

## **The Didactic Context of Literary Texts: Some Notes on the Social Behavior as a Human Value in Ancient Egypt**

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### **Abstract**

This research explores the social behaviors that reflect the core of the social life of the ancient Egyptians through a selected examples provided of a discrete group of documents, known as wisdom, didactic literature or as instructions. These examples provide us with evidence that explains the social behaviors of the ancient Egyptians. The study approaches different texts that explain some of the good and bad manners instructed to the children. The main aim is to illustrate way of thinking and the social behaviors and its impact in the life in ancient Egypt. The manners which are discussed in this paper are: good ethical treatment of people, gluttony in eating and greediness, gossip, respect public and dealing with people ethically, venerating the elderly and showing respect towards the disabled, the rights of the neighbours and their guardianship, friendship, counselling and advising the ruler and avoiding the adultery. Having scrutinized the texts in the scope of this study, it is clear that a structure of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ character of man can be built up by the behaviors mentioned in these texts.

**Keywords:** Moral, Teaching, Behavior, Instruction, Literature, Ethical, Kagemni, Ptahhotep, Merikare, Khety son of Duauf, Any, Amenemapt.

### **I. Introduction**

The ancient Egyptians, of any social ranking, were noticeably influenced by instructions. Regardless of their literacy,<sup>1</sup> they listened and narrated. Writers, prompted by strong acceptance, diversified their literary works and topics, which enriched the ancient Egyptian civilization and provided it with all kinds of literature<sup>2</sup>.

Ancient Egypt is characterized by the authorship and presentation of wisdom texts and teachings. The Egyptian writers also valued literature for its own sake and gave various aspects of advice to

<sup>1</sup>In the society of ancient Egypt, nearly 1% were educated with varying levels of literacy, see: Baines, J & Eyre, C., “Four Notes on Literacy”, In: *GM 61* (1983), p.65-96.

<sup>2</sup>سليم حسن، الأدب المصري القديم، الجزء الأول، القاهرة، 1990، ص.2.

the society and these teachings were higher than all purposes of life, because they will remain after the end of everything in existence<sup>3</sup>.

Teachings in ancient Egyptian varied. For example, those directed by god to the king were definable as 'divine'. Instructions of rulers to children or senior officials are also attested as, for example, the Instructions of Amenemhat I to his son Senusret I. Finally, a father could give instruction to his children which would be defined in this way as 'family teachings'<sup>4</sup>.

Parents were keen on teaching their children the good behaviors that will benefit them both in their lives and in the afterlife. Wisdom texts and teachings, directed to offspring, were loaded with morality and ethics such as piety, tolerance, doing good deeds, the significance of familial love, helping those in need, honesty, and sincerity.

The texts studied herein range from the Old Kingdom throughout to the New Kingdom. This includes the Teachings of Ptahhotep, Amenemhat I, Kagemni, Amenemapt, Any and those of Khety son of Duauf. The study, however, is not an exhaustive list of wisdom texts from ancient Egypt. Rather, the data selected for this study was found to be sufficient for the purpose of the study.

## II. The Maxims

This paper investigates ancient Egyptian social behaviors in the light of teachings of ancient Egypt. The authors focused on social behaviors selected to elaborate on the ethics favored by the ancient Egyptians and others which they detested.

### II.1: Gluttony and Greediness

The instructions furnish what might be seen in modern eyes as 'dining decorum'<sup>5</sup>. Although, admittedly, an ancient Egyptian term for 'food decorum' does not exist, a structure of ethics related to food and dining can be deduced from ancient Egyptians' statements. Thus, while specific behaviors related to dining were praised, others were not. To exemplify, moderation was given due attention in the ancient Egyptians' teachings and instructions as a preferable social behavior<sup>6</sup>. Gluttony, conversely, was detested and seen as 'heart wrongdoing' (*jb-hw*) in Egyptian terms.

The Instructions addressed to Kagemni, for example, stress how one should eat and drink moderately. The son, to whom the instructions were directed, is advised to stick to chastity and self-restraint when eating food. The texts commend abstinence rather than eating greedily nor showing an excessive desire to eat and drink, especially when sitting with a group at one table. Otherwise, one would be unable to control his/her instincts. One also, as instructed, should

<sup>3</sup>سليم حسن، الأديب المصري القديم، الجزء الأول، ص.185.

<sup>4</sup>Moret, A., "La Doctrine de Maat", In: *RdE* 4 (1940), p.2. Depla stresses that, curiously enough, there is no single example of instructions given by a father to his daughter nor by a mother to her son, see: Depla, A., "Women in Ancient Egyptian Wisdom Literature", In: Leonie J. Archer, Susan Fischler and Maria Wyke (eds.), *Women in Ancient Societies: An Illusion of the Night*, Routledge, New York, 1994, p. 24-52.

<sup>5</sup>شعبان السمنودي، "أداب زيارة البيوت في مصر الفرعونية"، في: *مجلة الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية*، العدد 82، المجلد 2، كلية الآداب، جامعة المنيا، 2016، ص.790.

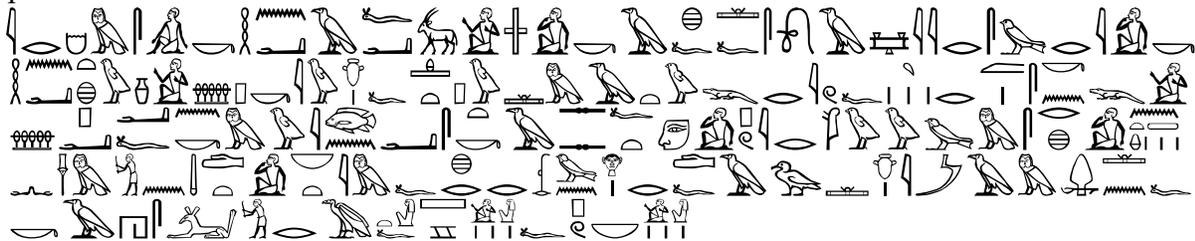
<sup>6</sup>شعبان السمنودي، *أداب زيارة البيوت في مصر الفرعونية*، ص.795.

consume less food and water. Also, when a person sits down with someone gluttonous, he does not eat and drink until this gluttonous person finishes his food. In his house, however, one may savor food<sup>7</sup>. Emphasizing eating moderately, the instructions resist this penchant for eating<sup>8</sup>. A related text, for example, reads:



“*jr hms.k hn<sup>c</sup> 3<sup>f</sup> msd t mrr.k 3t pw ktt d3jr jb-hw pw 3<sup>f</sup> jw db<sup>c</sup>.t(w) jm jw jkn n mw hm.f jbt mht r n šww smn.f jb jw nfrt jdn bw nfr jw nh n ktt jdn wr hs pw hnt n ht.f sw3 tr smh nf wstn ht m pr.sn*”, “If you sit down with a gathering of people, show dislike to the bread you love, (self-) suppressing is a little moment. Gluttony is improper, and it is reprimanded. A cup of water quenches thirst, a handful of herbs makes the heart established (strong). A good thing stands for goodness, a little thing stands for much. Weak is the one whose belly covets when (meal)-time has passed, he forgets those in whose house his belly is made free”<sup>9</sup>.

Another maxim of Kagemni relates to the rules and ethics of sitting at a dining table with someone voracious. Kagemni advised his son to eat and drink only after the voracious person had finished his food and drink:



“*hms.k hn<sup>c</sup> 3<sup>f</sup> wnm.k 3hf.f sw3.(w) jr swrj.k hn<sup>c</sup> thw šsp.k jw jb.f htp.w m 3tw r jwf r gs skn šsp.k dj.f n.k m wjn st k3 ssft pw jr šww m srh n t n šhm.n mdt nbt jm.f hr (t)r n hr r df3 jb jm3m n.f k3hs r mjwt.f mrw.f pw bw-nb*”, “When you sit with someone glutton, you eat only when his greed has passed, when you drink with a drunkard, you take only when his heart is content. Do not fall upon the meat beside one who is glutton, you should take only when he gives to you. Do not refuse it, then it will be something calming, as for him who is free of an accusation of bread, no word can take control of him, He whose face is averted from feeding the appetite, the harsh is kinder to him than to his mother, all people are his dependent”<sup>10</sup>.

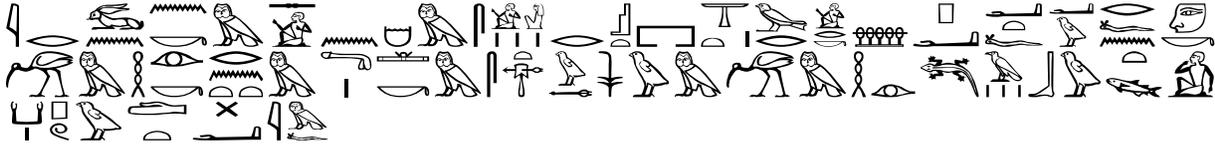
<sup>7</sup>شعبان السمنودي، آداب زيارة البيوت في مصر الفرعونية، ص.796.

<sup>8</sup>شعبان السمنودي، آداب زيارة البيوت في مصر الفرعونية، ص.796.

<sup>9</sup>Gardiner, A.H., “The Instruction Addressed to Kagemni and his Brethren”, In: *JEA* 32 (1946), p. 73; Federn, W., “Notes on the Instruction to Kagemni and his Brethren”, In: *JEA* 36 (1950), p.48 .n.1, 7; Barns, W.B.J., “Some Readings and Interpretations in Sundry Egyptian Texts”, In: *JEA* 58 (1972), p.159; Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature. A Book of Readings, Vol. I: The Old and Middle Kingdom*, University of California Press, 1975, p. 59-60; Allen, J.P., *Middle Egyptian Literature. Eight Literary Works of the Middle Kingdom*, Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, 2015, p. 162-163.

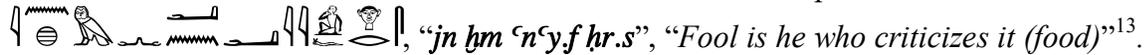
<sup>10</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 60. n.9-20; Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 163-164.

In the Instructions to Kagemni, one is instructed to watch his deeds when he is invited to a banquet. He should not, for example, look at the person who invited him with many glances:



“*jr wnn.k m s n hms r jst tt wr r.k ššp.k djt.f djw r fnd.k gmḥ.k r ntt m b3ḥ.k m stw sw m gmḥ ʿš3 bwt k3 pw wdt jm.f*”, “If you happen to be one among guests at the table of someone greater than you, you should take what he gives when it is set before you (lit. before your nose), you should look at what is before you, do not shoot him with many looks, bothering him is the ka’s abomination”<sup>11</sup>.

‘Dining decorum’ as drawn by the ancient Egyptians also included that one should behave courteously. Like that, happiness will be brought to him, and the host will be pleased with him<sup>12</sup>. It is urged, for example, not to criticize the food one is invited to since one who does that is denounced as ‘fool’ as mentioned in the Instructions of Ptahhotep. The text reads:



The Instruction of Any also advised against overeating: “Do not be greedy to fill your belly”<sup>14</sup>. Khety son of Duauf also advised his son to be careful of greed and overeating: “If you ate three loaves of bread, drank two jugs of beer, and the belly is still unsated, restrain it. If another eats, do not stand there; be careful of rushing to the table”<sup>15</sup>.

Also, showing respect to superiors is not an inseparable part of the ancient Egyptian ‘food decorum’. Hence, one should not eat before a governor dining with him does:



“*m jrj jmy ʿkw m b3ḥ wr m tw.k w3ḥ r.k r h3t*”, “Do not eat bread before an official, placing your mouth near a nobleman”<sup>16</sup>.

Likewise, the Instructions of Ptahhotep accentuated the significance of ‘food decorum’ and warned against eating gluttonously. Thus, one is instructed not to look constantly at the food

<sup>11</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 65. n.7; Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 178-179.

<sup>12</sup>محمد علي سعد الله، تطور المثل العليا في مصر القديمة، مؤسسة شباب الجامعة، الإسكندرية، 1989، ص. 88.

<sup>13</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 65; Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 178-179;

عطية عامر، الأدب الفرعوني، مكتبة الأنجلو المصرية، القاهرة، 1995، ص. 131.

<sup>14</sup>Suys, E., *La sagesse d'Ani: Texte traduction et commentaire*, *Analecta Orientalia*. 11, Rome, 1935, p. 79; Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature. A Book of Readings, Vol. II: The New Kingdom*, University of California Press, 1976, p. 142. n.5;

محرم كمال، الحكم والأمثال والنصائح عند المصريين القدماء، الطبعة الثانية، الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب، 1998، ص. 58-59: سليم حسن، *مصر القديمة*، الجزء السابع عشر "الأدب المصري القديم"، الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب، 2000، ص. 226.

<sup>15</sup>Hoch, J., “The Teaching of Dua-Kheti: A New Look at the Satire of the Trades”, In: *JSSEA 21/22* (1991–1992), p. 99; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 191. n.9-13;

محرم كمال، الحكم والأمثال والنصائح عند المصريين القدماء، ص. 64: سليم حسن، *مصر القديمة*، الجزء السابع عشر، ص. 215.

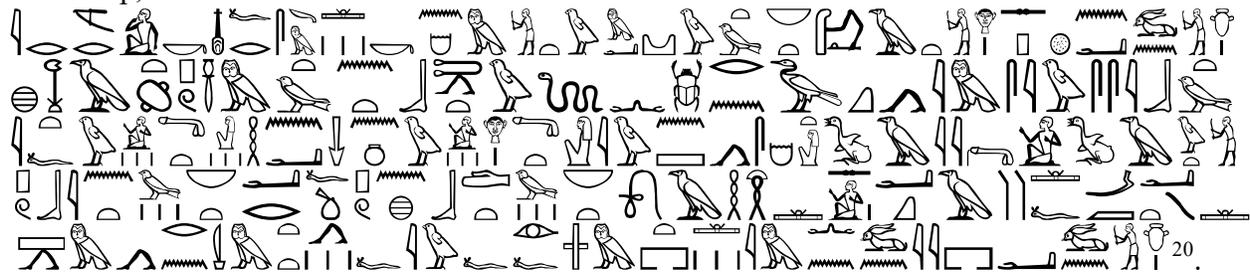
<sup>16</sup>Budge, E.A.W., *Facsimiles of Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, Second Series, London, 1923, p. 17, 49:Column.xxiii. N.13-14.

placed in front of others, because that would annoy both them and the host. The texts also urge to remain silent while eating, and if the master of the house speaks, or greets others, one should reply friendly with kind words that rejoice and comfort his heart<sup>17</sup>.

Greediness was also a behaviour on should have refrained from in ancient Egypt. Warning against greediness, Amenemapt advised not to strain in longing for the properties and wealth of royals and chiefs, nor to obtain privileges and benefits, except for those granted to him personally. The texts advised that one should not look forward to the possessions of the poor nor to try to get their food and bread. Stolen wealth, in the author's words, would only bring about poverty, rather than happiness. Also, Amenemapt warned against heed wealth and ignoring the fate and destiny because death is the end of everything. As such, Amenemapt inveighs against gluttony and overeating, and greediness for food, such as:

<sup>18</sup>, “*m jrj snkty r nktw n tw3 m tw.k hkr r t.f*”, “Do not covet a poor man's goods, nor hunger for his bread”<sup>19</sup>.

Also, greediness was a detestable behavior which would disintegrate family, brotherhood, and friendship. According to the instructions, one should be free from all evil and beware of the vice of greed: origin of evil and all hateful things. It is, in Egyptians' words, a dangerous disease for which a cure does not exist. It is also the cause of the problems which arise among family members where it could end up with a couple being divorced. For example, in the Instructions of Ptahhotep, one reads:



“*jr mr.k nfr ssm.k nhm tw m- dwt nbt h3 tw hr sp n wn jb h3t pw mrt nt btw n hpr.n k jm.s iw.s sibt jtw mwtw hn snw hr mwt jw ns.s hmt t3y t3wt pw bjnt nbt rf pw n hbd t nbt w3h s k3.f m3t sm r nmtt.f jw.f jr.f jmt-pr jm nn wn js wn jb*”<sup>21</sup>, “If you would love a perfect behavior, to take away every evil from yourself, fight against the deed of greed: a painful disease without cure, a treatment for which does not exist (?). It embroils fathers, mothers, and the brothers of the mother, it expels wife from husband; it includes all evils, a collection of all hateful things. That

<sup>17</sup>شعبان السنودي، أداب زيارة البيوت في مصر الفرعونية، ص.797.

<sup>18</sup>Budge, Hieratic Papyri, p. 45, Column.xiv. N.5-6.

<sup>19</sup>Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature II, p. 154. n.5.

<sup>20</sup>Budge, E.A.W., An Egyptian Reading Book, London, 1888, p.147, col.9-10. n.13-1; Fecht, G., Der Habgierige und die Maat in der Lehre des ptahhotep (5.und 19.Maxime), ADAIK, Band 1, New York , 1985, p.34, max.298-301; Žaba, Z., Les Maximes de Ptahhotep, Prague/Prahqa, Éditions de l'Académie Tchecoslovaque des Sciences/ Nakladatelství československé Akademie Véd, 1956, p.39, max.298-301.

<sup>21</sup>Allen, Middle Egyptian Literature, p. 193-194.

*man endures whose rule is rightness, who walks a straight line; he will make a will by it, there will be no tomb for the greedy*<sup>22</sup>.

Also, in the Instructions of Ptahhotep, one is deterred about being greedy in a division and not to become covetous except for what he has:



*“m wn jb.k hr psšt m hnt nn js r hrwt.k m wn jb.k r h3w.k”*<sup>23</sup>.

*“Do not be greedy in the division, do not covet more than your share; do not be greedy toward your kin”*<sup>24</sup>.

Amenemapt, addressing instructions to officials and young men,<sup>25</sup> warned his son from greediness and advised him not to covet:



*“m jrj 3fy gm.k p3 h3w”*, *“Do not grasp, and you will find the profit”*<sup>27</sup>.

Elsewhere, Amenemapt warned against coveting the possessions of the chief:



*“m jrj 3fy r 3htw n wr”*, *“Do not desire a noble’s wealth”*<sup>29</sup>.

In another example, Amenemapt also counselled his son saying:



*“m jr km3 jb.k m-s3 wsr nn hm š3yt rnnt m jr h3c n.k h3ty-jb.k m rw(t) s nb n t3y wf wnw”*, *“Do not set your heart on wealth, there is no ignoring fate and destiny, do not let your heart go straying, every man comes to his hour”*<sup>31</sup>.

Amenemapt also warned against a fortune obtained from theft and urged the acceptance of being poor:

<sup>22</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 68-69. n.19; Simpson, W.K., *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, New Haven and London, 1977, p.138 (9,13-10,1); Jacq, C., *L’Enseignement du Sage Égyptien Ptahhotep*, la Maison de Vie, paris, 1993, p. 97, max.298-301.

<sup>23</sup>Budge, *Egyptian Reading Book*, p.148, col.10. n.5-7; Žaba, *Les Maximes de Ptahhotep*, p.41, max.316, 318, 320; Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 194.

<sup>24</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 69. n.20; Quirke, S., *Egyptian Literature 1800BC Question and Readings*, London, 2004, p.95 (10, 5-7).

<sup>25</sup>Budge, *Hieratic Papyri*, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup>Budge, *Hieratic Papyri*, p. 43, Column.vi. N.15.

<sup>27</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II*, p. 151. n.15.

<sup>28</sup>Budge, *Hieratic Papyri*, p. 46, Column. xv. N.9.

<sup>29</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II*, p. 155. n. 9.

<sup>30</sup>Lange, H.O., *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope Aus dem Papyrus 10,474 des British Museum*, Kobenhavn, 1925, p.54 (IX,10-13).

<sup>31</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II*, p. 152; Lange, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope*, p. 56.

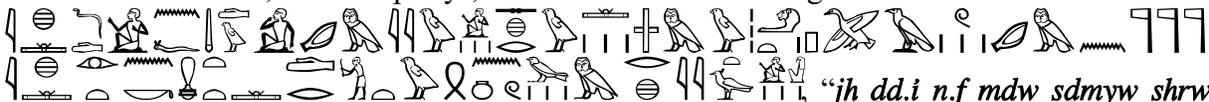


*“m jr ršw n.k wsr m hwr<sup>c</sup> mtw.k jh3m n nmhw”.*

*“Do not rejoice in wealth from theft, nor complain about being poor”<sup>33</sup>.*

## II.2: Dealing with People Ethically

In the “Negative Confessions” included in Chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead, the deceased declared that: “I have not committed wrongdoing against anyone”<sup>34</sup>. This is mirrored frequently in the instructions. On all levels, one is instructed to behave decently regardless of others’ social status. Ptahhotep, for example, instructed his son to respond to the orders of his chiefs and his supervisors in the royal house, so that he could lead a stable life in which he enjoys the bounties and donations. In so doing, Ptahhotep praised dealing with people with good manner. When one follows these maxims, Ptahhotep says, he would be content and good would be done for him:



*“jh dd.i n.f mdw sdmyw shrw imyw-h3t p3w sdm.n ntrw jh jr.t(w) n.k mitt dr.tw šnw m rhyt”*, “So, I will tell him the words of those who heard, the ways of the ancestors, who have listened to the gods, may the same be done for you, so that the troubles may be repelled from the people”<sup>35</sup>.

Also in his instructions, Ptahhotep advised to speak nicely to the tired or those in a miserable situation. One should neither detest nor dishonour them. Rather, the advisee should show kindness towards him:



*“jr gm.k d3jsw m 3t.f m hwrw n js mjt看.k m 3d-jb.k r.f hft hss.f”*, “If you find a disputant in his moment, a poor man, not your equal, do not let your mind attack at him because he is miserable and weak”<sup>37</sup>.

*“m hsf tw m 3t wr m shdnw jb n nty 3tp.w”<sup>38</sup>*, “Do not oppose the time of a great one, do not annoy the heart of one who is burdened and tired”<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>32</sup>Lange, Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope, p.55(X,6-7).

<sup>33</sup>Simpson, Literature of Ancient Egypt, p.230.

<sup>34</sup>Simpson, Literature of Ancient Egypt, p.269.

<sup>35</sup>Žaba, Les Maximes de Ptahhotep, p.17-18, col.5,n.3-4 (max.30-34); Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature I, p.63. n.13-17; Parkinson, R.B., The Tale of Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems 1940-1649 BC, Oxford, New York, 1997, p. 250; Allen, Middle Egyptian Literature, p. 169.

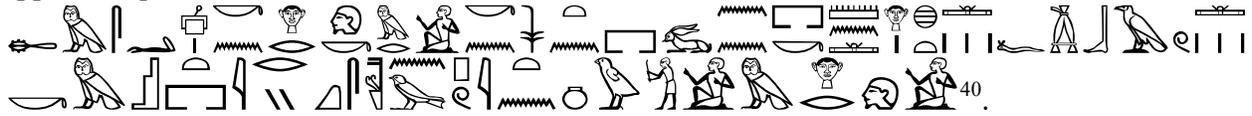
<sup>36</sup>Budge, Egyptian Reading Book, p.142 ,col.6,n.1; Žaba, Les Maximes de Ptahhotep, p.22,max.74-76; Allen, Middle Egyptian Literature, p. 174.

<sup>37</sup>Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature I, p.64. n.4; Jacq, L’Enseignement du Sage Égyptien Ptahhotep, p. 51, max: 74-76; Quirke, Egyptian Literature, p.91 (6, 1); Allen, Middle Egyptian Literature, p. 174.

<sup>38</sup>Budge, Egyptian Reading Book, p.150, col.12, n.6-7; Žaba, Les Maximes de Ptahhotep, p.47, max.388-389; Allen, Middle Egyptian Literature, p. 202.

<sup>39</sup>Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature I, p.70. n.26; Parkinson, Tale of Sinuhe, p.259; Quirke, Egyptian Literature, p.96 (12,6-7); Allen, Middle Egyptian Literature, p. 202.

Absolute obedience of supervisors would also bliss one with rewards. Otherwise, he who opposes superiors is wretched:



“*hms s3.k n hr(y) tp.k (j)m(y)-r.k n pr-nswt wnn pr.k mn.(w) hr hwt.f db3w.k m jst jrj ksn pw jtnw m hr(y)-tp*”, “Bend your back (in respect) to your chief, your overseer from the palace of the king, your house will be endured with his wealth, and your rewards in their right place, wretched is he who opposes a superior”<sup>40</sup>.

On disputes, Amenemapt advised his son not to strain himself to justify his wrong deeds to make the truth on his side, despite the many mistakes he made:



“*m jrj jrry bg3j r p3 th3.k m tw.k ‘n.n.f wšbwt hr ds.k’*”, “Do not rant with someone you have hurt and do not respond to him with an answer to make the truth on your side”<sup>42</sup>.

Amenemapt also warned his son not to harm others, especially the innocent one and to not misbehave and exceed his rights. Such transgression was deemed as a reprehensible act. He also urged him to control over his evil soul, otherwise, a swift punishment would befall him both in his life and in the afterlife:



“*p3 jrry bjn h3c sw mry t3y.f h3y jn.f sw t3 mh3w h3y tw skm.s wnw tw.f*”, “Cast the evil doer on the bank of the river (or canal), He will bring his own flood upon himself; the northern winds will come and bring his hour of life to an end”<sup>43</sup>.

Amenemapt also advised to guard one’s tongue against words of evil:



“*swd3 nst tw.k r mdw hdj jry.k mr.tw n kw3wy jry.k jm3hy h3pw tw.k (m) db3t*”, “Guard the tongue from the word[s] of evil (lit. that hurt), make yourself beloved by the masses (of people), make yourself as one of the blessed dead, hidden (in) the coffin”<sup>44</sup>.

He also commanded his son not to frustrate those who talk to him and to speak to them with all non-frustrating words:

<sup>40</sup>Budge, Egyptian Reading Book, p.151, col.13, n.9-11; Žaba, Les Maximes de Ptahhotep, p.51, max.441-443,446; Allen, Middle Egyptian Literature, p. 207.

<sup>41</sup>Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature I, p.71-72. n.31; Simpson, Literature of Ancient Egypt, p.143 (13,9-11); Quirke, Egyptian Literature, p.97 (13,9-11); Allen, Middle Egyptian Literature, p. 207.

<sup>42</sup>Budge, Hieratic Papyri, p. 11, 42: Column.iv. N.10-11.

<sup>43</sup>Budge, Hieratic Papyri, p. 11, 42: Column.iv. N.12-14.

<sup>44</sup>Budge, Hieratic Papyri, p. 13, 44:Column. x-xi. N.21, 1-4.

 , “*m iri štm̄t s̄dmt n p̄zy.k t̄tt̄*”, “Do not discourage him who quarrels with you”<sup>45</sup>.

The instructions also drew how impulsive speech, embodying the danger of tongue, hurts the heart:

 , “*mtw.k s̄3w.k r t̄fd̄nw sw š̄3r̄š mdw m d̄rty h̄d̄ jb̄*”, “Watch out not to say it without forethought, the hasty in speech offends (lit. hurts the heart)”<sup>47</sup>.

The Instruction of Amenemapt advised his son to be honest, to keep the secrets, and not to divulge them to anyone:

 , “*m d̄rt jnj.tw r.k m bw r-w̄3 tm h̄3ty jb̄.k jkrw*”, “Hear not the replies of a noble in a house and then report him to another without let not your speech be carried abroad”<sup>49</sup>.

The association of ‘doing’ (*jr*) *m̄3̄t* with one’s social behaviour was also remarkably present in the instructions. A sample of examples suffice. The Instructions of Amenemapt, for example, value justice and equity where one should not favor the rich only because of their wealth. Rather, he should deal fairly with everyone and, in the author’s words, does not meet one only when he wears bright white clothes but he should accept him with his ‘dirty clothes’:

 , “*m d̄rty hr̄.k n s̄3 d̄ww wb̄ht m tw.k b̄c sw ht̄3y*”, “Do incline to an individual wearing bright white clothes, and reject this who is in dirty clothes”<sup>50</sup>.

Also, for the sake of realizing justice among the people, Merikare exhorted his son to show kindness to the poor, not to expel a son from his father’s properties, to take the side of widows and to calm down the mourners and weepers. Therefore, he would gain happiness in the hereafter and respect as well as love of people:

 , “*jr m̄3̄t w̄3h̄.k tp t̄3 sgr rmw m 3jr h̄3rt m n̄š s hr ht̄ jt.f*”,

<sup>45</sup>Budge, *Hieratic Papyri*, p. 17, 49:Column.xxii. N.20.

<sup>46</sup>Lange, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope*, p.62 (XI,20-XII,1).

<sup>47</sup>Simpson, *Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.231; Wilson, J.A., “The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet”, In: *ANET* (1969), p.423.

<sup>48</sup>Lange, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope*, p.117 (XXIV,2-3).

<sup>49</sup>Griffith, F.L., “The Teaching of Amenophis the Son of Kanakht. Papyrus B.M. 10474”, In: *JEA* 12 (1926), p.221; Simpson, *Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.241.

<sup>50</sup>Budge, *Hieratic Papyri*, p. 16, 48: Column.xxi. N.1-2; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* II, p.158.

<sup>51</sup>Golênisheff. W., *Les papyrus hiératiques* 1115, 1116A et 1116B de l’Ermitage impérial à Saint Pétersbourg, St.-Pétersbourg, 1913, p.46-47; Helck, W., *Die Lehre für König Merikare*, *Kleine Agyptische Texte* 5, Wiesbaden , 1977, p.172-173.

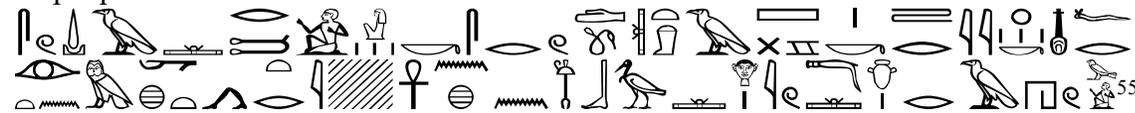
“Do maat, so that you endure on earth, pacify the weeper, do not drive away the widow, do not expel a man from his father’s property”<sup>52</sup>.

Amenemapt also recommended his son to do justice (*m3t*) among the people to gain the respect and appreciation by taking the side of the miserable to save and help them:



“*jr m3t(y) f3y 3 n ntr dj.f sw n mr.f jr t3 phty n p3 nty m mj kd tw.f sw šd j3dt m n3y.f knkn*”, “As for the just man who bears the greatness of god, he renders him as he loves. The strength of him who is in his likeness, it saves the poor wretch from his beating”<sup>54</sup>.

The Teachings of Merikare also instructed that one should respect his employees and common people. Also, he should strive to improve their conditions and provide good work and activities for people in the future so that he would not endure a miserable life:



“*swd3 rmt.k srwd t3š.k phryt.k nfr jrt n m-ht trj ʿnh n wb3-hr jw mh-jb r 3hw*”, “Sustain your people, make your borders and frontier patrols, Strong and good works for the future, respect the power of life for self-satisfaction, while he who trusts fails”<sup>56</sup>.

### II.3: Gossip

Backbiting and gossip were clearly detestable by the ancient Egyptians. The authors of the teachings showed how strongly they refrained from this *faux pas*. Ptahhotep sharply warned his son against this bad manner and commanded him to repeat only things he observed. The instructions confirmed that the instigator will customarily do it out of hate:



“*imi.k whm mskj n mdt n sdm.k sw prw pw n t3 ht whm mdt m3 n sdm*”, “Do not repeat gossip of speech you have not heard: it is a disclosure of hot-bellied(?). Repeat a speech that is seen, not heard”<sup>57</sup>.

Amenemapt also admonished his son to avoid the backbiting of a governor by narrating in the street what he heard secretly inside his house neither to not say everything in his mind when he goes out into the street:

<sup>52</sup>Gardiner, A.H., “New Literary Works from Ancient Egypt”, In: *JEA* I (1914), p.26; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* I, p.100; Parkinson, *Tale of Sinuhe*, p.219; Simpson, *Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.157; Quirke, *Egyptian Literature*, p.114

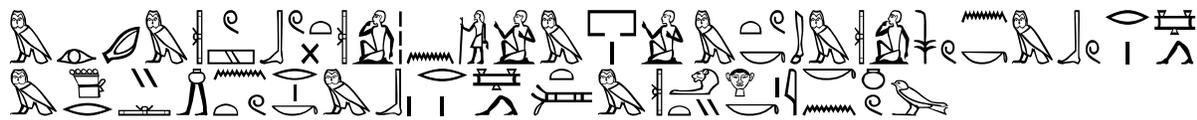
<sup>53</sup>Lange, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope*, p.104 (XXI,5-8).

<sup>54</sup>Griffith, *JEA* 12 (1926), p.218; Simpson, *Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.238.

<sup>55</sup>Golênischeff, *Les papyrus hiératiques*, E.38-39; Helck, *Merikare*, p.170

<sup>56</sup>Gardiner, *JEA* I (1914), p.26; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* I, p.99-100; Foster, J., *Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology*, Texas, 2001, p.194; Parkinson, *Tale of Sinuhe*, p. 219; Simpson, *Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p. 156; Wilson, J.A., “The Instruction for king Meri-Ka-Re”, In: *ANET* (1969), p.415.

<sup>57</sup>Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 198.



“*m jrj sđm wšbwt n wr m pr.j m tw.k whm sw n.k m br m dry jn tw r.k m br tm h3ty.k jknw*”, “Do not listen to the answers of someone great in my house, and then repeat them outside, when you have brought your mouth into the street, so that your heart would not be aggrieved”<sup>58</sup>.

#### II.4: Gaining “Love of people”

To gain respect and love, one was induced to please the hearts of common people and make them happy. The authors of the instructions elaborated on how one can realize love of people (*mri rmt*) and their respect. In his instructions, Amenemapt favored love and respect of common people more than wealth in a storehouse:



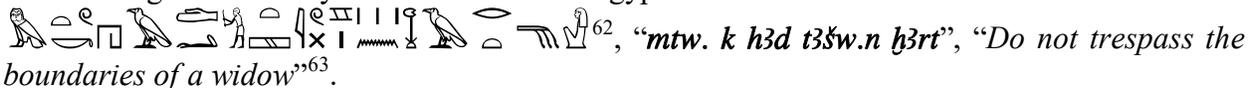
“*3h hsi m mri rmtw r wsr (m) wd3 3h p3wt iw h3ty ib ndm r wsr hr šnn*”, “The praise from the love of the people is better than great wealth (in) a storehouse. Better are bread-cakes with a happy heart, than wealth with hatred”<sup>59</sup>.

Being inseparable from ‘love of people’, forgiveness was a much-praised value. In this respect, in an interesting text, one is urged to consider the poverty and misery of a widow who may take food from the field for herself or for her children. The text advised to forgive the widow and urged for patience whilst listening to her answers:



“*m jr gm h3rt iw hm.k sw m sht mtw.k tm w3h n.k rw šbwt.s*”, “Do not pounce on a widow when you find her in the fields, and then fail to be patient with her reply”<sup>61</sup>.

Amenemapt also warned against looting a widow’s land: a warning one would unsurprisingly find in an agrarian society like that of ancient Egypt:



“*mtw. k h3d t3šw.n h3rt*”, “Do not trespass the boundaries of a widow”<sup>63</sup>.

It was also warned against taking the properties of the poor and the miserable:

<sup>58</sup>Budge, *Hieratic Papyri*, p. 17, 49:Column.xxiii-xxiv. N.22, 1-3.

<sup>59</sup>Budge, *Hieratic Papyri*, p. 15, 46:Column.xvi. N.11-14; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II*, p.156.

<sup>60</sup>Budge, *Hieratic Papyri*, p. 18, 50:Column.xxvi. N.9-10; Lange, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope*, p.129 (XXVI,9-10).

<sup>61</sup>Griffith, *JEA 12* (1926), p. 229; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II*, p. 161.

<sup>62</sup>Lange, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope*, p. 47(VII,15).

<sup>63</sup>Griffith, *JEA 12* (1926), p.204, n.7, 15; Keimer, L., “The Wisdom of Amen-em-ope and the Proverbs of Solomon”, In: *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, Vol. 43, No. 1, 1926, p.15; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II*, p.151.

 <sup>64</sup>, “*s3.tw r hwr j3dt*”, “*Beware of robbing a miserable person (poor)*”<sup>65</sup>.

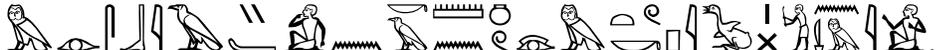
The Instructions of Ptahhotep also explained that whoever insulted a poor man, would be wretched:

 <sup>66</sup>, “*ksn pw hddw hwrw jb*”<sup>67</sup>, “*Wretched is he who injures a humble man*”<sup>68</sup>.

## II.5: Venerating the Elderly and showing respect towards the Disabled

In many instances, the instructions also focused on how one should treat the elderly and the one being afflicted. Children were taught to eat after the adults, regardless of age or status, are done.<sup>69</sup> Reviling the elderly and insulting them were warned against in the Instructions of Amenemapt. Also, laughing at and mocking the blind man, dwarf or lame were detestable behaviors one should refrain from:

 <sup>70</sup>, “*m jrj shwr 3 r.k*”, “*Curse not a man who is greater (older) than you*”<sup>70</sup>.

 <sup>71</sup>, “*m jri sbj3 n k3mnw mtw.k p3 nm*”, “*Do not laugh at (the) blind man, do not laugh at the dwarf*”<sup>71</sup>.

 <sup>72</sup>, “*mtw.k hd shrw n kbkb*”, “*Do not insult (lit. interfere the condition of) the lame*”<sup>73</sup>.

Also in these instructions, young people were discouraged to offend or revile elder people whereas this would be painful before Re:

 <sup>74</sup>, “*mr mt p3 r'c sri iw.f shwr 3*”, “*Very painful before Re, is a youth who insults an older*”<sup>75</sup>.

<sup>64</sup>Lange, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope*, p. 34(IV,4).

<sup>65</sup>Griffith, *JEA 12* (1926), p.199, n.4,4; Lange, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope*, p.36; Keimer, *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, Vol. 43, p.15.

<sup>66</sup>Budge, *Egyptian Reading Book*, p.142, col.6. n.3; Žaba, *Les Maximes de Ptahhotep*, p.23, max.81

<sup>67</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p.77. n.10; Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 174.

<sup>68</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p.64. n.4; Simpson, *Literature of Ancient Egypt*, 1977, p.132, (6, 3).

<sup>69</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II*, p.160.

<sup>70</sup>Budge, *Hieratic Papyri*, p. 17, 50:Column.xxv. N.17.

<sup>71</sup>Budge, *Hieratic Papyri*, p. 17, 49:Column.xxiv. N.9; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II*, p. 160; Simpson, *Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.234, 241.

<sup>72</sup>Budge, *Hieratic Papyri*, p. 17,50: Column.xxiv. N.10, 12; Lange, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope*, p.119 (XXIV, 10,12).

<sup>73</sup>Foster, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, p.223.

<sup>74</sup>Budge, *Hieratic Papyri*, p. 17, 50: Column.xxv-xxvi. N.21-1; Lange, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope*, p.127 (XXV, 21-XXVI, 1).

<sup>75</sup>Griffith, *JEA 12* (1926), p.223; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II*, p.161; Simpson, *Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.242.

It was also advised not to open one's mouth to an elder:

 “*mtw.k t3j r n 3*”, “Do not open your mouth to an elder”<sup>76</sup>.

## II.6: Neighbours' Rights and their Guardianship

The Instructions of Ptahhotep underscored respecting neighbours. While being among one's neighbours, Ptahhotep advised his son to give more attention to them so that he can gain their support and would become a leader and they would gather for him all things he did not know of<sup>77</sup>:

 “*df3.(w) hr.k r h3w.k b{wt}.tw n.k m hmt.n.k*”, “Direct you face (pay attention to) towards your neighbours and they shall collect for you what you have not known of”<sup>78</sup>.

In another maxim, Ptahhotep advised his son not to be greedy with neighbours. A kind man, he adds, had a greater claim than force. The poor is truly he whom his neighbours and relatives abandoned<sup>79</sup>:

 “*m wn jb.k r h3w.k wr tw3 n sfw r nht nd pw prr hr h3w.f*”, “Do not be greedy with neighbours, respect is greater for kindness than force. He who undercuts his neighbours is little”<sup>80</sup>.

## II.7: Friendship

On choosing a friend, Ptahhotep instructed his son to speak to him frequently, accompany him as long as possible, visit him in his house. Like that, the advisee can find out how good the friend's manners are. He also commanded his son to be friendly in disputes and to not respond with hostility. The related text reads:

 “*jr d'r.k kd n hnms m šnn r.k tkn jm.f jr sp hn<sup>c</sup>.f w<sup>c</sup>.w r tmt.k mn hrt.f d3js hn<sup>c</sup>.f m ht h<sup>c</sup>w wšm jb.f m šp n mdt jr pr m3t.n.f m<sup>c</sup>.f jr.f sp špt.k hr.f hnms sw r pw m jtw hr s3k.w m wb3 n.f mdt m wšb*”<sup>81</sup>

<sup>76</sup>Budge, *Hieratic Papyri*, p. 11, 42:Column.iv. N.7; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II*, p. 150.

<sup>77</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 67.n.14.

<sup>78</sup>Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 187-188.

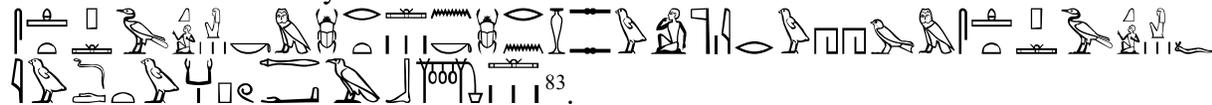
<sup>79</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 69.n.20.

<sup>80</sup>Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 194.

<sup>81</sup>Budge, *Egyptian Reading Book*, p.152; Žaba, *Les Maximes de Ptahhotep*, p.52-53, max.463-466.

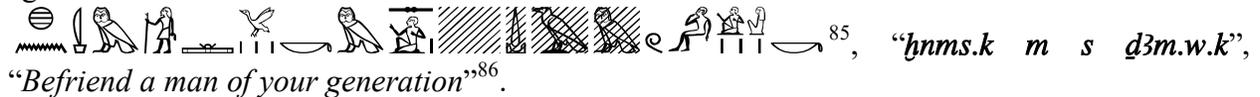
*m sp n sh3 m wj(3) tw r.f m hbw sw nj p3 sp.f tm jw nj wh.n.tw m \$3 sw*”, “If you investigate the character of a friend, do not question, but approach him, deal with him alone, in order to avoid suffering from his manner, argue with him after a time, test his heart in a conversation, when what he has seen comes out of him(?), if he makes a thing that annoys you, be friendly with him, do not attack in explaining the argument to him, be restrained, do not let fly, don’t answer with hostility, neither part from him nor attack him, his time does not once fail to come up, one cannot escape from the one who is fated him”<sup>82</sup>.

Also, Ptahhotep recommended his son to honor and sustain his friends with what he has and all what he was given by gods. The text also mentioned that selfish is the one who fails to provide his friends with what they need:

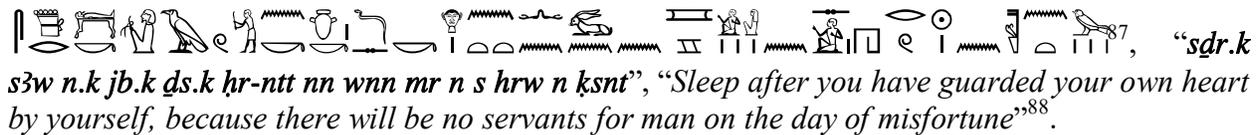


*“shtp kw.k m hprt n.k hpr.(w) n hssw ntr jr whh m shtp kw.f jw dd.tw k3 pw 3b*”, “Satisfy your friends with what you have, that which happened to exist by grace of god, this who fails to satisfy his friends, it is said, a selfish ka”<sup>84</sup>.

In a similar manner, Khety son of Duauf also advised his son to choose his friend of the same age:



Quite the opposite, a warning of potential treason of friends can be made. Corresponding to the dramatic context which resulted in his assassination, Amenemhat I cautioned about friends. Unlike the examples just mentioned, he encouraged his son to be the personal guard for himself, because he would not find his followers in hard times:



## II.8: Counselling the Ruler

Didactic literature also draws on how one should behave when he becomes a leader with his followers and supporters. In the Instructions of Ptahhotep, the advisee, therefore, is encouraged to reinforce his relationship with the public, to always declare his beneficent actions for their

<sup>82</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 72. n.33; Quirke, *Egyptian Literature*, p.97-98 (14,6); Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 209-210.

<sup>83</sup>Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 197.

<sup>84</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 69. n.22.

<sup>85</sup>Jurjens, J., “An Unpublished Manuscript of the Teaching of Khety (P. Turin CGT 54019)”, In: *Rivista del Museo Egizio 5* (2021), p. 120.

<sup>86</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 191; Jurjens, *Rivista del Museo Egizio 5* (2021), p. 121.

<sup>87</sup>Helck, W., *Der Text der Lehre Amenemhets I. für seinen Sohn, Kleine Agyptische Texte 1*, Wiesbaden, 1969, S.21-22.

<sup>88</sup>Parkinson, *Tale of Sinuhe*, p. 206-209; Simpson, *Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p. 168.

sake and to persevere his accomplishments that he is not blamed and his life in their leadership is prolonged:

 , “*jr wnn.k m sšmy hr wd n šhr n š3t h̄h n.k sp nb mn̄h r wnt šhr.k nn jw jm.f*”<sup>89</sup>, “If you are a leader who is upon commanding the affairs of many, seek out every beneficent deed, that your authority with no blame in it”<sup>90</sup>.

 , “*jr wnn.k hn̄c rmt jr n.k mr n kf3-jb kf3-jb jw(j) phr.f dd m ht.f*”<sup>91</sup>, “If you are among people, gain supporters through being trustworthy; one who does not vent the speech of his belly”<sup>92</sup>.

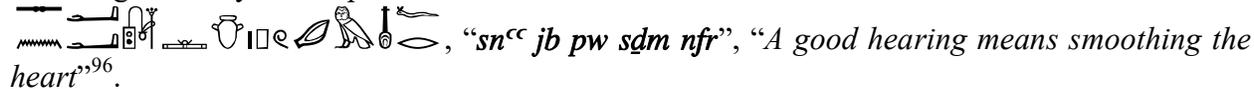
In another text, Ptahhotep advised his son to command his orders to perform his plans and projects and to follow up the progress of these plans personally:

 “*jr wnn.k m sšmy wstn šhrw m wdt.n.k jr r.k hwt trw*”, “If you are a leader, make with the ways how you makes decrees, do things of distinction”<sup>93</sup>.

On communicating with others, Ptahhotep motivated his son to listen carefully to the speech and the petitions of the public, and to let them say whatever they like, and he also assured that good listening softens the heart:

 <sup>94</sup>  
 “*jr wnn.k m sšmy hr sdm.k mdw sprw m gn̄f sw r skt ht.f m k3t.n.f dd.n.k st*”, “If you are a leader, listen quietly to the speech of one who pleads; do not prevent him from wiping away his body of what he had thought to say to you”<sup>95</sup>.

Listening carefully is also praised as it softens the heart:

 , “*sn̄c jb pw sdm nfr*”, “A good hearing means smoothing the heart”<sup>96</sup>.

<sup>89</sup>Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 175.

<sup>90</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 64. n.5.

<sup>91</sup>Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 187.

<sup>92</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 67. n.14.

<sup>93</sup>Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 190.

<sup>94</sup>Budge, *Egyptian Reading Book*, p.147, col.9. n.3-7; Žaba, *Les Maximes de Ptahhotep*, p.36-37, max.264-276.

<sup>95</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 68. n.17; Jacq, *L'Enseignement du Sage Égyptien Ptahhotep*, p. 91-92, max.264-276; Vernus, P., “Le discours politique de l’Enseignement de Ptahhotep”, In: J. Assmann, & E. Blumenthal (éds.), *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten*, BiEtud 127, 1999, p.143, 148; Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 190-191.

<sup>96</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 68. n.17; Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 190-191.

It was also advised to speak calmly and to show kindness even when one gives orders:



“*jr wsr.k dd.k snd.k m rh m hrt dd m wd dp nj js r sšmw jw štm k.f n jw*”, “If you are mighty, you obtain respect through knowledge and through quietness of speaking. Give no commands except for guidance, he who quarrels gets into trouble”<sup>97</sup>.

## II.9: Avoiding the Adultery

Adultery is defined as a consenting sexual relationship between a married individual and someone other than their partner. In ancient Egypt, adultery was a reprehensible crime both at the social and ideological level. For spouses, it was seen a breaking of the rules of and faithfulness fidelity between husband and wife<sup>98</sup>.

On religious level, adultery was envisaged as breaking ancient Egyptian norms. A legal code does not exist in ancient Egypt until the New Kingdom. However, literary texts heavily denounce the shameful practice of adultery. This is mirrored, most notably, in Papyrus Berlin 3033, also known as Westcar Papyrus. Westcar Papyrus narrates some stories that dealt with magic in the past<sup>99</sup>. One of these stories informs us that a priest suspected his wife’s behavior. When he found out that she was adulterous, he decided to take revenge. The story ends up showing the gruesome fate the adulterous wife and her partner where she was burnt, and he was devoured by a crocodile<sup>100</sup>.

In the Two Brothers’ Tale, “D’Orbiney BM 10183, shows how the wife of the older brother attempted at seducing the younger brother. The wife was also killed because of her bad deed according to this tale<sup>101</sup>.

Apart from literary texts, some papyri attest committing adultery. For example, in Papyrus Turin 1887, it is recorded that a priest of the Elephantine temple was accused of committing adultery with the wife of a fisherman called Djehutyemheb:



“(sm)jt r p3 nk jjr.f (r) ‘nh(t) nw niwt Mwt nmh s3t P3 shty iw.s m hmt di h’w dhwtj (m) hb s3 Pn t3 wr”, “An accusation that he copulated with Mwt nmh daughter of P3 shty, she is the wife of a fisherman called Dhwtj (m) hb, the son of Pn t3 wr”<sup>103</sup>.

<sup>97</sup>Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 70. n.25; Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 200-201.

<sup>98</sup>عبدالرحمن صدقي، القانون الجنائي عند الفراعنة، الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب، القاهرة، 1986، ص. 44.

<sup>99</sup>Parkinson, R.B., “Papyrus Westcar”, In: D.B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt III* (2001), p.24-25.

<sup>100</sup>Parkinson, *Tale of Sinuhe*, p.102-105; Eyre, C., “Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt”, In: *JEA* 70.(1984), p.92-105.

<sup>101</sup>Hollis, T., “Two Brothers”, In: D.B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt III* (2001), p.461-462.

<sup>102</sup>Gardiner, A.H., *Rameside Administrative Documents*, Griffith Institute, Oxford, 1948, p.74. Rt.1.5.

<sup>103</sup>إبراهيم على إبراهيم، صور الظلم ووسائل مجابهته في مصر القديمة، رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة، كلية الآثار، جامعة القاهرة، 2007، ص. 82.

Also, the foreman of the works on the royal tomb in the Kings Valley Paneb was accused, among other accusations including theft and bribery, to have “copulated with the citizeness (*ḥnh m niwt*) Tuy, she being wife of the workman Qenna. He copulated with Hul, she being with Pendau. He copulated with Hul, she being with Hesysunebef, so said his son. And when he copulated with Hul he copulated with Webkhet, her daughter. And Aapehty, his son, copulated with Webkhet as well”<sup>104</sup>.

The text goes further to show that Paneb was also accused of stripping a woman called Yaye-Waw, throwing her over a wall and violating her<sup>105</sup>:



“*Y3y3mw 3w m p3y.st ḥbs mtw.f ḥw3w.st ḥr d3d3 n p3 jnb m tw.f d3yt.st*”, “accusing of stripping a woman *Y3y3mw* of her clothes, throwing her over a wall, and raping her”<sup>106</sup>.

It does not come as a surprise therefore that a wide range of wisdom texts have tackled the shameful deed of adultery<sup>107</sup>. The teachings warn to keep away from the adultery, because it is an ephemeral pleasure that leads to death of man. Beyond, a warning was made against getting close to women (perhaps because this is often considered as a precedent of committing adultery)



“*jr mr.k sw3ḥ ḥnms m ḥnw ḳ.k r.f m nb m sn m ḥnms r pw r bw nb ḳ.k jm ḥ3.t(j) m tkn m ḥjmw t nj nfr.n bw jrrw st jm n spd.n ḥr ḥr ph3 st jw ngb.tw s(j) 1000 r 3ḥt n.f 3t ktt mjtt rswt jw ph.tw m(w)t ḥr rh st*”, “If you love to make friendship endure in a home which you get in, as lord, as brother, or as friend to any place in which you enter, resist getting near women: it is not a good place that in which they are, he is not welcome he who intrudes on it, a thousand men are

<sup>104</sup> The English translation here is after Eyre, *JEA* 70 (1984), p.94.

<sup>105</sup> Černý, J., “Papyrus Salt 124 (Brit. Mus. 10055)”, In: *JEA* 15 (1929), pl.xliii, p. 243-258.

<sup>106</sup> إبراهيم على ابراهيم، صور الظلم ووسائل مجابهته في مصر القديمة، ص. 82.

<sup>107</sup> Faur, A., *Le mariage en Judée & en Egypte. Analogie des deux institutions*, Université de Paris. Faculté de théologie protestante, 1897, p. 72-73; Capart, J., *Esquisse d'une histoire du droit pénal égyptien*. Extrait de la Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles, Verlag: Bruxelles, Lefèvre, 1900, p.15; Breasted, J.H., *Histoire de l'Égypte. Tomes I*, Bruxelles, 1926, p.86, 176; Pirenne, J., *Histoire des l' ancienne Égypte*, Bruxelles, 1932, p.73; Frédéric, B., “La peine de mort dans l'Égypte ptolémaïque”, In: *Revue Internationale des Droits de l'Antiquité* 3. ° série, 22 (1975), p. 143-175.

*diverted from what is beneficial for them: a short moment, in the likeness of a dream; death comes because of experiencing it*<sup>108</sup>.

These texts elaborated on, one hand, strengthening of relationships between society members, and, on the other, valued staying away from women and not to look at them when visiting homes, whether inside the houses of brothers, friends, or others, because the place in which women are alone with men is full of agitation. The text additionally focuses on the fact that a beautiful body will eventually dwindle, and the desire for it is short moment that will pass like a dream then death will come at the end, and one will regret it. Thus, the great value of respecting the homes, preserving their reputation, and taking care of their close ties would lead to the love among the members of the same community.<sup>109</sup>

### III: Conclusion

The selection of the texts above mirrors Egyptian values and manners in a *longue durée*. As shown above, Egyptian wisdom texts were loaded with moral values and instructions which tackled nearly all aspects of social life. Due attention was given to raising siblings with manners. This was instructed by the authors, usually fathers, in the form of *dos* and *don'ts*.

Henceforward, the advisees were taught chastity and self-restraint when eating food, abstinence rather than eating greedily nor showing an excessive desire to eat and drink, not to look at the food of others, to be silent while eating, not to criticize food, not to look to the belongings of the poor nor get their food, not to be greedy in the division toward the relatives, and, finally, not to covet the possessions of a noble's wealth.

This paper also evinced the ethics Egyptians adhered when dealing with people and which, if truly followed, makes one gain 'love of people' in author's terms. To do so, it was advised to show kindness towards people and to never oppose high officials and supervisors. Showing respect and dealing kindly with common and weak people was inextricable from respect shown towards superiors and elder people. A widow, her children, and her belongings were the subject of frequent instructions where one should listen carefully to her answers and retain the boundaries of her. Likewise, considering people with either disabilities or deformities were remarkable among Egyptian teachings. Thus, no old man would be offended, no blind man would be mocked, and no dwarf would be laughed at.

The instructions also sinister the consequences of spoken words, or harmful eye looks. It is therefore advised that one should guard against his tongue, or the many glances "shot" (*stw*) against someone else. Equally important, one had to keep secrets of the houses he entered and should never divulge them to others. Also corresponding to the theme of verbal misbehaviors,

<sup>108</sup>Zaba, *Les maximes de Ptahhotep*, p. 5; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, p. 68. n.18; Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature*, p. 191-192;

فرانسوا دوما، *حضارة مصر الفرعونية*، ترجمة: ماهر جويجاتي، المجلس الأعلى للثقافة، 1998، ص.537: سوزان عباس عبد اللطيف، " المرأة في الشرق القديم"، في: *موسوعة الثقافة التاريخية والأثرية والحضارية (التاريخ القديم)*، المجلد الرابع: ملامح من حضارات بلاد الشام والجزيرة العربية، دار الفكر العربي، القاهرة، 2008، ص.16: محمد بيومي مهران، *الحضارة المصرية القديمة*، الجزء الأول، الآداب والعلوم، دار المعرفة الجامعية، الإسكندرية، 1989، ص.241: سليم حسن، *مصر القديمة*، الجزء السابع عشر، ص. 183؛ محرم كمال، *الحكم والأمثال والنصائح عند المصريين القدماء*، ص. 35.

<sup>109</sup>شعبان السنودي، *آداب زيارة البيوت في مصر الفرعونية*، ص.790-806.

gossip (*mskj n mdt*) was an abomination of the authors of wisdom texts in ancient Egypt. One is, therefore, advised not to repeat it (*whm*). Only tangible things one sees, rather than rumors, should be believed.

On friendship level, it was advised not to rush to befriend people until the advisee, as instructed, found out they are good enough to be befriended. Therefore, it is advisable to visit people in their houses, to accompany them and to listen to what they say and how they bring up their sons.

In wisdom texts, literary works and religious literature, adultery was a sin one is eagerly cautioned about. It was advisable, therefore, to stay away from any place in which women were.

Altogether, these instructions represent a plethora of ethics and manners attested in ancient Egypt thousands of years ago. An individual is instructed to follow these maxims to lead a life that corresponds to *maat*.

Table 1: Frequencies of terms associated with social behaviors in Wisdom Texts and, where possible, the personal trait associated with the term.

Text	Period	Papyri (Example)	Terms related to social behaviour		A personal trait associated with the term in the text	Lexicographical reference
Ptahhotep	Fifth Dynasty	Papyrus Prisse 183-194 of the Bibliotheque Nationale	ϵwn-ib	Greed ( <i>Passim</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>hs</i> ‘weak’</li> <li>- <i>nn wn js (n) ϵwn jb</i> there will be no tomb for the greedy.</li> <li>- <i>h3t (mrt)</i> Painful disease</li> </ul>	<i>Wb</i> I, 172.12-13
			<i>hnt</i>	To be covetous		<i>Wb</i> III, 121.12-13.
			<i>msd t mrr.k</i>	Avoid the bread you love		<i>CDME</i> 118
			<i>3f</i>	Gluttony		<i>Wb</i> I, 9.17
			<i>wdt jm.f</i>	Pestering someone		<i>CDME</i> 72
			ϵnϵy.f hr.s	Complain (about food)	<i>hm</i> ‘fool’	<i>Wb</i> I, 191.9
			<i>3d-jb.k</i>	Anger your heart		<i>CDME</i> 7
			<i>shdnw jb</i>	To annoy the heart		<i>CDME</i> 239

		<i>hms s3.k</i>	To <b>bow</b> your back		<i>Wb</i> III, 367.1-4.
		<i>whm mskj n mdt</i>	To repeat the <b>gossip</b>		<i>CDME</i> 234
		<i>shtp ʿkw</i>	<b>Sustain</b> friends.	<i>k3 pw ʿ3b</i> <b>‘Selfish Ka’</b>	<i>Wb</i> IV, 221.10-222.20
		<i>hr sdm.k mdw sprw m gnf</i>	You <b>quietly</b> listen to the words of the one who pleads.		<i>CDME</i> 159
		<i>sdm nfr</i>	Good hearing		
		<i>m stw sw m gmh ʿš3</i>	Do not <b>shoot</b> him with many glances.		<i>Wb</i> IV, 326.1-327.14
		<i>nhm tw m-ʿ dwt</i>	Be free from evil.		<i>Wb</i> II, 295.12-297.4
		<i>ʿh3 tw hr sp n ʿwn jb</i>	<b>Fight</b> against the vice of greed.		
		<i>hms s3.k</i>	Bend your back (in respect)		<i>CDME</i> , 201.

			<i>hddw</i>	Injure (verbally)	<i>ksn</i> “wretched”	<i>Wb</i> III, 212-213.
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Text	Period	Papyri	Terms related to social behaviour		A personal trait associated with the term in the text	Lexicographical reference
Kagemni	Sixth Dynasty (?)	Papyrus Prisse	<i>msd t</i>	Avoid bread	<i>šww m srh n t</i> ‘free from the accusation of bread’	CDME 118
			<i>ʒf</i>	Gluttony		

Text	Period	Papyri	Terms related to social behaviour		A personal trait associated with the term in the text	Lexicographical reference
Merikare	Ninth or Tenth Dynasty	- Leningrad 1116A - Moscow 4658	<i>swd3 rmt.k</i>	Sustain your people		CDME 218
			<i>jr m3t</i> <i>sgr rmw m ʒjr</i> <i>h3rt m nš s hr</i>	Do justice.		

		- Carlsberg N.6	<i>ḥt jt.f</i>			
			<i>sgr</i>	Do Calm		<i>CDME 252</i>
			<i>nš</i>	To Expel		<i>Wb II, 337.12</i>
			<i>ʒjr</i>	Oppress		<i>Wb I, 11.9-16</i>

<b>Text</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Papyri</b>	<b>Terms related to social behaviour</b>	<b>A personal trait associated with the term in the text</b>	<b>Lexicographical reference</b>
<b>Khety son of Duauf</b>	New Kingdom	Sallier II, Anastasi XII and Chester Beatty XIX in British Museum and Amherst Papyrus of Pierpont Morgan Library, on two wooden	<i>ḥnms</i>	Befriend	<i>CDME 193</i>

		tablets in Louvre and 98 Ostraca from the Ramesside Period.			
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Text	Period	Papyri	Terms related to social behaviour		A personal trait associated with the term in the text	Lexicographical reference	
Amenemapt	New Kingdom		<i>snk</i>	Covet		CDME 251	
			<i>jrj 3fy</i>	To do covet (Attested three times)		Wb 1, 9.17	
			<i>hwr<sup>c</sup> hwr</i>	Theft / rob		Wb III, 56.8-13	
			<i>mdw m drty</i>	To speak impulsively		Dictionary of Late Egyptian, 273	
			<i>bg3i</i>	To rant		CDME 79	
			<i>swd3 nst</i>	To guard the tongue		CDME 218	

			<i>h3d t3šw</i>	To <b>encroach</b> boundaries		<i>Wb V, 234.15-236.14</i>
			<i>shwr</i>	Curse		<i>Wb I, 252.12</i>
			<i>jri sbj3 n</i>	Laugh at		
			<i>sHwr aA</i>	<i>Reviling someone elder</i>		<i>Wb IV, 213.4-6</i>
			<i>šmt</i>	<i>to be quarrelsome (note the similarity between this word and شتم i.e., to swear in Arabic)</i>		<i>Wb IV, 557.12-14.</i>
			<i>hwr j3dt</i>	<i>Robbing a wretch</i>		<i>Wb III, 56.8-13</i>
			<i>m jri sbj3 n k3mnw mtw.k p3 nm</i>	<i>Do not laugh at (the) blind man, do not laugh at the dwarf</i>		<i>CDME 221</i>

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#### السياق التهديبي للنصوص الأدبية بعض الملاحظات حول السلوك الإجتماعي كقيمة إنسانية في مصر القديمة

##### المستخلص

تستكشف هذه الورقة البحثية بعض السلوكيات الإجتماعية التي تعكس جوهر الحياة الإجتماعية للمصريين القدماء من خلال مجموعة مختارة من الأمثلة المقدمة من مجموعة منفصلة من الوثائق، والمعروفة بلسم الحكم، أو الأدب التعليمي، معاً، سنزودنا هذه الأمثلة بالأدلة التي تشرح السلوكيات الإجتماعية للمصريين القدماء، وتتناول هذه الدراسة نصوصاً مختلفة تشرح بعض الأخلاق الحميدة والسيئة الموجهة للأطفال. الهدف الرئيسي هو توضيح طريقة التفكير والسلوكيات الإجتماعية وأثرها في الحياة في مصر القديمة، وهذا وقد تم تناول بعض الأخلاق التي تمت مناقشتها في هذه الورقة البحثية كالتالي: حسن المعاملة الأخلاقية للناس، تجنب الشراهة والإفراط في الأكل والجشع، القيل والقال، كسب إحترام الجمهور، تبجيل كبار السن وذوي الإعاقة، حقوق الجيران والوصاية عليهم، الصداقة، نصح الحاكم وإجتنب الزنا ومخالطة النساء. وبعد التدقيق في النصوص في نطاق هذه الدراسة، من الواضح أنه يمكن بناء شخصية "جيدة" أو "سيئة" للإنسان من قبل السلوكيات المذكورة في هذه النصوص.

**الكلمات الدالة:** الأخلاق، تعليمي، سلوك، أدب، كاجمني، بتاح حناب، ميريكار، ختي بن دواف، أني، أمنمايت.