



**PROCEEDINGS OF THE XI
INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
OF EGYPTOLOGISTS**

Florence, Italy 23-30 August 2015

MUSEO EGIZIO FIRENZE

Florence Egyptian Museum

**edited by
Gloria Rosati and Maria Cristina Guidotti**



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**INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
OF EGYPTOLOGISTS XI**

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**MUSEO EGIZIO FIRENZE
FLORENCE EGYPTIAN MUSEUM**



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Reden und Rufe, are they kingly patterns? A first step towards an explanation of the origin(s) of speech captions in ‘daily life’ scenes in private tombs

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Abstract

Speech captions found in daily life scenes of private tombs, also named *Reden und Rufe*, are mostly known by the studies of Erman (1919), Montet (1925), and Guglielmi (1973). Yet, many questions have been left unanswered: when, where, how did they appear? This contribution aims at giving an overview of these issues.

Keywords

Speech captions (*Reden und Rufe*); Old Kingdom; elite tombs; royal funerary monuments; ‘daily life’ scenes

Introduction

Reden und Rufe are dialogs found in scenes of ‘daily life’. Three major studies have so far dealt with the subject: Erman (1919), Montet (1925), and Guglielmi (1973).¹ None of them however explained when, where, and how this specific genre appeared in private tombs. For my PhD research,² I try to determine what are their origins and accordingly, to solve these three questions.³

What about royal funerary monuments?

No study mentions whether such speeches were present in royal decorative programs or not. Although Old Kingdom royal funerary monuments are badly preserved,⁴ it appears *Reden und Rufe* are fully part of their decorative programs. Based on the available material, they are found in causeways, funerary temples, and in the sun-temple of Niuserra:

	Causeway	Funerary temple	Sun-temple
Userkaf		X	
Sahure	X		
Niuserra			X
Unas	X		
Pepi II		X	

FIGURE 1: *REDEN UND RUFEN* IN OLD KINGDOM ROYAL FUNERARY MONUMENTS.

Speech captions are known from the 5th Dynasty onwards in royal monuments, yet, they are not quite frequent: less than 50 speeches were gathered.

What about private tombs?

In private tombs, they appeared in the 4th-Dynasty tombs of Meresankh III and of Khuenre. They spread then over elite tombs during the mid 5th Dynasty. So far, I gathered roughly

1650 speeches in 143 private tombs. Very few of them are similar to speech captions from Userkaf, Sahure, and Pepi II funerary monuments, but numerous other speeches cannot be related to royal decorative programs.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, speech captions are not restricted to elite tombs. They are also found to a lesser extent in royal funerary monuments. Since the relationship(s) between these two corpora are not clear,⁵ an in-depth study would be required to reach a better understanding of possible ties between them.

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¹ A few other articles or monographs have occasionally broached the subject.

² Besides providing a philological commentary for each speech, I analyse *Reden und Rufe* in private tombs from the Old Kingdom to the Late Period in order to highlight an unrecognized genre.

³ These questions will be addressed more deeply in a forthcoming article.

⁴ According to el Awady (2009: 50), ‘what has survived from the original body of the Old Kingdom royal relief program hardly represents 1%’.

⁵ Did one influence the other or were they two separate phenomena?