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Spatial Metaphors as Rhetorical Figures. Case Studies from Wisdom Texts of the Egyptian New Kingdom

Summary

This study analyses a series of wisdom texts dating to the Egyptian New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period (1550–712 BC) in order to outline the rhetorical and communicative usage of spatial metaphors. The findings contribute significantly to our understanding of rhetoric: that the spatial metaphors (particularly *path*-based metaphors) become increasingly numerous and explicit when the rhetorical weight of the text increases – when, in other words, the more enumerative wisdom text genre comes to be influenced by the exhortations of scribal school texts.

Keywords: Metaphor; cognition; linguistics; wisdom literature; corpus analysis.

Diese Studie analysiert einige Weisheitstexte aus dem ägyptischen Neuen Reich und der Dritten Zwischenzeit (1550–712 BC), um die rhetorische sowie kommunikative Anwendungen von räumlichen Metaphern zu skizzieren. Unser Verständnis altägyptischer Rhetorik wird dadurch verstärkt: Wir sehen, zum Beispiel, dass die räumlichen Metaphern (insbesondere die *Weg*metaphern) sich vermehren und expliziter werden wobei die rhetorische Qualität des Textes ebenso zunimmt – oder anders ausgedrückt, dass die enumerative Weisheitsgattung zunehmend von den Aufrufen der Schultexte beeinflusst wird.

Keywords: Metapher; Kognition; Sprachwissenschaft; Weisheitsliteratur; Korpusanalyse.

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I Aims of the study

This study analyses the spatial metaphors, particularly *path*-based metaphors, in the so-called ‘wisdom literature’ corpus of the Egyptian New Kingdom (ca. 1550–712 BC) in order to assess the way in which this metaphor works rhetorically. It is argued here that spatial metaphors, particularly metaphors involving movement along a path, are fundamental elements of this educational genre, since the path metaphor is associated with life choices (LIFE IS A JOURNEY), particularly relating to behaviour. These metaphors appear both explicitly, via the mention of a ‘(life) path’ as well as implicitly, via mention of movement through space. The hypothesis being tested is that the explicitness of spatial metaphors (and here particularly *path*-based metaphors) increases when the argumentative weight of the text likewise increases – when, in other words, the prescriptive but more neutral wisdom text genre comes to be increasingly influenced by the more direct exhortations of scribal school texts.

To avoid conflation of rhetorical language with metaphors naturally and unintentionally used in the language, explicitly ‘deliberate’ metaphors have been taken into consideration (for a definition of which see § 2). These metaphors are then subjected to a multi-level analysis, comprising two approaches from the contemporary study of metaphor. The first is a word-based study based on the *Metaphor Identification Procedure VU University Amsterdam* (MIPVU) method of Gerard Steen and colleagues.¹ Here, the ‘Basic Sense’ and ‘Contextual Sense’ of a metaphorical lexical unit are determined in order to provide an empirical basis for metaphor identification. Secondly, a text-based analysis developed by Elena Semino, which identifies particular patterns of metaphorical language in cross-textual perspective, is applied.² This approach will be implemented across a range of genres in the Ancient Egyptian textual corpus, generating what will be the first simultaneously qualitative and quantitative analysis of metaphors for this language.

The perspective is synchronic, which in this context signifies that metaphorical language from the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period (ca. 1550–712 BC) are being investigated. The decision to work synchronically reflects a tendency in contemporary metaphor studies,³ where the focus is not on the emergence and development of metaphors but rather on the communicative intentions behind their use. This ties in well with a future research question, namely, whether metaphors in comparative perspective reflect the text type or register in which they appear. To do this, the ‘wisdom corpus’ will in an upcoming study be compared with metaphors used in other genres popular at this time.

1 Steen 2007, also Pragglejaz 2007.

2 Semino 2008.

3 Steen 2007, 79.

The analysis takes into consideration the so-called wisdom texts of the late New Kingdom. Wisdom texts are a popular ancient Egyptian literary genre, in which advice for proper behaviour is dispensed.⁴ The texts under analysis here, *The Teaching of Ani*, *The Teaching of Amenemope*, *The Teaching of Amunnakht* and *The ‘Teaching’ of Menena*, provide convincing support for our hypothesis. All wisdom texts draw on path metaphors for the single aim of highlighting behaviour but in differing amounts and with differing effect. In *The Teaching of Ani*, a text approximately 2925 Tokens long (from the longest text witness, pBoulaq 4),⁵ path metaphors are rare – only two cases of explicit path metaphors and another two less explicit variants are to be found. The path metaphors in *The Teachings of Amenemope* (with 3292 tokens in its longest manuscript, pBM EA 10474)⁶ are more numerous than in *Ani*, but focus on sailing rather than movement over land. The *Teaching of Amunnakht* (whose longest, most complete fragment oKV 18/3.614+627 consists of approximately 261 tokens)⁷ has similar features to *Amenemope* but the metaphors are much more conventional. Lastly, the metaphors in *The ‘Teaching’ of Menena*, (whose sole manuscript, oChicago OIC 12074+oIFAO Inv. 2188, numbers 421 tokens),⁸ present, in contrast to the other texts in the corpus, much more of a play with the idea of wisdom texts being ‘teachings for the path of life,’ explicitly drawing on terrestrial (and other) paths in its discussion of behaviour. In *The ‘Teaching’ of Menena*, which in its format and rhetoric really belongs more to a school text than a wisdom text, creative extensions of path-based metaphors permeate the text. In this way, this article intends to exemplify the extent to which metaphor analysis can contribute to our understanding of rhetoric in this genre. What we see is that paths as metaphors are often relegated in the wisdom corpus to the sphere of the cliché and it takes an enlightened rhetorician to make these metaphors extraordinary.

2 Some definitions

Metaphors are features of language in which a commonly more abstract entity (the *topic* or *tenor*) is represented by a more concrete entity (the *vehicle*),⁹ which seemingly reflects the association at the cognitive level between a more abstract category (the *target domain*)

4 See Junge 2003, 82.

5 Statistics from the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, <http://aew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/so?f=o&l=o&ff=7&cex=1&db=o&oc=1135&l1=o>, accessed 07.2015. The prefix p is an abbreviation for ‘papyrus’ and is used as such throughout the text.

6 Statistics from the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, <http://aew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/so?f=o&l=o&ff=7&cex=1&db=o&oc=1168&l1=o>, accessed 07.2015.

7 Statistics from the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, <http://aew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/so?f=o&l=o&ff=7&cex=1&db=o&oc=1114&l1=o>, accessed 07.2015. The prefix o is an abbreviation for ‘ostrakon’ and is used as such throughout the text.

8 Statistics from the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, <http://aew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/so?f=o&l=o&ff=7&cex=1&db=o&oc=1182&l1=o>, accessed 07.2015.

9 Richards 1936.

and a more concrete one (the *source domain*). *Domains* are to be understood as conceptual structures that represent the coherent organisation of experience.¹⁰ Since a metaphor can emerge in thought, in language and in communication,¹¹ there are several aspects to cover as part of an analysis. From the perspective of metaphor in thought, one main question emerges: is the metaphor *conventional* or *new*? If, however, one is investigating metaphor in language, the distinction lies rather in whether a *metaphor* or a *simile* is used. Lastly, if the focus lies on metaphor in communication, one has to consider whether the metaphor is *deliberate* or not.

To be clear, speakers often use metaphor in an unconscious manner. For instance, it is likely that a majority of native speakers of English would not regard the sentence ‘He *defended* his argument’ as being metaphorical. However, according to the classic work of metaphor studies, Lakoff and Johnsons *Metaphors We Live By*, 4), an equation like ARGUMENT IS WAR would most certainly be classified as metaphorical language, albeit conventional and non-deliberate.¹² Although it would indeed be worthwhile to seek out such unintentional comparisons in the Egyptian language, the lack of native speakers would make such an undertaking significantly more difficult than modern empirical studies. For this reason (amongst others), the accent lies in this study on the so-called *deliberate* metaphors, which explicitly draw attention to the source domain and function in this manner as rhetorical figures.¹³ In other words, these metaphors compel the reader to observe what is being represented from another perspective,¹⁴ for which an (admittedly somewhat stilted) English example could be: ‘He defended his argument *with the strategy of a general*’. Such deliberate metaphors can be either *conventional* or *novel* on the conceptual level – in any case, they draw our attention to the source domain, in the case above, WAR. Naturally, it is not an easy task to demonstrate deliberateness (in dead languages even less than in living ones), but I make the case here that the issue is to be answered on a case-by-case basis but also in relation to the context in which the metaphors occur. To this end, a current research project of mine is the establishment of a *typology of deliberateness* that is relevant for ancient languages.

3 Methodology

In this study, metaphor is analysed across three levels. Firstly, metaphors are identified at the word level using the MIPVU Procedure. Secondly, a more *ad-hoc* categorisation is used to describe the conceptual domains that form the basis of the metaphor and thirdly, Semino’s typology of metaphorical patterns in cross-textual perspective helps describe

10 Kövecses 2002, 4.

11 Steen 2008, 213, 221.

12 Lakoff and Johnson 1980.

13 Steen 2008, 224.

14 Krennmayr 2011, 154.

where the metaphors occur and their relationship to each other, if a relationship seems to exist.¹⁵

Firstly, MIPVU (*Metaphor Identification Procedure VU University Amsterdam*) identifies and annotates metaphors on the *lexical* level.¹⁶ The method investigates the *meaning in context* of each lexical unit and focuses on those cases in which the so-called *contextual sense* deviates from the *basic sense*. Fundamentally, the basic sense is the meaning that is often concreter, more precise or more embodied than other possible meanings.¹⁷ In order to specify these meanings, a corpus-based lexicon is used: if a fitting contextual sense appears in the lexicon one is most likely dealing with a *conventional* metaphor and when one such is not to be found one can begin to consider whether the metaphor in question is indeed *novel* or whether it is simply not (yet) attested in the textual record. At this point, further study in the corpus (preferably an annotated digital corpus) is required (see § 4) to test whether the usage is indeed quite individual or rather just a variation of a more well-known rhetorical figure.

The analysis of domains has as its basis the linguistic phenomena of a particular language, although lists of domains established on the basis of other languages like English (for which see, for instance, Kövecses 2002, 281–285 and Panther and Radden 1999, 419–423) can establish a good point of comparison. One cannot assume that these domains are the same across languages, but, nonetheless, several studies have shown the extent to which unrelated languages use very similar metaphors and therefore perhaps have similar conceptual metaphors at their base.¹⁸ It is one of the aims of this project to text whether these categorisations are acceptable for the Egyptian corpus. To make this explicit: the study is bottom-up, extracting categories from the textual record. These categories are then compared to categories already current in cognitive linguistic studies.

Lastly, at the level of the text, the typology of Elena Semino,¹⁹ as seen in Table 1, has been employed, in order to test how metaphors occur in relation to each other:

15 Semino 2008.

16 Steen et al. 2010, 12–13. Cf. Cameron 2003, 10 who analyses whole ‘discourse units’

17 Pragglejaz 2007 but also Krennmayr 2011, 29.

18 Kövecses 2002, 163–177.

19 Semino 2008, 22–30.

Type	Function
Repetition	A literal repetition of metaphorical lexical items.
Recurrence	Where different expressions relating to the same source domain appear far apart from each other in the text.
Clustering	Where there is a high density of (perhaps different) metaphorical lexical items in a particular part of the text.
Extension	Where expressions evoking the same source domain are used in close proximity to one another in relation to elements of the same target domain.
Mixing	Where metaphorical expressions from different source domains are used in close proximity to one another.
Literal-metaphorical opposition	Punning on literal and metaphorical meanings (<i>double entendre</i>).
Signalling	‘Signals’ that draw attention to metaphorical quality (‘like’, ‘as’).
Intertextuality	The metaphorical usage of a direct quote.

Tab. 1 Metaphor typology, following Semino 2008.

4 The data: The use of the *Projet Ramsès* database

In order to carry out a synchronic and corpus-based study in the future, we are currently annotating the metaphorical language in the texts stored within the database of the *Projet Ramsès* (Université de Liège, Belgium). This database is a linguistically annotated corpus of texts of the Late Egyptian language stage (dating from the New Kingdom until the Third Intermediate Period, ca. 1550–712 BC). Additionally, we shall be extensively using the *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*²⁰ with its accompanying *Belegstellen*²¹ and the online digital corpus *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, which presents a variety of Egyptian text types from many language stages. In this way, we have a triple means of checking definitions and usages. The *Wörterbuch* is in itself the perfect companion tool for a metaphorical analysis, since, in comparison with many modern language dictionaries, it is corpus-based.²² This being said, it is still a bilingual ‘translation dictionary’, with a corresponding focus on translation, which differentiates it from monolingual definition-based dictionaries. Unfortunately, the ancient Egyptians of the pharaonic period did not, to the best of our knowledge, attempt lexicographical research.

20 Erman and Grapow 1971 [1926–1931], henceforth Wb.

21 Erman and Grapow 1973 [1935–1953].

22 Verlinde and Selva 2001, 594.

In order to realise the aim of investigating metaphor in corpus perspective, a new annotation layer is being built into the Liège database, by which means metaphors can be tagged on all three levels of analysis outlined in § 3. This is a manual procedure, since context is so necessary to the identification and analysis of metaphors (see § 6.2). This signifies that one must observe metaphor usage across whole texts and not only isolate particular cases from the corpus.²³ Nevertheless, the usefulness of a large corpus will be demonstrated in the future, when, on the basis of the text-based qualitative tests, broader quantitative studies of particular expressions will be able to be carried out across the corpus.

Since the annotation layer was still being built at the time of conducting this research and writing this article, the *Projet Ramsès* database was not extensively used for this study, which comprises the pilot study used to identify and test the annotation levels. The study here is thus based in great part on the definitions of the *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache* (including the *Belegstellen*) and on the corpus data of the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, particularly for the testing of word meaning in context. This being said the transliteration, translation and glossing of the texts is the author's own.

5 The case studies

For this pilot study the most significant wisdom texts of the New Kingdom were subjected to analysis. All texts are written in hieratic script on a range of media (particularly papyrus and ostraca – limestone and pottery shards) and almost all derive from Thebes (modern Luxor). The manuscripts containing *The Teaching of Ani* date from the 19th Dynasty (from ca. 1290 BC, e.g. pBM EA 10685) until about the 26th Dynasty (ca. 650 BC, e.g. tBerlin 8934²⁴). *The Teaching of Amenemope* is attested from the 20th Dynasty (from ca. 1180 BC, e.g. oCairo SR 1840) until about 650 BC (e.g. pBM EA 10474²⁵). *The Teaching of Amunnakbt* also has manuscripts dating from the 20th Dynasty (reign of Ramses III, ca. 1150 BC, e.g. oKV 18/3.614+627²⁶), as does *The 'Teaching' of Menena* (reign of Ramses III – Ramses VI, e.g. oChicago OIC 12074+oIFAO Inv. 2188²⁷).

The research questions guiding our investigation of these sources principally concern themselves with spatial metaphors, particularly *path* metaphors, which are allegedly repeatedly used in educational texts.²⁸ One could ask, for instance: Are path metaphors used similarly in all wisdom texts from the period under investigation? With which other domains are paths connected? Do path metaphors develop throughout a text? This study

23 See also Kimmel 2012, 10.

24 See Quack 1994.

25 See Laisney 2007.

26 See Dorn 2004.

27 See Černý and Gardiner 1957 and Guglielmi 1983.

28 Vittmann 1999, 32.

hypothesises that the usage of path metaphors not only plays a role in the rhetorical structure of this genre but may also show a degree of connection not only between the texts within this corpus but also with other genres popular during this period.

6 The findings

What can be seen is that the path metaphors develop and interact with each other in similar ways to what Semino identified on the basis of metaphors in modern newspaper articles.²⁹ Although we do have cases of spatial metaphors in a wisdom text appearing once and never again, it is a more common phenomenon that these metaphors recur and stand in ever more complex relationships with each other. This type of relationship has been described by Andreas Musolff as a ‘Metaphor Scenario’ and is defined by him in the following manner:

[W]e can characterise a ‘scenario’ as a set of assumptions made by competent members of a discourse community about ‘typical’ aspects of a source-situation, for example, its participants and their roles, the ‘dramatic’ storylines and outcomes [...]

Scenarios enable the speakers to not only apply source to target concepts but to draw on them to build narrative frames.³⁰

6.1 *The Teaching of Ani*

In comparative perspective, it is clear that the path metaphors appear and develop in the four texts under analysis in very different ways. Concomitantly there are clear similarities between the metaphors of some texts. In particular, there are usually two to three cases of explicit mentions of a path, followed by more implicit and more creative plays on this motif. The kinds of variation include things like different types of path, different types of movement along a path and different kinds of blockages of a path.

In *The Teaching of Ani*, for instance, path metaphors do not play a very significant role. Metaphors of family structures and gardens are dominant instead, which represent growing beings, which one must take responsibility for.³¹ This being said, there are nevertheless two cases³² of explicit path metaphors, in which several ancient Egyptian

29 Semino 2008.

30 Musolff 2006, 28 and 36.

31 Metaphors other than ‘path’ in these texts are being treated in a separate study.

32 The latter part of Example 1 (starting with *dgs=k*) is also repeated in 21.11.

words for ‘path’, such as *mtn*, *mj.t* and *w3.t*, are used metaphorically (metaphorical usage of a lexeme is marked in bold throughout):³³

Example 1

<i>j.šm</i>	<i>tw</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>mj.t</i>	<i>n.t-^c{wi}</i>	<i>r^c-nb</i>	<i>dgs=k</i>	<i>s.t</i>	<i>nmt.t</i>		
<i>j.šm</i>	<i>tw</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>mj:t</i>	<i>n:t-^c</i>	<i>r^c-nb</i>	<i>dgs-k</i>	<i>s:t</i>	<i>nmt:t</i>		
go:IMP	2SG.M	towards	path:F	tradition	daily	tread:SBJV-2SG.M	place:F	step:F		

“Go daily towards the traditional path, so that you may traverse the trodden area.”³⁴
 (*Ani*, pBoulaq 4, 19.13)

At the end of the teaching, we also have the appeal to the god:

Example 2

<i>jmm</i>	<i>sn</i>	<i>hr</i>	<i>w3.t=k</i>			
<i>jmm</i>	<i>sn</i>	<i>hr</i>	<i>w3:t-k</i>			
place:IMP	3PL	on	path:F-2SG.M			

“Place them (the people, CD) on your (the god’s, CD) path!” (*Ani*, pBoulaq 4, 23.11)

Aside from these two examples, path metaphors are not otherwise present in the text. Instead, we are presented with two *anti-path metaphors*, in which the *static* condition of a person or animal represents a nightmarish situation in a metaphor defined at the conceptual level like HUMAN VICTIM IS ANIMAL (Eggertsson and Forceville 2009, 444):

33 There are metaphorical and non-metaphorical usages of *both* words for path *w3.t* and *mj.t* throughout the text. The phrases about the student finding his ‘way’ in 17.11–12 and 17.13 are not treated as metaphors, since, from a contextual perspective, they are talking about the student actually trying to get home in an inebriated state.

34 The phrase *s.t nmt.t* means literally ‘place of steps’. However, *nmt.t* ‘step’ is used in the earlier *Teaching of Ptahhotep* (D220–221, pPrisse 8.2, in Žába 1956, 33) to refer to ‘status’, a meaning applied by many to this passage from *Ani* (Volten 1937, 105). The

sentence *dgs=k s.t nmt.t* could thus read (after the emendation of a preposition and a possessive suffix pronoun – here bracketed, CD): “Stelle dich <auf> den Platz <deines> Ranges” (Volten 1937, 103). With *s.t* perhaps forming a composite abstract term (rather than meaning ‘place’) the reading “<Nach> der Position sollst du auftreten” (Quack 1994, 105) is also possible. As apparent by my translation, I prefer to see the sentence as a recurrence of the path metaphor, made likely not only by the context but also by the absence of the preposition *r*.

Example 3

[j]nk	n ^c	hr=s	n=k	r ^c -nb	jw	bn	n=s	mtr(.w)
ISG	smooth	say:PFV-3SG.F	to-2SG.M	daily	CORD	NEG	for-3SG.F	witness:PL
jnk	n ^c	hr-s	n-k	r ^c _nb	jw	bn	n-s	mtr:w
CORD-3SG.F	stand-RES	catch_in_net-RES	in	offence:M.SG	great	of	death	
jw=s	h ^c .tw	sht.tw	<m>	bB:w	ʿ3	<n>	m(w)t	
CORD-3SG.F	stand-RES	catch_in_net-RES	in	offence:M.SG	great	of	death	
m-ht	sdm{.tw}=f							
m_ht	sdm-f							
after	hear:INF-3SG.M							

“I am free’ she says to you daily, when no witnesses are present, but she will get caught up in a capital offence, when it becomes known.” (*Ani*, pBoulaq 4, 16.15)

In this case, we are presented with a metaphor that sits somewhat uncertainly between conventionality and novelty. The word *sht* has a basic sense, found in the *Wörterbuch*, of ‘catching a bird in a net’ (Wb. 4.262.3). A metaphorical usage along the lines of ‘to gain’ is apparent in contemporary texts such as the letter of Djehutymesu to his son Butehamun (pTurin 1971, vs. 2) as well as in the *Teaching of Amenemope* in this same corpus (pBM EA 10474, 7.18 and 12.9).³⁵ The problem is that the meaning here in *Ani* is significantly different – it represents not the action of an agent (in this case, the ‘hunter’), but rather the condition of a patient (the ‘hunted’). This metaphorical usage of *sht* could, in other words, be a quite particular usage. In any case, a contextual sense of ‘to be cornered’ is not to be found in the *Wörterbuch*.

A further example from *Ani* presents us with another potentially innovative case. A *sr(.t)*, or ‘wild goose’ (to be found in Wb. 4.192.5), is used to refer to a person, in this case, a young scribe. Although people are regularly represented metaphorically as animals (see also the cases of crocodiles in § 6.2–6.4) this particular case of a goose is not represented in the dictionary (the metaphor PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS is also found in other languages, for which see Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 2000, 111). The equation in the text here is nonetheless clear – both geese and young students must be restrained by

35 This usage also appears in earlier wisdom texts – and, from the data supplied by the digital corpus of the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* shows, scarcely in any other genre at this time: *The Teaching of pRamesseum*

II (pBM EA 10755, vs. 2.4), *The Teaching of Ptahhotep* (pPrise = pBN 186–194, 6,7) and *The Teaching for Merikare* (pPetersburg 1116 A, vs. 10.6).

society presenting yet another HUMAN VICTIM IS ANIMAL metaphor via the verb *ddh* ‘to trap’. At the textual level, this provides a *recurrence* (following Semino’s terminology) of the earlier ‘catching’ metaphor in Example 3:

Example 4

											
<i>t3</i>	<i>sr(.t)</i>	<i>h3y:tw</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>qbh:w</i>						<i>j{3}<w>=tw</i>	
<i>t3</i>	<i>sr:t</i>	<i>h3y:tw</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>qbh:w</i>						<i>ju-tw</i>	
DEF:F.SG	goose:F	descend:RES	from	watery_region:M.SG						SBRD-IMPRS	
											
<i>m-s3=s</i>	<i><r></i>	<i>{h3dn}<ddh>=s</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>t3</i>						<i>jd:t</i>	
<i>m_s3=s</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>ddh:s</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>t3</i>						<i>jd:t</i>	
behind-3SG.F	to	trap:INF-3SG.F	in	DEF:F.SG						net:F	

“The goose has flown down from the marshland – so one goes after it to trap it in the net.”³⁶ (*Ani*, pBoulaq 4, 23.5)

In sum, the few path metaphors that are to be found in *Ani* are explicit, concerned with following the correct life path. Less explicit cases are limited to ‘trapping’ imagery – the blocking of a bird’s airborne path – based on the bad behaviour of the human agents.

6.2 *The Teaching of Amenemope*

In the *Teaching of Amenemope* a large range of path metaphors are used, both explicit and non-explicit. At the beginning of the text we have (as in *Amunnakht* below in § 6.3) the clearest case: “Beginning of the instruction for life [...] in order to be led onto the right life path (*mj.t n 3nh*)” (pBM EA 10474, 1.1 and 1.7, also 16.8). The word *mj.t* ‘path’ is conventionally metaphorical: ‘path as life choice’ (Wb. 2.41.15). Following this introduction, on the other hand, the proclaimed aim of the teaching is: *<r> jri hm(w)=fr dw* ‘to steer oneself away from evil’, or literally ‘to use one’s oar against evil’ (pBM EA 10474, 1.10). We thus have the immediate influence of naval metaphors. The word *hm(w)* ‘steering oar’ can be used metaphorically in connection with the actions of a respectable person at least from the Middle Kingdom (see § 6.3). Although this usage is not to be found anywhere in the *Wörterbuch*, it appears throughout texts from a range of genres,

36 For the amendment of *ddh* see pGuimet 16959 = pLouvre E 30144, 5.5.



<i>pʒ</i>	<i>qrj</i>	<i>by</i>	<i>nʒ</i>	<i>msh(.)</i>	<i>bjn</i>
<i>pʒ</i>	<i>qrj</i>	<i>by</i>	<i>nʒ</i>	<i>msh:w</i>	<i>bjn</i>
DEF:M.SG	stormcloud:M.SG	be_high:RES	DEF:PL	crocodile:M.PL	be_evil:RES

“The north wind picks up, and brings his (the bad man’s, CD) time to a close [...] the storm is loud and the crocodiles are evil.” (*Amenemope*, pBM EA 10474, 4.14 and 4.16)

The terms *mshyt* ‘north wind’ (Wb. 2.125.6) and *qrjw* ‘cloud/storm’ (Wb. 5.58.6–7) are not recorded in the dictionary as having any metaphorical sense – here they have contextual senses of something like ‘turmoil’. In addition, it is interesting to note that the north wind usually appears in offering formulae with a positive meaning: *ḫ.w nḏm n(i) mshyt* ‘the sweet breath of the north wind.’³⁸ Here, on the other hand, we have a less positive connotation more in line with the *Blind Harpist’s Song D* from the tomb of Inherkhau (TT 359), which connects the wind more unequivocally with death – indeed, even following passage, in which each man has his ‘time’ (to die!) links the two texts.³⁹ On the other hand, the word *msh* ‘crocodile’ (Wb. 2.136.10) is most certainly a conventional metaphor, with a well-attested contextual sense of ‘symbol of speed and greed’ (Wb. 2.136.13). The water, sailing and weather-bound path metaphors, which present good (or bad) life decisions, are occasionally also bound to the teaching of life skills:

Example 7



<i>ḫr-rʒ-c</i>	<i>wn.w</i>	<i>dʒ</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>mdw(.wt)</i>	<i>jr(j).y=w</i>	<i>nʒ.y.t</i>	<i>m</i>
<i>ḫr_rʒ_c</i>	<i>wn:w</i>	<i>dʒ</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>mdw:wt</i>	<i>jrj:y-w</i>	<i>nʒ:y:t</i>	<i>m</i>
still	exist:SBJV	storm:M.PL	of	word:F.PL	do:SBJV-3PL	anchor:F.SG	in

ns=k

ns-k

tongue-2SG.M

“And even if there is a storm of words, they (the wise words, CD) will form an anchor on your tongue.” (*Amenemope*, pBM EA 10474, 3.15 and 3.16)

38 See for instance the Stela of Dedtu, Manchester UM 7964, A4 = Abydos 9 (Kubisch 2008, 161–162, Tbl. 2.b).

39 Blind Harpist’s Song, Text D, Tomb of Inherkhau (TT 359), 7 (KRI VI 192.2, in Kitchen 1969–1990): *nw ḫd(j) mshyw ḫnty z(j) nb r wnw.t=f* “The water of the Nile flows downstream and the north wind blows upstream – to each man his (own) time”.

Although the *Wörterbuch* does indeed define *d*^c ‘storm’ (Wb. 5.533.11) as ‘shouting’ (Wb. 5.534.5), the attestation for this usage seems to be reliant on this particular citation from *Amenemope*.⁴⁰ There is the possibility, therefore, that the author was establishing a quite particular association between shouting and weather, which perhaps is also reflected in *Menena* (Example 9). In sum, *Amenemope*, a long and rich wisdom text (at least 3292 tokens), provides only two explicit path metaphors, but a large number (25) and rich range of plays on the path, particularly from a nautical perspective.

6.3 *The Teaching of Amunnakht*

In *The Teaching of Amunnakht*, as in *Amenemope*, we are presented with an explicit path metaphor right at the beginning of the text: *tsjs(.w) n w3.t n 3nh* ‘the sayings for the path of life’ (oBM EA 41541, 1). Directly following this, similar to *Amenemope* in § 6.2, are a series of sailing metaphors. The student, responding to his teacher, says: *jnk p3 jmw mntk p3 hmw*, “I am the ship (but) you are the steering oar” (oKV 18/3.614+627, rt. 8). It is possible at this point that there is a certain metaphorical *intertextuality* (as argued by Fischer-Elfert 1984, 338), which draws on a metaphor from the much earlier dialogue known as *The Eloquent Peasant*: *ntk hmw n t3 r-dr=f* “You (Rensi) are the steering oar of the entire land!” (pBerlin 3023, 298). This motif is also present in *Amenemope* and is in this richer text developed even further as an idea: not only can people steer – people can in turn be ‘steered’ by god: “As for a man’s tongue, it is the ship’s steering oar, (but) god is its pilot!” (*Amenemope*, pBM EA 10474, 20.5–6). Though *Amunnakht* shares the metaphorical basis of *Amenemope*, with its metaphors of terrestrial and nautical paths to represent good and bad behaviour (of which it has two explicit and nine non-explicit cases), it relies on conventional, clichéd expressions:

Example 8



<i>j.sm[=j]</i>	<i>hr</i>	<i>w3.t</i>	<i>sdm</i>	<i>n=k [...]</i>	<i>tw=j</i>	<i>hr</i>	<i>mw</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>j:sm-j</i>	<i>hr</i>	<i>w3:t</i>	<i>sdm</i>	<i>n-k</i>	<i>tw-j</i>	<i>hr</i>	<i>mw</i>	<i>n</i>
gO:NMLZ[-I.SG]	upon	path:F.SG	hear:INF	for-2SG.M [...]	PRS-1SG	upon	water	of

dmy=k

dmy-k

name:REL-2SG.M

40 The citation in Wb. 5.534.5 and in the *Digital-isiertes Zettelarchiv* of the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* (DZA-Zettel 31.558.940) are from *Amenemope*; the

Belegstellen of the *Wörterbuch* (Vol. V of Erman and Grapow 1973 [1935–1953], 95) do not cite any further examples for this usage.

“I go along the path of listening to you (= I follow your lead obediently) [...] I go upon the water of what you say (= I am loyal to your instructions).” (*Amunnakbt*, oKV 18/3.614+627, rt. 8–9)

From a lexical perspective, both these metaphors are conventional. The contextual sense of *ḥr w3.t* ‘on the path’ is ‘to fit in with someone’ (Wb. 1.248.8) and that of *ḥr mw* ‘on the water’ is ‘to be loyal to someone’ (Wb. 2.52.17, also Dorn 2004, 54). From a textual perspective, we also see a recurrence of the above-mentioned water metaphor, “I am the ship (but) you are the steering oar” (oKV 18/3.614+627, rt. 8). To this point, all water metaphors have come from the discursive perspective of the student, which perhaps also explains why they follow such a conventional route. The teacher, however, takes up the water metaphor at the end of the text and uses it more creatively to build up a metaphor scenario to recount the story of the disobedient son: “He (the son, CD) is in the ship at the ropes, which are (heading) towards the water over his head, so that he is united with the crocodiles and hippopotami!” (oTurin CGT 57436 = Suppl. 9598, rt. 3–6).

In *Amunnakbt* there is also a path metaphor representing movement in flight: “You should [not] fly about like a little quail, which darts off and flies here and there. The snapping shut of the net, when it is made, is worse than saying (in the first place): ‘I’ll do it’” (oLacau, 12–13). This passage reminds us of the poor goose caught in the net in *Ani* (Example 4). However, this motif of the flighty bird appears ordinarily, not in the classical wisdom literature but rather in school instruction texts and the like, such as pAnastasi IV 2.4: “Someone has told me that you have given up on writing, that you go and fly off [...] Your heart has hopped off – you’re like an *achy-bird*” or the ‘*Teaching*’ of *Menena* (oChicago OIC 12074+oIFAo Inv. 2188, rt. 5): “You find yourself on the trip of a swallow with its young”.

6.4 The ‘*Teaching*’ of *Menena*

In the so-called ‘*Teaching*’ of *Menena* the density of path metaphors is higher than the other texts in the corpus (3 explicit path metaphors and 16 non-explicit ones in a text about 421 tokens long). Moreover, they are treated in a very different manner. Three characteristics are apparent in this text, which strengthen its metaphorical power in comparison to the other texts: a high degree of intertextuality, innovation and self-referentiality. Firstly, the storm metaphor is made more complex thanks to an intertextual inclusion from a much earlier work of Egyptian literature:⁴¹

41 Gardiner 1923, 25 also discusses a citation from *The Eloquent Peasant* in *Menena*.

Example 9



<i>sr(w)</i>	<i>n=k</i>	<i>p'</i>	<i>d^c</i>	<i>bw</i>	<i>jy(j).t=f</i>
<i>sr:w</i>	<i>n-k</i>	<i>p'</i>	<i>d^c</i>	<i>bw</i>	<i>jyj:t-f</i>
predict:PFV.PASS	for-2SG.M	DEF:M.SG	storm	NEG	come:COMPL-3SG.M

“The storm was predicted for you before it arrived.” (*Menena*, oChicago OIC 12074+oIFAO Inv. 2188, rt. 1)

As Simpson discussed (1958: 50–51), this sentence cites but also modernises the following Middle Egyptian sentence:

Example 10



<i>sr=sn</i>	<i>d^c</i>	<i>n(j)</i>	<i>jy(j).t</i>
<i>sr-sn</i>	<i>d^c</i>	<i>nj</i>	<i>jy(j):t</i>
predict:SBJV-3PL	storm	NEG	come:COMPL

“They could predict a storm before (it) arrived.” (*The Shipwrecked Sailor*, pPetersburg 1115, 30–32)

The original quotation from *The Shipwrecked Sailor* is in itself not metaphorical – a factor that differentiates this case of intertextuality from the category outlined by Semino, where metaphors themselves are described as being included in intertextual references (§ 3). Nevertheless, the metaphorical usage of this citation in *Menena* vividly illustrates how Menena’s badly-behaved son Pai-iri (like the brave sailors in *The Shipwrecked Sailor*) currently finds himself in an unpleasant situation. The word *d^c* has the basic sense of ‘storm’ and a contextual sense of ‘bad situation’ not to be found in the *Wörterbuch* (compare, for instance, the meaning of *d^c* in Example 7). The metaphorical meaning of the word and the whole passage is not only to be gained from the co-text but also from the reworked syntax of the citation. We have not only a ‘translation’ (following the terminology of Hagen 2012, 147) of the citation from Middle Egyptian to Late Egyptian syntax but also a completely new framing of the citation. This happens firstly via the passivisation of the verb *sr* ‘to predict’ and secondly through the addition of the prepositional phrase *n=k* ‘for you.’ These new elements allow the son Pai-iri to be linked to – but also compared with – the skilful and courageous sailors from the tale of *The Shipwrecked Sailor* – he is, by comparison, unable to foresee problems or even to react appropriately, when

these problems have been foreseen for him. Such explicit references to much earlier texts emphasise the power and meaning of the metaphor – the foretold storm – and function also in an intra-textual manner as a framing motif: all the ‘travel over water’ metaphors in the text extend from this citation.

Although a series of other metaphors follow which depict travel along a path, particularly over water, we have also particularly innovative developments of the terrestrial path metaphor in this text. For instance, in the following passage, the word *t(b)w* ‘sandal’ (Wb. 5.362.16) gains unprecedented metaphorical weight by being used here in reference to something like ‘preparation.’ It comes together with the word *sr:t* ‘thorn’ (Wb 4.190.24–191.2), which in this case means something like ‘obstacle,’ to build a metaphor scenario along the theme of path metaphors:

Example 11

<i>šm=k{wj}</i>	<i>ju</i>	<i>nn</i>	<i>n=k</i>	<i>t(b)w.w</i>	<i>tm</i>	<i>sr:t</i>	<i>nb{t}</i>	
<i>šm-k</i>	<i>ju</i>	<i>nn</i>	<i>n-k</i>	<i>tbw:w</i>	<i>tm</i>	<i>sr:t</i>	<i>nb</i>	
go:PFV-2SG.M	SBRD	not_existent	for-2SG.M	sandal:PL	not_do	thorn:F	any	
<i>jn(j)=k</i>								
<i>jn-j-k</i>								
bring:INF-2SG.M								

“You have gone off without sandals because no thorn has ever brought you (back again).” (*Menena*, oChicago OIC 12074+oIFAO Inv. 2188, rt. 3)

What is meant is that until his son actually has a bad experience he will never adequately prepare himself for life. Such novel metaphors are clear developments of conventional path metaphors, but the surprising details more precisely outline Pai-iri’s bad behaviour. The last particular feature in *Menena* to be discussed here is the mixture of self-referentiality (in other words, the *signalling* of a metaphor following Semino’s terminology) with references to the explicit path metaphors in the other texts from this corpus. The *creative* development of these explicit path metaphors, however, is taken on rather by the school text tradition than the wisdom texts themselves, as we see here in one of the scribal miscellanies:

Example 12

<i>d(j)=j</i>	<i>tw</i>	<i>hr</i>	<i>mtn</i>	<i>jwṯi</i>	<i>šnn=f</i>	<i>ḥḳy.t</i>	<i>mˁk</i>
<i>dj-j</i>	<i>tw</i>	<i>hr</i>	<i>mtn</i>	<i>jwṯi</i>	<i>šnn-f</i>	<i>ḥḳy:t</i>	<i>mˁk</i>
give::SBJV-1SG	2SG.M	upon	path	NEG.REL	worry-3SG.M	bulwark:F	protect:INF
<>	<i>pḥ</i>	<i>msh</i>					
<i>r</i>	<i>pḥ</i>	<i>msh</i>					
against	DEF:M.SG	crocodile:M.SG					

“I want to set you upon a path that is free from worry, a barrier that protects (you) from the crocodile.” (pChester Beatty IV vs. 6.4)

To put the probable reference to this contemporary school text into context, in his remonstrance of his son, Menena begins to demand changes to his behaviour. He does this by using a path metaphor, which certainly has similarities with the above passage of pChester Beatty IV (as discussed in Moers 2001, 236). He then marks his metaphor further using *signalling* (here placed in italics). Moers’ argument notwithstanding, it is significant that the barrier in *Menena* is not the barrier *against* the wicked influence but instead seemingly the fortification *belonging to* it – from which Pai-iri should of course remove himself as quickly as possible!

Example 13

<i>j.rw(j)=k</i>	<i>jnb.t</i>	<i>nhr-hr</i>	<i>j///</i>	<i>mjnḥ</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>tsjs-md.(w)t</i>
<i>j:rw(j)-k</i>	<i>jnb:t</i>	<i>nhr=hr</i>	<i>///</i>	<i>mjnḥ</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>tsjs=md:wt</i>
leave:IMP-2SG.M	fortification:F	fierce=face	///	here	with	saying=speech:F.PL

“Get away from the fortification of (the evil being, CD) ‘Fierce of Face’!, to ... *here with a figure of speech*” (*Menena*, oChicago OIC 12074+oIFAO Inv. 2188, rt. 10–12)

The speaker thereby establishes both a link with the earlier conventional metaphor of ‘the path, where ‘Fierce-of-Face’ lurks in the bushes’ (*Menena*, oChicago OIC 12074+oIFAO Inv. 2188, rt. 2–3) as well as the paths, barriers and crocodiles in the school texts and other wisdom texts.

7 Conclusion

To sum up, this contribution has investigated the path metaphors in texts of the Rameside wisdom tradition, in order to assess the connection between mode of expression, meaning and genre on the basis of modern methods of metaphor analysis. We see that in the rhetoric of instructional texts, the idea of a path has an important role to play in the elucidation of good and bad behaviour, correct and incorrect life choices. The path emerges often a few times as an explicit reference and is then built on by the author(s) in a variety of ways to elaborate their point. In *Ani* the motif barely emerges beyond the two explicit cases, but takes the route of describing a truncated airborne path via the metaphor HUMAN VICTIM IS ANIMAL. In *Amenemope*, we have a great richness of metaphors that draw on water-borne paths, as well as the logical derivations of such paths: sailing and weather. We see similar features in *Amunnakht*, but in a more conventional way. *Menena*, by contrast, provides great innovation in the development of metaphors around both terrestrial and water-borne paths to portray the hearer, the badly behaved son, in the worst possible light. The more explicit developments of the path motif are, in fact, rather to be seen in the scribal texts and in texts that straddle the wisdom and scribal genres (like the so-called ‘*Teaching*’ of *Menena*) than the wisdom texts themselves. We have also seen that the metaphors investigated in this study demonstrate a significant degree of interaction both within texts of the wisdom genre but also between different genres, such as wisdom texts, school texts, monumental texts and literary texts. Lastly, the development of metaphors and metaphor scenarios in the span of whole texts (which fit the parameters established by Semino and Musolff) showcases the structural and rhetorical brilliance of these texts.

8 Perspectives

In closing, we can only say that the still preliminary state of this research (with only one genre investigated in detail to date) leaves many important questions open, which are to be addressed in future research. For instance, the question of the extent to which metaphors are bound to particular genres has only begun to be properly answered, although already the results are quite promising. Also, that some metaphors reached idiomatic status in the Ramesside Period has to this point only been shown in reference to path-related metaphors (like in *Amunnakht* § 6.3). Lastly, the investigation of parts of speech in which metaphors occur – in itself an issue in contemporary metaphor research (for which see Steen et al. 2010) – requires a quantitative approach, which will therefore be addressed as the annotated corpus develops further. The pilot study nevertheless gives us an insight into both the creativity and the conventionalism of Egyptian scribes.

9 Glossing abbreviations⁴²

I	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ACT	active
CAUS	causative
COMPL	completive
CORD	coordinating particle
DEF	definite (article)
F	feminine
IMP	imperative
IMPRS	impersonal
INF	infinitive
M	masculine
NEG	negative
NMLZ	nominalizer
PASS	passive
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PRS	present
PTCP	participle
REL	relative
RES	resultative
SG	single
SBJV	subjunctive
SBRD	subordinating particle
-	connects segmentable morphemes
=	marks clitic boundary
:	marks units that are segmentable without visible formal segmentation
—	shows that two words in one language correspond to one in another
.	separates several meta-language elements rendered by a single object-language element

⁴² Following Di Biase-Dyson, Kammerzell, and Werning 2009.

- () marks inherent, non-overt categories
- [] marks an element in the gloss not corresponding to element in the source language
- { } emends a scribal error (deletion) *or* represents an orthographical convention

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