXII curves up quite sharply, as it does to some extent in P. DeM IV.

Most of the above groups are fairly simple, so their likeness is not necessarily significant. The same is true of certain simple words which appear in only two or three texts, such as *ʿ*⁶⁴ (P. DeM IV and V; Table 11), *bn*⁶⁵ (P. DeM IV, V and XXII; Table 12), *jny*⁶⁶ (P. DeM V and VI; Table 13), and *dj.t*⁶⁷ (P. DeM V and VI; Table 14).

Other groups are written differently in each text, such as the preposition *hr*⁶⁸ (in all four texts; Table 15), *rm*⁶⁹ (in all four texts; Table 16), *tm*⁷⁰ (in all four texts; Table 17), *ptr*⁷¹ (P. DeM IV, V and XXII; Table 18), *jj*⁷² (P. DeM IV, VI and XXII; Table 19) and *nfr* (P. DeM IV, V and VI; Table 20). In P. DeM IV rt. 9, 11, 12 and vs. 7 the base of the *nfr*-sign curves upwards; in P. DeM VI it has a flat base (vs. 2), as it does in P. DeM V (vs. 3, vs. 5). However, P. DeM V also includes the only *nfr*-sign with a round base (rt. 5). In the group in P. DeM VI (vs. 2) the head of the *f*-sign begins directly above the vertical stroke of the *nfr*; in the other papyri the *f* begins behind and above the crossbar.

Certain groups appear to contrast one pair of papyri with another. Such is the prothetic *j* (Table 21), which shows two distinct patterns of use: P. DeM IV and V use the short hieratic form of the -sign⁷³ , P. DeM VI and P. DeM XXII the full one .⁷⁴

However, this pattern does not remain constant. Apart from the words listed above, P. DeM IV and V have little else in common. Indeed, certain words in both texts are written entirely differently, such as *jwn*⁷⁵ (Table 22) and *nb* (Table 23). The *nb*-sign of P. DeM

⁶² P. DeM IV [rt. 3], vs. 6 (×2); V rt. 1; VI rt. 2; XXII rt. c1. The *nh*-sign in P. DeM XXII, however, is more like those in P. DeM V and VI.

⁶³ Both variants appear in P. DeM IV, V and VI. The groups in P. DeM XXII have a long-tailed cobra and a flat hand.

⁶⁴ P. DeM IV vs. 1; V vs. 1.

⁶⁵ P. DeM IV rt. 6, rt. 10; V vs. 3; XXII rt. a.

⁶⁶ P. DeM V rt. 7; VI rt. 4.

⁶⁷ P. DeM V rt. 7; VI rt. 7, rt. 8. In P. DeM VI vs. 1, however, the *t*-sign has a long tail which curves back underneath it.

⁶⁸ P. DeM IV rt. 2; V rt. 1; VI rt. 1, rt. 6, rt. 7 (×2); XXII vs. 1.

⁶⁹ P. DeM IV rt. 1, rt. 11; V rt. 5; VI rt. 8; XXII vs. b2. However, the plural signs of P. DeM IV rt. 11 and VI rt. 8 resemble each other.


⁷⁰ P. DeM IV rt. 9; V rt. 6, vs. 1; VI rt. 5, vs. 3; XXII vs. c3. The *tm*-signs themselves in P. DeM V and VI are similar, but the second half of the word is different.

⁷¹ P. DeM IV rt. 5; VI rt. 7, vs. 1, vs. 3; XXII vs. 5.

⁷² Unlike P. DeM IV rt. 5, rt. 9 and V rt. 3, the *j*-sign in the word *jj* in P. DeM XXII rt. 1, rt. 2, vs. 1, vs. c1 is written with a long tail curving back below the sign. In P. DeM V the sign has a flat base, in P. DeM IV the base curves under very slightly. The top of the *j*-sign curves backwards dramatically in P. DeM XXII.

⁷³ P. DeM IV rt. 7, rt. 9; V rt. 4, vs. 3.

⁷⁴ P. DeM VI vs. 2, vs. 4; XXII rt. 3.

⁷⁵ P. DeM IV rt. 10, V vs. 3. Amongst other differences, P. DeM V is written with the full hieratic form for , whereas P. DeM IV is written with the short form.

V rt. 1 has a number of short vertical strokes sprouting from the upper edge of the sign; by contrast, the *nb*-signs of P. DeM IV consist of a semi-circle with a slanting lid.⁷⁶ The group *rc nb* (Table 24), which appears in P. DeM IV, V and VI, is similar in P. DeM V and VI,⁷⁷ but different in P. DeM IV. In P. DeM IV rt. 5 the *nb*-sign has no horizontal stripe, but a long tail instead, and the *rc*-sign is formed differently from P. DeM V and VI. The word *mj*,⁷⁸ which appears in both texts, is also dissimilar, although this dissimilarity stems mostly from the fuller spelling with two $\beta\beta$ used in P. DeM V (Table 25).

As we have already seen, the *pr*-sign is somewhat similar in P. DeM IV and VI; the same is true of the *jrj*-sign⁷⁹ (Table 26). By contrast, the *jrj*-signs in P. DeM V have long tails curling upwards from the right-hand corner of the eye.⁸⁰ Little remains of the *jrj*-sign in P. DeM XXII rt. 3, but it apparently had a long flat base.

The word *spr*⁸¹ (Table 27), and the conjunctive preformative *mtw.k*⁸² (Table 28), which appear in P. DeM IV and VI, are also somewhat similar. However, as we have seen above, the two hands also differ significantly.

P. DeM V and VI share a similar writing of the word *cm*,⁸³ (Table 29). However, the eye-determinative is open much wider in P. DeM V than in P. DeM VI. They also share other small similarities, such as the initial sign in the word *tm* and the first group of signs in the word *rmt*.

P. DeM XXII has certain similarities to P. DeM IV in the words *jh*⁸⁴ (Table 30), *bjn*⁸⁵ (Table 31), and to some extent *wnm*⁸⁶ (Table 32). It seems to have no points of contact with P. DeM VI and very few with P. DeM V. The determinative of the word *jrww* is similar⁸⁷ (Table 33), and the *mn*-group in the name of the god Amun in P. DeM XXII also resembles the group in P. DeM V more than any of the examples in P. DeM IV⁸⁸ (Table 34). However, *jh*, *jj* and *wnm* differ between P. DeM V and XXII. Similarly, P. DeM XXII differs from P. DeM IV to some extent in the writing of *jrww* and *fmn*.

Thus, there seems to be no consistent pattern of similarity which would lead us to identify any two of these texts as written by the same hand. The importance of these results, I suggest, lies in their opening up wider questions about hieratic palaeography: Which factors are significant? How great a degree of variation is to be expected within one person's handwriting?

⁷⁶ P. DeM IV rt. 3 ($\times 2$), rt. 4, rt. 5.

⁷⁷ P. DeM IV rt. 5; V rt. 1; VI rt. 3.

⁷⁸ P. DeM IV rt. 7; V rt. 2.

⁷⁹ P. DeM IV rt. 5, rt. 7, vs. 2, vs. 3 ($\times 2$), vs. 5; VI rt. 5 ($\times 2$), rt. 8, vs. 3, vs. 4 ($\times 3$).

⁸⁰ P. DeM V rt. 4, vs. 3. This element also appears, in a more attenuated version, in P. DeM IV rt. 9 and P. DeM VI vs. 3.

⁸¹ P. DeM IV vs. 1; VI vs. 7.

⁸² P. DeM IV vs. 4; VI rt. 5, [rt. 6], vs. 3.

⁸³ P. DeM V rt. 4; VI vs. 1.

⁸⁴ P. DeM IV rt. 5 ($\times 2$), rt. 7. P. DeM XXII vs. c1 writes the book-roll-determinative with a dot above it, as does P. DeM IV, whereas P. DeM V rt. 2 does not.

⁸⁵ P. DeM IV rt. 9; XXII vs. 3. In both instances, the toe of the foot curves back under the sole, and the bottom half of the bird-determinative is similar. The word is incomplete in both cases.

⁸⁶ P. DeM IV rt. 6, rt. 11; VI rt. 4; XXII rt. 4. The long tail of the *wnm*-sign appears in both P. DeM IV and P. DeM XXII but the central signs of both words are different.

⁸⁷ P. DeM IV rt. 6, rt. 11, rt. 12; V rt. 5; XXII rt. b3.

⁸⁸ P. DeM IV rt. 2, rt. 4, vs. 5, vs. 6; V vs. 2; XXII vs. 4.

TABLE 1-3






















































	P. DeM IV		P. DeM V		P. DeM VI		P. DeM XXII
1. <i>pʒ</i>	 rt. 4		 rt. 2		 rt. 1		 rt. 1
	 rt. 4		 rt. 2		 rt. 1		 rt. 1
	 rt. 5		 rt. 3		 rt. 3		 rt. b2
	 rt. 6		 rt. 4		 rt. 6		 vs. 1
	 rt. 11		 rt. 4		 rt. 7		 vs. 2
	 vs. 1		 rt. 5		 rt. 8		 vs. 2
	 vs. 2		 vs. 2		 rt. 8		 vs. 2
	 vs. 2		 vs. 2		 vs. 3		 vs. 2
	 vs. 2		 vs. 3				 vs. 2
	 vs. 4						 vs. b2
							 vs. b3
2. <i>hr</i>	 rt. 8		 rt. 4		 rt. 4		 vs. 4
	 vs. 3				 vs. 1		
3. <i>n.j</i>	 rt. 9		 rt. 2		 rt. 2		 rt. b1
	 vs. 2		 rt. 7				 vs. 3
	 vs. 2		 vs. 1				

TABLE 4-8


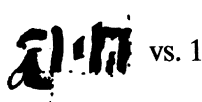







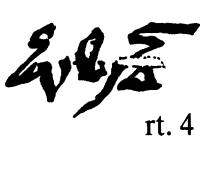

























	P. DeM IV	P. DeM V	P. DeM VI	P. DeM XXII
4. <i>h3b</i>	 rt. 9  vs. 1	 rt. 2  vs. 1	 rt. 3  rt. 7	 rt. 3
5. <i>cq.w</i>	 rt. 6	 vs. 4	 rt. 4	 rt. 4
6. <i>dd</i>	 rt. 2  rt. 5  vs. 2	 rt. 1  rt. 5  rt. 7  vs. 3	 rt. 1  rt. 3  vs. 1  vs. 2	 rt. 4  rt. 5
7. <i>jmj</i>	 rt. 3  rt. 3  rt. 3	 rt. 1	 rt. 2  rt. 3	 rt. c1
8. <i>snb</i>	 rt. 3	 rt. 1	 rt. 2	 rt. c1

TABLE 9-14




































	P. DeM IV	P. DeM V	P. DeM VI	P. DeM XXII
9. <i>n.k</i>	 rt. 3  rt. 3  rt. 10  rt. 12	 rt. 1  rt. 5  rt. 7  vs. 4	 rt. 2  rt. 3  rt. 6  rt. 7  rt. 7  vs. 2	 rt. 3  rt. c1  vs. b2
10. <i>nh</i>	 rt. 3  vs. 6  vs. 6	 rt. 1	 rt. 2	 rt. c1
11. <i>c</i>	 vs. 1	 vs. 1		
12. <i>bn</i>	 rt. 6  rt. 10	 vs. 3		 rt. a
13. <i>jnj</i>		 rt. 7	 rt. 4	
14. <i>dj.t</i>		 rt. 7	 rt. 7  rt. 8  vs. 1	

TABLE 15-19















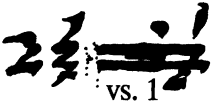
















	P. DeM IV		P. DeM V		P. DeM VI		P. DeM XXII
15. <i>hr</i>	 rt. 2		 rt. 1		 rt. 1  rt. 6  rt. 7  rt. 7		 vs. 1
16. <i>rmt</i>	 rt. 1  rt. 11		 rt. 5		 rt. 8		 vs. b2
17. <i>tm</i>	 rt. 9		 rt. 6  vs. 1		 rt. 5  vs. 3		 vs. c3
18. <i>ptr</i>	 rt. 5				 rt. 7  vs. 1  vs. 3		 vs. 5
19. <i>jj</i>	 rt. 5  rt. 9		 rt. 3				 rt. 1  rt. 2   vs. 1  vs. c1

TABLE 20–25
















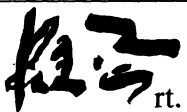











	P. DeM IV	P. DeM V	P. DeM VI	P. DeM XXII
20. <i>nfr</i>	 rt. 9  rt. 11  rt. 12  vs. 7	 rt. 5  vs. 3  vs. 5	 vs. 2	
21. <i>j-</i>	 rt. 7  rt. 9	 rt. 4  vs. 3	 vs. 2  vs. 4	 rt. 3
22. <i>jwn</i>	 rt. 10	 vs. 3		
23. <i>nb</i>	 rt. 3  rt. 3  rt. 4  rt. 5	 rt. 1		
24. <i>rc nb</i>	 rt. 5	 rt. 1	 rt. 3	
25. <i>mj</i>	 rt. 7	 rt. 2		

TABLE 26-30

























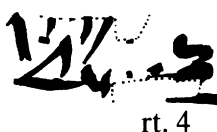
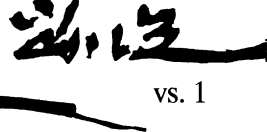























	P. DeM IV	P. DeM V	P. DeM VI	P. DeM XXII
26. <i>jrj</i>	 rt. 5  rt. 7  rt. 9  vs. 2  vs. 3  vs. 3  vs. 5	 rt. 4  vs. 3	 rt. 5  rt. 5  rt. 8  vs. 3  vs. 3  vs. 4  vs. 4  vs. 4	 rt. 3
27. <i>spr</i>	 vs. 1		 rt. 7	
28. <i>mtw.k</i>	 vs. 4		 rt. 5  rt. 6  vs. 3	
29. <i>cmz</i>		 rt. 4	 vs. 1	
30. <i>jh</i>	 rt. 5  rt. 5  rt. 7	 rt. 2		 rt. 2  vs. c1

TABLE 31–34

	P. DeM IV	P. DeM V	P. DeM VI	P. DeM XXII
31. <i>bjn</i>	 rt. 9			 vs. 3
32. <i>wnm</i>	 rt. 6  rt. 11		 rt. 4	 rt. 4
33. <i>jrw</i>	 rt. 6  rt. 11  rt. 12	 rt. 5		 rt. b3
34. <i>jmn</i>	 rt. 2  rt. 4  vs. 5  vs. 6	 vs. 2		 vs. 4