Eloquence of Speech as Expressed on Private Monuments

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ABSTRACT

The theme of the good speech seems to have been a central one in ancient Egypt, highlighting the positive effect of eloquence and rhetorical skills in varied situations. Admiration of the good speech was noticeably articulated in varied forms and expressions. The correct use of the language was conceived as “art”. Notions of the significance of knowing when to speak, how to speak and choosing the words to say were therefore frequently encountered. Therefore, texts alternating between negative declarations and positive affirmations of speaking good were often encountered. Being knowledgeable and skilled were significant qualities echoing a wise attitude. Carefully chosen utterances were opposed to the evil speech. The studied texts shed the light on the lexicographical diversity and the perspective of how eloquence of speech was conceived. The main aim is to consider the wide range of private monuments on which the value and significance of the good speech was recorded, reflecting wisdom and knowledge. Examples were encountered on varied medium such as tomb inscriptions, stelae and statues. The one eloquent of speech was characterized as being ‘skilled in speech’, ‘foremost of speech’, one who speaks in situations of wrath’ and ‘precise when he speaks’. Expressions that designate the good speech were related to the mouth, the tongue and the utterances such as ‘precise of speech’ and ‘wise of tongue’.

1. Introduction

Eloquence of speech was highly valued in the ancient Egyptian society. Being mindful of the uttered words was evidently linked to being knowledgeable. Admiration of the good speech was noticeably articulated in varied forms and expressions. Furthermore, saying what was good was on top of the high officials’ affirmations.1 The correct use of the language was conceived as “art” as evoked by Assmann.2 Notions of the significance of knowing when to speak, how to speak and choosing the words to say were therefore frequently encountered.

1 M. Lichtheim, Moral Values in Ancient Egypt, OBO 155 (Freiburg, 1997), 20.
2 J. Assmann, “Reden und Schweigen”, in W. Helck and E. Otto (eds.), LÄ V (Wiesbaden, 1984), 196.

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Two basic comportments were extremely appreciated in Old Kingdom texts; neither speaking evil, nor doing it. Therefore texts alternating between negative declarations and positive affirmations of speaking good were often recorded on private monuments. Besides, one of the typical values affirmed since the Old Kingdom was the beautiful speaking, and speaking associated with attentive listening.3

2. Declarations of speaking good

Declarations of speaking good were often encountered on private monuments during the Old Kingdom.4 Positive declarations were as well paralleled in the Middle Kingdom,5 where Abydene stelae testify of the growth of vocabulary and the expansion of terminology. ‘Chosen utterances’ stp tβsw6 and ‘excellent utterances’ ikr tβsw7 would make a difference in speaking. Besides, all the speaking competences were layed out as requisites for holding offices.

The good speech was further recorded on private monuments dated to the New Kingdom as mdwt ngmt,9 literally translated ‘the sweet talk’. The expression was interpreted by Sethe as “angenehme Rede”10 (the comfortable talk), as it soothes the heart.

3. Eloquence of speech in the language

The expressions encountered on private monuments are extremely varied in style. Some of them may seem recherché, and do not belong to the usual registers of the language. Yet, particular phrases were more popular, and were thus recurrent in many sources. A conspicuous variety of expressions was elaborated and came into use especially since the Middle Kingdom.

Furthermore, silence was conceived as a virtue that hinders quarrel. Lichtheim further explains “Right silence and right speech have equal value”.11 When a mediator is needed to interfere, the one who appeases the situation was called mdww ‘the one who speaks’ as on the Abydene stela of Ini-it.f, son of %nt (BM EA 581).12

3 Assmann, “Reden und Schweigen”, 195-196.
4 E.g. Urk. I, 200, (4); J. Capart, Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah (Brussels, 1907), pl. 77, 79. (Tomb of Nfr-s$mn-Pth called $ti, Saqqara).
5 E.g. Stela of St joined Hr (BM EA 569). Cf. the text on the stela of S-n-Wsr (Louvre C 170 - E 3110); and that on the stela of hw-Sbk (Manchester 3306).
6 H. Fischer, “The Inscription of In-it.f, born of Tfi”, JNES 19/4 (1960), pl. VI.
7 W. K. Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos: The offering chapels of dynasties 12 and 13, Yale Expedition to Egypt 5 (New Haven - Philadelphia, 1974), pl. 10, (8).
8 Urk. IV, 122, 16, 17 (tomb of P3 hry at El-Kab).
9 The word mdwm can also be translated ‘pleasant, pleasing’, ‘comfortable’. See R. O. Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian (Oxford, 1988), 144.
10 K. H. Sethe, Urkunden der 18. Dynastie. Bearbeitet und übersetzt von Kurth Sethe, IV. Historisch-Biographische Urkunden, (Leipzig, 1914), 60.
11 M. Lichtheim, Moral Values in Ancient Egypt, OBO 155 (Freiburg, 1997), 24.
12 M. Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom: A Study and an Anthology, OBO 84 (Freiburg, 1988), 111, (n. 1)
Reporting well was valued as well; the expression $\text{smi nfr 'report well'}$ was attested in Middle Kingdom inscriptions. The ability to report personally (i.e. with no interference from mediators) was an indicator of wisdom.

Especially on occasions of distress being able to listen and to control what might be said was valued. The good speech would soothe the weeping one $\text{sgr rm.w.}$ Moreover, ‘precision of speech’ $\text{k3 mdw}$ was emphasized as a reason for the ruler’s compensation.

3.1. Expressions attested since the Old Kingdom

- $\text{dd.(i) n m3t 'I spoke what was right'.}$
- $\text{smi m3w 'one) who makes speech right'.}$
- $\text{dd.n.(i) nfr whm.(n.i) nfr 'I spoke what is good, (I) repeated what is good'.}$
- $\text{r(h) r3.f 'one) who knows his speech'.}$

3.2. Expressions attested since the Middle Kingdom

3.2.1. Expressions associated to ‘the mouth’ and/or ‘the speech’ $\text{r3}$

- $\text{r3.(i) ikr.(w) 'my) mouth was excellent'.}$
- $\text{nn isft prt m r3.(i) 'No evil came out of (my) mouth'.}$
- $\text{spd r3 'efficient of speech'.}$
- $\text{r(h).w r3 'who know their speech'.}$

$^{13}$ Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 17 (4, 5), stela of S-n-Wsrt Kt (Louvre C 174 – E 3132). Cf. the parallel text on the Abydene stela of Sít Hr-Hr (BM EA 569): $\text{smi sSm.f nn am 'who reports his actions without forgetting'.}$

$^{14}$ HTBM 2, 23; Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 12, (12), (stela of Ini-iti.f: BM EA 581).

$^{15}$ H. O. Lange and H. Schäfer, Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II, Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du musée du Caire (Nr. 20400-20780) (Berlin, 1908), 90, 91, (12, 13), stela of Hr-nht (Cairo, CG 20499).

$^{16}$ Urk. I, 57, 1, 2. False door in the Giza tomb of Ssm-nfr.

$^{17}$ Urk. I, 260, 1. Lintel in the tomb of Nnki, south Saqara.

$^{18}$ Urk. I, 200, (4); Capart, Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah, pl. 77, 79. Nfr-s Yam called Šhti, Saqqara.

$^{19}$ H. Junker, Gîza VIII. Bericht über die von der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien auf gemeinsame Kosten mit Dr. Wilhelm Pelizaeus unternommenen Grabungen auf dem Friedhof des Alten Reiches bei den Pyramiden von Gîza. VIII. Der Ostabschnitt des Westfriedhofs. Zweiter Teil, Philosophisch-historische Klasse 1947, 73/1 (Wien, 1947), 134-35, Abb. 62, Taf. XXIII b. Mastaba of ʿnḥ-wg3 at Giza.

$^{20}$ Wb II, 389, 5-9.

$^{21}$ Fischer, “The Inscription of In-it.f, born of Tfti”, pl. VI. Stela of Ini-it.f son of Tfti (MMA 57.95).

$^{22}$ J.J. Clère and J. Vandier, Textes de la première période intermédiaire et de la XIe dynastie, BAeg 10 (Brussels, 1948), § 24, (12). Stela of Hwmt (Cairo E. 36346).

$^{23}$ HTBM 2, 23; Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 12, (27). Stela of Ini-it.f son of Snt (BM EA 581). Also Urk. VII, 59, 11 (east wall, southern half, text 248). Tomb-chapel of dd.(i) h*pyn (nr. 1), Assiut.
3.2.2. Expressions associated to ‘the utterance’ $\tau$sw and/or ‘the words’ mdwt, $\varrho$d

- $\tau\overline{h}(w)\; m\overline{d}w\;t$ ‘(one) skilled in speech’.
- $\tau t\overline{p}$ ‘(one) with chosen utterances’.
- $\overline{m}n\overline{t}\; m\; d\;w$ ‘(one) foremost of speech’.
- $\tau\overline{t}\overline{s}(\overline{i}) \; w\overline{s}(w)$ ‘(my) utterance was powerful’.
- $\tau\overline{r}(\overline{i})\; m\overline{d}w\; w\; m\; s\; w\; t\; d\; n$ ‘I was one who speaks in situations of wrath’.
- $\tau r\overline{h}\; \tau s\; (w)$ ‘(I was one) who knew the phrase(s)’.
- $i\overline{k}r\; m\overline{d}(w)\; f$ ‘excellence of his speech’.
- $i\overline{k}r\; \tau\overline{s}\; w$ ‘excellent of utterances’.
- $m\; t\; y\; n\; \varrho\; d\; f$ ‘precise when he speaks’.
- $\tau h\; w\; n\; f\; h\; r\; m\; d\; w\; f$ ‘one on whose speech his lord relies’.
- $i\overline{k}r\; \varrho\; d$ ‘excellent at speaking’.
- $r\; \tau\; \varrho\; d\; (w)$ ‘my mouth was firm’.
- $h\; n\; n\; f\; r$ ‘good speech’.

3.2.3. Expressions associated to ‘the tongue’ ns

- $s[k]m\; n\; s$ ‘wise of tongue; also (one) who makes perfect the tongue’.

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24 HTBM 2, 22, (10). Stela of Ini-iti.f son of Snt (BM EA 572). Also on the stela of MnTw-htp (Cairo CG 20539), verso 20.
25 H. Fischer, “The Inscription of In-it.f, born of Tfi”, pl. VI.
26 H. Fischer, “The Inscription of In-it.f, born of Tfi”, pl. VI.
27 Wb IV, 338, 8 “wählerisch sein”.
28 Clère and Vandier, Textes de la première période intermédiaire et de la XIème dynastie, § 24, (1). Stela of Ini iti.f son of Myt (Ny Carlsberg 1241).
29 Fischer, “The Inscription of In-it.f, born of Tfi”, pl. VI.
30 HTBM 2, 23; Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 12, (10). Stela of Ini-it.f son of Snt (BM EA 581)
31 HTBM 2, 23; Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 12, (10).
32 F. L. Griffith, The inscriptions of Siût and Dêr Rîfeh (London, 1889), 10, pl. 5; Urk. VII, 57-58 (great hall, east wall, southern half, text 242, 243). Tomb-chapel of $df\overline{s}(\overline{i})\; h\; p\; y$ (nr. 1), Assiut.
33 Griffith, The inscriptions of Siût and Dêr Rîfeh, 10, pl. 5; Urk. VII, 57-58 (great hall, east wall, southern half, text 242, 243). Tomb-chapel of $df\overline{s}(\overline{i})\; h\; p\; y$ (nr. 1), Assiut. Also on the stela of Ini iti.f (Louvre C 167 – E 3111).
34 Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 10, (x+3). Stela of Ini iti.f (Louvre C 168).
35 Lange and Schäfer, Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II, 155, (rt. 5). Stela of MnTw-htp (Cairo CG 20539), recto 5.
36 Lange and Schäfer, Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II, 152, (vs. 9). Stela of MnTw-htp (Cairo CG 20539), verso 9.
37 Urk. IV, 118, 13, 14. (Tomb of Pj hry, El-Kab).
38 Wb III, 289, 1, 2; HTBM 2, 23.
The present research concerns mentions of eloquence of speech and rhetorical skills on private monuments. The examples attested are excerpts from private tomb inscriptions, stelae and statues. It is noteworthy that literary tales were not included in the study, being a specific genre of their own; different in both style and composition. The studied texts shed the light on the lexicographical diversity and the perspective of how eloquence of speech was conceived. The main aim is to consider the wide range of private monuments on which the value and significance of the good speech was recorded, reflecting wisdom and knowledge. Illustrative examples were categorized as follows:

I. Positive and negative declarations concerning speech
II. Speaking perfectly/righteously
III. Denial of lies, evil or falsehood
IV. Precision of speech
V. Useful and knowledgeable speech
VI. The effect of good speaking on soothing the heart
VII. The appreciation of being silent in specific situations

I. Positive and negative declarations concerning speech

1. Tomb inscription of Nḥbw

Dating: Old kingdom
Location: Giza

\[
\text{ink dd nfr}^{43} \text{ whm nfr}
\]
\[
n sp dd(.i) ht nb qw r rm\text{f} nb
\]
I am one who speaks what is perfect (and) repeats what is perfect,
Never did (I) say an evil thing against any man.

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40 Clère and Vandier, *Textes de la première période intermédiaire et de la XIème dynastie*, § 24, (1). The text is attested on the stela of Ini iṣ, son of Myt (Ny Carlsberg 1241), and on the stela of Ḥty (Cairo JE 45057).
41 Simpson, *The terrace of the great god at Abydos*, pl. 11, (8). Stela of Ḥfr-Nfrt (Berlin 1204).
42 Uk. IV, 993, 4-8.
43 Uk. I, 219, 6, 7.
44 The word nfr could also denote beautiful or good. See R. B. Parkinson, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant: A Reader’s Commentary*, Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographica 10 (Hamburg, 2012), 4, 8.
2. Tomb inscription of Sḥmt-nśnh
Dating: Fifth Dynasty (Sahure)
Location: Saqqara

\[ n \text{ sp } \text{i} \text{r} \text{i}. \text{i} \text{ ht } \text{nb } \text{d}w \text{r } \text{rmt } \text{nb} \]

Never did I do an evil thing against any man.

3. Tomb inscription of Sḥm-nfr, Giza (nr. 53)
Dating: Fifth Dynasty (Isesi)
Location: False door

\[ n \text{-sp } \text{d}d.(i) \text{ ht } \text{nb } \text{d}w \text{r } \text{rmt } \text{nb } \text{br } \text{hm } \text{n } \text{nb}(i) \]

Never did (I) say anything evil against any man in the presence of (my) lord.

4. Tomb inscription of Tdw Smn (Kasr al Sayad)
Dating: Sixth Dynasty (Pepy II)
Location: inscription above a shaft in the tomb

\[ n \text{ dd.s ts } \text{sn}(i) \]

She did not say a phrase that repelled my heart.

5. Biographical text of nḥ mry Rʿ mry Pth called Nḥbw, Cairo text (JE 44608)
Dating: Sixth Dynasty (Pepy I)
Provenance: Giza chapel, nearby Khufu’s pyramid

The biography belongs to a royal master builder. The text relates to the category of texts concerning the organisation of workmen. The inscriptions mention that the stela owner followed his master’s commands to his satisfaction. He further includes negative declarations of having wrongly behaved towards anyone with whom he dealt.

44 A. Mariette, Les mastabas de l’ancien empire, fragments du dernier ouvrage de A. Mariette, publié d’après le manuscrit de l’auteur par G. Maspero (ed.) (Paris, 1889), 204, 205; Urk. I, 40, 4 (B) false door, right side.
45 LD II, 81.
46 Urk. I, 57, (1, 2).
47 LD II, 114 a.
48 Urk. I, 116, (10).
49 Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 308.
50 Wb IV, 504, 5; Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 269.
51 N. C. Strudwick, Texts from the Pyramid age, R. Leprohon (ed.), Writings from the ancient world 16, (Atlanta, 2005), 189.
52 Urk. I, 215. The chapel had been dismantled and the restored texts were probably originally on either side of a doorway. Strudwick, Texts from the Pyramid age, 265.
n-sp ḏḏ(.i) ḥt nb ḏw n nsw śḥm\textsuperscript{54} ḫ[r] ṛmt nb

Never did (I) say anything evil to a king or a powerful person against any man.

6. **Tomb of Ḥr hw.f, Qubbet el-Hawa**

**Dating:** Sixth Dynasty (Pepy II)

**Location:** Façade, entrance

\[\text{n-sp ḏḏ(.i) ḥt nb ḏw n śḥm ḫ[f] ṛmt nb}\]

I am one who speaks what is perfect (and) repeats what is beloved,

Never did (I) say an evil thing to a powerful person (lit. power he does) against any man.

7. **Stela of Hnwn (Cairo E. 36346)**

**Dating:** Eleventh Dynasty (Intef II, Intef III)

**Provenance:** Thebes, Dra\textsuperscript{c} Abu el-Naga

\[\text{n-sp ḏḏ(.i) ḥt nb śḥm ḫ[f] ṛmt nb}\]

I am one who speaks what is perfect (and) repeats what is perfect, who does a thing the right way.

II. Speaking perfectly/ righteously

8. **Tomb inscription of Ḥnw[k, Deir el-Gebrawi]\textsuperscript{57}**

**Dating:** Fifth or Sixth Dynasty\textsuperscript{58}

**Location:** Deir el-Gebrawi

\[\text{n-k[ ] ḏḏ nfr nḥm}\]

I am Ḥnw[k who speaks what is perfect and sweet.}

\textsuperscript{53} Urk. I, 217, (7).
\textsuperscript{54} Wb IV, 249, 7.
\textsuperscript{55} Urk. I, 122-123, (7).
\textsuperscript{56} Clère and Vandier, *Textes de la première période intermédiaire et de la XIème dynastie*, § 32, (1).
\textsuperscript{57} N. de G. Davies, *The rock tombs of Deir El Gebrâwi*. Part II. *Tomb of Zau and tombs of the northern group*. ASEg 12, (London, 1902), pl. 24.
\textsuperscript{58} Urk. I, 76; Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid age*, 366.
\textsuperscript{59} *Urkh. I, 76, (1).*
9. Tomb inscription of Nfr-sšm-Rc called Șṣi, Saqqara

Dating: Sixth Dynasty (Teti)

Location: Middle jambs of the false door

\[ \text{dd.n.(i) m3t} \quad \text{ir.n.(i) m3t} \]

(I) spoke justice, (I) performed justice;

(I) spoke what is perfect, (I) repeated what is perfect.

10. Tomb inscription of Nfr-sšm-Pth called Șṣi, Saqqara

Dating: Sixth Dynasty (Teti)

Location: tomb facade

It is noteworthy that there are similarities with the text of Nfr-sšm-Rc (tomb no. 224). This is most probably due to the close proximity of both tombs.

\[ \text{dd.n.(i) nfr} \quad \text{wHm.(n.i) nfr} \]

(I) spoke what is perfect, (I) repeated what is perfect.

11. Tomb inscriptions of Nnkt, Saqqara

Dating: Sixth Dynasty (Pepy II)

Location: architrave, lintel

\[ \text{sm3} \quad \text{mdw} \]

(One) who makes speech right.

12. Stela of Ini-itif (Strassburg 345 + Firenze 7595)

Dating: early Eleventh Dynasty

Provenance: Thebes, El-Tarif

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60 PM III², 511, 512.
61 Urk. I, 198, (1); Capart, Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah, pl. 11.
62 PM III², 511, 512.
63 Strudwick, Texts from the Pyramid age, 299.
64 Urk. I, 200, (4); Capart, Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah, pl. 77, 79.
65 PM III², 515, 516.
66 The lintel was in Leipzig (Inv. 359) but is lost. Urk. I, 57; Strudwick, Texts from the Pyramid age, 226.
67 Urk. I, 260, (1).
68 Wb VI, 124, 14.

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Every ruler arrived there. Then, they rejoiced over meeting me, because (my) speech was good.

13. Stela of Ini iti.f (MMA 57.95)
Dating: Eleventh Dynasty

Provenance: probably Thebes

\[ \text{\textit{didi}(w) mdwt r wn.s m}\text{\textit{t}r(h).w) mdwt stp}\]

I was one who gives speech as its true being, one knowledgeable (in) speech, (with) chosen utterances.

14. Stela of Ini iti.f (MMA 57.95)
Dating: Eleventh Dynasty

Provenance: probably Thebes

\[ \text{\textit{mdw}(i) ws\text{\textit{tn.kwi m Dd ib}(i) m\text{\textit{h}} m\text{\textit{k}}\text{\textit{z}} n nb}(i)\]

When (I) speak, I am unrestricted in speaking, my heart is filled of straightness for (my) lord.

15. Tomb-chapel of df\textit{b}(i) h\textit{py} (nr. 1), Assiut
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)

A parallel inscription is in the great hall of the same tomb in Assiut. Being efficient in speech was associated with the good conduct that the king loves.

\[ \text{\textit{spd}} \]

One efficient of speech in the hall of the officials.

16. Tomb-chapel of df\textit{b}(i) h\textit{py} (nr. 1), Assiut
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)

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69 R. Landgráfová, *It is my good name that you should remember: Egyptian biographical texts on Middle Kingdom stelae* (Prague, 2011), 2, (5, 6).
70 Wb III, 40, 12.
71 Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 197.
72 H. Fischer, “The Inscription of In-it.f, born of Tfi”, pl. VI.
73 Wb IV, 338, 8 “wählerisch sein”.
74 Fischer, “The Inscription of In-it.f, born of Tfi”, pl. VI.
75 Wb IV, 233, 9-13.  “richtig redend”; Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 50 ‘exact sense of speech, precise, accurate’.
76 Urk. VII, 59, 11 (east wall, southern half, text 248).
77 Wb IV, 109 “tüchtig”.

[9](https://jaauth.journals.ekb.eg/)
One who subdues wrongdoing (that happened),
one whose excellence brought about his respect,
one unique in confiding to him,
one efficient of heart, excellent of utterances,
one whose excellence was put in the front,
one revered on account of the excellence of his speech, one promoted because of the efficiency of his counsels,
one whom his heart taught to satisfaction.

17. Stela of Ini-itif son of Snt (BM EA 572)

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)

Provenance: Abydos

One who subdues wrongdoing (that happened),
...

F. L. Griffith, The inscriptions of Siût and Dêr Rîfeh (London, 1889), 10, pl. 5; Urk. VII, 57-58 (great hall, east wall, southern half, text 242, 243).

Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 115.

Wb I, 290, 23 "dem das Herz geöffnet wird = dem man etwas anvertraut".

Wb I, 137, 1-15 ‘trefflich, nützlich’.

Wb V, 403, 10-21 ‘Spruch, Ausspruch, Rede’.

Wb II, 129, 12.

HTBM 2, 22, (10).
(I was) a uniquely efficient one, excellent of counsel, who agrees with the words of those who know their speech.\footnote{Compare with the stela of Ini-iti.f son of Snt (BM EA 572): HTBM 2, 21, (10).}

18. Stela of \textit{Mnwp-wsr} (MMA 12.184)

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)

Provenance: Abydos

\begin{align*}
\text{} & \text{ink mdw r r-\textsuperscript{c} srw \textit{sw.y m \textit{qd p3w}}.}\footnote{Landgráfová, \textit{It is my good name that you should remember}, 130, (13).}
\end{align*}

I am one who speaks according to the art of the officials,\footnote{The precise meaning of \textit{p3w} is not clearly determined. See Landgráfová, \textit{It is my good name that you should remember}, 132, n. (242). M. Lichtheim (\textit{Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom: A Study and an Anthology}, OBO 84 (Freiburg, 1988), 105, n. (4) translates ‘gossip’.} one free of saying that (i.e. improper speech).

19. Stela of \textit{Ini ti.t.f} (Louvre C 167 – E 3111)

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)

Provenance: Abydos

\begin{align*}
\text{} & \text{w3h-ib ikr t3sw.}\footnote{Landgráfová, \textit{It is my good name that you should remember}, 130, (13).}
\end{align*}

A kindly one, excellent of utterances.

20. Stela of \textit{Snt Ht-Hr} (BM EA 569)

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Amenemhat II)

Provenance: Abydos

\begin{align*}
\text{} & \text{mry nb.f m\textsuperscript{c} n st-ib.f \textit{qd nfrt whm mrrt}.}\footnote{Simpson, \textit{The terrace of the great god at Abydos}, pl. 10, (8).}
\end{align*}

One truly beloved of his lord, his trusted one, who speaks what is good and repeats what is beloved, who does what the lord of the two lands praise, who reports his actions without forgetting.

21. Stela of \textit{S-n-Wsrt} (Louvre C 170 – E 3110)

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert II)
22. **Tomb inscriptions of the Nomarch Imn-m-h3t**

**Dating:** Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)

**Location:** Beni Hassan, tomb no. 2 (UE 16), portico

\[\text{dd(f) \text{nfrt whm mrrt ir ht n tp nfr}}\]

(One) who says what is good and repeats what is beloved, one who does things right.

23. **Inscription of K3rs, Thebes**

**Dating:** Eighteenth Dynasty (Amenhotep I)

**Location:** Dra' Abu el-Naga, Thebes (actually in Cairo)

\[\text{nn wn hnt} \quad \text{m ht.f} \quad \text{dd.f m mdt m35t}\]

There is no greed in his body,

what he speaks is truth.

24. **Tomb inscriptions of Inni, Thebes**

**Dating:** Eighteenth Dynasty

**Location:** Sheikh Abd el Qurna, Thebes

Among the titles of Inni the following related to his qualifications as the king’s adviser.

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92 PM VIII, 83 (803-026-601).
93 Landgrafová, *It is my good name that you should remember*, 202, 203 (5).
94 Wb V, 286, 3-6 ‘richtig (handeln)’.
95 The inscription is on the right door post.
96 A. H. Gardiner, Late-Egyptian Miscellanies, BAe 7, (Brussels, 1937), 101, rto. (3,1).
97 Wb III, 121, 12.
98 **Urk.** IV, 47, 9.
99 Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*. Bearbeitet und übersetzt von Kurth Sethe, IV. Historisch-Biographische Urkunden, (Leipzig, 1914), 25 “vortrefflich im Reden”.
100 **Urk.** IV, 47, 11.

https://jaauth.journals.ekb.eg/
Excellent in speaking for the heart of the king, (with) perfect tongue.  

25. **Tomb inscriptions of P3 hry, El-Kab**

Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty (Thutmosis III)

Location: livestock census

His son, his beloved, the excellent scribe truly, (with) perfect tongue.

26. **Tomb of P3 hry, El-Kab**

Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty (Thutmosis III)

Speaking about his moral conduct P3 hry mentions that his mouth was firm.

My mouth was firm, concerning what was excellent for the lord.

---

101 Urk. IV, 67, 12, 13.
102 Cf. Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*. Bearbeitet und übersetzt von Kurth Sethe IV, 35.
103 J. J. Tylor and F. L. Griffith, *Ahnas el Medineh (Heracleopolis Magna); with Chapters on Mendes, the Nome of Thot, and Leontopolis*. *The Tomb of Paheri at El Kab*, MEEF 11 (London, 1894), 125.
104 Urk. IV, 127, 14, 15.
105 Wb IV, 317, 2-11.
106 Cf. Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*. Bearbeitet und übersetzt von Kurth Sethe IV, 62.
107 Urk. IV, 118, 13, 14.
108 Wb II, 412, 10.
109 Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*. Bearbeitet und übersetzt von Kurth Sethe IV, 58.
III. Denial of lies, evil or falsehood

27. Tomb inscription of Hnkw, Deir el-Gebrawi

Dating: end of Fifth Dynasty or beginning of Sixth Dynasty

Location: Deir el-Gebrawi

\[n \dd(\dd) \grg \im \text{(?)\]}

(I) did not speak lies therein.

28. Tomb of P3 hry, El-Kab

Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty (Thutmosis III)

\[dd.i \ntn \grg \im\]

I speak to you,

without lies therein.\textsuperscript{113}

29. Tomb inscriptions of the sculptor Dhwty

Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty

Location: Kom el Ahmar (Hierakonpolis)

The sculptor Dhwty was praised for not speaking wrong or falsehood as follows:

\[n \pr.n \isft \mr \rf\]

There was no falsehood that came out of his mouth.\textsuperscript{115}

30. Tomb of P3 hry, El-Kab

Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty (Thutmosis III)

\[mdwt \ndmt \nt \sd\by\-\hr\]

\textsuperscript{110} Urk. I, 79, (24).

\textsuperscript{111} Wb II, 189, 2; Faulkner, \textit{A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian}, 290 “falsehood, lie”.

\textsuperscript{112} Urk. IV, 118, 13, 14.

\textsuperscript{113} Cf. Sethe, \textit{Urkunden der 18. Dynastie}. Bearbeitet und übersetzt von Kurth Sethe IV, 59 “Ich rede zu euch, ohne dass Lüge darin ist”.

\textsuperscript{114} Urk. IV, 131, 11.

\textsuperscript{115} Sethe, \textit{Urkunden der 18. Dynastie}. Bearbeitet und übersetzt von Kurth Sethe IV, 64.

\textsuperscript{116} Urk. IV, 122, 16, 17.

\textsuperscript{117} Wb IV, 15, 379, 12, 13.
A sweet speech of a pleasant conversation. The heart will not cease (lit. be full) to hear it.\textsuperscript{119}

31. Inscription of the vizier $P\tilde{s}$ $sr$, Theban tomb 106
Dating: Nineteenth Dynasty (Ramsses II)
Location: pillar D in broad hall, face A

\begin{quote}
\vspace{-0.5cm}
\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
$\ddot{\text{\textcircled{\textbullet}}} \text{\textbullet}$ $\ddot{\text{\textbullet}} \text{\textbullet}$ $\text{\textbullet}$
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{n dd.i grg rh.i}
\end{quote}

I have told no lie knowingly (lit. ‘I know’).\textsuperscript{121}

IV. Precision of speech

32. Stela of $Hny$ (Moscow, Pushkin Museum I.i.a. 1137 a, b)
Dating: Eleventh Dynasty (Intef II)
Provenance: Thebes, El-Tarf

\begin{quote}
\vspace{-0.5cm}
\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
$\ddot{\text{\textbullet}} \ddot{\text{\textbullet}} \ddot{\text{\textbullet}} \ddot{\text{\textbullet}}$
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{n sp ir rmt nb m r\textasciitilde{i} smt\textsuperscript{123}(i) n nb(i) ds.i}
\end{quote}

Never did a man act as (my) mouth, (I) reported to (my) lord myself.
The text conveys the meaning that the stela owner never had a mediator to talk for him (lit. act as his mouth). Reporting personally to the lord was a privilege he enjoyed; definitely because of the precision of his speech.

33. Stela of $MnTw-htp$ (Cambridge E.9.1922)
Dating: early Twelfth Dynasty
Provenance: Abydos

\begin{quote}
\vspace{-0.5cm}
\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
$\ddot{\text{\textbullet}} \ddot{\text{\textbullet}} \ddot{\text{\textbullet}} \ddot{\text{\textbullet}}$
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{gm t\textasciitilde{s} wsd.t(w) f ir f w\textashir{\textbullet} b m-sp r sp\textsuperscript{125} f}
\end{quote}

(I was) one who found the (right) phrase when he was asked for it, one who gives (lit. he gives) the answer at once and to the point.

34. Stela of $Tnl ltt.f$ (Louvre C 168)
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)

\begin{quote}
\vspace{-0.5cm}
\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
$\ddot{\text{\textbullet}} \ddot{\text{\textbullet}} \ddot{\text{\textbullet}} \ddot{\text{\textbullet}}$
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Wb VI, 128, 14.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{M. F. Petrie, Tombs of the courtiers and Oxyrhynchos, BSAE 37 (London, 1925), pl. XXII.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Wb III, 435, 4.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Clère and Vandier, Textes de la première période intermédiaire et de la XIème dynastie, § 17, (7).}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{KRI III, 5, 8.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{KRITA III, 4, 5:5.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Sethe, Urkunden der 18. Dynastie. Bearbeitet und übersetzt von Kurth Sethe IV, 60.}
\end{quote}
Provenance: Abydos

Being precise and accurate was as well a significant qualification repeatedly emphasized in biographies. In the following text it was further associated with speaking.

\( \text{\( h^c.w \) r mty n dd.f nn wn ss} \)

(One) who stands precise when he speaks without it being written.

35. Stela of Hr-nht (Cairo, CG 20499)
Dating: Second Intermediate Period

Provenance: Tell Edfou

\( \text{rdi.n i hkt wblyt} \)

The ruler gave me a beautiful servant for the precision of my speech.

36. Granite statue of Mn-hpr-Rc-snb (Cairo 547)
Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty

Provenance: Abydos

\( \text{\( k^3 \) st ns} \)

(One) precise in speech.

V. Useful and knowledgeable speech
37. Tomb inscription of Sfm nfr
Dating: Fifth Dynasty (Isesi)

Location: Giza, tomb no. 53

\( \text{wn(.i) dd(.i) hr nswt h n rm} \)

n sp dd(.i) ht nb dw r rm n nb(.i)

\( \text{126 Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 10, (x+3).} \)
\( \text{127 S. Kubisch, Lebensbilder der 2. Zwischenzeit: Biographische Inschriften der 13.-17. Dynastie,} \)
\( \text{SDAIK 34 (Berlin-New York, 2008), 224.} \)
\( \text{128 Lange and Schäfer, Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II, 90, 91, (12,} \)
\( \text{13) \).
\( \text{129 Wb I, 292, 7 \‘Diener‘.} \)
\( \text{130 Urk. IV, 993, 6.} \)
\( \text{131 Wb II, 320, 16 \‘Stelle der Zunge‘.} \)
\( \text{132 Urk. I, 57, 15, 16.} \)
(I) used to tell the king what serves people, 
never did (I) tell an evil thing against any person to the majesty of (my) lord.

38. **Mastaba of ㈜-wDg**\(^{133}\)
**Dating:** Sixth Dynasty
**Location:** Giza

\[\text{ink } 3ḥ ikṛ ṛḥ riplina]\(^{134}\)

I am an excellent spirit, who knows his speech.

39. **Stela of D₃rI** (Cairo JE 41437)
**Dating:** Eleventh Dynasty (Intef II)
**Provenance:** Thebes, Dra\(^c\) Abu el-Naga

Providing sustenance for the country was part of D₃rI’s career. The text on the stela relates that the ruler caused him to fare down in order to acquire barley (*r irt wnmt nt it-šm†*). He was caused to do that because his speech was beautiful and because of being knowledgeable.

\[\text{n ṛḥ mdt(.i) nfr dd.i}\]

Because (my) words were knowledgeable and my speech was good.

40. **Stela of Ini iti.f** (MMA 57.95)
**Dating:** Eleventh Dynasty
**Provenance:** probably Thebes

\[\text{riplina } ikr(.w) tšs(.i) wsr(.w)}\]

(My) mouth was excellent, (my) word was powerful.

41. **Stela of Ini iti.f son of Myt** (Ny Carlsberg 1241)
**Dating:** Eleventh Dynasty (Mentuhotep II)
**Provenance:** Thebes, Dra\(^c\) Abu el-Naga

\[\text{ḥnty mdw sbk shr s[k]m ns}\]

\(^{133}\) PM III, 167.
\(^{134}\) Junker, *Giza* VIII, 134-35, Abb. 62, Taf. XXIIIb.
\(^{135}\) Clère and Vandier, *Textes de la première période intermédiaire et de la XIème dynastie*, § 14, (4, 5).
\(^{136}\) See W. Schenkel, *Memphis - Herakleopolis - Theben: die epigraphischen Zeugnisse der 7.-11. Dynastie Ägyptens*, AA 12 (Wiesbaden, 1965), 100.
\(^{137}\) Fischer, “The Inscription of In-it.f, born of Tfi”, pl. VI.
\(^{137}\) Clère and Vandier, *Textes de la première période intermédiaire et de la XIème dynastie*, § 24, (1).
(One) foremost of speech, wise of counsel, who makes perfect the tongue.

42. **Stela of Hty (Cairo JE 45057)**
   
   **Dating:** late Eleventh Dynasty

   **Provenance:** Thebes, El-Tarif

   \[skm\ ns\ m\ sh\ n\ srw\]

   (I was) wise of tongue in the hall of officials.

43. **Stela of Mntw-htp (Cairo CG 20539), recto 5**

   **Dating:** Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)

   **Provenance:** Abydos

   \[gm\ t\is\ sn\dm\ ksn\]

   One who finds the phrase (i.e. the right phrase), who eases what is difficult. One on whose speech his lord relies (lit. his lord relies on his speech).

44. **Stela of Mntw-htp (Cairo CG 20539), recto 15**

   **Dating:** Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)

   **Provenance:** Abydos

   \[w\]e\ h\w\ w\ n\f\ m\dw\ f\]

   The unique one who protects good speech.

45. **Stela of Mntw-htp (Cairo CG 20539), verso 5**

   **Dating:** Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)

   **Provenance:** Abydos

   In the following text wisdom was expressed by stating that Thot has written on the stela owner’s tongue.

   \[ss\ n\ dh\w\ ty\ h\ r\ ns\ f\]

   Thot had written on his tongue.

---

138 Landgráfová, *It is my good name that you should remember*, 54, (7).
139 Lange and Schäfer, *Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo* II, 150-158, (rt. 5).
140 Wb V, 71, 1.
141 Lange and Schäfer, *Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo* II, 150-158, (rt. 15).
142 Lange and Schäfer, *Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo* II, 150-158, (vs. 5).
46. Stela of Mn\textsuperscript{nw}-\textit{htp} (Cairo CG 20539), verso 20

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)

Provenance: Abydos

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{[ink 3h]} \text{i}kr \text{rh } r\text{3.f} \\
\text{iw rh.i } 3 [ht \text{ m hrt-nfr}]
\end{array}\]

[I am] an excellent [spirit], knowing his speech.

I know the useful [in the necropolis].

47. Stela of S-n-Wsrt K\textit{tt} (Louvre C 174 – E 3132)

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty

Provenance: most probably Abydos\textsuperscript{144}

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{ink s3} \text{146 mdd w3t} \text{147 smi nfr n h3b sw}
\end{array}\]

I am wise and faithful (lit. who follows the way, i.e. loyal), one who reports good to the one who sent him.

48. Stela of \textit{d2w Sbk} (BM EA 566)

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty

Provenance: Abydos

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{si3 s r tpt-r3.f}
\end{array}\]

(One) who knows a man according to his speech.

49. Stela of \\textit{Tbr-Nfrt} (Berlin 1204)

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert III)

Provenance: Abydos

\textit{Tbr-nfrt} recorded that his majesty appointed him as ‘courtier’ \textit{smr} while still young (aged twenty six), because of the reasons that he states in the text as follows.

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{149}
\end{array}\]

\textsuperscript{143} Lange and Schäfer, \textit{Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II}, 150-158, (vs. 20).

\textsuperscript{144} Simpson, \textit{The terrace of the great god at Abydos}, 6.

\textsuperscript{145} Simpson, \textit{The terrace of the great god at Abydos}, pl. 17 (4, 5).

\textsuperscript{146} Faulkner, \textit{A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian}, 208.

\textsuperscript{147} \textit{Wb} II, 192, 4 ‘dem Weg jemds folgen, ihm ergeben sein’.

\textsuperscript{148} HTBM 4, pl. 37 (3).

\textsuperscript{149} Simpson, \textit{The terrace of the great god at Abydos}, pl. 11, (8).
ikr shr spd ns
(One) excellent of plans and sharp of tongue,

50. Stela of hw-Sbk (Manchester 3306)
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert III)
Provenance: Abydos

\[ \text{id nfr whm mrrt m hrt-hrw nt r^c nb} \]
(One) who says perfection and repeats what is beloved in the course of every day.

51. Stela of %Htp-ib-Rc (Cairo CG 20538), recto 6
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert III, Amenemhat III)
Provenance: Abydos

\[ \text{id nfrwt whm mrrt} \]
One who says good things and repeats what is beloved.

52. Stela of Hr-nht (Cairo, CG 20499)
Dating: Second Intermediate Period
Provenance: Tell Edfou

\[ \text{sm h rw n sr hr mdw.f} \]
(One who) walks quietly for (?) the nobleman because of his speech.

53. pLansing = pBM EA 9994 (rto. 3, 1)
Dating: Twentieth Dynasty
Provenance: Thebes, west bank

\[ \text{spd r3.k <hr> šdI} \]

\[ ^{150}\text{Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 31, (1).} \]
\[ ^{151}\text{Lange and Schäfer, Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II, 145-150 (rt. 6).} \]
\[ ^{152}\text{Kubisch, Lebensbilder der 2. Zwischenzeit: Biographische Inschriften der 13.-17. Dynastie, 224.} \]
\[ ^{153}\text{Lange and Schäfer, Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II, 90, 91, (11, 12).} \]
\[ ^{154}\text{Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 159.} \]
\[ ^{155}\text{Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 159.} \]
\[ ^{156}\text{Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 235.} \]
\[ ^{157}\text{Gardiner, Late-Egyptian Miscellanes, 101, rto. (3,1).} \]
\[ ^{158}\text{Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 273.} \]
Your mouth is effective\textsuperscript{159} (i.e. eloquent) \textit{upon} reading.\textsuperscript{160}

\textbf{54. Statue of the vizier P3 \textit{sr} (Philadelphia UM E. 534+)}

\begin{flushleft}
\textbf{Dating}: Nineteenth Dynasty (Ramsses II)
\textbf{Provenance}: Deir el Bahari, Metuhotep temple
\textbf{Location}: texts on the front
\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image1.png}
\end{center}
\begin{center}
\textit{mh \textit{nḥwy}}\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Hr m m\textit{ḥt}}
\end{center}
\begin{center}
\textit{hr.tw hr pr n r3.f}
\end{center}
(One) who fills the ears of Horus (i.e. the king) with truth,
one is satisfied with what comes from his mouth.\textsuperscript{163}

\textbf{55. Naophorous cube-statue of P3 \textit{ḥr pdt}, \textsuperscript{164} (Brussels E. 8063)}

\begin{flushleft}
\textbf{Dating}: Nineteenth Dynasty (Ramsses II)
\textbf{Location}: Naos left side
\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image2.png}
\end{center}
\begin{center}
\textit{htp di nsw Hr \textit{s.f nsw tḥwy di.k \textit{ḥt} nfr m iḥtw nfr}
\textit{iw r3 wd3 iwt r st.s}}
\end{center}
An offering which the king gives to Herishef, king of the two lands, that you may give a happy lifetime, with a happy old age,
The mouth being sound, the step being at its (proper) place.\textsuperscript{166}

\textbf{56. Inscription on the door lintel of Mry \textit{Tm}, \textsuperscript{167}}

\begin{flushleft}
\textbf{Dating}: Nineteenth Dynasty (Ramsses II)
\textbf{Location}: actually in Kestner Museum, Inv. 1925.186
\textbf{The inscriptions express that he may be granted the mouth to be sound and that his step be placed in the proper place.}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{159} Faulkner, \textit{A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian}, 223, 224.
\textsuperscript{160} M. Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, Bd. 2, The New Kingdom (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1976), 168, 169; N. Take, \textit{Verspunkte als Gliederungsmittel in ramessidischen Schülerhandschriften}, SAGA 21 (Heidelberg, 2001), 88, 89.
\textsuperscript{161} \textit{KRI} III, 17, 10.
\textsuperscript{162} Faulkner, \textit{A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian}, 44.
\textsuperscript{163} \textit{KRI} III, 14, 17:10.
\textsuperscript{164} \textit{P3 hḥr pdt} was the King’s steward.
\textsuperscript{165} \textit{KRI} III, 181, 8-9.
\textsuperscript{166} \textit{KRI} III, 126, 181:5.
\textsuperscript{167} Lieutenant of Chariotry.
\end{footnotesize}
The mouth being sound, and the step being at its (lit. their) (proper) place.\textsuperscript{169}

VI. The effect of good speaking on soothing the heart

57. Stela of \textit{Rdiw \textit{hn}nw} (Cairo CG 20543)

\begin{flushright}
\textit{Dating: Eleventh Dynasty (Intef II)}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushleft}
Provenance: Dendera
\end{flushleft}

When good speaking is reciprocated in letting others speak up and express what is in their hearts, it is conceived as a graceful attitude. Containing others, especially those who would complain or feel unsatisfied is in this sense a good comportment.

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{sbt-}\textit{hr} \textsuperscript{171} n spr.\textit{ti r qd.f ntt m ib.f}
\end{flushleft}

(I was one) friendly to the one who comes so that he might say what is in his heart.

58. Stela of \textit{Ini-\textit{iti.f}} son of \textit{Snt} (BM EA 581)

\begin{flushright}
\textit{Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushleft}
Provenance: Abydos
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{ink sf\textit{n.w} \textsuperscript{173} sdm.i rn.i n qd n(i)} wnnt m ib.i
\end{flushleft}

I was gentle when I heard my name to the one who told (me) what was in his heart.

59. Stela of \textit{Ini-\textit{iti.f}} (BM EA 581)

\begin{flushright}
\textit{Dating: Twelfth Dynasty}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushleft}
Provenance: Abydos
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{sgr rm.w m \textit{hn} \textsuperscript{176} nfr}
\end{flushleft}

(One) who soothed the weeping (one) with a good speech.

60. Stela of \textit{Ini-\textit{iti.f}} (BM EA 581)

\begin{flushright}
\textit{Dating: Twelfth Dynasty}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{\textsuperscript{168} KRI III, 243, 4.}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{\textsuperscript{169} KRITA III, 173, 181:5.}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{\textsuperscript{170} Lange and Schäfer, \textit{Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II}, 165, (5).}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{\textsuperscript{171} Wb III, 434, 10 ‘lachenden Gesichts, freundlich’.}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{\textsuperscript{172} HTBM 2, 23; Simpson, \textit{The terrace of the great god at Abydos}, pl. 12, (11).}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{\textsuperscript{173} Wb III, 443, 2-12.}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{\textsuperscript{174} Obviously ib\textit{i} is to be rendered ib<f>.}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{\textsuperscript{175} HTBM 2, 23; Simpson, \textit{The terrace of the great god at Abydos}, pl. 12, (12).}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{\textsuperscript{176} Wb III, 289, 1, 2.}
\end{flushleft}

URL: https://jaauth.journals.ekb.eg/
Provenance: Abydos

Offices held by Ini-itif son of Snt required competences such as consideration and attentiveness. He was supposed to perform multiple tasks, instructing officials and dealing with specific matters and petitions.177

spd r3 m swt hns-ib179

(One) efficient of speech on occasions of suffering.

VII. The appreciation of being silent in specific situations

61. Stela of Ini-itif (BM EA 581)
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty

Provenance: Abydos

ink gr n ḏnd180

I was one silent with the angry.

62. Stela of Ini-itif (BM EA 581)
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty

Provenance: Abydos

Speaking on occasions where there is anger required wisdom and careful listening rather than speaking. This is what was expressed by Ini-itif on his stela, confirming his ability to deal with difficult situations.

ink mdww m swt ḏnd182

I was one who speaks in situations of anger.

63. Stela of Wp-wḏwt-ś (Leiden V4 = AP 63)
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)

Provenance: Abydos

ink gr.w m-m srw ḏḏ.w rḏ.f sḏ.w iwt.f

177 Lichtheim, Moral Values in Ancient Egypt, 81.
178 HTBM 2, 23; Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 12, (27).
179 The expression swt hns-ib concretely means ‘places’, yet it is used to denote abstract situations. See Wb III, 116, 12-16; M. Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom: A Study and an Anthology, OBO 84 (Freiburg, 1988), 111, (n. 2).
180 HTBM 2, 23; Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 12, (8).
181 Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 323 “angry man”.
182 HTBM 2, 23; Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 12, (10).
183 Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 30, (9).
I was a silent one among the officials, one of whom it was said ‘await that he comes’.

64. Stela of Mnw-ḥtp (Cairo CG 20539), recto 5
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)
Provenance: Abydos

ḥmt rṣ.f ḥr sḏm.f
One whose mouth is closed (lit. sealed) at what he hears.

65. Stela of Mnw-ḥtp (Cairo CG 20539), verso 5
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)
Provenance: Abydos

didi pr snwy ḥtp m pr.w n rṣ.f
(One) who caused the two contenders to go out satisfied because of the speech of his mouth.

66. Stela of Mnw-ḥtp (Cairo CG 20539), verso 9
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)
Provenance: Abydos

nfr sḏm ḫr ḫd
(One) good at listening and excellent at speaking.

67. Stela of Mnw-ḥtp (Cairo CG 20539), verso 14
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)
Provenance: Abydos

mdw ṣ ḫr.w.f m pr bITY
ḥry ṣgr n šnwT

184 Lange and H. Schäfer, Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II, 150-158, (rt. 5).
185 Lange and H. Schäfer, Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II, 150-158, (vs. 5).
186 Lange and H. Schäfer, Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II, 150-158, (vs. 9).
187 Lange and H. Schäfer, Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II, 150-158, (vs. 14).
188 Wb IV, 498, 3; Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 268.
(One) who speaks according to his voice in the house of the king, master of silence of the entourage.

68. Stela of Shtp-ib-Rc (Cairo CG 20538), recto 6
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert III, Amenemhat III)
Provenance: Abydos

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{w}^\text{h}-ib \text{ iwty snw.f nfr sdny ikr dd}
\end{array} \]
A kind one without his equal, good of listening, excellent of speaking.

69. Inscription of K3rs, Thebes
Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty (Amenhotep I)
Location: Dra\textsuperscript{e} Abu el-Naga, Thebes (actually in Cairo)

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{htm r}^3 \text{ hr sdmt.f}
\end{array} \]
(One) who closes the mouth concerning what he hears.\textsuperscript{191}

70. Tomb biographical inscriptions of Inni, Thebes
Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty
Location: Sheikh Abd el Qurna, Thebes

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{hsp r}^3 \text{ hr} \text{ hrt pr-nsw nhr wd3 snb}
\end{array} \]
(One with) covered mouth (i.e. who keeps silent) concerning the matters of the house of the king (i.e. the palace), may he live, be prosperous and healthy.\textsuperscript{194}

71. Statue of the vizier P3 sr\textsuperscript{195} standing, holding figure of Ptah (Cairo, CGC 630)
Dating: Nineteenth Dynasty (Ramsses II)
Provenance: Memphis
Location: texts on dorsal pillar, rear, right side

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\end{array} \]

\textsuperscript{189} Lange and H. Schäfer, \textit{Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II},145-150 (rt. 7).
\textsuperscript{190} \textit{Urk.} IV, 47, 11.
\textsuperscript{191} Sethe, \textit{Urkunden der 18. Dynastie}. Bearbeitet und übersetzt von Kurth Sethe, IV, 25.
\textsuperscript{192} \textit{Urk.} IV, 63, 15.
\textsuperscript{193} Faulkner, \textit{A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian}, 163 \[ \begin{array}{c}
hsp \text{h} \text{ip hr r/hr 'keep silent about'}; \text{ Sethe, } \textit{Urkunden der 18. Dynastie}. Bearbeitet und übersetzt von Kurth Sethe, IV, 33, n. 4 “der seinen Mund verschlossen hält”.
\textsuperscript{194} Sethe, \textit{Urkunden der 18. Dynastie}. Bearbeitet und übersetzt von Kurth Sethe, IV, 33.
\textsuperscript{195} Owner of Theban tomb 106.
\textsuperscript{196} \textit{KRI} III, 13, 10.
\textit{h3p h4}^{197} \textit{hr shrw},^{198} \textit{ch}

(One) silent concerning the counsels of the palace.\textsuperscript{199}

5. Conclusion

When the speaking is beautiful, the character is beautiful; a principle revealed by the texts, establishing what might be called ‘moral vocabulary’. The theme of the good speech seems to have been a central one recorded on private monuments, highlighting the positive effect of eloquence and rhetorical skills in varied situations. The study reveals significant illustrative examples highlighting how high officials were extremely keen to declare their ability to speak well among other competences. Recording such skills was encountered on private monuments since the Old Kingdom and continued through the Middle and the New Kingdoms.

Being knowledgeable and skilled were significant qualities echoing a wise attitude. Carefully chosen utterances \textit{stp t3sw} were opposed to the evil speech \textit{qd d bin} which reveals ignorance.\textsuperscript{200} The good speech was described as \textit{nfr} ‘good, beautiful’, \textit{wsr} ‘powerful’, \textit{stp} ‘chosen’, \textit{rh} ‘known’, \textit{spd} ‘efficient, sharp’, \textit{ikr} ‘excellent’ and \textit{3k3} ‘precise’.

The texts were recorded on varied medium; tomb inscriptions, stelae and statues. They form a stylistic register of the language embodying varied ways of articulating speeches. Positive declarations of saying what was good for people were attested starting from the Old Kingdom. The declarations continued to be encountered in Middle Kingdom biographies. Both expressions of contrasting affirmations of speaking well and of disclaiming speaking evil were encountered. Negative declarations were paralleled in varied sources. Examples occur in the Giza tomb inscriptions of \textit{S3m nfr},\textsuperscript{201} and \textit{N3hw}.\textsuperscript{202} Variants of the negative declaration of not speaking evil against people were attested as well.\textsuperscript{203}

Affirmations of not saying ‘lies’ \textit{ggr}\textsuperscript{204} (ex. 27, 28, 31) or ‘falsehood’ \textit{isft}\textsuperscript{205} (ex. 29) were encountered in several texts. Not only was the good speech appreciated, but also being silent when needed was praised. In this sense \textit{htm r3} ‘(one who closes the mouth’ (ex. 64, 69) and \textit{h3p r3} ‘(one with) covered mouth’ (ex. 70) were valued attitudes.

The terms and expressions used to denote eloquence of speech set the basic pattern for the characteristics of the good speaking. Officials’ biographies, especially during the

197 Faulkner, \textit{A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian}, 163.
198 Faulkner, \textit{A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian}, 242, 243.
199 \textit{KRITA} III, 11, 13:10.
200 Lichtheim, \textit{Moral Values in Ancient Egypt}, 24.
201 \textit{Urk.} I, 57, 15, 16.
202 \textit{Urk.} I, 219, 6, 7.
203 E.g. \textit{Urk.} I, 57, (1, 2). (\textit{S3m-nfr}, False door in his tomb at Giza).
204 \textit{Urk.} IV, 118, 13, 14.
205 \textit{Urk.} IV, 131, 11.
206 \textit{Urk.} IV, 63, 15. (Tomb biographical inscriptions of \textit{Inni}, Thebes).
Twelfth Dynasty, summed up the necessity of mastering how to talk by emphasizing the following:

- precision of speech
- soothing the heart
- perfecting the tongue
- becoming wise

The one eloquent of speech was characterised as being knowledgeable ḥₚ(w) mdwₚ ‘skilled in speech’, ḥnty mdw ‘foremost of speech’, mdwₚ m swt qnd ‘one who speaks in situations of wrath’ and mty n ḥdf ‘precise when he speaks’.

The good words would not disturb the heart (ex. 4, 14, 57, 58). They were related to Mḥfr (ex. 9, 22, 54) and to righteousness ḳḥ (ex. 14, 35, 36). They cause the ruler to rejoice ḥfr (ex. 12). Being selective in choosing utterances was praised (ex. 13). It might be deduced that the excellent utterances would be those who fulfil the formerly described characteristics.

Expressions that designate the good speaking were related to the mouth, the tongue and the utterance. Among the examples encountered ḥₚ nfr²⁰⁷ ‘the good speech’ was attested since the Middle Kingdom, ḥₚ st ns²⁰⁸ ‘place of the tongue’ was attested in the form ḥₚ ḥₚ ḥₚ st ns²⁰⁹ ‘precise of speech’ and ḥₚ st ns²¹⁰ ṣₚ ‘wise of tongue’. Precision of speech and chosen utterances convey the meaning of voicing the speaker’s wisdom and maturity. This was echoed on the Abydene stela of MnTw-Htp (Cairo CG 20539), where Thot was mentioned as having written on the stela owner’s tongue (ex. 45).²¹¹

The declarations follow a simple tone in self-presentations. The parallelism of the expressions is evident. Yet, the broad range of varied expressions and richness of vocabulary is impressive. Rhetorical skills seem to have been typical of an official’s professional requirement of a highly stylized composed portrayal of virtuousness and wisdom. The texts clearly illustrate the types of behaviour expected of the leaders, where self-expression as a medium to resolving stressful situations was appreciated.

Mastering philological expressions would lead to calming intensely troubled situations. Wisdom in talking would prevent greed; and would enable paraphrasing the demands in ways that would lead to dissolving arguments. Controlling speech, dealing with adversity and reconciliation would usually lead to the wished for ‘happy end’.

²⁰⁷ Wb III, 289, 1, 2; HTBM 2, 23.
²⁰⁸ Wb II, 320, 16 ‘Stelle der Zunge’.
²⁰⁹ E.g. Statue of Mn-hpr-Reₚ-snb (Cairo 547).
²¹⁰ Wb IV, 317, 2-11 “vollständig machen, beenden”; Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 251. E.g. Stela of Ḥty (Cairo JE 45057).
²¹¹ Lange and Schäfer, Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II, 150-158, (vs. 5).
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فصاحة الحديث كما تم التعبير عنها على الآثار الخاصة

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المملوكتين

إن موضوع الحديث الطيب يعد أحد الموضوعات المحورية في مصر القديمة، بما يعكس من التأثير الإيجابي للفصاحة والمهارات البلاغية في المواقف المختلفة. وقد تم التعبير عن فصاحة الحديث بوضوح من خلال تعبيرات وصيغ متنوعة، بل لقد كان الاستخدام الصحيح للغة يعد بمثابة "فن". فقد تناولت نصوص عديدة ذكر الأهمية الخاصة لإدراك مدى يمكن التعبير بالكلام، وكيف يتم استخدام الكلام وكيفية اختيار الكلمات. ومن ثم فإن النصوص تتنوع ما بين التأكيد الإيجابي عن الحديث الطيب والمنفي المرتبط بما يقابله سلبًا. ولقد كانت كل من المعرفة والمهارة في الحديث تعد خصائص مهمة تعكس الحكمة. وأما الكلام المختار بعناية فهو على النقيض من الحديث السيء، والنصوص التي تمت دراستها في هذا الصدد تتبقي الضوء على التنوع في التعبيرات، وكذلك على الكيفية التي يتم من خلالها إدراك قيمة فصاحة الحديث، والهدف الأساسي هو الوقوف على التنوع العريض للمصادر المسجلة على الآثار الخاصة والتي تبرز قيمة وأهمية الكلام الطيب، والتي تعكس الحكمة والمعرفة. وقد وردت العديد من الأمثلة على آثار خاصة متنوعة مثل النصوص المسجلة في المقامات، واللوحات والتماثيل. ولقد تم وصف الشخص الذي يتم بصفة الحديث بأنه "الموهوب في الحديث"، "المتقدم في الحديث"، "الذي يتحدث في المواقف الصعبة"، أو "الذي يتم بالدقة عندما يتحدث". واتبعت التعبيرات التي استخدمت للإشارة إلى الحديث الطيب بالفم واللسان والكلام، مثل "دقيق الحديث" و"حكم اللسان".