

**Shard of limestone (ostrakon) bearing a letter
addressed to the draftsman Khay
Uncertain provenance, probably Deir al-Medina
New Kingdom, 19th dynasty, reign of Ramesses II**

Limestone, black ink

H.: 8.8 cm; W.: 9.1 cm

Department of Egyptian Antiquities, Musée du
Louvre (E 27679)

In this short letter an unknown person asks the “scribe” (in fact, “draftsman”) Khay, who lived in Deir al-Medina during the reign of Ramesses II, to procure on his behalf a measure of beans in order to pay for a libation to his deceased mother: “To the scribe Khay... Hear me: Get me one measure of beans. Find it without fail, [to pay] for a funeral libation for my mother. I intend to pay the price, assuredly.”

The Deir al-Medina draftsmen, more literally called “scribes of outlines,” blithely shortened their title in the hope of winning some of the prestige traditionally attached to scribes in Egypt.

