

‘Will your heart remain cool concerning it?’ Reproach in Egyptian Sources

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Abstract

In a number of Egyptian sources varied occasions reveal incidents of reproach. Variations of style and behavior of both complainer and reproached reflect reasons provoking disagreeable conduct. Constructions vary from classical forms to informal dialogues, not necessarily following the same tone or manner.

Aside from seeking to rectify the situation, the complainer mainly specifies inappropriate behavior. The greater part of the documents are ostraca and papyri. The subject matter is concentrated on how people linguistically composed their reactions to unpleasant situations.

Varied text types were added to the corpus with the aim that more diverse material would allow exploring aspects of behavioural attitudes.

In an attempt to understand the two sides of conversations, two basic points were taken into account; sentence structure expressing dissatisfaction and consideration of the response.

The source material discussed is not narrowed down to a specific time period in order to give

a more accurate interpretation of the textual corpus. The main aim is to consider the wide range of sources from a societal perspective, reflecting personalities' status and types of offense. In most cases reproving was not to justify inadequate behavior; rather to express disappointment for inappropriate response.

Keywords: Reproach, behaviour, attitude, context, texts, societal perspective, personalities.

Introduction

In a number of Egyptian narrative, literary and non-literary texts is the theme of reproach broached. Varied occasions of social conduct reveal incidents of reproach and expressions of distress. The sources are meaningful; recalling criticism of misconduct indicative of unsatisfactory situations.

Disagreements and conflicts provoking misunderstandings or discontentment are aspects of human conduct. Reproach was a common theme as repeatedly revealed, especially in letters where plausible theoretical context reconstructions could be inferred.

Since meanwhile shouting, gazing looks, offended angry voices are absent, other presumed remarks sum up a reproachful tone that could reveal anger. Direct reproach appears to be more influential especially in personal communication, although no specific

expression has been used. Nevertheless, conveying a reproachful tone is often expressed implicitly, implying annoyance.

Variations of style and behavior of both complainer and reproached reflect reasons provoking disagreeable conduct. Reproach is often structured as series of questions; urging the addressee to positively react, or recognize how unsatisfied the complainer is. Constructions vary from classical forms to informal dialogues, not necessarily following the same tone or manner (Sweeney, 1998a; Sweeney, 1998b; Sweeney, 2001).

The theme is not only reflective of annoyance, disappointment and frustration, but also of despair, anger, and bitterness. Moreover, moral insult was often implicitly conveyed by acting in reserved manners. Aside from seeking to rectify the situation, the complainer mainly specifies inappropriate behavior. Some sources illustrate that addressees had been irresponsive to unsatisfactory states, and therefore no positive reaction was seemingly awaited (Sweeney, 2001).

There have been separate studies, yet lacking facets of individual genre texts revealing features of social relationships. Dealing in depth with the subject matter of reproach helps providing circumstantial evidence and synthesis of the data.

Corpus Definition

Sufficient evidence seems to be available to illustrate aspects of private attitudes. The greater part of the documents are ostraca and papyri. Letters in particular are significant indices of what personal correspondence could reveal; providing more insight into private life aspects and social interaction.

The subject matter is concentrated on how people linguistically composed their reactions to unpleasant situations. Yet, it is neither related to the moral values subject of autobiographies, wisdom literature, the so-called *Klageliteratur*, or monologue dialogues.

The study is limited to how people phrased direct reproach, with an attempt to highlight stylistic similarities. Extracts from the Eloquent Peasant appealing for *Maât* (Blumenthal, 2004, p. 14), were discussed as the literary example illustrative of direct petitioning *par excellence*. It reveals social criticism (Gnirs, 2000, pp. 126, 127) by means of the peasant's appeal; urging for the negligent official intervention and criticizing him for being self-centered, greedy, or corrupted for biased treatment (Blumenthal, 2004, p. 18).

Though not frequently attested, relative documentation to this topic is often effectively complemented by tomb inscription. Being a genre that would preferably be studied on its own, only illustrative examples of tomb scenes were included in the current study. The research is to be further followed by a forthcoming detailed study of the textual corpus uttering reproach in tomb scenes.

Other text types were added to the corpus with the aim that more varied material would allow exploring aspects of behavioural attitudes. The study is an attempt to contextualizing extracts, be it from private letters, literary works or tomb scenes. Examples occur as well in the funerary contexts of the so called Letters to the Dead. These letters include inquiries to resolve familial or domestic problems; whereupon the dead is called to interfere and ward off the evil encountered (Donnat, 2009, pp. 61, 62). Reproachful statements are particularly popular in Late Ramesside Letters (LRL); where the projection of reproach is the central theme of the letter.

The persons involved use varying ways of expressions and approaches allowing to reflect manners of behavioral conduct. However, in most cases reproving was not to justify inadequate behavior; rather to express helplessness or disappointment for

the other on the outside addressed to his mother Iy. He complains that while having taken care of his brother Sebkhotep's burial, the latter is offending him.

Ex. 1.2 Bowl from Kâu el-Kebîr, UC 16163, inside, 4 (dated between the Sixth and Eleventh Dynasties) (Gardiner & Sethe, 1928, pls. II-IIa, 4)



in irr.t(w) r.î r gs.k n irt ddt n s3.k im in sn.î

Is it in your presence that (evil) is done against me, while that which your son said was not done by my brother?

- For the translation: (Gardiner & Sethe, 1928, p. 4). Cf. (Silverman, 1980, p. 21)
- The use of *r.î* implies that what was done against him is evil/ bad; for which he seeks intervention to ward off the evil/ offense.

Ex. 1.3 Bowl from Kâu el-Kebîr, UC 16163, outside, 3 (Gardiner & Sethe, 1928, pls. III-IIIa, 3)



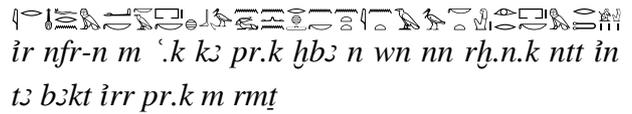
in ir(r).t(w) r.î r-gs.t hrdw špt n s3.t im mr in-m rf stî.f n.t mw

Is it in your presence that (evil) is done against me, the children being solely discontent with this your son?

- For *mr*: (*Wb* II, p. 96, 12; Baer, 1966, p. 5, n. (n)).

Ex. 1.4 Cairo Bowl, CG 25375, inside, 6-8 (beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty) (Gardiner & Sethe, 1928, pl. Via, 6-8)

The priest Antef's widow addresses him likewise on Cairo Bowl seeking his intervention to ward off the illness of their serving-maid (Gardiner & Sethe, 1928, pp. 7, 8).



If there be no help from you, then is your house destroyed. Can it be (?) you do not recognize that it is this serving-maid who makes your house among (?) people?

- For the translation: (Gardiner & Sethe, 1928, p. 7).
- *hb3*: 'etw. Zerhacken, zerstören' (*Wb* III, p. 253, 2).

2- Expressing astonishment as something seems hard to believe

Lack of needed support prompted the peasant scolding in pBerlin 3023. His ironical speech marks his astonishment for having been robbed. The threat that this could happen in the estate of Rensi is an aspect of scolding emphasized by the use of a rhetorical question (Parkinson, 2012, p. 51).

Ex. 2.1 pBerlin 3023 (B1), 46-49 (late Twelfth Dynasty) (Parkinson, 1991, p. 12)



iw.î grt rh.kwi nb n d3tt tn n(y)-s(y) imy-r pr wr mrw s3 rnsy ntf grt hsf 'w3 nb m t3 pn r-dr.f in 'w3.tw.î rf m d3tt.f

Now I know the lord of this estate. It belongs to the high steward Rensi, son of Meru. It is he who represses every robber in this entire land. It is really that I will be robbed in his estate?

- Oréal (2011, pp. 84, 85) translates *in 'w3.tw.î rf m d3tt.f* "est-ce alors dans son secteur que je serai volé?", possibly rendering *rf* with the translation "dans ce cas, alors, donc".
- For the translation: (Parkinson, 2012, pp. 49-51).

Ex. 2.2 pBerlin 3023 (B1), 58-60 (late Twelfth Dynasty) (Parkinson, 1991, p. 13)

Nemtinakht by threatening the peasant of being silenced by death, renders the level of interaction more intensified. As the peasant suffers, not only does he reproach Nemtinakht, but further accuses him of robbing his mouth of lament (Parkinson, 2012, pp. 55, 56).


dd.īn sh̄ty pn ḥw.kwī 'wz.k ḥnw.ī nḥm.k rf nhwt m r3.ī

And this peasant said 'You'll beat me and steal my belongings, and then you'll rob my mouth of lament?'

- For the translation: (Parkinson, 2012, p. 56).
- For *nḥm*: (*Wb* II, pp. 295, 296).

Ex. 2.3 pBerlin 3023 (B1), 77-79 (late Twelfth Dynasty) (Parkinson, 1991, p. 16)

The use of a rhetorical question to which no answer is awaited is a marker of astonishment.


sp-pw n ḥsf.tw n nmty-nḥt pn ḥr nhy n ḥsmn ḥn' nhy n ḥm3t

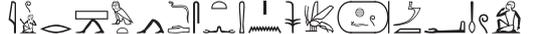
This is a case to punish this Nemtinakht for a little natron and a little salt?

- For the translation: (Parkinson, 2012, pp. 64, 65; Allen, 2015, p. 250).
- For *ḥsf*: (Faulkner, 1988, p. 197).

Ex. 2.4 pWestcar 12, 9 - 12, 12 (Twelfth Dynasty) (Blackman, 1988, p. 16)

The composition is most probably dated to the the Twelfth Dynasty (Simpson, 2003, p. 13). Rhetorical questions expressing reproach were also used.



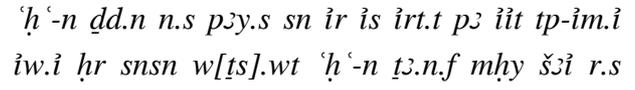
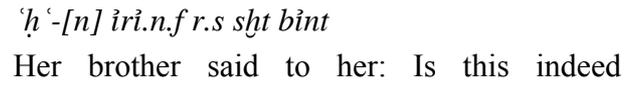
ḥr m ḥt hrw sw3i(.w) ḥr nn 'ḥ'.n šnt Rwd-ddt ḥt n t3 wb3yt rdī.n.s ḥsf.tw n.s m ḥwit 'ḥ'-n dd.n t3 wb3yt n n3-n rmt nty m p3 pr īn irt st n3 r.ī iw ms.n.s nswt 3 iw.ī r šmt dd st ḥm n nswt bity ḥwfw m3'-ḥrw

After some days had passed, Redjedet had an argument with the maidservant, and she had her punished with a beating. So the maidservant said to the people who were in the house: Shall this be done to me? She has given birth to three kings, and I am going and I will tell it to His Majesty the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Khufu, the vindicated!

- Mathieu (2013, p. 13) translates 'Est-ce moi que l'on traite ainsi ?'. The translation is to be compared with: (Simpson, 2003, p. 23; Lepper, 2008, p. 53).

Ex. 2.5 pWestcar 12, 15-12, 17 (Twelfth Dynasty) (Blackman, 1988, p. 16)





'ḥ'-n dd.n n.s p3y.s sn irt is irt.t p3 iit tp-īm.ī iw.ī ḥr sns n w[ts].wt 'ḥ'-n t3.n.f mḥy š3i r.s 'ḥ'-[n] irt.n.f r.s šht bint

Her brother said to her: Is this indeed something to be done, your coming to me thus? And am I to agree to [this] denunciation? Then he took a whip of flax to her, and he gave her a real beating.

- For the translation: (Simpson, 2003, p. 24; Mathieu, 2013, pp. 13, 14).
- *snsn*: 'agree to action' (Faulkner, 1988, p. 233).
- For *w[ts].wt*: (Faulkner, 1988, p. 72).

Ex. 2.6 Tomb of Pahery, El Kab (dated to the Eighteenth Dynasty, Thutmosis III) (Tylor & Griffith, 1894, pl. III)

šd.n.ī ʿw 202 iw.k ḥms.tī

While I was driving off 202 donkeys, you remained sitting on your backside.

- For the translation: (Schneider & Raven, 1981, p. 96; Houlihan, 2001, p. 44).
-  *wni*: 'hasten, hurry' (Faulkner, 1988, p. 61).
- For the tomb dating: (Guglielmi, 1973, p. 46, 13; Schneider & Raven, 1981, p. 96).

Ex. 3.5 pCairo 58061, r 5 (LRL) (Černý, 1939b, p. 62, 8)

Papyrus Cairo 58061 is a letter written by the *w*'b-priest of Khonsu and scribe Bakenkhons to the scribe of the Necropolis Ankhef (Wente, 1967, p. 17, 75). The former is awaiting information that he never receives; the fact that makes him express his annoyance.


m-ir dit h3b.i n.k ḥḥ n md

Do not make me send (i.e. write) you innumerable (lit. millions of) words.

The use of an exaggerated number highlights the state of the sender, offended to have to repeat over again the message that he needs to convey (Lesko & Switalski-Lesko, 2002, p. 329).

Ex. 3.6 pDeM VIII, r 9 (LRL) (Černý, 1978, pl. 24)

Papyrus DeM VIII, a letter where the scribe Amenmose asks the carpenter Maanakhtef to finish a neglected ordered bed and stool, and to send Nakhtmin very quickly bringing them (Sweeney, 2001, p. 85).


i.īr.ī h3b n.k iw 20 n hrw

I sent (i.e. wrote) to you since twenty days.

- For the translation: (Vernus, 1981, p. 438). Cf. *oDeM 437, r1-3*: (Wente, 1990, p. 134; Neveu, 1998, p. 219; Sweeney, 2001, pp. 195, 211, 213).

Ex. 3.7 pDeM XXVIII, r 4 (LRL) (Eyre, 1987, p. 19, b. Cf. ČERNÝ 1986, pl. 18).

Papyrus DeM XXVIII is another letter addressed from the scribe Amenmose to the carpenter Maanakhtef. The following quotation highlights that the reproach gets even toned with the tendency to warn.

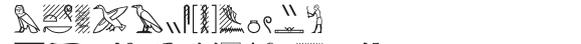

m-di t3y.tw n.tn ḥn' dd

Do not let yourselves get reproached.

- For *t3y*: (Lesko & Switalski-Lesko, 2004, p. 225).
- For the probable reading *t3y.tw n.tn*, see: (Sweeney, 2001, p. 60).

Ex. 3.8 pBibliothèque Nationale 198, III, r 3-5 (LRL) (Černý, 1939b, p. 69, 1-3)

The sender reproaches his addressee of being neglectful that it is becoming useless to argue with him.


*i3 iḥ p3 mdw m-di.k mtw.k tm sḏm m[tw].k wsf
p3y šḥn n Pr- ʿ3 ḥḥ wḏ3 snb p3y.k nb nfr nty
tw.k im.f*

Now what is the use of remonstrating with you when you don't listen and neglect this task of Pharaoh, L. P. H., your good lord, in which you are involved?

- For the translation: (Borghouts, 1979, p. 22; Sweeney, 2001, p. 201).
- For *wsf*: (*Wb* I, p. 357, 3-5).
- For *šḥn*: (Faulkner, 1988, p. 238; *Wb* IV, p. 216, 8).

Ex. 3.9 pDeM V, r 5-v 1 (LRL) (Černý, 1978, pl. 21)

Papyrus DeM V is a letter dealing with Amennakht's failure to respond to the [scribe] Nakhtsobek's request to send ointment (Sweeney, 1998a, p. 101). The later criticizes his correspondent's conduct; having asked him

twice while the latter did not bother to send him the requested *hin* of ointment.


iw.s <r> nfr <n> rmt iw.f <hr> dd nkt n pꜣy.f
iry sp sn mtw.f tm sdm.f mi-ḳd hnw sknn
r dbht.i m-di.k iw.k <hr> dd n.i iw.i <r> dit
in.tw.f n.k iw.k <hr>tm ꜣty

Will it be good for a man when he says something to his friend twice and he doesn't listen, like that *hin* of ointment which I requested from you and you told me, 'I will send it to you,' and you didn't bother?

- For *iw.s <r> nfr <n> rmt*: (Wente, 1990, p. 151; Sweeney, 1998a, p. 106, a).
- For *dit in.tw.f n.k iw.k <hr>tm ꜣty*: (Sweeney, 1998a, p. 106; Sweeney, 2001, p. 81).
- For *ꜣty*, also *ꜣd*: 'sorgen für' (*Wb* I, p. 24, 23).

Ex. 3.10 pLansing, v 2, 3-4 (LEM) (Gardiner, 1937, p. 101, 2)

In papyrus Lansing, the composition known as 'The Teaching of a man to his son', the former emphasizes the importance of literary education.


kry šri ʿ.wsi ib.k bw sdm.k iw.i (hr) mdw

Young fellow, how conceited you are! You do not hear when I speak.

- For *kry šri*: (Blackman & Peet, 1925, p. 286, n. 4).
- For *bw sdm.k iw.i (hr) mdw*: (Blackman & Peet, 1925, p. 286; Caminos, 1954, p. 377; Junge, 1999, p. 123. See also (Guglielmi, 1985, p. 141).

Ex. 3.11 pLeiden I 369, r 6-8 (LRL) (Černý, 1939b, p. 1, 9-11)

Being away at the wars in Nubia and not receiving any letters from his family and friends based in Thebes, the scribe Djhutmose questions the matter. Feeling neglected for having sent them several letters while not receiving any, he expresses reproach by using rhetorical questions.


yꜣ ih tw.i (hr) dit in.tw n.tn pꜣy hmn n š't iw
bw pwy.tn dit in.tw w' iry.i ih r.tn

Indeed what is that: I send you these several letters whereas you have not sent one? What have I done against you?

- For *yꜣ ih*: cf. (Junge, 1999, p. 206).
- For *hmn*: (*Wb* III, p. 96, 4).
- For *iry.i ih r.tn*, see: (Wente, 1967, p. 18; Romer, 1984, p. 184).

A similar reproach is expressed in *pLeiden I 367, r5-6*. Cf. (Janssen, 1960, p. 45).

Ex. 3.12 pDeM VI, v 4-5 (LRL) (Černý, 1978, pl. 22)

Papyrus DeM VI, a letter from the [scribe] Nakhtsobek to Amennakht, revealing that he similarly feels neglected for not having received any letters from the latter (Sweeney, 2001, p. 222).


ink i.ir hꜣb n.k m {ir} <d>wn iw bw ir.k hꜣb
n.i

It is I who am always sending (i.e. writing) to you, but you don't send (i.e. write) to me.

- For the translation: (Černý, 1978, p. 19).

Ex. 3.13 pTurin 1974+1945, r 6-7 (LRL) (Černý, 1939b, p. 39, 10-12).

Writing about one's condition in letters such as *pMond II r4-7* (Peet, 1930, pl. XXVI, XXVII, p. 92; Sweeney, 1998b, pp. 355, 356)

would comfort the heart, while ignoring to write would cause worriedness. The writer of the letter urges the addressee to continually write about his state.



wnn t3y.i š't spr r.k iw.k tm rwī.k h3b n.i .k m.di p3 nty nb nty iw.f i m ht

As soon as my letter reaches you, you should not cease sending (i.e. writing) me about your condition through whoever may come northward.

- For the translation: (Wente, 1967, p. 182). Cf. (Junge, 1999, p. 222).
- For *rwī*: (*Wb* II, p. 407, 1).

4- Blaming someone for a wrongdoing/ disagreeable conduct

Ex. 4.1 pBibliothèque Nationale 198, II, r 4-7 (LRL) (Černý, 1939b, p. 67, 10-13)

A remarkable reminder of the relationship superior/ subordinate is highlighted in pBibliothèque Nationale 198. The chief taxing master seems to have scolded the sender for having included jokes in his letter to him. The sender of the letter blames someone else for being responsible for that wrongdoing (Sweeney, 1998b, p. 363; Sweeney 2001, p. 226).



sdm.i r-dd tw.k hdn.t di.k šfy.i m shwr hr st r n t3 mdw sbi i-dd.i n p3 '3 n št hr t3i š't iw m hnwt-t3wy i-dd n.i i-dd nhy n mdt n sbi n p3 '3 n št hr t3y.k š't

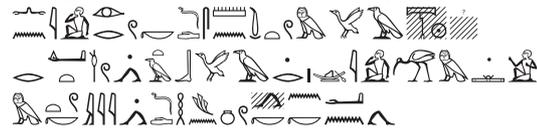
I have heard that you are wroth. You have caused me to be contemptible through reproaches on account of this joke which I told the chief taxing master in this letter, it was

Henuttawy who said to me, “Say some jokes to the chief taxing master in your letter.”

- For *hdn.t*: (Wente, 1967, p. 80, n. a; Blackman, 1925, p. 251, n. 4).
- For *di.k šfy.i m shwr*: (Lesko, Switalski-Lesko, 1987, p. 76. Cf. Meeks, 1982, p. 264, 79.2690).
- For *shwr*: (Faulkner, 1988, p. 238).

Ex. 4.2 Wenamun Report, I, x+9- I,x+10 (LES - Ramesses XI) (Gardiner, 1932, p. 65, 13-14)

Wenamun seems perplexed complaining about having found a ship ready to go back to Egypt, and yet he was ordered to stay.



nn i.ir.k dd smn.tw m p3 grh r dit wd t3 b3r i.gmī.i mtw.k iī <r> dd hn.k n.k 'n

Aren't you saying ‘Stay tonight,’ just in order to let the ship which I found depart? And then you will come and say, ‘Get out of here!’ again.

- For the translation: See (Goedicke, 1975, p. 151; Sweeney, 2001, p. 222).

Ex. 4.3 pBibliothèque Nationale 197, VI, v 2, 3 (LRL) (Černý, 1939b, p. 64, 12-14)

A reasonable explanation for reproach in pBibliothèque Nationale 197 seems to be that the addressee has not for long written about his condition. According to Wente (1967, pp. 13, 17), the writer of this letter was Butehamon in Thebes and the addressee was Shedsuhor, who accompanied Dhutmose to Nubia.



iḥ t3 mdw n p3i h3b i.ir.k n.i r-dd i.ir.k h3b š't m-dr wn hmt-šri di wn bn iw.k <r> h3b n.i <m> 'd3

What is the meaning of this your having sent (i.e. written) me saying, “It was when Hemetsheri was here that you sent a letter”? You would not write me falsely.

- For the translation : (Černy, 1939b, p. 64).

Ex. 4.4 pBM 10247 (Anastasi I), 8, 1 - 8, 2 (Sety II) (Fischer-Elfert 1983, pp. 77, 78)

The scribe Hori, author of the *Satirical Letter* in pBM 10247 (Anastasi I), reproves his colleague Amenemope. The absence of an opening greeting from the beginning of the letter is being conceived as a sign of neglecting. (cf. Davies & Toivari, 2000, p. 72 Ostrakon DeM 314)



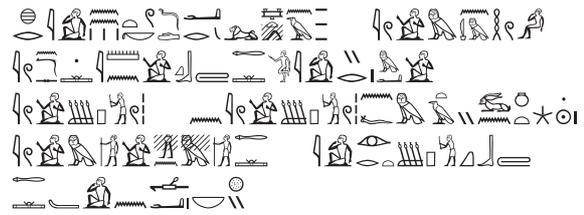
iw mdwt.ī nb bnri m dd bn.ī ir.ī mī kd.k m dr šni.k <wi> šz .k wi r.ī m shwr tpty

All my words are sweet in saying; I will not act as you do when you ask <me>. You start with insults against me.

- For the translation: (Gardiner, 1911, p. 11; Fischer-Elfert, 1986, p. 71).
- *bnri*: also with the meaning ‘pleasant’ (Faulkner, 1988, p. 83; Lesko & Switalski-Lesko, 2002, p. 156).
- For *ir.ī mī kd.k m dr šni.k <wi>*: (Fischer-Elfert, 1986, p. 68).

Ex. 4.5 pBibliothèque Nationale 198, II, r 12-v 1 (LRL) (Černy, 1939b, p. 68, 2-5)

An angry official reproachfully denounces the inadequacy of Nesamun’s behaviour; considering it as underestimation. He expresses his expectation of respect by using an interrogative construction emphasizing his status.



*hr inn tw.k <hr> dd ‘r n z iw.ī m nmh iw Ns-
imn <r> kb ‘irm.ī iw.ī <r> šsp.w <i>n iw.ī
<r> šsp.w n.f m tzy wnw t iw.ī m sr in m sr ‘z i-
iri šsp kb ‘n w ‘nb sp sn*

Now if you say, ‘Push off!’ when I am an orphan, Nesamun would make fun of me and I would have to accept it. But should I accept it from him now while I am an official? It is not an important official who accepts ridicule from just everyone.

- For the translation: (Wente, 1990, p. 173; Sweeney, 1998b, p. 363; Sweeney, 2001, p. 226).
- For *kb*’: (Lesko & Switalski-Lesko, 1989, p. 8).

Ex. 4.6 pD’Orbiney 7, 4 (LES) (Gardiner, 1932, p. 16, 9-10)

Bata reproaches his brother for not hearing what he was saying; thus confronting him and proclaiming the right for defense (Théodoridès, 1967, p. 113, n. 3).



*ih pzy.k it m-s.ī r hdbw m grg iw nn sdm.k r.ī
hr mdt*

What is your coming after me to kill wrongfully, not hearing my mouth speak on the matter?

- For *hdbw m grg*: (Théodoridès, 1967, p. 113, n. 3; Hollis, 2008, pp. 100, 101).
- For the translation: (Junge, 1999, p. 207; Wettengel 2003, p. 98; Pehal, 2013, p. 108).

5- Recalling good endeavors/ memories

Recalling old good memories or denying the commitment of any offence that might have triggered discontentment were used as medium to remedy situations.

Ex. 5.1 pLeiden I 371, r 1-2 (Nineteenth Dynasty) (Gardiner & Sethe, 1928, pl. VII, 1-2)

A widower addresses his deceased wife Ankh-iri, reminding her of how a good husband he was. Suffering and despair carry along a reproachful tone to the deceased wife.



iry ih r.i m btz p3 hpr m p3y shrw bin nty tw im.f iry.i ih r.t

What offence have I done against (you) that I should have come into this wretched state in which I am? What have I done against you?

- On the question of considering pLeiden I 371 as being a letter, see: (Guilmot, 1973, p. 97; Sweeney, 1998a, p. 107).
- For *btz*: (Lesko & Switalski-Lesko, 2002, p. 166).
- Guilmot (1973, pp. 101, 102) translates *m p3y shrw bin* ‘dans un état pénible’, and notes that it is unclear whether this suffering was psychological or physical.
- The sign  here rendered *r.t* is to be understood as the second person suffix pronoun feminine singular.
- ‘What offence have I done against (you)’: probably a rhetorical question used as a reminder of the husband’s devotion. See (Sweeney, 2001, p. 108, n. 61, 64, p. 210; Sweeney, 1998b, p. 362).
- For *iry.i ih r.t*: see (Gardiner & Sethe, 1928, p. 8; Wente, 1990, p. 216).

Ex. 5.2 pDeM IV r 5-7 (LRL) (Černy, 1978, pl. 19)

A broken down friendship seems to be the case of the letter, where the crew member Amennakht does not reply. The scribe Nakhtsobek (Sweeney, 1998a, p. 101, n. 2) addresses him in an attempt to resume their previous friendship; using inflexion questions and reminding him of their old shared meals (Sweeney, 1998a, p. 110).



iz ih iry.i ih (n) btz<.i> r.k bn ink p3y.k iry n wnm n kw isy ist iwt tz wnw i.iri.k h3' [sn.]k

Now what offence have I done against you? Am I not your old eating companion? Will the hour come that you abandon your [brother]?

SWEENEY (1998a, p. 108, n. (a), p. 112) suggests a possible connection between *pDeM XXII* and *pDeM IV-VI*.

- For *iry.i ih <m> btz r.k*, cf. (Sweeney, 1998a, p. 108, n. (a); Neveu, 1998, p. 215).
- *wnm n kw isy*: (Černy, 1978, pp. 16, 17, e; Lesko & Switalski-Lesko, 2002, p. 45). Cf. (Fischer-Elfert, 1992, p. 36; Sweeney, 1998a, p. 108 b; Fischer-Elfert, 2004, p. 9; Demarée, 2006, p. 20).
- For *i.iri.k h3'*: cf. (Sweeney, 1998b, p. 360).
- ‘Will the hour come that you abandon your [brother]?’: for inflexion questions that might be used rhetorically, see (Sweeney, 2001, p. 107).

Ex. 5.3 pLeiden I 369, r 8 (LRL) (Černy, 1939b, pp. 1, 2)

The letter carries a similar emotional stimulant. Feeling neglected by his family and

friends while being at the wars in Nubia, the scribe Dhutmose reminds them of his good deeds.



ir iry.i ḥḥ n bt3 bw ir.i w' nfr dīt smḥ

Even if I were to have committed millions of offences, have I not done one good deed that makes them forgotten?

- For *ḥḥ n bt3*: (Sweeney, 1998b, pp. 359, 361).
- For *ir.i w' nfr dīt smḥ*: cf. (Sweeney, 1998b, pp. 356, 358).
- For *smḥ*: (Lesko & Switalski-Lesko, 1987, p. 53).
- For the translation 'have I not done one good deed that makes them forgotten?': cf. (Wente, 1990 p. 178; Junge, 1999, p. 281).

6- Expressing disappointment as expectations were not fulfilled

Ex. 6.1 pLeiden I, 366, v 1 (dated to Ramesses II) (Janssen, 1960, p. 38)

A letter from the servant Meriyotef where he expresses his concern about the chantress of Amon Ernute; having not received any replies from her. At the end of the letter he asks her to write about her condition immediately.



nḥt.i iḥ m- .k bn ... ḥr dīt int ḥsf n.i t3y.i š't dī.i

Why have I trusted in you since you have not been sending me the answers to my letters which I have sent to you?

- For *bn ... ḥr dīt int*: (Lesko & Switalski-Lesko, 2002, p. 32).
- For *ḥsf*: (Lesko & Switalski-Lesko, 2002, p. 374).

- For the translation: (Wente, 1990, p. 32).

Ex. 6.2 pBM EA 75019+10302, r 4-7 (LRL) (Demarée, 2006, pl. 14, 4-7)

The letter concerns political arrangements and military aid provided for the general's campaign south into Nubia. A high-ranking official, most likely Piankh (Demarée, 2006, pp. 15, 18), requests all his requirements to be immediately completed upon receipt of the letter; thus confirming that the recipient was a subordinate (Ridealgh, 2013, pp. 187, 188). Piankh's previous request has apparently been neglected (Demarée, 2006, p. 18).

The name of the intended recipient is lost in the lacuna. Demarée (2006, p. 18) suggests him to be the scribe of the necropolis Dhutmose; a relative of Piankh (see also Ridealgh, 2013, p. 188) or one of his subordinates, yet with no certain evidence (Demarée, 2006, p. 18).



r-nty h3b(.i) n.k p3i šmsw ink (i)w dī.i iw n.k ky šmsw ink m p3y šmw mḥ iw.k tm r dīt iwt.f 3s wnn t3y.i š't ḥr spr r.k iw.k wdī p3y šmsw ink 3s m-dī 'ḥ' f m 'ḥ' nb iw.f spr p3-nty tw.k im iw dī.k in.tw n.i p3 h3b(.i) n.k nb ḥr.f

As follows, (I have) sent to you this messenger of mine, after I have caused to come to you another messenger of mine at the end of summer (?), and you did not cause him to come (back) quickly! When my letter reaches you, you shall dispatch this messenger of mine quickly. Do not let him wait at all when he has reached the place where you are, after having

caused to be brought to me all which I have written to you.

- For the translation: (Demarée, 2006, p. 14).

Ex. 6.3 pBN 199 V-IX+196 V+198 IV, r 4-7 (LRL) (Černý, 1939b, p. 5, 7-10)

The following quotation is from a letter addressed from the scribe [Dhutmose] to the scribe Butehamon.



iw.ī spr r pꜣy.ī ḥry r [...] iw.f šsp n-ḥꜣt iw.f irit n.ī nfr nb iw.f [...] īī wn iw.t (r) tttt irm.k ḥr nfrw [...] nfr m ḥꜣty.k iw.k īī

I reached my superior at [...]. He took (me) in charge and did every good thing for me. He (said to me) “[... If you had not] come, then, I would have argued with you. Now, good (things?) [...] goodness in your heart and you have come.

- For *iw.f šsp n-ḥꜣt*: (Wente, 1967, p. 22, a).
- *tttt*: ‘to quarrel’ (Lesko & Switalski-Lesko, 1989, p. 119)
- For the translation: (Wente, 1967, p. 21; Wente 1990, p. 186; Ridealgh, 2013, p. 190).

7- Blaming someone for injustice

Ex. 7.1 Cairo Bowl, CG 25375, inside, 2-4 (beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty) (Gardiner & Sethe, 1928, pl. VI A, 2-4)

A Letter to the Dead where a widow reproaches her late husband the priest Intef for not interfering to look after their house as the maid servant has fallen ill. The response needed is an action to ward off the illness

(Gardiner & Sethe, 1928, p. 8; Sweeney, 1991, p. 318).



(i)n ir tꜣ bꜣkt Īmīw ntt mr.tī (i)n n ḥꜣ.n.k ḥr.s grḥ hrw ḥn ḥrr nb r.s ḥn ḥrrt nbt r.s

What about the maidservant *Īmīw* who is ill? Can't you fight for her night and day with every man and every woman who acts against her?

- For *(i)n ir*: (Silverman, 1980, pp. 64, 65).
- For the translation: (Sweeney, 1991, p. 318).

Ex. 7.2 pLouvre 3230, 2-3 (Eighteenth Dynasty) (Peet, 1926, pl. XVII, lower piece)

The letter is written by the scribe Ahmose of Peniati to the treasurer Tai; reproaching him for having taken away the female slave.



ḥr-m pꜣ m nḥm tꜣ bꜣbt wnt ḥn ḥr rdi.tī n ky in- iw nn inḥ pꜣy.k bꜣk ḥr sḏm wpwt.k m grḥ mī hrw

Why has the female slave who was with me been taken away and given to another? Am I not your messenger, hearkening to your commands by night as well as by day?

- For *wpwt*: ‘messenger’ (Lesko & Switalski-Lesko, 2002, p. 114)
- For the translation: cf. (Spiegelberg, 1918, p. 85; Peet, 1926, p. 71).

Ex. 7.3 O DeM 303, r 3-5 (dated to Ramesses II) (Černý, 1939a, pl. 18, 3-5)

Ostrakon DeM 303 is a letter where the draughtsman Prehotep criticizes his superior the scribe Qenherkhopeshef (Černý, 1939a, p. 16; Kitchen, 1980, p. 534). Being offended, Prehotep reproaches the later for exploiting his work by stating series of commands which he

seemingly used to receive. He conceives never to have been treated in a friendly way (Sweeney, 2001, p. 220, 222), which was often unexpectedly repeated (compare with pBM 199 V-IX+196 V+198 IV and pBM EA 10326; see (Ridealgh, 2013, p. 190).

ir wn b3k in p3 3 hr ir wn wnmw in p3 ih ir wn
hnkt bn tw.k hr wh3<.i> ir wn [p3] b3k iw.k hr
wh3<.i>

If there is work bring the donkey, if there is fodder bring the ox. If there is beer you never look for me. (Only) if there is work (to do), then you look (for me).

- For *ir wn b3k in p3 3 hr ir wn wnmw in p3 ih*: (Junge, 1999, p. 301).
- For *wh3*: (Meeks, 1978, p. 104, 78. 1073; Lesko & Switalski-Lesko, 2002, p. 126).
- For the translation: (Kitchen, 2000, p. 373; Sweeney, 2001, p. 220).

To conclude, studying detailed communication helps reconstructing work atmosphere, as well as shaping a more accurate world of societies. The study provides insight into social behavior in ancient Egypt. Rather than only focusing on various ways of expressing reproach, the study further includes diverse attitudes reflecting people's reactions. Therefore, the texts may be interpreted as glimpses of individuals' lives.

The situations dealt with reveal a well-known aspect of human behavior due to disagreements. Reproach occur often due to injustice, ignorance or negligence. In some cases, though not explicitly stated, the offended expects taking action against the wrongdoer (Sweeney, 2001, p. 191). The contexts occasionally reveal indirect reproach;

highlighting that certain requests were not accomplished or fulfilled as expected.

Most of the references in the aforementioned documents allow to investigate ways in which people phrased reproach and communicated their dissatisfaction. The used expressions are reflective of diverse relationships. The texts vary accordingly and are differently worded in every case. The textual sources on papyri, ostraca, objects and in tomb scenes allow *a priori* to conclude that there are not typical expressions used in phrasing reproach. Some of the sources tend to be out of official contexts, and rather concern family or friendly relationships.

All forms of both explicit and implicit references to scolding are illustrated; giving an overview of both social and ethical contents. An attempt of shaping complainers' portraits of style is therefore based on a wide range of expressions. The general tone usually evokes angry irritated plaintiffs, reproaching for a certain mistreatment or inappropriate behavior. The sources reveal that someone would allow himself to reproach a seemingly well acquainted person. Reproach is more concerned with blame rather than addressing accusation. At least in some of the sources the questions are ironic; denouncing unaccepted behavior while not awaiting a reply or remedy. Annoyance is often marked by astonishment and/ or rhetorical questions inquiring about what has happened, or making allusion to injustice. In some sources it may be conjectured that an arbitrator intervention is required (Sweeney, 1998a; Sweeney, 2001).

As regards the interpretations of the situations, the inexistent voice tone should have indicated the exact meaning and allowed more interpretation (cf. Gardiner, 1957, § 491). Yet, question strategies in expressing reproach reveal a repertoire of words and constructions; using tactics in asking questions:

- Questions eliciting response
- Questions eliciting further explanation
- Indirect questions expressing dissatisfaction

The reason for offence features in various documents with appended explanation. No specific vocabulary or terminology were commonly used as designation for reproach. Reasons for scolding in letters could be inferred from previously sent messages. Glimpses of feelings are often felt; especially when correspondents express willingness to acknowledge the misbehaviour or to repair the relationship. Emotional expressions include reminding the other of old good times (e.g. pBibliothèque Nationale 198, II, vs. 5-6. See Černý, 1939b, p. 68, 8-9; Wentz, 1967, p. 80. Cf. Sweeney, 1998a, p. 107; Demarée, 2006, p. 20), of family or friendship relations (e.g. pDeM IV-VI and p DeM XXII. See Quack, 1994, p. 172. Cf. Sweeney, 1998a, p. 102, n. 7), or that the wrongdoing was not that bad (e.g. pLeiden I 369 and pLeiden I 371).

Correspondents frequently reproach others for not having replied to letters; questioning neglecting attitudes and provoking guilty feelings. The sender emphasizes the fact that he is the one who is always writing; disapproving that the other party does not respond. In other letters the recipient upholds his merits, reminding the addressee of their old good days.

The study of cultural and social aspects reflected by language is far from being complete; highlighting that private documentation deserve more extensive discussions.

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