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.
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’ ḫw nsw⁶ and ‘excellent utterances’ ỉkṛ tḥsw⁷ 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 ḫw nDmt⁸, literally translated ‘the sweet talk’. The expression was interpreted by Sethe as “angenehme Rede”⁹ (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 ḫw nDmt ‘the one who speaks’ as on the Abydene stela of Ini-iti.f son of Snt (BM EA 581).¹²

⁴ E.g. Urb. I, 200, (4); J. Capart, Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah (Brussels, 1907), pl. 77, 79. (Tomb of Nfr-sḥm-Pḥ called Ṣṭḥ, Saqqara).
⁵ E.g. Stela of Ṣḥt Hr-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 Tḥt”, JNES 19/4 (1960), pl. VI.
⁸ Urb. IV, 122, 16, 17 (tomb of Pḥ hry at El-Kab).
⁹ The word ḫw nDm can also be translated ‘pleasant, pleasing’, ‘comfortable’. See R. O. Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian (Oxford, 1988), 144.
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 \( s\text{mi} nfr \) ‘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 \( s\text{gr} \text{rm.w} \). Moreover, ‘precision of speech’ \( k3 \text{mdw} \) was emphasized as a reason for the ruler’s compensation.

3.1. Expressions attested since the Old Kingdom

- \( dd(i) \text{ m3t} \) ‘(I) spoke what was right’.
- \( sm3\text{r} \text{mdw} \) ‘(one) who makes speech right’.
- \( dd.n(i) \text{nfr} \text{whm}(n.i) \text{nfr} \) ‘(I) spoke what is good, (I) repeated what is good’.
- \( r\text{h} r\text{j.f} \) ‘(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’ \( r\text{3} \)

- \( r\text{3}(i) \text{ikr}(w) \) ‘(my) mouth was excellent’.
- \( nn \text{isft prt m} r\text{3}(i) \) ‘No evil came out of (my) mouth’.
- \( spd r\text{3} \) ‘efficient of speech’.
- \( r\text{h}.w \text{r3} \) ‘who know their speech’.

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13 Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 17 (4, 5), stela of S-n-Wsrt Ktt (Louvre C 174 – E 3132). Cf. the parallel text on the Abydene stela of \( %\text{At @t - @r} \) (BM EA 569): \( s\text{mi} s\text{smt.f} \text{nn} \text{m-n-ib} \) ‘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). 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 S\text{sm-nfr}.
17 Urk. I, 260, 1. Lintel in the tomb of Nnki, south Saqara.
18 Urk. I, 200, (4); Capart, Une rue de tombbeaux à Saqqarah, pl. 77, 79. Nfr-s\text{sm}-Pth called \( S\text{ti} \), Saqara.
20 Wb II, 389, 5-9.
21 Fischer, “The Inscription of In-it.f, born of Tfi”, pl. VI. Stela of Init.i.f son of Tfi (MMA 57.95).
22 J.J. Clère and J. Vandier, Textes de la première période intermédiaire et de la X\text{le} dynastie, BAeg 10 (Brussels, 1948), § 24, (12). Stela of \( Hnwn \) (Cairo E. 36346).
23 HTBM 2, 23; Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 12, (27). Stela of Ini-it.i.f son of Snt (BM EA 581). Also Urk. VII, 59, 11 (east wall, southern half, text 248). Tomb-chapel of \( df(i) h\text{bpy} \) (nr. 1), Assiut.

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3.2.2. Expressions associated to ‘the utterance’ $\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{s}_{w}$ and/or ‘the words’ $\mathfrak{m}\mathfrak{d}_{w}, \mathfrak{q}\mathfrak{d}$

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

3.2.3. Expressions associated to ‘the tongue’ $\mathfrak{n}_{s}$

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

24 HTBM 2, 22, (10). Stela of Ini-it.i.f son of $\mathfrak{S}_{n}t$ (BM EA 572). Also on the stela of Mn$\mathfrak{t}_{w}$-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 it.i.f son of $\mathfrak{M}_{y}t$ (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.i.f son of $\mathfrak{S}_{n}t$ (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 $\mathfrak{d}\mathfrak{f}(i) \mathfrak{h}_{r}\mathfrak{p}_{y}$ (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 $\mathfrak{d}\mathfrak{f}(i) \mathfrak{h}_{r}\mathfrak{p}_{y}$ (nr. 1), Assiut. Also on the stela of Ini it.i.f (Louvre C 167 – E 3111).
34 Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 10, (x+3). Stela of Ini it.i.f (Louvre C 168).
35 Lange and Schäfer, Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II, 155, (rt. 5). Stela of Mnt$\mathfrak{t}_{w}$-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 Mnt$\mathfrak{t}_{w}$-htp (Cairo CG 20539), verso 9.
37 Urk. IV, 118, 13, 14. (Tomb of P$\mathfrak{h}_{r}$ry, El-Kab).
38 Wb III, 289, 1, 2; HTBM 2, 23.
4. Textual corpus

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

\[ \text{ink } dd \text{ nfr}^{43} \text{ whm nfrt} \]
\[ \text{n sp } dd(i) \text{ lt } nb \text{ } dqw \text{ r rmf } nb \]

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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39 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 iti.f son of Myt (Ny Carlsberg 1241), and on the stela of Hfry (Cairo JE 45057).
41 Urk. IV, 993, 4-8.
42 Urk. I, 219, 6, 7.
43 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 Shmt-n-\u03c9nh
Dating: Fifth Dynasty (Sahure)
Location: Saqqara

\[ n\ sp\ isi.i\ htr\ nb\ dw\ r\ rmt\ nb \]
Never did I do an evil thing against any man.

3. Tomb inscription of S\u00e6m-nfr, Giza (nr. 53)\textsuperscript{45}
Dating: Fifth Dynasty (Isesi)
Location: False door

\[ n-sp\ dd(.i)\ htr\ nb\ dw\ r\ rmt\ nb\ hr\ hm\ n\ nb(.i) \]
Never did (I) say anything evil against any man in the presence of (my) lord.

4. Tomb inscription of Tdw Sn\u00f1i (Kasr al Sayad)\textsuperscript{47}
Dating: Sixth Dynasty (Pepy II)
Location: inscription above a shaft in the tomb

\[ n\ dd.s\ ts\ ^{49}\ sn\ ^{50} ib(.i) \]
She did not say a phrase that repelled my heart.\textsuperscript{51}

5. Biographical text of \u03c9nh mry R\u00fc mry Pth called N\u00f8bw, Cairo text (JE 44608)
Dating: Sixth Dynasty (Pepy I)
Provenance: Giza chapel, nearby Khufu’s pyramid\textsuperscript{52}
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.

\textsuperscript{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; \textit{Urk.} I, 40, 4 (B) false door, right side.
\textsuperscript{45} LD II, 81.
\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Urk.} I, 57, (1, 2).
\textsuperscript{47} LD II, 114 a.
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Urk.} I, 116, (10).
\textsuperscript{49} Faulkner, \textit{A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian}, 308.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Wb IV}, 504, 5; Faulkner, \textit{A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian}, 269.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Urk.} I, 215. The chapel had been dismantled and the restored texts were probably originally on either side of a doorway. Strudwick, \textit{Texts from the Pyramid age}, 265.
6. Tomb of Hr hw.f, Qubbet el-Hawa
Dating: Sixth Dynasty (Pepy II)
Location: Façade, entrance

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

7. Stela of Hnwn (Cairo E. 36346)
Dating: Eleventh Dynasty (Intef II, Intef III)
Provenance: Thebes, Dra Abu el-Naga

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

II. Speaking perfectly/ righteously

8. Tomb inscription of Hnk, Deir el-Gebrawi
Dating: Fifth or Sixth Dynasty
Location: Deir el-Gebrawi

I am Hnk who speaks what is perfect and sweet.

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54 Wb IV, 249, 7.
56 Clère and Vandier, Textes de la première période intermédiaire et de la XIème dynastie, § 32, (1).
58 Urk. I, 76; Strudwick, Texts from the Pyramid age, 366.
59 Urk. I, 76, (1).
9. Tomb inscription of *Nfr-sšm-Rc* called Ṣši, Saqqara\(^{60}\)

**Dating:** Sixth Dynasty (Teti)

**Location:** Middle jambs of the false door

\[
\text{dd.n.(i) m3\textlangle i\rangle t \at n.(i) m3\textlangle i\rangle t}
\]

\[
\text{dd.n.(i) nfr \at whm.n.(i) nfr}
\]

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

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

10. Tomb inscription of *Nfr-sšm-Pth* called Ṣši, Saqqara\(^{62}\)

**Dating:** Sixth Dynasty (Teti)

**Location:** tomb facade

It is noteworthy that there are similarities with the text of *Nfr-sšm-Rc* (tomb no. 224).\(^{63}\)

This is most probably due to the close proximity of both tombs.

\[
\text{dd.n.(i) nfr \at whm.(n.i) nfr}
\]

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

11. Tomb inscriptions of *Nnki*, Saqqara\(^{65}\)

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

**Location:** architrave, lintel\(^{66}\)

\[
\text{sm3\textlangle n\rangle k mdw}
\]

(One) who makes speech right.

12. Stela of *Int-itti* f (Strassburg 345 + Firenze 7595)

**Dating:** early Eleventh Dynasty

**Provenance:** Thebes, El-Tarif

\[
\text{pm iii 2, 511, 512.}
\]

\[
\text{Urk. I, 198, (1); Capart, Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah, pl. 11.}
\]

\[
\text{pm iii 2, 511, 512.}
\]

\[
\text{Strudwick, Texts from the Pyramid age, 299.}
\]

\[
\text{Urk. I, 200, (4); Capart, Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah, pl. 77, 79.}
\]

\[
\text{pm iii 2, 515, 516.}
\]

\[
\text{The lintel was in Leipzig (Inv. 359) but is lost. Urk. I, 57; Strudwick, Texts from the Pyramid age, 226.}
\]

\[
\text{Urk. I, 260, (1).}
\]

\[
\text{Wb VI, 124, 14.}
\]
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

\[\text{didi}(w) \text{ mdwt } r \text{ wn.s } m3^r \text{ rh}(w) \text{ mdwt stp} \]

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

\[\text{mdw}(.i) \text{ ws}tn.kwi m \text{ dd} \text{ ib}(i) \text{ mh m } ^{\text{ak}}3 \text{ nb}(i)\]

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

15. Tomb-chapel of dfβ(.i) h²py (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.

\[\text{spd} \]

One efficient of speech in the hall of the officials.

16. Tomb-chapel of dfβ(.i) h²py (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.
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.
76 Urk. VII, 59, 11 (east wall, southern half, text 248).
77 *Wb* IV, 109 “tüchtig”.

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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-iti f son of Snt (BM EA 572)
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)

Provenance: Abydos

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.

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


Wb I, 290, 23 *wb* ḫn ḫt ṭḥ *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.\textsuperscript{85}

18. Stela of \textit{Mntw-wsr} (MMA 12.184)
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)

Provenance: Abydos

\textsuperscript{86}

\textit{ink mdw rf r-ṣrw šw.y m  qed pḥw.}\textsuperscript{87}

I am one who speaks according to the art of the officials,\textsuperscript{88} one free of saying that (i.e. improper speech).

19. Stela of \textit{Ini tti.f} (Louvre C 167 – E 3111)
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)

Provenance: Abydos

\textsuperscript{89}

\textit{wḥ-ib ikr tḥsw}

A kindly one, excellent of utterances.

20. Stela of \textit{Sḥt Ht-Hr} (BM EA 569)
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Amenemhat II)

Provenance: Abydos

\textsuperscript{90}

\textit{mṛy nb.f mṣ n st-ib.f ḏḏ nfrt ṣḥḤm mrrt}

\textit{ir ḥsst nb-thw smi sšm.f nn ṣm ḭb}\textsuperscript{91}

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-Wṣrt} (Louvre C 170 – E 3110)
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert II)

\textsuperscript{85} Compare with the stela of \textit{Ini-tti.f} son of \textit{Snt} (BM EA 572): HTBM 2, 21, (10).

\textsuperscript{86} Landgráfová, \textit{It is my good name that you should remember}, 130, (13).

\textsuperscript{87} The precise meaning of \textit{pḥw} 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’.

\textsuperscript{88} Cf. Lichtheim (\textit{Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom}, 105, (n. 4).

\textsuperscript{89} Simpson, \textit{The terrace of the great god at Abydos}, pl. 10, (8).

\textsuperscript{90} HTBM 2, pl. 19-20 (9, 10).

\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Wb} I, 184, 16, 17 ‘\textit{ṣm} ‘wissen, erfahren’. See also \textit{Wb} I, 184, 14 ‘\textit{ṣm ḭb} ‘das Herz verschluckt etw. = hält es geheim’.
Provenance: probably Abydos.\textsuperscript{92}

\textit{dd}\{\textit{f}\} \textit{nfrt whm mrtr ir ht n tp nfr}.\textsuperscript{94}

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

\textbf{22. Tomb inscriptions of the Nomarch Imn-m-H\textit{3t}}

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)

Location: Beni Hassan, tomb no. 2 (UE 16), portico.\textsuperscript{95}

\textit{nn wn hnt}\textsuperscript{97} \textit{m ht f}

\textit{ddf m mdt m\textit{3t}}

There is no greed in his body, what he speaks is truth.

\textbf{23. Inscription of \textit{K\textit{3rs}}, Thebes}

Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty (Amenhotep I)

Location: Dra\textsuperscript{r} Abu el-Naga, Thebes (actually in Cairo)

\textit{mn\textit{h dd}}

Excellent (in) speaking.\textsuperscript{99}

In the same text, another inscription specifies \textit{K\textit{3rs}}’ ability to deal with what is heard as being confidential and therefore never speaks of it.\textsuperscript{100}

\textbf{24. Tomb inscriptions of \textit{Inni}, Thebes}

Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty

Location: Sheikh Abd el Qurna, Thebes

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

\textsuperscript{92} PM VIII\textsuperscript{3}, 83 (803-026-601).

\textsuperscript{93} Landgrafová, \textit{It is my good name that you should remember}, 202, 203 (5).

\textsuperscript{94} Wb V, 286, 3-6 \textit{n tp nfr ir ht} ‘richtig (handeln)’.

\textsuperscript{95} The inscription is on the right door post.

\textsuperscript{96} A. H., Gardiner, \textit{Late-Egyptian Miscellanies}, BAe 7, (Brussels, 1937), 101, rto. (3,1).

\textsuperscript{97} Wb III, 121, 12.

\textsuperscript{98} Urk. IV, 47, 9.


\textsuperscript{100} Urk. IV, 47, 11.
Excellent in speaking for the heart of the king, (with) perfect tongue.\textsuperscript{102}

\textbf{25. Tomb inscriptions of \textit{P3 hry}, El-Kab\textsuperscript{103}}

\textbf{Dating:} Eighteenth Dynasty (Thutmosis III)

\textbf{Location:} livestock census

\textit{sn.f mry.f s$s$ ikr n wn m3$}

\textbf{skm}\textsuperscript{105} \textbf{ns}

His son, his beloved, the excellent scribe truly, (with) perfect tongue.\textsuperscript{106}

\textbf{26. Tomb of \textit{P3 hry}, El-Kab}

\textbf{Dating:} Eighteenth Dynasty (Thutmosis III)

Speaking about his moral conduct \textit{P3 hry} mentions that his mouth was firm.

\textit{r3.l rwd$($w$)\textsuperscript{108}}

\textit{hr smnh n nb}

My mouth was firm, concerning what was excellent for the lord.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{101} Urk. IV, 67, 12, 13.
\textsuperscript{103} J. J. Tylor and F. L. Griffith, \textit{Ahnas el Medineh (Heracleopolis Magna): with Chapters on Mendes, the Name of Thot, and Leontopolis / The Tomb of Paheri at El Kab}, MEEF 11 (London, 1894), 125.
\textsuperscript{104} Urk. IV, 127, 14, 15.
\textsuperscript{105} Wb IV, 317, 2-11.
\textsuperscript{107} Urk. IV, 118, 13, 14.
\textsuperscript{108} Wb II, 412, 10.
III. Denial of lies, evil or falsehood

27. Tomb inscription of Hnw, Deir el-Gebrawi

Dating: end of Fifth Dynasty or beginning of Sixth Dynasty

Location: Deir el-Gebrawi

\[ n \text{ dd(.) grg}^{110} \text{ im (?)} \]

(I) did not speak lies therein.

28. Tomb of P3 hry, El-Kab

Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty (Thutmose III)

\[ d\text{d.i n.tn} \]

\[ n \text{ grg im} \]

I speak to you,

without lies therein.\(^{113}\)

29. Tomb inscriptions of the sculptor Dhwy

Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty

Location: Kom el Ahmar (Hierakonpolis)

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

\[ n \text{ pr.n isft m r3.f} \]

There was no falsehood that came out of his mouth .\(^{115}\)

30. Tomb of P3 hry, El-Kab

Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty (Thutmose III)

\[ m\text{dwt ngrmt nt s3y-hr}^{117} \]

\(^{111}\) Wb II, 189, 2; Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 290 “falsehood, lie”.
\(^{112}\) Urk. IV, 118, 13, 14.
\(^{114}\) Urk. IV, 131, 11.
\(^{115}\) Sethe, Urkunden der 18. Dynastie. Bearbeitet und übersetzt von Kurth Sethe IV, 64.
\(^{116}\) Urk. IV, 122, 16, 17.
\(^{117}\) 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 $P3\ sr$, Theban tomb 106
Dating: Nineteenth Dynasty (Ramsses II)
Location: pillar D in broad hall, face A
\begin{equation}
\text{n dd.i grg rh.i}
\end{equation}
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-Tarif
\begin{equation}
\text{n sp ir rmt nb m r3(.i) smt}^{123}(.)i \text{ n nb(.i) ds.i}
\end{equation}
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{equation}
\text{gm t's wsd.t(w).f ir.f w}^{125}b \text{ m-sp r} \text{ sp}
\end{equation}
(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 $Tnl lt.f$ (Louvre C 168)
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{118} \text{Wb IV, 15, 13, 14.}
\textsuperscript{119} \text{Sethe, } Urkunden der 18.Dynastie. \text{Bearbeitet und übersetzt von Kurth Sethe IV, 60.}
\textsuperscript{120} \text{KRI III, 5, 8.}
\textsuperscript{121} \text{KRITA III, 4, 5:5.}
\textsuperscript{122} \text{Clère and Vandier, } Textes de la première période intermédiaire et de la XIème dynastie, § 17, (7).
\textsuperscript{123} \text{Wb VI, 128, 14.}
\textsuperscript{124} \text{M. F. Petrie, } Tombs of the courtiers and Oxyrhynchos, BSAE 37 (London, 1925), pl. XXII.
\textsuperscript{125} \text{Wb III, 435, 4.}
\end{footnotes}
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{\( ^{\text{i}}\text{h}^{\text{c}}.w \text{ r mty n dd.f n wn s\&} \)} \]

(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{\( \text{rdi.n n.i hk}^{\text{3}} \text{ wb}^{\text{3}} \text{yt} \)} \]

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

36. Granite statue of \( Mn-bpr-Rc-sn\)b (Cairo 547)
Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty

Provenance: Abydos

\[ \text{\( ^{\text{c}}\text{k}^{\text{3}} \text{ st ns} \)} \]

(One) precise in speech.

V. Useful and knowledgeable speech

37. Tomb inscription of \( S\text{m nfr} \)
Dating: Fifth Dynasty (Isesi)

Location: Giza, tomb no. 53

\[ \text{\( \text{wn(.i) dd(.i) hr nswt 3h n rmt} \)} \]

\[ \text{\( n sp dd(.i) ht nb dw r rmt nb hr hm n nb(.i) } \]

---

126 Simpson, The terrace of the great god at Abydos, pl. 10, (x+3).
128 Lange and Schäfer, Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II, 90, 91, (12, 13).
129 Wb I, 292, 7 \( \text{\( ^{\text{w}}\text{b}^{\text{3}} \text{yt} \)} \) ‘Dienerin’.
130 Urk. IV, 993, 6.
131 Wb II, 320, 16 \( \text{\( ^{\text{w}}\text{b}^{\text{3}} \text{yt} \)} \) ‘Stelle der Zunge’.
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 ʿnb-wdub
Dating: Sixth Dynasty
Location: Giza

ink 3h ikr rr r3.f

I am an excellent spirit, who knows his speech.

39. Stela of D3ri (Cairo JE 41437)
Dating: Eleventh Dynasty (Intef II)
Provenance: Thebes, Dra 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 i rt wnmt nt it-šm). He was caused to do that because his speech was beautiful and because of being knowledgeable.

n rh 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

r3(.i) ikr(.w) t3s(.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 Abu el-Naga

lnty mdw sbk shr s[k]m ns

---

133 PM III, 167.
136 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 ḫty (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 Mnḥw-ḥtp (Cairo CG 20539), recto 5
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)
Provenance: Abydos

\[ gm \, tś \, snqm \, ksn \]

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 Mnḥw-ḥtp (Cairo CG 20539), recto 15
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)
Provenance: Abydos

\[ w\, ḫw\, w\, nfr\, mdwt \]

The unique one who protects good speech.

45. Stela of Mnḥw-ḥtp (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.

\[ ss\, n\, dhwty\, hr\, ns\, f \]

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.
142 Lange and Schäfer, *Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo* II, 150-158, (vs. 5).
46. Stela of Mnpw-htp (Cairo CG 20539), verso 20
   Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)
   Provenance: Abydos
   \[\text{[ink 3h]} \ ikr rh r3.f \]
   \[\text{iw rh.i 3[ht m hrt-nfr]}\]
   [I am] an excellent [spirit], knowing his speech.
   I know the useful [in the necropolis].

47. Stela of S-n-Wsrt Ktt (Louvre C 174 – E 3132)
   Dating: Twelfth Dynasty
   Provenance: most probably Abydos\(^{144}\)
   \[\text{ink s3}^{146} \ mdd w3t^{147} \ smi nfr n h3b sw \]
   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 Ddw %bk (BM EA 566)
   Dating: Twelfth Dynasty
   Provenance: Abydos
   \[\text{siA s r tpt-r3.f} \]
   (One) who knows a man according to his speech.

49. Stela of Ixr-Nfrt (Berlin 1204)
   Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert III)
   Provenance: Abydos
   Ixr-nfrt recorded that his majesty appointed him as ‘courtier’ smr while still young
   (aged twenty six), because of the reasons that he states in the text as follows.

\(^{143}\) Lange and Schäfer, *Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo* II, 150-158, (vs. 20).
\(^{145}\) Simpson, *The terrace of the great god at Abydos*, pl. 17 (4, 5).
\(^{146}\) Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 208.
\(^{147}\) *Wb* II, 192, 4 ‘dem Weg jemds folgen, ihm ergeben sein’.
\(^{148}\) HTBM 4, pl. 37 (3).
\(^{149}\) Simpson, *The terrace of the great god at Abydos*, pl. 11, (8).
iqr shrt spd ns
(One) excellent of plans and sharp of tongue,

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

(dd nfr wHm mrrt m hrt-hrw nt r° nb)
(One) who says perfection and repeats what is beloved in the course of every day.

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

(dd 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

(šm hrw n s r 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

(spd r3.k <hr> ̄šdl)

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150 Simpson, *The terrace of the great god at Abydos*, pl. 31, (1).
151 Lange and Schäfer, *Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo II*, 145-150 (rt. 6).
157 Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanea*, 101, rto. (3.1).
Your mouth is effective\(^{159}\) (i.e. eloquent) upon reading.\(^{160}\)

**54. Statue of the vizier P\(3\) sr (Philadelphia UM E. 534+)**

Dating: Nineteenth Dynasty (Ramsses II)

Provenance: Deir el Bahari, Metuhotep temple

Location: texts on the front

\(^{161}\)

\[ mh \ cnhwy \ Hr \ m \ m\ is \ t \]
\[ hr. tw \ hr \ pr \ n \ r\ 3 \ f \]

(One) who fills the ears of Horus (i.e. the king) with truth,

one is satisfied with what comes from his mouth.\(^{163}\)

**55. Naophorous cube-statue of P\(3\) hry p\(d\)t,\(^{164}\) (Brussels E. 8063)**

Dating: Nineteenth Dynasty (Ramsses II)

Location: Naos left side

\(^{165}\)

\[ htp \ di \ nsw \ Hr \ s.f \ nsw \ t\ 3 \ wy \ di. k \ c \ h \ c \ nfr \ m \ l\ is \ wt \ nfr \]
\[ iw \ r\ 3 \ wd\ 3 \ iwt \ r \ st. s \]

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.\(^{166}\)

**56. Inscription on the door lintel of M\(r\)y Tm\(^{167}\)**

Dating: Nineteenth Dynasty (Ramsses II)

Location: actually in Kestner Museum, Inv. 1925.186

The inscriptions express that he may be granted the mouth to be sound and that his step be placed in the proper place.

\(^{159}\) Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 223, 224.


\(^{161}\) KRI II, 17, 10.

\(^{162}\) Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 44.

\(^{163}\) KRIITA III, 14, 17:10.

\(^{164}\) P\(3\) hry p\(d\)t was the King’s steward.

\(^{165}\) KRIITA III, 181, 8-9.

\(^{166}\) KRIITA III, 126, 181:5.

\(^{167}\) Lieutenant of Chariotry.
The mouth being sound, and the step being at its (lit. their) (proper) place.\textsuperscript{169}

\textbf{VI. The effect of good speaking on soothing the heart}

\textbf{57. Stela of Rdw hnmw (Cairo CG 20543)}

Dating: Eleventh Dynasty (Intef II)

Provenance: Dendera

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{center}
\textit{sbt-\textsuperscript{171} hr\textsuperscript{171} n spr.ti r qdl.f ntt m ib.f}
\end{center}

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

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

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I)

Provenance: Abydos

\begin{center}
\textit{ink sf\textsuperscript{173} n 3dm.i r n qdl n(i) wnnt m ib.i}
\end{center}

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

\textbf{59. Stela of Ini-itj.f (BM EA 581)}

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty

Provenance: Abydos

\begin{center}
\textit{sgr rm.w m hnt\textsuperscript{176} nfr}
\end{center}

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

\textbf{60. Stela of Ini-itj.f (BM EA 581)}

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty

\begin{center}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\end{center}

\textit{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.  

spd r3 m swt hns-ib  

(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

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 qnd

I was one who speaks in situations of anger.

63. Stela of Wp-w3wt-3 (Leiden V4 = AP 63)

Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)

Provenance: Abydos

ink gr.w m-m srw qd.w r3.f s3.w iwt.f

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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 Mn̲w-ḥtp (Cairo CG 20539), recto 5
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert I, Amenemhat II)
Provenance: Abydos

\[ htm \ r3.f \ hr \ sdmt.f \]
One whose mouth is closed (lit. sealed) at what he hears.

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

\[ didi \ pr \ snwy \ htp \ m \ pr.w \ n \ r3.f \]
(One) who caused the two contenders to go out satisfied because of the speech of his mouth.

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

\[ nfr \ sdm \ ikr \ dd \]
(One) good at listening and excellent at speaking.

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

\[ mdw \ r \ hrw.f \ m \ pr \ bity \]
\[ hry \ sgr \ n \ šnwt \]

185 Lange and H. Schäfer, *Grab und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo* II, 150-158, (vs. 5).
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-Rā (Cairo CG 20538), recto 6  
Dating: Twelfth Dynasty (Senusert III, Amenemhat III)  
Provenance: Abydos  

\[\text{wḥ-ib ḫwy } sny.f nfr sdḥ ikɾ ḏl\]

A kind one without his equal, good of listening, excellent of speaking.

69. Inscription of K3rš, Thebes  
Dating: Eighteenth Dynasty (Amenhotep I)  
Location: Draʿ Abu el-Naga, Thebes (actually in Cairo)

\[\text{ḥtn r3 } ḫr sdḥti } \]

(One) who closes the mouth concerning what he hears.

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

\[\text{ḥṯp r3 } ḫr \text{ ḫrt pr-nsw } ʰnḥ wḏ3 snb} \]

(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.

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

\[\text{ḥṯp r3 } ḫr \text{ ḫrt pr-nsw } ʰnḥ wḏ3 snb} \]

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190 *Urk. IV*, 47, 11.
192 *Urk. IV*, 63, 15.
195 Owner of Theban tomb 106.
196 *KRI* III, 13, 10.
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 \( stp \ t3sw \) were opposed to the evil speech \( qdl \ bin \) which reveals ignorance.\(^{200}\) The good speech was described as \( nfr \ ‘good, beautiful’ \), \( wsr \ ‘powerful’ \), \( stp \ ‘chosen’ \), \( rh \ ‘known’ \), \( spd \ ‘efficient, sharp’ \), \( ikr \ ‘excellent’ \) and \( \text{"k3 ‘precise’} \).

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 \( Ssm \ nfr \)\(^{201}\) and \( Nhbw \)\(^{202}\). Variants of the negative declaration of not speaking evil against people were attested as well.\(^{203}\)

Affirmations of not saying ‘lies’ \( grg \)\(^{204}\) (ex. 27, 28, 31) or ‘falsehood’ \( isft \)\(^{205}\) (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 \( \text{"hmt r3 ‘(one who closes the mouth’) (ex. 64, 69) and ‘(one with) covered mouth’ (ex. 70) were valued attitudes.} \)

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, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 163.

\(^{198}\) Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 242, 243.

\(^{199}\) KRITA III, 11, 13:10.

\(^{200}\) Lichtheim, Moral Values in Ancient Egypt, 24.

\(^{201}\) Urk. I, 57, 15, 16.

\(^{202}\) Urk. I, 219, 6, 7.

\(^{203}\) E.g. Urk. I, 57, (1, 2). (\( Ssm-nfr \), False door in his tomb at Giza).

\(^{204}\) Urk. IV, 118, 13, 14.

\(^{205}\) Urk. IV, 131, 11.

\(^{206}\) Urk. IV, 63, 15. (Tomb biographical inscriptions of \( Inni \), 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 \( rh(w) mdwt \) ‘skilled in speech’, \( hnty mdw \) ‘foremost of speech’, \( md\bar{w}w m swt dnd \) ‘one who speaks in situations of wrath’ and \( mty n dlf \) ‘precise when he speaks’.

The good words would not disturb the heart (ex. 4, 14, 57, 58). They were related to \( M\ddash st \) (ex. 9, 22, 54) and to righteousness \( 'k\beta \) (ex. 14, 35, 36). They cause the ruler to rejoice \( h^\gamma.y \) (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 \( \overleftrightarrow{\text{mnh nfr}} \) ‘the good speech’ was attested since the Middle Kingdom, \( \overleftrightarrow{\text{st ns}} \) ‘place of the tongue’ was attested in the form \( \overleftrightarrow{\text{km3 st ns}} \) ‘precise of speech’ and \( skm \) ‘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 \( Mn\bar{w}-htp \) (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 \( Mn-hpr-R^\alpha-sn\beta \) (Cairo 547).
\(^{210}\) Wb IV, 317, 2-11 “vollständig machen, beenden”; Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, 251. E.g. Stela of \( Hty \) (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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في 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". لقد 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 سليماً. 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 تلقى الضوء على الت نوع في التعبيرات، وكذلك على الكلمية التي يتم من خلالها إدراك قيمة فصاحة الحديث. والهدف الأساسي هو الوقوف على الت نوع العريض للمصادر المسجلة على الآثار الخاصة والتي تبرز قيمة وأهمية الكلام الطيب، والتي تعكس الحكمة والمعرفة. ولقد وردت العديد من الأمثلة على آثار خاصة متنوعة مثل النصوص المسجلة في المفاخر واللوحات التماثيل. ولقد تم وصف الشخص الذي يتم بفصاحة الحديث بأنه "الموهوب في الحديث"، "المنتمي في الحديث"، الذي يتحدث في المواقف الصعبة، والذي يتم بالثقة عندما يتحدث. وارتبثت التعبيرات التي استخدمت للإشارة إلى الحديث الطيب بالغم واللسان والكلام، مثل "دقائق الحديث" و "حكيم اللسان".

معلومات المقالة

الفصاحة؛ المهارات البلاغية؛ الآثار الخاصة؛ الدقة؛ التعبيرات.

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