

Écritures malhabiles et ostraca à plusieurs mains d'après les ostraca littéraires de Deir el-Médina

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Abstract

This article examines literary hieratic ostraca from the Theban region, dating to the New Kingdom. It explores the concept of clumsy or poor writing in ancient Egypt, identifying its meanings and possible causes. For instance, such writing may have been produced by novice scribes early in their careers, or by professionals who lacked sufficient skill. Additionally, bad writing in ancient Egypt is evident in the book *Kemyt*, where students practiced their handwriting.

The ostraca, written by multiple hands/scribes, provide insight into the errors made by Egyptian pupils, which were then corrected by their instructors. The study of palimpsests also presents an intriguing case. It was found that ostraca written by multiple scribes were not necessarily produced at the same time, but rather within close timeframes. Often, different handwriting appears on each side of the ostraca.

Thus, it is crucial to study lesser-known calligraphic works to gain a better understanding of scribal practices in the Theban region during the New Kingdom.