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Author
Di Biase - Dyson, Camilla

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UCLA ENCYCLOPEDIA of EGYPTOLOGY

METAPHOR

الإستعارة

Camilla Di Biase-Dyson

Version 2

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METAPHOR

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Camilla Di Biase-Dyson

Metapher
Métaphore

Metaphors are tropes driven by similarity relations that appear in texts, script, images, and even objects from ancient Egypt. When tracing the disciplinary and thematic development of metaphor studies in Egyptology, what can be seen is a change from a typological perspective, which sought to categorize both motifs and metaphor types, to a cognitive perspective, which was more interested in the processes behind the linguistic phenomena. Recently, there has also been increased interest in the development of metaphors in textual and multimodal perspective, and in the usage of metaphors across various media.

الاستعارات هي "صور بلاغية" (أشكال من التعبير المجازي) تستند إلى علاقات التشابه. تظهر في النصوص، والمخطوطات، والصور، وحتى في الأشياء المادية (القطع الأثرية) من مصر القديمة. عند تتبع تطور دراسة الاستعارة في علم المصريات، نلاحظ تحولاً من منظور تصنيفي يهدف إلى تصنيف كل من الرموز وأنواع الاستعارات، إلى منظور إدراكي يركز على العمليات الكامنة وراء الظواهر اللغوية. في الآونة الأخيرة، زاد الاهتمام بتطور الاستعارات من منظور نصي و"متعدد الوسائط"، وكذلك في استخدام الاستعارات عبر مختلف الوسائط.

Metaphor is a trope, found both in linguistic and visual domains (including images and script), that establishes relations of similarity via comparison between two entities (Goatly 2011: 16), for instance, between a king and a wild animal. Metaphors are used for aesthetic and rhetorical purposes (Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1457b; Fyfe, ed. 1932) although, as Aristotle himself pointed out, metaphorical language is also a pervasive feature of natural discourse (*Rhetoric*, 3.2.6; Freese, ed. 1926). Via metaphor one can "speak of something as though it were another" (Richards 1936: 116) by comparing a *topic* (what is being talked about) to a *vehicle* (how the topic is being talked about), based on common characteristics, the *ground* (Richards 1936: 99, 117-118).

The relation between topic and vehicle can be seen as scalar in terms of its degree of *conventionality*. In other words, a metaphor may be entirely fossilized, where the basic meaning might not be accessible to the user, like ***pr*(*j*)**, usually "to emerge" in the usage "unpolished, untreated": ***ẖn pr*(*j*)** 4 "4 untreated animal skins" (pMallet = Louvre E 11006, 1.4; Maspero 1877: 47). This meaning may have come from an earlier usage "as has emerged from the quarry" (*WB* I 524.7-8, see Erman and Grapow 1926-1963). A metaphor may alternatively be highly conventional, like the "path of life" to refer to life choices (*WB* II 41.15), or potentially novel, like ***jn*(*j*) *pꜣ jḥ*** "Bring the ox!" to refer to inviting a person to one's house (oDeM 303, 4; Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions III*: 534.11). A metaphor can also be defined at the conceptual level according to its

degree of *aptness*, i.e., the degree to which the figurative meaning describes a relevant feature of the thing being described (Jones and Estes 2006: 19).

Metaphor can be identified at the linguistic level via various parts of speech, including names (e.g., Morenz 2004: 46, 79, 86), titles, and epithets (e.g., Blumenthal 1970; Naguib 1992; Franke 1998; Morenz 2004: 119; Windus-Staginsky 2006). At the linguistic level, we can furthermore differentiate a metaphor (an "indirect metaphor" in Steen et al. 2010: 32-33) from a simile (a "direct metaphor"). With simile, the noun or verb is directly likened to another thing or action via a construction with "like" or similar. In Egyptian this role is usually performed by ***mj*** "like," although there also seems to have been an intermediate category between similes and metaphors, comprising metaphors formed with the "identificational" use of the preposition ***m*** "as" (Gillen 2009: 183), which mark the vehicle more than other metaphors. Although truly metaphorical phrases can be phrased in this way, this form is mostly used for non-metaphorical statements in rhetorical-religious texts such as ***šms=j sw m Ḥr-rsj*** "I will follow him as the Southern Horus" (Stela of Amenemhet, Cairo CG 20040, x+6; Lange and Schäfer 1902: 50). The same can be said for the many non-metaphorical cases of ***mj***, like ***jw smn.n(=j) ẖm.n(=j) {j}mj rḫ.n(=j)*** "(I) established the one unknown (to me) like the one known (to me)" (Stela of Djari, Brussels E 4985; Landgráfová 2011: 7).

Lastly, metaphor is to be distinguished from metonymy (including meronymy or synechdoche, namely, PART FOR WHOLE relations), which establishes a relationship not of similarity but of *contiguity* between two connected elements of a *single* domain, like CAUSE FOR EFFECT (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 19). This trope is common to Egyptian linguistic and visual culture (Guglielmi 1986a: 30; Werning 2014), but is not dealt with in detail here. Here and below conceptual methaphors, images, schemas, and metonymic relations are represented in SMALL CAPITALS.

Metaphor is not just a linguistic (or visual) expression: it can also be seen as a communicative phenomenon, something that can in effect occur completely unconsciously but that can, even if the metaphor is entirely conventional, have attention drawn to it (Steen 2008: 224 calls this *deliberateness*; for reactions to this see Gibbs, ed. 2011 and Müller 2011, and for an Egyptological perspective, Di Biase-Dyson 2020).

Lastly, metaphor can be seen as a cognitive process, based on the human propensity to think in concepts. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) posits that not only linguistic entities (topics and vehicles), but also the *conceptual domains* from which they derive, are being compared (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Conceptual domains are regarded as the conceptual structures that represent the coherent organization of experience (Kövecses 2002: 4). By way of example, the Egyptian linguistic metaphor ***mj.t n ꜥnḫ*** "path of life" (*Amenemope* L = pBM EA 10474, 1.7; Laisney 2007: 325) might have its origin in the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY,[1] based on a similarity relation between paths (the *source domain*) and life progression (the *target domain*).

However, research has matured beyond Lakoff and Johnson to question the literal attribution of language structures to thought structures (McGlone 2007: 115). Today, many scholars acknowledge that it is more likely that "conceptual metaphors underlie the cognitive process by which we *interpret* figurative language" (McGlone 2007: 116; based on Gibbs 1994, italics mine).

Such challenges notwithstanding, this "weak" version of the theory, as McGlone puts it, is fairly robust, being supported by both creative uses of metaphorical language (such as building on specific motifs throughout a text), as well as converging and cross-linguistic

evidence. Converging evidence can be derived from psychological research and can be seen, for instance, in slowed processing speed when linguistic and conceptual metaphors are scrambled (Gentner et al. 2002). It can also be noted in metaphors appearing simultaneously in different modes of communication, like spoken language and sign or gesture (Müller 2008). Cross-linguistic and cross-cultural research involves finding the same kinds of conceptual metaphors in a wide range of cultures (Kövecses 2005: 3). This model does not deny that some metaphors are culture-specific (cf. Haikal 1994: 207), nor does it imply that the conceptual metaphors manifest linguistically in the same way. For instance, an Egyptian version of a culturally well-represented conceptual metaphor ANGER IS A HOT SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER (Kövecses 2005: 68), *tꜣ ḫ.t rkḥ{.t} m ẖ.t=f* "The fire rages in his belly" (*Amenemope* L = pBM EA 10474, 13.7; Laisney 2007: 342), is anchored in a specifically Egyptian complex of metonymically charged body parts: the belly is connected to both the heart and tongue, standing for UNDERSTANDING, and EXPRESSION respectively, both INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION metonymies. It must moreover be recognized that our knowledge of metaphor is undermined by the fact that analysts are external to the cultural system under investigation (Derchain 1976: 7). Although this remark is pertinent for all attempts to appraise ancient cultures, the access to *intended meaning* demanded by the study of metaphor amplifies the problem in this case.

Metaphor Types

Metaphors occur in a wide range of genres in Egyptian texts and are apparent already in the earliest language and iconography (cf. Goldwasser 1992, 1995). They are found in all manner of ways in the language, of which the list below gives a mere sample:

The verb of a sentence can be a metaphor vehicle (in **bold**), as in:
wn<n>=f sḫt m ʿnḫ.yw n ʿḏꜣ . . .
"If he gains (lit. **catches with a net**) on the basis of false oaths . . ." (*Amenemope* L = pBM EA 10474, 7.18; Laisney 2007: 334).

Metaphors can also be nominal, appearing in what are known as "A is B metaphors," wherein the first noun, the topic, is A, and the second noun, the metaphor vehicle, is B:
(j)m(.j)-rʾ-pr-wr nb=j ntk ḥmw n tꜣ r-ḏr=f
"Oh High Steward, my lord! You are the **steering oar** of the entire land!" (*Peasant* B1 = pBerlin 3023, 298; Parkinson 2005: 37).

Some nominal metaphors present only the vehicle, rather than both topic and vehicle, which requires the nature of the metaphor to be deduced from the context. Here the teacher likens a poor student to a piece of wood too bent to be of any particular use:
pꜣ ḫt gwš ḫꜣʿ m sḫ.t
"The **crooked wood** is left abandoned in the field" (*Ani* B = pBoulaq 4 r., 23.13; Quack 1994: 337).

Metaphors can also be adjectival, as we see, for instance, in metaphors for temperature that express emotional states (Di Biase-Dyson 2018):
ḳb rʾ hrw ṯz.w
"calm (lit. **cool**) of speech and comforting of words" (stela of Ibi, Cairo JE 46200, 7, in Kubisch 2008: 235-236).

Another striking figurative phenomenon, closely tied to metaphoricity, is personification. Here the ground on which the stolen goods have been placed becomes animate and disposes of the contraband:
wn pꜣ jwdn rʾ=f ʿḳ(ꜣ)=f sw ʿm=f <s>w
"The **ground opens its mouth** and it levels it and it swallows it up" (*Amenemope* L 9.20; Laisney 2007: 336).

Metaphors "marked" with the *m* of identification form a category somewhere between simile and metaphor, as discussed above. Here an aspect of Thoth (in his manifestation as a baboon) is described:
jw pꜣy=f jb m tḫ
"His heart/understanding is **the plummet** (of the scales)" (*Amenemope* L 18.1; Laisney 2007: 348).

A simile (direct metaphor) creates an even more direct comparison, which can be further reinforced by other paralinguistic elements. In this case, we see a nominal simile (A is like B), followed by a clarifying subordinate clause:

mnmn.t=s mj šʿy n wḏb.w km=sn ḥḥ.w
"Its [the temple's] cattle are **like riverbank sand**: they number in the millions" (Stela of the construction program of Amenhotep III, CG 34025 = JE 31408, 7-8; Helck, ed.: *Urk. IV*: 1649.14-15).

This use of clarification is particularly important in similes, which can otherwise be completely obscure due to a lack of cultural context:
tw=k ḫpr mj wnb
"You have become **like a wnb-plant** [?]" (*Menena* = oChicago OIC 12074 + oIFAO Inv. 2188, v. 12-13; Guglielmi 1983: 149).

Nominal similes can also appear in verbal constructions to highlight the nature of the action:
ḫbꜣ.n=f sj m ꜣ.t šr(j).t mj mꜣj ḥzꜣ
"He [Amenhotep II] destroyed it instantly **like a wild lion**" (Memphis Stela of Amenhotep II, JE 86763, 4; Helck, ed.: *Urk. IV*: 1302.2).

Although ***mj*** is often used to directly precede verbs, as well as nouns, as in the case of ***mj wbn Rʿ***(*w*) "as when Ra shines" (Year 23 Inscription of Thutmose III at Wadi Halfa; Sethe, ed.: *Urk. IV*: 806.15), the results are, as mentioned above in relation to the Stela of Djari, seldom metaphorical (see Peust 2006). Nevertheless a poignant metaphorical example, with ***mj*** preceding an infinitive of the verb ***pr***(*j*)*,* describes the will of the *Lebensmüder* to end his life:
jw m(w)t m ḥr=j {m} mjn <mj> snb mḥr mj prj.t r-ḫnt r-sꜣ jhm.t
"Death is before me today **<like> the healing of a sick person, like going outside after (a period of) suffering**" (*Lebensmüder* = pBerlin 3024, 130-131; Allen 2010: 303).

Extended, text-based metaphorical phenomena are also prevalent in Egyptian literary texts, particularly in scribal encomia, wisdom texts, and love poetry—all rhetorically charged genres. We can measure metaphors across texts via the repetition of lexemes, as well as via the introduction of lexemes within the same semantic field in the course of a text. We see this, for instance, in *The "Teachings" of Menena*, whereby Menena admonishes his son Pai-iri by drawing on different path-based metaphors that serve to emphasise how his son has gone astray, figuratively speaking. In this way, the conventional metaphor of the "path of life," key to wisdom texts (see Di Biase-Dyson 2016b), becomes reactivated and brilliantly exploited for rhetorical purposes.

Menena starts by asserting to his son that he knows all too well where temptation, personified here by the underworld being "Fierce of Face," is to be found:
mtr=j r mṯn nb ntj nḥꜣ-ḥr m šfn
"I am informed/I have advised about every **path** (on) which Fierce of Face is in the undergrowth" (*Menena*, r. 2-3; Guglielmi 1983: 148).

It is followed by another path metaphor relating to Pai-iri's errant movements:
šm=k{w} jw nn n=k {tjwt} <ṯbw> tm sr.t nb.t jn(j)=k
"You have gone off without **sandals** (because) no **thorn** has (yet) brought you back" (*Menena*, r. 3; Guglielmi 1983: 148).

Although the text then expands into water-themed metaphors to emphasise Pai-iri's deviancy, the father nevertheless re-employs his earlier metaphor of the thorn (which stands for the father's intervention) later in the text, though he masterfully demonstrates that in this new, nautical domain, the metaphor is no longer apt:
ptr jn(j)=j sr.t n mḥ 1 ḥr mṯ<n> tꜣḥ mn ʿ n sḫ=s
"Look, I have brought a **thorn** a cubit long onto the submerged **path**, but there is no way of beating it in" (*Menena*, v. 5-7; Guglielmi 1983: 149).

Identifying Metaphors

Until very recently in Egyptology there seemed to be a tacit acknowledgement that a "transfer" of one thing to something else (based on Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1457b; Fyfe, ed. 1932) was something so commonly recognizable that there would be no need to be more explicit about the means by which metaphors are identified. This may in some cases be so, but when a metaphor is contentious, when the meaning is unclear, as is often the case, it is

wise to employ a replicable methodological framework.

A step forward in this direction was provided by Renata Landgráfová (2008), who, in order to identify metaphorical language in the love poems of the Egyptian New Kingdom, implemented a framework from pragmatics, specifically the "Cooperative Principles" of the language philosopher Paul Grice (1991: 28-30), which outline the conditions under which discourse is maximally comprehensible (quality, quantity, relation, and manner). When one of the communicative maxims is breached, a communicative implicature (i.e., a non-overt meaning, like metaphor) becomes involved. Thus, in the context of the erotic, the "house" of a woman can come to refer to her body (cf. Landgráfová 2008; Vinson 2016).

To date, the most explicit approach to metaphor identification has come from Di Biase-Dyson (2016 a; 2017; 2018; also Richardson 2023), whose implementation of MIPVU (Metaphor Identification Procedure VU Amsterdam, for which see Steen 2007: 9, 89; Steen et al. 2010) draws on corpus-based dictionaries to identify basic and contextual senses of lexemes. In this procedure, a metaphor can be identified when the contextual sense differs from the basic sense. Moreover, a *conventional* metaphor can be identified when that contextual sense is present in the lexicon in the time period of the text. This may also be of use in finding metaphors that have become fossilized, by allowing for some kind of etymological reconstruction (Müller 2008: 11).

In this way, one can firstly consider the degree of metaphoricity of a lexeme and secondly make judgments about the metaphor's conventionality. Metaphors range from conventional, e.g., ***jt*(*j*) *n*(.*j*) *nmḥ*(.*w*)** "father of the orphan" (*Peasant* B1 93; Parkinson 2005: 18), to potentially novel, e.g., ***kꜣn.y n*(.*j*) *bw-ḥwr.w*** "gardiner of meanness" (*Peasant* B1 294; Parkinson 2005: 37). As has been emphasized, the dictionary is key to ascertaining conventionality, but this being said, such analysis must be cross-checked with the corpus. For example, when the apparently figurative meaning of ***kꜣn.y*** "gardiner" in the dictionary (*WB* V 107.9) is cross-checked in the dictionary's source base (*Belegstellen,* in Erman and Grapow 1926-1963) and subsequently also in the digital corpora, the [*Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*]() (including the [*Digitalisiertes Zettelarchiv*]()), the metaphorical meaning is revealed to be attested in only this case. This not uncommon occurrence underscores not only the necessity for a corpus perspective in metaphor research, but also advocates a *scalar* approach to metaphoricity: things need not be classified as "metaphorical" or "not metaphorical," but rather as "more" or "less" metaphorical, as well as "more" or "less" conventional (cf. also Nyord 2017). A data collection and annotation procedure specifically for myth-based metaphors has also been proposed by Katja Goebs (2023).

Egyptological Approaches to Metaphor

Although one can trace a sustained engagement with metaphor in Egyptological research in the last century, it is significant that little attempt has been made to define and describe metaphor as a phenomenon. Beyond preliminary movements towards categorization, in general little explicit discourse has been conducted as to what constitutes a metaphor. Moreover, it is hard to identify specific strains of research into metaphor, given not only the hybridity of approaches adopted by scholars but also the reality that metaphor is multidimensional, occurring at many levels of text, script and image (e.g., Goldwasser 1995; Angenot 2011; Goldwasser and Grinevald 2012; Chantrain and Di Biase-Dyson 2018; Thuault 2020).

Motif-based approaches to metaphor

The most important early studies of metaphor were focused on collecting and grouping significant metaphorical cases across a range of text types, without an explicit research program to develop a means of identifying or investigating metaphorical language. Hermann Grapow contended that two factors determine the type of metaphor employed: the existence of sufficient common ground between the things being equated and the intentions of the producer (1983: 10). As his focus was

exclusively on a typology of what we would now call "metaphor vehicles" or "source domains" (ibid.: 4), he placed little importance on the kind of metaphorical language used, whether simile or metaphor, as was pointed out by Waltraud Guglielmi (1986b: 986). In fact, Grapow (1983: 3) himself argued that the difference between simile and metaphor is "*an sich gering und mehr formaler als inhaltlicher Art*." However, the ongoing empirical research by the current author, which considers the semantic environment of similes and metaphors, suggests that only *conventional* metaphor vehicles can appear interchangeably as either a simile or a metaphor, depending on the syntax. For instance, the metaphor is used for the king's epithet ***mꜣj ḥzꜣ*** "the wild lion" (Karnak hypostyle of Seti I: Hittite Campaign, W side of N wall, 12; Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions I*, 17.16), but following a verb or an adverbial predicate the simile is usual: ***jw ḥm=f m-sꜣ=sn mj mꜣj ḥzꜣ*** "his majesty was after them like a wild lion" (Ramesseum: Battle of Kadesh relief inscription = R2, W wall of 2nd court, 17; Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions II*, 135.13-15). Where the metaphor is neither conventional nor apt at the conceptual level—in other words, neither well known nor easily comprehensible (Jones and Estes 2006: 19)—similes are employed. We see this, for instance, in the evocative and creative metaphorical language of the love poems: ***pꜣ nḏm m r'=j sw mj sḫ.w n ꜣpd.w*** "the sweetness in my mouth [i.e., of wine], it is like the bile of birds" (Song 12 of pHarris 500, ro 5.2; Mathieu 2008: pl. 12). This is very likely because similes more distinctly mark a metaphor vehicle at the linguistic level, which in turn makes the listener/reader more actively consider the comparison at the conceptual level (see Steen et al. 2010: 26).

In more recent times, a range of metaphorical motifs (i.e., source domains) have been explored, such as the heart (Brunner 1977), the path (Vittmann 1999; Zehnder 1999; Di Biase-Dyson 2016 a and b), darkness/light (Galán 1999), water (Ogdon 1987; Grimal 1994; Haikal 1994; Moers 2001), sleep (Gerhards 2018, 2021; Apostel 2022) the moon (Altmann-Wendling 2024), and sensory domains (Di Biase-Dyson and Chantrain 2022). Other studies take the opposite perspective, the interrogation of specific target domains, and the motifs they attract, such as death (Hsu 2021) and specific emotions (Köhler 2016; Chantrain 2024).

Metaphor and genre

Other approaches to metaphorical motifs study them in the perspective of a particular genre. For instance, Siegfried Herrmann described a series of connected motifs in the wisdom tradition that represent human behavior: the ship, the scales, the tongue, and the heart (1954: 106-108). The cultural context of the motifs was then considered, such as the weighing of the heart in funerary contexts (1954: 109-112). Such key metaphors in the wisdom corpus in turn influenced literary works, as can be seen in *The Eloquent Peasant* (Parkinson 2012), and provided impetus for motifs in the Ramesside genre of "scribal texts" (Ragazzoli 2010: 159-164; Allon 2013: 110).

Ramesside love poetry has also engendered a range of motif-based studies. Mathieu (2008: 184) identifies 87 comparative structures (metaphors and similes) in the corpus, 69% of which come from the natural world, constituting a link to the theme of fecundity key to this genre (Mathieu 1999: 105-106; 2008: 247). The poetic strategies in this corpus have since then received fairly abundant attention (for which see Landgráfová and Navrátilová 2009; Hsu 2014a; Vinson 2016).

The use of animal imagery in pharaonic monumental texts has also had its share of scholarly attention (for which see, among others, Gillen 2007 and 2009; David 2011; Hsu 2013; Khalafallah Safina 2024). Whereas Gillen considers the features from a discourse-analytical perspective (2009: 183), David (2011) emphasizes the connection between royal iconography and figurative language, and Hsu (2013: 15; 2014b) focuses on the relative distribution of metaphor and simile respective to the king and his enemies. New qualitative research is illustrating that metaphorical density is affected by genre constraints (Di Biase-Dyson fc.), that tests hypotheses about

the distribution of metaphor posted by Hellmut Brunner (1975: 805-808).

Metaphor in its relation to other tropes

An analytical and classificational perspective on metaphor was posited, albeit briefly, by Gerhard Fecht (1970: 37). Following this, Waltraud Guglielmi (1986a: 22-41; also 1996: 465-497) provided an exhaustive typology of ancient Egyptian figurative language for the *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, and in another contribution, considered the construction of similes and their distribution in comparison with metaphor (1986b: 986). Other key works considering metaphor in relation to other tropes are Eberhard Otto, in relation to abstraction (1975: 21), Jürgen Osing on allegory (1977: 618-624), Thomas Schneider (2000) on analogy, Steve Vinson (2014) on metonymy, Borges Pires (2017) on symbolism, and Pascal Vernus (2020) on euphemism.

Metaphor in words (lexicography and lexical semantics)

A preoccupation with the meaning spans of words (a key aim of lexical semantics) has long been prominent in Egyptological lexicography, visible, for instance, in the detailed entries of the *Wörterbuch der aegyptischen Sprache*. Though not always explicity tied to metaphor, the role of abstraction in polysemy is an additional long-standing concern in Egyptian lexicographical work (cf. Westendorf 1973).

More recent metaphorically based approaches to the lexicon include work by Koemoth on the word *wꜣb*, Di Biase-Dyson (2012; 2018), on the diachronic development of spatial metaphors, Daniel Werning (2012: 324; 2014), who provides an overview of body part terminology and its figurative usages (2014: 147-154), Elisabeth Steinbach (2015), who analyzes the semantics of perception verbs, and Gaëlle Chantrain (2023), who looks at verbs of ignorance and forgetfulness. Another direction entirely is offered by Georgakopoulos et al. (2016), who show that semantic maps can visualise the polysemy of words, including figurative (metaphorical, metonymic, etc.) meanings.

Metaphor and cognitive approaches

Closely tied to the lexical semantic approach to metaphor is the cognitive one, which, adopted simultaneously by studies of classification, made its way into the analysis of Egyptian language via prototype theory (Rosch 1978; cf. Goldwasser 2002), lexical semantics (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 27ff.), Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), and cognitive linguistics in general (see Croft and Cruse 2004: 193ff.; also Nyord 2015).

This trend was headed by Orly Goldwasser (1980, 1992, 1995, 2005) and Paul John Frandsen (1997), who shared an interest in the role of prototype categorization in metaphor production, both in Egyptian art and in written language. Their cognitive focus, which drew heavily on the models of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980), is applied more directly to textual material by Arlette David (2004: 48), Erika Meyer-Dietrich (2006: 232-233), Ines Köhler (2011, 2016), Rune Nyord (2009, 2012), and Steve Vinson (2014). Significant in Nyord's research in particular is an awareness of cultural models (particularly tied to embodiment, a mapping of the CONTAINER image schema inside the human body) upon which speakers are presumed to have drawn in their use of metaphorical language (2012: 170; for image schemas see Hampe, ed. 2005).

Pan-textual metaphor

A more recent approach to metaphor has brought attention to metaphor patterns in whole texts. Linda Steynor takes a lexical and text-based approach (based on Goatly 2011) to the grain-based metaphors in *The Eloquent Peasant* and shows how these metaphors are tied to crucial points in the narrative (2011: 169). Lurson (2022) reanalysed the wind-motifs as political metaphors in *Neferti*. Di Biase-Dyson (2017) developed a means of analyzing pan-textual metaphor in Egyptian literary texts by applying a typology developed by Elena Semino (2008: 22-30) for English texts.

Graphemic metaphor (script and classifiers)

In recent times, several scholars have offered significant contributions to the field of

metaphor in Egyptology from the perspective of metaphor in written language. In particular, Goldwasser (1995: 40) considers metaphors from the graphemic level through to linguistic and visual levels. Goldwasser claimed that metaphors emerge in classifiers via associations that reflect *ad hoc* categories rather than stable semantic structures (for which she cites Barsalou 1983; cf. also Smoczyński 1999: 159-160; and additionally Goldwasser 1999 and 2006). Thus, an abstract verb like ***sr*** "to foresee" is classified with the giraffe (Gardiner's Sign-list: E27) on the basis of an association between giraffes and THOSE WHO SEE AND KNOW BEFORE ALL OTHERS (Goldwasser 2002: 18). The lexical semantic basis of this example has been called into question by Christian Cannuyer (2010: 545, 601, 613).

Arlette David (2000) also considers the role of *ad hoc* categories on classification, showing how the semantic development of the lexeme ***nḏs*** from "smallness" to "inferiority" ensures that its bird classifier G37 can be applied, in an ad-hoc metaphorical transfer ("bad like the small bird"), to other negative lexemes by the First Intermediate Period (ibid.: 56-57). Sandro Schwarz (2005) follows this notion in his study of ship classifiers. The connection between metaphor and classifiers is further considered by David (2007 and 2011), Niv Allon (2007: 20–21), and, from a more lexical than cognitive perspective, Angela McDonald (2007, cf. Zandee 1963: 147).

Exception has been taken in recent times to the role of metaphor in classification strategies on the grounds that the relation of these lexemes to their classifiers is more likely to be metonymic than metaphorical (Lincke, ed. 2011: 43-59; Kammerzell 2011; Lincke and Kutscher 2012: 19-22; also Chen 2024). For instance, the duck classifier G39, has a meronymic (PART FOR WHOLE) relationship to nominal lexemes, like ***rzf*** "the catch (of fowl and fish)," and a metonymic one (AGENT FOR ACTION) with verbs, such as ***ꜥḫm*** "to fly" (Lincke and Kammerzell 2012: 80).

This being said, there is still something to be gained by considering metaphors in relation to classification, particularly if there is a concomitant focus on classification as a reflection of semantic change (cf. Chantrain 2014). It is possible that the systematization of classification apparent at the end of the New Kingdom, which seemed to have been carried out to reflect the semantic change of a number of lexemes, may have even been *exploited* by some scribes to mark metaphorical language across a text (Chantrain and Di Biase-Dyson 2018).

Visual metaphor

Visual metaphor is hard to qualify as a separate entity in the Egyptian record: it is often tied to metaphor in complementary modes, as a *representation* of a linguistic metaphor (Morenz 2006: 52-53; 2008: 128-129), or as a *complement* (and perhaps precursor) of graphemic metaphor (Morenz 2004: 168; 2008: 74). The latter is argued for by Goldwasser (1995: 11ff.), who analyzed the metaphoric elements relating to domination on the Narmer Palette and elsewhere (ibid.: 12-13). She contends that "domination" not only affected the language used to describe the king but also emerged in the classification system of terms describing pharaonic power (Goldwasser 1995: 58; cf. Frandsen 1997: 91-92; David 2011; Hsu 2013: 5-10).

However, not all visual-*cum*-linguistic metaphors have their basis in political ideology. Some are tied to religious motifs or could be perceived as "cultural metaphors" (Angenot 2011: 260): the tree goddess as shelter (Goldwasser 2002: 42), the depiction of a temple as the body of the god (Meyer-Dietrich 2009), or the portrayal of the western mountains as an embodiment of Hathor-Imentet and "the Peak" (***tꜣ dhn.t***) (Rummel 2016: 48). Others include the lotus in relation to the Four Sons of Horus (Servajean 2001) and the connection between green feldspar and the Eye of Re (Aufrère 2005). Such metaphors are often multimodal: a scene of pouring water accompanied by ***stj mw*** "pouring water" on the small golden shrine of Tutankhamun may be creating a "sexual metaphor"(Angenot 2011: 277) based on the *double entendre* of this phrase as "sowing semen" (Westendorf 1967: 141; Kessler 1986: 36; in relation to earlier artworks,

Altenmüller 1991: 30-34, but cf. Eaton-Krauss and Graefe 1985).

It must be acknowledged, however, that the embeddedness of these motifs in the religious sphere may compromise the very metaphoricity of the "transfer" from one entity to another. More precisely, since the Egyptians *believed* that the western mountains were the goddess ***tꜣ dhn.t,*** and as such were ontologically committed to this transfer (see Nyord 2017: 17), then either there is no metaphor as such—since metaphor relies upon there being a literal and a non-literal meaning—or the definition of the term "metaphor" must be expanded to encompass the Aristotelian sense of "transfer." Since such a broad categorization would adversely affect the precision with which we can define other kinds of metaphor, I would plead for "religious figuration" to be consciously distinguished from mundane uses of figurative language, including metaphor (cf. Di Biase-Dyson 2023b)

It also bears mentioning that some visual metaphor is not simply derived from the language, as illustrated by the respective size of human figures relating to their status in relief, painting and sculpture (Di Biase-Dyson 2023a), or by cultural practices like branding (Valerio 2023).

Concluding Remarks

Egyptian textual and visual material from all time periods indicates that metaphor, like other modes of figurative expression, forms part of the very earliest means through which Egyptian written and visual culture was expressed. This necessity to represent the "unrepresentable" in tangible terms aligns the cultural output of ancient Egypt with that of other world cultures. This overview has illustrated the broad spectrum of applications of metaphor to various media, from a wide chronological span and a variety of perspectives. While studies of metaphor have become increasingly sophisticated, much remains to be done, and the call for a more empirical basis for these analyses (Haikal 1994: 206) must be heeded. Moreover, more multimodal and multidimensional approaches to metaphorical representation will enable a more holistic understanding of this means of cultural expression.

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