This study deals with the dossier of juridical documents known collectively as the Late Ramesside Tomb Robbery Papyri. These documents, which date to the end of the Twentieth Dynasty, record the proceedings of the interrogation of those prosecuted for robbing the royal tombs and tombs of high officials in western Thebes. In judicial matters, one might expect a maximal trend towards standardization. When variation occurs, it signals what is exceptional (as opposed to common), personal (as opposed to general), or remarkable (as opposed to banal). To sum up, it marks the unexpected. At first glance, in our corpus, the depositions made by the defendants should be the place of choice for free and multifaceted discourse, while the procedural sentences should favour a formalized and rigid phraseology. This assumption is supported by the evidence only up to a certain point. This paper will show that diversity is found where uniformity is expected, while some kind of uniformity is encountered where variation should be the rule.

§1. INTRODUCTION

The Great Tomb Robbery papyri, as Peet felicitously named them, have been known to Egyptologists for more than eighty years. Very recently, in the 1990s, a new papyrus, P. Rochester, came to light. This papyrus is more loosely related
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| I | P. Abbott          | y. 16 of Ramses IX |
|   | P. Léopold II-Amherst | y. 16 of Ramses IX |
| II | P. BM EA 10054     | y. 16 (of Ramses IX) |
| III | P. BM EA 10068, r² | y. 17 of Ramses IX |
|   | v² 2–8             | y. 12 (whm msw.t) |
|   | v² 1               | same as v² 2–8 (?) |
|   | P. BM EA 10053, r² | y. 17 of Ramses IX |
| IV | P. BM EA 10053, v⁰ | y. 9 (R. XI or whm-msw.t) |
|   | P. BM EA 10383     | y. 2 (whm-msw.t) |
| V  | P. Rochester       | y. 1 of whm-msw.t |
|   | Abbott Dockets     | y. 1 of whm-msw.t |
|   | P. BM 10052        | y. 1 of whm-msw.t |
|   | P. Mayer A         | y. 1 and 2 of whm-msw.t |
|   | P. BM EA 10403     | y. 2 of whm-msw.t |
| VI | P. Mayer B         | (Ramses IX?) |
| VII| P. Ambras          | y. 6 of whm-msw.t |

#### Fig. 6.1. List of the papyri in chronological order

The arrows to the right of Figure 6.1 suggest possible regroupings according to the scribe’s hand.⁴ P. Abbott and P. Léopold II-Amherst were reportedly written by the same scribe.⁵ The same is generally said for the two long papyri P. BM EA 10052 and P. Mayer A.⁶ It has also been suggested that P. BM EA 10053 v⁰ and P. BM 10403 share some characteristic features with P. BM EA 10052 and P. Mayer A; however, a conclusive identification of the scribe’s hand in these two papyri is still pending.⁷ In the second part of this study, I will discuss the problems raised in identifying the scribes based on paleography.

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⁴ The Roman numbers in the first column correspond to the classes made by Peet.
⁵ See Gardiner (1936, 191).
⁶ See Peet (1920, 135), who already unhesitatingly stated, ‘It [i.e. P. BM EA 10052] is written the way up on both sides by the same hand as Mayer A.’
⁷ As Peet wrote (1920, 169), the handwriting of P. BM EA 10403 ‘is remarkably like that of Paps. 10052 and Mayer A, but differences in the forms of certain crucial signs, and variants in spelling…prevent our ascribing 10403 to the same writer as the other two.’
It has long been recognized that the Tomb Robbery papyri belong to more than one genre. In his presentation of the material, Peet grouped together the documents dealing with the same case, in chronological order. In the list shown in Table 6.1, the documents have been rearranged according to their contents. The bulk of the material consists of the testimonies of thieves. Of course, placing a document in a group is no simple matter, as the content of some papyri may be heterogeneous. The list should thus be considered a rough classification.

Recently, the corpus of the Tomb Robbery papyri has been extensively used in fixing the chronology and the history of the transition from the Twentieth to the Twenty-first Dynasty. The questions I would like to address in this study are directly related to those individuals who wrote the Tomb Robbery papyri, i.e. the scribes. I shall start with a very general question: how did the scribes process the material, starting from the questioning of the accused to the production of the final document? I shall then move on to specific questions related to the process of the writing itself. How did the scribes handle what they heard? This chiefly concerns, of course, the declarations made by the defendants, but also the questions posed by the officials.

§2. PRODUCING AN ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENT

Producing the final report was undoubtedly the achievement of a long and, to be sure, tiresome process. One could guess that it usually involved three steps:

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8 On this papyrus, see Winand (2011b).
taking notes during the questioning, making a preliminary draft, and writing down the final document.

In the present state of our documentation, there is no evidence to support the existence of the first step. It is difficult to guess what form it would have taken: more or less loose sentences, names and titles written in full or abbreviated, key words for formulaic parts such as oaths, questions, denials, and so on. One can also only guess what material was used to write it down (e.g. papyrus, tablets, or ostraca). 10

In most cases, going directly from the notes to the final document was hardly possible. Some sort of intermediary document was probably needed. It has been suggested that PBM EA 10054 and P.Rochester could be examples of precisely that kind of document. 11 PBM EA 10052 also clearly shows that spaces, which are sometimes quite large, had been included by the scribe to allow for insertions that were never made. It is difficult to decide whether this is sufficient grounds to view the papyrus as an intermediary document, or if it was from the outset conceived as the definitive output. The final documents that were produced for the record were sometimes magnificent pieces of elegant writing, as shown by P.Léopold II-Amherst.

Ideally, all steps should be performed by a single scribe, and it was most desirable that not too much time should elapse between the different steps. In the particular case of the Tomb Robbery Papyri, one can guess that this was, in fact, what happened, considering the political implications up to the highest level of the Egyptian state.

Thus, in many cases, an intermediary document was probably needed. We are most often presented with depositions, spoken in an invariably correct and sometimes subtle, if not always elegant, Late Egyptian. It seems clear that the evidence given by the defendants could hardly be well articulated during the trial between two beatings. The confessions, more often than not, were obtained by force. One must also reckon with the low level of literacy of some defendants, with the inevitable slips of memory, the contradictions that are too common in such circumstances, and so on.

As already noted, it has been suggested that two papyri, PBM EA 10054 and P.Rochester, could be such intermediary documents. Goelet observed that the names of the officials were not recorded in the latter papyrus. He also pointed to a lack of certain details that are expected in this kind of document, but this

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10 The way proceedings were reported in Greek and Latin judicial systems (oratio obliqua vs oratio recta; verbatim or non-verbatim) is still debated. As observed by Coles (1966, 16), the scribes did not need to make a complete version during the hearings; they simply could have recorded in note form what was essential: ‘in drafting his finished version the scribe would have put his condensed speeches back into colloquial language and arranged the whole in an Oratio Recta quasi-verbatim form.’ I thank the anonymous OUP reviewer for pointing out this reference to me.

may be subjective. As noted by Quack, recapitulative sums are lacking at the end of the document, which ends rather abruptly. As regards P.BM EA 10054, Thijs suggested that the arrangements of the different parts of the writing on the papyrus might reveal a work in progress. In his opinion, it is a sign that the scribe was still waiting for some piece of information before completing the final report. The potential use of drafts in scribal work has already been studied, more particularly in connection with the material of Deir el-Medina. The Tomb Robbery papyri probably give us a rare opportunity to see how the scribes rearranged the raw material they collected during the trials in order to produce a document that could eventually be presented to the highest authorities before being stored in the archives.

§3. STANDARDIZING THE DOCUMENTS

In legal documents, some sort of uniformity is only to be expected. This can be observed in every culture where there is an administration. Uniformity can manifest itself in:

- the lexicon
- spellings
- morphosyntax
- phraseology and style
- the general layout of the document

The documents dealing with interrogations of the suspects unmistakably share an air of familiarity. This can be observed in:

- the expository sections
- the questions posed by the officials
- the answers given by the defendants

As regards the last two points (the discourse sections), it is generally assumed that some kind of rephrasing took place. Before going into the details, an important preliminary issue is the identification of the scribes' hands. According to our present knowledge, some papyri are considered to have been written by the same scribe (see Table 6.1). P.Abbott and P.Léopold II constitute the first group; the P.BM EA 10052 and P.Mayer A, a second group to which one should

12 Goelet (1996, 119) curiously writes that the papyrus 'reads as if it were an abridged edition of a more carefully executed and complete document,' which seems very unlikely.
15 Donker van Heel and Haring (2003, ch. 1–2).
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perhaps attach P.BM EA 10053 and 10403. In what follows, I shall examine some issues, taking the whole corpus into consideration. In the second part, I shall focus more thoroughly on two closely related papyri, namely P.BM EA 10052 and P.Mayer A.

As already noted, in documents like the Tomb Robbery papyri, some kind of standardization is unavoidable, at least in the narrative sections. A first case is what can be labelled an adaptation to the administrative style. For instance, at the end of a deposition, it is common to find a list of the stolen items as reported by the accused. It seems very unlikely that what has been recorded corresponds to what was actually said, as, to be sure, nobody ever spoke like that in Egypt.

1. P.Léopold II 2.19–3.1
   iw 20 n dbn n nbw hty r.n n z nb m p′ 8 rmṯ r n nbw dbn 160
   ‘and twenty deben of gold fell to us, for each one, that is the eight people, which makes 160 deben of gold’

2. P.BM EA 10053 νο 3.15
   iw n dl.t n f nbw kd.t 4 gs, dmd i dy t n A : nbw kd.t 4 gs
   ‘and we gave him one and a half kite of gold, the total of what has been given to A: four and a half kite of gold’

3. P.BM EA 10054 νο 1.7
   iw nbw kd.t 4 hty m z nb p′ 5 rmṯ w nb 4 ir n nbw dbn 8
   ‘and four kite of gold fell to each of the five men, which means four (kite) for each, that is eight deben of gold’

These three examples demonstrate distinctive marks of administrative language: the absence of articles, the word order used, the use of the archaic passive participle, the recapitulative sum at the end, and so on. The following example shows what was probably nearer to the colloquial language, as shown by the syntax of the numerals:

4. P.BM EA 10403 2.1
   iw 3′ ḫpj sr ḫpj ḫpj 3′ 10 n dbn n hmmw iw 3′ ḫr-m-ws.t . . . ḫpj 3′ 10 n dbn n hmmw n X
   ‘and the foreigner Payser took my ten deben of copper, and the foreigner Horem-waset . . . took the ten deben of copper of X’

One can also suppose that the scribe sometimes needed to add some information that could hardly have been uttered by the accused when questioned. In the next example (5), Amenpanufer admits that he committed his thefts with a fellow named Hapy-wer:

5. P.Léopold II-Amherst, 1.16–17
   iw iḥpr [ḥ] wr [m n m′ ḫ] ḫ. w m dl [wn zn 2 i] rm ḫrty-nṯr ḫpy-wr s mr-n-pḥn t ḫw.t wsr-md′, t-r mṛ-r-imn, ḫnh, ḫdb, snb r-hṭ sm ns-imn n pr pmḥr ḫ ḫsb t 13 [n pr-‘5] ‘nhḥ, ḫdb, snb ḫpj n [nb] ‘nhḥ, ḫdb, snb ḫḥr 4 n ṭ r By . . .
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‘and I began to steal [in the to]mbs ve[ry regularly w]ith the necropolis worker Hapy-wer, son of Merenptah, who belongs to the temple Usermaatre-Meriamun, life, prosperity, health, under the sem-priest Nesamon of this estate; and in year 13 [of Pharaoh], life, prosperity, health, our [lord], that is four years from now…’

It is very doubtful that Amunpanufer actually recited the whole curriculum vitae of Hapy-wer. He probably did not say more than his name and patronym. The affiliation of Hapy-wer and the name of his superior were most likely added later by the scribe. It is equally improbable that the epithets ‘nlḥ, wdḥ, snb (‘.w.s.), followed by ṣḥn nb ‘.w.s., were pronounced by the defendant during his trial. It is also possible, albeit very difficult to prove, that the phrase hpr 4 rnp.t r tḥy, ‘that is four years from now’, was actually a gloss added by the scribe. That is, unless one prefers to consider it in the reverse perspective, taking hpr 4 rnp.t r tḥy as the original phrase and the opening phrase ḫr ḫr hsb.t 13, ‘and in year 13’ as the gloss added by the scribe. In a way, this would even make better sense, since it is highly disputable that everybody would have been fully aware of the official calendar.

§4. REWRITING THE DEPOSITIONS

Although it is perhaps less palpable, there was also some kind of rewriting of the lengthy depositions made by the accused. It seems that the scribes more or less conformed to what can be called a storyline when faced with certain matters. For instance, a complete declaration on the robbing of a tomb usually follows certain steps presented in a relatively fixed order following a logical and temporal line, and using a fixed phraseology:16

- entering the tomb
- finding the coffins
- tearing them to pieces
- setting them on fire
- stripping them of their gold and silver
- stealing the gold and silver
- parcelling out the booty

Now, in some cases, one has the distinctive feeling that the report includes some kind of verbatim quotations.17 This happens more frequently in some environments such as:

16 The best example of this is probably P.Léopold II-Amherst II 2.4–3.6, but consider also P.BM EA 10052 r° 3.5–7; r° 6.1–6; P.BM EA 10053 v° 2.11–14; v° 3.7–10; v° 3.12–17; P.BM EA 10054 r° 1.3–11; r° 2.13–16; P.BM EA 10403 1.11–2.3.
17 Of course, even in these cases, some kind of rewriting could have taken place.
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1. exceptional tales that do not conform to the habitual pattern
2. reported speech within a declaration
3. exceptional grammatical constructions
4. the use of slang

The first two points do not require much discussion, so I will focus mainly on the last two.

§5. VERBATIM QUOTATIONS

§5.1. Exceptional Constructions

The Tomb Robbery corpus sometimes shows constructions that are either exceptional with regard to the body of Late Egyptian texts or completely unparalleled. In such cases, one is greatly tempted to admit that the scribe faithfully reproduced what was actually spoken by the defendants. Consider the following example, where hpr ‘to become’ is used as an aspectual auxiliary of inchoativity:

6. PBM EA 10052 8,9
   iw.w hpr ‘h’ sdd r-dd ‘and they began to quarrel, (saying)’

The presence of hpr in a complex aspectual construction is already attested, albeit rarely and sporadically, in the Nineteenth Dynasty, always co-occurring with an Old Perfective.18 It can also be used to add an inchoative meaning to an aspectually neutral construction, as in the following example:

7. RAD 77.5
   šḷi r p.i hpr i.ir A ttß ñrm B ‘report concerning the fact that A began to have a row with B’19

In a sequential construction, which naturally gives an inchoative meaning to atelic verbs,20 using hpr is a kind of redundant encoding. Compare in this respect how people weep in the Late Egyptian Tales, an exceedingly common attitude.21 In the Two Brothers, one finds the simplex iw.f(hr) rm (Two Brothers 13.3),22 but a complex construction, using one of the posture auxiliaries ‘h’, hmsi or sdr before an infinitive, is also attested without any notable nuance:

18 Cf. Battle of Kadesh (KRI II, 88,8), or the instance on an ostracon written in the time of Ramses II (KRI III, 542,12).
19 One will note the presence of the verb ttß, whose meaning is very close to that of sdd in the preceding example.
21 This, of course, is reminiscent of the Homeric poems where mortal and divine characters alike come to tears very quickly.
22 LES 10–30.
8. Two Brothers 8.1

\( iw.f \ hr \ 'h' \ hr \ rmy.t \ n.f \ k' \) ‘and he began to weep loudly because of him’

This complex pattern surfaces again in Horus and Seth, a tale composed in the Twentieth Dynasty:

9. Horus and Seth 8.11

‘\( h' \ n \ is.t \ hms \ hr \ rm \) ‘and Isis began to weep’

One must wait until the Tale of Wenamun, well into the Twenty-first Dynasty, to encounter an example of the double complex pattern in a literary piece. However, it remains exceptional even in this tale, as witnessed by the more common pattern \( hpr + \) infinitive:

10. Tale of Wenamun 2.64

\( iw.i \ hpr \ hms.tw \ rm \) ‘and I began to weep’

11. Tale of Wenamun 2.67

\( iw.p' \ wr \ hpr \ rm \ m-di \ n3 \ md.t \ i.dd.w \ n.f \)

‘and the prince began to weep because of the words that were told to him’

These examples, taken from the literary corpus, show the gradual introduction of \( hpr \) to express inchoativity in narrative patterns. Of course, one could argue that the literary texts and the documentary texts do not reflect exactly the same level of Late Egyptian. In this case, the construction under discussion does not appear, in the literary corpus, before the Tale of Wenamun, a text which can be considered linguistically closer to the non-literary corpus than the New Kingdom compositions. Thus, the appearance of \( hpr \) as an auxiliary of inchoativity in the Tomb Robbery corpus can be regarded as an innovative trait.

The use of \( hpr \) in contexts where it was usually absent before can again be observed in the contrastive pair appearing in P.Mayer A:

12. P.Mayer A 6.23

\( hr \ ir \ tw.i \ m \ iy \ r-hry, \ iw.i \ gm \ w' \ b \ ttt\-\triangledown \) ‘as I was coming down, I found the wab-priest Tjata-sheri’

13. P.Mayer A 2.7

\( iw.i \ hpr \ m \ iy.t \ r-hry, \ iw.i \ sdm \ hrw <n> \ n3 \ rmt \ iw.w \ m-hnw \ pwy \ r-\triangledown \) ‘and I began to come down, and I heard the voice of the men who were inside this treasury’

23 LES 37–60. 24 LES 61–75. 25 See most recently Winand (2011a).

26 One can also note the use of \( hpr \) in a deposition found in PBM EA 10403 (3, 5–6: \( hr \ hpr.i \ hms.kwi \ hkr.tw \ hr \ n3 \ nhi, \ mtw \ hpr \ n3 \ rmt \ ir.t \ swt \ n \ hnw, \ iw.n \ hms.wyn \ hkr.wyn, \ i.n.i \ n.f \) ‘and it happened that I was sitting hungry under the sycamores, when people started trading copper as we were sitting hungry.’ I said to him, with an inchoative force in the narrative conjunctive (on this, see Winand 2001), but with a different sense in the opening line, where it means something like ‘it happened that.’
The second example of what I call a remarkable construction is the use of an emphatic i.ir.f pattern with an adverbial predicate, i.e. in the construction that will be known later as the second tense of the first present. The context is very clear and definitely favours a contrastive-emphatic reading:

14. P.BM EA 10052 5.21–3

\[\text{ir ti s.t i.dd.k : in<.n> n; ťbw n ḫd i m k.t s.t ˈt byname, rwi.tw pỹy ḫd ˈi dd.f ˈdi ˈi.ir n;i ťbw r pỹy ḫd ˈi dd.i n.tn 'n w* s.t w'ty B wn.n}\]

\[\text{‘as for the place you said that you [lit. we] took the silver vessels from, it is another great place, distinct from this treasure. He said, “False! It is to this big treasure I’ve already told you about that those vessels belong. It is one single place that we opened.” }\]

As a third example, one can also add an instance of wn before an indefinite subject in the negation of the perfective, i.e. the bwpw.f sdm pattern. The use of wn (a form of the verb wn n ‘to be’) before an indefinite subject is very far from being systematic in Late Egyptian; it will later become grammaticalized, but only in constructions following the pattern of the Present I. The presence of wn here is somewhat unexpected in other grammatical environments. It can possibly be explained as an analogical process at this particular moment of the development of Later Egyptian. Sporadic uses of wn in syntactically close grammatical contexts can be observed in the corpus of the late Ramesside times and in the Third Intermediate Period.

15. P.BM EA 10052 3.18–19

\[\text{‘dī pỹ dd.k 10 n dbn n ḫd n z nb n; dy n pỹ rmṯ ḫn n íy.f íry.w bwpw wn zp n.tn dd.f wn zp n.n z nb íry.n šw.w <r> wn.n st}\]

\[\text{‘it is false what you said, that ten deben of silver to each man was what was given to this man and his accomplices and that there was nothing left for you. He said, ”There was something left for each of us; we traded them <to> eat them.” }\]

§5.2. Slang

All languages have a slang register, and Egyptian was undoubtedly no exception. Further research is still needed in order to provide the data needed to handle this topic properly. Slang can be defined both as variation according
to some idea of normativity in linguistic use and as substandard in terms of use of linguistic register. Use of slang is common in some parts of society. Ancient Egypt seems to conform to well-known patterns in its use of slang in matters related to sex and crime. The following examples illustrate some possible uses:

16. P.BM EA 10052 1.8
iw s dd n.i gm nh; rm t w’ śsp n ‘k, w ḫn. n wnm.k sw irm.w – in.s n.i
‘and she said to me, “Some men have found a haul of dough. Let’s go so that you can wolf it down with them.” So said she to me.’

17. P.BM EA 10052 3.5
my r-bnr ḫn.n in.n pīy ‘nḥ-y<k <r> wnm
‘come out! Let’s go, we will bring this piece (?) of dough <to> wolf it down’

18a. P.BM EA 10052 8.11
śh:k <w:I> m pū ḫd ‘you conned <me> out of the silver’

18b. P.Mayer A 9.20
śh:k wī ḫr.f m w’ n pīy.f iry ‘you conned me, so they kept saying to one another’

19. P.Mayer A 1.21
sd(m.i) r- dd nī rm t ḫn r ir.t ḫw m pīy pr-n-sṭ;
‘(I) heard that the men went to do their business with the portable shrine’

§6. VARIATION WITHIN STANDARDIZATION

Administrative records are, of course, the first candidates where strict standardization can be expected. However, even there, scribes can offer variation in formulae that one could be tempted to see as completely frozen. In what follows, the field of investigation has been restricted to P.BM EA 10052 and P.Mayer A.

a) Curiously enough, the well-known formula ‘he was interrogated with the stick’ has a different look in the two papyri. In P.BM EA 10052, the formula in the first ten columns is invariably the periphrastic passive ı̇r smt r.f m bd’n. From col. 11 onwards, the passive construction is sometimes replaced by the Present I sw smt r m bd’n. In P.Mayer A, the formula is always sw smt r knkn m bd’n, which is the second formula found in P.BM EA 10052, with the insertion of m knkn ‘by beating’ (Table 6.2).31 This kind of variation between the two documents is not at all exceptional, as will be made clear in the following sections.

30 See already Peet’s comment (1920, 158 n. 4).
31 One will note here that the practice of P.BM EA 10403 reflects that of P.Mayer A.
b) Another interesting instance of variation can be observed when the defendant tells the officials to bring a witness to charge him. Such an invitation can happen as part of an oath or as the concluding sentence of a deposition. In the examples below, O stands for oath and D for deposition:

20. P.BM EA 10052 10.16
O: ı̓my in.tw pṣy-nḥ... ı̓ry sfṣh’s
‘let Payankh be brought so that he may accuse her’

21. P.BM EA 10052 13.8
D: ı̓my in.tw nfw ns-imn ı̓ry sfṣh’s.i
‘let the sailor Nesamun be brought, so that he may accuse’

22. P.BM EA 10052 12.27; 15.8
D: ı̓my in.tw pṣty i[w.f s]h’s.i mtw.f sfṣh’s.i
‘let the one who will accuse me be brought and let him accuse me’

23. P.Mayer 8.24
O: ı̓my in.tw rmt r sfṣh’s.i
‘let someone be brought to accuse me’

24. P.BM EA 10052 14.5
D: ı̓my in.tw rmt r sfṣh’s.i
‘let someone be brought to accuse me’

The recurrent formula ı̓my in.tw X can be followed by a subjunctive, ı̓ry sfṣh’s.i/ṣf, by a conjunctive, mtw.f sfṣh’s.i, or by a prepositional phrase, r sfṣh’s.i. Interestingly enough, P. Mayer A always sticks to the PrepP, which is also known to P.BM EA 10052. In the latter one, however, the subjunctive and the conjunctive are more common.


33 As was pointed out to me by Stéphane Polis, the alternation of the subjunctive (ı̓ry sfṣh’s.i) vs r + infinitive (r sfṣh’s.i) should perhaps be explained by the position of the subject of in.tw on the animacy scale: the subjunctive seems to be preferred when the witness is higher on the scale. In exx. 20 and 21, the subject is a proper name, whereas in exx. 23 and 24, it is the generic noun rmt ‘somebody’. In the first case, the subjunctive is used, but in the second one, r + infinitive has been preferred. This, of course, requires further investigation.
They are only intended to give an idea of the different patterns that can be found.

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P.BM EA 10052, the suspect usually says $i.w\hat{h}, dd,i$ ‘stop! I’ll speak!’,

an exclamation never found in P.Mayer A. The formula of denial $w\hat{r}_i, w\hat{r}_r$

$h^t.i, i$ ‘far from me! far from myself!’, which occurs six times in P.BM EA

10052, never appears in P.Mayer A. In four cases, the same defendant

appears in both documents: Nesparai (P.BM EA 10052 11.2 and P. Mayer

A 8.10), Ankhefenamun (P.BM EA 10052 11.11 and P. Mayer A 8.15),

Pa‘irsekheru (P.BM EA 10052 11.15 and P. Mayer A 9.24), and Ahautynefer

(P.BM EA 10052 15.22 and P. Mayer A 10.9). It is thus difficult to understand

why there is such a difference in formulation.

d) The question posed by an official on the modus operandi of the thieves

can take different forms, as shown by the four following groups.36

1. The $i.dd\ (n.i)$ group

$i.dd\ n.i\ rmgt\ nb\ i.wn\ irm.k\ m\ n\ w.s\ wt\ ‘\text{Tell me all the people who were with you in the great places}’$ (P. BM EA 10052 1.7, 3.1, 5.11, 7.15)

$i.dd\ p\ shr\ n\ sm\ i.ir.k\ r\ ph\ n\ w.s\ wt\ ‘\text{Tell how you managed to reach the great and venerable places}’$ (P. BM EA 10052 1.14, 3.23, 5.5, 12.14; P. Mayer A 2.11, 2.18, 8.4, 8.17, 8.20)

$i.dd\ p\ i.ir.k/\ i.dd\ p\ shr\ i.ir.k\ ‘\text{Tell what you did // tell how you did it}’$ (P. BM EA 10052 1.17)

$i.dd\ my\ n.i\ in\ bwpswk\ sm\ r\ t\ s.t\ ‘\text{Tell me please if you did not go to the place}’$ (P. BM EA 10052, 4.2)

$i.dd\ n.i\ rmgt\ nb\ i.sdm.k\ i.ptr.k\ ‘\text{Tell me all the people you heard and saw}’$ (P. BM EA 10052 4.3)

$i.dd\ n.i\ rmgt\ nb\ rdy\ n.w\ h\ d\ m\ p\ ly\ h\ d\ ‘\text{Tell me all the people that were given silver from this silver-hoard}’$ (P. BM EA 10052 5.18)

$i.dd\ p\ shr\ n\ p\ h\ d\ i.ptr.k\ m-di\ A\ ‘\text{Tell how you saw the silver in the possession of A}’$ (P. BM EA 10052 7.5; P. Mayer A 8.11)

$i.dd\ my\ +\ NP\ ‘\text{Tell please + NP}’$ (P. Mayer A 4.2, 4.4, 5.3)

2. The $i.p\ shr\ n\ +\ infinitive\ group$

$i.p\ shr\ n\ sm\ i.ir.f(irm\ A)\ ‘\text{How did he go (with A)?}’$ (P. BM EA 10052 4.6, 4.16; P. Mayer A 1.9, 2.2, 3.3, 3.20)

$i.p\ shr\ n\ sm\ i.ir.f\ r\ n\ s.wt\ ‘\text{How did he go the places?}’$ (P. BM EA 10052 8.18)

$i.p\ shr\ n\ sm\ i.ir.f\ r\ ph\ n\ s.wt\ ‘\text{How did he manage to reach the places?}’$ (P. BM EA 10052 8.3, 11.15, 14.12, 16.18)

$i.p\ shr\ n\ sm\ i.ir.f\ r\ \ VB\ ‘\text{How did he + VB?}’$ (P. Mayer A 1.22)

$i.p\ shr\ n\ \ VB\ i.ir.f\ ‘\text{How did he + VB?}’$ (P. BM EA 10052 10.14, 11.5, 13.2; P. Mayer A 1.14, 5.10)

$i.p\ shr\ n\ p\ ly\ h\ d\ i.in\ X\ ‘\text{What is the matter of the silver that X brought?}’$ (P. BM EA 10052 10.13, 10.17, 11.7v)

34 P. BM EA 10052 1.13, 1.17, 3.17, 4.1, 4.18, 5.9, 5.13, 5.15, 5.17, 7.16, 8.14, 11.16, 12.16.

35 P. BM EA 10052 4.8, 8.4, 11.2, 11.11, 11.15, 15.22.

36 In each group, the formulae are subject to variation as regards their lexical components.

They are only intended to give an idea of the different patterns that can be found.
Words of Thieves

3. The *ih hr.k + NP* \[\text{P. BM 10052 7.10, 10.3, 11.20, 13.11, 14.2, 15.5}\]
   
   \[ih\ hr.k \, t+t\text{ }md.t\, n + NP 'What would you say concerning the matter of + NP?'\]
   
   \[ih\ hr.k\, p\text{ }shy\, n\, ph\, hr.k\ldots \text{ (P. BM 10052 11.10)}\]
   
   \[ih\ hr.t\, p\text{ }hqd\, i\text{ }in\, X \text{ (P. BM 10052 11.5, 12.25;}\, P.\, Mayer\, A\, 10.2,\, 10.18)\]
   
   \[ih\ hr.k + NP \text{ (P. BM 10052 13.15, 15.1, 15.20;}\, P.\, Mayer\, A\, 4.16,\, 4.18,\, 6.14,\, 7.1,\, 8.23)\]

4. The *ih hr.k* group 'What would you say?'


Tables 6.3 and 6.4 provide the statistics of use for the two papyri. The numbers along the top of the columns indicate the sheets of the papyrus, and the numbers in the columns the number of occurrences of each example. The formulae have been arranged according to decreasing degree of complexity.

As a conclusion, one can see that the distribution is roughly the same in both papyri. As (t)he(y) approach(es) the end of the papyrus, the scribe(s) show(s) a strong tendency to favour shorter formulae, leaving aside the most complex ones. In P.BM EA 10052, the *i.dd* group is prominent in the first seven columns; it disappears thereafter, with an exception in col. 12. The *ih hr.k r NP* group and the *ih hr.k* group, the shortest one, are totally absent before col. 7. P.Mayer A offers the same general profile. In the last five columns of the papyrus, the two *ih hr.k* groups appear fourteen times, while the *i.dd* group, which was no longer present since col. 6, occurs four times in col. 8.

This tendency towards abbreviation can also be observed in the spellings. Figure 6.2 shows the different writings of the pervasive word *smtr* ‘testimony’ in

**Table 6.3.** Introduction of a question: PBM EA 10052

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PBM EA 10052</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
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<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>i.dd</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ih p\text{ }shy</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ih hr.k r NP</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ih hr.k</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6.4.** Introduction of a question: P.Mayer A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P.Mayer A</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>i.dd</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ih p\text{ }shy</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ih hr.k r NP</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ih hr.k</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[37\] On the meaning of *hr.k* in this case, see Winand (forthcoming a).
Jean Winand

In P.BM EA 10052, there are nine different spellings, which can be grouped into three sections (as shown by the shadings) according to an increasing degree of simplification.38

In the first group, smtr has been written in full; in the second group, some abbreviations occur but the group mt is still written; in the third and last group, the word is fully abbreviated (with some differences in the choice of classifier). The distribution of the data (Figure 6.3) shows a striking succession of the three groups.

The full written form (III) is present only at the beginning of the papyrus, and the last group (VII+VIII+X+XI) is increasingly used from the second part of the papyrus onwards. In P.Mayer A, the difference is even stronger. The full written form (𓩂𓏏𓊀𓊍𓏿𓀁) is present only once, in the very first line of the papyrus. The abbreviated form (𓩂𓏹𓀁) is the only one used (forty-five times) in the rest of the document, with one minor exception in col. 8.19 (𓉃𓉲𓉐𓉁).

Fig. 6.2. Spellings of smtr in P.BM EA 10052

Fig. 6.3. Distribution of the spellings of smtr in P.BM EA 10052

PBM EA 10052 and the P.Mayer A. In P.BM EA 10052, there are nine different spellings, which can be grouped into three sections (as shown by the shadings) according to an increasing degree of simplification.38

In the first group, smtr has been written in full; in the second group, some abbreviations occur but the group mt is still written; in the third and last group, the word is fully abbreviated (with some differences in the choice of classifier). The distribution of the data (Figure 6.3) shows a striking succession of the three groups.

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38 The first group starts with III, and not I. The reason for this is that the first two classes, which represent other spellings, are not attested in this papyrus. The order of the spellings reflects their first occurrence in the text. This explains the position of spelling IX, which belongs to the second group, in the middle of the third group.
Another striking difference between the two papyri is offered by the words \( \text{bdn} \) ‘stick’ and \( \text{mnn} \), another kind of instrument of torture, perhaps a device for twisting the limbs. Tables 6.5 and 6.6 show the distribution of the two words in the two papyri. Again, P.BM EA 10052 and P.Mayer A seem to operate according to different choices.

If P.BM EA 10052 and P.Mayer A sometimes behave differently, they also display some features that are not shared with the rest of the Tomb Robbery papyri. Here are some examples, both at the lexical and the graphic level.

In the corpus of the Tomb Robbery papyri, there are two verbs closely related in meaning: \( \text{wšwš} \) and \( \text{kk} \). Both are used to describe the stripping off of precious metals from wooden equipment. However, the two verbs consider the process from opposite angles: \( \text{kk} \) takes the point of view of the metal (\( \text{kw} \text{w} \text{k} \text{k} \text{n} \text{bw} \text{m} \text{n} \text{i} \text{h} \text{tr} \text{.w} \) ‘they stripped off some gold from the doorjambs’),\(^{39}\) whereas \( \text{wšwš} \) considers the process from the point of view of the equipment (\( \text{kw} \text{w} \text{wšwš} \text{n} \text{t} \text{w} \text{t} \text{.w} \) ‘they broke the coffins into pieces’). In this case, the metal is not mentioned, but it is clear from the context that the process of \( \text{wšwš} \) is in direct connection with the stripping of the gold and silver that were plated on the furniture, as is clear from the following example:

25. P.Mayer A 3.4
\( \text{iw} \text{w} \text{f} \text{wšwš} \text{p} \text{i} \text{pr} \text{-} \text{n} \text{st} \text{.i} \text{iw} \text{f} \text{i} \text{n} \text{i} \text{h} \text{mnw} \text{i} \text{m} \text{f} \)

‘and he broke the portable shrine into pieces, and he carried the copper parts out of it’

\( \text{kk} \) does not seem to be attested outside the Tomb Robbery corpus, but \( \text{wšwš} \) is known elsewhere.\(^{40}\) Table 6.7 shows the distribution of both words in the corpus

\(^{39}\) \( \text{kk} \) is still attested in Ptolemaic times with the meaning of ‘to peel off’. It is also known in Coptic (\( \text{k} \text{k} \text{w} \text{k} \text{w} \text{k} \)) with the same meaning; see Crum (1939, 100b–101a). The demotic \( \text{kwk} \text{w} \text{k} \text{e} \) that appears in P.Magical London–Leiden 3.21 in the expression \( \text{kwk} \text{e} \text{n} \text{swh} \text{t} \text{n} \text{msh} \) ‘crocodile egg shell’ is possibly linked to the same root.

\(^{40}\) In describing some kind of beating: P.Anastasi III 5.8–9; P.Anastasi IV 9.7; P.Anastasi V 10.7; P.Sallier I 3.9; P.Chester Beatty IV v° 6.1; in the Necropolis Journal, in a section dealing
Jean Winand

Table 6.7. \(\text{wsws} \rightarrow \text{qq} \) in the TR corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(\text{wsws})</th>
<th>(\text{kk})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P.BM EA 10052</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.BM EA 10053</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.BM EA 10054</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Mayer A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.8. The spellings of \(\text{iTay} \) ‘thief’ in the TR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(\text{iTay})</th>
<th>(\text{iTay})</th>
<th>(\text{iTay})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P.Abbott</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Ambras</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.BM EA 10052</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.BM EA 10053</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.BM EA 10054</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.BM EA 10068</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.BM EA 10403</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Léopold II-Amherst</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Mayer A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of the TR. Some strong tendencies appear: P.BM EA 10052 and P.Mayer A use only \(\text{wsws}\), whereas P.BM EA 10053 exclusively favours \(\text{kk}\). P.BM EA 10054 is the sole document that uses both words.\(^{41}\)

Significant differences in spellings also appear throughout the corpus. Although the variations may sometimes seem very slight, they gain significance because they bear upon nouns that are used extensively. Two examples will suffice here.

The word for thief, \(\text{iTay}\), is well attested for obvious reasons. In the Tomb Robbery corpus, it appears 112 times (although only 109 occurrences can be used due to lacunae). The spellings can be sorted into three classes according to what is written just before the two classifiers: \(\varnothing\), \(-y\) or \(-w\). The choice of the spelling has nothing to do with the number: each one can be used for singular and plural. As is clear from Table 6.8, each papyrus tends to favour one spelling. One will note here that the scribe of P.BM EA 10053, which is sometimes said to be very close to that of P.BM EA 10052 and P.Mayer A, did not choose the same option for the writing of \(\text{iTay}\).

with a tomb robbery during the reign of Ramses IX (KRI VI, 579,8–9 and 11); and in P.Anastasi I 26.1, for describing a chariot broken to pieces. See also P.Anastasi I 19.9, in a damaged context. The verb is still known in Coptic (\(\text{ⲟⲟⲟⲟⲟⲓⲟⲩ}\)), where it means something like ‘to trash’; see Crum (1939, 504b).

\(^{41}\) It can be shown that this has something to do with an empiric linguistic tendency I have elsewhere termed the Principle of Thematic Continuity, which makes the prediction that, if one is given the choice between two differently oriented processes, one tends to select the verb that has the thematic entity as its direct object (Winand 2012).
Words of Thieves

Table 6.9. The spellings of the negative marker in the TR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(and var.)</th>
<th>P.Abbott (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P.Léopold II-Amherst (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P.BM EA 10053 (1)</td>
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<td>P.BM EA 10403 (1)</td>
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<td>P.BM EA 10052 (48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P.BM EA 10403 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P.Mayer A (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P.Mayer A (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another good example is provided by the spellings of the negative marker \textit{bwpw}, which appears eighty-eight times in the corpus. As shown in Table 6.9, its spellings can easily be sorted into two groups: the \textit{bwp}- group and the \textit{bp}- group,\footnote{On the spellings of the negative \textit{bwpw}, see Winand (1992, 202–8).} which nicely match the chronological ordering of the manuscripts (see Figure 6.1).

§7. HANDLING A CASE: SOME INTERESTING ISSUES

In the Tomb Robbery corpus, a single case is sometimes dealt with in several documents. This gives us the rare opportunity to get an idea of how the scribes handled the testimonies. A case can be presented twice, in the same document or in two different ones. The testimony can be given by a single defendant, but it can also be presented by two different ones. Parallel wording can also occur with completely distinct cases implying unrelated defendants. In what follows, these possibilities are examined.

§7.1. One Case, Two Witnesses, and One Papyrus

This category can be illustrated by a case reported twice in P.BM EA 10052 by two witnesses:

\textbf{26. P.BM EA 10052 r\textsuperscript{a} 3.20–21: Deposition of the incense-burner Shedsukhonsu}

\textit{sd\textit{m}.\textit{i r-d\textit{d} w' \textit{ksks}.\textit{t iw.\textit{s mh}.\textit{ti m nbw m-di hry}-\textit{t3 dhwty}-\textit{htp iw ns-sw p3 hr}}}

‘I heard that one basket full of gold is in the possession of the doorkeeper Djehutyhotep, although it belongs to the Tomb.’

\textbf{27. P.BM EA 10052 r\textsuperscript{a} 4.4–5: Deposition of the trumpeter Perypatjau}

\textit{sd\textit{m}.\textit{i r-d\textit{d} w' \textit{ksks}.\textit{t m-di hry}-\textit{t3 dhwty}-\textit{htp iw.\textit{s mh}.\textit{ti m nbw iw ns-sw p3 hr}}}

\footnote{On the spellings of the negative \textit{bwpw}, see Winand (1992, 202–8).}
'I heard that one basket is in the possession of the doorkeeper Djehutyhotep, being full of gold, although it belongs to the Tomb.'

The two depositions differ in one point only: the position of the phrase m-di hry-š dḥwty-ḥtp, ‘is in the possession of Djehutyhotep’. In the second deposition (only a few lines later), the scribe undoubtedly intended to reproduce what he had written in the first one. In doing so, he probably relied too confidently on his memory. As a result, he cut wꜢ ksk.t, ‘one basket’, from its expansion ıw.s mh.ti mn nbw, ‘full of gold’. These two passages strongly suggest that the second deposition is a mere copy-and-paste reproduction of the first one. The odds that the second witness reproduced exactly the same phrasing seem rather weak.

§7.2. One Case, One Witness, and Two Papyri

In the second category, a case is reported by a single witness. In exx. 28 and 29, it seems that the defendant was interrogated about the same case on two different occasions. The two testimonies share a striking air of similarity, but there are differences, too, which can be explained in different ways. It is possible, and actually very probable, that Sekhahatyamun confessed more or less the same facts, but it is debatable, to say the least, that he chose exactly the same words in the same order. In fact, what is truly surprising is the fact that the two depositions are so close. It is difficult to escape the feeling that the latter deposition is an adaptation of the former one:

28. P.BM EA 10052 8.6–11

As already noted by Peet, the intended meaning of bı cannot be precisely defined: either it has to do with the quality of the silver (some problem with the fineness of the metal?), or it alludes to the illicit provenance thereof.

It is difficult to assess the syntactic status of this phrase: it may be circumstantial (as they were starting to quarrel) or sequential. The presence of the inchoative auxiliary hpr makes the first option less attractive.

On the meaning of ḫr in reported speech, see Winand [(forthcoming a)].
Words of Thieves

29. P.Mayer A 9.17

*a dš.t-ní 4 hr r n hmwt t pt-nfr n pš hr b iwf dt n i ḫḏ ḫd.t 2 iwf ḫḥ n r-ḏd d bin iwf tm gm.t.f iwm nnnw lhy-mh iy r-bnr s iwf w dt f ḫ; i r w šn b iwf ṣḏm m-di.w iwm ḫṯ tšt ḫ ḫ w ḫḏ r-ḏd s ḫ iht.k w ḫ ḫ m ḫ w n pš n pšš ḫ šr

*a I gave some barley (four kh₇r) to the coppersmith of the Tomb, Panefer, b and he gave me two kite of silver. c I took them for him (i.e. to return them to him?) thinking d (they were) bad, e but I did not find him. f Then the herdsman Ihumeh came out g and they made me enter a storehouse. h I then could hear them46 i as they were having a row over a quantity of silver j “you conned me,” so they were saying to one another.

The version in P.Mayer A is obviously an abridged version of that in P.BM EA 10052. Some sentences of P BM EA 10052 (e, f, g, h, and l), are missing in P.Mayer A. There are also differences that are purely lexical, such as sentence (j) of P.BM EA 10052 and (i) of P. Mayer A, which have ṣḏd and ṣḏḏt, respectively, two verbs that are semantically very close. In the opening sentence of Mayer A, there is information on the quantity of grain that has been given, which is absent from the version in P.BM EA 10052. This could well be a new piece of evidence given by Sekhahatyamun during the second interrogation.47 More significantly, however, sentences (c–e) of P.BM EA 10052 have been obviously misunderstood in P. Mayer A, with the last one missing. This is, in my opinion, a strong argument in favour of a dependence of P. Mayer A’s redaction on the version offered by the P.BM EA 10052.

§7.3. Two Cases, Two Witnesses, and One Papyrus

The next pair of examples illustrates a parallel wording found in two different cases reported by two distinct witnesses (Sekhahatyamun and Ankhefenamun) in the same papyrus (P.BM EA 10052). The last sentence of both depositions follows a very similar pattern, even if small differences can be identified. It is very close to a modern bureaucratic form, in which one only has to complete what is changing: ‘If you want to kill me for (blank) such or such reason, it is (blank) him or them that did it.’ Once again, there is some suspicion that the scribe reused a formula he had already written for the second deposition. It is, of course, impossible to decide whether this formula was actually produced by the former witness and taken over by the scribe for the second deposition, or if it was part of the phraseological stock of the scribe.

46 The indirect construction, ṣḏm m-di NP, instead of ṣḏm + SN, suggests that the witness could not hear directly what was said, because not all of the protagonists were in the same room, hence my translation with ‘can.’

47 The precise stating of the function of Panefer’s role—he is said to be a coppersmith—might be an addition by the scribe.
Jean Winand

30. P.BM EA 10052 8.4

dd  n.f  ffty
Q:  ḫ chrom 'n>  šm  i.irms  <r> ḫ mh n3  s.wt  'y  irm n3  rmt  wn [i.wn]  irm.k
dd.f
A:  wš  r.i, wš  ḫ.t.i  n3  sw.t  'y  inn  iw.tw  ḫdb.i  ḫr  n3  m’h’.  w  n  iw.-mr-itrw  mntw  n3
wn.i  im

“The vizier said to him:
Q:  “How did you manage <to> reach great places with the men who were with you?”
He said:
A:  “Far be it from me! Far be it from myself! If I have to be killed on account of the tombs of Iumiteru, then they are the ones I have been in. “48

31. P.BM EA 10052 11.12

didi.tw  n.f  nh  n nb  ‘nh,  wdš,  snb  ‘nh,  wdš,  snbr-dd
O:  mtw.i  dd  ’ḍi  iw.f  ḫšb,  didi.tw  <r>  kš
dd.tw  n.f
Q:  ḫ  ḫr.k  šy  shr  <n>  ph  i.irms  n3  s.wt  ‘y.t  irm  X
dd.f
A:  wš  r.i  wš  ḫ’.t.i  bw  ḫj.h  n3  m’h’  (i)n  nỳ.y.i  rmt  <n>  nty  <m>  imnt.t  ḫr  ḫn  r  p3  ḫr
inn  iw.tw  ḫdb<.i>  ḫr  rmt  mntf  šty.i  ʃw.t

‘He was given an oath by the Lord, life, prosperity, health life, prosperity, health:
O:  “If I say something false, I’ll be mutilated and deported <to> Nubia.”
It was said to him:
Q:  “What’s about how you reached the great places with A.”
He said:
A:  “Far be it from me! Far be it from myself! I do not know the tombs. It is my men who are <in> the West,49 and also who went to the Tomb. If <I> have to be killed because of someone, my crime is his!”50

§7.4. Two Cases, Two Witnesses, and Two Papyri

In my last example, we have exactly the same wording for two different cases, concerning two different witnesses and recorded on two different papyri.

32. P.BM EA 10052 12.18

dwpwy.i  ptr  inn  iw.k  dd  i.gš,  giy.i

‘I did not see (anything). If you say, “Lies!” I will lie.’51

48 See most recently Collier (2006, 183, ex. 3).
49 This sentence is usually translated with a past (‘who were in the West’), pace Peet (1920, 153).
In this case, one would rather expect a past converter (cf. mntw n3  i.wn.i  im: PBM EA 10052 8.5, cf. ex. 30 above). I prefer to understand it as a present; the accused is probably making a general statement here.
Once again, one must not discount the possibility that the two witnesses wanted to show their good faith, but the odds that they both used the same colourful expression, making the same allusion to a possible obligation of lying, seem very low. The verb ḫli ‘lie’ is found elsewhere, in different phraseological contexts:

34. P.BM EA 10052 11.21
m ir ḫli, bn mšt ḫwnt ‘Do not lie, it is absolutely not true.’

35. P.BM EA 10052 14.17
m ir <ḏt.t> ḫli, bwpwy ḫtr ‘Do not <make> me lie. I did not see (anything).’

36. P.Mayer A 9.4
ировки <mš> ḫl, ink m ir <ḏt.t> ḫli
‘How could it be done? As for me, do not <make> me lie!’

§8. CONCLUSION

The study of the Tomb Robbery material opens an exceptional window into the work of the scribes while dealing with their administrative business. The complexity of the issues, as well as the number of defendants and witnesses, undoubtedly forced the scribes to handle the cases very methodically. To be sure, the Pharaonic administration had the necessary expertise to handle such difficulties. The mysterious ways that preside over the preservation of the documentary evidence in ancient Egypt have brought to light the dossier of an assassination attempt on Ramses III, a major case in judicial history that was not so remote in time (about seventy years) from the Tomb Robbery proceedings.

Immediately following the first edition of the Tomb Robbery corpus, scholars could hardly believe that the written records were verbatim reports of the witnesses’ declarations. Gardiner wondered if the depositions were not simply faked. A more nuanced approach was taken by Wainwright. For him, the depositions needed to be partly rewritten to gain the internal coherence they would have otherwise lacked. ‘The papyrus is of course not a verbatim report...

52 The spelling of ḫli prevents the same reading as in the next two examples. In the two last examples, I inserted the causative ḫtr because ḫli does not seem to have a factitive meaning (to make someone lie), judging by the evidence provided by the two papyri. Except for a disputable instance in the Wisdom of Amenemope (XII, 4), the word does not appear outside these two papyri.

53 Gardiner (1936, 187).

54 See also more recently Thijs’ opinion (see above, n. 9).
of the proceedings, but a précis giving the gist of the endless cross questions and crooked answers by which some approximation to some facts got into writing. For instance, no man comes into court and states boldly “I committed this, that, and the other crime”. Nor does he call himself a thief; that, of course, is the clerk’s designation of the accused.\(^{55}\)

The opinion of these distinguished scholars was more an assumption than the result of a clear and neat demonstration. The present study shows that the reality is more subtle.

When reworking the rough data taken during the trials, the scribes undoubtedly proceeded towards some kind of standardization. This process is manifested in the lists, especially in the lists of the stolen items, or the lists of the thieves, where an administrative tone was adopted. They also had the opportunity to add some missing information, such as the father’s name, the institutional affiliation, and so on.

Standardization also occurred in phraseology. In the narrative, but also in the questions asked and in the answers that were given, there is an air of familiarity, a feeling of déjà vu. This strongly suggests that a certain degree of rephrasing took place at some point. For lengthier depositions, it is even possible to speak of a restyling, as the scribes tried to follow a storyline in the presentation of the facts. This, of course, implies that drafts were sometimes produced from notes taken between the time of the trial and the final writing of the document. The purpose of this was to bring some coherency to the document. It also made it easier to compare the depositions when looking for factual evidence. This reminds me of a personal experience of mine. Some time ago, I was asked to provide evidence before a court. I made my deposition before a judge, who did not take any notes while I was speaking. He then dictated to his clerk (his scribe) what would eventually become my deposition. He condensed my ten-minute speech into a one-page declaration. He slightly modified the order of the sentences, sometimes keeping my own words, sometimes adding his own. The result was a masterpiece of clarity and logic. I put my signature at the bottom of the page, and it thus instantly became my declaration (I must make it clear that it was written as an oral statement in the first person).

When dealing with a case reported by several witnesses, the scribes somewhat inevitably came across the same formulations. When dealing with the same case twice, they were also tempted to shorten the second version. In some instances, they probably relied too confidently on their memory, which can explain certain oddities in the redaction.

Now, the scribes obviously did not have a modern approach to standardization in the sense that it did not mean for them an exact reproduction \textit{ne varietur}. The evidence shows that a fair degree of variation was acceptable. The scribes did not work with copy and paste. This is, of course, to be expected if the scribes

\(^{55}\) Wainwright (1938, 59).
were different, but it also happened with a single scribe. The scribes undoubt-
edly had their idiosyncrasies, and they could even change their habits as they
proceeded to the end of their work.

The Tomb Robbery papyri fall into different categories as regards the choice
or the spellings of certain words. In some cases (∫h, bdn, mnn, bwpt) this
neatly supports the conclusion drawn from the palaeographical evidence.
Nevertheless, there are also notable differences. The study of two such closely
related papyri as PBM EA 10052 and P. Mayer A reveals some interesting points.
The main results are tabulated in Table 6.10.

Comparison of the two documents leads to the following observations:

• Generally speaking, P. Mayer A did not bother with details that are present
  in PBM EA 10052;
• Some formulae that are present in PBM EA 10052 are absent in P. Mayer A;
• The spellings of common words in P. Mayer A are generally abbreviated,
  much more so than in PBM EA 10052;
• The scribe who wrote P. Mayer A probably had PBM EA 10052 relatively
  close to him, but was sometimes too confident about his memory, which
  inevitably led to some inaccuracies;
• The tendency in any single document was to abbreviate phraseology (∫h hrk)
or spellings (smtr). This is a very common trend across cultures. The
  questions asked by the official could take different forms: from a long
  and articulated sentence to something very brief, such as ∫h hrk, which
  corresponds more or less to modern Egyptian Arabic 'eh da?'. In PBM EA
  10052 and P. Mayer A, a change from the most elaborate to the simplest
  formulae can be observed throughout the papyrus. The scribe gradually
  abandoned the longer expressions as he approached the end. The choice of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formula</th>
<th>PBM EA 10052</th>
<th>P. Mayer A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.wal, ddi</td>
<td>'stop! I'll speak!'</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wî rî, wî r hî tî</td>
<td>'far from me! far from myself!'</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ir smtr f m bdn</td>
<td>'he was interrogated with a stick'</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sw smtr m bdn</td>
<td>'he has been interrogated with a stick'</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sw smtr m kÎn m bdn</td>
<td>'he has been interrogated with a beating by a stick'</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... i rî s'î f</td>
<td>'so that he accuses me'</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... mîw.f s'hî.f, i</td>
<td>'and he will accuse me'</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... r s'hî f</td>
<td>'so accuse him'</td>
<td>(x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mÎn</td>
<td>'torturing'</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mnn</td>
<td>'torturing'</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bdn</td>
<td>'stick'</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bdr</td>
<td>'stick'</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
formula has nothing to do with the official rank of the person asking the question. Anyone involved in the procedure is treated equally, whether vizier, royal butler, priest, or scribe;

- More disturbingly, some differences between P. BM EA 10052 and P. Mayer A have been noted that would be difficult to explain if both documents were written by the same hand. Here, I have essentially in mind the different choices that were made at the lexical level, because this was probably deeply rooted in the scribe’s consciousness.

When comparing two documents, similarities are less interesting than differences. Similarity is not sameness, for similarities can be explained variously. As a last example, I would like to briefly discuss a sentence that is found in P. BM EA 10052:

37. P. BM EA 10052 3.16
\[ \text{pꜢ} Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ Ꜣ ꜜ
Words of Thieves

The final sentence is an indirect echo of the last part of the expressions found in P.BM EA 10052 and the Tale of Wenamun: it is made perfectly clear that nobody would be able to search for the poor wretches who were probably involved in some state secrets.⁶⁰

This shows that much caution is needed. A similarity of expression in two documents does not imply common authorship. The natural conclusion of this is that it would be of the utmost interest to have a reappraisal of the palaeography of these two eminently interesting documents.

⁶⁰ On this, see Jansen-Winkeln (1995b).