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A family affair in the community of Deir el-Medina: gossip girls in two 19th dynasty letters*

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Abstract

In this paper, we publish two letters found by E. Schiaparelli in Deir el-Medina (1908). These can be dated to the mid-19th dynasty (c. year 45–50 of Ramesses II) based on palaeographical and prosopographical clues. They add to the body of evidence for epistolary communications between women in the community of workers. In complex interactions (involving numerous quotes based on hearsay), the daughters and other female relatives of *T3-ḥꜣ.t* (ii) complain about the evil behavior of their mother and each other. The scribal hand is the same for both letters, though the letters were sent by different individuals, and it reveals the writing habits of a scribe who was active during the first part of the reign of Ramesses II. As such, autographs can be excluded.

I. Introduction

The two letters published in this paper contain thematically connected communications between the mostly female members of the family of *T3-ḥꜣ.t* (ii).¹ In Letter

* This paper was written within the framework of the ‘Crossing Boundaries’ project (<http://crossing-boundaries.uliege.be/>); see Polis et al. 2020. The Introduction, sections 3.2, 4.2, and the Conclusion were written by the three authors; sections 2 and 6 are by Kathrin Gabler; sections 3.1 and 4.1 are by Rob Demarée and Stéphane Polis; sections 3.3, 4.3 and 5 are by Stéphane Polis. The images are scans by the Museo Egizio (Turin) and the hieroglyphic plates were prepared by Klaudija Stanic (Basel). We are very grateful to Matthias Müller (Basel), Renaud Pietri (Liège), Philipp Seyr (Munich/Liège), and Jean Winand (Liège) for insightful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this paper; to Susanne Töpfer (Turin) for facilitating all aspects of our work on these papyri (the hieroglyphic transcriptions have been checked against the original documents in September 2021); and to Daniel Waller (Oxford) for improving the English of this article. The Turin Papyrus Online Platform (<https://collezionepapiri.museoegizio.it>) provides access to digital pictures and a complete set of metadata about the papyri discussed in this paper, cf. document <https://papyri2020.museoegizio.it/d/524> [8 June 2020].

1 Unless stated otherwise, the identification of individuals follows Davies’ 1990 numbering system. For general studies about women in Deir el-Medina, see Toivari-Viitala 2001, Sweeney 2006a, 2016, and Donker van Heel 2018. On women’s correspondence specifically, see Swee-

1, the daughter of *T3-ḥr.t* (ii), named *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i), expresses – in vivid fashion² – her sadness and discontent due to gossips spoken behind her back.³ She complains about the evil behavior of her mother, sisters, and further female relatives, and she discusses the misappropriation of commodities within the family. Letter 2 is more lacunary than Letter 1 but it is evidently connected with the same family-internal issues. Interestingly, while both letters have different senders and addressees, they were written by the same scribe,⁴ probably a professional, who was somehow connected to the family and who penned the missives for these women.

In this paper, we adopt the contextualizing approach of the ‘Crossing Boundaries’ project and dive into the social milieu of Deir el-Medina during the first part of the 19th dynasty. Our goal is threefold: (1) to discuss the material features, form, and contents of the letters, (2) to analyze the grammatical, orthographical, and palaeographical habits of the untidy scribe who wrote them, and (3) to elucidate the prosopographical issues at stake so as to situate the communications within these two letters both temporally and geographically.

The paper is structured as follows. After a discussion of the provenance of both letters in section 2, we provide a hieroglyphic transcription of the reconstructed documents and describe their material features, especially the folding patterns. In sections 3 and 4, we propose an annotated transliteration and translation of Letter 1 and Letter 2. Section 5 is devoted to a discussion of the main characteristics of the hieratic handwriting (from its layout and general organization down to individual signs), while prosopographical information is scrutinized in section 6. Based on the evidence discussed in sections 5 and 6, we suggest a date for these letters in the Conclusion and discard the possibility that they were autographs.

2. Provenance

The Ramesside documents from Deir el-Medina in the Turin papyrus collection⁵ may be divided into at least two lots. The first of these, the so-called ‘Drovetti lot’,

ney 1993, who observes that the subject matter of these letters “falls into four broad groups: transactions, confrontations, family matters and errands”.

2 On the interplay between gender and language in the Ramesside letters and the difficulty of identifying genderlects, see Sweeney 1998a and 2006b.

3 In Deir el-Medina, gossiping was apparently believed to potentially have terrible consequences. *Jj-nfr.t* (iii), the wife of *Sn-ndm*, claims on Bankes stela no. 6 that she lost her eyesight *ḥr n3-n md.wt ḥm.wt* ‘because of those women’s talks/business’ (see Černý 1958, no. 6).

4 See section 6 and Polis, this volume (esp. section 6) for a discussion of this family of hands.

5 Töpfer 2018. For a broader contextualization of the Deir el-Medina material in the Museo Egizio in Turin and a discussion of the provenance of objects belonging to the Drovetti collection and coming from Schiaparelli’s excavations, see Del Vesco and Poole 2018.

was bought by the agents of Bernardino Drovetti somewhere in Western Thebes at the beginning of the 19th century.⁶ New fragments of the *Stato Civile* (SC) – previously only known from the Turin papyri – have been identified at the French Institute for Oriental Archaeology (IFAO) in Cairo and suggest that (at least) some of these papyri come directly from the village.⁷ The documents of the Drovetti lot date largely to the mid to late 20th dynasty, and comprise the majority of the Ramesside papyri in Turin.⁸

The second, much smaller, lot of papyri was discovered during the Italian excavations directed by Ernesto Schiaparelli in the region of the Valley of the Queens (e.g., Turin Prov. 358I, 18th dynasty) and in Deir el-Medina during the 1908/09 season.⁹ These documents appear to date to earlier periods (first part of the 19th dynasty), like the newly edited letters discussed in this article.

A short note left by Giuseppe Botti in the folder (previously labelled CP080/SN3) where the main fragments of both letters (CP080/050 and CP080/043) were found reads as follows: “3 fragments put together in July 1948 from a small box (labelled) Schiaparelli’s excavations at Deir el-Medina (1908). Letters” (fig. 1).¹⁰ As the two letters were written by the same scribe (see section 5), we assume that they may have been stored together in antiquity.

During the 1908/09 season, the Italian mission spent most of its time working in the village proper. They discovered fragments of papyri in a few rooms of the houses that they excavated. The team also explored several tombs in the Western necropolis, in which at least one papyrus was found (S. 10125, the *Ritual of Amenophis I*).¹¹ Both of these sites could be the find-spot of the CP080 letters, as documented archaeological contexts for letters (both from Deir el-Medina and other places and

6 <http://web.philo.ulg.ac.be/x-bound/background/> [8 June 2020].

7 Demarée, Dorn and Polis 2020.

8 A preliminary estimate regarding the date of the administrative ostraca (100) and papyri (80) from Turin shows that most of the material belongs to the 20th dynasty, especially the reigns of Ramesses III–VI and Ramesses IX. The ‘peak’ of preserved papyri at the end of the 20th dynasty is mostly due to the evidence preserved in the Turin collection, because the number of preserved papyri coming from Deir el-Medina is otherwise stable during the Ramesside period. These numbers are based on searches in the Deir el-Medina Database (DMD)-Leiden and have been compared with (and adjusted in light of) the numbers provided by Haring 2018.

9 <http://web.philo.ulg.ac.be/x-bound/background/> [8 June 2020]; Gabler and Soliman 2018, 14–18.

10 Giuseppe Botti taught Egyptology at the University of Florence from 1942 to 1956. In 1948, he would have been back at work on the Turin collection. The *Giornale*, co-authored with Thomas E. Peet, was published in 1928, see Bierbrier 2012, 73–74.

11 We are grateful to Paolo del Vesco for detailed information about Schiaparelli’s work. According to a report letter from 12th of May 1909, Schiaparelli informed the Italian ministry about the fragments of papyri found in houses as well as the discovery of the *Ritual of Amenophis*.

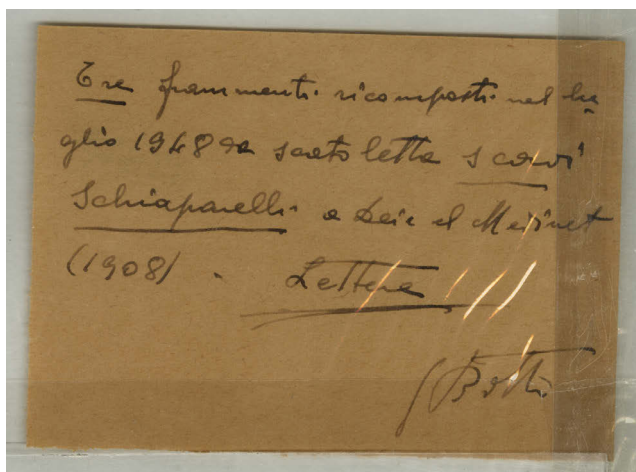


Fig. 1: Giuseppe Botti's note to CPo80/SN3 (© Museo Egizio, Turin. Scan: Museo Egizio)

periods in Egypt) include tombs and houses, as well as the environs of villages, such as the *Grand Puits*.¹²

In 1908/09, Schiaparelli's team definitely investigated the following houses: N.O. (*Nord-Ouest*) I to III, N.O. V, the first rooms of N.O. VI to VIII, N.O. IX to XI, and N.O. XX. 26 years later, Bruyère mentions that the Italian team must also have explored N.O. IV, VIII, XII to XIV, and N.E. (*Nord-Est*) I to VI.¹³ According to Bruyère, N.O. II was most likely the house in which the Italians found various ostraca and papyri.¹⁴ The N.O. sector is the most disturbed archaeological area of the village, which makes it difficult to assign objects to find-spots (for which information is largely missing for the Italian mission) and houses to individuals. By contrast, in the southern and central sectors excavated by the French team, 50 to 90% of the houses can be assigned to their former inhabitants, while only 25% may be assigned in the sector N.O.¹⁵ As such, if the two Turin letters were discovered in one of the N.O. or N.E. dwellings excavated in 1908/09, the identification of this structure is not possible on the basis of the available documentation and preservation of the site.¹⁶

12 Gabler and Soliman 2018, 14, 22; Gabler, in preparation.

13 Del Vesco and Poole 2018, 97–130, especially 122–128.

14 Del Vesco and Poole 2018, 123–124; Bruyère 1939, 280. Details kindly provided by Paolo del Vesco.

15 Bruyère 1939, 30–32, 292, 294–295; Gabler and Salmas, forthcoming; Gabler, in preparation.

16 Potential evidence that might allow the assignment of a house to a member of the *Si-Mwt*-family is discussed in section 6 below.

At the same time, we know of letters that were (sometimes intentionally, sometimes incidentally) left in tombs.¹⁷ During the 1908/09 season, the Italian mission worked in the following tombs: TT 1 to 10, 210 to 212, 215 to 217, 1241, 1259, 1069, 1071, and 1089 (325?).¹⁸ None of these tombs belongs to the individuals appearing in the letters published here (see the prosopographical discussion in section 6), but some of them are located in the vicinity of the burial places of their relatives: TT 1 to 10 are close to TT 330 (the tomb of *Knr* (i)); TT 217 (belonging to the sculptor *Jpwj* (i) who was the brother of *Hnsw* (i)) is next to TT 219 of *Nb-n-Mꜣꜣ.t* (ii). It is therefore theoretically possible that the letters were discovered in one of these tombs or its surroundings.

To sum up, both find-spots – house/village and tomb/necropolis – are possible. However, a few clues would suggest that the northern part of the village is more likely: (a) the family of *T-ḥꜣ.t* may have lived there, and (b) a fair number of texts by this family of hands come from zones north of the settlement.¹⁹ As such, we consider a provenance from the northern area of the village more likely.

3. Letter 1 (P. Turin CP080/050+045+046+CP158/008)

3.1. Joining fragments and hieroglyphic transcription

Letter 1 is made up of four joining fragments (fig. 2–3). In the same folder as the main fragment (CP080/050), two smaller fragments (CP080/045 and 046) were found that form the beginning of r° 2–3 (= end of v° 2–3). Browsing through the thousands of fragments in other folders revealed CP158/008, which preserves the beginning of r° 5–9 (= end of v° 5–9).

3.2. Material description

Letter 1 is inscribed with black ink on a rather poorly erased piece of palimpsest papyrus (with some previous hieratic signs still clearly visible, like the plural strokes between the beginning of r° 5–6, the $\overline{\square}$ between the beginning of v° 2–3, and the

17 Gabler and Soliman 2018, 14–15.

18 Of the 566 letters in the DMD Leiden (<https://dmd.wepwawet.nl> [8 June 2020]), the provenance of 188 cannot be determined. A good number originate from the *Grand Puits* (73); from the Valley of the Kings (22); from the area of the German House (DAI Cairo, 31); the P. DeM series (25 found close to P 1165); from the *Kom* sud (18); the excavations of E. Schiaparelli in 1905 and 1909 (27); the excavations of G. Möller in the village (sector N.E., 14); from clearing the temple by E. Baraize (6). Details will be discussed by Kathrin Gabler in a separate contribution.

19 See section 5 and Polis, this volume.

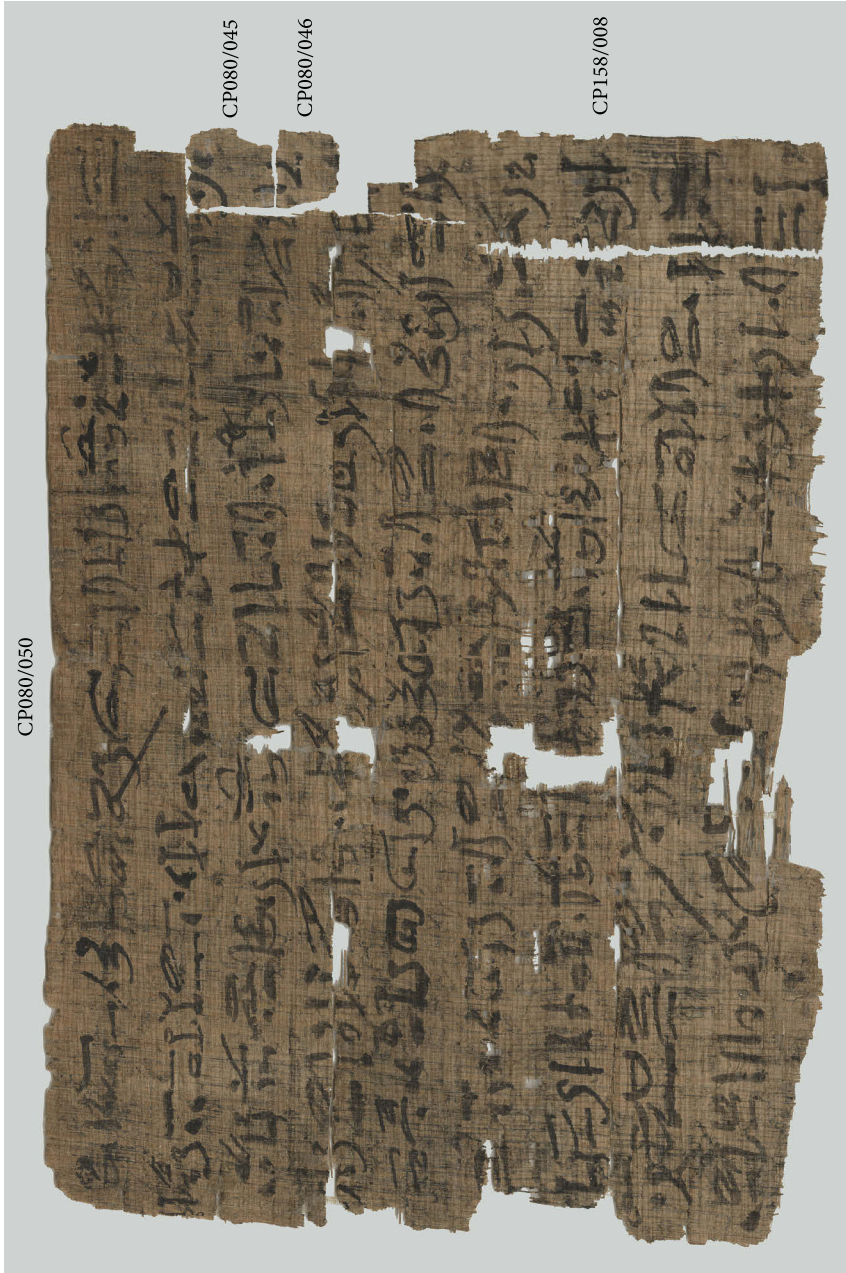


Fig. 2a: Letter I r', P. Turin CP080/050+045+046+CP158/008 (© Museo Egizio, Turin; scan: Museo Egizio)

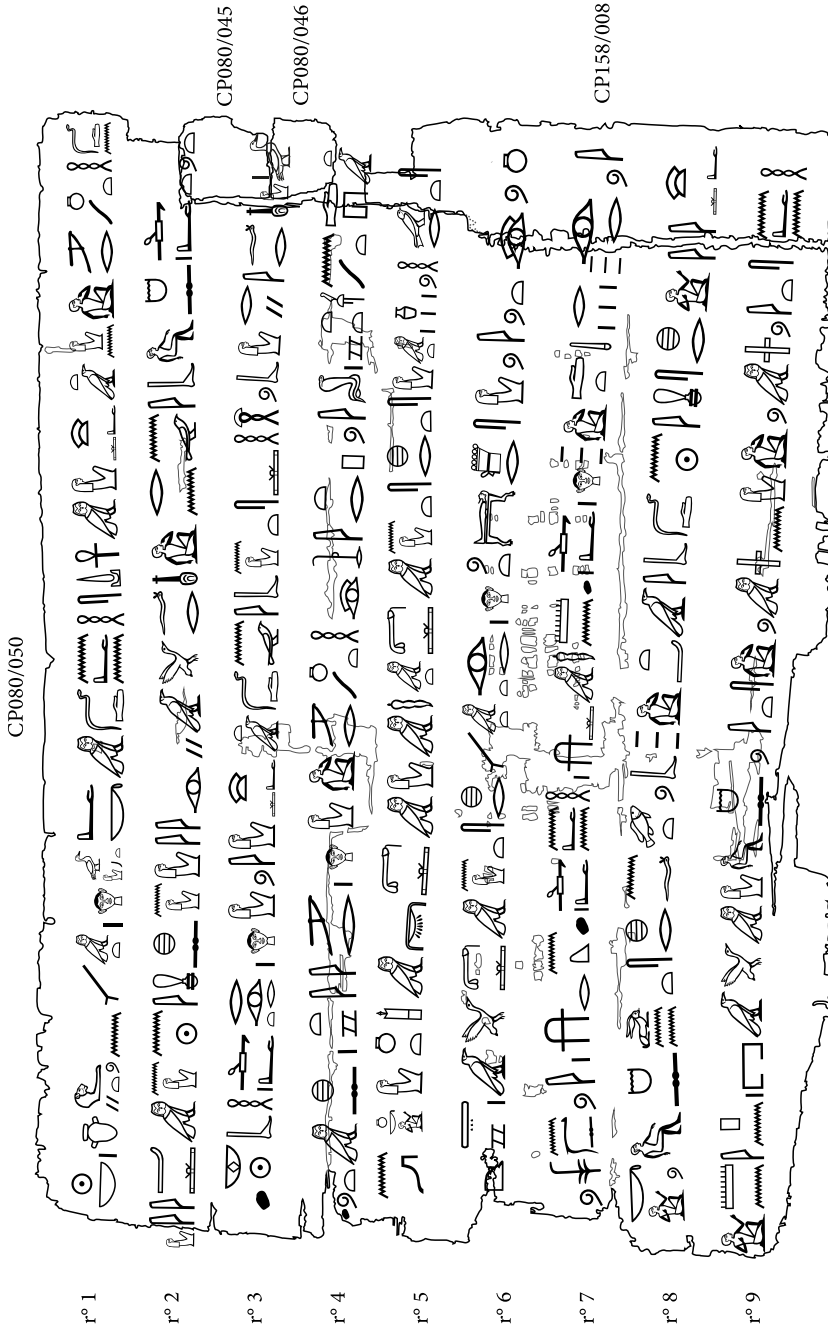


Fig. 2b. Letter I r°, P. Turin CP080/050+045+046+CP158/008 (hieroglyphic transcription © Stéphane Polis & Klaudija Stanic)

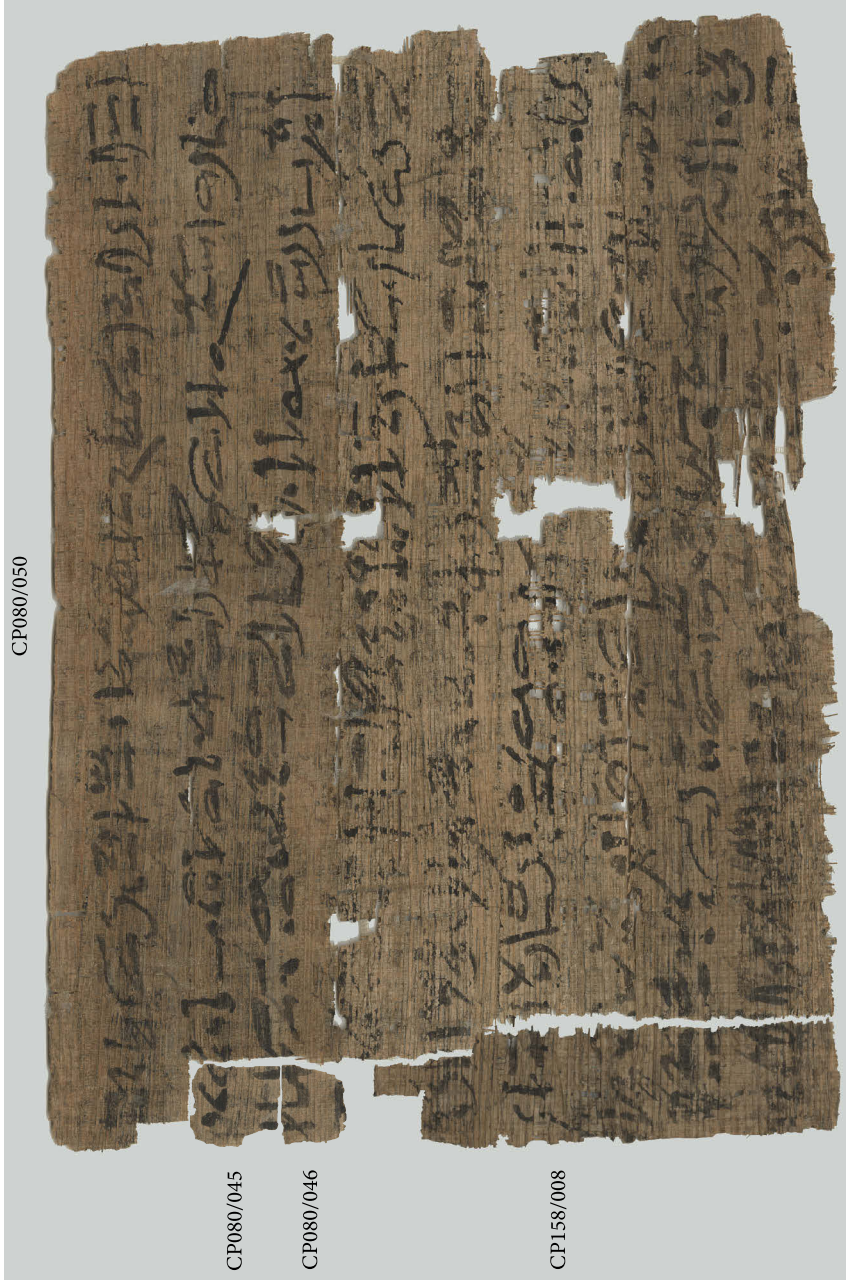


Fig. 3a: Letter 1 v°, P. Turin CP080/050+045+046+CP158/008 (© Museo Egizio, Turin; scan: Museo Egizio)

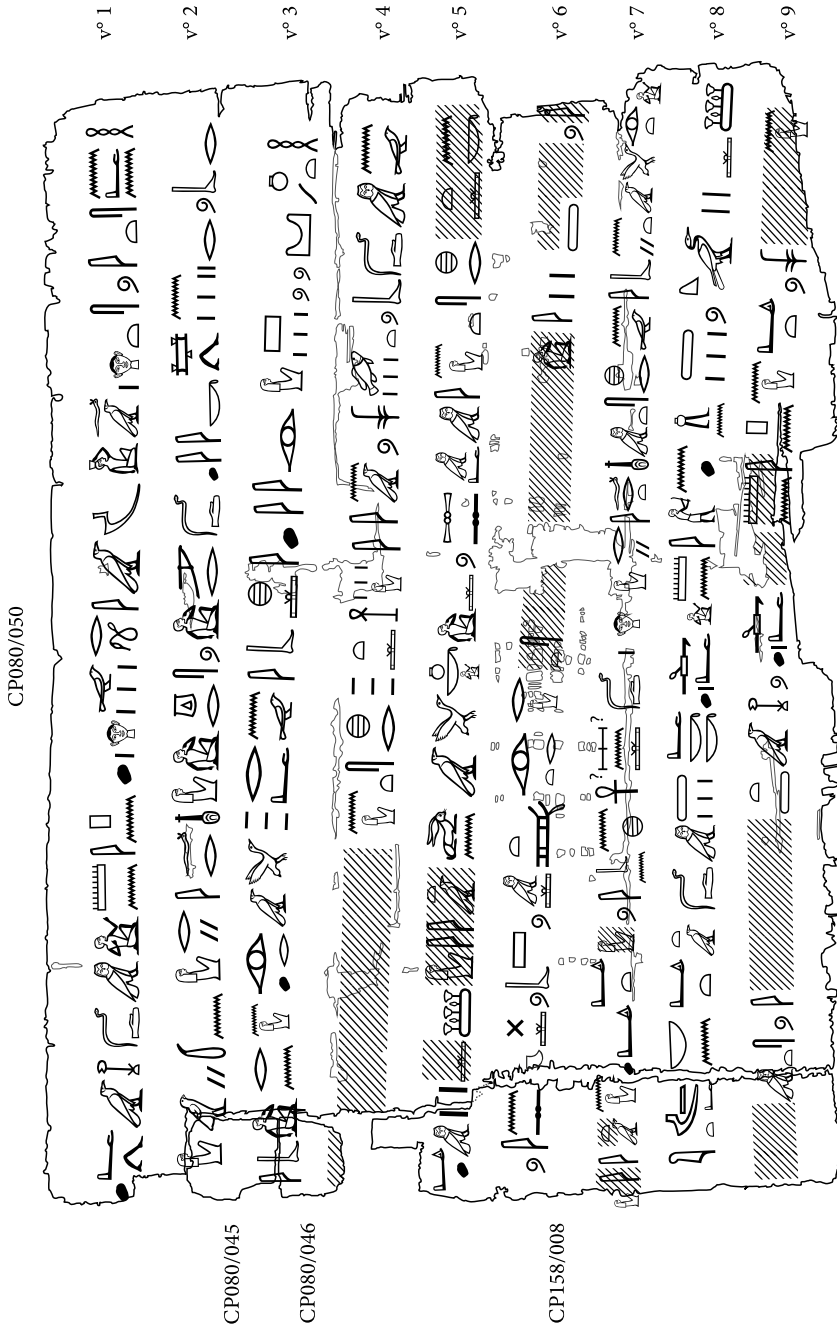


Fig. 3b: Letter I v°, P. Turin CP080/050+045+046+CP158/008 (hieroglyphic transcription © Stéphane Polis & Klaudija Stanić)

numerous traces at the end v° 1–2).²⁰ It measures 19.4×13.9 cm, with nine lines on each side. As the text flows between *recto* and *verso*, the papyrus is clearly preserved in its entire height. Consequently, the traces of ink at the bottom of *recto* and *verso* are better considered palimpsest.

As expected for a Ramesside letter,²¹ the scribe resorted to a halved roll with the short side positioned horizontally and the rolled part of the papyrus positioned against his body. He began to write the letter on the vertical fibers (*recto* = V/H) and flipped it horizontally – which is not the normal practice – in order to write the *verso* (H/V), so that the top of the *recto* corresponds to the top of the *verso*.

As revealed by several material features, the letter was actually sent as a folded package (probably of Type FP11).²² As evidenced by the lacunae at the center of the page, the letter was probably folded in two along the vertical axis and then rolled along the horizontal fibers (with six folds in total). Since the horizontal folds are slightly smaller towards the bottom, it seems likely that the scribe rolled it bottom up.²³ However, both practices (rolling from top to bottom or from bottom to top) are attested and the style is difficult to ascertain when the letter is found unfolded.²⁴ The broken right part of the *recto* (left of the *verso*) surely results from the folding of the extremities of the package, which may finally have been secured with string before dispatch.²⁵

3.3. Annotated transliteration and translation²⁶

Letter 1 contains two communications by and between women belonging to the same family. As is often the case with ancient letters, many details are not clear, and what makes it worse here is that the events unfold in a series of reported speeches by different individuals quoting each other. In this respect, the greatest hermeneutic challenge lies in the frequent use of the suffix pronoun $\overline{\text{w}}$, which can express both

20 Investigation with *D-Stretch* did not lead to any substantial results regarding the content of the former text. It can be noted, however, that the size of the signs and orientation of the palimpsest are parallel to those of the preserved text, which makes it likely that another letter was previously written on the same sheet of papyrus.

21 Černý 1939, XVII–XX; 1952, 21; Bakir 1970, 19–22; Janssen 1991, 48–50.

22 Krutzsch 2008, 76, 83.

23 Bakir 1970, 25–26.

24 Krutzsch 2006, 170. The folding practice is illustrated in a videoclip ‘*Crossing Boundaries in Home Office – Part 3*’ (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rZ5nTotMyE> [3 July 2020]).

25 Černý 1939, XIX.

26 In addition to traditional tools, digital corpora such as the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* (<http://aew.bbaw.de/tla/>) and *Ramses Online* (<http://ramses.ulg.ac.be>) have been used systematically to prepare the philological comments in sections 3.3 and 4.3.

the first-person singular =j ‘I’ and the second-person feminine singular =t ‘you’. Given the high number of quotes involving female participants, this may lead to some confusion on the part of the modern interpreter who is not familiar with the private affairs of the Deir el-Medina community.

As we understand it, the letter’s sender is *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i), a daughter of *Knṛ* (i) and *T3-ḥꜥ.t* (ii),²⁷ and the addressee of the first communication is her mother, *T3-ḥꜥ.t* (ii). *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i) is saddened and offended because her mother has damaged her good name. According to what *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i) heard from a certain *Ḥwj* – who is either her niece *Ḥwj* (ii) or, more probably, the sister-in-law of her elder sister *Nfr.t-jrj* (ii/viii) – *T3-ḥꜥ.t* (ii) complains heavily about her. *T3-ḥꜥ.t* (ii) wants *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i) to come to a feast that she is planning in honour of Meresger; *T3-ḥꜥ.t* (ii) also wants *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i) to be the one who anoints her because she took good care of *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i) when she was seriously ill and quite obviously expects the same care and concern from her daughter, as she keeps saying in front of everyone (r^o 1–6). Another – somewhat more obscure – matter relates to a basket and a sieve belonging to *Ḥꜥj*, who is probably *Ḥꜥj* (i), the son of her elder sister *P3-šd.t* (i) and of the draughtsman *Nb-Rꜥ* (i), and hence a nephew of *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i). This matter is also at the center of Letter 2 (see section 4). A woman – the aforementioned *Ḥwj*, who is also the sender of Letter 2 – was apparently accused of misappropriating these items, though she proclaims her innocence. *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i) used to live with *Ḥwj* in the house of *Pn-Jmn* – hypothetically *Pn-Jmn* (i) – to whom *Ḥwj* was probably married, and reports that *Ḥwj* felt miserable because *Pn-Jmn* wanted to divorce her. What the specific relations between *Ḥwj*, *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i), and *Pn-Jmn* actually are, and whether *Pn-Jmn* was the one who accused *Ḥwj* of the act of misappropriation (which appears likely based on the clues in Letter 2) are challenging questions discussed in section 6.6.

The second communication of this letter is addressed to relatives of *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i): her sisters *Mrj=s-gr* (v), *Nfr.t-jrj* (ii/viii), and *Ḥnw.t-dww* (i), as well as her mother-in-law *Twj* (i). She is quite obviously concerned about their gossiping behind her back, contributing like their mother to her bad reputation. The poor state of preservation of the bottom of the *verso* makes it difficult to reconstruct the matter at stake, but it seems that they disagree on matters regarding different sorts of bread, with deliveries involving male members of the family – *Nb-n-M3ꜥ.t* (ii), the husband of *Mrj=s-gr* (v), and perhaps *Pn-Jmn* (i) and *Nḥt-Jmn* (iii).

r^o 1 *ḏd.n Ḥnw.t-mr(w.t) n T3-ḥꜥ.(t) m ʿ.w.s ḥnꜥ-nꜥ ḏd mk s3.t(=t)2 ḥr mwt n ḥ3ty3 rꜥ nb*

r^o 2 *twt4 wꜥ ḥms5 bjn rn nfr6 p3y jrjy=t n=j ḥ<r>=s7 mjn(?)8 n=j m Ḥwj*

r^o 3 *s3.t Nfr.(t)-jrj bw w3ḥ=s n=t9 bjn10 ḏd [T3-]ḥꜥ.(t) jw=j {hr}11 r jr.t wꜥ ḥb (n)*

27 For a full discussion of the prosopographical issues, see section 6. All the individuals appearing in these letters are found in the family tree in fig. 23.

r^o 4 t[ɨ] dhn.t jmnt.t¹² jw(=j) (r) ptr⁴³ Ḥnw.t-mr(w.t) ḥr mry.t¹⁴, ḥ<r>=s, mtw=
r^o 5 s wrḥ¹⁵ m(w).t=s, ḥr=s(n) n=j m-b:ḥ Mw.t-ndm(.t) m-b:ḥ Nwb-m-Jwnw.t, jnk nw
r^o 6 tw¹⁶ jw=ṯ sdr.t(j) ḥr jr.t mwt¹⁷, ḥr=s n=j m-b:ḥ p: t: (n) km[.t]¹⁸
r^o 7 jw jr=w r-3mdw.t¹⁹ ḥr w^c mndm ḥn^c-n w^c nkṛ²⁰ jw ns-sw
r^o 8 Ḥj²¹, ḥr=s mjn: (ḥr-)dd (m-)bj:t, bwt n=f²², ḥr=s, wnn(=j) ḥms.kw
r^o 9 ḥn^c-n=s jw wnm=j n wnm=s j[w] ḥms=j²³ m p: pr Pn-Jmn

r^o 1 Ḥnw.t-mrw.t says to Tḥ:t, in life, prosperity and health.
Look, your daughter is dying in (her) heart every day.
r^o 2 Really, it is an evil slaying of good name what
you did to me. Here is what Ḥwj
r^o 3 ‘daughter’ of Nfr.t-jrj tells me: “she neglected no bad deeds
for you! Tḥ:t said: ‘I will organize a feast for
r^o 4 the (goddess of) the western cliff, and I will look for Ḥnw.t-
mrw.t at the riverbank,’ she says, ‘so that she
r^o 5 anoint her mother,’ she tells me in front of Mw.t-ndm.t
and in front of Nwb-m-Jwnw.t. ‘I was the one
r^o 6 who watched over you when you were playing dead!’
she keeps telling me in front of everyone.”
r^o 7 And one had an argument about one basket and one sieve that belong to
r^o 8 Ḥj. Here is what she says: “That’s not true, shame
on him,” she says. When I was living
r^o 9 with her and eating her food, after I moved into the house of Pn-Jmn

v^o 1 ḥn^c-n=s jw=s ḥr f: mjṛ²⁴ ḥr Pn-Jmn m-dd ḥj^c=j ø²⁵
v^o 2 r-bl²⁶ ky-dd <n>²⁷ Mrj=s-gr Nfr(.t)-jrj n Twj²⁸
v^o 3 Ḥnw.t-dww jry=j jḥ bjn (m-)r-^{c29} p: jr.t n=j rn bj
v^o 4 n m-dd bwt sw n:y=ṯ šn.t³⁰ ḥr=s n=j [...]
v^o 5 nkt ḥr=s n=j jmy ṯs.w jnk³¹ p:-wn t:y=j š(i) 2³² m-dj=ṯ
v^o 6 [...] 2 [...]s r=ṯ jr tm³³ wšb³⁴ n=s jw
v^o 7 =j jr.t p: nty bjn ḥr=s m Nfr(.t)-jrj ḥr dd ?ḏn?
ḥh³⁵ bn jw=j dj.t dj.t(w) n=ṯ [t]:y[=j]
v^o 8 š(i) 2 ḳw jn n=j Nḥt-jmn w^c ḳk³⁶ m-dd t: dj.t Nb-n-M³⁷.t³⁷
v^o 9 [...] sw dj n=j Pn-Jmn [...] w^c(t) wh:t [...] jw=s m [...]

v^o 1 with her, she began to feel miserable about Pn-Jmn saying: “I want
v^o 2 to divorce.” Another message to Mrj=s-gr and Nfr.t-jrj, and to Twj
v^o 3 and Ḥnw.t-dww: what did I do wrong again
for making me a bad reputation,
v^o 4 saying: “Your pleas, they are evil,” she tells me [...]

- v^o 5 something,” she tells me, “Provide words of mine, because my two shares are in your possession
- v^o 6 [...] 2 [...] she [...] to you who does not answer her, and
- v^o 7 I did what is wrong,” so says *Nfr.t-jrj* saying, “?On my life?, I will not let my two shares of food
- v^o 8 be given to you”; *Nht-Jmn* brought me one *‘kk*-bread, saying, “That is what *Nb-n-Mꜣꜣ.t*
- v^o 9 [?gave you?]” (and *Pn-Jmn* gave me one *whꜣ.t*-bread [...] while she was [...].









Notes and comments

1. The spelling (*passim*) is typical of hieratic texts written during the 19th dynasty (e. g., O. Ashmolean Museum 112, r^o 2; O. DeM 678, r^o 2; P. Chester Beatty IX, r^o 4, 7 & 8) and under Ramesses II in particular (e. g., O. Ashmolean Museum 165, r^o 4 & 7; O. Berlin P. 11238, r^o 2; O. DeM 144, r^o 5; O. DeM 581, r^o 6 & 9; O. DeM 10075, v^o 3). It further seems to be a spelling habit of the literate family to which the scribe of this text belongs (see the discussion in Polis, this volume, section 6).
2. The ductus of is slightly problematic, but compare with O. Louvre E 13156, r^o 2 and the spelling of the masculine in other letters by scribes of the same family (O. Berlin P. 11247, r^o 1; O. Černý 19, r^o 1; O. DeM 10249, r^o 1).
3. The figurative expression *mwt n hꜣty* ‘to die of the heart’, although particularly vivid and cross-culturally telling, does not seem to be attested in other texts from Deir el-Medina (or elsewhere). On emotions and their metaphorical expressions, see Di Biase-Dyson 2018. Note the combination of the Present I with *rꜣ nb*.
4. Since the nominal sentence in r^o 2 is syntactically complete (A \emptyset , *pꜣy jrꜣꜣ.t*, ‘it is A what you did’), the hieratic signs that read *twt* (or possibly *twj* with B1) at the beginning of r^o 2 must stand for an initial particle. The most likely candidate is the particle *tjw*, ‘really, verily, yes’ (*Wb.* 5, 242,1–7, Gardiner 1957, 189 § 258), but its spelling as $\triangle \triangle \triangle$ is rather unexpected.
5. The verb *hmsj*, ‘to sit’ stands here for (or similar) *hms* ‘to slay, slaughter, castrate’ (*Wb.* 3, 96,9–10; Wilson 1997, 648; Lesko 2002, I: 314). The scribe quite obviously resorted to the wrong classifier for a verb that is poorly attested before the Greco-Roman period.
6. The phrase *rn nfr* (lit.) ‘good name’ has a meaning parallel to its English equivalent and refers to someone’s good reputation (see e. g. P. Lansing 10, 3 [*LEM* 108,14] = P. DeM 35, r^o 3 [= Sauneron 1968, 20 & pl. I–II]).

7. For the quotative *hr* ‘to say’ (Winand 2017) spelt with a single \ominus during the 19th dynasty, see O. Prague 1826, r^o 5 & 6 (= *HO* 70.2). The same spelling occurs at the end of r^o 4.
8. Throughout Letter 1 and 2, the scribe appears to mistakenly use the spelling ‘today’ – a lexeme virtually absent from the administrative documents of Deir el-Medina – instead of the Late Egyptian adverb *mjn*; ‘so’ (*Wb.* 2, 44, 2–3). For the cataphoric expression of the subject (introduced by *m*) with quotative verbs, see Winand (2016, 862–863, 890–891). The phrase *hr=fmjn*; ‘Here is what he says’ is usually used in order to introduce a quote (rather than to conclude it); in 19th dynasty texts, see e.g. O. Cairo CG 25237, r^o 4 (= *KRI* 3, 529,10–11); O. Leipzig inv. No. 1905, r^o 2 (= Leipzig 16 in *HO* 33.2); O. Qurna 633, r^o 5 (= Burkard 1999, 8, 15).
9. On the second-person *t* and not *j*, we assume an *IRP* (‘Indirekte Rede mit Personalanpassung’, see Peust 1996, 53–61, 82–84 and Peust 2014).
10. The expression *bw w:ḥ=fbjn* does not seem to be attested so far, but it is assuredly the antonym of the well-known *bw w:ḥ=fnfr* ‘he did not overlook/leave aside any good deed’ (see e.g. *Qadesh*, § 103 [= *KRI* II, 37,10–15]; P. Anastasi 8, v^o 2–3 [= *KRI* III, 504,2]; P. Geneva D 191, v^o 12–13 & 14 [= *LRL* 59, 10 & 12–13]; P. Leiden 371, v^o 18 [= Gardiner and Sethe 1928, 25]). See the thorough discussion of this construction by Vernus, in press. The expression clearly refers to the mean-minded attitude of *T-h:t* toward her daughter; the closest parallel is found in P. Boulaq 13, frag. 4 (= Haikal 1983, 220, pl. 44): [*b*]w w:ḥ=fzp ḥd r tm jr n=f[sw] ‘he did not overlook any harmful deed so as not to do it for him.’
11. At the beginning of a direct speech, the sequence can only be interpreted as a Third Future *ju=j {hr} r jr.t* with superfluous *hr* (which is confirmed by the conjunctive of r^o 4–5). For the use of the preposition *hr* in this pattern, see Winand 1992, 485–486, § 763, with previous literature.
12. Note that the reading is tentative, but seems to fit the traces at the beginning of r^o 4. The goddess metonymically referred to as (*t*) *dhn.t jmnt.t* ‘(the) Western cliff’ (e.g., O. DeM 1722 + Fitzwilliam Museum E.GA.6130.1943, r^o 4 [= *KRI* 7, 190,10–11]) is Meresger, as stated explicitly in stela Turin CGT 50058, 1–2 (= Tosi and Roccati 1972, 286, with Adrom 2005).²⁸ On this nickname (*rn nfr*, ‘good name’) of Meresger, which can also be *t*: *dhn.t wr.t n.t jmnt.t* ‘the great cliff of the West’ (stela Turin CGT 50059 = Roccati and Tosi 1972, 287), see Yoyotte 2003, 289–294. Feasts in honour of Meresger (Valbelle, s.v. Meresger, *LÄ* IV, 80) are well documented at different dates (Bruyère 1930, 236–242, Schott 1950, 100, and stela Bordeaux, with

28 Cf. also Rummel 2016 for this denomination in Thebes, and Verhoeven 2020, I, 283–284 for the ‘great cliff’ as name of the goddess in the Western necropolis of Asyut.

- Clère 1975, esp. 76–77) and often involved offerings of various sorts (e.g., O. DeM 273, r° 6; O. Michaelides, r° 1,1–2).
13. The verb *ptr* is used transitively here with its etymological meaning ‘to look for’, ‘to search for’, or even ‘to find’. It is semantically quite close to verbs such as *rh* ‘to know’ and *gmj* ‘to discover, to find’ (see already Winand 1985, 71). In Late Egyptian, this use is not exceptional; see for instance P. Anastasi 4, 8,3 (= *LEM* 43,1–2).
 14. For a discussion of the location and function of the *mrj.t*, ‘market-places’ along the riverbanks, see the excursus in Gabler 2018a, 334–336.
 15. The anointment of elderly relatives was probably a common practice during religious feasts, but – to the best of our knowledge (and unlike in funerary contexts where information abounds; cf. Thompson 1998) – no extant textual source makes explicit reference to it (see Koura 1999).
 16. For the transitive use of *nw(i)* ‘to look, to watch’ in Late Egyptian, see the remarks in Stella 2012, 442, 457.
 17. The construction *sḏr ḥr jr.t mwt* ‘to be playing dead’, probably highly ironic in the present context, is not attested so far. One could have thought of a parallel to the expression *sḏr m r3-ꜣ mwt* in the *Tale of the Two Brothers* (P. d’Orbiney, 13,3–4 = *LES* 22,15–23,1) when Anubis discovers his younger brother Bata lying dead upon his bed: *jw=f rmj(.t) m-ḏr ptr<=f p3y=f> sn šrj sḏr m r3-ꜣ mwt*, ‘He wept when <he> saw <his> younger brother lying in the state of death’. However, *ḥr jr.t* is palaeographically secure.
 18. For the omission of *n* in the phrase *p3 t3 (n) Km.t* (probably due to a line break), see P. Turin Cat. 1928+, r° 5–6 (Polis, in press).
 19. The compound *r3-mdw.t* ‘speech, discussion, argument’ (i. e., words in action, see its use in the *Dedic. Inscrip. of R. 2*, 88 [= *KRI* II, 333,2–3]) can be connoted positively in contexts such as *The Instruction of a Man for his Son*, § 1,5: *pnk r3-mdw.t ḥr-ḥ3.t ḥpš* ‘Exhausting an argument takes precedence over (using) strength’, but also negatively as in the present context (see further *Neferty*, Xh [= Helck 1970, 39]: *tw r rdj.t ḥ.wt m msdd r sgr r3-mdw* ‘Goods will be given with hatred to silence an argument’; P. Turin Cat. 1791 [= *Tb.* 42,14]: *mk r3-mdw.t gr(.w)* ‘Look the speech is over’).
 20. For the association between the *mnḏm*-basket and the *nkr*-sieve, see Janssen 1975, 147–149.
 21. The same possessive construction, with *Ḥj* as the legal owner, is found in Letter 2, r° 5, which confirms the direct thematic connection between the two letters.
 22. On the use of *bwt* ‘abomination’ in legal contexts, see McDowell 1990, 27, 156–157. Two analyses are possible: a nominal predication *bwt ø n=f* ‘this is an abomination for him’ or an adverbial predication *bwt n=f* ‘shame on him’,

29. Assuming an omission of the initial *m* of the particle *m-r-ꜥ*. For the expressive use of this particle in interrogative clauses, see Winand 2009, 526–527. For similar constructions, with the consequences of a potentially bad action expressed by DETERMINER+INFINITIVE, see e. g. O. DeM 326, r° 1–2 (*jry=jjh ꜥy=k hb n=j nꜥy{=n} md.wt mhr* ‘what did I do that you send me these sick words’) and P. Leiden I 371, r° 1–2 (*jry=jjh r=ꜥ m btꜥ ꜥy=j hꜥr m ꜥyꜥ shr bꜥn nꜥy tw(j) jm=f* ‘what crime did I commit that I find myself in that evil state in which I am currently?’). Note that, from a purely palaeographic viewpoint, a reading  could be preferred, but it hardly makes sense in this context.
30. For a similar spelling of  *šn.t* with omission of the classifier , see O. Berlin P. 9898, r° 1 (= Fischer-Elfert 2015, 319–322). This spelling is attested in hieratic texts for the lexemes derived from the verbs *šnj* ‘to ask, to recite’ (*Wb.* 4, 495, 8–17) and *šnj* ‘to suffer’ (*Wb.* 4, 494, 15–18). The context seems to favor the former interpretation, since it would be awkward to qualify ‘suffering’ as an abomination. For the use of the cataphoric pronoun as subject of the adjectival predication, with coreferential noun phrase in apposition, see Loprieno, Müller, and Uljas 2017, 669–671.
31. The same phrase, *tswjnk* ‘words of mine’, occurs in Letter 2, v° 2.
32. The hieratic signs between *tꜥy=j* and *m-dj=ꜥ* appear again at the beginning of v° 8, where they are better preserved and read  or, less probably, . In this context, *š(i)* would have a meaning akin to ‘share, portion’, but we cannot produce any parallel for this word. If one chooses to read *š(i)ꜥ*, the spelling could refer to a type of bread (or similar) that is not attested in the Deir el-Medina material so far, but is known in Old Kingdom sources as *š(i)ꜥ(t)* (Schwechler 2020, 103–104).
33. For a parallel to the use of *jrj* as participle introducing the negation *tm*, see P. Leiden I 343+345, r° VII,8 = O. Strasbourg H. 115, r° 3 (Beck 2018, 49, 19–20). This construction is extremely rare.
34. The verb *wšb* ‘to answer’ is spelt with the classifiers of the ‘metal vessel’  *ꜥ*  (*Wb.* 1, 373, 6); see, e. g., O. BM EA 65930, r° 14, 16, v° 13 (= *HO* 46.2).
35. The group of hieratic signs between *ꜥꜥ* and ‘*nḥ*’ is puzzling. We tentatively suggest to read it  *kn* or ‘*ꜥn*’ (Quack 2000), and to understand the sequence ‘*ꜥn nḥ*’ as an exclamation meaning something like ‘on (my) life’. Note that one could also understand ‘*nḥ*’ as ‘oath’, with the omission of the classifier (see n. 30 above). For the phrase *ꜥꜥ nḥ* ‘to take an oath’ in the Deir el-Medina material (instead of the more common *jrj nḥ*, cf. McDowell 1990, 36–37), see, e. g., O. BM EA 65956, r° 11 (= *HO* 47.1) and P. Vienna 9340, r° 7 (= el-Kholi 2006, 24–25). This interpretation, however, leaves the reading of the group between *ꜥꜥ* and ‘*nḥ*’ entirely unsolved.

36. On different varieties of bread and *'kk*-bread in particular, see Janssen 1975, 344–346; 1997. Note that a letter from the draughtsman *Nb-R'* (i) to his son *Nht-Jmn* (iii) discusses similar matters involving *'kk*-bread (O. DeM 10250).
37. The two male individuals in v° 8 are probably *Nht-Jmn* (iii) and his father *Nb-n-Mḥ:t* (ii), the nephew and bother-in-law of *Hnw.t-mrw.t* (i) respectively. On the *wh:t*-bread, appearing again in Letter 2, v° 6, see Janssen 1997, 23, 25, 27–29 and Schwechler 2020, 13–15.

4. Letter 2 (P. Turin CPo80/o43)

4.1. Hieroglyphic transcription

Letter 2 consists of a single fragment numbered CPo80/o43 (fig. 4–5). For the sake of completeness, we provide pictures of an additional fragment (CPo80/o47) which could have belonged to Letter 2 given its fiber structure, color, and handwriting, but

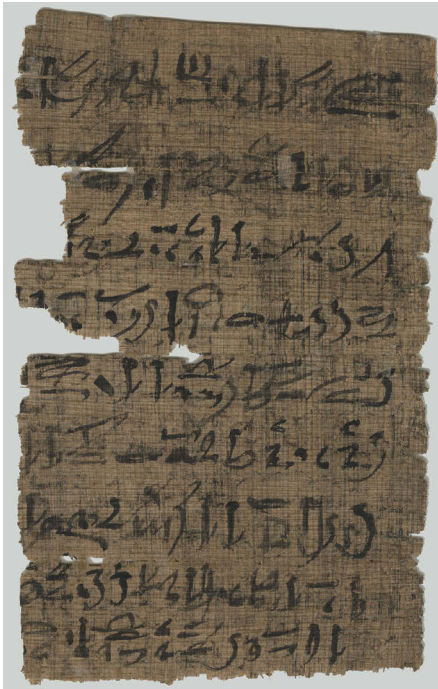


Fig. 4a: Letter 2 r°, P. Turin CPo80/o43 (© Museo Egizio, Turin. Scan: Museo Egizio)

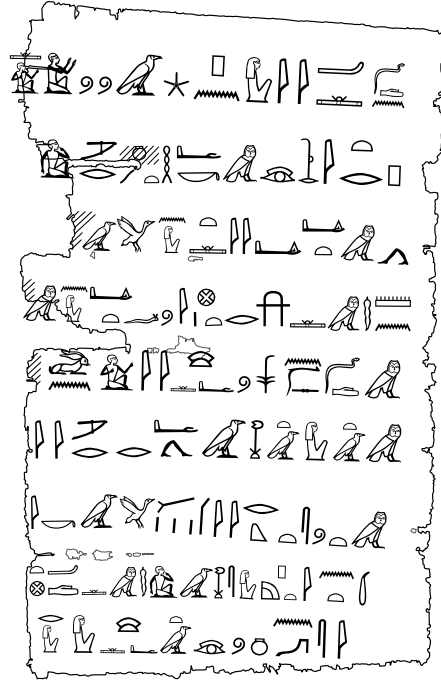


Fig. 4b: Letter 2 r°, P. Turin CPo80/o43 (hieroglyphic transcription © Stéphane Polis & Klaudija Stanic)

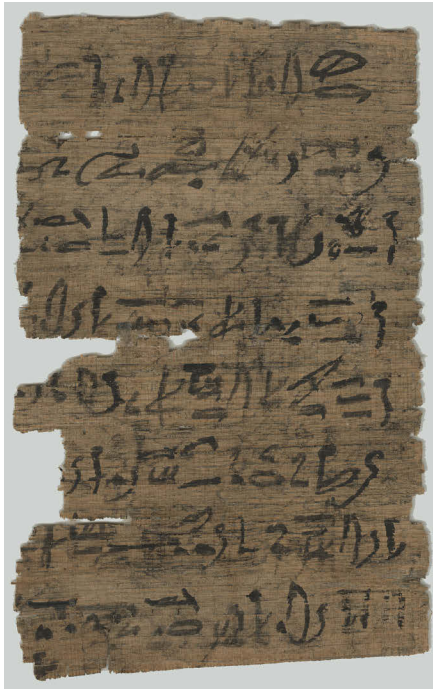


Fig. 5a: Letter 2 v°, P. Turin CPo80/043
 (© Museo Egizio, Turin. Scan: Museo
 Egizio)



Fig. 5b: Letter 2 v°, P. Turin CPo80/043 (hi-
 eroglyphic transcription © Stéphane Polis &
 Klaudija Stanic)



Fig. 6: CPo80/047 r° (papyrological *verso*;
 © Museo Egizio, Turin. Scan: Museo Egizio)



Fig. 7: CPo80/047 v° (papyrological *recto*;
 © Museo Egizio, Turin. Scan: Museo Egizio)

which could not be connected (or positioned with respect) to the main fragment (fig. 6–7).

4.2. Material description

Like Letter 1, Letter 2 is inscribed with black ink on a badly erased piece of palimpsest papyrus. It measures 9.3×15.1 cm, with nine lines on the *recto* and eight lines on the *verso* (with a possible ninth line centered at the very bottom). The papyrus

is probably preserved in its entire height, but we possess only half of its original width (the right-hand side of *recto* and *verso*). The scribe resorted to a halved roll (c. 20 cm), started his letter on the vertical fibers (*recto* = V/H), and flipped it – vertically this time (unlike for Letter 1) – in order to write the *verso* (H/V). When he was done, he turned it into a package similar to Letter 1, folding it into two along the vertical axis (see the comments in § 3.2), which ultimately broke the sheet of papyrus into two parts (of which only the right side is now preserved).

4.3. Annotated transliteration and translation

Due to the missing left-hand part of the papyrus, the contents of Letter 2 are even more difficult to reconstruct than the contents of Letter 1. *Hwj*, one of the main protagonists of Letter 1, is definitely the sender and *Pn-dw3* is probably the addressee. The likeliest scenario is that *Hwj*, the daughter of *P3-šd* (x) and *Nđm.t-bħd.t*, contacted her brother *Pn-dw3* (iii). The possibility that *Hwj* (ii), the daughter (in-law?) of *Mrj=s-gr* (v) and *Nb-n-M3:t* (ii), was the sender cannot be excluded entirely, but it would be challenging to explain why she would send a letter to her uncle (in-law?) *Pn-dw3* (iii).

The letter opens on a matter involving *Hnw.t-mrw.t* (i), the sender of Letter 1, and a basket belonging to *Hj* (i) that is being sent to town (Thebes). This means that the topic of Letter 2 must be directly connected to the basket and sieve mentioned in Letter 1, r° 7–v° 2. An additional sister of *Hnw.t-mrw.t* (i) is then introduced. Absent from Letter 1, this sister is named *Tj-n.t-jp.t* (i); she was the wife of *Hnsw* (i). Besides *Tj-n.t-jp.t*, the mother of *Pn-dw3* (iii), called *Nđm.t-bħd.t*,²⁹ and *T3-ħ:t* (ii), who is again apparently at the center of declarations and reported speeches, are mentioned. Finally, an older sister *Mrj=s-gr* (v) is mentioned, as well as *Pn-Jmn*, who was connected to the ‘basket and sieve’ issue in Letter 1 and about whom it is said that he will have to pay double for some commodity, perhaps the aforementioned basket and sieve.

- r° 1 *đđ.n Hwj <n>1 Pn-dw3 [...]*
 r° 2 *ptr mk2 Hnw.t-mr[w.t ... n]*
 r° 3 *m-dj.t dy.t n=j p3 [...]*
 r° 4 *mndm r njw.t, jw=f đj.t n=j m[...]*
 r° 5 *m-đđ ns-sw Hj4 wn [...]*
 r° 6 *mntf t3 ħ3 r mrj[t.t ...]*
 r° 7 *mtw=s rky6 p3 ky [...]*

²⁹ Ranke 1935 I, 215, n° 13.



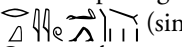






- r^o 8 Tj-n.t-jp.t sh; Ndm.t-bhd.t [...]
 r^o 9 js⁷ nw T3-h'.t r=j [...]
- r^o 1 Addressed by Hwj <to> Pn-dw; [...]
 r^o 2 But look: Hnw.t-mrw.t [...]
 r^o 3 again, do not let the [...] be given to me [...]
 r^o 4 basket to town, and he gave me [...]
 r^o 5 saying 'it belongs to H'j' [...]
 r^o 6 of yours, the one left at the riverbank [...]
 r^o 7 and she will fend off the other [...]
 r^o 8 Tj-n.t-jp.t, Ndm.t-bhd.t remembered [...]
 r^o 9 would T3-h'.t look at me [...]

- v^o 1 hr=s mjn(i)⁸ jst mdw [...]
 v^o 2 m ts.w jnk⁹ dd T3-h'.t ...]
 v^o 3 hn.tw n=j js bn¹⁰ jr=j j[y ...]
 v^o 4 hn'=j, j.n=j, jw=s h[r...]
 v^o 5 hn' Mrj=s-gr m k[...]
 v^o 6 wh3.t n kps¹¹ [...]
 v^o 7 jw=s n k3b¹² n Pn-Jm[n ...]
 v^o 8 pr jw=s jm=fjr p; nty [...]
 v^o 9 [...]

- v^o 1 Here is what she says: 'did [...] discuss [...]
 v^o 2 of words of mine?' T3-h'.t said '[...]
 v^o 3 entrusted to me, would I not co[me ...]
 v^o 4 with me,' I said, and she [...]
 v^o 5 with Mrj=s-gr in [...]
 v^o 6 wh3.t-bread in kps-basket [...]
 v^o 7 it will cost twice as much to Pn-Jmn [...]
 v^o 8 a house in which she is. Whoever will [...]
 v^o 9 [...]

Notes and comments

1. The emendation is not mandatory here, since we might be dealing with a joint communication. The restitution of <n> however is likely: it would be quite astonishing for male and female siblings to send a letter together. See the comments on Letter 1, v^o 2 where the same omission occurs.
2. For the use of the particle ptr before mk, see a possible example in P. Boulaq 13, frag. 12, 5 (= Haykal 1983). The reverse order mk ptr 'but look' is more often

- attested, especially in literary works; see for instance P. Chester Beatty I, 7,11–12 (= *LES* 46, 15–16); P. Turin Cat. 1966, r° 1,10 (= López 1992, 138); P. Moscow 120, 2,81–82 (= *LES* 75, 12–13). On the diachronic relationships and distribution of the two particles in Late Egyptian, see Winand 2004, 105–106.
3. The traces at the end of r° 3 do not allow us to restore the name of the product that ought not to be brought.
 4. The same construction occurs in Letter I, r° 7–8 (see § 2.2, n. 20–21), which means that a *mn̄dm*-basket and a *nk̄r*-sieve were probably mentioned at the end of r° 4.
 5. We interpret the sequence  as a spelling of the independent pronoun 2SG.F. Unexpected spellings of this rare pronoun are not uncommon (see e. g. O. UC 39656, r° 3 = *HO* 23.4). For the exact same spelling, see O. BM EA 65930, r° 7 (= *HO* 46.2).
 6. For the classifiers  in *rkj* ‘to fend off, to be hostile’ (*Wb.* 2, 456,9–12), see the spellings of *rk̄w* ‘enemy’ in O. Gardiner 347, r° 10 (= *HO* 103.4):  (similar in O. Gardiner 358, r° 5 = *HO* 105.1).
 7. On antiphrastic questions with *js* and *js̄t* in Late Egyptian, see Collier 2014.
 8. About the use of  ‘today’ for  *mjn̄* ‘so’ (*Wb.* 2, 44,2–3), see § 3.3, n. 8.
 9. The same phrase, *ṯs.w jnk* ‘words of mine’, occurs in Letter I, v° 5.
 10. See n. 7 above.
 11. On the *wh̄s.t*-bread, see § 3.3, n. 37. The spelling  that follows is the unit of measurement (a basket of some sort) for bread, meat, and other products that is transliterated *kps* (*Wb.* 5, 119,2); see P. Boulaq II, r° 2,8 (= Peet 1934, 189) for a similar spelling (). This allows clarification of the discussion by Grandet 2003, 110, and Schwechler 2020, 14–15 of the *k̄p=w* unit.
 12. Understood as a variant of the construction with the analogical Third Future *jw=fr=j m k̄b* ‘it will cost me twice as much’ that one commonly finds in the apodosis of oaths when promising not to dispute an agreement (cf. Winand 1996, 135–136). The scribe certainly confused the velar and uvular stops, writing for  for .

5. Palaeographic analysis: towards a scribal profile

In this section, we discuss the principal features of the hieratic hand that wrote the two letters and describe the main habits of the scribe in terms of (§ 5.1) general writing style and arrangement of the texts,³⁰ (§ 5.2) spelling mistakes and emenda-

³⁰ Gasse 1992.

tions, and (§ 5.3) shape and ductus of words and (groups of)³¹ signs.³² The goal of this palaeographic description is to establish a preliminary ‘scribal profile’ that takes into account the different dimensions of a hand. Indeed, if identifying scribes by their hands is a notably difficult business³³ – both because of the high degree of variation that can be observed for individual hieratic hands³⁴ and because handwriting analysis is still ‘no less an art than a science’³⁵ – a joint examination of the different aspects of the written performance³⁶ allows one to avoid the methodological pitfalls found in approaches that focus on specific palaeographic aspects in isolation and to objectify attributions that might otherwise remain highly subjective. As such, the discussion that follows will contribute in the long run to identifying further writings by the same scribe.³⁷

5.1. Layout of the texts and handwriting style

The texts of Letter 1 and Letter 2 cover the entire available surface of both papyri, with very small top/bottom and right/left margins, a regular characteristic of 18th–19th dynasty letter writing that is taken to its extreme here. It seems that this scribe was exceedingly and systematically economical with his writing media, even cutting words in order to make more space available (Letter 1, r^o 5–6 [cf. fig. 9], v^o 3–4; Letter 2, r^o 2–3, 3–4).³⁸ This parsimonious approach is also exemplified by the use of palimpsest sheets of papyrus. Furthermore, his interlinear spacing is small, corresponding to roughly half the height of the writing line. Taken together, these characteristics contribute to the crowded appearance of the text.

Overall, baselines are straight and regular (fig. 8a), but this orderliness – which attests to the skills of the scribe – tends to diminish as the text unfolds (fig. 8b).

The handwriting style is in stark contrast with the quite principled organization of the layout. We are faced with an untidy and smudged hand, with a fast ductus, round but jerky movements, and a definite lack of sharpness. Besides the variation in sign shapes (§ 5.3) and the use of a blunt brush, three global features contribute to this messy impression.³⁹ First, the density of the ink varies significantly across

31 Van den Berg and Donker van Heel 2000; Dorn 2015; McClain 2018.

32 Regulski 2018.

33 Janssen 1987; 2000; Sweeney 1998b; Miyanishi 2016; Hassan and Polis 2018.

34 Polis 2020, 554–559.

35 Ast 2018, 34.

36 Dorn and Polis 2016, 67–73; Demarée 2018.

37 Polis, this volume, section 6.

38 Cf. Müller 2006, 315.

39 Polis, this volume.



Fig. 8: Comparison of baselines (a = Letter 1, r° 1) vs. (b = Letter 1, r° 8) (© Museo Egizio, Turin. Scan: Museo Egizio)

the text, with clear traces of dipping (c. 4/5 times per line in Letter 1; see the white arrows in fig. 8a) that are usually meaningful⁴⁰ but lead to an alternation between sequences of thin and thick strokes (see fig. 9, dipping after *m-b;h*).



Fig. 9. Alternation between thin and thick sequences of strokes due to dipping (Letter 1, r° 5)

Horizontal sign spacing is a second key characteristic. One can indeed observe many overlaps between hieratic signs belonging to different morphemes. Fig. 10 illustrates a series of such overlaps between and (a), and (b), and (c), and (d), and (e), and (f). This feature obviously affects legibility as well.

A third factor is fluctuation with respect to the vertical positioning of signs: small hieratic signs (like , , , or) may be written on the baseline, as is usually the case in hieratic texts written in lines, but the scribe of Letter 1 and Letter 2 often centers them vertically, putting them in the middle of the writing line (or even above). Fig. 11 illustrates this phenomenon with four occurrences of in Letter 1 (a–d) and with in Letter 2 (e).

It is worth noticing that the handwriting does not deteriorate progressively (as is often observed in hieratic texts): the characteristics described above are intrinsic to this hand, which is definitely not untrained, and do not result from external circumstances.

⁴⁰ Ragazzoli 2017, 106–107; 2020, 69–77.

A family affair in the community of Deir el-Medina: gossip girls in two 19th dynasty letters

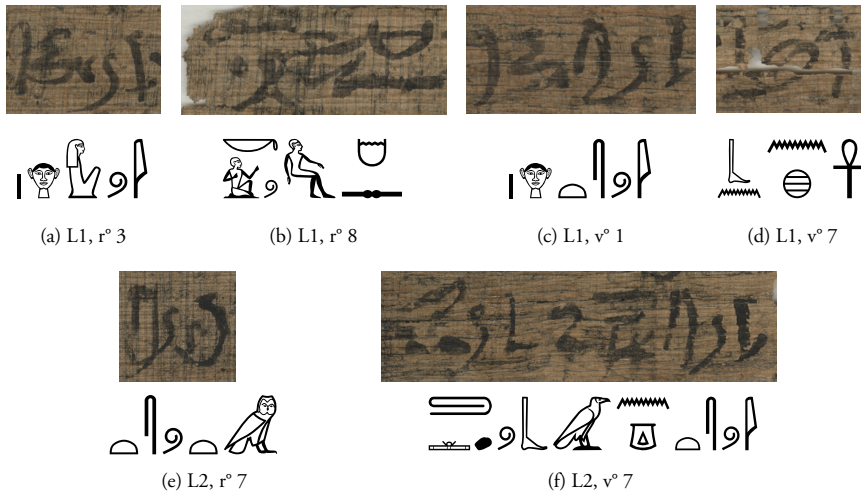


Fig. 10. Overlaps between hieratic signs

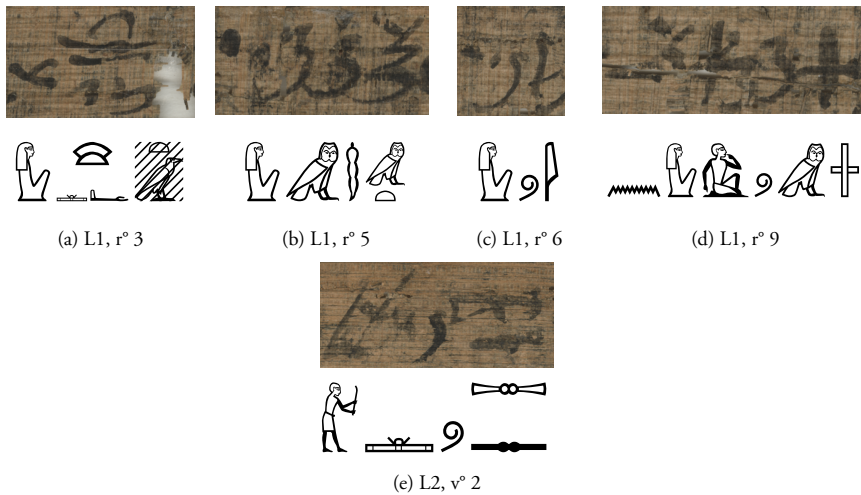


Fig. 11. Vertical positioning of small hieratic signs

It appears that this scribe inclines to the progressive addition of dots after some words (a phenomenon which does not appear to be linked to dipping). This feature is conveniently illustrated by the occurrences of *w* ‘one, a’ in Letter 1 (fig. 12a–e): while the dot is not used in r° 2 & 3, it occurs systematically later on in the text. Dots also appear in more unexpected contexts, like after the preposition *hr* (fig. 12f) or in the middle of the word *kps* (fig. 12g).

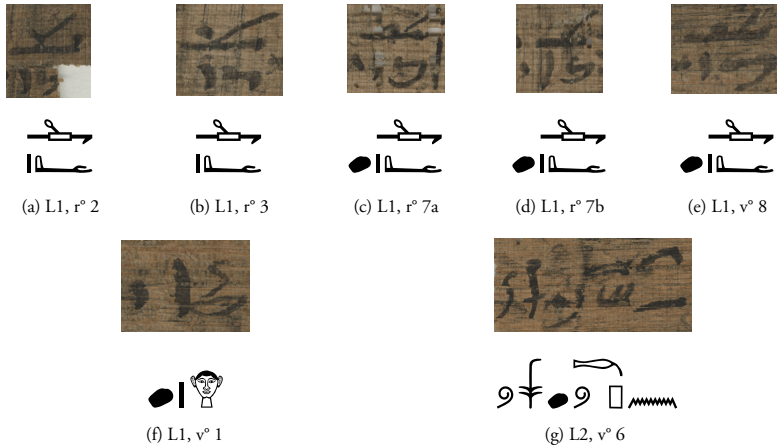


Fig. 12. Addition of dots

5.2. Spelling mistakes and emendations

As observed above, though the letters were assuredly written by a skilled scribe, they were produced quite hastily and without much aesthetic consideration: efficiency of communication appears to have been his primary goal. The impetuosity of his writing, however, led him to commit several spelling mistakes that are detrimental to the good understanding of the letters he penned.

On several occasions, he resorts to the wrong classifiers, writing $\overline{\text{hmsj}}$ 'to sit' for $\overline{\text{hms}}$ 'to slay' (fig. 13a), $\overline{\text{mjn}}$ 'today' for the adverb $\overline{\text{mjn}}$ 'so' (fig. 13b; see also Letter 1, r° 2 and Letter 2, v° 1), and $\overline{\text{wšb}}$ 'metal vessel' for $\overline{\text{wšb}}$ 'to answer' (fig. 13c). He also omitted the classifier $\overline{\text{sn}}$ twice in $\overline{\text{sn.wt}}$ 'demands' (Letter 1, v° 4) and perhaps in $\overline{\text{nh}}$ 'oath' (Letter 1, v° 7).

Even more surprising is the inversion of $\overline{\text{r-bnr}}$ 'outside' (fig. 14a): the frequency of the group writing $\overline{\text{r-bnr}}$ for the phoneme /l/ is high in Late Egyptian hieratic texts, and – to the best of our knowledge – this is the sole occurrence of this phenomenon. These kinds of mistakes are rather unusual and might suggest a scribe who did perhaps not follow the regular curriculum in acquiring hieratic literacy.

In other places, however, the scribe realized that he was making a mistake and re-touched the hieratic sign while writing (see, e. g., $\overline{\text{yod}}$ in fig. 9) or emended it. Fig. 14b is a case in point: due to the occurrence of the proper name $\overline{\text{yod}}$ earlier in Letter 2 (r° 5), he began to write a *yod* after the group $\overline{\text{yod}}$ in the name $\overline{\text{yod}}$, but immediately emended it to $\overline{\text{yod}}$ without bothering to erase the vertical stroke that he had already penned for the *yod*.

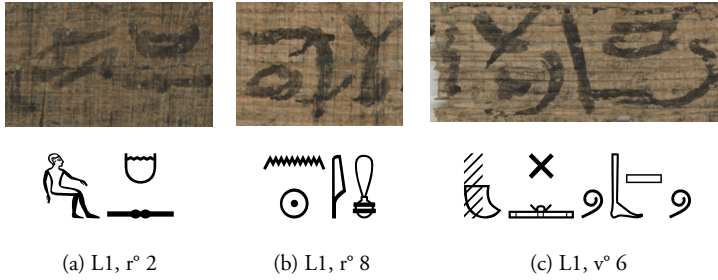


Fig. 13. Uses of wrong classifiers

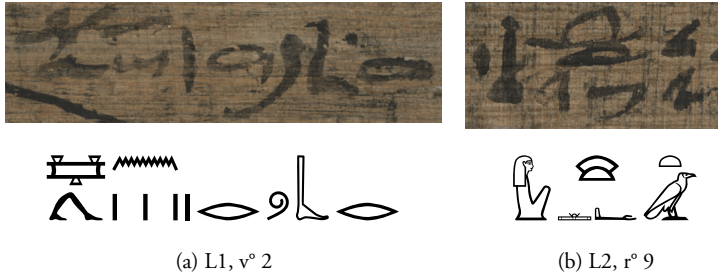





Fig. 14. Mistake and emendation

5.3. Individual words, sign-groups, and signs

In this section, we examine diagnostic words, sign-groups, and individual signs that are attested in both letters in order to show that – beyond the general style, layout, and spelling habits – the shared identity of the hand across Letter 1 and Letter 2 can be observed at a more basic level. This further allows us to date the manuscripts roughly on palaeographic grounds.

Given the strong thematic connection between Letter 1 and Letter 2, many words appear in both letters despite their relatively small size. In fig. 15 (compare also fig. 17a vs. e), we illustrate the shared ductus for a clause (*hr=s mjn*: ‘here is what she says’; fig. 15a vs. 15b), for a proper name (*H’j* ‘Khay’; fig. 15c vs. 15d), and for a verb/particle (*ptr* ‘(to) see’; fig. 15e. vs. 15f).⁴¹

Highly symptomatic of this hand is the spelling and ductus of the preposition *hn* that one finds in Letter 1 and Letter 2 written  (fig. 16). Note the initial  that almost takes the shape of a hieratic owl () , sometimes with a dot on top.











⁴¹ Individual signs (, , , ) are discussed below, but note already the ductus of  (fig. 15e–f, 17b–c), with a ligature between the right-hand side vertical stroke and the horizontal stroke. Wimmer 1995, 267c.



Fig. 15. Comparison of phrases and word

Zooming in on smaller units,  *mn*, considered as an important ligature in palaeographical studies (e.g., Dorn 2015), is given a particular shape in both letters: the upper part  is written with a single stroke, almost like an oblique <z>, that is normally not ligatured with the *n* below (fig. 17a–d; an exception is fig. 17e). That specific shape seems to have been in use mostly during the 19th and the beginning of the 20th dynasty.⁴²

The classifier  also displays an identical ductus in both letters (fig. 18), and is realized with two strokes.⁴³ This hieratic form is sometimes a quicker way to write  after earlier occurrences with 3 or 4 strokes in the same text.⁴⁴ Here however, the simpler form is used consistently in Letter 1 and Letter 2.

The shape of the eye touched up with paint () is clearly shared by both manuscripts as well (fig. 19), and displays a characteristic rounded upper eyebrow. Unfortunately, this feature cannot be used to date the manuscripts due to the current lack of palaeographic data.⁴⁵

42 Cf. Wimmer 1995, 383aa.

43 Wimmer 1995, 10b.

44 Dorn and Polis 2016, 69.

45 Möller 1909, II, no. 83; Wimmer 1995, 31.

A family affair in the community of Deir el-Medina: gossip girls in two 19th dynasty letters

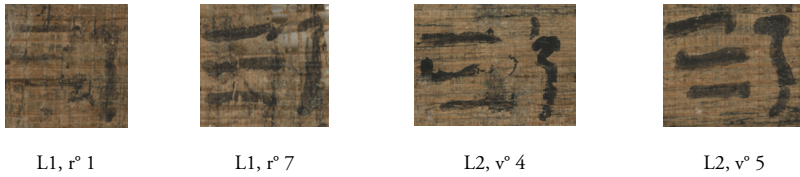


Fig. 16. Occurrences of the preposition *hn*^c

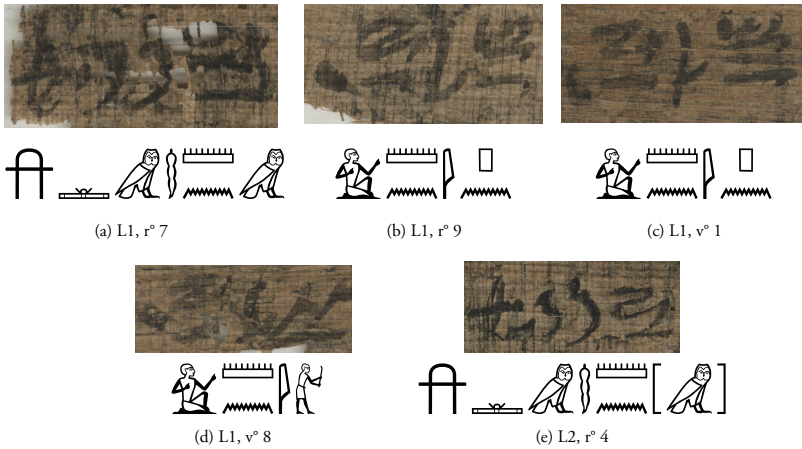



Fig. 17. Ductus of the group 

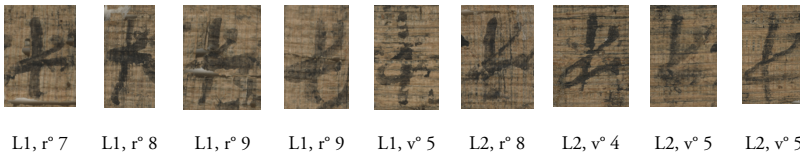






Fig. 18. Ductus of the classifier 

As far as dating is concerned, the most relevant hieratic sign is definitely  (fig. 20). Indeed, Wimmer⁴⁶ has shown that its <s> shape is a reliable marker of texts written during the 19th dynasty.

The same observation holds true for . As observed by Wimmer,⁴⁷ during the 19th dynasty, the left stroke often extends below the middle of the writing line (fig. 21), as opposed to 20th dynasty examples with left strokes that are usually much shorter. It is also worth noting that the right stroke is markedly curved and even takes on an -like shape, which is definitely an indicator of the hand of our scribe.

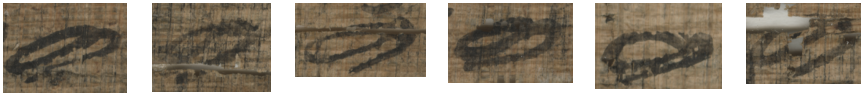
46 Wimmer 1995, 396a–aa; 1998, 1229; Dorn, this volume.

47 Wimmer 1995, 279a; 1998, 1228.



L1, r° 4 L2, r° 2 L2, r° 9

Fig. 19. Ductus of the classifier \ominus



L1, r° 2 L1, r° 4 L1, r° 5 L1, r° 6 L1, r° 8 L1, r° 8



L1, v° 3 L1, v° 4 L1, v° 7 L1, v° 7 L2, v° 1

Fig. 20. Ductus of the phonogram \ominus



L1, r° 1 L1, r° 3 L1, r° 5 L1, r° 5 L1, r° 6 L1, r° 6 L1, r° 8 L1, r° 8 L1, r° 9 L1, r° 9



L1, v° 1 L1, v° 4 L1, v° 7 L1, v° 9 L2, v° 1 L2, v° 1 L2, v° 3 L2, v° 4 L2, v° 5 L2, v° 8

Fig. 21. Ductus of the phonogram $\mathbb{1}$ (with and without a following \ominus)

Finally, the $\mathbb{1}$ takes three different shapes in Letter 1 and 2. In its fuller form, it is made up of three strokes: a rounded $\langle \circ \rangle$ at the top, a vertical stroke, and a short right-oblique stroke towards the bottom (fig. 22a). This shape seems characteristic

A family affair in the community of Deir el-Medina: gossip girls in two 19th dynasty letters



Fig. 22a. q with three strokes (and a curved upper stroke)

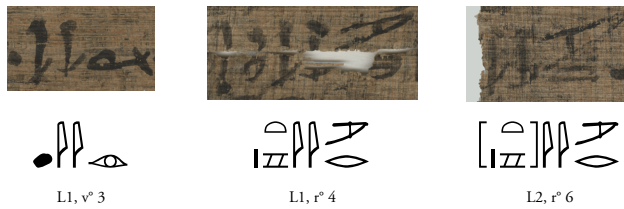


Fig. 22b. q with three strokes (and a blob/dash on top)



Fig. 22c. q with two strokes

of early New Kingdom hieratic texts⁴⁸ and tends to disappear progressively during the Ramesside period.⁴⁹

This full shape coexists with another three-stroke ductus in which the rounded <O> on top takes the form of a blob or short horizontal dash (fig. 22b).

48 Möller 1909, I & II, no. 282.

49 Wimmer 1995, 181–182.

In its simplest form, illustrated already by some occurrences in fig. 22b, the \mathcal{Q} is made up of only two strokes (vertical and oblique) with some pressure on the brush at the beginning of the vertical stroke in order to get the blob-effect (fig. 22c).

The scribal profile sketched above establishes beyond a reasonable doubt that the two letters were written by the same scribe: they display the same habits and practices in terms of general style, layout, and spelling, as well as individual word and sign ductus. In terms of dating, the data suggest a date during the 19th dynasty (and point towards an early date in this period, given the shape of the *yod* for instance). The prosopographical discussion in section 6, which takes advantage of the huge quantity of information available for the Deir el-Medina community, leads to more fine-grained results.

6. Prosopographical analysis⁵⁰

The rich written material from Deir el-Medina provisions us with plenty of prosopographical information that may be scrutinized in order to delineate precisely the temporal, geographical, and social contexts of the two letters studied in this paper. In table 1, we list all the individuals mentioned and sum up their roles in the letters, while a chronology of the persons and most important objects is presented in table 2.

Table 1

Individual	Letter 1	Letter 2
<i>Hnw.t-mrw.t</i>	Sender of the letter, accusing her mother and several sisters of bad behavior, lived in the house of <i>Pn-Jmn</i> , left the village	Topic of the communication between <i>Hwj</i> and <i>Pn-dw</i>
<i>Ti-h.t</i>	Addressee of the first communication, accused of bad behavior by <i>Hnw.t-mrw.t</i> , organizes a feast for Meresger, took care of her sick daughter <i>Hnw.t-mrw.t</i>	Looking after a female person, said something

continued on next page

⁵⁰ We would like to thank M. Marée for discussing the iconographic and stylistic dating criteria of the stelae and statues with us.

A family affair in the community of Deir el-Medina: gossip girls in two 19th dynasty letters

Individual	Letter 1	Letter 2
<i>Ḥwj</i> ('s:t' <i>Nfr.t-jrj</i>)	Reports negative words spoken by <i>T3-ḥr.t</i> , linked to the basket belonging to <i>Ḥj</i> , lived in the house of <i>Pn-Jmn</i> (maybe as his wife)	Sender of the letter, linked to the basket belonging to <i>Ḥj</i> (which was brought to Thebes)
<i>Nfr.t-jrj</i>	Sister in-law of <i>Ḥwj</i> , addressee of the second communication, accused of bad behavior by <i>Ḥnw.t-mrw.t</i>	–
<i>Pn-dw3</i>	–	Addressee of the letter
<i>Mw.t-nḏm.t</i>	Witnessed <i>T3-ḥr.t</i> gossiping in front of <i>Ḥwj</i> who reported it to <i>Ḥnw.t-mrw.t</i>	–
<i>Nwb-m-Jwnw.t</i>	Witnessed <i>T3-ḥr.t</i> gossiping in front of <i>Ḥwj</i> who reported it to <i>Ḥnw.t-mrw.t</i>	–
<i>Ḥj</i>	Owner of a basket and a sieve	Owner of a basket which is now in Thebes
<i>Pn-Jmn</i>	Inhabitant of a house, former (?) relative of <i>Ḥwj</i> and <i>Ḥnw.t-mrw.t</i> , was divorced (?)	May pay double the price of a commodity
<i>Mrj=s-gr</i>	Addressee of the second communication, accused of bad behavior by <i>Ḥnw.t-mrw.t</i>	Had an issue with someone (<i>Ḥwj</i> and <i>T3-ḥr.t</i> ?) about bread and a basket? which may cost <i>Pn-Jmn</i> double
<i>Twj / Tjj</i>	Addressee of the second communication, accused of bad behavior by <i>Ḥnw.t-mrw.t</i>	–
<i>Ḥnw.t-ḏww</i>	Addressee of the second communication, accused of bad behavior by <i>Ḥnw.t-mrw.t</i>	–
<i>Nḥt-Jmn</i>	Brought bread to <i>Ḥnw.t-mrw.t</i> ?	–
<i>Nb-n-M3r.t</i>	Involved in a delivery	–
<i>Tj-n.t-jp.t</i>	–	Involved in the matter
<i>Nḏm.t-bḥd.t</i>	–	Involved in the matter

As evidenced by the grammatical and palaeographic discussions of sections 3–5, the letters date to the first part of the 19th dynasty. A prosopographical investigation leads to a more precise dating within the long reign of Ramesses II. The names attested in both letters point to the family of *S3-Mw.t* (i) (Davies 1999, chart 27). The close connection of this family to the family of *Q3ḥ3* (i), the famous foreman of the

left side, was first noticed by Thomas G. H. James.⁵¹ In what follows, information about each individual is discussed separately (see the full family tree in fig. 23) and a contextualized interpretation of the letters is proposed in the Conclusion.

Table 2

object/relative dating individual	Stela Turin N. 50069 S I	Stela BM EA 144, early R II	Stela Turin N. 50012, Year 20	Stela BM EA 328 Year 20	TT 330 <i>Knr (i)</i> <Year 40	Statuette MET <Year 40	O. BM EA 5634, Year 39/40	Stela BM EA 818, Year 40	TT 219 <i>Nb-n-M^r.t (ii)</i>	Other
<i>Tj-ḥr.t (ii)</i>	x single	x married	x 5 children		x	x		x		
<i>Knr (i)</i>		x married	X married 2x, 5 children	x	x shabti	x	retired dead?	x		
<i>S-Mw.t (i)</i>			x		x					
<i>Pt-šd.t (ii)</i>			x		x					
<i>S-Mw.t (ii)</i>			x ²							
<i>Hj (ii)</i>			x							
<i>Hwj (xx)</i>			x							
<i>Mhj (i)</i>			x							
<i>Tj-wr.t (vi)</i>			x		x					
<i>Jrtj-nmh (i)</i>			x							
<i>Nwb-ḥr.tj (i)</i>			x							
<i>Hwj-nfr (iii)</i>			x eldest son	x eldest son	x	x	x	x		
<i>S-Mw.t (iii)</i>			x ²		x stela frg.		x	(x)		dead, O. BM EA 66411, Year 9 Mer.
<i>Hwt-jj/jj (s.t)</i> <i>Wgd-ms (i)?</i>										O. BM EA 66411, Year 9 Mer.
<i>Wsr-ḥt (viii)</i>			x							
<i>Hwj (xxi)</i>			x							
<i>Mrtj-s-gr (v)</i>			x eldest daughter		x shabti stela frg.	x		x	x	
<i>Nb-n-Mr.t (ii)</i>							x		x	
<i>Wp-w.t-ms (i)</i>						x			x	O. DeM 202, Turin N. 57099, Year 38
<i>Hwj (ii)</i>									x	
<i>Tj-ḥr.t (iii)</i>									x	
<i>Pt-šd.t (i)</i>			x		x	x		x	x	
<i>Nb-R' (i)</i>							dead?		x	
<i>Hj (i)</i>									x	= <i>Hj (iii)</i>
<i>Nḥt-jmn (iii)</i>							x ²		x	
<i>Pt-ḥrtj-pd.t (iii)</i>									x	
<i>Jmn-m-jp.t (iv)</i>										
<i>Nfr.t-jrj (ii/viii)</i>								x	x	
<i>Pn-dw' (iii)</i>							x		x	TT 3
<i>Knr (vi)</i>									x	TT 3
<i>Pt-šd (v)</i>									x	TT 3

continued on next page

⁵¹ James 1970, 50.

A family affair in the community of Deir el-Medina: gossip girls in two 19th dynasty letters

object/relative dating individual	Stela Turin N. 50069 S I	Stela BM EA 144, early R II	Stela Turin N. 50012, Year 20	Stela BM EA 328 Year 20	TT 330 <i>Knr</i> (i) <Year 40	Statuette MET <Year 40	O. BM EA 5634, Year 39/40	Stela BM EA 818, Year 40	TT 219 <i>Nb-n-M^r.t</i> (ii)	Other
<i>Ndm.t-bhd.t</i>									x	TT 3, 326, stela Geneva D 55
<i>Hwj s:t Ndm.t-bhd.t</i>									x	TT 3, stela Geneva D 55
<i>Tj-nt-jp.t</i> (i)					x shabti			x		
<i>Hnsw</i> (i)							x			
<i>Hnw.t-šww</i> (i)								x		
<i>Jn-hr-ḥ</i> (i)							x			
<i>Knr</i> (ii)										
<i>Hj</i> (iv)										
<i>Hwj</i> (v)										
<i>Qḥr</i> (ii)										
<i>Hnw.t-mrw.t</i> (i)								x		
<i>Pn-jmn</i>										
<i>Jj-NN</i>					x					
<i>Qḥr</i> (i)	x workman	x foreman								
<i>Twj/Tj</i> (i)	x									Court of TT 216

6.1. *Hnw.t-mrw.t*

The sender of Letter I is a woman named *Hnw.t-mrw.t*. This name is attested for a single individual in Deir el-Medina so far: *Hnw.t-mrw.t* (i), the daughter of *Knr* (i) and *Tj-ḥr.t* (ii).⁵² This letter was probably addressed to her mother, from outside of the village. *Hnw.t-mrw.t* is attested on the damaged limestone stela BM EA 818. This stela belonged to her father *Knr*, who is depicted in the first register in front of a goddess; only the lower part of the goddess is preserved and no inscription remains.⁵³ The stela was acquired in 1854 by the British Museum.⁵⁴ The individuals and titles attested on the stela confirm that it comes from the community of Deir el-Medina. The lower register of the stela depicts the *nb.t-pr Tj-ḥr.t* and eight of their (eleven known)⁵⁵ children – all of whom are depicted as adults and linked to their

⁵² Davies 1999, 275.

⁵³ https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA818 [18 September 2020].

⁵⁴ James 1970, 49, pl. XL.

⁵⁵ The children missing from the stela are a daughter, *Jj-NN*, and two sons, *Wsr-ḥr.t* (viii) and *Hwj* (xxi). As none of the objects quoted by Davies 1999, 275, n. 892, refer to a son called *Pj-šd*, the name *Pj-šd* (xvii) probably stems from an incorrect reading of *KRI* III, 824,13 in which *s<.t>=s Pj-šd* is written. This phrase refers to the daughter who is attested on several objects, and conforms to the arrangement of the tomb inscriptions: first daughters, then sons. *Hwj* and *Wsr-ḥr.t* are depicted as small boys on stela Turin N. 50012. This stela dates to an earlier period (see below). The two boys are attested only on this object and probably left the set-

mother by the term *sꜣ/t=s*. Following the two sons, *Ḥwj-nfr* (iii) and the (possible and quite probable) reconstruction *Sꜣ-Mw.t* (iii), three pairs of daughters appear: *Mrj=s-gr* (v) and *Nfr.t-jrj* (ii/viii), *Pꜣ-šd.t* (i) and *Tj-n.t-jp.t* (i), and *Ḥnw.t-dww* (i) and *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i). The names of all six daughters were probably followed by the epithet *mꜣ-ḥrw*. The paired arrangement of the women is known from other contexts; it is possible that they are depicted according to the order of their birth, from eldest to youngest.⁵⁶ *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* would therefore be one of the younger children born to this couple; this hypothesis is supported by further evidence discussed below. Based on iconographic and stylistic criteria, stela BM EA 818 may be dated to a period between the early and the middle part of the reign of Ramesses II. Prosopographical evidence points towards the middle of this reign (max. year 40, which is when *Knr* probably died), and this is supported by the palaeographic features of the stela.

Ḥnw.t-mrw.t would have been born around year 20 of Ramesses II (slightly earlier, depending on the date of stela Turin N. 50012). Five of her sisters married within the settlement and remained there. *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* left the village around year 40. Living somewhere nearby, she might have married⁵⁷ and met her sisters/family occasionally at the *mrj.t* (as mentioned in Letter 1). This marketplace (on the riverbank) was an important meeting point and place to exchange products and goods, as well as the latest news and gossips.⁵⁸

6.2. *Tꜣ-ḥ.t*

A woman called *Tꜣ-ḥ.t* is the addressee of the first communication of Letter 1 and appears in Letter 2 as well. We know three women with this name in Deir el-Medina, all from the family of *Qꜣḥ* (i) and *Knr* (i).⁵⁹

Tꜣ-ḥ.t (i) and her husband *Ḥj* (i) were the paternal grandparents of *Qꜣḥ* (i), and must have lived in the late 18th and early 19th dynasty.⁶⁰ The couple had a son,

tlement because – unlike their elder brothers – they did not get a job in tomb construction. Consequently, stela BM EA 818 does not include them, but includes their younger sisters, who would have been born after the Turin stela was produced.

⁵⁶ Gabler 2017, 18–20; Gabler, forthcoming.

⁵⁷ She was also somehow connected to *Pn-Jmn*: according to Letter 1, she spent some time in his house. For a discussion of this point and the identification of *Pn-Jmn*, see section 6.6.

⁵⁸ Its location is debated. For an overview of the textual references and a discussion of its location, see Gabler 2018a, Exkurs, 334–336. According to administrative texts, there were several *mrj.t*-places on the East and West bank (one around Deir el-Bahari, one around Deir el-Medina, etc.). In the letters, the phrase probably refers to the *mrj.t* close to the village, on which Jac. J. Janssen focused during his inaugural lecture ‘De Markt op de Oever’ in 1980.

⁵⁹ Davies 1999, 305.

⁶⁰ Davies 1999, 13.

Ḥwj (ii), who married *T3-nḥsj* (i). At least eight children were born from the marriage of *Ḥwj* (ii) and *T3-nḥsj* (i), among them, the foreman of the left side, *Q3ḥ3* (i), *Ḥwj-nfr* (ii), and *T3-ḥ3.t* (ii), who was named after her grandmother.⁶¹

T3-ḥ3.t (ii) married *Knr* (i) *s3 S3-Mw.t* (i), with whom she had at least eleven children: four sons and seven daughters who are known from different sources.⁶² The two Turin letters refer to five of her daughters: *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i), *Nfr.t-jrj* (ii/viii), *Tj-n.t-jp.t* (i), *Mrj=s-gr* (v), and *Ḥnw.t-dww* (i). She is depicted on several stelae, either in the context of the family of her brother *Q3ḥ3* (i) or with her own family.

Stela Turin N. 50069 is dedicated to *Ḥwj* (ii) and *T3-nḥsj* (i) and mentions several of their children, including *T3-ḥ3.t* (ii). The focus of this object is *Q3ḥ3* and his family, as it depicts some of his children. It must have been erected before *Q3ḥ3* (i) was appointed foreman in the early years of Ramesses II as he bears the simple title *sdm-š m s.t M3.t* on the stela. If we assume that *Q3ḥ3* (i) did not become foreman before the age of 20 in the early years of Ramesses II, he and his sister *T3-ḥ3.t* would have been born at the latest at the beginning of the 19th dynasty.⁶³ As such, the stela should be dated to the reign of Seti I (confirmed by stylistic reasons) or less likely to the early years of Ramesses II, before *T3-ḥ3.t* got married and had children. *T3-ḥ3.t* (ii) may have been their eldest daughter, as indicated by the decision to name her after her grandmother.⁶⁴

Stela BM EA 144 records *Q3ḥ3* as foreman (*ḥrj js.t m s.t M3.t*) and depicts *T3-ḥ3.t* in the last register, as well as her husband, *Knr*, and her brothers, *P3-ḥrj-pd.t* (ii) and *Ḥwj-nfr* (ii/iv).⁶⁵ It should be dated to the early years of Ramesses II, when *Q3ḥ3* replaced *P3-šd* (x) as foreman and his sister *T3-ḥ3.t* married *Knr*. As *Q3ḥ3*'s brother-in-law, *Knr* (i) is depicted first, followed by *Q3ḥ3*'s siblings, *P3-ḥrj-pd.t* (ii), *T3-ḥ3.t* (ii), and *Ḥwj-nfr* (ii/iv).⁶⁶

Most of the objects (stelae, tombs, statues) that depict *T3-ḥ3.t* focus on her husband, *Knr* (i), and are discussed in section 6.3. *T3-ḥ3.t* (ii) is otherwise not attested

61 Davies 1999, chart 3.

62 Davies 1999, 274–275, chart 27. *P3-šd* (xvii) is an erroneous reading for *P3-šd.t* (i), see above. The couple had only four sons.

63 Gabler (2018b, 169) summarizes age groups and the ages at which certain functions would have been occupied.

64 https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA144 [18 April 2020].

65 James 1970, 46–47. Stelae BM EA 144 and Turin N. 50069 both probably originate from the area of the tomb of *Q3ḥ3* (TT 360) or of his father *Ḥwj* (TT 361). *Jn-ḥr-ḥ3* (i) *s3 Q3ḥ3* (i) is also attested on stela BM EA 144.

66 James 1970, 46–47. James suggests identifying *Ḥwj-nfr* as the son of *Knr* and *T3-ḥ3.t* (ii). This identification does not fit well with either the arrangement of the figures (*Ḥwj-nfr* should be next to *Knr* and *T3-ḥ3.t*) or the relative chronology of the individuals (all of whom are depicted as adults). *Ḥwj-nfr* (iii) would have been born around the time the stela was produced. Why *P3-ḥrj-pd.t* is depicted between *Knr* and *T3-ḥ3.t* remains an open question.

in administrative texts so far: the Turin letters mark her first appearance in hieratic texts.⁶⁷

T3-ḥꜣ.t (ii) must have been born during the reign of Haremhab or Ramesses I; she married *Knr* in the early years of Ramesses II (who died around year 40; see below) and would have died towards the end of the reign of this king. She lived for roughly 70 years, maybe even longer, and must have been highly influential. She was born into an important family; six of her seven daughters married within the community; and she survived her husband for quite some time (possibly as head of the family), coordinating various matters (the feast for Meresger; care-taking of her sick daughter *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t*) as evidenced by the letters.

T3-ḥꜣ.t (iii), named after her grandmother *T3-ḥꜣ.t*, was the daughter of *Mrj=s-gr* (v) *sꜣ.t T3-ḥꜣ.t* (ii) and *Nb-n-Mꜣꜣ.t* (ii). Little is known about this woman. She is depicted in TT 219, her father's tomb, together with her siblings, among whom is *Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms* (i),⁶⁸ and she must have been born in the middle of the reign of Ramesses II, according to the relative chronology of her family. As such, *T3-ḥꜣ.t* (iii) should most likely be excluded as the addressee of Letter 1.

Having settled these two identifications for Letter 1, we continue by identifying further individuals mentioned in the two letters as well as discussing the family's relative chronology.

6.3. *Knr* (i) and sons

Knr (i), the husband of *T3-ḥꜣ.t* (ii) and father of their eleven children, is not mentioned in the letters, but it is necessary to discuss several of his attestations in order to develop the inner chronology of the family and to date the letters more precisely.

Stela BM EA 328 depicts the god Ptah, Ramesses II, and the vizier *P3-sr* in its first register.⁶⁹ The second (and final) register includes a short prayer to Ptah by the *sḏm-šꜣ m s.t Mꜣꜣ.t Knr* and his son the *sḏm-šꜣ m s.t Mꜣꜣ.t Ḥwj-nfr*. It seems that father and son were active together in the crew when the object was manufactured. *Ḥwj-nfr* (iii) was most likely the family's eldest son and would have been 15 to 20 years old when he worked with his father (who would have been around 40). The stela

67 Gabler, forthcoming, explains why women are rarely attested in administrative texts of this period. *T3-ḥꜣ.t* probably appears in an unpublished hieratic letter written by the same scribe (O. IFAO OL 4119; under study by St. Polis).

68 Davies 1999, 237, chart 21. This 'brother' married *Ḥwj* (ii), who is one possible sender (the less likely one) of the second letter. For a discussion of this question, see section 6.5.1.

69 https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA328 [18 September 2020]. The last attestation of *P3-sr* as vizier is in year 21 of Ramesses II, cf. Frood 2007, 148.

dates to approximately year 20 of Ramesses II. James suggests that the object may originate from the area of TT 330, the tomb of *Knr* and *T3-ḥꜛ.t*.⁷⁰

TT 330 is located at the northern end of the Western necropolis, on the upper terrace in the corner close to TT 8. The small tomb is badly preserved and its interior is in poor condition. The second/middle register of the preserved decoration in the chapel depicts eight family members, including the late father of *Knr*, *S3-Mw.t* (i), and *S3-Mw.t*'s wife, *P3-šd.t* (ii). *Knr* is referred to as *sdm-ꜛš m s.t M3.t*. The same register depicts at least five further relatives – of whom only *Knr*'s sister, *T3-wr.t* (vi), can be clearly identified.⁷¹ The third register focusses on *Knr*'s family: his wife *T3-ḥꜛ.t*, and their children *s3.t=s Mrj=s-gr*, *s3.t=s P3-šd.t*, *s3.(t)=f (Tj-n.t-)jp.t*, *s3.t=f Jj-NN*, *s3=f Ḥwj(-nfr?)*, and *s3=f NN*.⁷² The change of the suffix (=s to =f) and the link to either the mother or the father is unsystematic. Judging from what is accessible and legible, it seems that the daughters were depicted before the sons. *Nfr.t-jrj*, *Ḥnw.t-dww*, and *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* are missing from the inscriptions – though they appear in stela BM EA 818 – while another daughter, *Jj-NN* (possibly the youngest), is included. The three missing daughters may however have been depicted in the missing parts of the decoration/text. Assuming that all the children were depicted according to their age, *Mrj=s-gr* would have been the eldest daughter and *Ḥwj-nfr* the eldest son. *Nfr.t-jrj* is missing between *P3-šd.t* and *Tj-n.t-jp.t*, as are *Ḥnw.t-dww* and *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t*. Speaking of the sons, *S3-Mw.t* as well as *Ḥwj* and *Wsr-ḥ3.t* are missing. The latter two had probably left the village by then (see above and below), while *S3-Mw.t*'s name may be included amongst the damaged portion of the inscriptions. The texts may have been installed around year 20 of Ramesses, by which time all of the children were born, but they were most likely written later on. Why *Knr*'s famous sons-in-law (*Nb-n-*

70 James 1970, 49–50, pl. XL.

71 One name may contain the element 'w', while another one may contain the element *Jj-NN* (maybe the name of the daughter depicted in the third register). The tombs in the Western Necropolis usually form family clusters, as in the case of the *Ḥwj-Q3-ḥ3-*family (to which *T3-ḥꜛ.t* belonged); see Gabler and Salmas, forthcoming. However, this family cluster (TT 360 and 361) is located at the opposite end of the site – at the southern end of the necropolis – while TT 330 is located at the northern end, surrounded by the tombs of ordinary workmen from earlier periods. Note that an increasing lack of space is not a convincing reason for locating TT 330 in the northern corner, as most of the tombs were under construction during the time of Ramesses II. *Knr*'s sons-in-law (*Nb-n-M3.t* and *Jn-ḥr-ḥꜛ*) had tombs within their family clusters at more prominent locations. The necropolis administration had to grant a tomb (cf. McDowell 1999, 67–69). O. BM EA 5624 clearly states that locations for tombs were allocated to the crew by the State during the reign of Haremhab. One may assume, however, that the exact locations were discussed within the community. Because *Knr* probably joined the crew in the early years of Ramesses II, he had no family cluster to connect a tomb to, and no ancestors in Deir el-Medina (except by marriage). He was thus probably granted a spot to build a (small) tomb, without connection to the family cluster, in the northern corner.

72 Bruyère 1925, 93–97, pl. II and XXVI; *KRI* III, 824, 12–14.

Mꜣ.t (ii), *Nb-Rꜥ* (i), *Pn-dwꜣ* (iii), *Hꜣsw* (i) and *Jn-hꜣr-hꜣ* (i) are not mentioned in TT 330 remains open to debate, though their interment would permit a more precise dating.⁷³ A fragment of a limestone stela from the tomb further permits the possible identification of the son *Sꜣ-Mw.t* (iii), the daughter *Mrj=s-gr* (v), and her daughters (*Knr*'s granddaughters), perhaps *Hwj* (ii) and *Tꜣ-(hꜣ.t)* (iii).⁷⁴ In addition, three shabtis are also known: for *Mrj=s-gr* (v), for *Knr* (i), and perhaps for (*Tj-n.t-jp.t* (i)).⁷⁵

Stela Turin N. 50012 most likely originates from TT 330, even if it must have been created before the tomb itself – or at least before the tomb's decoration – as it depicts members of *Knr*'s family at different ages. Two sons are depicted as young boys and several other children are missing, that is, they were not yet born.⁷⁶ Most of the Turin stelae stem from the Drovetti collection acquired by the Museo Egizio in 1824. The corner of the necropolis in which TT 330 is located belongs to what was one of the highest and most easily accessible parts of the Western necropolis during the 19th century. Many (well-preserved) stelae and artefacts must still have been in their original location when the site was rediscovered around 1800, and it is possible that stela Turin N. 50012 did not come from the chapel of TT 330 but from one of the chapels nearby.⁷⁷ This stela provides important insights into the origins and ancestors of *Knr* (i). *Knr* is depicted in each of the stela's three registers:

(1) Making an offering (with a *ḥs*-vase) in front of the seated gods Osiris, Ptah-Sokar, Anubis, Horus, and Hathor. He is dressed in a short kilt of early Ramesside style, and named as *sdm-š m s.t Mꜣ.t ḥꜣr.tj-nꜣꜣ n Jmn m njw.t rsj Knr*.

(2) Making an offering (with an incense burner) in front of his ancestors and family in the role of a sem-priest (and dressed accordingly). The text refers to him as *sdm-š m s.t Mꜣ.t Knr mꜣ-hꜣrw sꜣ Sꜣ-Mw.t mꜣ-hꜣrw ms n nb.t-pr Pꜣ-šd.t*

73 The tomb and its inscriptions are not published; as such, a dating is difficult to establish.

74 Bruyère 1925, 96.

75 We would expect *Mrj=s-gr* (v) to have been buried with her husband *Nb-n-Mꜣ.t* (ii) in TT 219, and the tomb is located too far away for the shabti to be a stray find. The shabti might also be interpreted as a gift for her father. Two pottery fragments bearing the name of an Osiris *Twrꜣ* cannot be put in context. A similar case is stela St. Petersburg 44, which is dedicated to a certain *Wsr-hꜣ.t*. This man probably lived in the 18th dynasty; his filiation (*sꜣ Knr*) is not visible in Lieblein 1873, 26, contra Bruyère 1925, 97.

76 Porter and Moss 1960, 398.

77 Tosi and Roccati 1972, 47–49, 266; Gabler 2017, 20–21. During their 1908/09 season, the Italian mission directed by Schiaparelli explored by chance almost the same area – TT 1–10, 210–212, 215–217, as well as 1241, 1259, 1069, 1071, and 1089 (325?) – the upper terraces whose tombs were most easily accessible. We would like to thank Paolo del Vesco and Federico Poole for this information.

mꜣꜣ-hrw. The family members depicted are: his beloved father *hr.tj-ntr n Jmn m kꜣ.t? Sꜣ-Mw.t mꜣꜣ-hrw*; his mother, the *nb.t-pr Pꜣ-šd.t mꜣꜣ-hrw*; his brother, the *hrj mnj.w n Jmn Mꜣhj mꜣꜣ-hrw*; his sister *Tꜣ-wr.t*; his brother, the *hr.tj-ntr n Jmn Hꜣj mꜣꜣ-hrw*; his brother, the *hr.tj-ntr Hwj*; his beloved sister *Jr.tj-nmḥ mꜣꜣ-hrw*; and his wife (*ḥm.t=f*), the *nb.t-pr Nwb-hꜣ.tj*.

(3) Sitting as passively as Osiris, *sdm-š m s.t Mꜣꜣ.t hr jmnt.t njw.t*, accompanied by his wife, the *sn.t=fmrj=f nb.t-pr Tꜣ-hꜣ.t* and his beloved brother the *bꜣk n Jmn Sꜣ-Mw.t mꜣꜣ-hrw*, as well as two small, naked boys, his sons *Hwj* and *Wsr-hꜣ.t mꜣꜣ-hrw*. The active role of the donor of the object – the individual depicted bringing a flower offering – is taken by his beloved son *Hwj-nfr mꜣꜣ-hrw*, accompanied by his daughters *Mrj=s-gr mꜣꜣ-hrw* and *Pꜣ-šd.t*; all three children are depicted as adults.

We concur with the common interpretation of these registers, which posits that *Knr* and his family (parents, siblings, and his first wife, *Jr.tj-nmḥ*) worked first in Thebes/on the East bank on tasks that were most likely related to the Karnak temple. Almost all of the male family members (the father *Sꜣ-Mw.t* and three sons) occupied the profession of *hr.tj-ntr*, while the fourth son was the chief of herdsmen. It is likely that *Knr* was amongst the craftsmen who were transferred from other building projects (e. g., Karnak) to Deir el-Medina in the early Ramesside period.⁷⁸

Knr probably arrived at the village with his brother *Sꜣ-Mw.t* (ii), who is depicted in the Turin Stela in the same register as the new Deir el-Medina relatives. But because this man is attested only on this stela, it is also possible that the inscription *sn* was a mistake for *sꜣ* and that we are dealing with *Sꜣ-Mw.t* (iii) (see below). We have no further information about *Knr*'s father, mother, or other brothers and sisters beside the information that is included in his tomb inscriptions (patronym and matronym) and on the stela. As such, *Knr* may have joined the crew alone (or with *Sꜣ-Mw.t* (ii)), without his first wife (whom we know only from the Turin stela). *Jr.tj-nmḥ* may have died at an early age, or was unwilling to move, or they may have divorced. In any case, this first marriage does not seem to have produced children (*Knr* was certainly fairly young, around 20 years old, when he came to the village).

Knr married a second time when he joined the crew, this time to an important local woman, *Tꜣ-hꜣ.t* (ii), whose ancestors (probably all resident in the village) can be traced back for three generations.⁷⁹ This marriage to the sister of the subsequent foreman of the left side, *Qꜣhꜣ* (i), connected him to one of the most influential families in the community. *Knr* himself was probably an eligible bachelor, as the newly

78 For an overview, see Soliman 2015, Table 102, 489–490. Note that *Sꜣ-Mw.t* (i), however, certainly did not transfer to Deir el-Medina.

79 Davies 1999, chart 3.

appointed inhabitants of the village took on specific jobs as stonemasons, draughtsmen, or painters; appreciated for their skills, they were often housed in the southern sectors that were built at the time of Seti I.⁸⁰

Stela Turin N. 50012 can be dated, iconographically and stylistically, to the first half of the reign of Ramesses II (earlier than year 20 at the latest, as three of *Knr*'s children, or four, depending on whether one identifies *S3-Mw.t* (ii) or (iii), are depicted as adults); being 15 to 20 years old, they were maybe not yet married. Two younger sons are depicted as young boys. The five absent daughters would have been born after the stela was produced, from max. year 20 onwards; they would have been old enough to get married sometime in the following 15/20 years. Stela Turin N. 50012 probably served as a memorial object – designed to honour *Knr* and his ancestors – commissioned by his eldest son *Hwj-nfr* and intended to provide himself and his family (as outsiders) with some history in the new social environment of Deir el-Medina.⁸¹

Knr was a *hr.tj-nṯr*. This title is attested from the Old Kingdom onward.⁸² It is commonly translated as necropolis workman, and more specifically as quarryman or stonemason/stonecutter. *Knr* would certainly have performed such masonry-related tasks at the construction sites in the Valleys of the Kings and Queens from the beginning of the reign of Ramesses II onwards.⁸³ *Hrtj-nṯr* is a functional title, rarely attested in the context of Deir el-Medina in the Ramesside period.⁸⁴ It embraces different duties of daily life and could be used in religious and funerary contexts in addition to the usual cultic title *sdm-š m s.t Mṯ.t*.⁸⁵

Knr is also represented by the wooden statuette New York MMA 65.114.⁸⁶ He is carrying a standard crowned with the head of a falcon. The statuette dates to the

80 Gabler 2018a, 526; Gabler, forthcoming. For *Knr*, no dwelling can be identified based on the available data.

81 The name *Knr*, written with the throw stick (T14), suggests a foreign origin. Fischer (1977, 137–140) suggests the fourth cataract. A discussion of the name is found in Ward 1994, 74–78, 84–85, who suggests a Libyan origin. The name and its spelling are too vague to indicate any (foreign) origin in the case of *Knr* (i), especially as all his other relatives bear common Egyptian names.

82 Jones 2000, no. 2894.

83 Whether he joined the crew in the time of Seti I is doubtful, as *T3-ḥr.t* is depicted without her husband on stela Turin N. 50069, which dates to this period.

84 The DMD Leiden (<https://dmd.wepwawet.nl/>) gives only 15 hits, and most of these attestations are in lists on ostraca dating to the 18th dynasty, as well as in a few administrative ostraca from the early Ramesside period (Gabler 2018a, 183). Besides P. BM EA 10055, all the 20th dynasty attestations occur in Turin papyri. The title also appears occasionally in hieroglyphic inscriptions from Deir el-Medina dating to the times of Seti I and Ramesses II.

85 Functional titles were seldom used in religious or funerary contexts, cf. Beck and Gabler 2019, 55.

86 Fischer (1977, 137–140) assumes that the statuette would have been placed in the tomb of *Knr*.

reign of Ramesses II.⁸⁷ Henry Fischer labelled its inscriptions from (a) to (i).⁸⁸ Text (a) consists of a small emblem for Amun-Ra, typical of statues of the Third Intermediate Period and later.⁸⁹ Inscription (b), located on the kilt, refers to *Knr* as *ḥmw.w wr m s.t Mꜣ.t*. The same text also appears on the right and left sides of the base, (h) and (i), as well as on the back pillar, (g), and the top of the base, (d) and relates him to Amun-Ra in Karnak, where he must have been employed before he moved to Deir el-Medina, see above. On the staff (c), *Knr* is referred to as *šdm-š m s.t Mꜣ.t* and *ḥmw.w wr*.⁹⁰ His wife is depicted on the right side of the statuette, along with inscription (f), which reads: *sn.t=fmrj=fnb.t-pr Tꜣ-ḥ.t mꜣ-ḥrw, sꜣ.t=s Mrj=s-gr mꜣ-ḥrw*.⁹¹ This inscription again proves that *Mrj=s-gr* (v) must have been his eldest daughter. Inscription (h), on the back of the base, mentions his son *Ḥwj-nfr* (iii), lending further support to the hypothesis that *Ḥwj-nfr* was the eldest son. *Ḥwj-nfr* is also referred to in text (d) on top of the base. Judging by the style and iconography of the object, as well as the prosopographical information, the statuette should be dated to the early years of Ramesses II, when the couple had only these two children (max. year 10). Alternatively, it may be that – due to a lack space – only the eldest male and female were included, meaning a date of max. year 40 (the last attestation for *Knr* occurs shortly before). This would conflict with text (e), however, a short inscription at the surface of the base beneath the staff, which is almost invisible in the photographs accessible via the MMA online database. This line mentions *sꜣ.t=f Pꜣ-šd.t mꜣ-ḥrw sꜣ n Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms mꜣ-ḥrw*. The first part refers to *Pꜣ-šd.t* (i), a daughter of *Knr* (probably the second oldest, according to stela Turin N. 50012). The name *Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms* is known for one person in Deir el-Medina: *Knr*'s grandson *Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms* (i), the son (in-law?) of *Mrj=s-gr* (v) and *Nb-n-Mꜣ.t* (ii). No *Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms*

87 <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/545870> [19 April 2020].

88 Fischer 1977, fig. 32, 31, 138.

89 We are grateful to M. Marée who supports dating the statue to the period of Seti I and the early years of Ramesses II from an iconographic and stylistic point of view. Similar statues from Deir el-Medina also date to the first half of the reign of Ramesses II, e.g. for *Rꜣ-ms* (Turin C. 3046, Leiden AH 211), *Pꜣ-šd* (Turin C. 3047), *Pn-bwj* (Turin C. 3048), *Jmn-nḥt* (Leiden AH 210), without inscription (Turin C. 3049). The statuette Leiden AH 210 bears a similar emblem for Amun-Ra. <https://collezioni.museoegizio.it/>; <https://www.rmo.nl/en/collection/search-collection/> [25 June 2020].

90 His father-in-law *Ḥwj* (ii) bore the same title *ḥmw.w wr*, e.g., O. Carnarvon 300 PP. Because this title is attested more often during the reign of Seti I and the early years of Ramesses II, its use provides a further indication of the object's date. Davies (1999, 274) interprets the title as 'merely honorific' – which may be correct. Note however that *Knr* had relationships with a 'real' *ḥmw.w wr*, his father-in-law.

91 The inscriptions on the back pillar and the right arm are hard to read, even with a high-resolution picture. They seem to include prayers, but no further relatives.

is attested earlier than year 38 of Ramesses II (see below).⁹² Fischer has already noted that this inscription is unusual; he concurs with the identification of *Pꜣ-šd.t* (i), but offers no solution for *Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms*, though he suggests that he may have been another son.⁹³ Correlating the iconography, style, and prosopography of the object, one can propose that the statue was produced in the early years of Ramesses II, and that inscription (e) was partly added at a later date:⁹⁴ *Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms* would have been born around year 20 and begun working actively around year 38/40 (but probably not in the crew).

Only four administrative ostraca refer to *Knr* (i).⁹⁵ O. Ashmolean Museum 116, which records a deficit of water, must date before (or close to) year 40, depending on whether *Knr* himself is referred to or whether his name was intended to represent the household even though he was already dead.⁹⁶ Column I, in which *Knr* is listed, may reflect the delivery sequence of water to houses in sector S.E. – these homes received 1 ¼ sack of water, the usual amount for a workman's family.⁹⁷ Consequently, only houses S.E. I, IV, or V could have housed this family.⁹⁸ O. Berlin P. 14350, a list of 20 workmen, includes *Knr*. According to Gutgesell, the text dates between year 38 and 40, with 38 or 39 being more likely.⁹⁹ O. DeM 843 is a grain ration list of 13 workmen that records their monthly wages. *Knr* opens the list, receiving 1 ½ sacks; he is followed by his son-in-law, *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* (1 sack); another of his sons-in-law, *Pn-dwꜣ* (1 ¼), appears in line 13. *Knr* and *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* seem to be linked to the left side, while *Pn-dwꜣ* perhaps belonged to the right. According to Grandet, the text should be dated before year 39.¹⁰⁰ O. Varille 12 also dates to the period shortly before year

92 Davies 1999, chart 21, 275. His father/father-in-law *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* (ii) was active between year 25/26 and 64 of Ramesses II; see section 6.5.1 below.

93 Fischer 1977, 140. The construction *sꜣ n* is puzzling; an emendation to *sꜣ=f* would make sense.

94 His name may have been added (later) because he was the eldest (and only) 'grandson' (at that time); or added in the mid-reign of Ramesses II on the occasion of his grandfather (in-law?)'s death around year 40; or added after *Knr*'s death. See the discussion about *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* and *Mrj=s-gr*. Only an investigation of the original may prove whether or not these signs vary from the other hieroglyphs.

95 Other texts dating to the late 19th dynasty probably refer to *Knr* (ii) *sꜣ Jn-ḥr-ḥꜣ* (i), a grandson of *Knr* (i); *Knr* (iii) lived in the 20th dynasty. Davies 1999, 16, 19, chart 3.

96 Janssen 1979, 12. It is possible that O. DeM 10170 records water delivered to a *Ḥwj-nfr*; see Grandet 2010, 56–57. As most of the water delivery texts date to the period of Ramesses II, it is possible that *Ḥwj-nfr* (iii) or (ii/iv) is meant here.

97 Gabler 2018a, 126–128.

98 The other houses in the S.E. sector can be assigned to other inhabitants; Gabler, in preparation.

99 Gutgesell 2002, 99.

100 Grandet 2003, 21–23.

40 (36 to 40).¹⁰¹ The text lists 15 persons – usually with a title – either wab-priests or sculptors, and a guardian. *Knr* is recorded as *šdm-š m s.t Mꜣꜣ.t ḥr Jmnt.t njw.t*. Some of the other individuals seem to have been related to him: the *wꜣb Ḥnsw* may have been his son-in-law (i), as may *Pn-dwꜣ* (iii). The wab *Ḥwj* was possibly another relative.¹⁰²

Knr (i) must have died around year 40 of Ramesses II. In any case, he was certainly retired by then, as O. BM EA 5634 does not include him in the working schedule, while it includes his son *Ḥwj-nfr* (iii) as well as several of his sons-in-law.¹⁰³

Stela BM EA 818, which belonged to *Knr*, is discussed above in the section dedicated to *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t*. This item dates again to max. year 40 of Ramesses II, shortly after *Knr* (i) must have died.

6.4. The sons – and their families

Knr's younger sons *Wsr-ḥꜣ.t* (viii) and *Ḥwj* (xxi) (named after his uncle *Ḥwj* (xx)) are known only from the stela Turin N. 50012 (and probably left the village at some point around year 20 in order to seek jobs elsewhere), but the two elder sons *Sꜣ-Mw.t* (iii) and *Ḥwj-nfr* (iii) were given positions in the gang, working for a while together with their father.¹⁰⁴ They must have been born in the early reign of Ramesses II (before/around year 10). *Ḥwj-nfr* was possibly active in the crew from year 20 onwards, while *Sꜣ-Mw.t* joined the gang some 10 years later. Any timeline for *Sꜣ-Mw.t* (iii) depends on whether we identify him on the Turin stela or not. If we do not (and instead identify *Sꜣ-Mw.t* (ii)), then *Sꜣ-Mw.t* (iii) would appear to have been *Knr*'s youngest son, born after the Turin stela was produced; in this case, he would have joined the crew only after his brother *Ḥwj* and *Wsr-ḥꜣ.t* had left. If we identify *Sꜣ-Mw.t* (iii) on the Turin stela, he would represent the second oldest son, and his name (following that of his paternal grandfather and uncle) would reflect the practice of name-giving in Deir el-Medina.

¹⁰¹ Gutgesell 2002, 85; Černý NB 107.44.

¹⁰² O. Berlin P. 14340 and O. IFAO 1010 refer to *Knr* at this period (Gutgesell 2002, 99, 112–113).

¹⁰³ Graffito 589 (*KRI* III, 611, 7–8) records the *šdm-š m s.t Mꜣꜣ.t Knr* and his 'son' (the son-in-law) and foreman *Jn-ḥr-ḥꜣ*. At the time this text was carved, *Knr* seems to have still been active in the crew, and *Jn-ḥr-ḥꜣ* already promoted to the rank of chief workman. In O. BM EA 5634, however, *Jn-ḥr-ḥꜣ* (i) is still an ordinary workman (see below). An explanation that accounts for these observations entails the promotion of *Jn-ḥr-ḥꜣ* in year 40 of Ramesses II, when *Knr* would still have been alive but most likely retired.

¹⁰⁴ *Ḥwj-nfr* and *Sꜣ-Mw.t* may be attested on O. Gardiner 265, from the reign of Merenptah; see Gutgesell 2002, 62–63. Pace Davies (1999, 27) and Grandet (2010, 49), it is uncertain whether *Sꜣ-Mw.t* (ii) lived in Deir el-Medina.

Hwj-nfr (iii) was *Knr*'s oldest son (see stelae BM EA 144 and 328, as well as the wooden statuette discussed in section 6.3). It is possible that he worked with his father for 15 to 20 years. The Turin stela supports this hypothesis, as *Hwj-nfr* is the donor of the object. Named after his uncle *Hwj-nfr* (ii/iv) *s; Hwj* (ii), *Hwj-nfr* (iii) is attested on a couple of ostraca.¹⁰⁵ He is numbered amongst the 40 workmen attested on O. BM EA 5634 in year 40,¹⁰⁶ where he is noted as having been ill for several days. At that time, he must have been around 35 years old. Even if he reached old age, he was probably no longer active as a workman under Merenptah.¹⁰⁷ *Hwj-nfr* is also attested in two water ration lists, O. DeM 189 and 370. In the first text, his

105 Davies 1999, 17–18, 275. Davies lists twelve individuals with the name *Hwj-nfr*, often in relation to the family of *Hwj* (ii) and *Qj:h* (i). It is therefore not always clear whether an attestation relates to *Hwj-nfr* (iii) or a namesake (see below).

106 The same text attests to several further men that are relevant to the family and its chronology. *Pn-dw* (iii) is attested with *Jn-ḥr-ḥ* (i) who was absent from work because his wife (*Hn-w.t-dww* (i)) had her period on the 4th month of *ḥt*, day 17. At this time, he was still acting as a workman (and had not yet been appointed the foreman of the left side). *Hnsw* (i) was ill for several days; so was *Nb-n-M*:t. Janssen (1980, 127–135) observes that a clear distinction of the workmen between the right and the left side is not apparent and requires further discussion. According to O. Toronto ROM 906.20.1, *Hwj-nfr* belonged to the right side (max. year 38/39 of Ramesses II); see Gutgesell 2002, 104. However, contra Gutgesell, *Hwj-nfr* must have been active in the crew much earlier than year 36; see above.

107 According to Gutgesell (2002, 64 vs. 109), *Hwj-nfr* would have died around year 2 of Siptah or year 8 of Ramesses III – aged 70, 80, or even 90! He was most likely retired towards the end of the 19th dynasty. Furthermore, several namesakes are known from the same period: *Hwj-nfr* (iii) or *Hwj-nfr* (ii/iv) may be attested in the following texts: Ramesses II – O. IFAO 331 (year 36, with the title *ḥmw*, pointing to *Hwj-nfr* [ii/iv], whose father was a *ḥmw.w wr*), O. DeM 10125, O. IFAO 597, 1347 (each close to year 40). The latter texts must refer to namesakes, as *Hwj-nfr* (ii/iv) would have been approximately 80 to 90 and *Hwj-nfr* (iii) 70 years old in the reign of Seti II. Even if one of these two men reached such an old age, he was probably not active in the crew and thus unlikely to be recorded in work lists, cf. O. DeM 621 (Merenptah?, which refers to a *Hwj-nfr* on the right side); O. Cairo CG 25510, 25516 (each Seti II, incl. another *Knr*); O. Cairo CG 25507, 25513, O. Ashmolean Museum 37, O. Černý 4 (each Seti II?); O. Cairo CG 25521 (year 1/2 Siptah, which refers to a *Hwj-nfr* on the left side), O. Cairo CG 25519, O. DeM 695, 10127 (a *Hwj-nfr* on the right and left side, as well as a *Knr* on the left), O. Gardiner Frag. 22 a (with *Hnsw* and a *Jmn-m-jn.t*), O. Turin N. 57388 (each Siptah?). For the texts, see Gutgesell (2002, 56), who admits that *Hwj-nfr* might refer to two different workmen bearing the same name. A filiation appears in texts of the 19th dynasty only for *Hwj-nfr* (ix) *s; Tj*; in O. Cairo CG 25505 (Seti II/Siptah). Scribes usually used patronyms for workmen when dealing with two contemporaneous namesakes. Therefore, at least two, even three, namesakes were working towards the end of the 19th dynasty. O. DeM 560 refers to the scribe *Hwj-nfr*, along with *Hj* and two women; see Gutgesell 2002, 142 and see below. O. DeM 10351 includes a certain *tj-mḏ:t Hwj-nfr* (vii) and a *Hnsw* in the 19th dynasty, cf. Grandet 2017, 95–96.

brother *S3-Mw.t* is also present.¹⁰⁸ The brothers received the normal amount of water for workmen, 1 ¼ sack.¹⁰⁹ This text might indicate the sequence of deliveries to the houses in the N.E. sector, as might O. DeM 370, which includes the house of *Hwj-nfr*.¹¹⁰ Given the fact that their father *Knr* is also named in such a list (O. Ashmolean Museum 116) and that the three men acted simultaneously as workmen, they must have all occupied different houses. Moreover, O. DeM 189 must reflect rations before year 40, as *Jn-hr-h'* (i) receives the ordinary amount of water (the ration for foremen was higher).¹¹¹ O. DeM 370 probably dates around the same period.¹¹² Unfortunately, the sectors N.E. and N.O. were excavated several times (see section 2) and objects possibly originating in these structures are not documented, while the area is partly damaged.¹¹³ The water account can therefore only broadly indicate the location of the houses of *Knr*, *Hwj-nfr*, and *S3-Mw.t* in the northern part of the village. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that both sons must have left their family home and moved to their wives' homes, or taken over the houses of relatives. Without the names of their wives, however, we cannot confirm whether the men came to live in these houses as a result of the pattern whereby houses were passed on to female children within families.¹¹⁴ No wife or children are attested for *Hwj-nfr*, though he was almost certainly married when he was a member of the crew. One can assume that his wife was the daughter of an ordinary workman, as chances would otherwise be high that more information would be available about a woman from an important family.¹¹⁵

The wife of *S3-Mw.t* (iii) is mentioned anonymously on O. BM EA 5634 as having her period on day 25 of the 1st month of *pr.t* and day 23 of the 4th month of *pr.t*, as Terry Wilfong has convincingly shown. Jac. J. Janssen observes that, on day 23 of the 4th month of *pr.t*, a daughter of *W3d-ms* (i) was sick and that her father was also away from work.¹¹⁶ Given further evidence for menstrual synchrony among exactly

108 The name *S3-Mw.t* is used only in *Knr*'s direct family (his father, his brother, and his son). The name appears in Deir el-Medina exclusively in the 19th dynasty.

109 Davies 1999, 275; Gabler 2018a, 126–128. The list O. DeM 10163, which includes *Q:h3*, *P3-hrj-pd.t*, *S3-Mw.t*, *Qn*, *Nfr-rnp.t*, and *Jmn-ms* could theoretically also be a water list, cf. Grandet 2010, 48–49.

110 Gabler and Salmas, forthcoming.

111 Gabler 2018a, 126–129. At the same time, the text is one of the earliest pieces of evidence for the scribe *Qnj-hrj-hpš=f* (i), who took on the title of Scribe of the Tomb in year 40.

112 Gutgesell 2002, 109.

113 Gabler and Salmas, forthcoming.

114 Gabler, forthcoming. Following the suggestion that their dwelling is located in the Northern sector, the find-spot of the letters might have been in this area; see section 2.

115 Gabler, forthcoming.

116 Janssen, 1980, 127–152; Demarée 2002, pl. 25–28. Wilfong 1999, 419–434, especially 425–427. However, Janssen fails to distinguish *S3-Mw.t* (i) from (ii) or (iii), the grandson/son on the stela Turin N. 50012 (p. 143). In any case, it is unlikely that *S3-Mw.t* (ii), who would

these women,¹¹⁷ it is possible that *Sj-Mwt* (iii) was married to a relative of *Wjḏ-ms*. According to O. BM EA 664II, the *rmt-ḏs.t Sj-Mwt* was married to *Ḥwt-jj*. His wife had to pay his debts, amounting to 12 sacks of emmer and 8 sacks of barley,¹¹⁸ to at least eight creditors after his death in year 9 of Merenptah at the estimated age of 65.¹¹⁹ The name *Ḥwt-jj* is rare in Deir el-Medina. It appears in O. Turin N. 57062 (year 47 of Ramesses II), a text that is difficult to interpret, but in which *Ḥwt-jj* swears an oath, perhaps to the goddess Anukis.¹²⁰ In O. VM 3000, also middle of

have been *Knr* (i)'s contemporary, was still active later than year 40 of Ramesses II, especially considering how rarely he is attested.

- 117 Davies 1999, chart 6. There is only one *Wjḏ-ms* attested in the community; he had only one son (*Nb-nfr*). *Ḥwt-jj* may have been the daughter of this *Wjḏ-ms*. The workman was active during the mid-reign of Ramesses II; his son *Nb-nfr* (iii) was active towards the end of the 19th dynasty.
- 118 For comparison, a workman's monthly ration was 4 sacks emmer and 1 ½ sacks barley. The debts are at least as high as four months' wages, and 20 sacks correlate to 160 deben! These large debts may indicate a major investment, e.g. work on a tomb, its decoration, funerary equipment, or the purchase of several animals. The names of the creditors favour the first suggestion: the *sš(w)-qd Nfr-ḥtp* and *Jpwj* seem to have been involved in craftsmanship. TT 330, which may be the family's tomb, is too poorly preserved to suggest the possible burial of *Sj-Mwt* (iii) in the tomb of his father *Knr* (i).
- 119 McDowell 1999, 181; Toivari-Viitala 2001, 212; Gutgesell 2002, 9, 62–64. Gutgesell refers to O. Zurich H 2, but this is incorrect; the ostrakon is O. Zouche H 2 = O. BM EA 664II. *Sj-Mwt* (iii) is also attested in O. Gardiner 219, together with his brother-in-law *Pn-dw*; in O. DeM 661 with his brother-in-law *Ḥnsw*; and in O. Cairo CG 25524. All these texts stem from shortly before he died in year 9 of Merenptah. *Ḥwt-jj* may have been born around year 25 if she was the daughter of *Wjḏ-ms*; in this case, her husband would have been around the same age, or possibly up to 15 years older (depending on whether or not *Sj-Mwt* (iii) is attested on stela Turin N. 50012). In O. Turin N. 57080, a *rwḏw*-inspector, *Sj-Mwt*, is recorded as being involved with wood deliveries and deficits. On the basis of other documents that include this title, one can assume that this *rwḏw* is a different person than *Sj-Mwt* (iii) – perhaps *Sj-Mwt* (ii)? Gabler 2018a, 80–81, 431–433.
- 120 The same text mentions *Pj* (i), the father-in-law of *Pj-šd.t* (i) – who was a sister of *Sj-Mwt* (iii) – or *Pj* (ii), a grandson of *Pj* (i), as a 'water-carrier/carrying water for Anukis'. For a summary of the interpretations of this text, see Donker van Heel 2016, 47–48. According to O. Berlin P. 11247, *Pj* (i) became blind; this text can be dated to year 50 of Ramesses II at the latest. Otherwise, we have no evidence for *Pj* (anymore). *Pj-R-ḥtp* (i), the son to whom the letter is addressed, must have been born in the early years of Ramesses II. Attested around year 40, his son *Pj* (ii) died at the end of the 19th dynasty; see below. When exactly *Pj-R-ḥtp* (i) died is hard to determine, due to the existence of several namesakes during the reign of Ramesses II, of which probably only one or two lived until the time of Siptah. Gutgesell 2002, 149–150, dates *Pj* (i) from year 5 of Ramesses II until year 4 of Amenemesse. This seems highly unlikely, as it would mean that the man lived to be over 110 years old. *Pj* (i) must have been born in the very early 19th dynasty. In year 47 of Ramesses II he was probably around 60, 70, or even 80 years old (depending on whether he was born under Haremhab, Ramesses I, or Seti I). The loss of his eyesight at this age seems realistic. The *Pj*

the reign of Ramesses II, *Hwt.t-j* is included in a list of at least 18 women.¹²¹ In both cases, we are probably dealing with the wife of *Sj-Mwt* (iii); any children of theirs are unknown. O. VM 3000 includes several names that can be related to the family of *Knr* (and the two letters): *Nfr.t-jrj* and *Mrj=s-gr* might have been *Hwt.t-j*'s sisters-in-law (see section 6.5). The anthroponym *Hwt.t-j* might be spelt elsewhere as *Hwt.t-jj*; she was a sister of *Nfr-htp* (iii).¹²² The origin of the two women is unknown, but the name *Nfr-htp* would point to the family of *W3d-ms* (i), whose wife *Jj-m-w3w* (ii) was a granddaughter of *Nfr-htp* (i).¹²³ If *Hwt.t-j* is indeed *Hwt.t-jj*, this possible wife of *Sj-Mwt* (iii) would have been around 12 to 15 years old in year 39/40, and would have reached an estimated age of roughly 70 years under Ramesses III.

6.5. The daughters – and their families

6.5.1. *Mrj=s-gr* (v) and *Nb-n-M3:t* (ii) – and family

The pieces of evidence discussed thus far suggest that *Mrj=s-gr* (v) was the eldest daughter of *T3-ht.t* (ii) and *Knr* (i) – born in the early years of Ramesses II and depicted as an adult on stela Turin N. 50012, when she would have been around 15 years old. Her 'son' *Wp-w3.wt-ms* (i) is attested around year 40 of Ramesses II, which means that *Mrj=s-gr* would have married her husband about year 20, that their son was most likely born shortly thereafter, and that he was old enough for work around year 40 (being 15 to 20 years old). In addition to *Wp-w3.wt-ms* and *Hwj* (ii), the couple had at least four other children, including three daughters: *T3-ht.t* (iii), who was named after her maternal grandmother, *T3-jnj.w* (i), and *Hnrw* (vi).¹²⁴

Mrj=s-gr was married to *Nb-n-M3:t* (ii).¹²⁵ The inscriptions on an offering table record *Nb-n-M3:t* together with his parents-in-law, *T3-ht.t* and *Knr*. The table is partly destroyed, but it seems probable that *Mrj=s-gr* was mentioned in the lost portions of the table.¹²⁶ Other attestations of *Nb-n-M3:t* (ii) *s3 Jmn-nht* (xxi) support the scenario

attested in the reign of Amenmesse (who died in year 4) must be *P3j* (ii), as argued by Davies 1999, 152. O. Cairo CG 25784 reads, in r° 3: *Nb-Jmn qrs P3j*. The letter O. Černý 19 seems to have been written by *P3j* (i) on the occasion of the death of his wife, *Mrj.t-R3* (ii), the mother of *P3-R3-m-ht* and the addressee of the letter, who would have worked on his mother's coffin.

121 Gutgesell 2002, 26; Hagen 2016, 210–212. *Hwt.t-j* appears on r° II, 6, alongside *Hnw.t-mhj.t*, *Hnw.t-jwnw*, *T3-Mrj.t*, and *3s.t*. The *verso* includes a *Nfr.t-jrj* and *Mrj=s-gr*, see also section 6.7.

122 O. Louvre E 13156, see *Hnw.t-dww* (i) below, as well as other texts.

123 Davies 1999, chart 6.

124 Davies 1999, chart 21.

125 Davies 1999, 236–239.

126 Bruyère 1928, 39, fig. 26.1; Maystre 1936, 5–7; Davies 1999, 237. While the *Knr*-family was linked with the title *b3k n Jmn*, *Nb-n-M3:t* was a *b3k n Hwt.t-Hr*. This information derives from

adduced so far. *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* was active in the crew from at least year 25/26 onwards (by which time he was likely married to his wife). He probably served until year 64 (being the only individual of that name at that time).¹²⁷ In year 25 and 26, he got involved in some business with *Nb-Rꜣ* (i) over a period of eleven months.¹²⁸ *Nb-Rꜣ* was the husband of *Pꜣ-šd.t* (i), a sister of *Mrj=s-gr* (v). Both couples would have been married by then. In the grain ration list of O. DeM 843, *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* appears alongside his father-in-law *Knr* (i) and another of his brothers-in-law, *Pn-dwꜣ* (iii), all of whom acted together on the crew.¹²⁹ According to O. DeM 621 + 829 – where he receives 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ sacks of grain on the left side of the gang – *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* (ii) worked until year 64,¹³⁰ which means that he worked actively for a period of (at least) 40 years, until the approximate age of 65. He appears again in the list of O. DeM 188 + 373, where he receives 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ sacks, the usual amount of water per household, even though the amount may also refer to a grain ration.¹³¹ This text might even date to the reign of Siptah or Tausret. In this case, either his name was intended to refer only to the household; *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* (ii) reached the age of 85; or we are dealing with a third (unknown) *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t*.

Nb-n-Mꜣ:t is also recorded together with his brother-in-law, *Pn-dwꜣ* (iii), in the water account O. Ashmolean Museum 195, where each man receives one *jnḥ.t-jar*.¹³² In O. DeM 706, he is again on the left side, and once more with his brothers-in-law: *Pn-dwꜣ* (iii) and *Sꜣ-Mw.t* (iii) (on the right side) and *Hnsw* (i) and *Nḥt-Jmn* (iii) (on the left). O. BM EA 5634 provides little information, but it does let us know that *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* was ill four times. *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* also appears with *Pꜣ-šd.t* (i), the wife of *Nb-Rꜣ* (i), in the presence list O. Cairo CG 25573 (see section 6.5.2). The couple

the lintel Turin N. 6026 and 6050 and traces on the wall of a hut in the west group in the mountains/Village du Col. *Mrj=s-gr* is mentioned on a stela fragment with some of her siblings; see *KRI* III, 827,7.

- 127 Davies 1999, 236. *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* (ii) was named after his grandfather (i), his only attested namesake in Deir el-Medina.
- 128 According to O. Ashmolean Museum 228, *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* gave some grain, bread, and natron to *Nb-Rꜣ*. Later on, he gave some further bread, grain, and a leather skin to him. The text does not give any further information about the trade, for instance, whether *Nb-Rꜣ* as *sš-qd* decorated an item for *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t*. Interestingly, the reverse of the ostrakon was used as a palette; it depicts the sign for *ḥsmn* (natron). The limestone piece may have been used to smooth natron by one of the two families, but it has no find-context; see DMD Leiden. In O. DeM 641, *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* is referred to in the context of bread and dates.
- 129 Grandet 2003, 21–24, 212–214.
- 130 Grandet 2000, 76, 77, 213. Grain ration lists usually list titles alone (*sš*, *ꜣ n js.t*, *sj*, etc.), and only list individual names when additional payment is concerned or deficits have to be paid. The amount of 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ suggests such a scenario; as a retired workman, *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t*, would certainly have received a lesser ration.
- 131 Gabler 2018a, 637.
- 132 Gabler 2018a, 126, 130.

Mrj=s-gr and *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* (and probably two of their nephews, *Nḥt-Jmn* and *Ḥj*), are mentioned in Letter 1, in the context of bread delivery (maybe in relation to the feast organized by *Tꜣ-ḥꜣ:t*). Furthermore, *Mrj=s-gr* is accused by her sister *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* of casting her in a bad light.

TT 219 was the family's tomb. It depicts several of the couple's children (*Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms* (i) or *Ḥwj* (ii), *Ḥnrw* (vi), *Tꜣ-jnj.w* (i), *Tꜣ-ḥꜣ:t* (iii), and possibly more) and at least one grandson, *Nb-mḥj.t* (iv). It also depicts *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t*'s parents-in-law, *Knr* and *Tꜣ-ḥꜣ:t*, as well as *Pꜣ-šd.t* (i) and her husband *Nb-Rꜣ* (i) (both with and without their sons), the *sš-qd Nḥt-Jmn* (iii) and *Ḥj* (i), and *Nfr.t-jrj* (ii/vi) with her husband *Pn-dwꜣ* (iii) and their sons *Pꜣ-šd* (v) and *Knr* (vi).¹³³ Pace Davies, it seems unlikely that *Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms* would have had a son (*Nḥj* (vii)) when the tomb was decorated in the first half of the reign of Ramesses II. *Nḥj* (vii) must have been another 'son'/relative of *Mrj=s-gr* and *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t*, and thus a brother/-in-law of *Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms* (they are both called *sꜣ=f* in the inscriptions).¹³⁴ Even if *Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms* was married around year 40, his possible children would have been very young (< 10 years), and certainly not depicted as adults in TT 219.

According to Davies, *Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms*' wife was *Ḥwj* (ii); she is a possible candidate for the identification of the *Ḥwj* who sent Letter 2, and was probably around the same age as her husband.¹³⁵ *Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms* and *Ḥwj* are depicted together several times in TT 219 offering either to the gods or to their parents. Besides the tomb and the statuette MMA 65.114 (discussed in section 6.3), his name is attested in the context of pottery delivery on only two ostraca: O. Turin N. 57099 (delivering vessels, with *Jmn-m-jn.t* or *Jmn-m-jp.t*, in year 38, 1+ month of *pr.t*, day 21)¹³⁶ and O. DeM 202 (delivering vessels, 3rd month of *pr.t*, day 18). *Ḥwj* is attested only in TT 219 and maybe in the Turin letters. Because this family (*Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms*, *Ḥwj*, and their relative *Nḥj*) are rarely mentioned in Deir el-Medina and because they are all labelled as *sn/.t/=f/=s*, *Wsjr*, and *nb.t-pr* in the few available inscriptions, it is likely that they worked outside of Deir el-Medina, possibly as potters. Given the rarity of the name, one may identify the *Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms* of TT 219 with the deliverer mentioned in the ostraca.¹³⁷

It is not clear, however, why the (potential) children of *Mrj=s-gr* and *Nb-n-Mꜣ:t* were not named (as one would expect) after their grandparents or other relatives. The names *Wp-wꜣ.wt-ms* and *Nḥj* are not attested on either the paternal or maternal

133 Maystre 1936, 9–11. The family scene is pl. IV.

134 For a discussion of the possible scenarios, see Gabler 2018a, 313–314, 682. He could be identical to the potter *Nḥj* (VIII).

135 Davies 1999, 237.

136 Gutesell 2002, 6; Gabler 2018a, 683, 714. We are probably dealing with *Jmn-m-jp.t* (xvi = ii), the *smd.t*-scribe of the left side and possibly the son of *Mjn-ms* (i).

137 Gabler 2018a, 313–314.

side of the family,¹³⁸ but *T3-ḥ.t* (iii) was named after her grandmother (ii). Nonetheless, the scenes of TT 219 seems to confirm that the two men are ‘sons’ – *Wp-w3:wt-ms* performs the role of different priests in ceremonies for his ‘parents’ and is referred to in the inscriptions as *s3=f*, which can be interpreted in multiple ways. Another scenario would posit *Ḥwj* (ii) as the biological daughter of *Mrj=s-gr* and *Nb-n-M3:t*; her husband, *Wp-w3:wt-ms* (the relation ‘son-in-law’ expressed as *s3=f*), would then have taken on the duties of a son in the tomb decoration because they had no son of their own.¹³⁹ As the eldest daughter (named after her great-grandfather, *Ḥwj* (ii)), *Ḥwj* could not have been depicted as the main ritualist in these scenes, but instead is shown together with *Wp-w3:wt-ms*, and – in one scene – is even depicted slightly larger than her husband.¹⁴⁰ The painter perhaps tried to match the relations between the family members with the male-centric conventions of Egyptian texts and images. This second scenario would fit with the names of the family members and their roles, and would explain why the unusual name *Wp-w3:wt-ms* is rarely attested.

Ḥwj was born around year 20, and probably had to leave the village once she was old enough to get married (around year 35 to 40), having been unable to secure a husband who was part of the crew.¹⁴¹ She found a husband in the form of the potter *Wp-w3:wt-ms*, and – though outside of Deir el-Medina – she would have been able to keep in contact with her family through letters, as is perhaps confirmed by the new documents as well as by deliveries made by her husband and his family to the village. If *Nḥj* (vii) is identified with the potter *Nḥj* (VIII), this man would be the older brother of *Wp-w3:wt-ms*, the brother of the son-in-law of *Mrj=s-gr* (= ‘*s3=f*’), attested around year 30.¹⁴² In our opinion, this is the most convincing scenario; it fails only to explain the name of *Wp-w3:wt-ms* on the statuette MMA 65.114, where *Ḥwj* = the eldest granddaughter of *Knr* would have been expected.¹⁴³

To sum up, either *Wp-w3:wt-ms* (a potter) or *Ḥwj* was the child of *Mrj=s-gr* and *Nb-n-M3:t*, and lived between year 20 and 40 plus. In any case, the couple *Wp-w3:wt-ms* and *Ḥwj* must have lived and worked outside of Deir el-Medina. They are both depicted in the family’s tomb, and they kept contact via work-related activities and occasional meetings in public spaces like the *mrj.t*-place. *Ḥwj* and *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t*

138 *Nḥj* (VIII) was also a potter, which supports the identification of *Wp-w3:wt-ms* as a potter, Gabler 2018a, 682.

139 Davies 1999, chart 21.

140 Maystre 1936, pl. V, 29, pl. VI. Depictions of children in the tombs of their families who acted in the service personnel are possible, especially in the time of Seti I and Ramesses II, cf. Gabler 2018a, 127, 165–166, 314.

141 Gabler, forthcoming. Marriage outside of the village was common for many girls born to ‘ordinary’ workmen.

142 Gabler 2018a, 313–314.

143 As the relevant inscription is not clear from the photos, we cannot exclude the possibility that *Ḥwj* was recorded in addition to *Wp-w3:wt-ms*; see above.

may have shared a similar destiny, and wrote letters about different matters to the village, where the letters were kept. If we identify *Hwj* (ii) as the sender of Letter 2, she certainly provides further insights into the issues pertaining to the basket of *Hj* and *Hnw.t-mrw.t*. *Hwj* could have provided additional information from the outside: moving around (maybe to Thebes), she could have kept track of the basket and informed her uncle or uncle-in-law *Pn-dw*; by message. However, this scenario cannot explain why *Hwj* is called *s:t Nfr.t-jrj* in Letter 1. No daughter is attested for *Nfr.t-jrj* (ii/viii) and *Pn-dw*; (iii) so far: either we are dealing with an as yet unattested child or we should read ‘*s:t*’ according to a different interpretation; see below. A more plausible scenario concerning the identity of the sender of Letter 2 is suggested in section 6.5.3 where *Ndm.t-bhd.t* and her daughter *Hwj* are discussed.

6.5.2. *P3-šd.t* (i) and *Nb-Rc* (i) – and family

This couple is not mentioned in the Turin letters and both individuals are briefly discussed here in order to reconstruct the entire family and their time frame, and because their children are attested in these texts. Named after her paternal grandmother, *P3-šd.t* (i) was probably the second oldest daughter of *T3-ht.t* (ii) and *Knr* (i). She was most likely born around the same period as her sister *Mrj=s-gr* (in the early years of the reign of Ramesses II) and she is attested in the same contexts: stela Turin N. 50012, statuette MMA 65.114, stela BM EA 818, the family’s tomb TT 330, and TT 219, the tomb of her brother-in-law *Nb-n-M3.t* (ii) (where she appears with three of her four sons in different combinations: the *sš.w-qd Nht-Jmn* (iii), *Hj* (i), and *P3-ħrj-pd.t* (iii)).

P3-šd.t (i) married the *sš-qd Nb-Rc* (i) *s; P3j* (i), with whom she had at least four sons: *Nht-Jmn* (iii), *Hj* (i), *P3-ħrj-pd.t* (iii), and *Jmn-m-jp.t* (iv). They also had one daughter, whose name we do not know. The *šrj.t Nb-Rc* is mentioned in O. DeM 10218 in the context of textiles.¹⁴⁴ According to O. Ashmolean Museum 228 (see above), the couple were married at the latest in year 25/26 of Ramesses II and their first children had been born by that time. The *sš-qd Nb-Rc* (i) has no namesake within the village; *Nb-Rc* (II) was a *šd-ht* in the reign of Siptah and possibly a grandson

¹⁴⁴ Grandet 2010, 101. Davies refers to the offering table Turin N. 22029 on which another grandchild of *P3j* (i) (*s:n s:f Hwj*) is recorded. Either this grandson was related to *P3-Rc-m-ħb* (i), he may have been named after his maternal grandfather, *Hwj* (ii), the father of *T3-ht.t* (ii). *Nb-Rc* and his wife are mentioned in the inscriptions. Davies 1999, 150. This child is not shown in chart 10.

of *Nb-R^c* (i); this grandson might be a child of the otherwise unattested daughter who most likely married outside of the village.¹⁴⁵

The family consists of several *sš.w-qd* ‘draughtsmen’. Like *Nb-R^c*’s father, *Pj* (i), his brothers *Pj-R^c-m-ḥb* (i) and *Pj-R^c-ḥtp* (i) inherited the title and probably received their training within the family. The only son not attested with this title is *R^c-wbn* (ii). Two sisters named *Bk.t-R^c* (i) and (ii) are also known to have been born to *Pj* (i) and *Mrj.t-R^c* (ii).¹⁴⁶ The members of this family are responsible for several letters on ostraca and papyri. *Nb-R^c* wrote some of these messages¹⁴⁷ to relatives: O. Brussels E 6781 to his brother, the *sš-qd Pj-R^c-m-ḥb* (i) (around year 25 to 32);¹⁴⁸ O. DeM 558 to the *sš-qd Nḥt-Jmn*, probably his son (around year 40 to 58);¹⁴⁹ O. DeM 10250, again to his son, the *sš-qd Nḥt-Jmn* (iii), dealing with *mḏj.w*. *Nb-R^c* is also the addressee of the unpublished ostrakon O. IFAO 102, a letter written by the scribe *Bk*. His name also appears in O. IFAO 1519 (also unpublished). In O. DeM 240, several members of the family are linked to sandals produced by the sandal-makers *Mḥj* and *Ḥ^c*: *Pj* (i), *Pj-R^c-ḥtp* (i), *Nb-R^c* (i), and *Pn-dw^c* (iii) (his brother-in-law; see section 6.5.3). Footwear is also discussed in O. DeM 126 and O. DeM 10249. The three texts may be dated roughly to year 30 of Ramesses II.¹⁵⁰ O. Turin N. 57431 contains a passage from the *Teaching of Amenemhat*, which was certainly copied by the *sš-qd m s.t M^c.t Nb-R^c* (even if the name *Ḥnw.t-nfr.t* appears on r° 5).¹⁵¹ The handwriting is obviously different from the cursive hieroglyphic hand on O. DeM 1153, a passage of the Kemit which contains the same ‘signature’ *jn sš-qd Nb-R^c*.¹⁵² Furthermore, *Nb-R^c* left

145 Gabler 2018a, 82 (e. g. O. Cairo CG 25593, 25603); Gabler, forthcoming. *Pj* (i), the father of *Nb-R^c* (i), appears to be attested until year 47, according to O. Turin N. 57062; see Davies 1999, 150.

146 Davies 1999, chart 10; for *Pj* (i) and (ii), see above. *Pj* (i) must have died around year 50 of Ramesses II (at 60 to 85 years old, and probably blind), *Pj* (ii) in year 4 of Amenmesse. Details on the monuments of *Pj* (i) are provided by Malek 1979, 153–156.

147 *Nb-R^c* may have been responsible for (at least parts of) O. Toronto ROM 906.19.5, on the reverse of which he is indicated as the sender.

148 Gutgesell 2002, 148.

149 Gutgesell 2002, 116–117. The text must date to around year 40 or before, as *Nb-R^c* is no longer attested after year 40.

150 Gutgesell 2002, 60–61; Gabler 2018a, 390–391, correcting my previous suggestion that the sandal-maker *Mḥj* may have been the brother of *Pj* (i) *s: Jmn-ms* (i), not of *Pj* (i) *s: Jpwj* (v).

151 Cf. Gutgesell 2002, 132; Lopez 1982, 41, pl. 138. *Ḥnw.t-nfr.t* may be identified with *Ḥnw.t-nfr.t* (ii), the daughter of *Qjḥ* (i) and sister of *Jn-ḥr-ḥ^c* (i) (who married *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (i), a sister of *Pj-šd.t* (i)).

152 Some additional names and titles are visible at the end of this text: *jn sš-qd Nb-R^c*, [...] *s:f sš Ḥwj? s:f sš Bk-j-? ḥrj-^c sš NN*. Some letters were sent by the *sš-qd Nb-R^c* with a similarly elaborate spelling of the element Ra (see O. Brussels E 6781, O. DeM 558, and O. DeM 10250).

several graffiti, sometimes writing out only his name and title, and sometimes the names of his colleagues in addition.¹⁵³

The wife of *Nb-Rʿ* – *tꜣ ḥm.t Nb-Rʿ* (= *Pꜣ-šd.t*) – is mentioned in a list of workmen, O. Cairo CG 25573.¹⁵⁴ The text dates to approximately year 40 of Ramesses II, indicating that *Pꜣ-šd.t* was still alive at that time. Interestingly, *Nb-Rʿ* himself is not included in the list, raising the possibility that his wife replaced him at work just like in the duty roster O. DeM 145 where *Tꜣ-wr.t-m-ḥb* assumed the duties of *Nfr-ḥr*.¹⁵⁵ *Nb-Rʿ* is not recorded in O. BM EA 5634 (also year 40), indicating that he may have retired or died around that time. If the Cairo ostrakon dates from shortly before, he might have been ill and his wife may have gone to work in his place. If this was the case, then his father *Pꜣj* (i) – who is still attested in year 47 – outlived his son. *Pꜣ-šd.t* perhaps died shortly after, as she cannot be traced after year 40. Since the couple is not referred to in the new Turin letters, they may have passed away before these messages were written. Their burial place is unknown.

Nb-Rʿ and his family left behind several stelae (all dating to the reign of Ramesses II) that the draughtsman may have (partly) produced himself.¹⁵⁶ The stela Berlin 20377 is a well-known object in the context of personal piety: *Nb-Rʿ* prays for his ill and badly behaving son, *Nḥt-Jmn* (iii), and *Ḥj* (iii) is attested as well.¹⁵⁷ These two men are certainly the *Nḥt-Jmn* and *Ḥj* of the Turin letters: the owner of the basket (and sieve) and the bringer of bread. The stela Turin N. 50056 also depicts the same three men: the *sš.w-qd Nḥt-Jmn* and *Ḥj* adore a cat. *Ḥj* (i) writes to his ‘*sn*’ the *sš-qd Pꜣ-Rʿ-m-ḥb* (i) in P. Grdseloff 1 (which is very probably written by the same scribe

153 Davies 1999, 154; *KRI* III, 659, 5–9 (= graffiti 849, 1045, 1050). *Nb-Rʿ* is also depicted in TT 2, 218, and 250, but without his wife.

154 The ostrakon originates from the Kings’ Valley, close to KV 47. Two women are mentioned at the end of this text, column II: the anonymous woman of *Nb-Rʿ* (*tꜣ ḥm.t Nb-Rʿ*; probably *Pꜣ-šd.t*) and a woman called *Jj*. The presence of the women in this context is extraordinary, as there is no direct evidence for the presence of any women at the construction sites; see Gabler, forthcoming.

155 DMD Leiden, turnus lists of year 30, 4th month of *šmw*. In Deir el-Medina, three women with that name are attested: the wife of *Nḥt-sw* (i), the daughter of *Nb-nfr* (xxiii) and the wife of *Ḥnsw* (vi) (who was a relative of *Nfr-ḥr* (i/vi), Davies 1999, chart 7), and the wife of *Jmn-nḥt* (v); the last two women are the likeliest candidates considering the dating. A similar case is found in O. Leiden 2000/1.2, where a *Tꜣ-wr.t-m-ḥb* is again included in a list of workmen (but in the context of grain rations), cf. Demarée 2000, 79–87.

156 For an overview, see Davies 1999, 153–154; *KRI* III, 653–659; Moje 2007, 147–148. *Nb-Rʿ* is attested solely on the stelae BM EA 276, Boston MFA 09.290, Turin N. 50063, and in N. 50036 with his son *Jmn-m-jp.t* (iv). Stela Louvre N. 4194 is made by *Nḥt-Jmn* (iii), *sꜣ Nb-Rʿ*. Besides, *Nb-Rʿ* is depicted on a stela (no. 207) published in Bruyère 1952, 51. I owe this reference M. Marée.

157 *KRI* III, 653–655.

as the two Turin letters); *sn* means uncle in this instance.¹⁵⁸ *Hj* (i) may have been named after the uncle of his mother *P3-šd.t* (i), *Hj* (ii).¹⁵⁹ The two sons might have been born around year 25 of Ramesses II, being some 15 years old when they actively worked in the crew around year 40.

Hj (i) is referred to as *sš-qd* twice, in the stela Turin N. 50056 and in the letter O. DeM 581. He is the sender of the latter, in which he asks for writing materials; *Hj* also seems to have been ill and lacking food, and asks *Mrj-R* (who was possibly the *smd.t*-scribe (iii) of the right side, attested before year 40) for supplies in the same message. Elsewhere, *Hj* is either not given a title (even if in the tomb inscriptions of TT 219, the title *sš-qd*, given to his aforementioned brother, *Nht-jmn*, may have applied to him),¹⁶⁰ or he is attested solely with the title *sš*.¹⁶¹ Černý commented upon the use of this title for *Hj* and explained that the title ‘scribe’ would have been more appropriate in the context of a letter.¹⁶² With respect to the stela Berlin 23077, the element *qd* is usually marked as “missing,” but this does not necessarily have to be the case. In O. Varille 3, an unpublished letter, the *sš Hj* writes to his ‘brother’ *Mhj*. In addition to *Mhj*, *Pjj* and *Pj* are also mentioned.¹⁶³ In the letter O. DeM 681, the *sš Hj* asks his ‘brother’ *P3-hj* to bring a *kbs*-basket and to give some items to the women *NN-n-jnh*, *Pn-n-NN*, and maybe *P3(-nht)*. Besides baskets, a supply of wood is required in connection to a certain *Hr*.¹⁶⁴ The letter O. DeM 10381 was sent by a *Hj* (*s; Nb-R?*) and is addressed to ‘his father *Jpw*’ – either his great-grandfather (v) (which is highly unlikely, because this man lived in the late 18th dynasty) or an otherwise unattested father-in-law.¹⁶⁵ In O. DeM 560, the woman *Wrnr* asks the scribe *Hjj-nfr* and a woman called *Nfr.t-h* to take care of their/her ‘brother,’ *Hj*, whom Davies identifies as *Hj* (i) and the husband or brother of *Nfr.t-h*.¹⁶⁶ If the latter is

158 Grdseloff 1940/1941, 533–536 (= *KRI* III, 542,7–9). The letter was found intact, folded into a package of 2 cm. It is a small reused part of a bigger papyrus; the message measures only 4 x 8 cm. The use of the term *sn* for ‘brother, brother-in-law, nephew, cousin, uncle’, etc. is common (see Bierbrier 1980, 100–107).

159 *Hj* (iii) was a *smd.t*-scribe of the right side, attested at the same time as *Hj* (i), around year 40 of Ramesses II (Davies 1999, 125–126).

160 Davies 1999, 154. The letter O. DeM 785 is addressed solely to *Hj* and concerns a mat.

161 In the unpublished and fragmentary letter O. OIM 13630, the *sš-qd* (or *rmt-js.t*, the beginning of r^o 1 is badly damaged) *Hj* writes to his ‘brother’ the scribe *Pn-dw*. The individuals of this letter would fit with the context of the Turin letters. Note that *Pn-dw* (iii) is otherwise not attested as a scribe; neither is *Hj* (iii) as a workman.

162 Černý 2001, 192. O. Turin N. 57124 lists the names of four ‘scribes,’ each with a title: *Pn-dw*, *Pjj*, *Hj* and *Mrj-shm.t*. This text is not a letter and contradicts Černý’s statement.

163 Černý NB 107.49. The text might relate to the issues referred to in O. DeM 240 (see, e.g., the sandals and the sandal-maker *Mhj*).

164 The name *P3-nht* is reconstructed by Wente 1990, 155–156.

165 Grandet 2017, 137–138.

166 Davies 1999, chart 10.

the case, the text may be dated towards the end of the lifetime of *Hj*, around year 50 to 60 of Ramesses II.

The letters written to and by *Hj* and sent from and to the village favour the identification of *Hj* (i) with *Hj* (iii), the *smd.t*-scribe, attested around year 40 of Ramesses II. It is conceivable that *Hj* replaced *Mrj-R'* (iii) around year 40 as *smd.t*-scribe (of the right side) and changed the title from *sš-qd* to *sš*.¹⁶⁷ This would explain the letters sent by *Hj* to the village, as well as their references to supplies (first asking for them, and later providing them).¹⁶⁸ According to O. Gayer-Anderson (unnumbered), the scribe *Hj* (iii) was responsible for fish deliveries in year 42 for at least 8 months, before a certain *Smj* took over. A clear connection to the right side is not apparent concerning *Hj* (iii), but because *Pn-T3-wr.t* (ii) occupied the position on the left,¹⁶⁹ it follows that *Hj* should be associated with the right. O. Berlin P. 14841 is addressed to *Hj* who is asked to bring fat; this would fit with his identification as *Hj* (iii).¹⁷⁰ In the letter Louvre E 27679, the anonymous sender asks the *sš Hj* to bring beans as a libation offering for his mother. *Hj* (i = iii) could have fulfilled such an urgent request and possibly dealt with baskets, sieves, and their contents, as in the two letters: *Hj* was the owner of the two items which were at the center of discussions between women of the family in both Letter 1 and 2.

Unlike *Hj*, *Nht-Jmn* (iii) remained in the crew, probably as *sš-qd*. He is attested in O. BM EA 5634 on a number of occasions in year 39/40 of Ramesses II, either with his boss, in trouble with his eye/s, or ill.¹⁷¹ In the letter O. DeM 558, from around year 40 of Ramesses II, the *sš-qd Nb-R'* (i) asks his son, the *sš-qd Nht-Jmn*, to take a person called *Nh* to the *qnb.t*-court because he did not bring what they agreed upon and to take care of other businesses with the *mdj P3-sr*.¹⁷² According to O. DeM

167 This scenario is supported by O. BM EA 5634, which does not mention *Hj*. Like *Mjn-ms* (i), *Jmn-m-jp.t* (xvi), another son of a member of the community, became a *smd.t*-scribe; see Davies 1999, 124; Gabler 2018a, 430, 434–435.

168 It is possible that he stayed in the village, where he had worked thus far as a draughtsman and moved around coordinating the service personnel later in life; compare the case of *Pn-njw.t* (i/iii).

169 Gabler 2018a, 715.

170 The name is not visible in DeM online, but is recorded in the DMD Leiden. The piece may originate from the village (it was found by G. Möller in 1913; https://dem-online.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/show_beschreibung.php?id=456&beschreibung=%2Fproj%2FHODF-G%2FOstrakaBerlinBeschr%2Fb14841-beschr.jpg&inventar_nr=Berlin+P+14841 [22 May 2020]), which would support the hypothesis that *Hj* lived in Deir el-Medina while occupying the office of *smd.t*-scribe. In an unpublished letter (on a Cairo ostrakon), the *sš-qd Nht-Jmn* writes to *Hj* and asks about *Nb-R'* and some goose fat. The two texts may be related to the stela Turin N. 50056 in which the two adore a big cat.

171 Demarée 2002, pl. 28.

172 Gutgesell 2002, 116–117; see above.

706, *Nḥt-Jmn* worked on the left side of the crew.¹⁷³ He received the letters O. DeM 783 (where he appears to have been unable to supply the sender with vegetables that year and offers a roll of papyrus in compensation) and 784 (concerning the cost of a mat).¹⁷⁴ In O. Berlin P. 14254, *Nḥt-Jmn* is mentioned together with *Ḥnsw* (i), his wife *Tj-n.t-jp.t* (i), and *Pn-dwꜣ* (iii), possibly after year 50 of Ramesses II.

The name *Nḥt-Jmn* is included in a grain or water ration list (O. DeM 86, Ramesses II); a grain ration list (O. Michaelides 65); and a list of workmen, found in the King's Valley (O. Cairo JE 72466), dating to the very end of the 19th dynasty. But *Nḥt-Jmn* (iii) had a namesake in the person of the *tꜣj-mdꜣ.t Nḥt-Jmn* (ii) s; *Pjjj* (ii), who lived at least until the mid-reign of Ramesses II. This man was also linked to the family: he was the brother-in-law of *Tj-n.t-jp.t* (i), that is, the brother of her husband *Ḥnsw* (i). The texts that date toward the end of the 19th dynasty probably refer to *Nḥt-Jmn* (iii), who could have reached an age of 60 to 70 years. His brother *Ḥj* probably died earlier, towards the end of the reign of Ramesses II. The references to trade and basketry strongly support the identification of *Ḥj* and *Nḥt-Jmn* in the Turin letters as *Ḥj* (i) and *Nḥt-Jmn* (iii).¹⁷⁵ *Nḥt-Jmn* brought bread to *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t*, probably outside of the village, while his uncle *Nb-n-Mꜣꜣ.t* was also involved in these transactions (Letter 1). From a prosopographical point of view, *Ḥj* could possibly be identified as the scribe who penned the Turin letters.¹⁷⁶

6.5.3. *Nfr.t-jrj* (ii/viii) and *Pn-dwꜣ* (iii) – and family

The couple *Pn-dwꜣ* (iii) and *Nfr.t-jrj* (ii/viii) are attested in the two Turin letters: *Nfr.t-jrj* is accused by her sister *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i) in the first letter, and *Pn-dwꜣ* is probably the addressee of the second letter, which was sent by *Ḥwj ꜣs.t Nfr.t-jrj*,¹⁷⁷ who was possibly his niece or more likely his sister (see below). *Nfr.t-jrj* was born after stela

173 The same text includes several relatives (see above): *Pn-dwꜣ*, *Nb-n-Mꜣꜣ.t*, *Ḥnsw*, *Sꜣ-Mw.t*, etc. (see Grandet 2000, 13).

174 He also received the letters O. DeM 965 (where he is referred to as *sꜣ-qd*) and O. DeM 969, as well as O. Louvre E 23554 (in which *Nḥt-Jmn* is requested to make some windows). O. DeM 972 was most likely written by *Nḥt-Jmn* to his father, the *sꜣ-qd Nb-Rꜣ*. As such, the letter probably dates close to year 40.

175 With respect to *Ḥj*, this identification is further supported by the rarity of his name; there is a single namesake *Ḥj* (iv), who acted as a doorkeeper in the 20th dynasty. *Nḥt-Jmn* had several namesakes within the same family, e. g. *Nḥt-Jmn* (xxi) was the father of *Nb-n-Mꜣꜣ.t* (ii). This man would have reached a very old age around year 50 of Ramesses II. The brother of *Nb-n-Mꜣꜣ.t*, *Jmn-nḥt* (xxiv) is hardly known from any sources. In any case, when and why scribes used *Jmn-nḥt* as opposed to *Nḥt-Jmn*, and whether there is a real difference between the order of the elements and the individuals, remains open to further investigation. The contemporaneous sculptor *Nḥt-Jmn* (ii) is discussed above.

176 Polis, in this volume, section 6.

Turin N. 50012 was produced; her two older sisters, *Mrj=s-gr* (v) and *P3-šd.t* (i), are attested on this stela while she is not. Born around year 15 to 20 (but before *Tj-n.t-jp.t* (i), *Hnw.t-dww* (i), and *Hnw.t-mrw.t* (i)), *Nfr.t-jrj* (ii/viii) is attested on stela BM EA 818 but not in the family's tomb TT 330, though this may be due to the tomb's poor state of preservation. *Nfr.t-jrj* and her husband are depicted in TT 219, the tomb of *Nb-n-M3:t* (ii), her brother-in-law. They had (at least) two sons, *P3-šd* (v) and *Knṛ* (vi), who are also attested in TT 219 (see above).¹⁷⁷ The close connection of the three elder daughters of *Knṛ* are confirmed by the scenes in this tomb: *Mrj=s-gr* (vi) married the (later) tomb-owner, and her two sisters (close in age) *P3-šd.t* (i) and *Nfr.t-jrj* (ii/viii) (plus their families) were included in the decoration. Furthermore, the relatives of *Pn-dw3* (iii) – his father *P3-šd* (x), his mother *Ndm.t-bhd.t*, a brother *Mnn3* (iv) and *Q3ḥ3* (vi) – are also depicted in the tomb.¹⁷⁸

We do not know much about *Pn-dw3* (iii) at first glance.¹⁷⁹ He is attested in only a handful of administrative texts under Ramesses II. He is listed on O. BM EA 5634, for instance, in one entry, where he is drinking with *Hnsw*, his brother-in-law (see 6.5.5). *Pn-dw3* was also involved in the sandal transactions within the *Nb-R*-family that are referred to in O. DeM 240 (see above). He also appears in the house and laundry list of O. DeM 258 (with *Hnsw* again);¹⁸⁰ in the list on O. Berlin P. 14254 (see above and below); perhaps in O. Gardiner 219 + O. BM EA 25289 (in an account alongside *S3-Mw.t* (iii)); possibly in O. Gardiner 199 (around year 40, in a list of workmen, with *Nb-n-M3:t* and his namesake *s3 Dd*); as the addressee of the letter O. OIM 13630, which was written by his 'brother' (his nephew *H3j* (i = iii)); and in O. Turin N. 57124 (again with *H3j*; see above).

However, more can be said about *Pn-dw3*'s background. His son *Knṛ* (vi) was named after his maternal grandfather, the father of *Nfr.t-jrj*. His other son, *P3-šd* (v), would have been named after his paternal grandfather, the father of *Pn-dw3* (iii). TT 3, the tomb of *P3-šd* (x) – foreman of the left side in the very first years of Ramesses II – is hardly discussed by Davies, who does not provide a chart for this

177 Davies 1999, 237, chart 36; Maystre 1936, 9–11. The family scene is on pl. IV.

178 Davies 1999, 166; Maystre 1936.

179 Davies 1999, 66. He has several namesakes in the family of *Qn* (ii) (*Pn-dw3* (i/vi)) and in the family of *Djdj* (i) (*Pn-dw3* (ii)), as well as a son of *Nw-nb* (*Pn-dw3* (iv)) and *Pn-dw3* (v), all of whom lived in the 19th dynasty. As in the case of *Hnsw* (see below), identification proves impossible when the name *Pn-dw3* is the only piece of information available. One of these four namesakes lived until the end of the 19th dynasty. Gutgesell (2002, 39) does not distinguish between these men and assumes that one person acted from year 32 of Ramesses II until the reign of Siptah. According to Grandet (2017, 10) the 'latest' attestations for *Pn-dw3* may reflect (iv) or (v). In O. DeM 706, a *Pn-dw3* is part of the right side. In the case of O. IFAO 989, is it likely that we are dealing with *Pn-dw3* (iii) and his father *P3-šd* (x).

180 This house (or the house of a namesake) is attested on O. DeM 818, in a query to an oracle.

family, which would explain *Pn-dwꜣ*'s origins.¹⁸¹ He was born to *Pꜣ-šd* (x) *sꜣ Mnnꜣ* (iii) and *Nđm.t-bḥd.t* (called *Tꜣ-bꜣy*), who is mentioned in Letter 2. As such, *Nfr.t-jrj* (ii/viii) married into another important family in the village.¹⁸² *Pn-dwꜣ* may have been a younger son of *Nđm.t-bḥd.t*, born in the early reign of Ramesses II and active in the crew from at least year 39/40 (according to O. BM EA 5634) to year 50, when he would have received Letter 2 from *Ḥwj*. If – as it seems – *Nđm.t-bḥd.t* was still alive at that time, her trajectory would have been similar to that of *Tꜣ-ḥꜣ.t* (ii). Both women would have been born around the time of Haremhab, got married (at the latest) during the reign of Seti I (*Nđm.t-bḥd.t*) or early in the reign of Ramesses II (*Tꜣ-ḥꜣ.t*), had many children shortly thereafter (eleven for *Tꜣ-ḥꜣ.t*, and at least ten for *Nđm.t-bḥd.t*), and reached an estimated age of 70 to 85 years. Unlike *Tꜣ-ḥꜣ.t*, however, we can catch only a glimpse of *Nđm.t-bḥd.t*. In addition to TT 3, TT 326, and stela Geneva D 55 (where she appears with her daughter *Ḥwj*, who was probably her eldest daughter and named after her paternal grandmother), she is referred to only in Letter 2, linked to *Tꜣ-ḥꜣ.t* and *Tj-n.t-jp.t*.¹⁸³

Her daughter *Ḥwj* may be an alternative (and more likely) candidate for the sender of Letter 2 (and the snitch of Letter 1). In this scenario, the older sister of *Pn-dwꜣ* (iii) contacts her brother; she may have married outside of the village, as we lack any further information about his sister. This *Ḥwj* cannot be *Ḥwj* (ii), as the latter would have been born about 15 to 20 years later than *Ḥwj sꜣ.t Nđm.t-bḥd.t*. To clarify which *Ḥwj* is meant, the scribe added *sꜣ.t Nfr.t-jrj* in Letter 1 – the term allows a wide interpretation including the meaning sister-in-law instead of the more common *sn.t*.¹⁸⁴ *Nđm.t-bḥd.t* and *Pꜣ-šd* (x) were married in the reign of Seti I and

181 Davies 1999, 2, 166–167. A prosopographical discussion can be found in Zivie 1979, 112–121. A detailed prosopographical investigation would take us too far away from the Turin letters and is foreseen for another contribution.

182 The biological brothers of *Pn-dwꜣ*, *Mnnꜣ* (iv) and *Qꜣḥꜣ* (vi), are also depicted in TT 219 and referred to as ‘brothers’ of *Nb-n-Mꜣꜣ.t* (ii), their brother-in-law (Maystre 1936, pl. 7). The name given to the younger son of *Pꜣ-šd.t* (i) and *Nb-Rꜣ* (i) must derive from a relative of *Pꜣ-šd* (x) and *Pn-dwꜣ* (iii): *Pꜣ-ḥrj-pđ.t*, a brother of *Pꜣ-šd* (x).

183 Zivie 1979; *KRI* I, 375–380; Moje 2007, 66; Pörtner and Wiedemann 1906, 24: 21, table VIII.

184 Gabler 2017, 11, 18; Bierbrier 1980, 100–107; Franke 1983, 170–174. The use of *sꜣ/sꜣ.t* or *sn/sn.t* may also depend on the intended perspective: *sꜣ/sꜣ.t* refers to someone in the same or a similar generation, while *sn/sn.t* refers to someone of a younger/other generation. The use of *sꜣ.t* in our case strengthens the identification of *Ḥwj sꜣ.t Nfr.t-jrj* as sister-in-law of *Nfr.t-jrj* (same generation) instead of the niece (*Ḥwj* (ii) who belongs to another generation). The perspective could be either that of *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (same generation), or that of the scribe (who sees the sisters/sisters-in-law as one generation). Letter 2 deals mainly with the business of the *Tꜣ-ḥꜣ.t*-family, therefore *Ḥwj* may have been linked to *Nfr.t-jrj* instead of *Nđm.t-bḥd.t* or *Pn-dwꜣ*. A third option would be an unattested daughter of the couple *Nfr.t-jrj* and *Pn-dwꜣ* named after her aunt *Ḥwj sꜣ.t Nđm.t-bḥd.t*. Because there are no indications for this scenario, this is the unlikeliest option.

possibly had children during the same period. The Geneva stela depicts the mother and daughter as adults adoring Isis.¹⁸⁵ If we identify the sender *Hwj* of Letter 2 as the sister of *Pn-dw*: (iii), she would have been roughly 60 years old towards year 50 of Ramesses II (at a time when all of the individuals attested in the letters may have been alive); *Pn-dw*: might have been born in the early years of the same king, being about 10 years older than his wife *Nfr.t-jrj*. The couple may have died towards the end of the reign of Ramesses II.

In the two scenarios suggested for the Turin letters – in which the sender of Letter 2 is *Hwj* (ii) or (more likely) *Hwj s:t Ndm.t-bhd.t*, and the sender of Letter 1 is *Hnw.t-mrw.t* – the senders of the letter/s to Deir el-Medina lived outside of the village but in its vicinity. They were informed about the same issues, knew the same people (their relatives in the village), were related to each other, and contacted the same scribe to write their messages (see section 5). This scribe must have been active in Western Thebes, acting as the contact person for many people and writing letters for them (see the discussion in Polis, this volume, section 6). Additionally, *Hwj s:t Ndm.t-bhd.t* would be older than *Hnw.t-mrw.t*, which could account for the fact that they lived together in the house of *Pn-jmn* as wife and daughter-in-law respectively, as Letter 1 seems to indicate, thereby strengthening the second scenario (see section 6.6).

6.5.4. *Hnw.t-dww* (i) and *Jn-hr-h'* (i) – and family

Hnw.t-dww (i) was a younger daughter of *T3-h'.t* (ii) and *Knr* (i). She was probably around the same age as *Hnw.t-mrw.t* (i); both would have been born around year 20 of Ramesses II. *Hnw.t-dww* is attested on stela BM EA 818 and in TT 330 (see above). She married the foreman of the left side, *Jn-hr-h'* (i) *s; Q;h;* (i), once more strengthening the links between two influential families of that period. This marriage was a union between two cousins, since *T3-h'.t* was a sister of *Q;h;*.¹⁸⁶ According to O. BM EA 5634, the couple was married since at least year 39/40, as *Jn-hr-h'* was away from work at that time because *Hnw.t-dww* had her period (the 4th month of *3h.t*, day 17). She displays menstrual synchrony with a daughter of *W;d-ms* and *Nfr-3bw*.¹⁸⁷ At this time, *Jn-hr-h'* was still an ordinary workman: he is listed like other members of the crew. He probably took on the role of foreman shortly thereafter, when his (elder?) brother *3nj* (i) (who acted as the deputy of the left side) perhaps died, meaning that

185 Moje 2007, 66 dates the stela to the reign of Seti I; Chappaz 2003, 101 to the Ramesside period. The style and iconography of the object point to the reign of Seti I and the first half of the reign of Ramesses II (information kindly provided by M. Marée).

186 Davies 1999, 275; James 1970, 50.

187 Wilfong 1999, 426–427.

a younger son of *Qḥḥ*, *Jn-ḥr-ḥʿ* (i) succeeded him as foreman.¹⁸⁸ The lists of workmen dating to the end of the 19th dynasty must refer to his namesake *Jn-ḥr-ḥʿ* (ii), who was still a workman before also assuming the post of foreman of the left side in year 22 of Ramesses III.¹⁸⁹ *Jn-ḥr-ḥʿ* (i) (as a workman/representative of the household) is part of the water ration list of O. DeM 189 (see above). *Jn-ḥr-ḥʿ* (i) was buried in TT 299, probably with his family (*KRI* III, 609–911). *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (i) is also attested with her husband on the doorframe of a naos, BM EA 597 + Turin N. 50220. Grafito 589 depicts her father *Knr* (i) with his ‘son’ (in-law), the *ḥrj js.t Jn-ḥr-ḥʿ*.¹⁹⁰

The couple had at least four sons and two daughters: *Qḥḥ* (ii) – named after his paternal grandfather; *Knr* (ii) – named after his maternal grandfather; *Ḥwj* (v) – named after his maternal great-grandfather; and *Ḥj* (iv) – possibly named after *Ḥj* (ii), another uncle of *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (i). This son later succeeded his father as foreman. Their daughter *Nfr.t-jrj* (i) was named after her aunt (ii/viii). Their youngest child was perhaps *Tḥ-ndm-ḥḥb.t* (i).¹⁹¹ Their children must have been born in the second half of the reign of Ramesses II. All four sons were workmen towards the end of the 19th dynasty and into the early 20th dynasty.¹⁹² When the Turin letters were sent, some of them may have been small children and they are not mentioned.

The name *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* is attested for four women in Deir el-Medina: *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (i) is whom the other relatives are named after. *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (ii) was the daughter of *Nfr.t-jrj* (i) and was named after her grandmother *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (i). *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (iii) was the daughter of *Nb-wʿ* (i). And *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (iv) was the daughter of *Ḥwj-nfr* (x), judging by the name related to the *Ḥwj* (ii)-family. If O. Ashmolean Museum 115 is dated to year 9 of Merenptah or Ramesses III, any of these three namesakes may have been the cause of a situation so severe that the crew had to stop working and the vizier was need to solve the problem.¹⁹³ The fragmentary text O. IFAO 1282 may relate to the same issue (if the Ashmolean text dates to the reign of Ramesses III); in this *qnb.t*-verdict, the name *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* is again mentioned alongside *Twj* and *Tḥ-*

188 Davies 1999, 13, 15.

189 Davies 1999, 16, 279, e. g., O. Cairo CG 25526 and 25781. In O. Strasbourg H. 110, *Jn-ḥr-ḥʿ* (i) is foreman, based on the grain rations he received.

190 *KRI* III, 609–611, 7–6; see section 6.3. The doorframe was found in the same season by the Italian mission as the letters.

191 Davies 1999, 16.

192 Davies 1999, 19–20. The fact that all four sons worked in the crew highlights the influence of this family. *Knr* (ii) died before year 11 of Ramesses III, perhaps even before his brother *Ḥj* (iv) became chief workman under Amenmesse. The property of *Knr* (ii) led to several posthumous *qnb.t*-gatherings: O. Cairo CG 25555 + O. DeM 999 and possibly P. Boulaq 10.

193 The same text mentions the workman *Ḥʿ-m-sbḥ*, who is attested from the end of the 19th dynasty onwards. As such, one can exclude dating the text to Merenptah, thus eliminating *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (i).

wr.t-ḥr.tj.¹⁹⁴ The three women/names are also mentioned in O. Cairo CG 25705 + O. IFAO 1322 + O. Varille 38 + O. DeM 10363, in which *Ḥnw.t-ḏww*, mother of *Knj*, is included amongst 30 other women celebrating at a drinking party for Hathor. If *Knj* is correlated with *Knr* (ii), *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (i) might have lived until the reign of Ramesses III and reached an age of at least 65 to 75 years.¹⁹⁵ The same text refers to *T3-ndm.t-ḥ3b.t*, either the daughter (i) of *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (i) or a related namesake (ii or iii), who is attested in several texts (feast lists) from the reign of Ramesses III and IV.¹⁹⁶ This woman must have been married to a member of the community, though her husband is unknown. The women in our letters seem to have organized feast for different goddesses on a regular basis, as Letter 1 shows for *T3-ḥr.t*. *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* attended several of these parties; being the wife of a foreman, she might also have planned similar events. Her mother-in-law, *Twj* (i) – the wife of *Q3ḥ* (i) – is certainly addressed in the second communication of Letter 1, together with *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (which strengthens this identification). *Twj* is mentioned several times together with other women of the village. She must have been of the same generation as *T3-ḥr.t* and *Ndm.t-bḥd.t*. Born in the early 19th dynasty, she had at least 12 children with *Q3ḥ*, and lived until the end of the same dynasty.¹⁹⁷

O. Louvre E 13156 is commonly dated to the reign of Ramesses II and would thus relate to *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (i), though this needs to be discussed before any firm opinion is offered about the individual it refers to. The division of *Nb-jmnt.t*'s possessions between his daughters *3s.t* and *Ḥnw.t-ḏww*, as well as other members of the community (*Nfr-ḥtp*, *Jmn-m-jp.t*, etc.), makes no sense from a prosopographical point of view. Neither *Nb-jmnt.t* (i) nor *Nb-jmnt.t* (ii) seem, at first glance, to have had daughters of these names. If this text refers to *Nb-jmnt.t* (i), it would suggest a date during the reign of Ramesses II, but there are no links to any *Ḥnw.t-ḏww*. However, *Nb-jmnt.t* (ii) *s3 Jn-ḥr-ḥr* (ii), a great-grandchild of *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (i), lived under Ramesses III. The other individuals in this text (*Nfr-ḥtp* and his sister *ḥnḥ-n-njw.t Ḥw.t-jj*) strongly suggest dating the text to the time of Ramesses III.¹⁹⁸ We are therefore probably dealing here with the family of *Nb-jmnt.t* (ii): with *Ḥnw.t-ḏww* (V), his brother-in-law *Nfr-ḥtp* (iii) – husband of *Twj* (ii) – and his sister *Ḥw.t-jj/3* (see above).¹⁹⁹ This

194 A more precise dating of this text than 'Ramesses III–IV' is a matter for further prosopographical investigation into the women at Deir el-Medina.

195 Grandet 2017, 113. *Jn-ḥr-ḥr* (i) died towards the end of the 19th dynasty.

196 O. Berlin P. 14222; O. DeM 155 beta; O. UC 39630, as well as O. DeM 10363, discussed by Grandet 2017, 107–116, and especially 113, 370–378.

197 Davies 1999, 2, 13–14, chart 1 and 3.

198 *Ḥw.t-jj* is attested in several ostraca of that time, being the only individual bearing this name: O. Ashmolean Museum 136, O. Cairo CG 25555 + O. DeM 999, O. Gardiner AG 57, O. DeM 10004, see above.

199 Davies 1999, 26, chart 3. The relation between *3s.t* and *Ḥw.t-jj* is confirmed by their joint appearance in the list of women in O. VM 3000, *recto* (Hagen 2016, 2010).

Hnw.t-dww may also be referred to in the name list P. Vienna inv. No. 3925. O. VM 3001 further records the household of the guardian *Jmn-m-jn.t* (iv), to which a *Hnw.t-dww* belonged; if this text is dated to the reign of Ramesses II, *Hnw.t-dww* (iii) may be identified here as the (first) wife of *R-ms* (iii).²⁰⁰ O. Ashmolean Museum 151, where *Hnw.t-dww* is linked to woodwork in a transaction between the *sš-qd Nb-nfr* and *Jmn-m-jp.t*, must also refer to *Hnw.t-dww* (ii), (iii) or (iv).

6.5.5. *Tj-n.t-jp.t* (i) and *Hnsw* (i)

According to our sources, *Tj-n.t-jp.t* (i) *s:t T;-h'.t* (ii) and *Knr* (i) must have been one of the younger daughters of this couple. She was probably close in age to *Hnw.t-mr-w.t* and born around year 20 of Ramesses II. These two sisters are attested together on stela BM EA 818 and in TT 330, discussed above. As often with younger children, her name is rare.²⁰¹ *Tj-n.t-jp.t* is also mentioned in O. Berlin P. 14254 as *nh-n-njw.t*, letting us know that she was married when this text was written. The ostrakon includes an account of bread distributed to several individuals; at the top of the list is *Tj-n.t-jp.t*. The text is partly destroyed, but among the names are her husband *Hnsw* (i), her brother-in-law *Pn-dw;* (iii), and her nephew *Nht-Jmn* (iii). The texts date to the later 19th dynasty.

Tj-n.t-jp.t married the *tj-mḏ;t Hnsw* (i) *s; Pjj* (ii), who was a member of an important family of the 19th dynasty. No children are attested for this couple.²⁰² Unlike his wife's name, *Hnsw*'s name was very common in Deir el-Medina.²⁰³ An early attestation of *Hnsw* (i) (as *hmw*) is found in P. DeM 15. In this letter, he says to his mother *Nfr.t-h'* (iii) that he promised not to eat a certain type of meat again, but broke his oath, and asks his mother to tell the god by whom he swore to have

200 Hagen 2016, 208–211; Gabler and Salmas, forthcoming; Davies 1999, 180. Amenemone (iv) shared his household with *s:t=f Wḏj.t-rnp.t*, *s:t=s Mrj=s-gr*, *s:t=s Nfr.t-jrj*, *s:t=s Nḏm.t-kj*, *s:t=s Hnw.t-w.tj* and a *Mw.t-nḏm.t*. The *verso* of the ostrakon mentions at least three more persons: *Hnw.t-NN*, *Hnw.t-dww?*, and *Mrj.t-R'*. Either we are dealing with several otherwise unattested female relatives of Amenemone (iv) or these kinship terms are used in a flexible manner. In comparison with other lists, the *Stato Civile* in particular, one can interpret the relationships as follows: the first *s:t=f* is a mistake for *mw.t=f* (*Wḏj.t-rnp.t* (ii)); the second *s:t=s* refers to her daughter-in-law (*Mrj=s-gr* (iii)); the third *s:t=s* to an unattested granddaughter/daughter of *Wḏj.t-rnp.t* (ii) or a sister of *Mrj=s-gr* (iii); while *Nḏm.t-kj*: (i) was *Wḏj.t-rnp.t* (ii)'s real daughter and the sister of the head of the household, *Jmn-m-jn.t* (iv); the other women that conclude the list were probably further female relatives.

201 Her only other namesake is a woman recorded in P. Milan E o.9.40127 + P. Turin Cat. 2074, at the end of the 20th dynasty.

202 Maybe a daughter is mentioned on the offering table Cambridge E SS-15, see Bierbrier 1982, 87.

203 Davies 1999, 184, chart 14.

mercy.²⁰⁴ A *Hnsw* is referred to in O. BM EA 5634 in year 39/40 – he is mentioned as being ill six times, once as being with his god, and twice at this god’s feast. He also had drinks with *Pn-dwꜣ*, and one may therefore assume that we are dealing with *Hnsw* (i) and his brother-in-law *Pn-dwꜣ* (iii). His relationship with *Pn-dwꜣ* may have been strengthened by their being neighbours in the village: according to O. DeM 258 (a list of houses and laundry, dating to around year 40), the houses of the two workmen (and families) were possibly located next to each other.²⁰⁵ The *tꜣj-mdꜣ:t Hnsw* (i) erected the stela Louvre E 13935 for Meresger, which also records his *nb.t-pr Tj-n.t-jp.t*.²⁰⁶ In O. DeM 706, *Hnsw* (i) is part of the left side, together with his relatives *Sꜣ-Mwt* (iii), *Nb-n-Mꜣꜣ:t* (ii), and *Nḥt-Jmn* (iii). The couple may have been roughly the same age, born around year 20, and he might have begun work around year 40. Letter 2 may be the last attestation of *Tj-n.t-jp.t* (i), around year 50; her husband may have outlived her, surviving until the end of the 19th dynasty.²⁰⁷

6.6. *Pn-Jmn* – a tricky issue

Four men named *Pn-Jmn* are attested at Deir el-Medina, and their identification has been the subject of prior discussions. *Pn-Jmn* (i) *sꜣ Wn-nfr* (i) was a brother of *Bꜣkj* (i), the first known foreman of the left side, during the reign of Seti I. Not much is known about this man: he probably lived during the first half of the reign of Ra-

204 Davies 1999, 184. There is no other evidence from Deir el-Medina for a mother named *Nfr.t-ḥꜣ* and a son named *Hnsw*. The letter could date to the first half of the reign of Ramesses II, when *Hnsw* (i) was probably not yet married and his mother was still alive (pace Wente 1990, 140 and DMD Leiden, which date the text to the mid 20th dynasty, cf. Černý 1978, pl. 30 and 30a).

205 Gutgesell 2002, 115. Neither the dwelling of *Pn-dwꜣ* nor the dwelling of *Hnsw* can be identified; see Gabler, in preparation.

206 Davies 1999, 184; *KRI* III, 675, 2–6. In documents where only the name *Hnsw* is preserved, it is impossible to decide which individual is referred to. However, the stela fragment for Amenophis I (*KRI* III, 675, 9–10) includes a *wꜣb Hnsw*, a *wꜣb Pꜣjꜣ*, a *šmsw Nḥt-(Jmn)?*, and a *šmsw Pn-dwꜣ*. This constellation of names points to *Hnsw* (i), together with his brother-in-law *Pn-dwꜣ*, with whom he probably had good relations; see Moje 2007, 115. Similarly, the fragmentary stela Turin 149 (*KRI* III, 713, 15–714, 2) mentions *Pn-dwꜣ*, *sn=f sꜣdm-š m s.t Mꜣꜣ:t šmsw m NN Jmn-nḥt*. The name *Hnsw* is often attested in administrative texts dating to the end of the 19th dynasty. An identification of these individuals would require an elaborate discussion. In this paper, only the texts in which *Hnsw* (i) can be identified at first glance are mentioned, which include O. DeM 290 (list of workmen), O. DeM 661 (grain ration list), perhaps O. Strasbourg H. 119 (list of workmen), and O. Varille 12 (as *wꜣb*).

207 The tombs of several of *Hnsw*’s brothers are known (e.g., TT 217, 335, 336), but the burial place of this couple is not. If the fragmentarily preserved inscription on a shabti found in TT 330 (see above, section 6.3) reads *Tj-n.t-jp.t*, then she may have been buried in her family’s tomb.

messes II. *Pn-Jmn* (ii) *s; B;kj* (i) or *s; Jmn-nḥt* (i) lived in the first half of the reign of Ramesses II; he married *Nb.t-nh.t* (ii) and the couple had at least one daughter (and possibly several children, depending on the filiation); they were buried in TT 213. As *Pn-Jmn* (ii) is not mentioned in the workmen's list of O. BM EA 5634 in year 39/40, he may have been retired or dead by this point.²⁰⁸ However, there is a *Pn-Jmn* attested in year 64,²⁰⁹ who might still be *Pn-Jmn* (ii) (even if it would then be difficult to explain his absence from O. BM EA 5634). Alternatively, this may be *Pn-Jmn* (iii), a workman known from many work lists from the end of the 19th dynasty, though his origins and family are otherwise unknown; this man might also be identified with *Pn-Jmn* (ii) (if he lived a long life) or *Pn-Jmn* (iv). *Pn-Jmn* (iv) *s; Ḥt-m-Ws.t* (i), a great-grandchild of *Pn-Jmn* (ii), is attested from Siptah/Amenmesse until the mid 20th dynasty; he might also be the man recorded in year 64 on the right side, which would mark his first attestation. He had children (the age of striplings for the crew) in year 5 of Siptah.²¹⁰ The house of *Pn-Jmn* (iii) or (iv) may be referred to in the water supply list O. Stockholm Medelhavsmuseet MM 14126.²¹¹

Ḥnw.t-mrw.t was born around year 20 of Ramesses II. She apparently spent some time in the house of a *Pn-Jmn*, together with *Ḥwj* (*s.t Nḏm.t-bḥd.t* and *P;šd* (x)) who was probably his wife, but the Turin letters were written when *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* had left the house of *Pn-Jmn* as well as the village (Letter 1). Was she married to a son of his? The available data do not answer this question, but this might explain why she stayed in this dwelling instead of her family home. She possibly also was divorced from her husband, and left the village just like *Ḥwj*.²¹²

Ḥnw.t-mrw.t could have got married at the earliest around year 35 of Ramesses II. As we do not know of any wife or children for *Pn-Jmn* (i) and (iii), no detailed scenario can be suggested.

Pn-Jmn (i) would have been born at the end of the 18th dynasty, and might have been some 25 years older than *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t*, which makes him a possible candidate as a father-in-law.²¹³ He could have been married to *Ḥwj*, and the couple would then

208 Davies 1999, 2–6, 216, chart 1 and 2.

209 O. DeM 621 + 829. The text also refers to *Nb-n-M;:t* (ii), but on the left side; see above. Gutgesell (2002, 7, 44) dates a/this *Pn-Jmn* between year 64 of Ramesses II and year 4 of Siptah, and possibly even year 2 of Ramesses VI.

210 *Wn-nfr* (iii), Davies 1999, 4, 6. *Pn-Jmn* (ii)? *s; B;kj* is perhaps also recorded in year 66 (cf. O. Cairo CG 25237), but this text might also document the inheritance of *Pn-Jmn s; B;kj*. In this case, the man was dead by year 66.

211 Davies 1999, 4.

212 Of course, there may have been other reasons why *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* stayed in this house. With respect to the time frame and life span of the individuals involved, the abovementioned scenario seems the likeliest.

213 Davies 1999, 2.

have been divorced before Letter 2 was written (around year 40). Shortly after, both *Hwj* and *Hnw.t-mrw.t* must have left Deir el-Medina.

Pn-Jmn (ii) was probably married by that time to *Nb.t-nh.t* and had children, amongst which are at least four sons about whom we have little information: *Wn-nfr* (ii), *Šd-Jmn* (i), *Nb-ṛn-sw* (ii), and *Jmn-ms* (ii).²¹⁴ We do not know the name of the wife (wives?) of *Pn-Jmn* (iv), but he had at least two sons: *Wn-nfr* (iii), who would have been roughly 15 years old in year 5 of Siptah (P. Greg)²¹⁵ and *H-ṛ-m-Ws.t* (iii). *H-ṛ-m-Ws.t* (iii) must have been born even later, as he appears as a workman under Ramesses III. Consequently, *Pn-Jmn* (iv) was probably too young to be married to *Hwj* and share his house with *Hnw.t-mrw.t*.

To sum up, the *Pn-Jmn* of the Turin letters might be *Pn-Jmn* (i) – *Pn-Jmn* (ii) being married to someone else, and the other two *Pn-Jmn* being slightly too young. This man appears to have been an unpleasant fellow, be it in his relationship with his (former) wife (*Hwj*, daughter of *Ndm.t-bhd.t*) or in the matter of the basket and the sieve belonging *Hj* for which he may have had to pay double. *Hnw.t-mrw.t* and *Hwj* left (or had to leave) Deir el-Medina and she contacted her relatives by letter from outside the village.

6.7. Further individuals attested in the Turin letters

Three individuals are rarely (if ever) attested in texts from Deir el-Medina. The name *Mw.t-ndm.t* (Letter 1) is also attested on O. Uppsala VM 3001 (discussed above). As this ostrakon might refer to the family of the guardian *Jmn-m-jn.t* (iv) at the time of Ramesses II, she may have been a member of his family. The same text includes a *Hnw.t-dww* and a fragmentarily preserved *Hnw.t-NN* that might read *Hnw.t-Jwn.t*. A *Hnw.t-Jwn.t* is listed in O. Uppsala VM 3000, which includes several women belonging to the wider family of *T3-hṛ.t* (ii) and her daughters (see above). Groups of women with these names celebrated several feasts together, especially in honour of the goddess Hathor: *Hw.t-j3* would have been the wife of *S3-Mw.t* (iii), a brother of *Hnw.t-mrw.t* (i); *Tj3=sn-nfr.t* (i) was the wife of *P3-R-ḥtp* (i) (who was a brother of *Nb-R* (i)); an *3s.t* and a *T3-mrj*. *Twj*, *3s.t* and *Hw.t-j3* appear together in several other sources. A *Nfr.t-jrj* and *Mrj=s-gr* are mentioned on the reverse of O. VM 3000. They may have been the (great-/grand-)daughters of *T3-hṛ.t* (ii) (for a discussion of the lists, see section 6.5.4). *Hnw.t-Jwn.t* (i), a daughter of *Nfr-3bw* (i) and *T3-3s.t* (i), is known from the parental tomb TT 5. *Nfr-3bw* was a brother of *Tj3=sn-nfr.t* (i). If *3s.t* (i) is identical with *T3-3s.t* (i) *s3.t* *Twj* (i) (the wife of *Q3-h3* (i)), we may consider identifying the same

214 Davies 1999, charts 1 and 2.

215 Davies 1999, 4.



Fig. 24: Overview of Deir el-Medina (© Kathrin Gabler & Klaudivja Stanic, based on B. Bruyère, *Rapport sur les Fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1934 – 1935), Troisième Partie: Le Village, Les Décharges publiques, la Station de Repos du Col de la Vallée des Rois*, FIFAO 16, Cairo 1939, pl. VII)

woman in the two Uppsala ostraca.²¹⁶ *ʒs.t* (i) and *Nfr-ʒbw* (i) were active until year 40 of Ramesses II.²¹⁷

Mw.t-nḏm.t and *Nwb-m-Jwnw.t* witnessed some gossiping by *T3-ḥ.t* that was subsequently reported by *Hwj* to *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t*. *Nwb-m-Jwnw.t* should be identified with the daughter of *Ks* (i). This woman is attested in TT 10, the tomb of her father and *Pn-bwj* (i); she is depicted together with her younger brother *Nfr-m-šnw.t* (i).²¹⁸ *Nwb-m-Jwnw.t* (i), *Ḥnw.t-mrw.t* (i), and possibly *Mw.t-nḏm.t* may have been around the same age and must have all been born within the village; they possibly left Deir el-Medina when they got married. But even if they lived outside the village, they definitely kept in touch with their relatives, met occasionally, and exchanged news and the latest gossip – either in person or via letter – as is demonstrated by the two Turin letters.

7. Conclusion

Summing up all the evidence, the two letters originating from Deir el-Medina (section 2) must have been sent from outside the village around year 50 of Ramesses II. This is in agreement with the palaeographic discussion (section 5), which indicates that they were written towards the first part of the 19th dynasty, and with the prosopographical analysis (section 6), which shows that the individuals, belonging to three generations (Table 1 and 2), would all have been alive around this time and old enough to justify their involvement in the matters and arguments at hand. In terms of relative chronology, Letter 1 was probably written slightly before Letter 2, which builds on the matter of the basket and *Pn-Jmn*, as well as the different kinds of bread.

The letters offer various new insights into the life of women in and around the village of Deir el-Medina during the first half of the 19th dynasty. However, since the two documents were written by the same scribe, autographs can be ruled out: they must have been penned for the women by a skillful (but admittedly careless) scribe who was connected somehow to the family of *T3-ḥ.t*. The precise identity of the scribe is open to discussion, but he certainly belonged to a line of draughtsmen that began with *Pj* (i). As such, the letters do not contribute much to the difficult question of female literacy in the community of Deir el-Medina or ancient Egypt more broadly.²¹⁹

216 Davies 1999, 7, 150–151, 158.

217 Davies 1999, chart 1, 11.

218 Davies 1999, 269, chart 28.

219 See Quack 2019, 927–928, quoting previous literature on the topic.

These texts are replete with difficulties: the handwriting is challenging at times, the grammar is somewhat intricate, the spellings are regularly idiosyncratic, and the subject matter is definitely complex. However, we think that the contextualized approach that we have adopted in this contribution solves most of the hermeneutic issues, even if we take for granted that the rich unpublished material from the village will lead to better understandings in the future.

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