

The Ancient Egyptian Idea of “Death” in Conceptual Metaphor Theory*

Hsu, Shih-Wei – Nankai University, P. R. China

[Linguists regard metaphor as a figure of stylistic rhetoric. Metaphor consists of tenor and vehicle: the characteristic of the vehicle will be transferred to the tenor. In the expression “a lion occupied this city”, “a lion” represents “the king” and the characteristics of the lion are transferred to the king. However, since Lakoff and Johnson proposed “conceptual metaphor theory” (CMT) in 1980, this new idea of research has expanded rapidly. Inside CMT, linguists deal with metaphors from different points of view. They consider that metaphors appear everywhere, and are constantly used in daily life. In the last decade, Egyptologists have reviewed the ancient Egyptian language and hieroglyphs from this new perspective and have reported diverse results. This paper aims to discuss the Egyptian ideas of “death” and its euphemistic expressions from the perspective of CMT.]

Keywords: metaphor; conceptual metaphor theory; death; euphemism; stylistic rhetoric.

1. *Metaphor and conceptual metaphor theory*

The term “metaphor” came originally from Greek (*metaphorá*), which means “transfer”, and belongs to the field of rhetorical stylistics. Briefly, a “metaphor” transfers a meaning from one object to another which presents some similarities, such as shape, colour, content, and so on. The Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BCE) analysed “metaphor” in his works “Poetics” and “Rhetoric”, and gave the definition as follows: “Metaphor is the application of a strange term either transferred from the genus and applied to the species or from the species and applied to the genus, or from one species to another or else by analogy.... Metaphor by analogy means this: when B is to A as D is to C, then instead of B the poet will say D and B instead of D. And sometimes they add that to which the term supplanted by the metaphor is relative.”¹ He gave an example of Achilles: “When the poet says of Achilles, ‘he rushed on like a lion, it is a simile; if he says, ‘a lion, he rushed on’, it is a metaphor; for because both are courageous, he transfers the sense and calls

* The abbreviations of this paper are as follows: BD: The Book of the Dead; PT: The Pyramid Texts; *LÄ*: Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* Vol. I–VII. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975–1992; *KRI*: Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Rameside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* Vol. I–VII. Oxford: B. H. Blackwell Ltd, 1975–1989; *Urk.* IV: Kurt Sethe, *Urkunde der 18. Dynastie* Vol. I–VII. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1906–1909; *Wb*: Adolf Erman and Herman Grapow, *Wörterbuch des ägyptischen Sprache* Vol. I–V. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1926–1921.

1. Aristotle, Poetic 1457 b. 6: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0056%3Asection%3D1457b>. (January 16th, 2020).

Achilles a lion.”² The linguist I. A. Richards was the first scholar to propose that metaphor consists of two technical terms: “tenor” and “vehicle”.³ Additionally, there is an important element in the construction of metaphor — *tertium comparationis*, the third part of a comparison, which is the quality of two objects. If we apply the theory to “Achilles, a lion, rushed on”, the tenor is “Achilles”, “vehicle is “lion” and the *tertium comparationis* is “strong, irritable, powerful, dangerous, willing to fight”.⁴

In 1980, G. Lakoff and M. Johnson proposed “conceptual metaphor theory” (abbreviated to CMT), which presented a new idea of metaphor. They considered metaphor to be pervasive in our everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action.⁵ The concept became a “cognitive linguistic view of metaphor”. Later, Z. Kövecses compared the traditional idea of metaphors to CMT and listed five key features:⁶

- 1) metaphor is a property of concepts, and not of words;
- 2) the function of metaphors is to better understand certain concepts, and not just some artistic or esthetic purpose;
- 3) metaphor is often *not* based on similarity;
- 4) metaphor is used effortlessly in everyday life by ordinary people, not just by special talented people; and
- 5) metaphor, far from being a superfluous though pleasing linguistic ornament, is an inevitable process of human thought and reasoning.

The above discussion indicates that most people use metaphors with unconsciously. Metaphors, indeed, exist in thoughts and in languages and affect our behaviour. CMT has two basic domains: target, and source. When a target domain is understood through a source domain, a set of mappings occurs between the two domains. The target and source domains can be described by conceptual correspondences, which have coherent systems and are pervasive in our everyday life, such as thinking, talking, and acting etc. In the concept of ARGUMENT IS WAR, the relationship between the target domain, source domain and mappings are as follows:

2. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, book III, Chapter 4, Section 1, 1406 b.22: <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0060%3Abook%3D3%3Achapter%3D4%3Asection%3D1>. (January 25th, 2020).

3. Ivor A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. New York: Oxford University Press, ²1956, 98–101.

4. Shih-Wei Hsu, *Bilder für den Pharao. Untersuchung zu den bildlichen Ausdrücken des Ägyptischen in den Königsinschriften und anderen Textgattungen*, Leiden: Brill, 2017, 24–25.

5. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980, 3.

6. Zoltan Kövecses, *Metaphor. A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, ²2010, x.

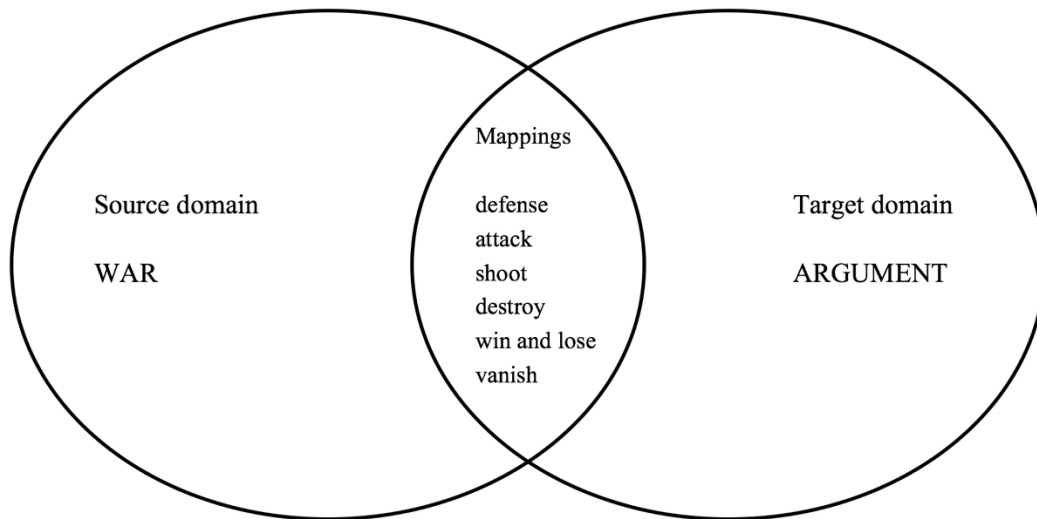


Fig. 1. The concept of ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor

The expressions of the concept of ARGUMENT IS WAR (after Lakoff and Johnson) are:⁷

defense	Your claims are <i>indefensible</i> .
attack	He <i>attacked every weak point</i> in my argument.
shoot	His criticisms were <i>right on target</i> . You disagree? Okay, <i>shoot!</i>
win	I've never <i>won an argument</i> with him.
destroy	I <i>demolished</i> his argument.
vanish	If you use that strategy, he'll <i>wipe you out</i> . He <i>shot down</i> all of my arguments

The concept of ARGUMENT IS WAR is using the terms of war, such as “attack a position”, “indefensible”, “strategy”, “new line of attack”, “win”, “gain ground” etc. The terms represent the concept of war for describing an argument. To quote Lakoff and Johnson: “Many of the things we *do* in arguing are partially structured by the concept of war. Though there is no physical battle, there is a verbal battle, and the structure of an argument — attack, defense, counterattack, etc. — reflects this. It is in this sense that the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor is one that we live by in this culture.”⁸ Different source domains occur in different conceptual systems and reflect diverse “mappings” in the target domain. Another example, the ARGUMENT IS BUILDING metaphor, is based on the concept of building:⁹

7. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 4.
8. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 4.
9. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 46.

stable	The argument is <i>shaky</i> .
collapse	This argument <i>collapsed</i> . The argument will <i>fall apart</i> .
structure	We need to <i>construct</i> a strong argument for that I haven't figured out yet what the <i>form</i> of the argument will be.

In the ARGUMENT IS JOURNEY metaphor,¹⁰ we can image the argument is like a journey, which makes progress toward the goal in stages. A concept of journey will be expressed.

direction	This observation <i>points the way</i> to an elegant solution.
movement	When we <i>get to the next point</i> , we shall see that philosophy is dead.
goal	Our <i>goal</i> is to show that hummingbirds are essential to military defense. We have <i>arrived at</i> a disturbing conclusion.

In the ARGUMENT IS A CONTAINER metaphor,¹¹ the content of an argument is viewed as a container, which has a limited space and a substance. The content can be described from different aspects of a container.

hollow	Your argument doesn't have much <i>content</i> . Your argument is <i>vacuous</i> . I am tired of your <i>empty</i> arguments.
hole	That argument has <i>holes</i> in it. Your argument won't <i>hold water</i> .
core	I still haven't gotten to the <i>core</i> of his argument.

From these examples from CMT, we can see that the same topic "argument" can be reflected in many mappings through different source domains. The usage of CMT appears indeed in our ways of thinking. With diverse social environments, people become conscious of different cognitions via these objects. Every object has many aspects and can always be changed by the development of environments. The purpose of CMT is to understand the meaning of each expression deeply. People can perceive everything further because everything is involved with other things in many ways. The expressions of CMT highlights the human thinking and people can understand each other better.

However, CMT has also become popular in Egyptology during this decade. Many scholars have researched CMT from different perspectives, such as signifier of hieroglyphs,¹² the heart as

10. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 90.

11. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 92.

12. Orly Goldwasser, *Prophets, Lovers and Giraffes: Wor(l)d Classification in Ancient Egypt*, GOF VI 38. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002; id., "A comparison between classifier language and classifier script: the case of ancient Egyptian". In G. Goldenberg and A. Shisha-Halevy (eds), *Egyptian, Semitic and general grammar: studies in memory of H. J. Polotsky*. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2009, 16–39.

emotional metaphor,¹³ body part as metonym¹⁴ and conceptualization of body,¹⁵ conceptualization of anger,¹⁶ *dp* “to taste; to bite into” as perceptible verb,¹⁷ spatio-temporal expression¹⁸ and kingship expressed by orientational metaphors.¹⁹ Therefore, in this paper the ideas of Egyptian “death” will be discussed, as well as its euphemistic expressions, from the perspective of CMT.

2. State of studies on “death”

“Death” is the final phenomenon of life. Nobody can escape it and nobody can describe it. Most people always avoid talking about this topic, because “death” is dreadful and mysterious. In ancient Egyptian culture, death is not only the end of life, but also the beginning of the next phase of the eternal journey. However, the Egyptians did not like to express these ideas of death in a straightforward manner either, be it the death of the king or the death of an ordinary person. The words related to “death” or “to die” were often replaced by euphemisms.

C. E. Sander-Hansen was one of the first scholar to research the idea of death in ancient Egypt.²⁰ He indicated that the ancient Egyptians took cognizance of death by religious custom: “Der Verstorbene kann nicht mehr sehen und hören, er spricht nicht wie früher den Angehörigen an, der Hauch des Lebens hat seinen Kehle verlassen, und er liegt regungslos da. Noch ist der Körper warm wie vor kurzer Zeit, wohl aber oft mit dem Schweiss des letzten Ringens bedeckt, bald ergreift ihn jedoch die Erstarrung, und eine Auflösung setzt ein, deren Erscheinung die Umgebung wohl tief beeindruckt hat.”²¹ There are many kinds of death: by natural or accidental

13. Maria Isabel Toro-Rueda, *Das Herz in der Ägyptischen Literatur des zweiten Jahrtausends v. Chr.: Untersuchungen zur Idiomatik und Metaphorik von Ausdrücken mit jb und ḥ3tj*. Göttingen: Dissertation 2004 Universität Göttingen.

14. Daniel Werning, “Der ‚Kopf des Beines‘, der ‚Mund der Arme‘ und die ‚Zähne‘ des Schöpfers: Zur metonymischen und metaphorischen Verwendungen von Körperteil-Lexemen im Hieroglyphisch-Ägyptischen”. In A. Wagner and K. Müller (eds), *Synthetische Körperauffassung im Hebräischen und seinen Nachbarkulturen. Beiträge zum Symposium “Synthetische Körperauffassungen” im Rahmen des DFG-Projekts “stabilitas dei”, 17./18. Juni 2011*. AOAT 416. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014, 107–161.

15. Rune Nyord, *Breathing Flesh: Conceptions of the body in the ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*. CNI Publications 37, Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2009.

16. Ines Köhler, “Rage like an Egyptian: the conceptualization of anger”. In Maarten Horn et al. (eds), *Current Research in Egyptology 2010: Proceedings of the eleventh annual symposium, Leiden University 2010*, Oxford: Oxbow, 2011, 81–96; id., “Du Pharao – ich Hulk: Wahrnehmung und Versprachlichung von Wut”. In Gregor Neunert et al. (eds), *Sozialisation: Individuum – Gruppe – Gesellschaft: Beiträge des ersten Münchner Arbeitskreises Junge Aegyptologie (MAJA 1), 3. Bis 5.12.2010*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012, 127–138; id. *Rage like an Egyptian: die Möglichkeiten eines kognitiv-semantischen Zugangs zum altägyptischen Wortschatz am Beispiel des Wortfelds [WUT]*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske, 2016.

17. Elisabeth Steinbach, “‘Ich habe seinen Anblick geschmeckt...’ – Verben der Wahrnehmung und die semantischen. Beziehungen zwischen Perception und Kognition”. In G. Neunert et al. (eds), *Text: Wissen – Wirkung – Wahrnehmung. Beiträge des vierten Münchener Arbeitskreises Junge Aegyptologie (MAJA 4) 29.11–1.12.2013*. GOF 4/59. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015, 209–225.

18. Camilla Di Biase-Dyson, “A diachronic approach to the syntax and semantics of Egyptian spatio-temporal expressions with *ḥ3-t* “front”: implications for cognition and metaphors”. In Eitan Grossman et al. (eds), *Lexical Semantics in Ancient Egyptian*, Hamburg: Widmaier, 2012, 247–292.

19. Hsu, *Bilder für den Pharao*.

20. Constantin E. Sander-Hansen, *Der Begriff des Todes bei den Ägyptern*. København: I Kommisson hos ejnar Munksgaard, 1942.

21. Sander-Hansen, *Der Begriff des Todes*, 4.

causes, by illness or by punishments for crimes, and so on. No matter the age and gender, death is unpreventable. The *Instruction of Ani* 18.3 says “Death will come, it will take the child, who is in embrace of his mother, as well the one, who becomes old”.²² Sander-Hansen also took different views of death:²³ it is the extermination of the body and the soul, because death causes the disappearance of the body. Besides, death is similar to sleep at night or to tiredness. It may recall the myth of Osiris, who might not be dead but just asleep; just as he awoke from sleep, he rose from death. The other condition of death is the loss of the ability to speak, i.e., silence. In the *Tale of Eloquent Peasant* B7, the dead person is called *nb sgr* “lord of silence”. Negative expressions of death are impressive; death is like a disease, disaster, or even catastrophe. People do not like it, because their heart will not beat, they will not breathe and their body will no longer be working. Death means not only the separation from the body, but also the loss of control of the body.

J. Zandee has analysed two concepts of death: monistic and dualistic.²⁴ The monistic concept of death is the natural appearance, i.e., the way in which plants and crops mature and die, and produce the seed which will grow again. This is the natural rhythm in vegetation. This one reflects the religious faith. In contrast, dualistic concept of death refers to the enemy of life, a natural fear of death in mankind. Zandee also researched all terms referring to death.²⁵ For the ancient Egyptian, death is in total opposition to life, because all the characteristics of life end because of death: the body and soul will not exist (*n wn*), the body will not happen (*n hpr*); the corpse will perish (*skj*), decay (*hnn*), become maggoty (*fnj*), dry up (*hm*).

Ancient Egyptian had many imaginable descriptions of death, as J. Assmann showed in his research: it is dismemberment, social isolation, enemy, dissociation, transition, separation and reversal, return and mystery.²⁶ From the point of view of the Egyptian culture, death connects two worlds: World of the living and world of the dead,²⁷ opposites which are nonetheless involved with each other. Where the living exists, the dead are excluded, and vice versa. Between the living and the dead there is no conflict: the living replace the dead, just as the dead take the place of the living. The ancient Egyptians viewed death as something at the end of life, and that subjection to death permeated life. Therefore, they built tombs as a medium of such “constellative embedding”, where the deceased intended to protect for his own specified kind. It also serves as a place in the social, geographical, and cultural space of the group.²⁸ In the *Instruction of Prince Djedefhor*, it is explained: “May you build a house for your son, for [I] have built for you the place where you are. Equip your house in the necropolis and make excellent your place in the West. Accept (this maxim), for death is bitter for us. Accept (this maxim), for life is exalted for us. The house of death is for life.”²⁹

M. Allam discussed the euphemistical words concerning with death, which appear under these three conditions: death is like the (last) journey, it is motionlessness and it is the ending of life.³⁰

22. Joachim F. Quack, *Die Lehre des Ani. Ein neuägyptischer Weisheitstext in seinem kulturellen Umfeld*. OBO 141. Freiburg; Göttingen: Universität Verlag Freiburg Schweiz; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Göttingen, 1994, 98–99.

23. Sander-Hansen, *Der Begriff des Todes*, 9–18.

24. Jan Zandee, *Death as an Enemy. According to Ancient Egyptian Conceptions*. Leiden: Brill, 1960, 1–3.

25. Zandee, *Death as an Enemy*, Chapter II. Term, A.

26. Jan Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005, 23–234.

27. Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, 14.

28. Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, 12.



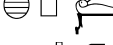

29. William K. Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003, 127–128.







30. Mourad Allam, „Euphemismus Beim Tod“. *Journal of The Faculty of Archaeology* 9 (2001), 57–62.

Based on the research of Allam, S.-W. Hsu stressed the euphemisms for death referring to the death of the king, with a selection of text types from biographies, literary texts and the Pyramid texts.³¹

3. The idea of death in CMT

Ancient Egyptian has the followings words for indicating death:

-  *mwt*;³²
-  *mtr*;³³
-  *hpj*;³⁴
-  *qbh*.³⁵

The classifiers can be conceptual categorized or have inclusive knowledge —structure, such as [HIDE&TAIL] includes not only the members in basic level, *m3j* “lion”, *b3* “leopard”, *3by* “panther”, but also those in the “fuzzy-edge”, *3tw* “tortoise”, *hf3w* “snake”, *d3rt* “scorpion”, *ddft* “worms” and *py* “flea”.³⁶ If we apply the theory of Goldwasser to these words, all the classifiers, so-called determinatives, correspond with the meaning of the word. The determinatives  “a man with blood streaming from his head” (A 14) and  “mummy lying on bed” (A 55) contain the meaning of “falling” and “lying”, and are classified under the superordinate category [MAN+DEATH]. Additionally, according to Lakoff and Johnson³⁷ and Hsu,³⁸ orientational metaphor, such as UP-DOWN orientation, shows that GOOD IS UP, HIGH STATUS IS UP, LIFE IS UP, CONTROL IS UP, ACTIVE IS UP and ORDER IS UP; BAD IS DOWN, LOW STATUS IS DOWN, DEATH IS DOWN, LACK OF CONTROL IS DOWN, PASSIVE IS DOWN and CHAOS IS DOWN. These determinatives convey clearly the DOWN-orientation: falling and lying (DOWN) = death. The determinative  is sometimes written in hieratic  (Z 6), so that in some texts the word *mwt* appears as . As for *qbh*, the determinative  “sandy hill-country over edge of green cultivation” indicates mostly the “hill-country”, i.e., “the foreign land”, but here rather the “desert”, “necropolis” or “east”. It is also suitable for the meaning of death.

31. Shih-Wei Hsu, “The Use of Figurative Language Concerning the Death of the King”. *Archiv Orientalni* 82 (2014), 201–209.

32. *Wb* II, 165–166.

33. *Wb* II, 171:8.

34. *Wb* III, 258:17–259:3.



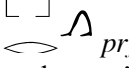

35. *Wb* V, 30:9–11.

36. Goldwasser, *Prophets, Lovers and Giraffes*, 84.

37. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors we live by*, 14–19.

38. Shih-Wei Hsu, “You up — I down: Orientational Metaphors Concerning Ancient Egyptian Kingship in Royal Iconography and Inscriptions”. In Gloria Rosati et al. (eds), *Proceedings of the XI International Congress of Egyptologists, Florence Egyptian Museum, Florence, 23–30 August 2015*, 2017, 283–286.

Apart from these lexemes, several special terms have a metonymic meaning for death. In particular, there are verbal metaphors focusing on the royal deceased, such as:³⁹

-  *cq* “to enter”:⁴⁰ *cq m jmnt pt* “the one who enters the west of heaven” (PT § 1469c);
-  *wḏ3* “to proceed”, “to go in procession”:⁴¹ *wḏ3.w r 3ḥt* “one who go to the horizon” (Sinuhe B36);
-  *prj* “to go forth”, “to come forth”:⁴² *prj=f m j3bt pt* “when he goes up to the east of heaven” (PT § 1469c);
-  *swḏ3* “to go”:⁴³ *wn zj pr tnj tp-^c swḏ3=f* “there is an aged man, just before he crosses over” (Ipuwer 16,1).

These verbs are often used to describe the royal death. The term “ascent to heaven” (*Himmelaufstieg*) is regarded as an official formula for the king’s obituary. For that reason, these verbs contain the determinative Λ “walking legs” (D 54) to emphasise movement. According to A. David,⁴⁴ these verbs with the determinative of “walking legs” can be categorized under the semantic category of [MOTION], because it represents a metonymic process, the category of [MOTION] in which leg motion is prototypical. The action “ascension to heaven” needs the [MOTION] to be completed. Therefore, it corresponds to the concepts of DEATH IS (LAST) JOURNAL and DEATH IS AN ASCENSION TO HEAVEN (see below).

In principle, if we take “afterlife” as the target domain, death could be conceptualized from different source domains.

a) DEATH IS THE (LAST) JOURNEY: Zandee has already pointed out that death is a journey, with coming (*ij*), passing away (*is*), being far (*w3j*), going forth (*prj*) etc.,⁴⁵ because the ancient Egyptians regarded death as a journey in the afterlife;⁴⁶ they had to pass through many unknown paths and take up diverse challenges.

- *jšm= k jw= k* “you have gone, but you will return” (PT § 1975a)
- *r3 n šmjṯ m sf jyt m p3 hrw* “Spell for going yesterday and coming forth to today” (BD 197)

b) DEATH IS AN ASCENSION TO HEAVEN: as mentioned above, this is an official announcement of the king’s death.⁴⁷ The king’s soul will ascend to heaven in many forms. PT § 1431 says: “A ladder is set up for him that he may ascend on it in its name of ‘Ascent to the sky’”. In Chinese culture, death is also expressed as *shēng tiān* 升天 or *guī tiān* 歸天 “ascend to heaven”. The

39. See more examples in Hsu, *Archiv Orientalní* 82 (2014), 203–204.

40. *Wb* I, 230–232.

41. *Wb* I, 403:2–19.

42. *Wb* I, 518–525.

43. *Wb* IV, 81:8–9.

44. Arlette David, “Devouring the enemy: ancient Egyptian metaphors of domination”. *The Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* (2011), 86–87.

45. Zandee, *Death as an Enemy*, 52–56.





46. In contrast, the Chinese thought that life is a journey, and death is the destination.

47. *LÄ* II, 1206–1207.


destination is *tiān táng* 天堂 for “heaven” or “paradise”, and the opposite direction *dì yù* 地獄 for “hell”⁴⁸ or the “netherworld”.⁴⁹ Certainly, the direction to go UP to “heaven” or to go DOWN to the “netherworld” is always dependent on the behaviour of the deceased in the world of the living: UP = good = heaven; DOWN = bad = netherworld.⁵⁰

- *mk tw q.tj m hrt* “look, you have entered to heaven” (KRI II, 33:11)
- *pr ntr pn jr pt* “... when this god goes forth to heaven” (PT § 1472b)
- *sd3 RN pn m gs j3b.t(j) n pt* “RN departs the east side of heaven” (PT § 947b)

c) DEATH IS A HARBOUR: the ancient Egyptians always described their path of life as a journey of a boat: each individual was the steerer of his own ship.⁵¹ Some boats might have a smooth mooring, while others could not land due to a storm or accident. The *Instruction of Amenemope* 20,3–6 says: “be solid, you, with your heart! Fortify your heart! Do not steer your tongue. What the tongue of human concerns, means the steering oar of the ship. Lord of All is his pilot.”⁵² Therefore, the ancient Egyptians took account of their behaviour in life, because they wanted their boat to

moor without any misfortunes. The verb  *mnj* “to land”, “to moor”, “to steer” has a euphemistical meaning for “to die”.⁵³ Its determinative is  “boat on water” (P 1), but it is replaced by  “mummy lying on bed” (A 55) and  (Z 6) to emphasise the meaning “death”.⁵⁴

- *hrw pw mnj.n=f jm* “on the day that he has landed” (PT § 1090f)
- *mnj.n=k nh=k* “you have landed and you will live” (PT § 1975b)
- *h^c hm=f n nswt-bjt RN mnj.n=f* “His majesty of Upper and Lower Egypt, RN, he has landed” (Kagemni 2, 7–8.)
- *r jwt hrw n mnj* “... till the day of landing comes” (Sinuhe B310)

d) DEATH IS MOTIONLESSNESS: This concept could be taken to indicate that death is like sleeping, because sleeping is always in a quiet and peaceful condition, i.e. motionless, and analogous to death. Hence, death is also called “eternal sleep” or “rest in peace” in the modern time. The Egyptian words *sdr* “to sleep”, “to lie”⁵⁵ and *htp* “to rest”, “to be pleased” has the determinative  “mummy lying on bed” (A 55), which shows the condition of death.

- *sdr=f wd3 r^cw-nb* “he will lie down in good health everyday” (PT § 123k)
- *htp RN m nh m Jmnt* “RN rests in life in the West” (PT § 306a)

48. The idea of “hell” in Chinese civilization is strongly influenced by Buddhism. It is very similar to the Naraka (Sanskrit: नारकीय), where the deceased is tortured and punished depending on what he had done before his death.

49. Hsu, *Archiv Orientalni* 82 (2014), 208.

50. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors we live by*, 16.

51. Siegfried Herrmann, “Steuerruder, Waage, Herz und Zunge in ägyptischen Bildreden”. *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 79 (1954), 106.

52. Vincent P.-M. Laisney, *L'enseignement d'Amenemopé*. Roma: E Pontificio Instituto Biblico 7, 2007, 177–178.


53. *Wb* II, 73:22.

54. Goldwasser, *Prophets, Lovers and Giraffes*, 25.



55. *Wb* IV, 390–392.

e) DEATH IS AN ANIMAL: This concept refer to the characteristics of animals, particularly winged creatures, such as birds, herons or falcons etc., which have qualities of speed and swiftness, so that they can reach the heaven as soon as possible. These characteristics could help the dead to reach the afterlife.

- *šwt= k m 3pdw* “your feathers are as those of birds” (PT § 913b)
- *snj RN pt m bjk* “RN kisses the heaven as a falcon” (PT § 891c)
- *qbh RN m ḥꜥw* “RN flies as a heron” (PT § 2042d)

f) DEATH IS A HORRIBLE ENEMY: Fear is the most common feeling, when the people have to face death. It is a natural phenomenon and no one can escape it. Besides, there is no detailed description of death, and so people are afraid of unknown things. No one wants to touch it or even talks about it. The ancient Egyptians viewed death as an enemy, especially when the deceased had to pass through the way to the afterlife. The enemies might be demons that threaten the dead, opponents in a lawsuit, opponents of Osiris, sinners as enemies of Re and Atum or *ḥfty* as devil.⁵⁶ All these imageries of monsters scare the dead.⁵⁷ There are many Egyptian words for enemy: *ḥrw*,⁵⁸ *ḥꜥby*,⁵⁹ *ḥfty*,⁶⁰ *t3yt*.⁶¹ These words have the determinative  “a man with blood streaming from his head” (A 14), which expresses the idea of DOWN = DEATH.⁶²

- *ph3 NN m3ꜥ-ḥrw m ḥww jrj.n=f r m33 ḥrw ntrw* “Shielding NN, justified, from all sins that he has committed and seeing the faces of gods” (BD 125)
- *skj ḥftj= k skj sn ꜥbš sn jr= k sn m šj dj sn m w3d-mr* “Perish your foes, perish them, drown them, make them in the lake, give them in the sea” (PT § 2186a–b)

g) DEATH IS A RETIREMENT: If we liken the whole life to a profession, death resembles retirement. The ancient Egyptians used the word *wḏ3 n ꜥnh* “to retire from life” to express death.⁶³ The term *wḏ3* usually has the determinative  “walking legs” (D 54), but sometimes it is replaced by  (Z 6) to drop a hint of death.

- *jw= j (hr) wḏ3y n ꜥnh* “he retired from life” (Papyrus D’Orbiney 19,7)
- *jrtwj= j dns ꜥwj= j nw rdwj= j fh.n= sn šms jb(= j) wrd tkn wj n wḏ3* “my eyes are weighty, my hands are weak, my feet, they stopped to follow, my heart is tired, the retirement approached me“ (Sinuhe B 169–171)

56. Zandee, *Death as an Enemy*, 217–224.

57. E.g. BD 146.

58. *Wb* III, 321–322.

59. *Wb* III, 42.

60. *Wb* III, 276–277.

61. *Wb* V, 231.

62. For more lexemes about the enemy see Shih-Wei Hsu, “Coincidence or Intension? A Case Study on the Usage of Determinatives of King Merenptah’s Inscriptions”. *Languages, Literary Studies and international Studies: An international Journal* 20 (2018), 117–150.

63. Hsu, *Archiv Orientalni* 82 (2014), 207 with n. 34.

h) DEATH IS A REUNION: This concept was very popular in the Christian faith.⁶⁴ The ancient Egyptians believed that the dead ascend to heaven and unite with “heaven”, “the horizon” or even “the sun”, “the moon”, “a star” and so on.

- *zm3.n RN pt* “RN has united with heaven” (PT § 514b)
- *šms= k R^c.w 3bh.tj m sb3.w hn^c j^ch* “you will follow Re and join with stars and together with moon“ (KRI II, 333:11–12)
- *hnm.n= k Itn* “you have united with Aton“ (Urk. IV, 54:16)

4. Concluding remarks

According to CMT, the target domain comprises by different source domains. This causes a set of mappings which reflect the thoughts and opinions of the ancient Egyptians about death. They used the experiences and perceptions of daily life to describe death metaphorically. The above-mentioned formula “ascent to heaven” is the most current expression for the kings, because it refers to a journey to the afterlife. If “death” is regarded as the target domain, source domains can be conceptualized as a harbour, a journey, an animal, an enemy, a reunion, etc. All these instances show that the deceased wants to reach the afterlife safely without any misfortunes. Death is frightening, horrible and catastrophic and it is like an enemy of which people are afraid. To sum up, these expressions of death are euphemisms, so that the dead can travel smoothly into the afterlife. The perspective of CMT shows that there are more abstract ways to represent the idea of death and can help us to understand better the circumstances of death in the religion and afterlife of ancient Egypt.

64. In the Christian faith, people will be with God after they die. In folk legends, some people believe that the dead become stars and then unite with the sun or other planets.