



Origin of Some Contemporary Common Egyptian Sayings and Expressions in Ancient Egypt

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Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to show the origin of some remarkable and distinguished contemporary common sayings and expressions in the ancient Egyptian sources represented in the statues, the wall scenes inside the tombs, the pictorial signs in the words and the tales. The common sayings are associated with the essential role of the woman in the society such as for example “Behind a great man is a great woman”, “wife is the mainstay of the house” and “the obedient wife is under the legs of her husbands”. Other expressions are rhetorically used to describe the characters of the person like “his heart is like feather”, “he suckled tenderness from the breast of his mother”, “her face is like owl”, “she deserves to be burned” and “she put our heads in the mud”. Other says are associated with condition of the person like “Sleep fled from the eyes” and “the atmosphere is messy”.

Keywords: Origin – Common Sayings – Expressions – Ancient Egyptian sources – women – characters - persons

Introduction

The people in their daily conversations use what is known as the common sayings. In general the saying can be regarded as phrases and expressions which describe symbolic ideas and concepts about the persons and the events¹. It is known that there are numerous aspects from ancient Egyptian civilization which can be regarded nowadays such as using words which had been derived from ancient Egyptian language as well as the inherited habits and behaviors from the ancient Egyptians².

¹ See “Saying” in Wikipedia, accessed on 1-10-2022 and <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Savings>, accessed on 1-10-2022.

² There are studies which focused on indicating aspects of ancient Egyptian civilization in modern time such as F. Haikal, “Thoughts and Reflexions on the Love Songs in Ancient Egypt” in *L’Impero Ramesside*, Rome 1999, p. 77-85; T. S. El-Din. “Ancient Egyptian Proverbs” in *Annales du Service des Antiquités de Égypte*, Tome LXXVI, 2000-2001, p. 157-171; A. Abdel-Hamid Youssef, *From Pharaoh’s Lips. Ancient Egyptian Language in the Arabic Today*, introduced by F. Haikal, The AUC in Cairo Press, 2003 and H. Ezz Eldin, “Origin of Some Contemporary Social Habits in the Ancient Egyptian Love Poems” in *Journal of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels-University of Sadat City*, Volume 1, Issue, 1, 2017, p. 96-110.

This paper displays some remarkable Egyptian common sayings with purpose of indicating their origin or the root in ancient Egyptian sources like statues, wall scenes and language.

The common sayings in this paper are related with rhetoric descriptions of the persons like “behind great man is great woman”, “wife is the mainstay of the house” and “he is voracious” and “his heart is like feather”. The paper also display certain sayings concerning the inability to sleep and expression of fear and other expressions as would be seen in the coming part.

Origin of Some Common Sayings in Ancient Egypt

1- “Behind a Great Man is a Great Woman”³.

This remarkable adage is used to appreciate role of the wife who devoted herself to support her husband to proceed and obtain success especially in his practical life.

It seems interesting to notify that the previous common saying is obviously incarnated through extraordinary royal statues for a king and a queen. The king is shown standing and his wife is positioned behind him (fig. 1). The great role of the queen is noticeably through placing her open hands on the king’s shoulder as if she supports and pushes him to possess the required ability and power to rule Egypt successfully.

Idea of the wife who supports her husband is also featured in other royal scenes like king *Akhenaton* and behind him is queen *Nefertiti* while presenting offerings to god *Aten* (fig. 2) as well as king *Osorkon II* followed by queen *Karomama I* in the *Heb-sed* festival (fig. 3).



Fig. 1 after
<https://www.meashots.com/photo/28731-a-photo-from-the-yard-of-the-egyptian-museum.html> by Ahmed Fadl, accessed on 18-10-2022.



Fig. 2 after P.A. Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs*, Thames & Hudson, 1994, lower picture in p. 123.

محرم كمال، أثار حضارة الفراعنة في حياتنا الحالية، الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب مهرجان القراءة للجميع، 1997 و محرم كمال، الحكم والأمثال والنصائح عند قدماء المصريين، المكتبة الثقافية 71، 1962 و جمال الدين عبد الرازق، "التواصل اللغوي والثقافي بين مصر القديمة والثقافة المعاصرة: دراسة لغوية مقارنة في أساليب التعبير الدارجة في مصر القديمة والتعبيرات العربية المعاصرة" في باسم سمير الشرفاوى (محرر)، الأفق دراسات في علم المصريات لتكريم الأستاذ الدكتور عبد الحليم نور الدين (10-12 أبريل 2007م) المجلد الأول، 2009، ص 249-290 وسامح مقار، أصل الألفاظ العامية من اللغة المصرية القديمة، الهيئة العامة المصرية للكتاب ثلاث أجزاء 2004 – 2005 و جلال أبو بكر، الموارد من مصر الفرعونية، دار المعارف، 2014.

³ <https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/behind-every-great-man-theres-a-great-woman.html>, accessed on 18-10-2022.



Fig. 3 after P.A. Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs*, Thames & Hudson, 1994, right picture in p. 187.

2- “The Wife is the Mainstay of the House”⁴.

A common saying describes the efficient and well-organized wife as “mainstay or stronghold of the house”. This is because everything inside the household depends on her; she is the one who provides her husband with all means of comforts and takes care of her children. The positive idea towards the wife can be suggested through some statues for the wives while standing near her husbands (figs. 4-5).



Fig. 4: Statues of *Nefer-her-n-Ptah* and his wife *Meret-ites* (Egyptian Museum) after M. Saleh and H. Sourouzian, *Official Catalogue. The Egyptian Museum. Cairo*, Organization of Egyptian Antiquities, ARE, 1987, no. 56.



Fig. 5: Statues of *Nen-khefet-ka* and his wife *Nefer-Shemes* (Walters Art Museum) after <https://art.thewalters.org/detail/29200/statue-group-of-nen-kheft-ka-and-his-wife-nefer-shemes/> accessed on 15-12-2022.

The husband he is shown in action of movement through stepping their left legs forwards which suits their roles in working outside the houses (figs. 4B-5B)⁵.

On the other hand, looking to the wife’s legs her feet are near each other (4A-5A). On the other hand the left leg of the husband steps forward. The standing position without any movement of the wife might be method used by the ancient Egyptian artists who wanted to express an indirect idea about the wife who represented power of stability inside the house due to her great responsibilities towards the family members (4A-5A). This suits title of the wife in ancient Egypt

⁴<https://kenoozarabia.com/2020/06/19/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%88%D8%AC%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A9/>, accessed on 18-10-2022.

⁵ G. Robins, (1998), *Women in Ancient Egypt*, British Museum Press, 1998, p. 92.

nbt pr “Lady of the House”⁶ and in the instructions of *Ani* he advised the husband not to be in command of his wife because she is proficient in organizing all the works and issues inside the house⁷.



Fig. 4A. Wife: Feet near each other = stability



Fig. 4B. Husband: Left leg stepping forward = movement



Fig. 5A. Wife: Feet near each other = stability



Fig. 5B. Husband: Left leg stepping forward = movement

3- “Obedient Wife is Under the Legs of Her Husband”.

This common saying is mainly recited in the village community to describe wife who completely devoted herself to please her husband. Fascinatingly this saying is obviously featured in some scenes inside ancient Egyptian tombs. The wife is illustrated seating in kneeling position on the ground near her husband’s legs as seen for example in the Giza tomb of *Idu* (fig. 6). Also a statue represents the wife seating on the ground near the left leg of her husband while the son stands on the right side of his father (fig. 7).

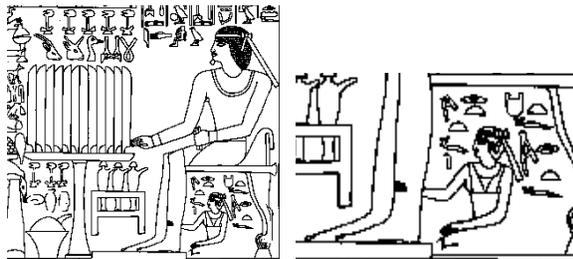


Fig. 6 after W.K. Simpson, *The Mastabas of Qar and Idu G 7101 and 7102*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1976, fig. 39.



Fig. 7 after G. Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, British Museum Press, 1998, right picture in p. 162.

It is better to mention that position of the woman on the ground near the husband’s legs has no intention to humiliate her but to accentuate her virtues that enabled her to gain the love of her husband. This is clearly indicated in the above shown two scenes for the wife is described in her accompanied inscription as  Hmt.f mrt.f “his wife, his beloved” (fig. 6).

4- “We Shall Live Together Forever and Nothing Would Separate Us”.

The lovers in their romantic moments exchanged sentences of passion and enthusiasm which include “I wish to live with you forever” and to assure their abilities to hinder the difficulties of life they says: “Nothing would separate us or do us apart”. These sentences can be sensed

⁶ G. Robins,(1998), Women in Ancient Egypt, British Museum Press, 1998, p. 92, 99 and 101.

⁷ G. Robins,(1998), Women in Ancient Egypt, British Museum Press, 1998, p. 176.

through the images of the wife in some tomb scenes. For example a scene shows the wife's right arm while encircling the left one of her husband *Khafkhufu* and in the same time her left hand holds his hand (fig. 8) ⁸. Embracing the husband's shoulder might signify deep desire of the wife to have eternal happy life with her husband without being separated even after their death. Moreover, it is noticed that both shoulders of the husband and wife are closely attached together.

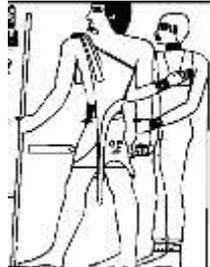


Fig. 8 after W. K. Simpson, *The Mastaba of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II G 7110-20 and 7150*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1978, p.137.

5- “Sleep Flied from My Eyes”.

This common saying is habitually said by a person who spends disturbing night because of his inability to sleep. It seems interesting to find the root of this expression in the ancient Egyptian

word  snb “to remove sleep from eyes” ⁹. It is noticed existence of the wing  ¹⁰ as determinative in the word. This leads to think that the ancient Egyptians imagined sleep as like a bird's wing which flied to deprive the person from getting sleep.

6- “He (or She) Chants from Heart”.

A singer who chants with passion is described as if singing from his heart. The cause of this saying can be featured in some walls scenes inside some tombs which represent a singer while placing his open left hands upon his left ears (fig. 9) which is side of the heart center of all feelings as previously mentioned ¹¹. This idea is assured through the word  Hst that means “song” ¹² and singer” ¹³ which accompanies him. This is fascinatingly because from the Hsw came the Arab word “*ihsas*” that means “emotion” and “feelings”.

⁸ W. K. Simpson,(1978), *I*, Boston, 1978, p.137.

⁹ *Wb* 4, 161.8.

¹⁰ J. P. Allen,(2010), *The Mastaba of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and I Middle Egyptian. An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 435, sign H5.

¹¹ E. Teeter,(2000), “The Body in Ancient Egyptian Texts and Representations (Plate 6)”, in vol. 37 no. 1/4, 2000, p.

157.

¹² *Wb* 3, 165.2.

¹³ *Wb* 3, 165.3-16.



Fig. 9. Relief from tomb of Nekheftka (Saqqara) in the Egyptian Museum, photo after the researcher.

7- “He Suckled Tenderness from His Mother”.

The saying concerning suckling tenderness from the breast of his mother” represents rhetoric expression to describe the good hearted one who shows gentleness, kindness and good treatment to every person through fulfilling their needs with satisfied feelings. Probably the cause of this say is found in statues and scenes for the mother while nursing her child through her left breast (figs. 10-12).

For the left is side of the heart centre of all senses according to thoughts of the ancient Egyptians¹⁴. Thus the infant obtains kind-heartedness while suckling milk from the left breast of his mother.



Fig. 10. Porcelain Statue of Isis nursing her son Horus in the British Museum, after A. Erman, *Life in the Ancient Egyptians*, New York, 1971, p. 166.



Fig. 11. Statue of mother nursing her infant, from Berlin Museum, after https://www.herodote.net/Antiquite_un_souffre_doul eur_tout_designe-synthese-2180-368.php. last visited in 11-10-2022



Fig. 12. Mother breast-feeds her child, from tomb of Minna at Thebes after <https://www.wikiart.org/en/ancient-egyptian-painting/mother-with-child--1411>. last visted in 11-10-2022.

8- “He is the Heart of His Mother”.

This saying intends to express the mother’s extreme warmth, compassion and love towards her child. Probably the reason of this saying is found in chapter 30 from Book of Coming Forth by Day when the deceased made a plea to his heart in order not to justify against him. In the text the deceased stated that he obtained his own heart from the heart of his mother¹⁵.

¹⁴ E. Teeter,(2000), The Body in Ancient Egyptian Texts and Representations (Plate 6) , in The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists, vol. 37 no. 1/4, 2000, p. 157.

¹⁵ R.O. Faulkner,(1989), The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, The British Museum Press, London, 1989, p. 55.

9- “His Heart is Clean or White”.

The kind person who works to please his surroundings and never thinks to hurt anyone is described as: “His heart is Clean or White”. Probably the root of this saying is in the ancient Egyptian epithet $\square \oplus \uparrow$ 16 px(A)-ib “clean of heart” which was inscribed in the praising texts of king Thutmose I in the XVIIIth dynasty 17.

For the white color it was symbol of purity and clearness in ancient Egypt 18. This is clearly expressed in the writings of *Ipuwer* who described the miserable condition of Egypt when he stated that no one dressed white garment and dirty spread everywhere 19.

10- “ His (or Her) Heart is Like a Feather”

A kind innocent person who never thinks to harm the others is given significant rhetorical description as having heart like feather or his heart has same lightness of the feather.

Indeed equating the heart with the feather is originated from the famous judgment scene in chapter 125 from Book of Coming Forth by Day (fig. 13). In this scene the deceased witnessed the weighing of his heart against the feather of *Maat* goddess of justice 20. When the heart is found not heavier than the feather this means that it is free from sins and wrongdoings 21.



Fig 13. Part from papyrus of Hunefer after R. Seleem, *The Illustrated Egyptian Book of the Dead. A New translation with Commentary*, Godsfield Press, Great Britain, 2004, figure in p. 68.

11- “The One Who Draws from Knowledge”.

A person who has motivation to reach high degree in science for he spends most of his times in learning and reading book is described as “the one who draws from knowledge”. The verb “to draw” is pronounced “*yanhal* ينهل” as well as “*istaka* استقى” in the Arabic language that refers to meaning of drinking 22. Thus “to draw or to drink” is considered an allusion to the act of learning.

¹⁶ *Urk* IV, 267.7.

¹⁷ *Urk* IV, 267.7 & R.O. Faulkner, (1991), *A Concise Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, 1991, p. 93.

¹⁸ R.H. Wilkinson, (1999), *Symbol and Magic in Egyptian Art*, Thames & Hudson, 1999, p. 116 and J. Toledano, *Egyptian Magic. The Forbidden Secrets of Ancient Egypt*, Astrolog Publishing House, 2004, p. 54.

¹⁹ R.O. Faulkner, *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*, in *JEA* 51, 1965, p. 53 (53-62) and M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume I. The Old and Middle Kingdoms*, University of California Press, 1975, p. 151.

²⁰ R. Seleem, *The Illustrated Egyptian Book of the Dead. A New translation with Commentary*, Godsfield Press, Great Britain, 2004, p. 68.

²¹ R. Seleem, (2004), *The Illustrated Egyptian Book of the Dead. A New translation with Commentary*, Godsfield Press, Great Britain, 2004, p. 68-69 and https://www.timetrips.co.uk/papyrus_of_hunefer.htm, accessed on 15-11-2022.

²² <https://www.arabdict.com/ar/%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A/%D9%86%D9%87%D9%84>, accessed on 19-11-2022 and <https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar-ar/%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%82%D9%89/>, accessed on 2-1-2023.

In the ancient Egyptian language there is the verb  Sdi with breast determinative  ²³ that means “suckle” ²⁴. This verb with determinative of man putting his finger in mouth ²⁵  denotes “read” ²⁶. No doubt act of reading leads a person to learn and gain more knowledge. Accordingly it is noticed that both verbs “to draw or *yanhal* in Arabic” and Sdi have two meanings of drinking and learning.

12- “He is a Voracious Man”

A man who eats too much to a limit that he would never stop from devouring the food is given an amazing sarcastic description as a voracious man.

Voracious in the Arabic language means “Nhm” “نهم” ²⁷. It seems exciting to realize that the three letters “N-h-m” had been derived from the ancient Egyptian word  snHm that means “grasshopper and locust” ²⁸ which is harmful insect known to devour the agricultural products ²⁹. The negative regard towards this insect is shown in the military texts on the Madinet Habu Temple of king *Ramesses III*. The dangerous enemies represented in the Northern Countries had been described as  sAnHm “grasshoppers” to signify their extreme threat towards the safety and stability of Egypt ³¹.

13- “She Has Owl Face”.

A woman who has gloomy face and never smile causes any one who sees her to have hard feelings of pessimism. This surly woman used to be given ironic description which identified her face with the owl’s one.

This common saying suits the negative regard to the owl bird as being related to death or expecting something bad to happen in Egypt ³². Aspect of relating the dim faced woman with the owl can be featured in two aspects in ancient Egypt. Firstly the owl represented letter “M” ³³ (fig. 14). For the phonogram of “M” when pronounced it causes the mouth of the person to be firmly closed. This suits the illustration of the owl with solid facial features with sealed mouth (fig. 15). Secondary the letter “M” represents the first letter for the word mAA that means “to look” ³⁴ and

²³ J. P. Allen,(2010), Middle Egyptian. An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 429, sign D 27.

²⁴ R.O. Faulkner,(2010), A Concise Dictionary of Ancient Egypt, Oxford, 1991, p. 273.

²⁵ J. P. Allen,(2010), Middle Egyptian. An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 425, sign A 2.

²⁶ *Urk* IV, 122, 11-1998, 6 and R.O. Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Ancient Egypt, Oxford, 1991, p. 273.

²⁷ <https://www.almaany.com/en/dict/ar-en/voraciously/>, accessed on 25-1-2023.

²⁸ *Wb* 3, 461. 6-8.

²⁹ <https://extensionpublications.unl.edu/assets/html/g1627/build/g1627.htm>, accessed on 19-11-2022 and <https://www.chinanews.uk/2020/11/hashrah.aljarad.html>, accessed on 19-11-2022.

³⁰ Epigraphic Survey,(1930), Medinet Habu. Volume I. Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III, *OIP* 8, Chicago, 1930, pls. 27-28 line 63.

³¹ W. F. Edgerton & J. A. Wilson, (1936), Historical Records of Ramses III: The Texts in Medinet Habu, Vol. I and II, *SAOC* 12, Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1936, pls. 27-28, p. 33, line 63.

³² <https://www.reference.com/world-view/owl-symbolize-egyptians-ec5c884dc155e587>, accessed on 1-11-2022.

³³ J. P. Allen, (2010), Middle Egyptian. An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 433, sign 17.

³⁴ *Wb* 2, 7.1-10.7.

“sight”³⁵. It is known that the owl enjoys sharp sight or vision and the woman with gloomy face is known to normally have pointed eyes.

	
<p>Fig. 14 after https://www.istockphoto.com/photos/egyptian-owl, accessed on 1-11-2022</p>	<p>Fig. 15. after R. Porter and D. Cottridge, <i>Birds of Egypt and the Middle East</i>, The AUC Press, 2001, upper picture in p. 78.</p>

14- “Come Under My Wing” and “I Will Outstretch My Wing Upon You”

The Arabic word for wing which is “Gnah” resembles the pronunciation of the ancient Egyptian word  DnH “wing”³⁶. The “wing” in the two common sayings is used to express idea of providing someone with care and protection. The origin of this rhetoric use for the wing is found in the ancient Egyptian verb  HA “to spread wings protectively”³⁷.

In addition the unique diorite statue of king *Khafre* in the Egyptian Museum represents best example to incarnate the common saying of stretching the wing for protecting purpose. The falcon god Hours is positioned at the back while outstretching its wings towards the king’s head (fig. 16).



Fig. 16 after <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/teaching-resources-for-historians/teaching-and-learning-in-the-digital-age/images-of-power-art-as-an-historiographic-tool/khafre>, accessed on 2-11-2022.

15- “She Put Our Heads in the Dirt or Mud”.

A fallen girl who committed sinful behavior which is mostly related with the act of having sexual relation without marriage or escaping from the house with her lover, the members of her family used such expression to express the bad reputation they would have in the eye of neighborhood represented in: “She put our heads in the dirt or mud”. Metaphorically, the “head” is associated

³⁵ Wb 2, 10.8-14 and R.O. Faulkner, (1991), *A Concise Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, 1991, p. 100.

³⁶ Wb 5, 577.6-578.7.

³⁷ Wb 3, 13.2

with self-respect and pride as incarnated in sentence of holding or raising the head high ³⁸. On the other hand “dirt” is related with bad reputation ³⁹ in the eyes of the community.

Most likely the primal source of the saying concerning putting head in the dirt is found in the ancient Egyptian tale of the Two Brothers. In this tale the wicked wife falsely told her husband *Inpu* that his younger brother *Bata* sexually assaulted her. *Inpu* became enraged and he took his knife to kill his brother. *Bata* defended himself from the false accusation against him and blamed his elder brother for believing what was said to him from his immoral wife. Then he cut his male organ and threw it in the lake before leaving his brother. After believing in the innocence of his *Inpu* had remorse with great grief for what happened to his brother because of the falseness and dishonesty of his wife so he returned to his house in bad condition while putting his hand which is smeared with dirt upon his head ⁴⁰ as stated in the following sentence:-



iw Drt.f wAH Hr DADA.f iw.f wrHw n iwtn ⁴²

“His hand is laid upon his head, it (= hand) is smeared with dirt” ⁴³.

From the previous it is clearly realized existence of the words head and dirt which are closely associated with feelings of shame and sadness in the contemporary common saying and the sentence in the ancient Egyptian tale. In addition there are other contemporary sayings having the same concept like “She besmeared our honor with slime” and “She smeared our Reputation with Dirt”.

16- “She Deserves to Be Burnt”.

The sinful woman who committed any sort of sin deserved is given a rhetorical insult represented in “she deserves to be burnt”. Probably the idea of burning the wicked woman was first stated in Tale of Adultery from the Westcar Papyrus. The wicked wife of the priest received the burning punishment because of committing adultery with a commoner ⁴⁴.

17- “Throwing the Wife to the Dogs”.

This common saying is usually uttered by the wife who served her husband and donated her life for him but he showed wickedness through expelling her out of the house. It seems interesting to find sentence concerning the act of throwing a wife to the dogs in the tale of the Two Brothers. The elder brother *Anubis* found his younger brother *Bata* innocent from sexually assaulting his

³⁸ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/hold-head-up-high>, accessed on 27-1-2023.

³⁹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dirt>, accessed on 27-1-2023.

⁴⁰ M. Lichtheim, (1980), Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume II The New Kingdom, 1980, p. 207.

⁴¹ C. E. Moldenke, (1896), Tale of the Two Brothers. A Fairy Tale of Ancient Egypt. The D’Orbiney Papyrus in Hieratic Characters in the British Museum. The Hieratic Text, the Hieroglyphic Transcription, a Translation, Notes, and a Glossary. The Elsinore Press, 1896, p. 78 line 74.

⁴² <https://aew.bbaw.de/ta/servlet/GetCtxt?u=guest&f=0&l=0&db=0&tc=755&ws=2345&mv=3>, accessed on 29-1-2023.

⁴³ L.H. Lesko, (2022), A Dictionary of Late Egyptian Volume I, Fall River Modern Printing Co, the USA, 2022, p. 22.

⁴⁴ D. Bagnato, (2006), The Westcar Papyrus. A Transliteration, Translation and Language Analysis. Edition Atelier, Wien, 2006, p. 28 and W.K. Simpson, The Literature of Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies and Poetry, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2003, p. 16.

wife thus he returned to his home and slaughtered his wicked wife before throwing her bones to the dogs ⁴⁵.

18- “I Have Dressed You with Fine Outfits”.

A frustrated rich woman during the quarrel with the hatred husband who is lower than her from the financial condition, she uses certain sentence to disgrace her husband that he was nothing when she knew him and she bought outfits to dress him.

It seems interesting to suggest cause of the idea of a wealthy woman who bought new clothes to a man from lower financial rank from two ancient Egyptian tales. Firstly in tale of adultery from the Westcar papyrus, the wife of the priest sent clothes to her lover who belongs to low social rank ⁴⁶. Secondly in tale of the two brothers, wife of the elder brother promised the younger brother *Bata* to make clothes for him in return of sleeping with her ⁴⁷.

19- “He Answered Summon of the Woman Caller”.

There is famous legend in the Egyptian villages about the disappearance of men known because they answered summon of the woman caller who lived near the lake ⁴⁸.

Perhaps the root of this legend is found in the ancient Egyptian tale of the Herdsman who met a bewildering woman near the lake's swamps and he hurried away from her request ⁴⁹.

20- “The Hair of My Head Stood up”

In the previous mentioned tale of the Herdsman, he was shocked when he saw the hair of the mysterious woman. The used sentence to express his fear was Sny.i Ddf “My hear stood on end” ⁵⁰. he said that his head's hear stood up ⁵¹ to show his shocking emotion when he saw the hair of the mysterious woman. This expression is used nowadays by the person who confront hideous and terrible situation.

21- “Unveiling”

When a crime is solved the newspaper uses the expression “unveiling”. The word unveil literally means remove a covering that hides something. It seems that root of this term is found in the

⁴⁵ W.K. Simpson,(2003), The Literature of Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies and Poetry, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2003, p. 85.

⁴⁶ D. Bagnato,(2006), *The Westcar Papyrus, A Transliteration, Translation and Language Analysis*, Edition Atelier, Wien, 2006, p. 27

⁴⁷ W.K. Simpson,(2003), The Literature of Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies and Poetry, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2003, p.3.

⁴⁸ <https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%A9>. last visited in 10-10-2022.

⁴⁹ A. Erman,(1927), The Literature of Ancient Egypt. Poems, Narratives, and Manuals of Instruction, from the Third and Second Millennia, translated into English by A.M. Blackman, London, 1927, p. 35

⁵⁰ J.C. Darnell, A Midsummer Night's Succubus—the Herdsman's Encounters in P. Berlin 3024, the Pleasures of Fishing and Fowling, the Songs of the Drinking Place, and the Ancient Egyptian Love Poetry, in S.C. Melville & A.L. Slotsky,(2010),(eds.), Opening the Tablet Box, CHANE 42, Brill, Leiden and Boston, 2010, p. 101-102.

⁵¹ A. Erman,(1927), The Literature of Ancient Egypt. Poems, Narratives, and Manuals of Instruction, from the Third and Second Millennia, translated into English by A.M. Blackman, London, 1927, p. 35

verb  sHAi “reveal secret”⁵² because this word includes determinative of cloth with fringes ⁵³.

22- “The Atmosphere is Missy”

When the weather became turbulence and turmoil because of the sandstorms covers the sun causing difficulties in seeing the roads a common saying is stated “the atmosphere is missy”.

The word missy means “*mzaabeb*” in the popular language. It seems interesting to note that word *mzaabeb* is derived from the ancient Egyptian name of the evil giant snake  aApp “Apep or Apophis”⁵⁴ the major enemy of the sun god Re⁵⁵ (fig. 17). “Apep” caused sandstorms to hinder the sun god in his daily journey. The letters “m and z” were added to Apep to have the final word *mzaabeb*. Even the Coptic month known as “*Amsher*” the sandstorms that happened during its period are called *mzaabeb Amsher*.



Fig. 17. The snake Apep is being hindered by god Atum, after <https://www.bible-codes.org/apophis.htm>, accessed on 27-10-2022.

23- “Living by the Favor of Your Breath”.

There is common saying which is recited as a compliment by the employees to flatter or praise their boss and show that they enjoy good position because of him represented “we live by the favor of your breath”. The aspect of this saying is found in some sources in ancient Egypt. For example in tale of Senuhi, he stated that every one live by the breath of the king:

 anx.tw m TAw n dd.k “one lives from the **breath** of you giving”⁵⁶.

When queen *Hatshepsut* sent the trading expedition to the land of Punt, its people astonishingly welcomed the Egyptians and asked them about the reason of their coming by the order of the king of Egypt from whom they got the breath of air to live⁵⁷. The defeated enemies made plea to the king of Egypt invoking him to show mercy through giving them the breath to live⁵⁸.

Moreover the *Sema-Tawy* sign of the Unification between Upper and Lower Egypt symbolically carries concept of this sayings from the political view (fig. 18). The papyrus plant and lotus flower symbols of Lower and Upper Egypt respectively are tied around the lungs and water pipes

⁵² Wb 4, 209, 10-14.

⁵³ Allen, *Middle Egyptian*, p. 443, sign S 28.

⁵⁴ Wb 1, 167.14-15.

⁵⁵ R.H. Wilkinson,(2003), *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, Thames & Hudson, 2003, p. 221.

⁵⁶ J. P. Allen,(2015), *Middle Egyptian Literature. Eight Literary Works of the Middle Kingdom*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 132.

⁵⁷ J.H. Breasted,(1906), *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty. Chicago*, 1906, p. 107 no. 255.

⁵⁸ W.F. Edgerton & J.A. Wilson,(1956), *Historical Records of Rameses III. The Texts in Madinet Habu I and II*, The University of Chicago Press, Illinois, 1956, p. 19 line 19.

which incarnated the power of the king whose breath would consolidate the unification of Egypt and the safe life of its people ⁵⁹.

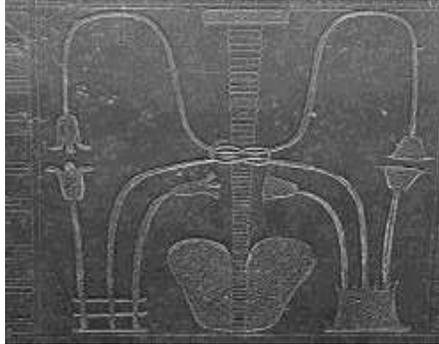
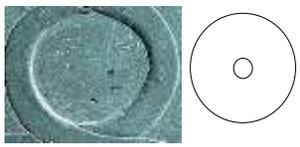


Fig.18.
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Sema tawy#/media/File:Seated_Statue_of_King_Senwosret_I_MET_25.6_back_of_throne.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Sema_tawy#/media/File:Seated_Statue_of_King_Senwosret_I_MET_25.6_back_of_throne.jpg), accessed on 16-1-2023

24- “Wishing Eternal and Everlasting Safety for the Country”

There is usually a wish that Egypt would enjoy safety and stability forever. This idea is early featured in the Narmer Palette through the image of the two mythical animals with long lion heads (fig. 18). These two animals are symbol of Upper and Lower Egypt and their elongated necks are interlaced forming circle between them. The circle looks like the sun disk ☉ ⁶⁰ (fig. 19) in the word  nHyt that means “eternity” ⁶¹. This might lead to hypothetically suggest that the ancient Egyptian artist expressed his inner desire for Egypt to be strong united country.

	
<p>Fig. 19 after https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narmer_Palette#/media/File:Narmer_Palette_serpopard_side.jpg, accessed on 9-1-2023.</p>	<p>Fig. 20</p>

⁵⁹ F. Atiya, (2006), Ancient Egypt, Dar el-Kuteb, 2006, p. 142.

⁶⁰ Allen, Middle Egyptian, p. 438, sign N 5.

⁶¹ *Wb* 2, 390.3.

Conclusion

From the previous the following results can be concluded:-

- I- The ancient Egyptians are the pioneers in incarnating and illustration their symbolic concepts and ideas through the statues, scenes and the determinatives in the words.
- II- The ancient Egyptians presented positive ideas about the woman as supporter to her husband and keeper of the power of stability inside the house.
- III- Role of the woman in nursing the child with her left breast is the reason of giving rhetoric positive description to the kind person.
- IV- The illustration of heart as centre of senses and feelings is still in use to describe the good and bad people.
- V- The determinative of wing in the ancient Egyptian words represented the root of some amazing contemporary common sayings.
- VI- Some situations in the ancient Egyptian tales led to the existence of some expressions of swearing which are uttered in moments of anger like the woman who insults her husband through buying clothes to him; the woman who dishonours her family through putting their heads in the mud.
- VII- The evil snake Apep the source of chaos and disorder is still in the inner conscious through associated part of its name in describing the bad weather because of the sandstorms through the word mzabeb.
- VIII- The important role of the king as source of giving people the breath to live is the origin of praising important people that they give praise to make life of the people especially the employees better.
- IX- The deep desire and sincere wish for Egypt to be land of safety forever its aspect can be suggested from the circle which is caused because of the interlacing long necks of the mythical animals symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt.
- X- Finally it is emphasized that the ancient Egyptian statues; wall scenes; determinatives in the words and tales fabulous and sources to indicate origins and roots of the common sayings in the contemporary life as well as the cultural heritage of the Egyptians.

أصل بعض الأقوال الشائعة المعاصرة في مصر القديمة

المستخلص

يهدف البحث إلى رصد أصل بعض الأقوال والتعبيرات المأثورة المعاصرة في مصر القديمة من خلال التماثيل ومناظر جدران المقابر وكذلك من اللغة المصرية القديمة. فعلى سبيل المثال مقولة "وراء رجل عظيم امرأة عظيمة" نجد أصلها في تمثال لملك ووراءه تقف زوجته الملكة، ومقولة "الزوجة هي عماد المنزل" فنجد إنه تم التعبير عنها من خلال تمثال المرأة وهي ثابتة وقدميها بجوار بعضهما، ومقولة "النوم طار من عيني" نجد أصلها في كلمة مصرية قديمة snb وتعنى انقضاء النوم ونجد الكلمة تحتوى على مخصص جناح، ووصف الرجل بأن قلبه مثل الريشة فذلك بسبب منظر المحاكمة لوزن القلب أمام الريشة، ومقولة قلب أمه وراضع الحنية من والدته فيسبب أن الأم في مصر القديمة كانت ترضع ابنها بثديها الأيسر موضع القلب. وهناك العبارة التي يدهن بها الموظفون رؤسائهم في العمل متمثلة في نحن نعيش بأنفاس سيادتكم نجد أن أصلها في مصر القديمة عندما يقال أن الناس جميعا يعيشون من خلال نفس الملك. وهناك الرجاء والتمنى في أن تعيش مصر في أمان وإستقرار دائم دون تفتت يلاحظ تلك المقولة في لوحة نارمر من خلال الدائري التي تتشأ من تداخل الوحشين الأسطوريين بوجه أسد رمز مصر لأن الدائرة هي رمز استمرار الحياة والرأسين المتداخلين والدائرة تحوى رمزية تمنى استمرار اتحاد أراضي مصر واستقرارها.

الكلمات الدالة: أصل - أقوال مأجورة- تعبيرات - مصر القديمة

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