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## Conflict between Determinism, Individualism and Identity in Ancient Egyptian Thought

By

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## **Abstract.**

*The ancient Egyptians were accustomed to use “travel” and “individualism” as metaphors for the journey of one's life, as an expression of an individual's aspirations in pursuit of a goal, whether on land or sea. A person who exhibits unusual attitudes or deviates from the cultural path of Egyptian society, will face obstacles and serious difficulties such as drowning, drifting, or disaster, while at the same time being tested by the gods, who could integrate him back into society and the Egyptian culture again, or leave him in the depths of darkness. In this context, our paper aims to shed light on the importance of individualism and how it is used as the basis for deviation from the prevalent cultural path. It also examines the relationship between individualism and the Egyptian culture, social identity, and self-representation. It also deals with individualism as an expression of human ambition, and its implications. Additionally, it discusses the issue of determinism and divine fate and their impact on the orientation of humans travelling through life, as opposed to human free will.*

**Keywords:** *Determinism, individualism, travel, deviation, identity, culture, Egyptian literature.*

## **1- Introduction.**

The ancient Egyptian considered his land and its environment to be unique from other environments, and he considered it also the essential factor in his daily life. The ancient Egyptian was strongly aware of the characteristics of nature, and also of the uniqueness of each element, such as seas, rivers, trees, fruits and flowers. On the banks of the eternal river, surrounded by deserts, this rich and charming area of fertility, home to the ancient Egyptian, increased and deeply rooted the idea that the individual is a part of the universe. This bountiful region and its animals formed an independent entity embraced by vast deserts in a long strip included within these natural boundaries. Thus this world influenced and played a vital role in the lives of Egyptian authors - or any other Egyptians - whether secular or religious.

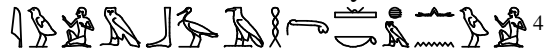
Although some religious hymns in the New Kingdom, e.g. Aton's hymn and Amon's hymns, praised the universality of the ancient Egyptian viewpoint, they did not proclaim only the life of the Egyptians and their lands, but also acknowledged the way of life of foreigners and their lands. The ancient Egyptians were indeed aware of the foreigners and their environments that existed outside their own exquisite and independent Egyptian world. In addition to, the Ancient Egyptian considered foreign environments to be fearsome, strange, life-threatening and a source of continuous worry on his boundaries and to his personal world. A mention of it in literature aroused a feeling of risk and adventure.

Moving from this known world to external ones was beset by limitations and great cultural obstacles. For some, travelling to the world beyond Egyptian boundaries was considered perilous and a move to the unknown. Thus the ancient Egyptian's ideas and perceptions about these worlds depended greatly on fiction. Travelogues, for example, were a means of entering adventures in the outside world, an imaginary world where it was allowed to experience excitement, pleasure and being under the influence of mixed feelings, to love the idea of adventure, fear, worry, bewilderment and the longing to return. At such moments, the hero's feelings were generally mingled with piety, devoutness, and supplication to the gods to rescue him from his misstep, and hence help him to return to his socio-cultural environment, i.e. Egypt.

## **2- Determinism and human will.**

Man has always been driven by his ambition to pursue knowledge and to discover the unknown, the urge of the individual to escape his cultural and social restrictions as opposed to

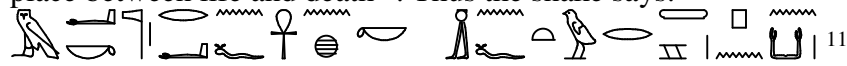
abiding by the expectations of his ancestors. Thus, individuality causes a person to deviate from the path which was set by the gods according to the concept of Maat in ancient Egypt. He becomes vulnerable to horrors and he lives the experiment of adventures and tests to which the supreme god subjects him, until he is on the verge of death<sup>1</sup>. Finally, he either concentrates himself again in his own world and into the culture of his society, or he is thrown away into the depths of darkness or otherwise into a mighty sea, the end of which is annihilation. In the story of the Shipwrecked Sailor for example, we find the sailor talks about his exploration beyond the limits of the human experiences and the known, to the remote and the unsafe areas over which man has no control<sup>2</sup>. The protagonist goes forth in an individual venture to meet the god, where he directly communicates with him<sup>3</sup>. The snake god appears as a mediator between the supreme god and the man (the sailor), who searches for the mystery of his existence; the Sailor says:



*iw=i m-bAH =k xm.n (=i) wi*

"I am before you without knowing myself"<sup>5</sup>.

The snake here represents the mirror which reflects the mystery of human existence on earth and shows the nature of his end and his destiny. This knowledge contrasts with the hero's ignorance of the basic reason for his existence on the island, which he ascribes to purely human reasons<sup>6</sup>. However, in the end the snake shows him that the reason behind his existence and survival is the supreme god<sup>7</sup> and it is he who has brought him to this delusional island<sup>8</sup> which basically represents a middle stage between existence and nothingness<sup>9</sup>, or the place between life and death<sup>10</sup>. Thus the snake says:



*mk nTr rdi.n=f anx=k ini=f tw r iw pn n kA*

"It is god who has let you live and brought you to this island of the ka"<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Pap. Leningrad 1115, 73-76; Blackman, A. M., *Middle-Egyptian Stories*, in: Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca, Vol. 2, La Fondation Egyptologique Reine Elisabeth, Brussels, 1972, p.43 (13-14); Pap. Berlin 3022, (225-226); Koch, R., *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe*, in: Bibliotheca aegyptiaca, Vol. 17, Bruxelles, 1990, p.29 (12).

<sup>2</sup>Moers, G., *Fingierte Welten in der Ägyptischen Literatur des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr. Grenzüberschreitung, Reisemotiv und Fiktionalität*, in: Probleme der Ägyptologie, Vol.19, Leiden; New York; Köln, 2001, p.248.

<sup>3</sup>Luiselli, M. M., *Religion und Literatur. Überlegungen zur Funktion der 'persönlichen Frömmigkeit' in der Literatur des Mittleren und Neuen Reiches*, in: Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur, Vol.36, 2007, p.172.

<sup>4</sup>Pap. Leningrad 1115, 73-76; Blackman, A. M., *Middle-Egyptian Stories*, p. 43 (13-14).

<sup>5</sup>Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature A Book of Readings*, Vol. 1, London, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973, p. 213; Simpson, W.K., *The Shipwrecked Sailor*, in: Simpson, W. K. (ed), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt, An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003, p.49.

<sup>6</sup>Pap. Leningrad 1115, 101-108; Blackman, A. M., *Middle-Egyptian Stories*, p. 44 (8-11); Simpson, W.K., *The Shipwrecked Sailor*, in: Simpson, W. K. (ed), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.50; Ignatov, S., *Some Notes on the Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor*, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 80 ,1994, p.195.

<sup>7</sup>Luiselli, M.M., *Religion und Literatur*, p.170.

<sup>8</sup>Loprieno, A., *The Sign of Literature in the Shipwrecked Sailor*, in: U. Verhoeven - E. Graefe (eds.), *Religion und Philosophie im Alten Ägypten*, in: *Orientalia lovaniensia analecta*, Vol. 39, Lovaina, 1991, pp. 29-46; Galán, J. M., *Cuatro Viajes en la Literatura del Antiguo Egipto*, in: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, Madrid, 2000, pp. 42-43.

<sup>9</sup>Moers, G., *Fingierte Welten*, p.250.

<sup>10</sup>Luiselli, M. M., *Religion und Literatur*,. p.170.

<sup>11</sup>Pap.Leningrad 1115, 114-115; Blackman, A. M., *Middle-Egyptian Stories*, p. 44 (14-15).

<sup>12</sup>Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 1, p.213; Simpson, W.K., *The Shipwrecked Sailor*, in: Simpson, W. K. (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.50.

The story as a whole and the journey of the hero reflects the questions around the beginning of a person's life, and the objective of his existence on earth<sup>13</sup>, or it describes a case of an individual who has lived a life of hardships and obstacles, followed by his overcoming these, who then finally ends up living normally (in accordance with the expectations of his society), which allows him to inhabit a place in his new world, or to be born again in the underworld<sup>14</sup>. The same idea appears clearly in the story of Sinuhe, an important fictional text which reflects human individualism and man's continuous seeking for knowledge. His name, Sinuhe, means "son of Sycamore", which may have either implied a close relationship linking Sinuhe with the Queen<sup>15</sup> (wife of the King of Egypt Senwosret I.), or implicitly refer to the region from which the hero came, where a goddess called The Lady of Sycamore in South Memphis existed<sup>16</sup>. However, the reference to the name of the goddess Hathor, in fact, does not only mean the son of knowledge, considering Hathor is the goddess of human knowledge<sup>17</sup>. Where the hero crosses outside the borders of Egypt and thereby performs not only a physical entry into another land, but also, as a representative of Egyptian culture, penetrates the walls of the foreigners' cultures<sup>18</sup>.

For reasons that are not clear, the protagonist, Sinuhe, then suffers from feelings of guilt and travels voluntarily into the exile to the south west of Asia for several years. These years caused him to view himself from the outside and they reflect how foreigners viewed the Egyptian identity<sup>19</sup>. In the end, he returns to Egypt, after being exposed to many international experiences. In order to accomplish all of this, he has to rid himself of the restrictions of the Egyptian culture and cross to the other side, i.e. to foreign countries, which means to deviate from the culture of his native society, and thus to be exposed to horrors. He was considered to be a character who refused to follow the ideal form of the Egyptian individual, and the specific, typical rules of the concept of Maat which were clearly set. Thus, he must take an individualist road to escape, which is considered the first error of individuality.

Sinuhe's crossing of the Nile River was considered as a crossing to the opposite "field", or to the negative side as compared to the positive one of the Egyptian identity<sup>20</sup>. Sinuhe describes this crossing saying:



*xpr.n tr n msy.t sAH.n =i r dmi ngAw DA.n=i m wsxt nn Hmw=s [m s]wt n imnty*

<sup>13</sup>Moers, G., *Fingierte Welten*, pp.247-251.

<sup>14</sup>Galán, J. M., *Cuatro Viajes*, p.46.

<sup>15</sup>Loprieno, A., *Defining Egyptian literature: Ancient texts and modern theories*, in: Loprieno, A., (ed.); *Ancient Egyptian Literature. History and Forms*, in: *Probleme der Ägyptologie*, Vol. 10, Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1996, p.44.

<sup>16</sup>Galán, J. M., *Cuatro Viajes*, p. 98.

<sup>17</sup>Moers, G., *Fingierte Welten*, p.91.

<sup>18</sup>Moers, G., *Fingierte Welten*, p.92.

<sup>19</sup>About Egyptian identity see: Mwanika, E., N., *Ancient Egyptian Identity*, MA., Department of History, Miami University Oxford, Ohio, 2004; Moers, G., *Bei mir wird es Dir gut ergehen, denn Du wirst die Sprache Ägyptens hören! Verschieden und doch gleich: Sprache als identitätsrelevanter Faktor im pharaonischen Ägypten*. In: U-C. Sander and F. Paul (eds.), *Muster und Funktionen kultureller Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung. Beiträge zur internationalen Geschichte der sprachlichen und literarischen Emanzipation*, Göttingen, 2000, pp.45-99.

<sup>20</sup>Moers, G., *Fingierte Welten*, p.254.

<sup>21</sup>Pap.Berlin 3022, 11-14; Gardiner, A., *Die Geschichte des Sinuhe und die Hirtengeschichte*, (Erman, A., *Literarische Texte des Mittleren Reiches*, II.,) Leipzig, 1909, PL.2a (36-39); Blackman, A. M., *Middle-Egyptian Stories*, p. 10(5-9); Koch, R., *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe*, pp.15(7)-16(8).

"At dinner time I reached "Cattle-Quay." I crossed over in a boat without a rudder, by the force of the westwind"<sup>22</sup>.

The reference to dinner time and the time of sunset enhance the feeling of loneliness and isolation. In addition, escaping in a rudderless boat is a metaphor for drifting away aimlessly in the wrong direction<sup>23</sup>. On entering the negative field, Sinuhe starts describing the whole journey as if it were a dream<sup>24</sup>. But this was completely unrealistic because he has already been plunged into an Asian society and become an Asian man in his habits and conduct. He has surrendered his old life for another new, tribal one<sup>25</sup>. When he finally returns to Egypt, the Queen and the royal family do not even recognize him at first<sup>26</sup>. Nevertheless, despite his existence in the negative field (being abroad) and living like an Asian to the point of being about to lose his Egyptian identity, he was still always connected to Egypt<sup>27</sup>. He was caught in a state of division, either loving the new foreign experience or desiring to return home, but the whole story shifts dramatically towards an overwhelming urge to get back after his duel with the Retenu man who wanted to take Sinuhe's position as a chief of the Asian tribe<sup>28</sup>. Sinuhe's return to the positive field is like a rebirth and reintegration into the Egyptian community<sup>29</sup>.

Individuality and the search for knowledge and integration in a foreign society were the goals of Sinuhe and they stand behind his quest to travel abroad. While there is no doubt that Sinuhe is still Egyptian<sup>30</sup>, his new post-travel nature is of a completely different quality from what it was before. Embodiment of the ideal Egyptian personality has been offered to him but Sinuhe refuses it, as he wants to know what else can be had. Having had this new individualist experience, he finally decides to return, realizing the real value of his identity.

Actually, Sinuhe did not really have to escape or to make this journey, as his escape was a kind of author's device in order to spin his yarn<sup>31</sup>. The end of the story shows that the hero's departure from Egypt was unnecessary as he was not, after all suspected of killing the king. However, his feelings of guilt related to the death of the king is what makes him a sinner.

With regard to the true motive behind this story and Sinuhe's travels abroad – whether it was a true story about Sinuhe, who as he says was escaping being accused of killing the king, or was a fictional parable about an expression of individualism, the latter would seem likely because of the form of the text, as it takes the symbolic shape of the circle ABA (Egypt-Asia-return to Egypt). In addition to the hero's leaving and his reintegration back into the Egyptian

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<sup>22</sup>Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol.1, p: 224; Blumenthal, E., *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe*, in: Kaiser (ed.), *Mythen und Epen*, in: Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments, Vol.3., 1990-1997, p.890 §5-6.

<sup>23</sup>Moers, G., *Fingierte Welten*, p.255.

<sup>24</sup>Pap. Berlin 3022, 225-226; Blackman, A. M., *Middle-Egyptian Stories*, p.34 (4-5); Koch, R., *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe*, p. 29 (12).

<sup>25</sup>Bolshakov, O. & Soushevski, G., *Hero and Society in Ancient Egypt*, in: Göttinger Miscellen, Vol. 163, 1998, p. 20.

<sup>26</sup>Pap. Berlin 3022, 264-268; Blackman, A.M., *Middle-Egyptian Stories*, p.37(15-16); Koch, R., *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe*, p.76 (3-11); Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol.1., p. 232; Simpson, W.K., *The Story of Sinuhe*, in: Simpson, W. K. (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.65.

<sup>27</sup>Pap. Berlin 3022, 92-97; Blackman, A. M., *Middle-Egyptian Stories*, p.24(4-8); Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 1., p.227; Simpson, W.K., *The Story of Sinuhe*, in: Simpson, W. K. (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p. 59.

<sup>28</sup>Pap. Berlin 3022, 149-160; Blackman, A. M., *Middle-Egyptian Stories*, pp. 29(8-16) – 30 (1); Koch, R., *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe*, pp. 54(5)- 55(14); Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol.1., p.228; Simpson, W.K., *The Story of Sinuhe*, in: Simpson, W. K. (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.60.

<sup>29</sup>Luiselli, M. M., *Religion und Literatur*, p.169; Bolshakov, O. and Soushevski, G., *Hero and Society in Ancient Egypt*, p.20.

<sup>30</sup>Baines, J., *Interpreting Sinuhe*, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol.68, 1982, p. 43; Luiselli, M. M., *Religion und Literatur*, p.169.

<sup>31</sup>Baines, J., *Interpreting Sinuhe*, pp.39-42.

cultural model, the story shows that the Egyptian ideal was opposed to the idea of entering a foreign culture. The reality of life is based on the concept of Maat, which protects a the person from the troubles of life that face him<sup>32</sup>.

### 3- The relation between individualism and deviation.

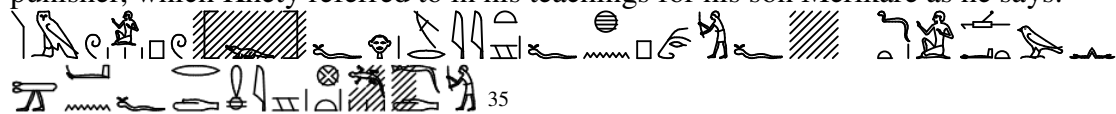
Individuality did not only mean to drift or move away from the Egyptian homeland and its culture or to have access to another exotic foreign culture, but it also involves behaviors and way in which an individual either conforms to or contravenes his culture, in this case the Egyptian identity developed according to the concept of Maat. Individualism, therefore was the problem from which the elders of the first, intermediate and the subsequent periods had suffered, and they attempted to keep the members of their society away from paths that might bring them to harm and damage, either in his worldly life or the afterlife. According to the concept of Maat and Egyptian identity, committing any deviation from the preordained path left a person open to fear – he would face animals (the crocodile) which were always the end of these deviations and moral crimes in the worlds of literary fiction. This was the subject clarified by the Eloquent Peasant regarding the nature of a person's journey, in case of being moderate or of seeking the opposite side in case of deviating from the proper path. Thus the Peasant says:



*ir hA=k r S n mAat sqd=k im =f m mAaw nn kf ndbyt HtA=k m dpwt=k nn iwt iyt m xt =k nn swA sgrgw=k nn sxm=k HAaa=k hr tA nn iT tw nwt nn sp=k Dwt nt itrw nn mA=k Hr snD*

*"If you descend to the Lake of Maat, you will sail thereon in the breeze. The fabric of your sail will not be torn, nor will your boat be driven ashore. There will be no damage to your mast, nor will your yards be broken. You will not founder when you come to land, nor will the waves bear you away. You will not taste the perils of the river, nor will you gaze upon the face of fear (the crocodile)"*<sup>34</sup>.

The consequences of individualism and deviation are disastrous, as they expose a person to severe horrors in the imaginary world; the crocodile, for example, played an integral role as punisher, which Khety referred to in his teachings for his son Merikare as he says:



*aAmw pw [mSH] Hr mryt =f xnp=f Dt wat n iT .n =f r dmit aSAw mH*

*"For the Asiatic is only a crocodile on its riverbank which attacks [who] one on a lonely road, but does not invade[ who] in the area of a crowded town"*<sup>36</sup>.

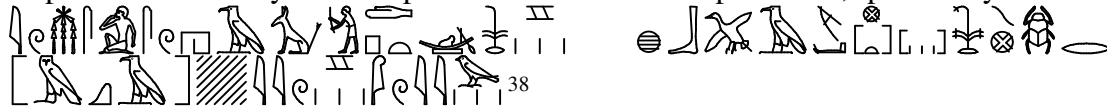
<sup>32</sup>Moers, G., *Fingierte Welten*, pp.260-262.

<sup>33</sup>Die Klagen des Bauern, B1, 55-61; Sethe, K., *Ägyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im akademischen Unterricht: Texte des Mittleren Reiches*, Leipzig, 1928, p.22 (5-6); de Buck, *Egyptian Reading book*, I., Leyden, 1948, p.92 (15); Parkinson, R. B., *The tale of the Eloquent Peasant*, Oxford, 1991, Pp.17(12), 18(1).

<sup>34</sup>Gardiner, A., *The Eloquent Peasant*, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 9, No. 1/2, 1923, p.9; Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol.1., p. 172; Parkinson, R. B., *The tale of the Eloquent peasant*, p.17f ; Tobin, V.A., *The tale of the Eloquent Peasant*, in: Simpson, W. K. (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.29 ; O'Dell, E. J., *Excavating the Emotion Landscape of Ancient Egyptian Literature*, PhD., Brown University, Rhode Island, 2008, p.114.

<sup>35</sup>Pap. Leningrad, 1116A, 97-98; Golénischeff, W., *Les papyrus hiératiques 1115, 1116A et 1116B de l'Ermitage impérial à Saint Pétersbourg*: St. Pétersbourg, 1913, Line.97-98.

The crocodiles lurk in secluded paths on the river banks in narrow areas which were considered areas from which the water turns. Crocodiles were a real threat which were also used as a figurative expression for what would befall a person who deviated from the culture, like deciding to move alone and to deviate from the ordinary roads beaten by the group. The Asiatic enemy was metaphorically described as a crocodile because he often represented danger or the stereotypical enemy of the Egyptian culture<sup>37</sup>. Therefore, the text refers to individualism, i.e. to deviation, and the choice between walking on the beaten track or dying between the jaws of a crocodile. This idea was expressed by Ipuwer, who saw a parallel between disaster striking the country and the split in the structure of the Egyptian state, which had become a ship that drifted away from its path to be errant in the open water, Ipuwer says:



*iw ms swhA(.w) dpt rsyw xbA (.w) niwwt Smaw xpr(.w) [m qA]yt Swy*

"Verily, the ship of the Southerners is shattered, The cities are ravaged, and Upper Egypt has become wasteland"<sup>39</sup>.

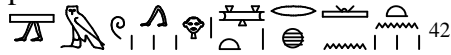
The deviation of the ship was due to the absence of a guide and the ship's master:



*n(n) iaS n Hat m wnwt =sn*

"There is no pilot in their hour. Where is he today?"<sup>41</sup>.

Also it was the situation which led the elders to advise the people attempting to find their path in life not to deviate:



*Smw Hr wAt rx .n =tn*

"Go on the road you know"<sup>43</sup>.

In another situation, he also warns against individuality and deviation, saying:



<sup>36</sup>Gardiner, A., *New Literary Works from Ancient Egypt*, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 1., No.1, 1914, p.31; Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 1., p.104; Faulkner, R. O., & Tobin, V.A., *The Teaching for King Merikare*, in: Simpson, W. K. (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, pp.161-162.

<sup>37</sup>Moers, G., *Fingierte Welten*, p.210; see below: Janzen, M. D., *The iconography of humiliation the depiction and treatment of bound foreigners in new kingdom Egypt*, PhD., The University of Memphis, 2013, pp.446-199.

<sup>38</sup>Pap.Leiden 344,rt.,2,10-2,11; Gardiner, A., *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage, from a Hieratic Papyrus in Leiden* (Pap. Leiden 344 Recto), Leipzig, 1909, p.28 (2,10-2,11).

<sup>39</sup>Gardiner.,A., *The Admonitions*, p.28, 2,10-2,11; Faulkner, R. O., *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 51, 1965, p. 54; Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, I., p. 151; Tobin, V.A., *The Admonitions of an Egyptian sage*, in: Simpson, W. K. (ed.) *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.192.

<sup>40</sup>Pap. Leiden 344, rt., 12,5; Gardiner.,A., *The Admonitions*, p.78 (12,5).

<sup>41</sup>Gardiner, A., *The Admonitions*, p. 78 (12,5); Faulkner, R. O., *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*, p.60; Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 1., p.160; Tobin, V.A., *The Admonitions of an Egyptian sage*, in: Simpson, W. K. (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.205.

<sup>42</sup>Pap. Leiden 344, rt., 10,3; Gardiner, A., *The Admonitions*, p.72 (10,3); Rasha, F., *Dirāsah lughawiyah taḥlīliyah libardiat alḥaqym Ipū-wer, (A study for Ipu-wer's Papyrus)*, MA., Alexandria, 1999, p.204.

<sup>43</sup>Gardiner, A., *The Admonitions*, p.72; Faulkner, R. O., *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*, p. 59; Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 1., p. 158; Tobin, V.A., *The Admonitions of an Egyptian sage*, in: Simpson, W. K. (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.202; Rasha, F., *Ipū-wer*, p. 204.

*iw ms tw Dd =tw m dgs(w) aA mk <m> Snw mk xnd =tw sxt mi rmw n tnw sw snDw m-a Hrijt jb*

"One says, "Don't walk here, look it's a net, but behold, men fall into the trap like fish, the fearful man could not distinguish it because of heart's terror"<sup>45</sup>.

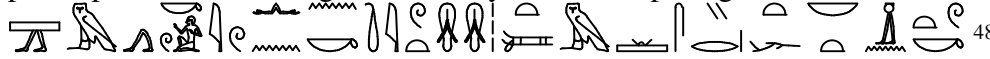
Despite such manifold warnings, they walk carelessly due to the severity of fear, deviating from the right path into an abyss and destruction. As a result, they became a prey for the crocodile, which Ipuwer clarified saying:



*iw ms msHw Hr bfA n iTt .n =sn Sm .n =sn rmT Ds*

"O, yet the crocodiles gorge, but do not seize, people go to them of their own will"<sup>47</sup>.

Another text that expresses the ambition of the individual and deviation due to human will is the story of the prodigal son, whose deviation from the right path was not because of laziness, misunderstanding or desire for gain, like his peers. The story shed light on the several forms of the misconduct which the prodigal son has pursued since his departure from home and his deviation from his cultural environment. It was the same story that the wise man pA iri persisted on telling. Thus he says about the prodigal son's condition:



*Sm =k iw nn n=k tiwt Tbw tm syrt nbt in .tw=k*

"You went barefooted in another direction, but no spindle could get you back"<sup>49</sup>.

He warns him about the crocodile, the moral penalty executor and the punisher for individual deviations, telling him to be cautious saying:



*bw sDm =k mtrw r mTn nb nt nHA -Hr<sup>51</sup> m Sfnw*

"You did not listen and you did not know exactly in which path the crocodiles lurk amidst the bushes"<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>44</sup>Pap.Leiden 344 , rt., 2,12- 2,13; Gardiner, A., *The Admonitions*, pp.29 – 30 (2,12-2,13).

<sup>45</sup>Gardiner, A., *The Admonitions*, pp.29-30; Faulkner, R. O., *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*, p. 54; Lichteim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 1., p.151; Tobin, V.A., *The Admonitions of an Egyptian sage*, in: Simpson, W. K. (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p:192; Enmarch, R., *A World Upturned: Commentary on and Analysis of the Dialogue of Ipuwer and the Lord of All*, British Academy, London, 2008, p.171.


<sup>46</sup>Pap. Leiden 344 , rt., 2,12; Gardiner, A., *The Admonitions*, p.29.

<sup>47</sup>Gardiner, A., *The Admonitions*, pp.29-30; Faulkner, R., *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*, p:54; Lichteim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol.1., p.151; Tobin, V.A., *The Admonitions of an Egyptian sage* , in: Simpson, W. K. (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, p.192; Rasha, F., *Ipū-wer*, p. 81; Enmarch, R., *The Dialogue of Ipuwer and the Lord of All*, p.171.

<sup>48</sup>O.Oriental Institute 12074, rt., 3; Guglielmi, W., *Eine Lehre für einen reiselustigen Sohn (Ostrakon Oriental Institute 12074)*, in: *Die Welt des Orients*, Vol.14, 1983, p.148 (3).

<sup>49</sup>Guglielmi, W., *Eine Lehre für einen reiselustigen Sohn*, p.152 (II).

<sup>50</sup>O.Oriental Institute 12074, rt., 2-3; Guglielmi, W., *Eine Lehre für einen reiselustigen Sohn*, p.148 (2-3).

<sup>51</sup>The term  nHA-Hr is often used of Apopis and other evil spirits (Wb. II, 290, 15-18). The Typhonic nature of these beings in whom, suggests that the meaning of nHA here lies in the same area as that identified above and that we should render 'Wild' or 'Fierce of Face'. The name would then be conceptually similar to that of the demon *irty.fy-m-sDt* , He whose Eyes are Flame", see below: Lloyd, A.B., *Once More Hammamat Inscription 191*, in: *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol.61, 1975, p.64.

<sup>52</sup>Guglielmi, W., *Eine Lehre für einen reiselustigen Sohn*, p.151(I).



He says in a different paragraph:



wHm =i Dd n=k an i rwi=k inbt nHA- Hr .. mi nA m Tsy mdwt m rA

"Stay away from the crocodile's ambush as it has been said (literally): discourses that in the mouth"<sup>54</sup>.

#### 4- Conclusions.

Individualism was considered to be an unpleasant and undesirable thing to the ancient Egyptian, as for obvious reasons an individual's voluntary deviation from his socio-cultural environment was socially unacceptable. The texts of wisdom comment on this matter, and condemn an individual's deviation from the accepted path as a deviation from the heart of his culture and his society – which was seen as a type of ethical misconduct.

The nature of a person's life may have two facets during his pursuit of his goal. On the one hand, he who lives with justice (Maat) will find his road and reach his goals. But on the other, he who lives alone, secluded, and travels along unbeaten tracks by deviating from the cultural path of the Egyptian community is destined to drift away in his boat, to fail and never achieve his goals. Besides being punished by disastrous consequences, which include a variety of undesirable outcomes such as sinking, drifting away, and failure to achieve goals, the individualist may become a prey of the crocodile. The crocodile was considered a tool of total destruction or the second death<sup>55</sup>. It was the creature that lurks at the edges of secluded roads among the jungle trees, and figuratively, it represents one of the boundaries of morals. It also appears in the story of the two brothers, Anubis and Bata, as a penalty for the crime of attempted fratricide<sup>56</sup>.

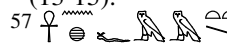
Falling into the coils of the crocodile and the second death have been used as a figurative metaphor for the failure and misconduct which result from sailing freely and clinging to the pleasures of worldly life i.e. individualism. These pleasures penetrate the limits of morals and lead in the end to a drifting into hell; thus the transgressor becomes not only missing, but is also alone as "the living dead"<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> O.Oriental Institute 12074, rt., 9-12; Guglielmi, W., *Eine Lehre für einen reiselustigen Sohn*, p. 148 (9-12).

<sup>54</sup> Guglielmi, W., "Eine Lehre für einen reiselustigen Sohn," p.152. (IV b).

<sup>55</sup> Zandee, Jan, *Death as an Enemy, According to Ancient Egyptian Conception*, in: *Studies in History of Religions (Supplements to Numen)*, Leiden, 1960, pp.14-20.

<sup>56</sup> Pap. Orbieny, 6,5- 6,6; Gardiner, A., *Late Egyptian Stories*, (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca I), Bruxelles, 1932, p.15 (13-15).

<sup>57</sup>  anx=f m mtt see: Pap. Prisse, 17,7; Žábá, Z., *Les Maximes de Ptahhotep*, Prague, 1956, p.61 (581).