



Universiteit
Leiden

How to Publish a Document in Cursive Script

Applicants

Eligible proposals must have at least two applicants from Humanities, preferably with an interdisciplinary approach.

Supervisor Name	Discipline
Dr. K. Donker van Heel	Papyrology
Dr. B.J.J. Haring	Egyptology

Project description

Leiden Egyptology is famous for its wide range of unique courses, including Hieratic and Ptolemaic. Students with an interest in Legal History and Papyrology can also choose Ancient Egyptian Law, Abnormal Hieratic Papyrology I-III and Demotic Papyrology I-IV, which are taught at the Leids Papyrologisch Instituut.

Abnormal Hieratic (Southern Egypt) and Demotic (Northern Egypt) are two competing shorthand scripts based on Hieroglyphs. In the 6th century BCE Demotic removed the rather fossilised Abnormal Hieratic from the stage, becoming the only shorthand script for another 1000 years.

Leiden is the only place where students can learn both Abnormal Hieratic and Demotic, leading to an inflow of foreign and some of the best Dutch students. Preparing one class requires 12-16 hours, yet students readily face up to the challenge, with much success. Many recent (Res)MA students are now doing a PhD in the Netherlands or abroad.

The ambition is to give the most talented students the opportunity to study an unpublished Abnormal Hieratic or Demotic papyrus with a view to scientific publication:

- *How to publish a papyrus in cursive script.* The curriculum of Egyptology does not focus on practical skills, such as writing a scientific article that can be offered to one of the main Egyptological journals. Our Traineeship aims to rectify this and to work towards embedding this initiative in the curriculum. The candidate will also actively participate in two international palaeographical projects.
- *The Abnormal Hieratic Global Portal:* a collaboration of the Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, the Département des Antiquités Égyptiennes of the Louvre, ECOLe Leiden and the Leids Papyrologisch Instituut. Its aim is to build a generic and smart online learning environment for the (independent) study of Abnormal Hieratic.
- *Paleographical collaboration* with the Altägyptische Kursivschriften project of Mainz University under prof. Ursula Verhoeven, promising the synergy needed to bring digital palaeography forward.

Research Trainee Profile

Reading an Abnormal Hieratic or Demotic text is always a challenge, even for the hardened professional, so one can imagine what a (Res)MA student has to go through. This observation already points forward to the qualifications required from the candidates, viz. knowledge of Hieratic and Demotic, as well as the ability to read English, German and French. Some knowledge of working with a dBase is a definite plus. The candidate is able to work hard and independently, if need be also in the weekend. This will be compensated by intensive guidance throughout the Traineeship, focusing on the skills and qualifications that need to be developed.

Collaboration

There is a rift between Egyptology and Papyrology. For instance, the many mortuary texts written in Demotic are next to never included in the Egyptological studies on the mortuary practices in Ancient Egypt, even though the Demotic evidence still perfectly reflects the religious thought often developed in Egypt thousands of years before. In other words, from the Egyptological perspective, the Demotic evidence could just as well not have existed, whereas there are many, many unpublished sources still awaiting publication. The same applies to Abnormal Hieratic, which is now again a booming discipline owing to the conscious strategy of the Leids Papyrologisch Instituut to create a new school of Leiden-trained scholars. This Traineeship aims to rectify the situation by repositioning the value of the Abnormal Hieratic and Demotic material within Egyptology in order to bring about cross-pollination between both disciplines. The more students of Egyptology start to realise the value of Abnormal Hieratic and Demotic for the study of the culture of Ancient Egypt, the better it will be for both Egyptology and Papyrology.

Deliverables

The candidate will deliver a scientific publication of a Demotic or Abnormal Hieratic text – or at least all the building blocks that allow him or her to finish within two months after termination of the Traineeship – that can be offered to one of the leading Egyptological journals.

Planning

Start Feb. 2021 for 5.7 hour/week, so c. 23 hour/month.

February: selection of source, instruction, guidance plan, meeting international partners through Zoom, etc.

March: reading source, finding the literature and parallel sources, etc.

April: reading source, discussion of results

May: reading source, discussion of results, do's and don't's of writing an article

June: reading source, discussion of results, autopsy of original, do's and don't's of referencing

July: scientific description, final transliteration and translation of source, ordering material for the notes

August: finishing article and sending it to reviewers

Student Application

The CV should be in English and be in line with the **Research Trainee Profile** above, showing a clear affinity with philology and palaeography. This should be accompanied by a Letter of Motivation, to be sent to k.donker.van.heel@hum.leidenuniv.nl.