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The Development of the Justice System in Ancient Egypt from the Old to the Middle Kingdom

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Preface

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

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Note on citations and appendices

To effectively navigate through the present work, the reader should be aware of the system employed herein to link the principal content to supporting evidence in the two appendices. Appendix I contains the title strings of all officials known to have been associated with the concepts of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and/or *sḏm* in the Old and Middle Kingdoms. Officials are listed and numbered in alphabetical order within each Kingdom, and these numbers are then cited in the main text. For instance, a reference to OK26 would denote the 26th entry in the Old Kingdom section of Appendix I, while MK5 represents the 5th entry in the Middle Kingdom section. In cases where multiple officials from the same time period are cited, the letters at the start of the citation refer to all. For example OK15, 19, 41, would refer to three Old Kingdom officials whose title strings bear the corresponding numbers in that section. This method of referencing title strings allows even long lists of individuals sharing particular titles or affiliations to be listed without need for lengthy footnotes, and also offers a convenient way of alluding to particular officials on the bar graphs of chapters 3 and 4. In these cases, the 'OK' or 'MK' designation is typically suppressed for reasons of space, since the graph title makes it apparent which period is being addressed.

Appendix I also has a distinctive system of visual coding to provide readers with a clearer insight into the extent to which each official may have specialised in judicial matters. Titles mentioning *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and/or *sḏm* are given in bold, while other titles commonly symptomatic of a connection with justice are marked with a star (*)[1]. Titles with no apparent link to justice are written in standard black. The numbers of titles in these three categories within each title string correspond to the composition of the stacked bars in the graphs of chapters 3 and 4, which are labelled accordingly.

Appendix II contains descriptions of traditional forms of justice in 19th and early 20th Century Egypt, used for ethnographic purposes in chapter 2. These descriptions are arranged and numbered in chronological order based on the date they were written. When cited, they have a prefix of 'D' – thus, 'D9' would correspond to the 9th ethnographic description in Appendix II.

[1] For information on the criteria used to determine if a title should be classed as having judicial connotations for the purposes of this study, see pp. 29-31 (including fn. 24) in the *Methodology* section of Chapter 1 in the present work.

Note on rendering of names, titles and concepts

The names of well-known deities, prominent individuals (mostly Pharaohs) and places are consistently translated in line with the conventions of English-speaking Egyptology throughout the main text of this work for ease of comprehension (e.g. *Ḥw.t-Ḥr* is referred to as Hathor, *Ppỉ* as Pepy, and *Nḫn* as Hierakonpolis). On the other hand, the names of non-royal individuals, whose names for the most part do not exist in widely accepted Anglicised versions, are given in transliteration in the main text. Egyptian titles, concepts, and names of institutions are also denoted in transliteration rather than Anglicised form (e.g. *Mỉʿ.t* and *ḥp*, not Maat and Hep), and these terms are also generally favoured over English translations to avoid excessive anachronism. However, such English translations are nonetheless occasionally offered in the main text in places where assigning an English meaning significantly adds clarity to the discussion – e.g. the connection of *ḫnr.t* to the English concept of 'confinement' is pointed out, as simply retaining the original Egyptian term would give little indication of the likely practical significance of this institution. In addition to this, approximate English translations of all terms denoting concepts and institutions studied in this work are available in Appendix I.

Abbreviations

AA – African Affairs

AC – Afrique contemporaine

AHSS – Annales. Histoire, Sciences sociales

AJSS – Asian Journal of Social Science

ALR – American Law Register

AMR – Academy of Management Review

Annales – Annales, Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations

ARA – Annual Review of Anthropology

ASAE – Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte

BA – Biblical Archaeologist

BAF – Proceedings of the Berner Altorientalisches Forum

BBf – Beiträge zur ägyptischen Bauforschung und Altertumskunde

BCICLR – Boston College International and Comparative Law Review

BHA – Bulletin of the History of Archaeology

BIFAN – Bulletin de l'Institut Fondamental de l'Afrique Noire

BIFAO – Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale

BMFA – Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

BSOAS – Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

CAL – Critical Analysis of Law

CCE – Cahiers Caribéens d'Égyptologie

CGC – Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire

CRIPEL – Cahier de Recherche de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille

CEWCES – Centre for East-West Cultural and Economic Studies Research Papers

DC – Droit et cultures

DCO – Digital Classics Online

DE – Discussions in Egyptology

DLR – DePaul Law Review

ELR – Erasmus Law Review

EVO – Egitto e Vicino Oriente

GJICL – Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law

GM – Göttinger Miszellen

IEP – Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Int'l L. Forum – International Law Forum du droit international

J. Anc. Philos. – Journal of Ancient Philosophy

JACS – Journal of African Cultural Studies

JAL – Journal of African Law

JAP – Journal of Applied Philosophy

JARCE – Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt

JBS – Journal of Black Studies

JEA – Journal of Egyptian Archaeology

JESHO – Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient

JLP – Journal of Legal Pluralism

JNES – Journal of Near Eastern Studies

JSSEA – Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities

LCP – Law and Contemporary Problems

Les. – Aegyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im akademischen Unterricht

LoC – Library of Congress

LSR – Law & Society Review

MDAIK – Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo

MIfO – Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin

MLR – Michigan Law Review

MMAF – Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique française au Caire

MUSJ – Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph

NAR – North American Review

NEA – Near Eastern Archaeology

OED – Oxford English Dictionary

OM – Orientalia Monspeliensa

PSWPC – Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics

RB – Revue biblique

RdE – Revue d'Égyptologie

RT – Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes

SAK – Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur

SJR – Social Justice Research

SLR – Sydney Law Review

SSI – Social Science Information

RIDA – Revue Internationale des droits de l'antiquité

UCLR – University of Chicago Law Review

Urk. – Urkunden des Alten Reiches

VA – Varia Aegyptiaca

Wb. – Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache

YHRDJ – Yale Human Rights and Development Journal

YLJ – Yale Law Journal

ZA – Zeitschrift für Assyriologie

ZÄS – Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde

ZRG – Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte

ZRGG – Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte

1: Introduction, theoretical approaches, and methodology

The challenges of studying justice systems: the case of Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egyptian 'law' and 'justice' have now been studied, in various ways, for well over a century. As will be shown below, a vast amount of ink has been spilt on the subject, and it may therefore seem surprising that such vast gaps in knowledge still remain. However, throughout this lengthy period, all of this research has been plagued by an essentially unsolvable and recurring problem: the lack of a clear and widely-accepted definition of the subject matter. The fundamental question of what 'justice' actually is, whether or not it is inherent in society, how it is manifested, and what this might mean in terms of defining it is among the largest themes of philosophical debate, extending far beyond the boundaries of Egyptology (e.g. Flew 1985; Barry 1991: 50-95; Rawls 1999: 3-170)[2]. A key part of this discourse concerns the possibility of 'justice' being a conceptual absolute – an overriding desire for fairness innate to the human mind – as opposed to it being an entirely subjective social construct (e.g. Wilson 1997; Horkuc 2010; Vega 2010). Debates about the nature of 'law', although often conducted in the legalistic rather than the philosophical sphere, have proven no less vehement (e.g. Hart 1994: 155-212; Green 1996; Ginsburg & Stephanopoulos 2017). In this complex and discordant theoretical environment, most Egyptologists have contented themselves with shying away from a definition altogether. Instead, as will be shown below, they have generally preferred to utilise a more generic approach which simply focuses on the translation and interpretation of particular documents which are, to their eyes, of a 'legal' nature. These generally include transfer documents and other texts related to property ownership, records of trials and disputes heard in 'courts' or similar assemblies of arbitration, royal decrees, and private correspondence or inscriptions mentioning adjudication or denouncing wrongful behaviour. Thus, scholars have shown a readiness to engage with the evidential manifestations of whatever 'law' and 'justice' may have been, but a reluctance or inability to delve deeper into the substantial nature of these concepts themselves.

There is, however, a need for a working definition of such constructs in order for research into them of any kind, Egyptological or otherwise, to have a theoretical focus beyond face-value reading and interpretation of sources. The Oxford English Dictionary definition may be useful in this regard, defining 'law' as *the body of rules, whether proceeding from formal enactment or from custom, which a particular state or community recognizes as binding on its members or subjects*[3]. Meanwhile, 'justice' is defined in the same work as *maintenance of what is just or right by the exercise of*

[2] For a very broad introduction with detailed bibliography, see also *IEP*: Justice.
[3] *OED*: Law: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/106405?rskey=pH854n&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid. Accessed: 10th December 2018.

authority or power or alternatively as the *administration of law*[4]. These definitions illustrate many of the difficulties associated with studying these concepts. The definition of 'law' acknowledges that it may be closely connected to another term, 'custom', which the dictionary in turn defines as a *mode of behaviour or procedure which is widely practised and accepted in a particular society*[5]. Such a fluid distinction between related notions gives rise to the idea of 'customary law', as discussed in more detail below. This 'customary law' can be difficult to study as formal, record-producing structures responsible for managing it may not exist. Another complication arises from the idea that 'law' must be binding, which implies some mechanism of enforcement, but the presence or absence of enforcement capability may be exceptionally difficult to gauge. This is especially so if enforcement was carried out at an informal, community level. As for the definition of 'justice', challenges stem from its inherent duality: it is both an abstract, philosophical concept, *what is just or right*, which is entirely contingent on the oft-unrecorded ideological framework of a society, and a more concrete tool for the *administration of the law*. From this, it does not necessarily follow that concrete 'laws' must reflect 'justice', although such a connection does seem logical if one accepts that ideology does often translate into practicality. Thus, although these terms are frequently used interchangeably, it must be emphasised that an understanding of a society's 'law' cannot be seen as wholly synonymous with an understanding of its 'justice'.

Another important, and frequently neglected, consideration is 'legal pluralism' – the existence of multiple forms of both 'law' and 'justice' in a given state or society (e.g. Merry 1988; Pirie 2013: 38-44; Fikentscher 2016: 36-42). In modern Western societies, to which many scholars in both legal studies and Egyptology belong, there is a broad uniformity of understanding regarding how 'law' and 'justice' function: all people are at least notionally subject to the same laws and court procedure as part of a clearly defined justice system, whose supremacy is unchallenged. However, this phenomenon is far from universal and assumptions to the contrary can generate simplifications divorced from more nuanced realities. For instance, many, if not most, countries in sub-Saharan Africa have multiple justice systems, with a formal state-run system co-existing alongside less formal and predominantly oral-aural systems operated by local populations (e.g. Cotran & Rubin 1970; Woodman 1996; Rautenbach & Matthee 2010). The authority of the state-run system is usually derived from recorded precedent or statute, often heavily influenced by the formal and bureaucratic practices of a former colonial power. On the other hand, the authority of the local system derives from long-standing and often unwritten custom, commonly termed 'customary law'. It has been

[4] *OED:* Justice: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/102198?rskey=kXk5ui&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid. Accessed: 10th December 2018.
[5] *OED*: Custom: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/46306?rskey=gP2ofV&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid. Accessed: 10th December 2018.

noted also that state-run and local systems differ in their main aims: while the former attempts to satisfy an abstract concept of 'justice', the latter focuses exclusively on demands set by specific individuals involved in litigation (e.g. Kamto 1990; Le Roy 2004: vii-xxiii). Indeed, the application of 'customary law' is usually considered a total failure if it proves unable to resolve a conflict to the satisfaction of all parties, or at least society at large if the demands are mutually exclusive (e.g. Gluckman 1955: 35-81; Gulliver 1963: 216-232; Le Roy 2004: 1-42). This encourages flexibility and *ad hoc* solutions, which are impossible in the formal setting. Such an approach may be at odds with the lived experience of many modern Western scholars, but it must receive substantial attention when studying societies different to our own.

Built on legal pluralism are the notions of 'order without law' and 'panlegalism', which must also be given due consideration. These two conceptions represent different ends of the theoretical spectrum emerging from legal pluralist debate. 'Order without law' is a framework for understanding informal justice proposed by Ellickson (1991). On the basis of an ethnographic study of cattle herders in Shasta County, California, he argues that social order in a rural, agricultural society can be at its most effective not when conflicts are resolved through some form of law, be it formal or customary, but rather when conflict can be avoided entirely. This cuts out the need for a justice system altogether, instead relying heavily on the notion that individuals will choose to behave in fashions acceptable to one another out of a self-interested desire to avoid conflict and draw maximum material gain from the goodwill and cooperation of their peers. This 'Rational-Actor model', heavily influenced by game theory (Ellickson 1991: 156-159)[6], can only be effectively studied through ethnographic observation as it is built around an absence of conflict and consequently an absence of material evidence, such as judicial records. In the context of an ancient society, ethnographic observation is naturally impossible, but an awareness of 'order without law' frameworks can at least lead the researcher to pursue more nuanced methods of enquiry, looking at broader ways in which society tried to discourage unrest and unwanted behaviour, as well as resolve it. This might include considering the development of kinship ties, religious beliefs, or other social norms aimed at forestalling the possibility of conflict.

The wider study of social norms also links directly to panlegalist thought. While Ellickson (1991) has argued for situations where law can be altogether absent through informal reduction of conflict in traditional societies, other scholars have instead chosen to classify all social norms influencing the actions of individuals as law (e.g. Melissaris 2013: 175-176; Melissaris & Croce 2017: 10-19). Ultimately, both these approaches generate the same fundamental methodological challenge: by

[6] A vast body of literature is available on this topic. See especially Schelling 1960, Lewis 1969, and Axelrod 1984.

making it impossible to delimit the precise boundaries of law, one is prevented from defining what exactly is being studied. This poses a dilemma with no truly satisfactory answer, for one must either draw an arbitrary line between 'law' and 'non-law', thereby setting artificial and not universally accepted parameters for what will be included in a study, or accept that to study law is to essentially simultaneously study all factors influencing social conduct. The latter is not usually a realistic option, and especially so in ancient cultures where many significant social influences remain poorly understood or perhaps even unknown.

Beyond such issues of definition, a number of broader theoretical and methodological considerations also emerge in relation to emic-etic views on 'law' and 'justice' (e.g. Morris *et al*. 1999: 781-786; Sabbagh & Golden 2007)[7]. As already mentioned above in relation to 'legal pluralism', scholars may find it difficult to meaningfully engage with justice systems operating in ways radically different to their own emic experience. Without a thorough understanding of the lived culture behind a given justice system, the most a specialist from an external environment can achieve is a thorough etic perspective of the practical manifestations of that system in action. In the modern setting, this can often be rectified to a degree through ethnographic research, which can provide an insight into the emic viewpoints of the practitioners through a study of the rationale and ideology behind given actions. However, as this is not possible when working with ancient cultures, textual material left behind by the judicial system or individuals affected by it therefore becomes the only means through which anything can be learned, making investigation fundamentally etic in nature. If textual material is not available either, as is the norm in systems with large oral-aural components, the only route forward is informed guesswork based on ethnographic parallels with other societies which, in the subjective view of the researcher, may display similarities with the primary object of study.

Moreover, the assertion that the etic is simply the emic of the observer (Lévi-Strauss 1973: 20-22) is perhaps especially true in the legal sphere, with its wide variety of concepts and institutions. Thus, modern Western scholars usually think of justice systems as having such features as courts and judges, as well as clear and binary divisions within strands of law such as 'criminal' and 'civil', 'religious' and 'secular', or 'customary' and 'state'. While these may be helpful for the purposes of structuring and presenting research, it must be recognised that such firmly defined concepts or boundaries may not have been present in justice systems structured along principles which may not have exact equivalents in modern Western thought. Indeed, even from a purely linguistic perspective, the translation of legal terminology from one language to another spoken in a different culture will almost inevitably result in approximations effacing important nuances. Thus, 'courts' may

[7] For a broader treatment of the emic/etic distinction, see Harris 1976.

have had social or broader administrative functions going beyond justice, 'judges' may simultaneously have held other posts, and the distinction between informal conflict resolution and more official processes may have been blurred. It should be noted that not all societies even acknowledge the existence of a concept of 'justice' divorced from wider matters of social governance or religion (e.g. Gluckman 1955; Elias 1956; Hamnett 1975), in which case it may be altogether futile to search for clear-cut categories into which the subject matter may be compartmentalized, tempting though this may be from the emic viewpoint of the researcher. Instead, the study of 'justice' may inevitably have to encompass aspects of administration, religion, and whatever else was inextricably intermingled with it in a given society.

Finally, there are challenges surrounding 'legal fiction' or other situations where the stated judicial provisions may not have reflected practical reality (Olivier 1975; Harmon 1990). For instance, research in Semitic legal history has shown that an ancient justice system might use concepts such as death or corporal punishment to denote processes which are in actual fact very different from the primary meaning of these terms and instead represent financial penalties (Westbrook 1986; 1997). More specifically in the Egyptian case, it has been shown that mention of facial mutilation in some cases probably did not refer to a literal execution of such a punishment, but was rather a more general statement of condemnation whose connotations may have been predominantly religious rather than being enforceable in a physical sense (Loktionov 2017: 272-275). Taking into account such non-literal uses of terminology, it is thus entirely conceivable that the recorded legal status or title of an individual might not necessarily reflect their social status or responsibilities, and may vary depending on the purpose of the medium on which it is written. Furthermore, it may also change with time and might be dependent on the status of those with whom the individual interacts. Thus, even in those instances where translations can be offered with a reasonable degree of confidence, it may prove difficult to ascertain whether they really mean what a *prima facie* interpretation suggests they mean.

All of these issues are found, often to a very large degree, in the context of Ancient Egypt. Pharaonic society ceased to exist millennia ago, and an emic perspective of its justice system or systems is therefore unavailable. Thus, while it is certain that the beliefs of practitioners influenced justice – as evidenced by extensive references to  in the legal setting – the specific impact of such beliefs, or indeed even what they entailed, largely remains a mystery. While there is extensive textual and material evidence concerning the role of  in religion, the royal sphere, and broad notions of social order (e.g. Assmann 1990; Morschauser 1995; Teeter 1997; Menu 2015), very little is known about the direct implications of the concept on the practicality of conflict resolution. Furthermore,

prior to the first millennium BCE, there is no unequivocal evidence that the Egyptians codified their law or compiled lists of defined precedents – even though they seem to have had a term, *hp*, denoting concrete provisions of some form for maintaining social order (Nims 1948; Bats 2014). Legal pluralism, and perhaps even informal 'order without law', are both likely to have been present, as Ancient Egypt is known to have had both strong central government and outlying regions rich in local beliefs and traditions. Considering the large geographical size of the state and the limited forms of communication available, decentralisation in the justice system seems inevitable. However, local justice systems would almost certainly have been oral-aural in nature, and therefore occur in the written record only insofar as they interacted with officialdom. Finally, even the written record itself is replete with problems: texts are often fragmentary, the exact meaning of many terms remains unclear, and cases of legal fiction or non-literal meaning are difficult to ascertain despite strong evidence that they did exist (Loktionov 2017: 272-275). Nonetheless, awareness of these challenges should not prompt the researcher to accept the futility of further scholarly endeavour in this field – instead, it should encourage a more nuanced approach which acknowledges multiple possibilities, is prepared to re-evaluate established theories, and accepts that it will not provide all the answers.

Previous research on Ancient Egyptian justice

Having summarised the principal challenges faced by research in this field, it is now appropriate to provide an outline of previous scholarship on this topic. Before doing so, one must however note that justice still remains among the most commonly disregarded aspects of Ancient Egyptian culture. A fine illustration of this is the highly influential reference volume edited by Shaw (2000), used very widely by universities introducing students to Egyptian culture, which makes no mention of justice across fifteen chapters covering every period of Ancient Egyptian history. Another, more recent reference volume briefly acknowledges that legal procedures did exist, but adds that they are 'relatively poorly known' and implies that study of pre-New Kingdom justice might not be feasible due to a lack of sources (van de Mieroop 2011: 119, 229). This creates a challenge from the outset, meaning that many students are not even aware that this area of study is viable. This lack of opportunity to develop an interest in this field likely contributes to the dearth of professional researchers working in this area.

Nonetheless, despite its small size, research into Ancient Egyptian justice has a long history. The first major contribution was by Spiegelberg (1892), who effectively founded this strand within Egyptology. His work was entirely on the New Kingdom, and for the most part simply consisted of transcribed and translated texts which the author considered to be of a legal nature. The following decades saw the publication of numerous editions of specific texts connected to New Kingdom justice, with the best

known being the *Court Case of Mose* (Gardiner 1905), the *Duties of the Vizier* (Sethe 1912), *Papyrus Salt 124* (Černý 1929), the *Tomb Robbery Papyri* (Peet 1930; Capart *et al*. 1936) and the *Judicial Papyrus of Turin* (De Buck 1937)[8]. This focus on the New Kingdom, and mostly on papyri from the Theban region, in these early decades would have a fundamental effect on the subsequent development of research: in relation to justice, 'Ancient Egyptian' would often become near-synonymous to 'New Kingdom'.

Reference works on New Kingdom justice proliferated rapidly from the latter half of the 20th Century onwards. These had a new approach, focusing more on the practicalities of justice as a coherent system rather than just offering new translations with relatively little analysis. Among the earliest and most significant was the introduction to Egyptian legal history by Seidl (1951), which remains an important resource to this day. Seidl divided the topic into four main chapters covering historical development of the law, source material, judiciary, and private law. None of these is treated in great depth; the primary aim being simply to provide an overview of the key features of Egyptian justice, and although the work claims to cover all of Ancient Egyptian justice before the 1st millennium BCE, its examples are overwhelmingly drawn from the New Kingdom. A decade later, a study of exclusively New Kingdom justice was published by Lurje (1960). This substantial work had a strong focus on law court administration and considered in detail different types of court, such as local village courts, temple courts, and centrally-constituted courts for trying the most serious offences. It was in many ways pioneering for its time, but its publication in Russian and the need for compliance with Soviet ideological requirements greatly reduced its impact on the international research landscape[9]. More recently, volumes have been published specifically dedicated to justice and conflict resolution at the New Kingdom settlement of Deir el-Medina (Allam 1973; McDowell 1990), which continues the trend of focusing on the Theban region, and three works designed to appeal to a slightly broader audience have sought to summarise Egyptian justice for non-specialists on the basis of predominantly New Kingdom examples of court cases (Tyldesley 2000; Vernus 2003; Lippert 2008). Furthermore, legal studies have also extended beyond the New Kingdom, with a particular focus on contracts, wills and property transactions in the Late and Ptolemaic periods (e.g. Depauw 1999, 2012; Lippert 2004; Keenan *et al*. 2014)[10]. Recently, the study of such documents has also been used to gain new insights into the legal regulation of gender relations from Ramesside times onwards (Muhs 2017). Thus, it is

[8] This papyrus was actually first published in the 19th Century (Devéria 1897), but De Buck's edition brought the text to much greater prominence.

[9] A German translation (Lurje 1971) was eventually released, but it is abridged and never achieved wide circulation.

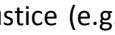
[10] Indeed, one must note that Demotic material is so numerous that it has been described as 'one of the best pre-Roman legal corpora' (Manning 2013: 2030). See this same article for a list of further key references for this.

overall fair to say that at present the New Kingdom and subsequent historical phases continue to dominate discourse in the sphere of Ancient Egyptian justice.

A very different picture emerges regarding justice before the New Kingdom, which has to date still received relatively little attention. Two summative chapters on the broad features of Old and Middle Kingdom justice have been contributed by Jasnow (2003[A], 2003[B]), but this was done in the context of a much broader overview of the legal history of the entire Ancient Near East and was never intended as a definitive study. Aspects of Old Kingdom law, specifically those related to property and land tenure, are also addressed in a study of autobiographical funerary inscriptions of that period (Goedicke 1970). However, only one monograph is devoted exclusively to the topic of pre-New Kingdom justice (Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]), and it has demonstrated that the earlier periods of Egyptian history are in fact far from barren in terms of textual evidence for judicial practice. For the first time, this work has provided a comprehensive set of transliterations and translations of Old and Middle Kingdom texts connected to justice in a single volume. That certainly makes it an exceptionally useful compendium of primary material, but its analysis of how these texts fit together to create an understanding of the justice system which produced them is limited in scope. There are also a number of detailed studies of individual justice-related documents, mainly from the Middle Kingdom (e.g. Ray 1973; Menu 1982), but once again there has so far been little emphasis on integrating them into a model of how justice may have operated as a system. Consequently, the present state of research is in major part a disparate patchwork of isolated translations, often published to a high standard individually but shedding relatively little light on the framework within which they operated.

One approach alternative to period-based studies has been to concentrate on specific features of the justice system. This has included work on particular institutions, such as courts (McDowell 1990: 143-186; Allam 1991; Lippert 2012) and oracles (Kaiser 1958; Černý 1962; Kákosy 1975; Ray 1981), as well as research into the legal consequences of particular types of crime such as theft (Černý 1937), adultery (Eyre 1984; Galpaz-Feller 2004: 154-157), murder (Hoch & Orel 1992), or bribery (El-Saady 1998)[11]. The question of whether or not Ancient Egyptian legal provisions were written down has received attention too, largely in connection with the term *hp* (Nims 1948; Bats 2014) but more recently also in relation to other legal formulations such as *wḏ-n(y)-sw.t*-decrees or *ḫtm.t*-contracts (Logan 2017: 84-102). Perhaps most significantly, there has been very extensive research on the ideological and theological framework of *Mꜣꜥ.t*, which seems to have played at least some part in

[11] For a recent article summarizing the state of the art in crime-based approaches to Ancient Egyptian justice of this sort, see Müller-Wollermann 2015.

informing justice (e.g. Assmann 1990; Morschauser 1995; Teeter 1997; van Blerk 2018).  has also been the subject of more subjective treatments, with commentators going as far as postulating that it may have been a form of Ancient Egyptian 'conscience' (Breasted 1934) or 'moral ideal' (Karenga 2004; Mancini 2004; Ferguson 2016). While these views are not universally accepted in modern Egyptology, they do highlight the broad-based nature of scholarship related to features rather than periods of Egyptian justice. This is further highlighted by work done on another important dimension – the practical manifestation of justice through punishment and law enforcement. Studies here have ranged from highly focused work on the death penalty (e.g. Leahy 1984, 1989; Willems 1990; Muhlestein 2008) and mutilation (Keimer 1954; Loktionov 2017) to wider treatments of how criminals of all categories could be punished (Bedell 1973; Lorton 1977; Müller-Wollermann 2004). Overall, the vast majority of such feature- or concept-based studies have again been grounded in New Kingdom material – partly due to the greater range of available sources, and partly due to the aforementioned implicit tendency to equate New Kingdom Egyptian justice with the totality of Ancient Egyptian justice.

Another, rarer approach has been to glean information about justice through literary works. Most notably, the judicial complaints in the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* have been used for this purpose by both an Egyptologist (Shupak 1992) and a legal historian of broader profile (VerSteeg 1994). Other examples include studies of justice being administered by gods in the *Tale of Truth and Falsehood* (Théodoridès 1969), in the *Coffin Texts* (Grieshammer 1970) and in the *Contendings of Horus and Seth* (Allam 1992; Campagno 2006). Insights into notions of social justice and perceived equitable ways of living have also been obtained from studies of the so-called 'wisdom literature', such as the *Instruction of Amenemope* (Vernus 2001: 299-346), the *Instruction of Amunnakhte* (Bickel & Mathieu 1993: 31-51), the *Duties of the Vizier* (Sethe 1912; van den Boorn 1988), the *Teaching for King Merikare* (Helck 1988; Quack 1992), the *Teaching of the Vizier Kagemni* (Gardiner 1946; Allen 2014: 162-167),the *Instruction of Hardedef* (Helck 1984), the *Instruction of a Man for his Son* (Fischer-Elfert 1999), and the very comprehensive *Instructions of Ptahhotep* (Žába 1956; Hagen 2012; Allen 2014: 167-227). These works have significantly aided understanding of what behaviour was and was not considered acceptable, while also highlighting ways in which practitioners of justice may have been expected to behave. However, much like the other approaches discussed above, they retain a very strong New Kingdom focus and provide little information on how these various beliefs and behaviours actually amalgamated into a justice system.

Academic divides regarding Egypt as 'African'

At this point, it should also be stated that research into Ancient Egyptian justice has been significantly affected by the much wider and at times acrimonious debate about the place of Egypt in an 'African' context. This has resulted in the very conspicuous absence of any significant comparison of Ancient Egypt with other African judicial traditions within traditional Egyptological circles, despite the seemingly obvious point that the culture first arose in Africa and could therefore quite feasibly have conceived of justice in a similar way to its African neighbours. This gap in scholarship largely has its origins in a certain mindset which has historically been prevalent across much of Western Egyptology, effectively summarised as follows by Fairman (1965: 70):

> Egyptian civilisation as we know it, dynastic, historic Egypt, Egypt of the Pharaohs, was not the logical, automatic development of Predynastic Egypt; it was the result of the intrusion from the north or north-east of a group, probably quite small, of people of superior cranial capacity and brain power who had been in contact with, and influenced by, Sumer.

Such racialist views, and the 'Dynastic Race Theory' closely associated with them[12], contributed to an overall perception that looking for African influence on Egyptian culture would be futile as Egypt had separated itself from the African social, cultural and intellectual milieu prior to, or at the point of, state formation. While this theory has been comprehensively discredited in recent years (e.g. Silberman 1991, 1999; Ramsey 2004), tacit elements of its legacy remain in terms of the avenues of research commonly pursued by Egyptologists. A consequence of this is that Egyptology has not yet fully developed a scholarly tradition of comprehensively engaging with broader African socio-cultural material, generating an ongoing lack of Egyptologically rigorous research in this area[13]. This is particularly significant in a field such as justice, where commonalities with wider African traditions are highly likely and would be entirely logical.

A further challenge is that while professional Egyptologists have not engaged with African material extensively, many African scholars with only limited, if any, training in Egyptology have attempted to demonstrate that Egypt was an exclusively black African civilisation[14]. Such Afrocentric efforts have

[12] For more on the concept of a 'Dynastic Race' and its alleged takeover of Egypt, see for instance Petrie 1939, Emery 1952 and Derry 1956.

[13] For discussions on the gulf between Western Egyptology and African studies, see Roth 1995, Autori 2001 and de Brito 2002. However, none of these are widely read in either field, which aptly illustrates the nature of the problem. For a broader acknowledgment of the difficulties faced by efforts to forge connections between established Egyptology research hubs and scholars from academic traditions in countries with weaker links to conventional Egyptology, see Langer 2017: xiv.

[14] For an extensive list of such scholars, see Siame 2013: 253.

ranged from asserting that Ancient Egypt was a 'land of the Blacks' (Diop 1974: 168; Carruthers 1992: 28), to claiming that Tutankhamun was linked to the Swahili language (Siame 2013: 255-256), and classifying Egyptian wisdom literature and the concept of *M3ʿ.t* as entirely 'African' (e.g. Karenga 2004; Graness 2016). Assertions of this sort are highly problematical from the perspective of academic Egyptology, as they are usually not grounded in exhaustive analysis of empirical data because their proponents typically lack the requisite Egyptological training to do so. Furthermore, studying the African dimension of Egyptian culture has come to be seen as very politically charged, with extensive debates about cultural appropriation where the Afrocentric position is that 'Egypt is to Africa as Greece is to Europe' (Asante 2010: 337), representing the 'origin of philosophy in Africa' (Graness 2016: 144). At the more extreme end of Afrocentrism, and especially within the often vocal American black rights movement, professional Egyptologists have at times been denounced as racists and inhibitors of black empowerment (Hilliard III 1992: 10, 21-22)[15]. This has further contributed to a perception in academic Egyptology that the field of study relating to Egypt and Africa is yielding research which is not only of dubious academic value, but is also tainted by explicitly political motivation and sometimes an attitude of outright hostility towards non-black scholars[16]. Such inferences have contributed to even greater restrictions on engagement with questions of wider African culture within Egyptology itself, and it remains largely outside conventional discourse. This certainly holds true for exploring broader African elements in Egyptian justice, even though there is no *bona fide* reason for why Afrocentrism concerns and political considerations should hold such a study back indefinitely.

Overall limitations of existing research

Based on the above, it is therefore possible to identify four significant limitations in the current state of research into Ancient Egyptian justice, namely:

1) A broad chronological tendency to focus on the New Kingdom and later periods, and sometimes to draw conclusions about Ancient Egyptian justice in other, earlier times on the basis of this alone. This creates an unfortunate situation whereby scholars tend to work backwards, projecting judicial norms of the late 2nd millennium or even later onto earlier periods, rather than using the earlier periods to inform understanding of subsequent legal norms.

[15] For additional examples of African American writers harnessing Egyptian material with the explicit aim of furthering the African American political cause and strengthening pride in African American identity, see Houston 1926, Asante 1990, and Winters 1994.

[16] For a list of key Egyptological publications denouncing or seriously criticising Afrocentrism, see Siame 2013: 253.

2) The judicial texts subjected to the most intensive study are to date overwhelmingly associated with the Theban region in Upper Egypt, which is an inevitable consequence of New Kingdom material currently dominating the field. Indeed, at present research on Deir el-Medina justice alone matches or perhaps even exceeds scholarship relating to all other sites combined. Consequently, datasets are geographically limited in scope and therefore might fail to account for regional variation.

3) A broad methodological tendency to focus on specific texts, leading to very limited integration of the written material into coherent theories of how justice may have functioned as a system. While many judicial texts have appeared in text editions, their significance within the wider legal landscape is not yet apparent. In particular, while at least some studies of judicial institutions are available, almost no work has been done specifically on practitioners of justice.

4) No substantial engagement with wider legal anthropological discourse and possible ethnographic comparison, and a lack of appreciation of the possibilities of legal pluralism due to the likely co-existence of formal, state-based and informal, community-based justice systems. Closely linked to this is the dearth of research on oral-aural aspects of Ancient Egyptian justice, and in particular the ongoing shortage of Egyptologically rigorous work on the place of Ancient Egypt in the African socio-cultural milieu.

Ancient Egyptian justice and its connotations for wider legal, historical and ethnographic scholarship

Before setting forth the ways in which the present work may seek to address the above issues, it is worth pointing out that the study of Ancient Egyptian justice also has significant connotations for wider legal, historical and ethnographic scholarship. On the legal side, VerSteeg (2002) has already released a volume on Ancient Egyptian law aimed predominantly at law students and practicing lawyers of the modern day[17]. While this volume certainly must be commended for being the first to disseminate detailed information on Egyptian law to an audience of non-Egyptologists, it has limitations as the author himself is above all an expert in American law rather than Egyptology. The book therefore superimposes American legal terminology and conceptualisation of justice over Egyptian material, discussing distinct branches such as substantive, commercial and even international law. From an Egyptological perspective, such modern distinctions are not especially helpful, but at present Egyptologists have not produced any alternative of wide appeal in this area.

[17] The same author has also looked for evidence of law in Ancient Egyptian literature, again from the perspective of a lawyer (VerSteeg 1994). The methodological issues therein are broadly similar to those in VerSteeg 2002.

Thus, there remains a need for an Egyptologically rigorous work capable of both engaging with legal theorists and practitioners interested in the history of their own discipline, and presenting a conceptual framework understandable to them but not anachronistic to the ancient culture in question. This would not only bring research into Egyptian justice to a broader audience, but would also go some way to situating the Egyptian tradition within global legal history, from which it is at present somewhat isolated[18]. Some limited work in this direction has already been done regarding the Egyptian legal tradition of the first millennium BCE, linking it to subsequent developments in Greek and Roman legal history (Menu 2015), but earlier periods remain fundamentally understudied.

Another dimension of particular significance to the study of law is the possibility of exploring legal pluralism in Ancient Egypt. Legal studies has in recent years experienced what has been termed a 'paradigm shift' in how law is conceived within society, with legal pluralism replacing traditional, state-based approaches to law as the dominant theoretical model (Lakin 2005). This theory has now become highly significant not only in studies of the colonial and post-colonial legal systems where it originated (e.g. Woodman 1996: 156-60; Le Roy 2004; Pirie 2013: 38-44), but also in fields such as international and corporate law in a context of globalisation (e.g. von Benda-Beckmann 2002; Tamanaha 2008; Melissaris 2013: 173). There is now an increasing tendency to appreciate the way in which different types of law overlap within a single socio-cultural system, and the historical development of such intersections is likely to be of considerable interest to legal scholars, but nonetheless to date the only ancient society which has been analysed from a legal pluralism perspective in response to this demand is Archaic Greece (Lakin 2005). The present study of Ancient Egyptian justice should therefore make a significant contribution to the ongoing development and expansion of this theoretical tendency.

On the broader historical side, there is a long tradition of interest in the evolution of law in the Ancient Near East over extensive periods of time (e.g. Cherry 1915; Diamond 1957; Westbrook 2003: 72-73). This has now been enhanced by a renewed interest in *longue durée* studies as a wider way of gauging the evolution of particular socio-political phenomena (Armitage & Guldi 2014, 2015)[19], and the potential importance of such an approach for legal history has already been stressed (Dubber

[18] For an explicit acknowledgement of a belief that Ancient Egyptian law might not even be true law as it is "nonsense to talk of law before it was elaborated by the Romans", see Théodoridès 1971: 291. The rise of "normative legislation" (i.e. laws expressed in abstract general categories with clearly defined terms) is also acknowledged as Graeco-Roman (e.g. Westbrook 1988; Westbrook 1989: 217-222). For a conventional argument that legal history effectively begins with the Graeco-Roman world, see for instance Kelly 1992: 1-78 and Lakin 2005.

[19] For the original argument, stressing the importance of studying long-term processes in history rather than narrowly concentrating on events, see Braudel 1958.

2015). A study of Ancient Egyptian justice, particularly one focused on the earlier periods, fits well into such a framework as it can significantly extend the overall historical period over which judicial evolution can be studied. As justice cannot be easily separated from wider matters of administration and socio-political control, a study of this kind can also contribute to much broader questions on how ordering of human societies has developed over many millennia. Again, central to this is the need to connect highly specialised Egyptological knowledge to cross-period discourses on social history, which has to date not usually been a priority for Egyptologists.

From an ethnographic and anthropological perspective, the concept of 'archéologie judiciaire' (Le Roy 2004: 87), consisting of using research into modern customary law practices in traditional societies to reconstruct justice in the past, has particular relevance to this study. While much has been written about how traditional, oral-aural justice systems evolved as a result of the imposition of formal law by a foreign, colonising power (e.g. Gluckman 1955; Hamnett 1975; Le Roy 2004: 109-128), the functioning and evolution of such systems in a past not affected by Western colonialism has not received comparable attention. Ancient Egyptian justice, with its likely scope for legal pluralism and informal mediation processes existing alongside judicial practitioners formally recognised by the state, therefore presents a system which may prove interesting and novel to modern ethnographers and anthropologists concerned with questions of conflict resolution, and perhaps especially to socio-legal scholars of post-colonial Africa seeking cross-period comparanda. Overall, the ethnographic approach allows this Egyptological study to tentatively attempt reconstructions of social processes in a way not otherwise possible, and its repayment to ethnography consists of giving anthropologists of law a much earlier reference point for their work[20]. In the process, this should also reduce the aforementioned perceived gap between Egyptian and wider African socio-cultural phenomena, fostering an understanding of interconnections between these on the basis of recorded or observable data rather than presupposition.

Aims of the present work

Taking note of the above, the present work aims to offer a new treatment of Ancient Egyptian justice in its earlier periods, with a particular focus on integrating the available evidence into an understanding of justice as an evolving and multi-faceted system with practitioners, rather than merely texts, at its heart. The approach can be characterised by six constitutive goals, each tackling a hitherto underdeveloped area of scholarship:

[20] At present, the most widely cited work on comparative legal anthropology remains Pospíšil 1973. Although very wide-ranging in terms of identifying cross-cultural parallels across geographically and politically disparate societies, this work makes little attempt to broaden the chronological scope by considering ancient societies.

1) ***Shifting the chronological scope*** – The current imbalance in scholarship will be redressed by analysing Egyptian justice before the New Kingdom. This is in turn an important tool for understanding the better-studied legal developments of later periods (i.e. the legal historical roots of New Kingdom justice). However, the New Kingdom shall not be used to extrapolate developments in earlier periods, unless there is firm evidence for the existence of New Kingdom concepts, institutions, and titles in documents of the earlier periods themselves. Thus, the work shall not become another New Kingdom-centric treatment of justice.

2) ***Focusing on practitioners*** – Unlike previous research on the subject, this study will be based primarily on practitioners rather than institutions and/or individual documents. This does not mean disregarding the role of institutions, but it does mean considering them predominantly in the context of the practitioners' association with and role in them. Likewise, the activities of practitioners in other fields beyond justice will be considered, giving an insight into their wider professional lives. While documents remain crucial, they will be studied with the aim of getting information about practitioners, and not just to yield another study of the individual legal sources *per se*.

3) ***Acknowledging orality*** – This study aims for the first time to shift scholarly focus towards the role of orality in Egyptian judicial culture. As evidence of the justice system is preserved entirely in writing, it is easy to fully focus on the role of the written record without paying due attention to what was said and heard. However, the existence in this written record of key judicial concepts indicative of oral process, namely the terms *wḏ^{c}-mdw* ('dividing words') and *sḏm* ('hearing'), points to the spoken word playing an important, and at present understudied, role which must not be overlooked.

4) ***Harnessing ethnographic comparisons with Africa alongside legal theory*** – Much greater use will be made of ethnographic parallels with extant African legal systems which still follow highly traditional, and ancient, modes of practice. This project in no way seeks to be Afrocentric, in the conventional Egyptological sense of that term, but equally it will not follow the tradition of dismissing potentially valuable data from other African cultures without giving it due consideration. To draw maximum benefit from this, ideas from current legal scholarship, and in particular theories surrounding legal pluralism and customary law, will also be deployed to assess the possibility of Ancient Egypt having more than one legal system, hence challenging the notion of a single concept of 'Ancient Egyptian law'. This aim is closely related to the acknowledgement of orality as a crucial component of justice, as mentioned above.

5) ***Developing a systems-based model of judicial evolution*** – The present work will seek to explore the ways in which the different components of Egyptian justice fitted together into a system or systems, and in turn how these interrelated with wider administrative and indeed religious practice. This is inherently tied to the study of its practitioners, who may have held multiple posts at the same time, and comparison of the nature of these systems at different times before the New Kingdom will serve as the basis for a model of judicial evolution for the period in question. Developing such a model will in turn allow judicial developments to be mapped onto wider *longue durée* social and political trends in Egypt, demonstrating how justice was shaped by the changing realities around it.

6) ***Initiating a process of integrating Ancient Egyptian judicial developments into the wider narrative of global legal history*** – This project is firmly in the scholarly tradition of Egyptology, but nonetheless it seeks to contribute to much wider research into the evolution of judicial systems and the place of justice in society. This research analyses arguably the earliest detailed textual evidence of an evolving legal landscape anywhere in the world, and as such hopes to attract the interest of scholars outside the conventional boundaries of Egyptology. In the longer term, it is hoped that this will increase the perceived value of studying very early legal systems, initiating a move away from a near-exclusive and highly Eurocentric focus on the 'glory and uniqueness of Roman jurisprudence' (Wieacker 1981: 268), a view which in its various iterations has been the norm among many legal historians for generations, despite already being the object of lament over a century ago (Maine 1908: 3)[21].

Methodology

The core of the present work is a prosopographic study of all Old and Middle Kingdom officials connected to the following two processes, typically denoted in texts as follows:

wḏᶜ-mdw ('dividing words')[22]

sḏm ('hearing')[23]

[21] For a range of treatments concerning the importance of Roman law across legal historiography, see for instance Ramage 1900, Taylor 1909, Schulz 1946, Kaser 1950, Zimmermann 1996, and Stein 1999.
[22] Transcription after the first variant of how this term is spelled in *Wb*. I: 405.
[23] Transcription after the first variant of how this term is spelled in *Wb*. IV: 387.

These appear to be the only two terms unambiguously linked to judicial activity in this period. For the purposes of this research, an official is considered 'connected' to one of these concepts if he has at least one title mentioning it. The vast majority of officials holding such titles were traced via extensive indices of titles, which have been published for both the Old (Jones 2000) and Middle Kingdom (Ward 1982, Fischer 1985, Quirke 1986). Several additional attestations – notably associated with seal impressions – have also been brought to light in the years after the release of these indices (Pätznick 2005, Nolan 2010), and these were likewise included in the dataset. Each index allows all known titles containing *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and/or *sḏm* to be looked up, and provides references for all published attestations of these titles. Each attestation was subsequently studied individually in the context of the inscription in which it is found, and all the titles held by the official in question were condensed into a 'title string'. This allowed for the removal of superfluous text irrelevant to the investigation, such as offering formulae and standard honorific epithets such as *mry X* ('beloved of X'), *ḥsy X* ('favoured of X') and *m^{3}^{c}-ḫrw* ('true of voice'). The aim was to create concise lists of titles held by officials engaged in *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and/or *sḏm* in the Old and Middle Kingdoms, which could give a meaningful indication of their other activities, including the extent of their involvement in wider state matters. Such information can in turn yield insights into the social status of practitioners, although great care must be taken not to equate office wholly with wider matters of societal ordering.

The combined dataset of title strings, 97 in total, was subjected to various forms of data analysis such as calculating the average number of titles held by practitioners of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and/or *sḏm* in different periods, determining the commonality of title strings containing fewer than a fixed number of titles, and assessing changes in the frequency of specific titles from the Old to the Middle Kingdom. It was also possible to identify trends regarding titles which commonly occur together, or which have ties with specific institutions (e.g. *ḥw.t-wr.t*, *ḏ^{3}ḏ^{3}.t*) or concepts (e.g. *M^{3}^{c}.t*, *ḥp*). Moreover, the extent to which holders of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and/or *sḏm*-containing titles held other titles with judicial connotations was assessed also, thereby giving some indication of how closely specialised in specifically judicial matters these individuals may have been. For the purposes of this study, 'titles with judicial connotations' to be included in that segment of analysis were all titles mentioning *wḏ^{c}-mdw* or *sḏm*, all titles displaying a connection to a potentially legal institution such as the *ḥw.t-wr.t*, *ḥw.t-wr.t-6*, *wsḫ.t*, *ḏ^{3}ḏ^{3}.t* and *h^{3}y.t*, and all titles identified as having legal connotations by either the *Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache* or Philip-Stéphan's '*Séquence juridictionnelle classique*' (Philip-Stéphan 2008^{A}: 52)[24].

[24] With the notable exceptions of those titles in the *Séquence juridictionnelle classique* which cannot be deemed specific to the judicial setting on account of either their high degree of prevalence in other contexts, or because they are exceptionally poorly understood. Such titles are: *^{i}wn knm.wt* ('Pillar of *knm.wt*-people'), *mdw rḫy.t* ('Staff of *rḫy.t*-people'), *ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t* ('One under the head of the King'), *s^{3}b ^{c}ḏ-mr* ('Dignitary and Administrator') and *wr mḏ Šm^{c}.w* ('Great one of the tens of Upper Egypt').

Finally, the title strings could also be used to construct case studies of particular practitioners of *wḏᶜ-mdw* and/or *sḏm*, considering the range of judicial and non-judicial functions exercised by them, their ties to institutions, and to a certain extent their status in society. This element is part of a wider acceptance that ultimately justice relies wholly on the people who carry it out, and that inferences about their lives are therefore essential for understanding how it may have operated as a system.

Alongside the work on titles, other texts mentioning judicial practice or shedding light on terms found in the title strings were also studied. Mostly these consisted of additional lapidary inscriptions on stelae or funerary architecture, in cases where owners wanted to immortalise certain aspects of their relationship with justice. The study also included as many papyri as possible: these are often more administrative in nature, focusing mainly on practicalities of life rather than commemoration after death, and are thus useful for understanding the mechanics of justice in action. However, for reasons of poor preservation only one Old Kingdom papyrus could be included, while the number of Middle Kingdom papyri was somewhat greater thanks to the rich El-Lahun archive, but still outweighed by lapidary inscriptions. Most texts, both lapidary and on papyrus, were initially located in the compendium by Philip-Stéphan (2008[A]) mentioned above, with subsequent close reading of them using the latest edition available.

An additional component of the methodology consisted of using ethnographic comparison to cautiously propose a framework for understanding oral-aural aspects of the justice system carried out informally at local level. This involved reading accounts of traditional forms of justice carried out in Egypt in relatively recent times, as recorded by travellers mostly of the 19th Century, and consulting existing literature on customary law and its enforcement in traditional societies in sub-Saharan Africa, where this practice is best documented and where potential similarities to Egypt might be greatest. Particular attention was paid to the relationships between local and central justice systems, the link between the spoken and written word in such instances, and the extent of power and agency of judicial practitioners. These ethnographic comparanda were then used in conjunction with the title strings and textual evidence to ultimately propose a theory of evolving legal pluralism in the Ancient Egyptian setting.

Finally, it should be added that a clear emphasis on theoretical considerations, namely legal pluralism and the focus on dichotomy between the oral and the written, sought to move this project away from the overwhelmingly positivist tradition of prior scholarship in this field. Unlike the earlier projects discussed above, this research aimed to transcend the conventional goals of simply discovering specific details about Egyptian justice, focusing instead on integrating data into a model

with implications for a wider understanding of the place of justice in Egyptian society, and how this changed with time.

Limitations

The reliance on prosopography, rather than longer passages of description, as the primary research pathway is a novel approach in legal studies which allows for a dataset far broader than would be possible in a conventional text-based study. It also permits the involvement of practitioners to be brought to the fore in a hitherto unprecedented manner. However, the limitations of the approach must be acknowledged, and they can be summarised as follows:

1) ***Specific challenges of working with titles*** – It is widely accepted that prosopographic studies of ancient individuals and their titles can at times result in more confusion than clarity (e.g. Verboven *et al.* 2007: 61-68; Bodard *et al.* 2017: 34-35). Title strings, by their very nature, were recorded for specific purposes which may not be indicative of the function of a given individual in life. For instance, title strings in tomb contexts or on stelae may include purely honorific titles, fossilized titles originally associated with particular functions but subsequently transformed into courtesy styles, and other titles whose literal translation may significantly diverge from the practical duties connected to them. Likewise, the much shorter title strings on seal impressions might not give a fair representation of all the functions of a given official, only listing titles demonstrating his ability to fulfil the functions connected to that given seal. There are also a number of titles which remain obscure and cannot be meaningfully translated. Furthermore, there is the ever-present problem of lacunae, meaning that some title strings now appear shorter than they were originally, with potentially important additional titles lost. Added to this is the fact that the contents of judicial material could be deliberately modified by the Egyptians themselves after the conclusion of proceedings, for example leading to the erasure of names or titles (Posener 1946; Philip-Stéphan 2008[B]). Naturally, the issue of lacunae or deliberate amendment is also highly significant in the study of the other justice-related texts which are independent of title strings.

Another problem which has plagued Egyptological studies of titles is the complex issue of 'rank' and its relationship with function (e.g. Baer 1960; Grajetzki 2012). Thus, it has been argued that certain titles convey a given status in society, being awarded in sequence as part of a ladder of career progression, and should not be seen as indicators of connections with particular institutions or activities. Unfortunately, it is usually impossible to objectively determine which titles fall into this category, and it is quite feasible that some titles originally denoting function

may have transformed into ranking titles over time. Occasionally, an educated guess may be possible based on a literal translation: for instance, it seems logical that *ỉry-pˁ.t* ('Member of the elite') denotes a rank, whereas *ḫtm.w-bỉty* ('Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt) refers to a specific duty. However, this is often inadequate, as not all titles fit this neatly into one or the other category. For example, *rꜣ Nḫn* ('Mouth of Hierakonpolis') is a fairly common title, and one significant later in this study, but its translation gives no clue whether it is a rank, a function, or both[25]. The best solution therefore seems to be to avoid this dilemma altogether wherever possible, focusing instead on what people bearing a particular title did on the basis of wider prosopographic patterns, and not what the title denotes individually.

Finally, the prosopographic caveat of 'fission and fusion' (Smythe 2007: 136-137) is a particularly significant limitation in this study. As originally proposed, this concept refers to a single individual being falsely interpreted as two separate individuals ('fission'), or two separate individuals being conflated into one ('fusion'). However, in this study the challenge is not separating out people, but rather drawing boundaries between specific titles. The scope for multiple interpretations, and possibly errors, can be effectively shown by a worked example, taken from the title string of the late Fifth Dynasty official *Wr-ḫww* (OK21):

ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr m ḏꜣḏꜣ.t wr.t

Four translations are possible, depending on which parts of the above are fused together by the translator and which are retained as grammatically distinct elements:

1) Director, Scribe, and One connected to petitioning in the great *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*-court
2) Director of scribe(s) and One connected to petitioning in the great *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*-court
3) Director and Scribe who is connected to petitioning in the great *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*-court
4) Director of scribe(s) who are connected to petitioning in the great *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*-court

While these translations might all look similar at first sight, the implications associated with each are rather different. (2) and (4) suggest that this official directed scribes – this makes good semantic sense, but relies on supplying a plural marker that is not there in the original inscription.

[25] Indeed, in this example even the transliteration is dubious. While the present work renders this title as *rꜣ Nḫn* ('Mouth of Hierakonpolis'), the reading *ỉry Nḫn* ('One associated with Hierakonpolis') is equally widespread. A case for either reading can be made on the basis of the available orthography – see Jones 2000: 806 (2946), 808-809 (2953), and the reasons for *rꜣ Nḫn* being selected for use here are explained on pp. 92-93 of the present work.

Meanwhile (1) and (3) are more rigid renderings of what is carved in the stone: if these are followed, it is unclear what this man directed, but it would seem that he himself was a scribe and may not have had scribes under his charge. To further complicate matters, a similar ambiguity exists concerning the relationship of this scribe (or scribes) and the petitioning in the great *ḏ͗ḏ͗.t*-court: (1) and (2) suggest that the activities of that official in that court are independent of him being a scribe or directing scribes, while (3) and (4) suggest that the two are intimately linked – although they paint different pictures of the relationship between the official, the scribes, and the court. In this instance, translation (4) seems the most likely outcome overall, as it seems logical that the Director would be directing somebody mentioned in the text (i.e. the scribes), and that what follows indicates the place where this is happening. However, this interpretation is based entirely on the subjective assessment of the present writer – the only firm truth is that any of the four options is grammatically rigorous, all are either orthographically or semantically imperfect, and ultimately none can be decisively excluded.

The example given above is a somewhat extreme case, but it is far from unique. Issues of this sort are especially common in longer title strings where certain titles may have obscure meanings, where the decision to fuse two possible titles into one or keep them distinct can be based on little more than informed guesswork by the translator. The problem is also compounded by the possibility of combinations of titles meaning something other than what each of those titles might mean individually: for example, Grajetzki (2012: 5-8) has suggested that a *ḥ͗.ty-ʿ* ('Count') title added to the aforementioned *i͗ry-pʿ.t* actually should not be seen as another title, but rather as an indicator that the *i͗ry-pʿ.t* in question is of lower status. This proposal cannot be proven, and the present writer would be inclined to disagree on the basis that both titles are well known to exist in their own right, but it does have parallels in other cultures to this day[26]. Regrettably, other than being aware of this possibility, there is very little a researcher can do to guard against misunderstandings here.

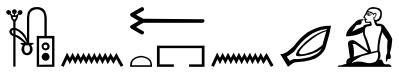
It must be emphasised that none of this in any way undermines the importance of titles as a method of inquiry. However challenging they may be, working with titles is surely more informative than not considering them at all. Furthermore, many core elements of their meaning can ultimately be understood regardless of their exact interrelation, and large numbers of title strings do feature vocabulary which is unambiguous. However, this does mean that a large degree

[26] For instance, the modern British Army rank of 'Lieutenant Colonel', holders of which are neither Lieutenants nor full Colonels. The 'Lieutenant' component is being used adjectivally to denote a junior Colonel, but there is no way of telling this just from looking at the title without culture-specific knowledge of Army practice.

of subjectivity might be present in the translation of individual title strings, and it can subsequently be amplified during macroanalysis of the entire dataset. Awareness of this is essential to avoid overconfident conclusions.

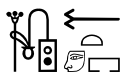
2) ***Flaws in currently available publications*** – Alongside considering the difficulties of working with title strings already included in the dataset, one must also carefully question whether a given title string should even be included from the outset. Initially this appears relatively simple: as stated in the methodology, if an official lived prior to the end of the Middle Kingdom and has a title connected to *wḏ^{c}-mdw* or *sḏm*, their title string is to be included. However, this relies on published renderings of titles reflecting the reality on the physical objects whereon they are inscribed, and regrettably this cannot always be taken for granted. To illustrate this, one such example is provided below.

It has been published that the title *sš n ḫnr.t n.(t) sḏm* ('Scribe of the confined space of hearing') is attested on two Middle Kingdom stelae: *BM 828* and *Louvre C 186* (Hayes 1955: 38). However, the present work found that while one of the attestations, *BM 828*, is genuine and its title string is duly part of the dataset (MK23), the purported occurrence on *Louvre C 186* is the result of a transliteration error. In the original published drawing of *BM 828*, the title is written as follows (Budge 1912: pl. 21):



sš n ḫnr.t n.(t) sḏm

Meanwhile, a photograph of *Louvre C 186* reveals that supposedly the same title attested there is in fact this (Louvre: C 186):



sš ḫnr.t

These titles are clearly not the same when investigated from first principles. The error appears to have originated in the *Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache*, where the title in Louvre C 186 is transcribed as follows (*Wb*. III: 297[1]):

sš ḫnr.t sḏm

Thus, sign D19 (nose, eye and cheek) in the original inscription has been replaced by F21 (ear of ox). While D19 is a common determinative in *ḫnr.t*, and is entirely appropriate in this context, F21 introduces the phonetic value *sḏm* and therefore adds a new word. While the shapes of the two signs are similar, and the lack of detail in the carving means that in isolation this sign could indeed be read as F21, its position in the text makes this reading inappropriate as it precedes the determinative O1 (house) which surely refers to *ḫnr.t* and not *sḏm*. Moreover, *sḏm* would be expected to have a determinative of its own, most likely A2 (man with hand to mouth), which is indeed found accompanying it in BM 828. It therefore seems highly unlikely that this title can be read as *sš n ḫnr.t n.(t) sḏm*, and by extension there is therefore no evidence that its bearer was connected to the *sḏm* procedure central to the present work.

This case illustrates the threat to data integrity posed by excessive reliance on secondary publications, and the necessity of verifying titles by consulting images of the original texts. While this study has done so insofar as is practicable, and most title strings have been verified in this way, gaps do remain. Many inscriptions, especially those in tombs published in the 19th Century (e.g. Mariette 1880, 1889; Maspero 1889, 1890), have not been photographed, and conventions of transcription and transliteration are frequently outdated. The ideal solution, solving this problem decisively, would be to visit all the tombs and view the inscriptions *in situ*, but this is sadly impractical for a project limited both by time and financial means. Consequently, while the situation has been mitigated where possible and it is strongly hoped that errors of the sort described above have been identified and removed, it must be acknowledged that the overall dataset used may in places still not fully reflect the original written record. The effect of this on the results presented here is likely to be minimal, as the vast majority of title strings are transcribed accurately, but the broader issue of possible discrepancy between primary data and publications remains worth noting.

3) ***Provenance of the evidence*** – There are three limitations associated with provenance: over-representation of very senior social strata, over-representation of specific geographic locations, and finally a lack of known provenance altogether. The first of these is an inherent limitation of all textual studies in Egyptology: the majority of the lower status population left no inscriptions, and

is therefore absent from the record. This is very true of the judicial material, although the use of ethnographic comparison and the broader focus on oral-aural justice does at least mean that this study can highlight the existence of non-elite forms of justice, proposing some mechanisms for how it may have functioned. However, these proposals cannot be grounded in evidence in the same way as conclusions drawn for the literate sections of society.

The second limitation is no less noteworthy, for the different elements of the dataset derive disproportionately from different parts of Egypt. Thus, the Old Kingdom evidence is very heavily centred on the necropoleis of Giza and Saqqara, while Middle Kingdom material largely consists either of mortuary stelae from Abydos or fragmentary correspondence from El-Lahun. The extent to which these areas were representative of Egypt as a whole is unknown. In view of their high levels of political and religious centrality, they may have had social and judicial structures atypical of Egypt in its entirety. It certainly seems likely that literacy rates in these regions were far higher than the norm, owing to the higher concentrations of senior administrative officials living, worshipping and dying there, and this would likely have had an effect on the forms justice assumed. Furthermore, the difference in geographical provenance of the Old and Middle Kingdom material means that it is impossible to compare like with like across periods: while it may be possible to show that the Old Kingdom area around Memphis was different to the Middle Kingdom area around Abydos, it is not possible to ascertain if the differences were down to change over time or simply variations in local practice. Added to this is the fact that to a major extent, this change in sites probably indicates fundamental shifts in the nature and localisation of state administration, so the absence of direct comparisons is probably altogether inevitable and indeed is a key feature of the evolving legal landscapes being studied. While this is highly significant in the context of the overall project, it also poses a distinctive methodological complexity.

The third limitation amplifies the challenges already caused by the second. In the present dataset, it disproportionately affects the Middle Kingdom, as the evidence from that period is to a greater extent based on portable objects, such as stelae and seals, rather than immobile tomb architecture. Such objects often entered museum collections from the antiquities market, and therefore their inclusion in the present study sheds very little additional light on the crucial question of where the people responsible for creating them were based. The quality of available publications of the material, many of which date to the 19th Century, occasionally augments these problems as such older works often pay less attention to matters of provenance than their more recent counterparts.

4) ***Challenges in interpreting textual media: preservation and attribution*** – The overwhelming majority of sources used in this study are lapidary in nature, consisting of tomb inscriptions or stelae. Both of these had religious functions, and providing information related to judicial matters is not their dominant aim. As stated earlier, more detailed information about judicial processes was probably recorded on papyri, which become by far the most important source of evidence about legal matters from the New Kingdom onwards. However, for the period covered here, relevant papyri are exceptionally few in number and the ones available are highly fragmentary. This is partly due to lapidary inscriptions often being inherently more durable than papyrus, but the issue is further complicated by very slow rates publication. Most notably, the El-Lahun papyri, discovered in 1889 and comprising by far the largest collection of Middle Kingdom material on daily administration, have still only been partially published (Luft 1992, 2006). Overall, this means that the evidence available relies heavily on what was selected by the officials themselves for their own commemoration, rather than accounts of any judicial processes in action. Thus, texts giving details about what functions were associated with particular titles or institutions on a practical level are exceptionally rare.

Furthermore, there always remains the possibility of officials having multiple monuments. This has already been highlighted in a study of Middle Kingdom administration (Grajetzki 2012: 140), which observes that officials with lengthy careers would likely have commissioned multiple monuments over their lifetimes, with each one perhaps only listing the titles significant to them at the point it was erected. This creates a risk of one individual being interpreted as several, linking back to the problem of prosopographic 'fission' discussed above. This is further compounded by the possibility, suggested in the same study, of officials using different personal names for themselves at different stages of career development (Grajetzki 2012: 57). If officials were indeed abandoning certain titles, or indeed names, upon receiving newer and more senior ones, verifying common or disparate identity becomes so difficult that tracking career progression effectively becomes impossible. However, this does not stop title strings from providing snapshots of what activities officials were engaged in at specific fixed points in their career. This means that the approach is still sound for determining long-term trends in the evolution of justice, but not necessarily of the careers of specific officials.

One additional observation should also be made specifically with regard to seals. Being portable and potentially transferable, the possibility that seals could be used by people other than the

individual named on them cannot be discounted (Grajetzki 2012: 68)[27]. Indeed, several people may have shared use of a seal, if they were acting in the name of a single superior with devolved responsibilities. Thus, it is a little simplistic to assume that one seal equals one official, in the same way as one tomb or one stela equals one official. While the latter are indeed solid indicators of specific individuals, the former may transcend the individual and instead represent an office. How many people served in that office is ultimately guesswork.

5) ***Lack of specificity in dating texts within broad chronological phases*** – A diachronic study of the type conducted herein can only be successful if one is confident in the dates assigned to the various materials forming the dataset. In the present work, while it is generally relatively easy to place texts within a broad epoch, such as the Old or Middle Kingdom, it is often exceptionally difficult to assign them to a specific phase within this period. Consequently, the approach taken here has been to analyse all Old Kingdom texts as one combined group, and all Middle Kingdom texts as a second combined group. While this does allow a broad comparison between the two periods, it might at times create an illusion that these two periods were entirely homogenous cultural blocks with no significant political, administrative or socio-economic development within them. It must be emphasised that this was not so: Egypt naturally continued to evolve between the Third and Sixth Dynasties, and again between the Eleventh and the Thirteenth. This would almost certainly have had legal implications, but these at present cannot be effectively traced. Therefore, this research is limited to taking what might be termed a 'macroevolutionary' approach, and is only able to highlight the most striking continuities and changes occurring from one Kingdom to the next. The presence of smaller nuances specific to particular phases within each period is acknowledged, but regrettably cannot be the focus of study.

6) ***Inherent limitations of ethnography and legal theory*** – While ethnographic comparison and ideas of legal pluralism may be useful in constructing hypothetical models of what unwritten, oral-aural aspects of Ancient Egyptian justice may have been like, they are far from providing proof. The fact that oral-aural justice functions in a particular manner in many traditional societies studied in modern times, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, does not mean that one can simply extrapolate that the Egyptian system followed the same principles. In particular, it is highly unlikely that Ancient Egyptian religious beliefs and conceptions of statehood and social ordering were the same as those of the traditional societies subjected to ethnographic enquiry today. As

[27] For a broader discussion of methodological issues surrounding Egyptian sealers and their work, see also Nelson-Thurst 2017. With reference to the Middle Kingdom, this paper notes that while seals do generally indicate that a given title had practical meaning, they do not make it clear exactly what objects or documents they were used to seal, and whether these were always of direct relevance to the office in question.

oral-aural practices by definition leave no written record, it is impossible to argue from evidence. One may succeed in showing beyond reasonable doubt that oral-aural practices did exist, as the concepts of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and/or *sḏm* both highlight the importance of the spoken word and are prominent in titles, but one cannot ascertain what they entailed. Thus, ethnography and legal theory remain but tools for educated speculation, supplementing the firm evidence of the title strings and other justice-related texts, but themselves yielding no proof.

2: Ethnographic insights into Ancient Egyptian justice

Before embarking on a detailed prosopographic study of Old and Middle Kingdom judicial officials, it is logical to form a clearer picture of what ethnography suggests might be expected on the basis of societies in some way resembling Ancient Egypt which have already been studied. The purpose of this is certainly not to form a preconception of the Egyptian model with a view to subsequently marshalling data to fit it, but rather to develop an appreciation of widely-observed features in relevant judicial systems which may shed light on Egyptian practices which were almost certainly present in some way, but are only partially discernible from direct evidence. This raises the dilemma of which systems should be considered 'relevant', and what criteria should be used in establishing whether a given society likely had enough commonalities with Ancient Egypt to be worthy of comparison. This is a somewhat circular question: to effectively select comparanda, ideally a good *a priori* understanding of the mechanics of Egyptian justice would be needed, but this can only be developed once comparanda are in place. In an attempt to at least partially break this loop, the following three strategies have been deployed:

1) ***Use of ethnographic material from Egypt itself***: While Ancient and Modern Egypt are very different in many ways, the view that Egyptian Arab culture lacks Ancient Egyptian influence has been openly called into question (El Daly 2005). In relation to justice specifically, it has been noted that traditional and probably very old approaches to law and conflict resolution, practiced at family or village level, remained dominant in rural areas until the late 20th Century (Smith *et al*. 1970: 482). It has also been widely argued that the lifestyle and social structure of Egyptian rural society, where such judicial practices are found, has until recently remained in many respects fundamentally similar to the Ancient Egyptian way of life (e.g. Ayrout 1963: 113; Blackman 2000: 280-316; Sattin 2000: 195). Indeed, the extent to which Egyptian justice relied upon local tradition, and consequently remained distinct from Western-influenced norms, led a contemporary British Consul-General to remark that prior to the British occupation of 1883, 'no system of justice existed in Egypt' (Cromer 1908: 516). While later developments in the academic understanding of justice mean that this view would not find acceptance today, it does nonetheless add to the argument that until recent times much of Egyptian justice remained relatively untouched by more recent, and predominantly Eurocentric, legal thought – hence not even fitting the notion of 'justice' familiar to the aforementioned colonial administrator. This means that narratives recounting local judicial practices in 19th and early 20th century Egypt,

notwithstanding their often outdated anthropological discourse and at times dismissive tone, may have substantial value as part of a wider attempt to understand the ancient legal landscape.

2) ***Focus on legal pluralism***: As mentioned earlier, Ancient Egypt almost certainly had both a state apparatus with a centralised source of power, characterised by formally-recognised officials who may be subjected to prosopographic study, and a decentralised network of far less formal varieties of local government and adjudication. In this, it has certain structural similarities with many modern sub-Saharan African states, where the legacy of colonialism has resulted in Western-style legal systems based around an administrative core and deriving authority from a bureaucratic state existing alongside traditional, community-based methods of conflict resolution found in outlying areas and deriving authority from the land or particular individuals respected locally. Overall, while the reasons for legal pluralism in those ancient and modern instances are clearly not the same, both feature an interesting balance between state and non-state actors and share the ability to provide justice through parallel avenues. As the sub-Saharan cases have already been studied extensively, it seems logical to cautiously use that scholarship to inform the Ancient Egyptian study.

3) ***Research into informal, oral-aural conflict resolution in traditional African contexts***: Study of legal pluralist justice systems has an inevitable tendency to veer towards the more formal aspects of conflict resolution, as these produce readily publishable documentary records which can subsequently be consulted. In a modern legal pluralist society, this balance can then be redressed by ethnographic fieldwork focusing specifically on observing informal, oral-aural dimensions of justice, but this is clearly impossible for Ancient Egypt. However, it has been noted that there are certain overarching features common to oral-aural justice across different social systems (e.g. Elias 1956; Ost 2012; Fikentscher 2016: 477-479), and in particular that traditional communities living along the Nile often have a very high degree of commonality within such customary law frameworks (Butt 1952: 52-53, 126, 142, 169). As discussed previously, academic Egyptology has not yet engaged with this path of investigation as much as could be hoped. However, some broad cultural similarities extending beyond law have already been pointed out. Past research has highlighted apparent points of convergence of certain Egyptian cult practices and sub-Saharan African fertility rituals (Fairman 1965: 73-74)[28], as well as significant areas of iconographic overlap

[28] This relates to the ritual of 'sacred marriage' between Horus and Hathor at Edfu, which appears to have strong links to a wide variety of African fertility rites. Unfortunately, this initial observation was never developed into a full research project. For further thoughts on the connections between Egyptian and wider African ritual practice, specifically with reference to divination, see Davis 1955.

(e.g. El-Yakhy 1985, Williams *et al*. 1987: 252-253)[29]. Furthermore, linguistic analysis of kinship terms in Egyptian and other African languages also points to the strong possibility of a common approach to questions of family and social regulation (Allen 2009: 56-67)[30], and in addition to this a strong case has been made for the vastly significant religious term *nṯr* ('god') being closely linked to nouns in Bantu languages (Siame 2013: 262)[31]. Consequently, a survey of the main characteristics of traditional legal procedure in such more modern African systems may be helpful for understanding the mechanics of informal Ancient Egyptian justice too, particularly at the level of village communities or kinship groups. This would be especially significant if the comparative findings are then found to be consistent with the relatively small volume of information gleaned about informal Egyptian justice from the textual record.

Ethnographic material from Egypt: traditional justice in Western accounts

It is most fortunate that a range of Western commentators have written fairly detailed accounts of different aspects of traditional Egyptian justice, even if their writing often contains a degree of subjective Eurocentric supremacism characteristic of the epoch in which they wrote. Keeping this in mind, the present section of this work will attempt to distil the most significant inferences therefrom. It investigates the key features of traditional Egyptian justice as recorded by six Western commentators of the 19th and early 20th centuries: Dominique-Vivant Denon, an associate of Napoleon and first Director of the Louvre Museum (D1), the Victorian scholar of Arabic Edward Lane (D2-8), the Victorian travel writers Lucie Duff Gordon (D9-10) and Amelia Edwards (D12), the Anglican priest, poet and traveller Charles Dent Bell (D11), and finally the early 20th Century British anthropologist Winifred Blackman (D13-14). While their accounts must obviously be treated with caution owing to the considerable discrepancy between the academic standards of their time and the present, their eyewitness nature still provides valuable details. Appendix II to the present work provides relatively lengthy *verbatim* excerpts of these authors, as these offer uniquely insightful illustrations of contemporary procedure. However, a detailed analysis of each would exceed the scope

[29] These include shared rock art motifs, such as boats and men with feathered headdresses, as well as the Qustul and Archaic Horus incense burners. For a factual summary of many of these similarities, see also Winters 1994: 185-188, although the present writer does not support the Afrocentric conclusions therein.

[30] While this study focuses on indisputable similarities in very specific words, it also fits into a more contentious but noteworthy wider argument for greater cultural affinity between Egypt and other African societies than commonly accepted (e.g. Diop 1977; 1978; 1981). Diop's work has been criticised for excessive Afrocentrism, but at the same time does raise significant points about similarities between Ancient Egypt and other African cultures. For sympathetic reviews, see Okafor 1991 and Winters 1994. For a list of highly critical reviews, which represent the conventional stance of most professional Egyptologists, see Siame 2013: 253.

[31] It must be emphasised that the present writer in no way supports the overall arguments and conclusions presented in Siame 2013, which claims that Ancient Egyptian civilisation was overwhelmingly black African. However, the narrow argument regarding the philological etymology of *nṯr*, based on comparison of its consonantal root with words of similar meaning in Bantu languages, appears highly convincing.

of this project, so the following section is limited to summarising the key characteristics of Egyptian justice deducible from a combined reading of all these extracts:

Arbitrary and absolute power of presiding judicial officials

Perhaps the most significant feature of these accounts is the focus on the absolute discretion of judges, who do not seem to have been bound by any significant legal constraints. Arbitrary punishment without any court procedure or indeed discussion was considered acceptable if handed down by individuals commanding sufficient respect (D1, D7). Torture by beating was commonly used, often allowing officials to predetermine the guilt of the accused prior to trial and subsequently generate confessions aligning with that initial interpretation (D3, D5). However, it was not always successful (D11).

Officials also had what was effectively legislative power in determining punishments, with scope for spontaneous design and implementation of unique sanctions for offences without obvious precedent or statutory basis. For instance, a tax collector who had slaughtered a cow and then ordered its body to be cut into pieces and sold was then treated in exactly that same way on the command of a more senior judge (D8). This reciprocal punishment was entirely unprecedented, involving the carving up of a body and the selling of human meat, but the official ordering it apparently had the social standing and seniority of office necessary for it to be seen as acceptable and indeed just by the local community. Moreover, the absolute power of judicial officials could be manifested up to the point of punishing individuals known to be innocent as a form of collective sanction, with an entire village threatened with beating on account of theft carried out by two men (D9) and fourteen neighbours of one man accused of hitting a foreigner sentenced to one month in prison (D12).

Without any standardisation of punishment, officials determined sentences on the basis of their personal view of the particulars of the offence (D1, D7, D8, D9, D10, D12), a desire to impress respected or wealthy individuals (D5, D8, D10, D12), or fear of being held accountable by more senior officials whose judicial actions would be equally arbitrary and potentially unpredictable (D5, D9). It should be noted that even though the justice such people dispensed was *ad hoc* and essentially informal, and in many ways derived from the respect for a given authority at a communal level, sentences of this kind were final and not subject to community influence or appeal once handed down. Communities did have an alternative way of seeking redress that avoided officials altogether –

the blood feud (D2, D14) – but if matters came to 'court'[32], the arbitrary ruling of whoever was the judge seems to have been binding.

Power of judicial officials linked to general social seniority rather than legal training

The descriptions consistently paint a picture where judicial authority was derived from other offices or statuses which were not necessarily, and frequently not at all, of a legal nature. Thus, a French general was considered qualified to act as a judge capable of imposing the death penalty purely on the basis of his high military office (D1), while the post of chief judge of Cairo could be purchased from the government by any eminent Turkish Ḥanafee Muslim (D4). In both these cases, the judge would not only lack any legal training, but would also come from a different culture, and indeed would be incapable of understanding the language spoken in the tribunal over which he presided. These judges were therefore dysfunctional unless they received very substantial help from local officials of much lower rank (D4), who had the practical skills but not the office-derived credibility required to dispense justice. Therefore, owing to the wealth and prestige associated with them, even somewhat aloof high officials were still considered appropriate sources – though not necessarily administrators – of justice. At the same time, continued reliance on such figures safeguarded the work prospects of the lower-level local functionaries, who might have been rendered redundant if their superiors had been able to discharge their duties with less assistance.

In cases of less gravity, judicial decisions could be vested in the village *sheikh* (D9, D10). This person would command wide respect in the local community as its most senior member, and would also live locally and be immersed in the specific socio-cultural dynamics of the place. In such situations, judicial authority was derived from social rank and patronage determined within the village, rather than *stricto sensu* from any clearly defined office. Unlike their more senior counterparts in formal settings, such individuals would indeed have had the linguistic and cultural awareness required to dispense justice without additional assistance with practicalities. However, much like the high officials, their legitimacy as judges was still rooted in social perception, and not in any quantifiable, objective level of legal knowledge. Indeed, socially unacceptable behaviour leading to an altered public persona and consequently public ridicule could be enough to strip a judge of responsibility, regardless of their judicial performance, as shown in a folk tale on the merits of judges and the consequences of their perceived foolishness (D13). Status and social respectability, whether emanating from office or simply

[32] The present work fully accepts that this term, which is evocative of formal legal procedure, is somewhat problematical in a customary context. However, since there is no compelling alternative designation for an environment where judicial decisions are made, it is retained with the caveat that its meaning does not correspond to a 'court' in the modern Western legal conception.

good local standing, seem to have therefore contributed far more to the prospects of a judge than their knowledge of any specific 'law'.

Judicial procedure heavily influenced by local relations, patronage, and religion

Notwithstanding the great power of local officials, another important inference is that justice itself was a malleable concept which different communities could shape on the basis of particular local histories, patronage networks, and religious beliefs. For instance, long-running disagreements between families in a given locality could give rise to blood feuds which, while not legal in terms of formal justice, did provide an opportunity for informal redress of grievance which was considered an indispensable part of the social fabric (D2, D14). In fact, informal regulations could grow up around the revenge concept, such as setting specific financial penalties as fines deemed the equivalent of revenge for unintentional wounding or mutilation (D2), or the requirement to kill murderers on the same spot and with the same weapon as used in the original act (D14).

Shifting to patronage networks, one must note the capacity of influential individuals to shape judgments in specific settings by relying on their contacts and bribery if necessary. A fine example is an inheritance case (D5) where a powerful and well-connected merchant almost succeeded in disinheriting a wealthy heiress in his own favour through a combination of bribes, suborning witnesses, and offering reciprocal patronage to judicial officials backing him. In another description, the malleability of justice caused Duff Gordon to comment that "if a prisoner can bribe high, he is apt to get off" (D10). The process could also work in the opposite direction, with officials offering payments to offenders in return for cooperation (D11). None of these payments were in any way formalised, discretion being exercised on both sides and presumably with no guarantee that the party being paid would then actually uphold its side of the agreement. Thus, an informal sense of reciprocal trust must have been at the heart of the system.

Finally, regarding the impact of religious beliefs on the practicalities of justice, Lane has commented that an informal way of identifying thieves involved compelling suspicious individuals to attest the unity of God to night watchmen (D6), based on an expectation that they would not dare to utter holy words after committing crime. Islamic scholars also had consultative voices in court, although their religious considerations could sometimes intertwine with commercial interests or patronage networks (D5). The religious feelings of local communities could also informally influence the pressing of charges, with particularly strict sanctions being advocated in a case where a known benefactor of Muslims was hurt (D9), and with the behaviour of even a non-Muslim plaintiff being judged against Islamic teaching (D10). It should be emphasised that these religious influences

occurred in a justice system that was not fundamentally based on *Sharia*: it was thus not indisputably religious law, but rather malleable, customary law where religion was one important factor among many that had to be considered by plaintiffs and presiding judges.

Relevance of these findings to the Ancient Egyptian setting

While limited previous research expressing the possibility of traditional Egyptian justice in some ways resembling ancient practices has already been cited, it has to be emphasised that 19th Century Egypt was nonetheless a very different polity to its ancient predecessor. It was a province of the Ottoman Empire, with a legal system heavily influenced by Islamic jurisprudence, and also drawing on earlier Byzantine thought, the *Code Napoléon*, and the British judicial framework (Lane 1908: 108-132; *LoC* 2015; Blick & Loktionov 2017). Furthermore, obvious differences would have emerged simply due to it existing in a technologically more modern epoch, with firearms and engine propulsion making lived experience in some ways rather different to ancient times. Farming practices and village life may still have resembled earlier periods, but from the perspective of conflict resolution the new developments in transport would have made it easier to involve centralised authorities, and more powerful weapons might have added a different dimension to enforcement. Consequently, the similarity of judicial practices must not be taken for granted and must be highlighted explicitly if a convincing case is to be made for using 19th Century descriptions as insights into ancient procedure.

From a practical perspective of the physical experience of justice, perhaps the most striking similarity is the use of torture by bastinado recounted in the 19th Century descriptions (D3, D5, D9, D11), which is directly comparable to the vigorous beatings described in the *Tomb Robbery Papyri* (Peet 1930: 40, 60-61, 142-158, 172-173; Capart *et al*. 1936: 172). Indeed, on one occasion the bastinado is even administered in a 19th Century investigation of this same offence (D11). Confession of the crime appears to have been a key requirement for conviction in both 19th Century (V3) and Ancient Egypt (e.g. Peet 1930: 142-158), and torture was seen as an effective method of inducing it in both cases. There also seems to have been continuity in punishment, with forced labour and deportation to mining regions practiced in the 19th Century (D3, D10) just as in Pharaonic times (e.g. Lorton 1977: 16-17, 33-38; Tyldesley 2000: 77-88; Loktionov 2017: 277-278).

From a belief-based perspective, the use of religious oaths as an important psychological mechanism of upholding lawful behaviour is also attested in the 19th Century (D6) just as it is in Ancient Egypt (e.g. Wilson 1948; Morschauser 1991; Loktionov 2017: 264-265). In the New Kingdom, oaths were sworn in the name of Amun and the King, while in the 19th Century they were based around attesting the unity of God and attributing misdemeanours to the work of the Devil (D3). The constant

undercurrent of religious considerations during judicial process in the 19th Century might have wider structural parallels with the mixing of the religious and judicial spheres in the ancient setting, as the fundamentally religious concept of *M3c.t* is widely considered to have had at least some influence on ancient judicial decisions (Assmann 1990; Morschauser 1995; Assmann *et al.* 2006). The interplay between omnipresent reminders of religion and physical torture, with both ultimately stimulating suspected criminals to confess, therefore appears to have functioned in at least partly similar ways in both the 19th Century and the ancient setting.

Commonalities also occur in the sphere of potential obstructions to justice: the pervasive bribery noted in the ethnographic descriptions (D4, D5, D12) has precedents in numerous ancient judicial investigations such as the Ramesside Tomb Robberies (e.g. Peet 1930: 118, 151-152; Capart *et al*. 1936: 171-172), *Papyrus Salt 124* (e.g. Černý 1929: 244-245; Théodoridès 1981: 22), the *Court Case of Mose* (Gaballa 1977: 23), and numerous prayers and treatises lamenting juridical corruption (e.g. Gardiner 1937: 17; Posener 1971; Vernus 2003: 127). Likewise, the harnessing of justice by individuals of high status to achieve self-advancement (D5), or their efforts to conceal unsatisfactory judicial outcomes to avoid punishment from higher authority (D9), resembles ancient practices in the *Tomb Robbery Papyri* where senior officials used justice as a vehicle for demonstrating their administrative prowess while simultaneously shaming rivals (Peet 1930; Vernus 2003: 7-18).

The absolutism of local judicial officials (D7-D12), effectively at liberty to set whatever punishment they saw fit, deserves special mention. Unexpected punishments, such as imprisoning people known to be entirely innocent (D12), or in one case even forcing members of an offending community to purchase pieces of flesh cut from the body of their recently executed tax collector (D8), seem to have been invented completely *ad hoc* by presiding adjudicators. This has many parallels with the Middle Kingdom *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* (Shupak 1992)[33], where a peasant is first unfairly punished and effectively robbed by a local official, then equally arbitrarily detained by the high official to whom he complains, and finally has his property restored by that same official because he likes his petitioning style. Indeed, by the New Kingdom there had emerged an entire sub-genre of literature criticising what was deemed unfair and often corrupt action by judicial officials (Vernus 2003: 121-149). It would therefore seem that lack of accountability for verdicts given, and great freedom to determine the verdict, were defining elements of the justice system in both cases.

[33] For a thorough treatment of the work, see Parkinson 1991. For a more recent edition, see Allen 2014: 229-326.

Uncovering a legal landscape: a legal pluralist view of Egyptian judicial process

From the analysis above, it is apparent that some traditional forms of justice remained present in Egypt in the long 19th Century, and in certain ways still resembled Ancient Egyptian practices. However, to understand the overall significance and implications of this traditional justice, one must also consider its place in the wider Egyptian legal landscape of the period. In particular, it must be noted that while essentially all forms of justice in Egypt at the time seem to have been characterised by procedural informality and arbitrary decision-making, certain types of justice were 'formal' in the sense of being sanctioned by the state, while others were not. These forms of justice, differing in their relationship to official authority if not always in the practical nature of their conduct, mean that 19th Century Egypt can be characterised as a legal system with major pluralist elements (*fig. 1*):

'Informal' (non-state-sanctioned) justice	'**Formal' (state-sanctioned) justice**
Organisational features • Led by local community leader (*Shaikh el-beled*), interacting with central government if necessary but usually not appointed by it. However, central government respected his authority. • No evidence for a place reserved specifically for justice; a place becomes a court if judicial practitioners convene there. • Any respected or high-ranking individual may be deemed qualified to act as judge; respected plaintiffs may be invited to propose sentences themselves. • Self-help strategies for seeking redress, such as blood feuds, are tolerated and considered an integral part of local justice. *Underlying rationale for existence* • Considered the traditional way of doing things, in existence since time immemorial and not imposed from above.	*Organisational features* • Led by a chief judge (*ḳáḍee*) of Cairo, appointed directly by central government. Written petitions to the Ottoman Sultan, asking him to intervene in the justice of a *ḳáḍee*, were initiated in rare cases. • Based around a centralised formal place of judgment (*Maḥkemeh*). • Involved a formal judicial hierarchy, with a deputy chief judge (*náïb*), a chief expert of religious law (*muftee*), a judicial council of religious notables (*'ulamà*), and a court interpreter (*bash-turguman*). • Had a clearly defined chief of police (*ẓábiṭ*) responsible for organizing patrols and making arrests. *Underlying rationale for existence* • Imposed by central government as a means of retaining and extending control, based on imported concepts from Ottoman justice.

Fig. 1: Elements of legal pluralism in 19th Century Egypt (based on ethnographic commentaries in Lane 1908: 108-132 with additional insights from Denon 1803: 230-231, Edwards 1899: 386-387, Duff Gordon 1969: 140-152, and Blackman 2000: 132-134). For more on relations between the *ḳáḍee* and the Sultan, see also Baldwin 2012: 511-513.

Models of this sort, showing parallel systems of justice within a single overall legal landscape, have to date been associated primarily with colonial contexts in modern Africa, of which 19th Century Egypt was an example. However, since Ancient Egypt was for most of its history a sovereign state operating

within a very different socio-political context, at first sight it might seem easy to dismiss the findings above as of little relevance. However, as discussed previously, recent developments in legal theory have shown that parallel justice systems can exist almost anywhere, and the fact that certain specific aspects of justice remained very similar to ancient practices raises the distinct possibility that the whole legal landscape had more in common with the ancient model than one might imagine. Indeed, while the outward appearances of the two justice systems might look very distinct due to factors such as Islamisation, the imposition of foreign Ottoman rule, and technological development, the fundamental mechanics might have remained remarkably similar, as illustrated below (*fig. 2*):

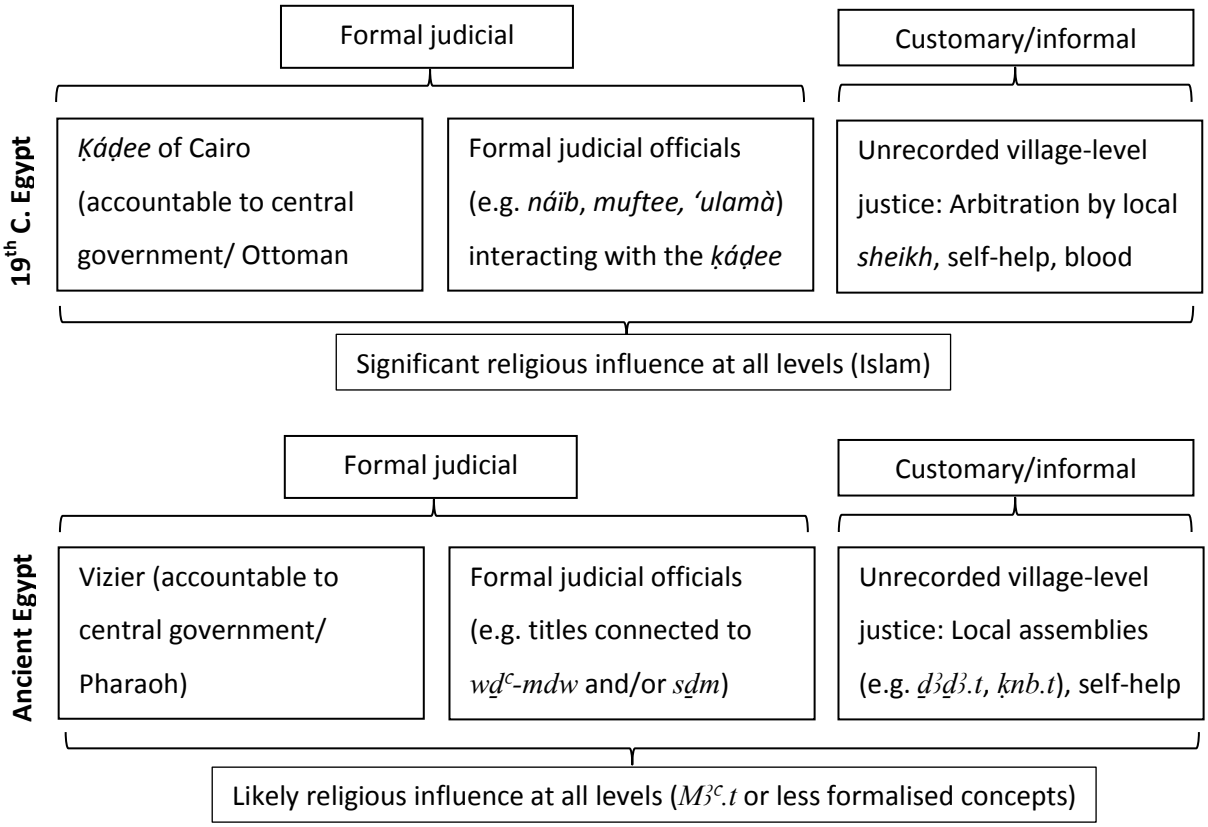


Fig. 2: Illustration of the possible structural similarities of the broad legal landscapes of Ancient and 19th Century Egypt.

It is important to note that this model merely seeks to illustrate possible continuities, or at least points in common, in the overall relationship between constituent components of Egyptian legal landscapes in antiquity and in the 19th Century. It certainly does not seek to equate the constituent parts to one another. However, it does show that the overall structure of the justice prevalent in Egypt in the 19th Century, which is described in the ethnographic texts discussed above, may have been far more ancient than initially appears. Such a view looks even more convincing when patent similarities in procedure are noted, such as the almost identical torture practices. Thus, the decision to use 19th Century material to gain insights into ancient practice should be regarded as more than a mere act of desperation, deployed because otherwise nothing at all could be proposed regarding less

formal judicial procedure in ancient times. That last point is to some degree a factor, but what evidence is available does point to continuities which make this choice entirely logical.

Informal conflict resolution: traditional African contexts and Egypt

Alongside diachronic ethnographic comparison within Egypt itself, a case can also be presented for engaging with comparative material outside of Egypt which may nonetheless have relevance to the present work. Much has already been published on how social order is regulated in traditional sub-Saharan African societies[34], and a summary of this prior research is in order here. It has been divided into seven distinct study areas: the role of chiefs, communal assemblies, theory of justice, religion, power of the spoken word, time and place of justice, and interaction of traditional systems with formal judicial structures of the state. While one must acknowledge that sub-dividing informal conflict resolution into such defined constituent parts is somewhat arbitrary considering the highly fluid nature of customary judicial process, and does not correspond to native African thought, such an approach does allow for a thorough conceptual summary and analysis of the key characteristics of such justice. Discussion of each sub-topic is in turn concluded by a paragraph outlining its potential significance for the Ancient Egyptian setting. Finally, this is followed by a brief case study of a much more concrete example: an uncanny similarity between a very specific aspect of Ancient Egyptian justice and what appears to be a strikingly similar practice in 15th Century Senegal. It could quite conceivably be coincidental, but it does raise wider questions about how exactly Egyptian justice might fit within the African setting.

Chiefs as holders of non-binding but socially authoritative powers of arbitration

Perhaps the most significant feature of these types of conflict resolution is the authority over arbitration held by a community chief, which is closely connected to religious belief. Ethnographic studies of sub-Saharan Nilotic peoples such as the Shilluk, Dinka, Nuer, and Alur have revealed that alongside justice, chiefs are typically believed to have fertility-inducing or rain-making powers due to a spiritual connection with specific divinities or the earth itself (Butt 1952: 50-54, 122-126, 141-154, 176-177). In such societies, the chief attempts to resolve disputes through exerting social pressure on the opposing parties, but does not have the executive power to impose a settlement upon them. If the disputants are fundamentally unwilling to make peace, there is no mechanism for compelling them to do so and ultimately a blood feud may ensue. However, this would indicate failure on the

[34] Regrettably, it should be noted that much of this literature is over fifty years old and hence dated from both theoretical and methodological perspectives. While this work attempts to cite the most recent publications wherever possible, the older literature often remains unsurpassed in terms of the depth of ethnographic descriptions. Partly this is due to Western scholars reducing field research focus on these traditional societies after decolonisation, switching instead to more theoretical approaches. For a good review of key issues here, see Smith 2017: 4-9.

part of the chief, whose perceived wisdom and religious authority should be too great to be ignored in this way. Thus, this aspect of upholding justice is exclusively based on an implicit social contract (Elias 1956: 17-24; Le Roy 2004: 82): the community perceives the chief as an epitome of wisdom and fairness, and the chief hands down non-binding judgments which are voluntarily obeyed because they confirm that perception. The common sub-Saharan maxim, 'un chef est avant tout un homme juste', reflects the primacy of this sentiment very well (Le Roy 2004: 62). Consequently, if these expectations are not met, arbitration processes are likely to unravel and a new chief may need to be installed. Indeed, in certain societies such as the Shilluk, if the chief appears to be weak and prone to poor decision-making, his community is likely to believe that this will weaken the earth too, as the two are intrinsically connected on a theological level (Butt 1952: 54). In such a situation, he is likely to be deposed in a violent fashion, giving the chief a very practical incentive to keep the community satisfied.

The concept of a widely-respected local figure rendering justice on the basis of their high status has considerable relevance for Ancient Egypt. Throughout Ancient Egyptian history, nomarchs and regional officials were keen to emphasise their role as guarantors of justice in their local areas, to such an extent that this became a very common trope (e.g. Eyre 2004; Menu 2015), while the longest preserved record of judicial action, the *Tomb Robbery Papyri*, shows that many key investigative roles were held by senior officials from the local area without any formal judicial titles (Peet 1930; Capart *et al*. 1936). Similarly, in the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*, it is a local official who hears the peasant's petitions (Shupak 1992). Naturally, it is important to emphasise that Egyptian local officials should not be equated with the village chiefs of sub-Saharan Africa: Ancient Egypt was a literate society, and furthermore many of these figures owed their positions to central government rather than ties to the land or overwhelming community support. However, these findings do highlight the importance of acknowledging the judicial power of officials at a community level, and potentially also the role played by notable local residents lacking formal posts who might conceivably have settled more minor village disputes which were not committed to writing.

Communal assemblies as places of conflict resolution through lengthy discussion

Alongside chiefs, traditional sub-Saharan African societies have typically employed communal assemblies for mediating disputes and ultimately generating solutions acceptable to everyone. This approach has for instance been observed in the Wolof people of Senegal, where it is epitomised by an idiom that disputes should be allowed to 's'arranger dans le ventre du village' (Le Roy 2004: 57), and in the local *engigwana*-assemblies of the Arusha of northern Tanzania where an ethnographic interview with an assembly member revealed an attitude where 'we discuss and discuss the matter

and then we agree' (Gulliver 1963: 232). There are usually no fixed requirements for membership of assemblies of this sort, with participation instead being determined on the basis of perceived standing in the community. Such standing is often associated with advanced age, as village elders have been recorded as prominent in conflict resolution processes of the Shilluk, Dinka, Nuer, Alur and Kikuyu (Butt 1952: 52, 126, 143, 176; Elias 1956: 222-228). People widely recognised in the community as priests or healers are likely to participate (Le Roy 2004: 63) too, often on the basis of their perceived influence in the divine sphere, and there is a strong social expectation that litigants will be supported by members of their extended family or clan (Le Roy 2004: 37). Witnesses must also be present, and have an important role in proceedings (Elias 1956: 245; Le Roy 2004: 39-41). The overall goal of such assemblies is to create an atmosphere of mediated confrontation (Fikentscher 2016: 19), where the opposing parties can both state their case in a structured but not overly rigid environment in the knowledge that the community will deploy collective efforts to secure the best possible outcome for all parties. This system also serves as a valuable tool of social pressure for chiefs, as its collective verdict or broad-based backing of a chiefly judgment can carry greater weight in convincing reluctant individuals to comply with the outcomes generated. If a collective decision is not observed, it logically follows that the offender may be ostracised by that collective as a punishment – a sanction so severe that it has been deemed a social form of the death penalty (Le Roy 2004: 78-79).

Regarding the Egyptian setting, research into communal assemblies of this sort might shed light on the nature of proceedings in the *ḏ͗ḏ͗.t* and *ḳnb.t* – two collective bodies long associated with judicial practice (e.g. Gabra 1929; Allam 1991; Lippert 2012) but the inner workings of which remain poorly understood. As there are no texts describing what happened when a *ḏ͗ḏ͗.t* or *ḳnb.t* was in session, it seems quite likely that procedure may have been dominated by lengthy discussion without a fixed format, perhaps similar to the traditions discussed above. If so, these places may have contrasted quite sharply with the bureaucratic, official aspects of Egyptian justice which are relatively well represented in the written record. They might have offered an environment for resolving conflicts with minimal state involvement and perhaps a greater emphasis on reconciliation – and while the possibility of this cannot be proven, it must be acknowledged when the better evidenced aspects of the Egyptian judicial system are studied.

Theory of justice in traditional sub-Saharan societies

In sharp contrast to Western conceptions of law, the societies discussed here do not regard justice as an abstract phenomenon capable of being satisfied independently of satisfying the individual litigants and society more broadly. Instead, justice is understood by all community members as a process

which should lead to the greatest possible degree of satisfaction for every affected party, aiming for social reconciliation which allows long-lasting harmonious coexistence in the future (Gluckman 1955: 49; Le Roy 2004: 11, 82-85). The aim of justice is therefore not to work out in concrete terms what is 'right' or 'wrong', in the process creating generalising laws that can then be applied to multiple cases, but simply to resolve the conflict in any particular case by whatever verdict is appropriate (Le Roy 2004: 52-53). It is therefore quite possible for two nearly identical cases to be resolved in very different ways, provided that both are seen as the most efficient path towards restoring peace. This in turn is seen as benefitting the entire community, all members of which therefore have a vested interest in locating any offenders and bringing them to justice (Elias 1956: 215-217). Conversely, there is a very strong social disapproval of violent, 'self-help' methods of resolving disputes (Gulliver 1963: 216-222), even if in practical terms there is no means of stopping the opposing parties from resorting to these if they so wish. The ideological attachment to this judicial philosophy is expected to be sufficiently great for wishes of this sort not to arise – what has been termed the 'psychical' rather than 'physical' compulsion to obey the rules of society (Niezen 2010: 2).

The idea that justice should seek to deliver maximum possible satisfaction for all, rather than achieve definite goals independent of the wishes of litigants, has striking similarities to Egyptian conceptions about the ideal judicial process. Perhaps the most explicit Egyptian statement advocating for this can be found in the *Instructions of Ptahhotep*, which state that adjudicators should prioritise delivering a positive experience for petitioners over solving the detailed minutiae of their case (Allen 2014: 190-191: 268-269):

mr ḫr(y) ỉw ỉʿỉ.t ib=f r ỉrỉ.t ỉỉ.t.n=f ḥr=s

> One oppressed by injustice loves the cleansing of his heart more than the doing of that regarding which he came.

The same person-centric, rather than abstract law-centric, approach is manifested by the plethora of self-laudatory inscriptions, from multiple periods of Egyptian history, where officials claim in various forms to have 'judged so that both parties were satisfied' (e.g. Lichtheim 1992: 27-28; Eyre 2004; Menu 2015). This is viewed as both a major personal achievement and a noteworthy benefit to society, and appears to closely match the sub-Saharan practices discussed above. It obviously does not mean that Egyptian adjudicators necessarily followed the same procedures as their sub-Saharan counterparts, but it could indicate a shared way of conceptualising the ultimate purpose of judicial process.

Religious aspects of justice

The sense of social duty discussed above is closely connected to a range of beliefs concerning both the fundamental metaphysics of the world and the power of chiefs to channel divine forces. On a theological level, traditional sub-Saharan African societies typically have an overarching set of beliefs regulating right conduct, such as the concepts of *Cuong* and *Thek* documented in Nuer thought (Butt 1952: 142-153). These terms, loosely translated as 'right' and 'respect' in Western scholarship, convey the duty of community members to behave with due reverence towards the perceived foundational components of harmonious social life, such as family, sacrifice and the power of spirits manifested in the totem of their community. Failure to do this can trigger either *Nueer*, a sickness generated by the spirit world or the wider cosmos to which all persons lacking *Thek* are deemed susceptible, or *Cien*, a ghostly vengeance thought to occur when a person dies without justice (Butt 1952: 153-154). Nuer society is by no means unique here: such belief-based overarching notions of justice are for instance also found as far south as the Lozi people of modern Zambia, whose concept of *mulao* ('right') informs *linto zelukile* ('doing what is correct') and is believed to have been forged at the creation of the world (Gluckman 1955: 1-3, 291-326). This again is linked to respect for the perceived natural order, disrupting which is thought capable of launching cosmic hardship independent of any judicial verdict. This has led to the observation that parts of Lozi judgments, if recorded, 'read like sermons' (Gluckman 1955: 49) – thus, the rationale for a certain form of conflict resolution may be grounded in religion rather than *stricto sensu* judicial considerations.

Religious factors can also lead to greater obedience to a judicial authority whose verdicts would otherwise be entirely non-binding. For instance, the chief in a traditional Dinka community is considered spiritually strong enough to magically kill anyone by piercing their clay effigy with a spear (Butt 1952: 125), even if he may not necessarily have the executive power to physically put offenders to death. Furthermore, the aforementioned role played by chiefs in religious rituals around rainmaking in many traditional Nilotic societies means that community members have a belief that their livelihoods are directly dependent on the actions of the chief, who can generate or terminate rainfall. Finally, it should be noted that religious justification for authority in justice can also extend beyond chiefs – for example, the Dogon people of Mali believe that their village councils of elders for resolving disputes, consisting of eight members, were created by the eight primeval ancestors of the people (Le Roy 2004: 80-81). Such councils therefore have the authority of creation behind them, giving the elders a cosmologically superior status opposing which could have dire consequences from a religious perspective. Again, it should be noted that the perceived proximity of the elders, or chiefs, to the divine gives them no strict executive right to enforce their verdicts, but it does ensure that failure to

do so is incompatible with the worldview of most members of the community on which potential litigants depend for social acceptance.

This religious dimension of justice may have parallels in Ancient Egypt. As discussed earlier, the concept of *M3ᶜ.t* and its legal connotations has already been the subject of many studies (e.g. Assmann 1990; Morschauser 1995; Assmann *et al.* 2006). They have shown that a fundamentally theological idea could, at least on occasion, have direct consequences for the practicalities of conflict resolution. Nonetheless, no Egyptological work[35] has been done on understanding the possible practical aspects of *M3ᶜ.t* on the basis of how religious concepts are integrated into other African judicial systems. This should be an important consideration, especially since connections to *M3ᶜ.t* may be readily traceable in the titles of judicial officials. The implications of overarching religious belief guiding processes of informal, or indeed relatively formal, conflict resolution, whether through a commitment to particular ideals or obedience to specific individuals, must also be acknowledged as part of a broader attempt to reconstruct how litigants navigated a judicial space that was at once practical and theological, and how legal authority may have been generated and maintained in environments distant from state administration. In the absence of texts, such attempts might be mostly futile, but any potential insight from ethnographic parallels should be seen as an improvement on the current evidential blank.

The power of the spoken word

Another key feature of justice in this cultural tradition is full reliance on oral-aural procedure, as there is a complete absence of written records. While this is partly for the practical reason that these societies were historically non-literate prior to colonisation, there is also a fundamental belief in the divine nature of spoken utterance among a wide array of traditional societies across sub-Saharan Africa (Le Roy 1974; Le Roy 2004: 32-36). In particular, these studies have shown that the spoken word is considered simultaneously a creator of order and of conflict, and is seen as a fundamental component of the essence of the cosmos. This belief in turn fits into the broader philosophy of justice of these peoples: the 'judicial utterance', in contrast to recorded law, has great potential for flexibility (Hamnett 1975: 17), meaning that agency in judicial decision-making rests with chiefs, assemblies and litigants themselves and not with abstract codes imposed by distant authority. As this oral-aural justice is generated by local people for local use, it is also typically more understandable to the litigants and wider community affected by it (Gluckman 1955: 49).

[35] A highly Afrocentric work on this topic exists (Karenga 2004), but it cannot be deemed a rigorous Egyptological study. It simply claims that *M3ᶜ.t* is part of African heritage, rather than showing how wider African ethnography can shed light on *M3ᶜ.t*. Certain similarities in beliefs between Ancient Egyptians and other Africans have also been pointed out, mainly in magical ritual (Davis 1955), but the scholarship is dated and *M3ᶜ.t* is not mentioned.

The fact that the spoken word is universally understood also means that 'lawyers', in the Western sense of that term, do not exist: there is no need for individuals trained specifically in implementation of a narrow set of defined judicial terms. However, there typically are individuals specialising in the oratory of judicial procedure, who might state a case on behalf of another litigant owing to their greater mastery of the spoken word (Elias 1956: 240-241; Le Roy 2004: 35). Indeed, studies of traditional judicial procedure in a chiefly court in Congo-Brazzaville have revealed that the whole judicial process can be seen as a performance, with members of the community arriving to admire the spectacle as well as to support the litigants (Le Roy 2004: 37-41). Consequently, participants in justice have a social obligation to deliver an interesting and passionate display instead of simply stating their case, and this can have a significant bearing on the final outcome.

These observations have direct relevance to the present study, which has a strong focus on the concepts of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* ('dividing words') and *sḏm* ('hearing') in Ancient Egyptian justice. The spoken word was clearly very significant: many people associated with it can be traced through title strings, and indeed the Egyptian name for the hieroglyphic script, *mdw-nṯr* ('word of god', *Wb*. II: 180-181), was likely connected to its perceived divine qualities. Mastery of the spoken word was highly valued in the judicial setting, as demonstrated above all in the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* (Shupak 1992). However, non-fiction descriptions of the oral-aural proceedings reliant on this spoken word are absent from the Egyptian written record, and this has prevented the topic from getting the attention it deserves. Consequently, ethnographic insights from sub-Saharan Africa open a new avenue for tentatively reconstructing what such processes may have been like, while being mindful of the caveats surrounding literacy and centralised state interference found in the Egyptian system.

The time and place of justice

In the societies discussed above, the spatial dimension of judgment is governed entirely by who is present, and not by the physical location. Thus, any place can become a court if attended by litigants, adjudicators and other assembly members with the express purpose of achieving justice (Le Roy 2004: 58-59). Typically, this would be the usual place where the community gathers to transact daily business, such as a marketplace or the house of a chief, but there is theoretically no restriction. However, while judicial process is not significantly affected by space, it is shaped by time: in particular, studies of traditional communities in Senegal and Benin have shown that seasonal events such as the monsoon rains or sowing period may prevent judicial assemblies from gathering, and especially significant judgments might only be passed at night when communications with the spirit world are believed to be easier (Le Roy 2004: 59-60).

These findings have several implications for Egyptian justice. Firstly, the absence of fixed adjudication locations raises the possibility that this may have been the case in Egypt too, with designations such as the *ḏ3ḏ3.t* and *ḳnb.t* perhaps denoting exclusively groups of people with specific duties, rather than both people and a place of judgment. This can help inform the overall approach to the spatial dimension of judgment: if Egyptian courts did not meet in purpose-built structures, they presumably met elsewhere which raises significant questions about dual use of the built environment. Secondly, the observation that justice can be shaped by time of year might also be applicable to Egypt – a society so heavily dependent on the flooding of the Nile and the seasonal activities revolving around it. For instance, one might hypothesise that at village level increased judicial activity could happen during the inundation period, when agricultural work was impossible and people may therefore have had more time to resolve disputes accumulated over the preceding year. In the absence of textual evidence, such an idea is inevitably speculation, but it does at least raise questions which might not have arisen without ethnographic descriptions of such practices occurring elsewhere.

Interactions of traditional justice with formal state law

In many African contexts, traditional justice structures have been shown to interact with formal judicial institutions of the centralised state, rather than simply co-existing alongside them. For instance, research into the spread of judicial practices in Lesotho has revealed chiefs being used by the central, post-colonial government as tools for the introduction of Western-style law (Hamnett 1975: 89-92). The formal, state-run judiciary often found it expedient to recruit chiefs into its ranks because they already had prior experience of conflict resolution, while local populations otherwise suspicious of alien practices imposed from above were more likely to accept them if they were put forward by a widely respected community leader delivering the reforms in a manner more understandable in the village setting. Similarly, chiefs have been used by colonial authorities across sub-Saharan Africa to impose centralised taxation regulations (Le Roy 2004: 102-103), presenting payment of government dues as part of the existing obligations of the community to its leaders and thereby convincing local populations of the need to comply without the unrest which might occur if financial demands were imposed directly from the administrative core.

As argued previously, it is highly likely that Ancient Egypt was at least to some extent a legally pluralist society, and therefore ethnographic observations relating to the interaction of informal and state law in other cultures are pertinent here. The comparative dimension illustrates that customary, village-based and formal judicial systems often do not operate independently of one another, but combine in a manner ensuring that elements of the centralised system become legitimised by figures of authority in outlying areas and thereby trickle down to local level. While this percolation of judicial

concepts cannot be reliably traced through historical records which do not describe the nature of oral-aural justice, the likelihood of its existence in Egypt must be highlighted. Great care must be taken in doing so, as the sub-Saharan legal pluralism discussed above occurred as a result of foreign cultural imposition triggered by Western colonialism, which clearly cannot be equated with the predominantly native socio-political processes at work in Ancient Egypt. Nonetheless, the judicial experience of these sub-Saharan societies does have relevance for the Egyptian case, as they are still prime examples of the interplay of formal and informal customary law even if the causes behind this are different. Based on the structural features of these systems, it might be logical to posit that the nature of legal pluralism in Ancient Egypt was probably not binary, with various degrees of state and customary influence instead combining in decision-making at any specific level.

An additional dimension: a case study of linkage between Egypt and Senegal?

While the points above illustrate many generalised ways in which the study of customary justice in sub-Saharan Africa might benefit understanding of the Egyptian setting, it should also be noted that on occasion one cannot exclude the possibility of much closer procedural rather than just conceptual similarities: namely that certain very specific aspects of justice in Ancient Egypt might have direct correlates in other African settings where one might not necessarily expect to find them. One must emphasise that this initiative in the present work is distinct from the aforementioned Afrocentric efforts, as it does not have a predetermined aim to demonstrate the 'Africanness' of Egyptian culture. It simply remarks that there is an instance where a society in Senegal made use of something apparently very similar to a well-known element of the Egyptian justice system. This is intended purely as an observation and a trigger for further thought, rather than as firm evidence for some fundamental linkage.

The element in question is the *ḥw.t-wr.t-6* ('six great enclosures'), which played a fundamental part in the legal landscape of Old Kingdom Egypt[36]. The *ḥw.t-wr.t-6* operated alongside a *ḥw.t-wr.t* ('great enclosure'). Together, these institutions seem to have been at the apex of judicial decision-making involving the Vizier, although the exact nature of their interactions is unclear. It is therefore interesting that the 15th Century Genoese traveller Alvise Cadamosto, when describing the adjudication practices of a Senegalese chief, described an ostensibly very similar arrangement (Le Roy 2004: 18)[37]:

[36] For a detailed discussion of the *ḥw.t-wr.t* and *ḥw.t-wr.t-6*, see pp. 74-78 in the following chapter.
[37] Translated from French by the present writer. For an English edition of this passage, see Crone 1937: 38-39. It should be noted, however, that the translation given therein is rather liberal.

> At the entrance of his house (where justice is dispensed) one encounters a great enclosure which leads to six other enclosures in succession before arriving at his living quarters.

While it is possible that two societies could independently develop a 'six plus one' model of enclosures at the top level of justice, it would be rather unusual. Moreover, shortly before this passage Cadamosto mentions a belief that the river in this part of Senegal was connected to the Nile and to Cairo (Crone 1937: 28), pointing to an awareness of Egypt and a purported geographical link to it. He does not state that the people were influenced by Egypt, and there is no overt connection in the text between this and the judicial enclosures, but it does add credence to the possibility of this not being sheer coincidence.

Naturally, such an interpretation is far from fully satisfactory, raising many unanswered questions. First of all, it is essential to acknowledge that Cadamosto was attempting to describe complex social and judicial phenomena in a culture of which he knew very little. Lacking knowledge of the local language, his communication abilities would have been limited and his ethnographic skills rudimentary by modern standards. While this does not necessarily mean that the description of what he saw should be doubted, caution is needed. Mindful of this, one can identify two key reasons for scepticism around a connection between Senegal and Egypt: firstly, Senegal is some 5000km from Egypt, and much of the terrain between the lands is near-impenetrable desert. Secondly, the chronological barrier is as strong as the geographical impediment: the 'great enclosures' of the Old Kingdom were probably obsolete by around 2200BCE, meaning that the Senegalese phenomenon was recorded over 3600 years later. Thus, it remains highly unlikely that Egyptian practice could have directly influenced the Senegalese, and thus the description given by Cadamosto should not be seen as a record of a preserved Egyptian practice.

However, what does perhaps seem more likely than pure coincidence is that the two systems evolved from a common ancestor, based on a shared initial conception and implementation of justice in prehistoric times. This is still a rather bold assertion considering the distances and timescales involved, but might be more believable considering the more generalised similarities between Egyptian and wider African justice discussed above. If these broader parallels are attributed to a shared starting point in judicial evolution, a narrower commonality such as this could have a similar explanation. Ultimately, this can neither be proven nor disproven and is at this point but a stimulus for further discussion.

Ultimately, the reason why Old Kingdom Egypt and 15th Century Senegal appeared to share this highly specific 'six plus one' enclosure phenomenon is in some ways secondary to the purpose of this study: the key point is that for whatever reason, sheer coincidence duly included, there are grounds for at least considering the possibility of certain sub-Saharan practices existing in near identical, rather than just somewhat similar, form in Ancient Egypt. If one were to follow this route, it would be possible to tentatively reconstruct Ancient Egyptian judicial procedures in unprecedented detail using wider African ethnography – for instance, an insight into what could have happened at the 'great enclosures' in the Old Kingdom might emerge based on the following passage from Cadamosto (Le Roy 2004: 18)[38]:

> In the middle of each (enclosure) is a large tree, for the convenience of those whose affairs compel them to be present. The entire retinue of the prince is distributed across these courts in accordance with their posts and ranks. […] In the evening, he (the chief) appears for a few moments in the innermost enclosure without distancing himself from the door to his living quarters, and the doors open only to magnates of the highest rank. Nonetheless he does give audiences to his subjects: regardless of the state of those who come to solicit his graces, all are obliged to remove their clothes, with the exception of what they use to cover their middle. Next, when they enter the innermost enclosure, they throw themselves on their knees while lowering their foreheads to the earth, and with two hands they cover their heads and shoulders with sand. […] Finally, when the prince begins to appear, they advance towards him without leaving the sand and without raising the head. They explain to him their request, while pretending not to see him, or at least giving the impression of not looking at him, while he ceaselessly makes conversation with other people. At the end of the speech, he turns his head towards them and honours them with a simple glance. He makes reply to them in two words.

This description appears to shed light on topics ranging from the physical environment in which cases were heard, to the behaviour of petitioners and the attitude of the adjudicator. Indeed, the appearing of the chief through a set of doors to face expectant subjects might even evoke the Pharaonic concept of the 'window of appearance', which was apparently also approached by passing under trees (Kemp 1976: 87-88). However, while it may be an invaluable source of information, one must remain vary of forging connections out of coincidence. This description, however detailed it may be, might in fact bear no resemblance to Egyptian practice. Nonetheless, by adding it to the

[38] Translation from French by the present writer. This passage is part of the same description as the Cadamosto excerpt earlier (i.e. Le Roy 2004: 18).

overall dataset with these caveats, one at least retains the option of considering the Egyptian data in the light of this information.

Lessons from ethnography: extra judicial insights from across time and space

The primary aim of this chapter has been to establish additional, and highly diverse, elements of enquiry which would not be discernible from the Egyptian texts themselves, in preparation for a detailed study of the purely Egyptian evidence in the two upcoming chapters. Before advancing to that stage, it is therefore fitting to briefly summarise those additional points of nuance:

i) Without even considering the broader African context, certain traditions of Egyptian justice were apparently exceptionally long-lived. This points to them being very firmly ingrained in the social fabric. Despite multiple changes in government, including periods of foreign rule, much seems to have remained relatively constant both at local level and in terms of how central and provincial justice interacted. This tendency to preserve certain key principles of justice in the *longue durée*, at times characterised by cosmetic changes in style rather than fundamental substance, must be remembered also when assessing the overall scale of any changes from the Old to the Middle Kingdom, and the extent to which they would have been noticeable to the population.

ii) The phenomenon of legal pluralism in Egypt has a lengthy and complex history. Long after the end of the Pharaonic period, parallel judicial structures continued to exist and were still in evidence as late as the 19th Century. While the differences between these ancient and comparatively modern systems should not be understated, they point to a fundamental duality in Egyptian justice: between centralised and outlying, written and oral-aural, official-led and community-led. An appreciation of these dualities is of importance to the study ahead, highlighting the fact that recorded evidence found in prosopography and other textual records probably represents but one feature of a remarkably varied and yet intersecting legal landscape.

iii) Egyptian justice is connected to the wider African legal tradition in a variety of ways, and regrettably measuring the extent of these connections rapidly descends into guesswork. Certain very broad similarities seem clear, such as the shared reliance on socially eminent individuals for adjudication and the presence of a common judicial rationale focusing on communal conflict resolution rather than abstract satisfaction of legal principles. Narrower similarities may also be present, as evidenced by the somewhat enigmatic case of the ‘great enclosures’, and these might yield a wealth of evidence, but equally these could also represent a false line of enquiry based on coincidence. Overall, the wisest approach is simply to be aware of these possibilities, using them to

tentatively inform analysis of the unambiguously Egyptian material. Such a strategy, while inevitably both speculative and somewhat timid, still goes considerably further than any prior effort.

3: People and places of judgment in the Old Kingdom

Having considered the theoretical and ethnographic background, in this chapter one may now proceed to an analysis of the Ancient Egyptian data falling directly within the chronological scope of this work, and therefore starting with the Old Kingdom. Inevitably, this will initially focus on the more formal elements of the justice system which have left a noteworthy prosopographic and wider textual record. Once the key features observable here have been addressed, the discussion will shift to broader theoretical considerations taking into account legal pluralism and proposing a model for a judicial landscape containing both formal and informal elements. This will in turn provide the foundation for the study of judicial evolution into and through the Middle Kingdom, which is the subject of the following chapter.

Wḏ^{c}-mdw in inscriptions

Before beginning any textual study of 'judging' in the Old Kingdom, one must first determine that at this time formalised judging did in fact occur in a manner distinct enough to be considered an independent and recordable concept in the Egyptian mind and vocabulary. Perhaps the clearest evidence for this comes from the Sixth Dynasty *Papyrus Turin CG 54002* (Roccati 1968: 15-16, pls. IV[a]-IV; Philip-Stéphan 2008^{A}: 299, Document 93, 8-18; Wente 1990: 57), a letter going into considerable detail about the judicial process before denoting it with a specific term: *wḏ^{c}-mdw* ('dividing words'):

> *[…]dd.n=f n(=ỉ) wn.t rdỉ.n=k sṯt 1 ḥḳ3.t bd.t m […][39]sḳ3.n Mmỉ pn r-gs smr (w^{c}.ty) ỉmy-r3 ḥm.w-nṯr M[…] Iw-Mỉtrw ḫr ḥr n smr w^{c}.ty Šm3ỉ sk smr w^{c}.ty Snk3w ỉy.(w) r ḏ3t.t tn ỉw […] m ḥry-ỉb ḏ3t.t ḥr ỉrỉ.t wšr.t m ỉt n.(t) s ḥn^{c} ỉt-Šm^{c}.w=f sk ḫrw=k ḫ3b.(w) ḥr […] r wḏ^{c}-mdw m-b3ḥ(?) […] n ḏ3t.t wpwty=ỉ […] m rdỉ.t rḫ=k ḏw ḏ3y.t štm […] ḫ3b-ḫrw.w ỉn ḥm s3w ṯw n sr.w ỉw=ỉ r ỉrỉ.t r ḫbd=k*
>
> […] He said to me that you caused to sow one *ḥḳ3.t* of emmer in […] ploughed by this *Mmỉ* in the presence of the (Sole) companion and Overseer of *ḥm-nṯr*-priests *M*[…] Rizeiqat, controlled by the Sole companion *Šm3ỉ*, while the Sole companion *Snk3w* is come to this estate […] in the middle of the estate, cultivating with barley of a man together with his Upper Egyptian barley, while your voice is crooked regarding […] to divide words before […] of the estate, my

[39] Philip-Stéphan (2008^{A}: 299, Document 93, 9) proposes that the first unclear word at the start of the lacuna be read *Nḫn* ('Hierakonpolis'). However, the veracity of this assertion is difficult to ascertain.

messenger […] in causing you to know the evil of wrongdoing and hostility […] those crooked of voice. Now, guard yourself concerning the officials. I will act to your displeasure.

This text, although fragmentary, suggests that complex and relatively formal procedures involving witnesses and meticulous reconstruction of grievances were already practiced, and that these could be resolved by *wḏ^{c}-mdw* procedure. Unfortunately, there are no further examples of this kind, although the mention of a *sš n wḏ^{c}.w* ('record of those judged') in the highly fragmentary *Papyrus Berlin 11301*[40] from Abusir is potentially another indication of the procedure happening within an administrative framework and triggering bureaucratic consequences.

Moreover, while there are no other occurrences of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* in Old Kingdom administrative texts outside of tomb inscriptions, the concept does also appear in texts concerning the dead. One of these, a 'letter to the dead' found at Qaw el-Kebir and likely dating to the very end of the Old Kingdom, was written by a son complaining about his deceased brother intervening in his life, and encouraging his equally deceased father to conduct *wḏ^{c}-mdw* proceedings against him, presumably in the afterlife (Gardiner & Sethe 1928: 3-4, pl. IIA, 9):

ỉrỉ n=k ỉrỉ.t wḏ^{c}-mdw ḥn^{c}=f ḏr-nt.t sš.w=k ḥn^{c}(=k?) m nỉwt w^{c}.t

You should carry out *wḏ^{c}-mdw* with him, since your scribes are with you(?) in one city.

While the exact meaning of this passage is uncertain, it does serve as further evidence for *wḏ^{c}-mdw* being a process not only important enough to feature in a letter, but also one which could necessitate scribal involvement. It seems possible that the allusion to scribes being 'in one city' with the addressee could be an idiom indicating proximity, with the writer pointing out that *wḏ^{c}-mdw* happens in a place where there are scribes.

Conversely, just as the living could encourage *wḏ^{c}-mdw* among the dead, so could the dead invoke *wḏ^{c}-mdw* when addressing the living. One example is *Stela Cairo JE 1432* (*Urk.* I, 14, 9-10; Philip-Stéphan 2008^{A}: 296-297, Document 89, 14, 9-14, 10), where the deceased invokes this procedure as a threat against anyone wishing to take his property:

ỉr ḫt nb.(t) prt(y).sy ḫnt rdỉt.n(=ỉ) n=s[n wnn wḏ^{c}-mdw ḥn^{c}=sn m bw] wḏ^{c}-mdw ỉm

[40] Discussed in more detail on pp. 77-78 of the present work.

> As for anything which I gave th[em] that will go missing, [there will be dividing words with them in the place] where dividing words occurs.

Another example of this invokes the concept as a form of retaliation by the tomb owner in the event of his tomb being violated (*Urk.* I: 72, 4-5):

> *s nb ỉrt(y).fy ḫt dw.(t) r grg.wy wnn(=ỉ) wḏᶜ-mdw ḥnᶜ=f ỉn nṯr ᶜ3*

> Any man who will do a bad thing against the foundations (of my tomb); I will be engaged in dividing words with him by the great god.

Highly formulaic attestations of *wḏᶜ-mdw* in this tradition are common in non-royal funerary inscriptions of this period, so the texts above are by no means unique (Jin 2003: 229-231). Meanwhile, the term also occurs in a royal context in the Pyramid Texts. In the example below, taken from *Pyramid* Texts 2045-46, the deceased King is shown resolving divine disputes (Guilhou 2001; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 22):

> *h3 r=f Ppy ḥnᶜ Rᶜ m wỉ3=f pw ᶜ3 sḳdd=f ỉm=f ỉr 3ḫ.t wḏᶜ-mdw nṯr.w ỉm=f sḳd Ḥr ỉm=f ḥnᶜ=f ỉr 3ḫ.t wḏᶜ Ppy mdw nṯr.w ỉm=f ḥnᶜ=f m 3ḫ.t Ppy wᶜ ỉm=sn*

> Pepy descended with Ra in this his great barque in which he is to sail to the horizon and divide words of the gods in it. Horus sailed in it with him to the horizon; Pepy is to divide words of the gods in it with him on the horizon, Pepy being alone among them.

Attestations of this sort are numerous in the *Pyramid Texts*, and are also highly formulaic (Goedicke 1963: 359-365). The deceased King almost always engages in *wḏᶜ-mdw* with respect to gods, but in *Pyramid Text* 273b he performs *wḏᶜ-mdw* for the living and in *Pyramid Text* 485c he conducts it in his city (Goedicke 1963: 364-365). Overall, it is therefore apparent that *wḏᶜ-mdw* was considered an important process in the Old Kingdom, although inscriptions say nothing about how it was done. In line with the wider African ethnographic parallels discussed in the previous chapter, it appears to have had religious implications as well as being a practical element of justice, being thought capable of transcending boundaries between the living and the dead. Thankfully, a more thorough picture can be obtained through a study of officials bearing titles containing *wḏᶜ-mdw*, which are plentiful in the Old Kingdom.

Wḏ^{c}-mdw in titles

The following section provides commentaries on all known titles containing *wḏ^{c}-mdw* found in Old Kingdom contexts. Each commentary begins by listing the attestations of all forms of the title in question, allowing them to be traced in Appendix I, before discussing general trends observable across the title strings wherein that title is found. These include the typical length of title strings, the prevalence of other titles with likely judicial significance, and where applicable connections to specific administrative institutions. The overall aim is to construct some understanding of the careers and professional activities of individuals involved in *wḏ^{c}-mdw*, as well as the broader administrative and possibly also social contexts within which they operated.

wḏ^{c}-mdw – 'Divider of words'

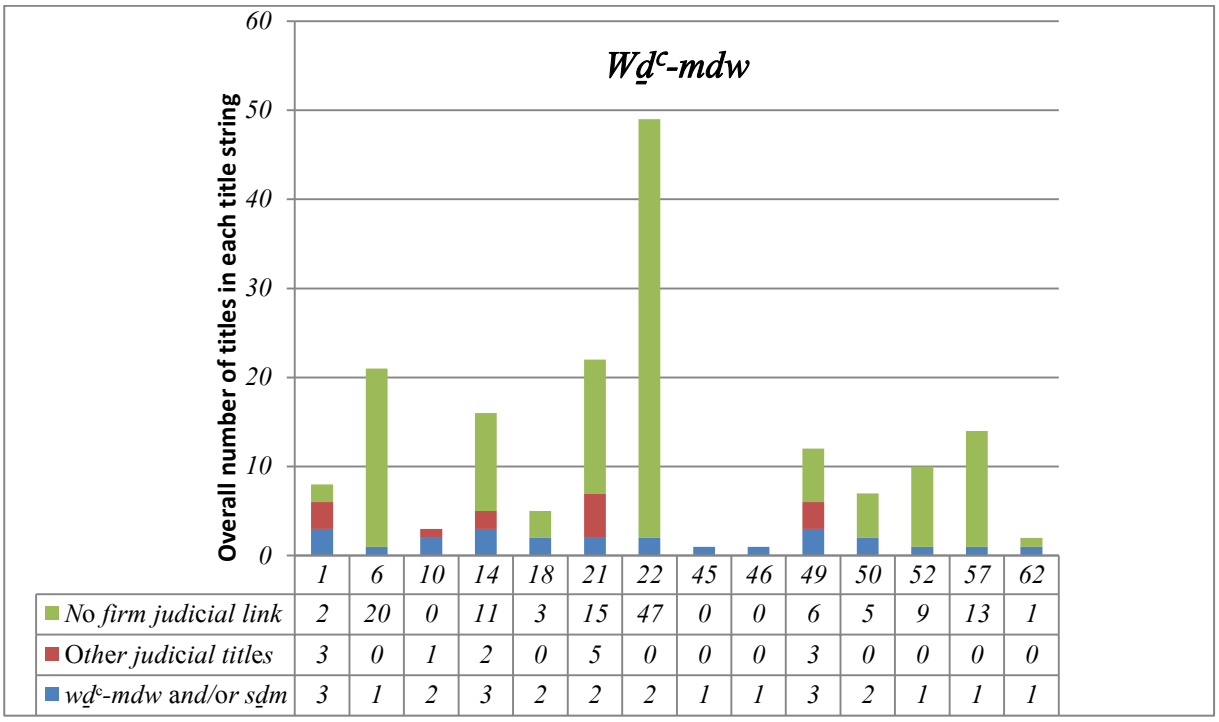
This common title is found in fourteen title strings. It has eight variants:

wḏ^{c}-mdw (OK14, 22, 45, 46, 62)
wḏ^{c}-mdw m ḥ^{ɔ}y.t (OK21)
wḏ^{c}-mdw m ḫw.t-wr.t (OK52)
wḏ^{c}-mdw m ḫw.t-wr.t-6 (OK10)
wḏ^{c}-mdw m s.wt šps.wt (OK50)
wḏ^{c}-mdw m s.wt šps.wt nt pr-^{cɔ} (OK6, 57)
wḏ^{c}-mdw šṯ^{ɔ} (OK18)
wḏ^{c}-mdw šṯ^{ɔ} n ḫw.t-wr.t (OK1, 49)

A broad range of officials possess it, such as one *^{ɔ}ḥ.t-mḫw* (OK1)[41], an official whose title string points to a very high degree of focus on judicial matters. It is also found on two seal impressions which bear no other titles (OK45, 46), indicating that the officials in question either had *wḏ^{c}-mdw* as their principal task, or at least considered it important enough to warrant a seal for use exclusively in such contexts. It is noteworthy that these two seal impressions are both from Elephantine: this is highly unusual for the Old Kingdom dataset, which is almost exclusively derived from the Memphite region, and may point either to practices being different in the provinces compared to the administrative heartland, or to the presence of itinerant judicial officials perhaps making a mark in the archaeological record at Elephantine without being permanently based there. One of these seal impressions is also exceptionally old (OK45), dating to the very early Third Dynasty or even the late Early Dynastic, which could suggest that the practice of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* as a fairly narrow sphere of specialised activity dates back to even before the conventionally-recognised beginning of the Old

[41] See also case study later in this chapter (p. 98).

Kingdom. On the other hand though, the title is also held by *Pḥ-r-nfr* (OK22), a man with only two titles with judicial connotations[42] out of forty nine and who probably did relatively little judging, and by a variety of officials nestled at various points along the spectrum between these extremes. A significant number of holders of this title are also designated as *ḥry-sšt3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw* (OK1, 14, 18, 50) – a title which, as will be shown below, is often connected to fairly high degrees of involvement in judicial matters**.** Overall, it is very difficult to consistently connect this title to a particular type of official, although it does seem highly likely that at least some holders considered judicial matters among their primary areas of activity and perhaps even their foremost task.



	1	6	10	14	18	21	22	45	46	49	50	52	57	62
No *firm judicial link*	2	20	0	11	3	15	47	0	0	6	5	9	13	1
Other *judicial titles*	3	0	1	2	0	5	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
wḏ^{c}-mdw and/or *sḏm*	3	1	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	3	2	1	1	1

Fig. 3: Graph showing compositions of title strings containing the title wḏ^{c}-mdw. The numbers in the top row indicate the title strings in question (e.g. 1 refers to OK1 and 62 to OK62 in Appendix I).

ḥry-sšt3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw – 'Master of secrets of dividing words'

Found in twenty eight title strings, this is by far the most common Old Kingdom title mentioning *wḏ^{c}-mdw*. There are seven variants*:*

ḥry-sšt3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw (OK1, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 16, 18, 24, 32, 36, 41, 44, 48, 53, 54, 58, 63)

ḥry-sšt3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw m3^{c} (OK20)

ḥry-sšt3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t (OK23, 35, 50, 68)

[42] For a definition of what constitutes a 'title with judicial connotations' for the purposes of the present work, see p. 29-31 (including fn. 24) in the *Methodology* section in Chapter 1.

ḥry-sšt3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw m ḥw.t-wr.t-6 (OK28, 32, 43)[43]

ḥry-sšt3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw nb ḥw.t-wr.t (OK3)

ḥry-sšt3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw št3 n ḥw.t-wr.t (OK23, 38)

ḥry-sšt3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw nb št3 n ḥw.t-wr.t (OK29)

As with *wḏ^{c}-mdw*, the spectrum of officials in question is very broad. Thus, the aforementioned *3ḫ.t-mḥw* (OK1)[44], who clearly had a close relationship with judicial action, holds this title. At the same time, it is also held by *Mrr.w-k3*, where it is found alongside eighty other titles, mostly entirely unrelated to justice (OK28). The other officials are spread very evenly between these poles, suggesting that the title was likely held both by people with a strong focus on justice and others who carried out judicial activities together with many other functions. On four occasions, this title is found alongside the title *wḏ^{c}-mdw* (OK1, 14, 18, 50), and this seems to be a feature of officials with shorter title strings. The exact significance of the *ḥry-sšt3* ('master of secrets') element of this title is far from clear – one possibility drawn from ethnography might be that this indicates that the practitioner had been initiated into some spiritual dimension of the *wḏ^{c}-mdw* process, representing a 'secret' to others in a manner similar to religious justification of chiefly adjudication in a number of traditional societies in sub-Saharan Africa.

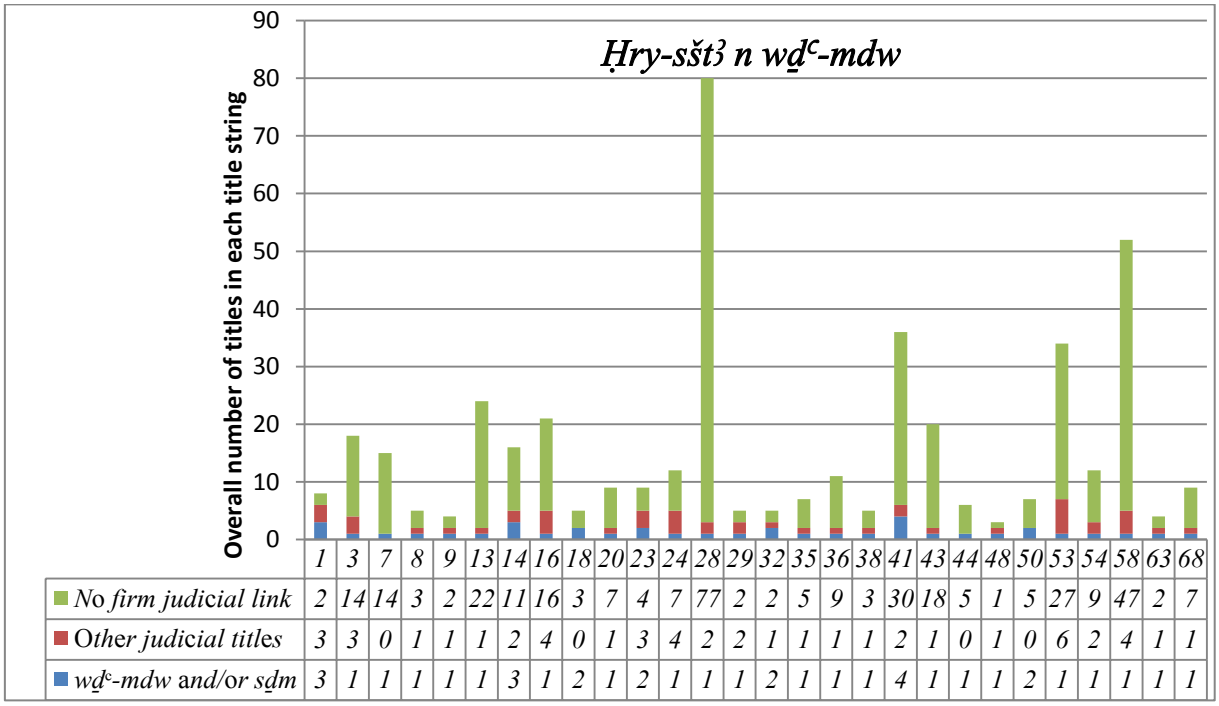


Fig. 4: Graph showing compositions of title strings containing the title ḥry-sšt3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw. The numbers in the top row indicate the title strings in question (e.g. 1 refers to OK1 and 68 to OK68 in Appendix I).

[43] Var. *ḥry-sšt3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t-6* (OK28).
[44] See also case study later in this chapter (p. 98).

sm3ᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw – 'Enforcer of dividing words'

This title is found in sixteen title strings, making it the second most common Old Kingdom title containing *wḏᶜ-mdw*, second only to *ḥry-sšt3 n wḏᶜ-mdw*. Its six variants are:

sm3ᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw (OK5, 14, 17, 25, 34, 37, 39, 64, 67)
sm3ᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw m3ᶜ (OK33)
sm3ᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t (OK19, 42, 51)
sm3ᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t-6 (OK11)
sm3ᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw n wsḫ.t (OK59)
sm3ᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw n wsḫ.t n(y)-sw.t (OK66)

Title strings containing this title are characterized by their short length: they are on average only six titles long, and even the longest outlier is no longer than sixteen titles (OK14). As longer title strings generally contain indicators of high social rank, this implies that holders were for the most part not of especially senior status. In many cases, the high concentrations of judicial titles may suggest a deep level of involvement in this field, with it perhaps being a primary duty. The translation suggested here would consolidate this interpretation: *sm3ᶜ* is the causative form of *m3ᶜ* ('to be in order'), followed by *wḏᶜ-mdw* ('dividing words') as the logical object of the participle, yielding a literal rendering of 'one who causes dividing words to be in order'. This strongly implies an active, practical role in bringing *wḏᶜ-mdw* into action in accordance with certain set principles – a form of enforcement quite possibly associated with *M3ᶜ.t*, which is clearly closely related to the stem. A further indication pointing to this title having connotations of enforcement is the fact that its holders also often hold the titles *r3 Nḫn* (OK11, 17, 19, 25, 33, 37, 39) and/or *sms.w h3y.t* (OK5, 11, 17, 19, 39, 42). As will be shown, both of these can be linked closely to the practical imposition of justice. This would be entirely consistent with a title denoting officials responsible for the enforcement aspects of *wḏᶜ-mdw* procedure.

Fig. 5: Graph showing compositions of title strings containing the title sm3c wḏc-mdw. The numbers in the top row indicate the title strings in question (e.g. 5 refers to OK5 and 67 to OK67 in Appendix I).

ỉmy-r3 wḏc-mdw – 'Overseer of dividing words'

This title is relatively rare, occurring in only four title strings. Its five variants, each attested only once, are:

ỉmy-r3 wḏc-mdw (OK4)

ỉmy-r3 wḏc-mdw nb (OK2)

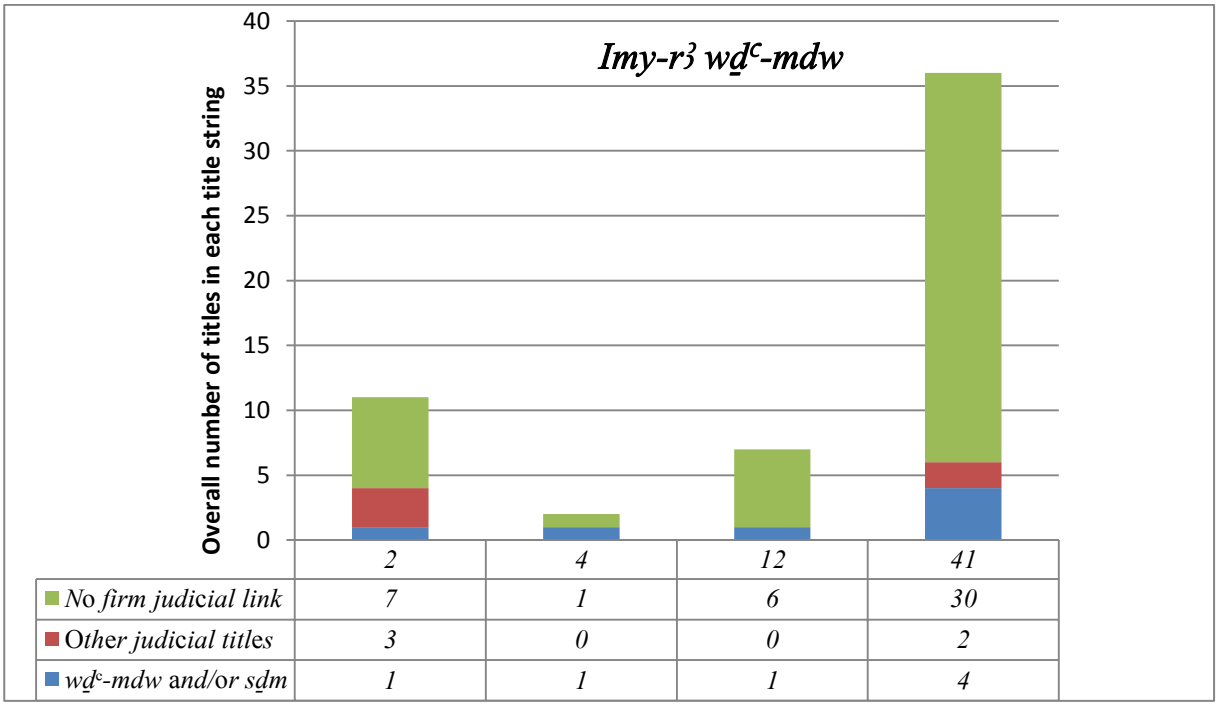
ỉmy-r3 wḏc-mdw nb št3 n ḥw.t-wr.t-6 (OK41)

ỉmy-r3 wḏc-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t-6 (OK41)

ỉmy-r3 wḏc-mdw n wsḫ.t (OK12)

Little can be inferred from such a small dataset, although the connection of this title to institutions such as the *ḥw.t-wr.t-6* and the *wsḫ.t* might point to an active function in a court setting. It is also worth noting that the rarity of the title may be a logical consequence of it being higher in a hierarchy of *wḏc-mdw* titles: these people were presumably overseers of other more numerous *wḏc-mdw* officials lower down the system, and the fact that none of the *ỉmy-r3 wḏc-mdw* officials also holds a plain *wḏc-mdw* title appears to corroborate this. It would therefore seem that these people did not engage in routine *wḏc-mdw* matters themselves. Indeed, out of the four attestations, three belong to officials with titles indicating close personal proximity to the King (OK2, 12, 41), including a serving Vizier (OK2) and a future Vizier (OK41). The title strings in these two cases are relatively long,

suggesting that the holders probably had significant other commitments alongside judicial matters. Nonetheless, their high social status would have likely given them great judicial authority in any cases which they did adjudicate, if Ancient Egyptian justice indeed followed the ethnographic comparanda discussed earlier.



	2	4	12	41
No *firm judicial link*	7	1	6	30
Other *judicial titles*	3	0	0	2
wḏꜤ-mdw and/or *sḏm*	1	1	1	4

Fig. 6: Graph showing compositions of title strings containing the title ỉmy-rꜣ wḏꜤ-mdw. The numbers in the top row indicate the title strings in question (e.g. 2 refers to OK2 and 41 to OK41 in Appendix I).

wḏ wḏꜤ-mdw n ḫry.(w)-wḏb.(w) – 'Commander and divider of words of the diverters of offerings'

This title is found in only two title strings, once as *wḏ wḏꜤ-mdw n ḫry.(w)-wḏb.(w)* (OK26) and once as *wḏ wḏꜤ-mdw mꜣꜤ n ḫry.(w)-wḏb.(w)* (OK31). These title strings are close to average length for the overall dataset, being twenty two and fourteen titles long respectively. Neither of them is rich in titles with strong judicial connections, but it may be noteworthy that both officials are *ḫrp wsḫ.t* ('Director of the *wsḫ.t*-court'), and so have ties to at least one potentially judicial institution discussed later in this chapter. Meanwhile, the mention of offerings in this title could indicate that it was mainly connected to religious administration and the temple sphere – if so, this would be further evidence for the fluid boundaries between religion and justice, already thrown into relief by the aforementioned occurrences of *wḏꜤ-mdw* in funerary literature and the wider ethnographic comparanda mentioned previously. However, considering the paucity of attestations, little more can be said of this title specifically.

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.w wḏꜤ-mdw štꜣ – 'Dignitary, overseer of scribes and secret divider of words'

This title exists in only one title string (OK49), although the official in question holds two variants of it: *sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.w wḏꜤ-mdw štꜣ* and *sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.w wḏꜤ-mdw štꜣ n ḥw.t-wr.t*. It appears that this compound title is a single unit in its own right, as the text also lists *wḏꜤ-mdw štꜣ n ḥw.t-wr.t* as a different title alongside the above[45]. The title string mentioning these titles is relatively short, only twelve titles in length, and has three titles connected to directing scribes in the *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*. Being connected to both the *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t* and the *ḥw.t-wr.t*, two institutions with strong links to justice discussed later in this chapter, it seems likely that judicial matters were among the key priorities of this individual, perhaps even being his main sphere of activity. However, with only one title string analysed, associating this title with a particularly high level of involvement in justice would obviously be premature.

ḥry-tp mdw n wḏꜤ-mdw štꜣ n ḥw.t-wr.t – 'Chief of words of the secret dividing of words of the great enclosure'

This hapax title is found only in the title string of *ꜣḫ.t-mḥw* (OK1)[46], which is exceptionally dense in judicial titles. As it is not found in any other context, the significance of its occurrence in this example remains unclear. As *ꜣḫ.t-mḥw* seems to have focused on justice almost exclusively, and to a degree far greater than most other officials of the time, one possibility might be that this title marks him out as having an especially close connection to the *wḏꜤ-mdw* concept. The *ḥry-tp* designation might perhaps be highlighting his focus in this field, indicating a degree of professional pre-eminence or specialisation.

ỉrr ḥtp.t n MꜣꜤ.t m wḏꜤ-mdw mꜣꜤ rꜤ nb ḏ.t – 'One who makes offerings to *MꜣꜤ.t* by true dividing of words every day, forever'

This is clearly an epithet rather than a true title, but being a phrase including *wḏꜤ-mdw* which describes an official in a title string, it deserves due consideration. It is found only once, on the statue of *Kꜣ-m-nfr.t* (OK53). Its main significance lies in the explicit connection drawn between *wḏꜤ-mdw* and *MꜣꜤ.t*, which matches the status of *ḥm-nṯr MꜣꜤ.t* possessed by many holders of *wḏꜤ-mdw*, and discussed at greater length later in this chapter[47]. As well as being described with the above epithet, *Kꜣ-m-nfr.t* was duly a *ḥm-nṯr MꜣꜤ.t* and a *ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏꜤ-mdw*, suggesting formal involvement in both religious and judicial spheres. As noted previously, ethnographic research has already highlighted how judicial practitioners often derive social authority and enforcement capability from spiritual

[45] While unlikely, it should be pointed out that the presence of this additional title nonetheless does not constitute absolute proof that *sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.w wḏꜤ-mdw štꜣ* is a single unit. The possibility of part of the title simply being copied twice in error cannot be excluded, especially if the inscription was carved by an illiterate individual.

[46] See also case study later in this chapter (p. 98).

[47] See pp. 86-88.

frameworks, and the interlinking between *Mȝᶜ.t*, offerings and *wḏᶜ-mdw* is probably indicative of this. Moreover, this official also had three titles connected to the *wsḫ.t* and two more linked to *spr* ('petitioning') – both terms associated with justice and discussed later in this chapter[48]. However, one must be cautious not to proceed too far with interpreting this man as some sort of 'priest-judge': he also had twenty seven other titles with no notable judicial connections, and the extent to which he regularly engaged in justice is unclear.

ỉr.w(?) wḏ.t wḏᶜ-mdw – 'One who conducts(?) the commands and dividing of words(?)'

Very little can be said about this title, it being a hapax found on a badly damaged seal impression from Giza (OK65). Its full reading cannot be reliably reconstructed, and it is possible that this official was simply a holder of the title *wḏᶜ-mdw* who also had another title preceding it. Its main significance lies in that it was found on a seal impression with very few, if any, other titles, much like OK45 and OK46, which mention *wḏᶜ-mdw* and nothing else. It is thus evidence for another official whose *wḏᶜ-mdw* activities appear to have been significant enough to warrant a seal in their own right.

Places of *wḏᶜ-mdw*

Overall, the evidence above shows that *wḏᶜ-mdw* was a common activity carried out by a wide range of people. For some, it seems to have been their main focus or at least one of their principal tasks. For others, and in particular high officials, day-to-day involvement was perhaps much more limited but they nonetheless elected to maintain a formal connection to the notion, and their social seniority might have added weight to whatever judgments they did pass. Formally emphasising connections to justice might also have been in itself a way of generating social prestige; a logical contributory factor in view of the venerable role played by *wḏᶜ-mdw* in the aforementioned religious literature and funerary inscriptions. Furthermore, those same title strings also provide an opportunity to link *wḏᶜ-mdw* to the places where it was carried out, as many titles explicitly connect it to specific institutions. These are discussed below.

Ḥw.t-wr.t – 'The great enclosure' / *Ḥw.t-wr.t-6* – 'Six great enclosures'

This institution, already mentioned in the previous chapter in relation to ethnographic comparanda, occurs 27 times in Old Kingdom title strings containing *wḏᶜ-mdw* (OK1, 3, 10-11, 14, 16, 19, 21, 23-25, 28-29, 32-33, 35, 37-38, 41-43, 49-51, 53, 58, 68). This makes the *ḥw.t-wr.t* or *ḥw.t-wr.t-6* by far the most common institution, or possibly location, mentioned in the dataset. It is found in almost the entire range of titles containing *wḏᶜ-mdw*, as illustrated in the table overleaf:

[48] See pp. 80-81 for *wsḫ.t* and pp. 101-102 for *spr*.

Title	Translation	Attestations
wḏ^{c}-mdw m ḥw.t-wr.t	'Divider of words in the great enclosure'	OK52
wḏ^{c}-mdw m ḥw.t-wr.t-6	'Divider of words in the six great enclosures'	OK10
wḏ^{c}-mdw šṯ3 n ḥw.t-wr.t	'Secret divider of words of the great enclosure'	OK1, 49
ḥry-sšṯ3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t	'Master of secrets of dividing words of the great enclosure'	OK23, 35, 50, 68
ḥry-sšṯ3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw m ḥw.t-wr.t-6	'Master of secrets of dividing words in the six great enclosures'	OK28[49], 32, 43
ḥry-sšṯ3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw nb ḥw.t-wr.t	'Master of secrets of every dividing of words of the great enclosure'	OK3
ḥry-sšṯ3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw šṯ3 n ḥw.t-wr.t	'Master of secrets of secret dividing of words of the great enclosure'	OK23, 38
ḥry-sšṯ3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw nb šṯ3 n ḥw.t-wr.t	'Master of secrets of every secret dividing of words of the great enclosure'	OK29
sm3^{c} wḏ^{c}-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t	'Enforcer of dividing words of the great enclosure'	OK19, 42, 51
sm3^{c} wḏ^{c}-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t-6	'Enforcer of dividing words of the six great enclosures'	OK11
ỉmy-r3 wḏ^{c}-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t-6	'Overseer of dividing words of the six great enclosures'	OK41
ỉmy-r3 wḏ^{c}-mdw nb šṯ3 n ḥw.t-wr.t-6	'Overseer of every secret dividing of words of the six great enclosures'	OK41
s3b ỉmy-r3 sš.w wḏ^{c}-mdw šṯ3 n ḥw.t-wr.t	'Dignitary, overseer of scribes and secret divider of words of the great enclosure'	OK49
ḥry-tp mdw n wḏ^{c}-mdw šṯ3 n ḥw.t-wr.t	'Chief of words of the secret dividing of words of the great enclosure'	OK1

Fig. 7: Table showing Old Kingdom titles indicating connections between wḏ^{c}-mdw and the ḥw.t-wr.t.

The numerous mentions of this institution within such titles could indicate a particularly close affinity to *wḏ^{c}-mdw*. It is interesting that *wḏ^{c}-mdw* occurred in both the *ḥw.t-wr.t* and the *ḥw.t-wr.t-6*, even

[49] Var. *ḥry-sšṯ3 n wḏ^{c}-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t-6.*

though these institutions seem to have been in some way different. There is a lively scholarly debate about the nature of this difference, with the *ḥw.t-wr.t-6*[50] generally being considered the more senior institution as its overseer invariably also held the vizieral title, *ṯ3.ty* (Andrassy 1991: 4; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 21). However, matters are obscured by the fact that not all viziers of this period were linked to the *ḥw.t-wr.t-6* (Nuzzolo 2017: 280)[51], and no texts give an insight into what happened there. The *ḥw.t-wr.t* also poses problems of understanding, as it too is rarely mentioned outside of titles. One view holds that it was far from being a wholly judicial institution, serving a much wider array of administrative functions not yet well understood (Martin-Pardey 1994: 165-167), but the more conventional stance is that it was in the main judicial (e.g. Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 27-33; Nuzzolo 2017: 280). In any case, judging from prosopography, the *ḥw.t-wr.t* was frequently not directly overseen by the Vizier (Strudwick 1985: 176-198; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 27-33)[52]. Overall, the topic remains complex and delimiting the differences between the *ḥw.t-wr.t* and the *ḥw.t-wr.t-6* is ultimately not the goal here. Instead, as this study is concerned with justice in a broader sense, it will simply be accepted that all institutions of the *ḥw.t-wr.t* type had important judicial functions, regardless of the nature of any specific differences. Much more important to this work is getting at least some insights into the processes occurring therein, as this may also shed light on *wḏ[c]-mdw*. To this end, alongside the potentially interesting but doubtful insights from the Senegalese ethnography addressed earlier[53], one may find some much more conclusive information about the *ḥw.t-wr.t* in the *Decree of Neferirkare* for the Temple of Abydos (Papazian 2012: 130):

> *ỉr s nb n š.t ỉṯty.fy ḥm.w-nṯr nb nty.w ḥr ỉḫ.t-nṯrỉ w[c]b.t=sn ḥr=s m š.t tw r r3-[c].wy ḥn[c] k3.t nb.(t) n.t š.t m3[c]=k sw r ḥw.t-wr.t dỉ [r k3.t…] m3ṯ sk3 ỉt bd.t*
>
> As for any man of the district who will seize any priests who are assigned to (*lit*. 'upon') the divine land, upon which service is carried out in this district, for any corvée labour and any work of the district, you shall lead him to the *ḥw.t-wr.t*. He will be put [to work…] granite (and) harvesting barley and emmer.

[50] Even the translation is controversial: while this study has chosen 'six great enclosures', an alternative translation of 'great enclosure of the six' has also been proposed. For more on the relative merits of each, see Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 35-36. The present writer finds the former translation preferable, as it is by no means clear who 'the six' would be, and the orthography of the term is wholly consistent with the bookkeeping style of plural notation (i.e. 'great enclosure: 6').

[51] This also contains the latest comprehensive list of further references pertaining to this debate.

[52] Strudwick (1985) attempts to differentiate between the *ḥw.t-wr.t* and the *ḥw.t-wr.t-6* on the basis of prosopographies of officials connected to each, but ultimately concludes that the evidence is insufficient for meaningful conclusions to be drawn.

[53] See pp. 59-62.

ỉr s nb n š.t ỉṯty.fy mr.t nt.t ḥr ꜣḥ.t-nṯrỉ n.t š.t r rꜣ-ᶜ.wy ḥnᶜ kꜣ.t nb.(t) n.t š.t mꜣᶜ=k sw r ḥw.t-wr.t dỉ [r kꜣ.t…] mꜣṯ skꜣ ỉt bd.t

As for any man of the district who will seize *mr.t* who are assigned to the divine lands of the district, for corvée labour and any work of the district, you shall lead him to the *ḥw.t-wr.t*. He will be put [to work…] granite (and) harvesting barley and emmer.

šsp r ḥw.t-wr.t sr nb rḫ-n(y)-sw.t nb ḥry-wḏb nb ỉrty.fy m-ḫt nn wḏ.w n ḥm=ỉ sḏꜣ pr ꜣḥ.t rmṯ ḫt nb.(t) wn.(t) ḫr=f dỉ rꜣ-ᶜ.wy

Drag to the *ḥw.t-wr.t* any official, any 'King's acquaintance', or any diverter of offerings who will act [inappropriately] with regard to these commands of my Majesty. Confiscate the house, the land, the people, and everything he owns (*lit*. 'all that is under him'), he being placed in a corvée.

The punitive aspect of the *ḥw.t-wr.t* is further indicated in a damaged inscription in the mastaba of *Nb-kꜣ.w-ḥr*, which contains the following phrase (Hassan & Iskander 1975[A]: 39, *fig. 17*, cols. 7-8 from right):

ḫnr=sn ḥr=s ḥwỉ=sn ḥr=s m ḥw.t-wr.t

They are detained on account of it and beaten on account of it in the *ḥw.t-wr.t*

The *ḥw.t-wr.t* is also mentioned in one fragmentary letter from the Abusir archive, *Papyrus Berlin 11301* (Abusir Letter 80A), which presents a legal matter involving offerings, water transport, and temple staff (Posener-Kriéger 1976: 451-54)[54]. Unfortunately, the exact nature of the case cannot be determined, but one line does deserve particular attention (Posener-Kriéger & de Cenival 1968: pl. LXXXA, 3)[55]:

[…] n sš n wḏᶜ.w ỉ[n] ḫr(=ỉ) […] m-ᶜ sr.w n.w rw.t ḥw.t-wr.t ỉ[n] ḫr(=ỉ) […]

[…] of the record of those judged. Did I not descend […] from the officials of the gate of the *ḥw.t-wr.t*. Did I not descend […]

[54] This offers a partial translation of the legible parts. See also Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 297-298 (Document 90).
[55] This provides a transcription. For a photograph of the papyrus, see Möller 1909: pl. 1.

This line suggests that the *ḥw.t-wr.t* may also have been involved in recording legal proceedings as well as hearing them. The mention of a gate (*rw.t*) staffed by officials is also potentially important for determining where judgment occurred, as will be highlighted below in the discussion of the *hꜣy.t* ('portal')[56]. Finally, the very existence of this letter is significant: it shows that, at least in this temple community, the *ḥw.t-wr.t* mattered in practical daily life, and could be the subject of correspondence.

Overall, these texts suggest that the *ḥw.t-wr.t* was very much a functioning institution: perhaps it was both where those going through the justice system were held during proceedings, and where they were punished subsequently. How exactly this related to the *ḥw.t-wr.t-6*, and whether or not this relationship is anything more than coincidental with the Senegalese evidence, remains at present impossible to tell. The safest inference is simply that the *ḥw.t-wr.t*, whatever it was, was a relatively formal institution and closely connected to *wḏꜤ-mdw*, as revealed both by prosopography and other Old Kingdom texts. It seems possible that cases may have been judged therein by 'dividing words', and punishment then meted out *in situ* without the need to transport convicts from trial to a separate penal location.

Hꜣy.t – 'The (temple) portal'

Another location with possible links to *wḏꜤ-mdw* is the *hꜣy.t* ('portal'), typically referring to a temple entrance (*Wb.* II: 476; Spencer 1984: 155-161). While the title of *wḏꜤ-mdw m hꜣy.t* ('divider of words in the portal') is only found once (OK21), holders of titles containing *wḏꜤ-mdw* are also designated as *sms.w hꜣy.t* ('elder of the portal') in seven further instances (OK1, 5, 11, 17, 19, 39, 42). It should be noted that in six of these, the title containing *wḏꜤ-mdw* is *smꜣꜤ wḏꜤ-mdw* (OK5, 11, 17, 19, 39, 42). As shown above, this title is often associated with individuals who appear to have relatively low social status but a fairly high level of focus specifically on judicial matters. The connection is significant in view of earlier studies (Sauneron 1954: 118-19; Quaegebeur 1993) which showed that temple portals in Late Period and Ptolemaic Egypt regularly had the designation *rw.t-dỉ-MꜣꜤ.t* ('gate of giving *MꜣꜤ.t*'), and were venues for legal proceedings[57]. Indeed, the tradition of hearing the most serious cases at the temple entrance endured until the transition to Christianity, as demonstrated by descriptions of trials in Coptic hagiographies (Cannuyer 1998: 782-786). Out of all these elements of evidence, perhaps the most revealing is the following inscription from the *rw.t-dỉ-MꜣꜤ.t* of the Ptolemaic Edfu temple, which explicitly labels this site as a place of rendering justice (Sauneron 1954: 119):

[56] See also van den Boorn 1985: 8 for earlier comments on the potential significance of a *rw.t* leading to a *ḥw.t-wr.t*. This article is however primarily concerned with spatial considerations and narrower definitions of architectural terms, and the link to the *hꜣy.t* and wider issues of Old Kingdom justice is not made.

[57] For more recent comments on the role of temple portals in Egyptian justice, with particular reference to later periods, see also Allam 2012.

st sḏm spr.w n.w sprw.w nb r wp Mꜣᶜ.t r ỉsf.t(?) b.t wr pw n.t nḫt mꜣr.w r […] m wsr.w

Place of hearing the petitions of all petitioners in order to separate truth from falsehood(?). It is the great *b.t*-building of protecting the vulnerable, to (protect them?) from the strong.

While the significance of this inscription alone should not be overstated in the context of the present work, considering how late it is, it is noteworthy that this practice can also be inferred from two far older papyri of the New Kingdom. The earlier of the two, *Papyrus Berlin 3047*, dates to the reign of Ramesses II and records a dispute about fields and their produce, which is judged by a tribunal of priests sitting before a 'great portal of Ramesses II' at Thebes (Théodoridès 1980: 27-28)[58]. The later, *Papyrus BM 10221* from the reign of Ramesses IX, briefly mentions a tomb robbery case being judged by high officials at a gate by the courtyard of Amun (Peet 1930: 42). Thus, the evidence for judgments being made at portals of temples in the Late Period and beyond is also echoed at an earlier stage of Pharaonic history. From a vocabulary perspective, this is supported further by the existence of a term *wḏᶜ-rw.t* ('divider of the gate'), which had unambiguously legal connotations from at least the New Kingdom and is for instance found multiple times in the 18th Dynasty *Duties of the Vizier* (van den Boorn 1985: 2). The findings in the present study suggest that this tradition could date back far earlier: if Old Kingdom holders of *sms.w hꜣy.t*, whose connection to portals seems beyond doubt, were also involved in *wḏᶜ-mdw*, it seems likely that judgment was already occurring in these places. The case for this seems particularly strong because the connection is specifically with the title *smꜣᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw*, which implies a high level of practical involvement. Furthermore, as shown in the excerpt from *Papyrus Berlin 11301* in the discussion of the *ḥw.t-wr.t* above[59], the concept of a *rw.t*-gate serving as a place of justice was already present, so it seems entirely feasible that the *hꜣy.t* could have been used in a similar way. Thus, it would appear that, at least in intent, the *hꜣy.t* may have been a precursor of the *rw.t-dỉ-Mꜣᶜ.t*, and that the idea of justice at the temple portal was already established in the Old Kingdom.

Finally, alongside obvious implications for understanding where Old Kingdom justice was conducted, the likelihood of portals having such a role in this period is significant from the perspective of the intellectual conceptualisation of justice at the time. The part played by portals in justice in later periods has been attributed to their function as liminal spaces where the authority of royal officials connected to the divine realm of the temple and the King could intersect with disagreements

[58] It is unknown which portal exactly is meant, but there can be little doubt that this refers to a temple entrance.
[59] See pp. 77-78.

generated in the outside world (e.g. van den Boorn 1985: 14-15; Luft 2017: 182). This also fits into the broader ethnographic discourse surrounding reliance on religion as a means of generating judicial authority. On the basis of this evidence, it seems highly likely that this phenomenon was very much present in the Old Kingdom also, with religion and justice being linked not only conceptually but also spatially within the setting of the temple entrance.

Wsḫ.t – 'The broad court'

Mention of the *wsḫ.t* ('broad court') provides further evidence of temples being places of *wḏꜤ-mdw*, as this term is usually used to denote a large open court or roofed hall in a temple (Spencer 1984: 71-80). It features in 11 title strings involving *wḏꜤ-mdw* (OK2-3, 12, 16, 24, 26, 31, 48, 53, 59, 66). On three occasions it is used to augment such titles: these are *smꜣꜥ wḏꜤ-mdw n wsḫ.t* (OK59), *smꜣꜥ wḏꜤ-mdw n wsḫ.t n(y)-sw.t* (OK66), and *ỉmy-rꜣ wḏꜤ-mdw n wsḫ.t* (OK12). However, its most common connection to holders of titles with *wḏꜤ-mdw* is through the title *ḫrp wsḫ.t* ('director of the broad court'), which occurs alongside titles with *wḏꜤ-mdw* on six occasions (OK2, 24, 26, 31, 48, 53). These six instances are quite disparate in terms of length, but all include high administrative titles and five are connected to the scribal administration (OK2, 24, 26, 48, 53). There is also a solitary attestation of a title explicitly denoting authority over *wsḫ.t* scribes (OK53). These observations call into question the conventional view of the *wsḫ.t* as a place centred almost exclusively on offerings and religious ceremonies (Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 34), showing that it could also be connected to *wḏꜤ-mdw* proceedings and was perhaps the place where they were, at least on occasion, put into writing. One possibility is that the *wsḫ.t* was seen as a location where a god made decisions, which would fit both a context of religious ceremony and also justice. *Sinai Inscription 13*, of the late Fifth Dynasty, appears to explicitly mention a god making a decision in writing in a *wsḫ.t* (Baines & Parkinson 1997: 13, fig. 1)[60]:

> *dỉ.t ḫ(r?) nṯr gm.tỉ Ꜥꜣ.t m wsḫ.t n.t Nḫn-rꜥw m sš nṯr ḏ(s?)=f*
>
> Causing by the god that stone be found in the *wsḫ.t* of the Nekhenre sun temple in writing of the god himself.

Clearly the meaning of this is not that stone be found in the *wsḫ.t*, it being nonsensical to suggest that a temple court could be a quarry. Furthermore, the inscription subsequently records that a quarrying expedition to the Sinai occurred as a result of this, meaning that the only logical inference can be that the god was somehow perceived to give written orders in the *wsḫ.t*[61]. One can see how a place

[60] This offers a drawing of the inscription and a translation. This transliteration is by the present writer.
[61] What this involved is very unclear, but it could be a very early example of Egyptian oracular practice (Baines & Parkinson 1997).

where divinely-backed decisions like this were made could also be a good fit for a judicial venue, especially in a society where boundaries between religion and justice were blurred. The case for this is strengthened by an explicit, albeit solitary, mention of a *wsḫ.t* in a legal setting. This occurs in *Papyrus Berlin 8869*, a late 6th Dynasty letter discussing court proceedings against a senior official (Smither 1942: 17, 9-11)[62]:

> *sbꜣkḳ.n swt sš=k n sn=k ỉm m wsḫ.t n.ṯ Ḥr mỉ nt.t wnn ỉs sš=k sn=k ỉm m ḫt wᶜ nfr.n wꜣḥ ḥꜣ.ty-ᶜ pn ᶜwꜣ ỉr.n=f r tꜣ*
>
> However, you commended me in the *wsḫ.t*-court of Horus, as it will be that you and I are therein together, (so that) this Count cannot deny (*lit.* 'put to the ground') the robbery which he committed.

The connection to Horus is worth noting, especially as a mythological *wsḫ.t* was the venue where litigation commenced in the *Contendings of Horus and Seth* (Broze 1996: 29, 2, 7):

> *ỉ-ỉr.tw wp.t=w m sp tpy m tꜣ wsḫ.t wᶜ Mꜣᶜ.wt*
>
> It is in the *wsḫ.t* -court 'unique are those of *Mꜣᶜ.t* ', for the first time, that they are to be judged.

While this is a New Kingdom text, it is still significant as it points to the *wsḫ.t* functioning as a court of the gods. This fits the Old Kingdom attestation of the '*wsḫ.t* of Horus', and lends further support to the view that this structure had a dual legal and religious function within the temple setting. In this context, the presence of *wḏᶜ-mdw* titles does not seem surprising.

Dꜣḏꜣ.t – 'The men of the circle'[63]

The *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*, which is conventionally considered to be another variety of law court (*Wb*. V: 528-529), is mentioned in only three title strings containing *wḏᶜ-mdw* (OK21, 49, 53). However, one of the title strings which does mention the *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t* indicates that the holder had a very close connection to it, while also holding two titles connected to both *wḏᶜ-mdw* and the *ḥw.t-wr.t* (OK49)[64]. Another string containing *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t* mentions not only *wḏᶜ-mdw* and the *ḥw.t-wr.t*, but also the *ḥꜣy.t* (OK21). The holder of this title string also possesses the office of *ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t*; a title very commonly associated with

[62] This offers a transcription. For modern transliterations and translations see Manassa 2006: 152 and Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 299 (Document 94, 9-11).
[63] This is the established translation proposed originally by Gabra (1929: 8, 10) and more recently upheld by Philip-Stéphan (2008[A]: 24). An alternative translation is simply 'magistrates' (Faulkner 1962: 319).
[64] See also case study below (p. 99).

justice. Furthermore, it should be noted that all the officials with a *ḏ3ḏ3.t* connection were responsible for directing or overseeing scribes there. Overall, it therefore seems possible that the *ḏ3ḏ3.t* did play some part in the *wḏ^{c}-mdw* legal process: perhaps, somewhat like the *wsḫ.t*, it was involved in recording proceedings. However, unlike the *wsḫ.t*, and indeed unlike all other legal institutions in this study, the designation *ḏ3ḏ3.t* does not seem to refer to an obvious location: it rather denotes a group of people, as conveyed by the translation. Thus, it seems possible that a *ḏ3ḏ3.t* was defined by what it did, and not where it did it, which would also be entirely consistent with the ethnographic findings in the preceding chapter.

There are two recorded Old Kingdom mentions of a *ḏ3ḏ3.t* in action, both linking it to bureaucratic aspects of judicial administration which are fully in line with the scribal context implied in the title strings. The first mention occurs on *Stela Cairo JE 42787* (Menu 1985: 251-255)[65]:

> *ḏd=f ỉn.n=ỉ pr pn r ỉs.w ḫr sš Ṯntỉ rdỉ.n(=ỉ) š^{c}.t-10 ỉr=f ḫtm.(w) r ḫtm m-b3ḥ ḏ3ḏ3.t n.t 3ḫ.t-Ḥwfw (m)-b3ḥ Ṯntỉ (ỉ)m(y.w)-ḫt ^{c}š3.w s3 K3-m-ỉpw*
>
> He said: "I have bought this house from the scribe *Ṯntỉ*. I gave 10 *š^{c}.t*-measures on account of it." Sealed with a seal in the presence of the *ḏ3ḏ3.t*-court of the 'Horizon of Khufu', in the presence of *Ṯntỉ*, and the numerous witnesses of the phyle of *K3-m-ỉpw.*

The second mention, found on *Balat Tablet 3689* of the late Sixth Dynasty, also involves dividing an inheritance (Philip-Stéphan 2008^{A}: 261, Document 56, 1-4):

> *ḏd b3k ỉm(=ỉ) dỉ rḫ ỉry-mḏ3.t nty m ḏ3ḏ3.t wn.t šms.w Kmỉ spr r b3k ỉm=ỉ r pšš pr ḫt nb.(t) n.t šps n(y)-sw.t Ṯšỉw n ḫ[rdw=f]*
>
> Your humble servant says: "May the messenger who is in the *ḏ3ḏ3.t*-court be informed that the follower *Kmỉ* has reached your humble servant in order to divide the house and all the belongings of the royal noble *Ṯšỉw* for his ch[ildren]."

These texts clearly indicate that the *ḏ3ḏ3.t* could be a venue for quite complex legal proceedings, involving oaths, witnesses, messengers, and transfer of property. In the religious literature of the

[65] See also Philip-Stéphan 2008^{A}: 259 (Document 53).

period, it is also a venue for judging the deceased (Goedicke 1963: 340)[66]. However, it is striking that it is attested so rarely in title strings, and that the attestations which do exist invariably have close ties to scribal bureaucracy. One possibility might be that the *ḏ𓂝ḏ𓂝.t*, designating a group of people rather than any specific location, was in fact a far more common and informal outlet for daily justice than its more elite and hence better documented counterparts like the *wsḫ.t* or *ḥw.t-wr.t*[67]. It may have operated at a lower level along oral-aural lines, adjudicating between people who did not regularly produce texts, convening outside the temple setting or the realm of royal administration, and only appearing in the written record on the rare occasions when scribal involvement did prove necessary. If so, it may have resembled the customary village assemblies prevalent in traditional societies in sub-Saharan Africa, as discussed in the ethnographic overview in the previous chapter[68].

S.wt šps.wt – 'The noble places'

The final institution, if it can be considered such, which is on occasion associated with *wḏ^{c}-mdw* is the so-called *s.wt šps.wt* ('noble places') or the *s.wt šps.wt n.t pr-^{ɔ}* ('noble places of the great estate'). It is mentioned in five title strings (OK6, 28, 50, 57, 58), and occurs in the same title as *wḏ^{c}-mdw* on three occasions: *wḏ^{c}-mdw m s.wt šps.wt* (OK50) and *wḏ^{c}-mdw m s.wt šps.wt n.t pr-^{ɔ}* (OK6, 57). Nothing is known about this institution, although it may be significant that inscriptions where the *s.wt šps.wt* is included generally do not feature other legal structures like the *hɔy.t*, *wsḫ.t*, or *ḏ𓂝ḏ𓂝.t*, although the *ḥw.t-wr.t* is sometimes mentioned (OK28, 50, 58). It seems highly likely that *s.wt šps.wt* may therefore be a broad term, maybe denoting multiple places where *wḏ^{c}-mdw* could occur and thereby eliminating the need to mention them individually. Indeed, it may even be a generic designation which also extended to any space of religious significance within a temple. If so, it would seem that the *ḥw.t-wr.t* was not included in this group designation, perhaps because it was considered the most senior judicial institution, associated more closely with the vizier and thus distinct from all others. Its prominence or prestige already seems likely in view of how many officials were eager to stress connections with it.

Defining the wider legal landscape of the Old Kingdom: other titles regularly found alongside *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and *sḏm* in title strings

While an initial understanding of the main features of Old Kingdom judging can be developed purely by looking at the titles and inscriptions most closely connected to it, as done above, a deeper insight can be gained through identifying which other titles regularly occur alongside *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and/or *sḏm*,

[66] See for instance the tomb of *Ny-^{c}nḫ Ppỉ*, analysed in more detail below in the section 'contextualising *wḏ^{c}-mdw*' (pp. 93-94).
[67] For a view that the *ḏ𓂝ḏ𓂝.t* was a common type of court in the Old Kingdom based on parallels with the Middle Kingdom, see Jasnow 2003^{A}: 105.
[68] See pp. 52-53.

another somewhat less prominent judicial concept discussed in greater length further in this chapter[69]. Across the entire dataset, this yields the following results (*fig. 8*, below and overleaf):

N.B. Titles categorised as in some way 'judicial' according to the 'Séquence juridictionnelle classique' proposed by Philip-Stéphan (2008[A]: 52) *are marked with a star (*).*

Title strings with *wḏ[c]-mḏw*		
Title	Number of occurrences[70]	Percent. of occurrences
*ḥm-nṯr Mɜ[c].t** – 'Priest of *Mɜ[c].t* '	23/59	39%
*(sɜb) [c]ḏ-mr** – '(Dignitary) and Administrator'	17/59	29%
*ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t** – 'One under the head of the King'	16/59	27%
sḫḏ sš.w – 'Inspector of scribes'	13/59	22%
*ỉwn knm.wt** – 'Pillar of *knm.wt*-people'	11/59	19%
(sɜb) rɜ Nḫn – 'Mouth of Hierakonpolis'	11/59	19%
rḫ-n(y)-sw.t – 'King's acquaintance'	11/59	19%
*n(y) ns.t ḫnt.t** – 'One of the foremost throne'	11/59	19%
*mdw rḫy.t** – 'Staff of *rḫy.t* -people'	10/59	17%
sš [c] n(y)-sw.t – 'Scribe of royal documents'	10/59	17%
ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr – 'Director of scribes of petitioning'	9/59	15%
ỉmy-rɜ ỉp.t/wp.t – ' Overseer of commissions/divisions'[71]	8/59	14%
ỉmy-rɜ kɜ.t (nb.t) n.t n(y)-sw.t – 'Overseer of all royal works'	7/59	12%
*sms.w hɜy.t** – 'Elder of the portal'	7/59	12%
*wr mḏ Šm[c].w** – 'Great one of the tens of Upper Egypt'	6/59	10%
ḫrp wsḫ.t – 'Director of the *wsḫ.t*-court'	6/59	10%

[69] See especially pp. 93-96, and *passim* in the next chapter.

[70] The fraction denotes in how many out of the 59 title strings containing *wḏ[c]-mḏw* this title is attested. This is then given as a percentage. Only titles with an occurrence rate of over 10% are shown.

[71] See Fischer 1968: 221-23 for a discussion on how *ỉp.t* ('commission') and *wp.t* ('division') were apparently analogous in spelling, but distinct in meaning.

Title strings with *sḏm*		
Title	Number of occurrences[72]	Percent. of occurrences
ḫry-ḥb.t – 'Lector priest'	8/16	50%
ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t – 'Overseer of commissions/divisions'	6/16	38%
smr wꜤ.ty – 'Sole companion'	6/16	38%
ỉmy-rꜣ pr.wy-ḥḏ – 'Overseer of the two treasuries'	6/16	38%
ḥꜣ.ty-Ꜥ – 'Count'	6/16	38%
*ḥm-nṯr MꜣꜤ.t** – 'Priest of *MꜣꜤ.t*'	5/16	31%
(sꜣb) rꜣ Nḫn – 'Mouth of Hierakonpolis'	5/16	31%
ỉmy-rꜣ kꜣ.t (nb.t) n.t n(y)-sw.t – 'Overseer of all royal works'	5/16	31%
(tꜣy.ty sꜣb) tꜣ.ty – '(Shrouded one, Dignitary), and Vizier	5/16	31%
ḫtm.w-bỉty – 'Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt'	5/16	31%
ỉry-pꜤ.t – 'Member of the elite'	5/16	31%
ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t – 'One under the head of the King'	4/16	25%
ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) Ꜥ n(y)-sw.t – 'Overseer of scribes of royal documents'	4/16	25%
ḥry-tp Nḫb – 'Chief of El-Kab'	4/16	25%
*(sꜣb) Ꜥḏ-mr** – '(Dignitary) and Administrator'	3/16	19%
ỉwn knm.wt *– 'Pillar of *knm.wt*-people'	3/16	19%
*mdw rḫy.t** – 'Staff of *rḫy.t* -people'	3/16	19%
ỉmy-rꜣ ḥw.t-wr.t – 'Overseer of the *ḥw.t-wr.t* '	3/16	19%

Fig. 8: Tables summarising the prevalence of different titles occurring regularly in title strings alongside wḏꜤ-mdw and sḏm.

The main conclusions from these tables are that holders of *wḏꜤ-mdw* and *sḏm* titles were also often priests of *MꜣꜤ.t*, and frequently had administrative titles. Some of these (e.g. *sꜣb Ꜥḏ-mr*) are simply very common titles held by administrators across multiple fields, and yield little useful information. However, the title *ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t* may be more significant, as the concept of *ỉp/wp* may have had judicial undertones (Goedicke 1963: 333-339; Jin 2003). In certain cases, the officials in this dataset also held scribal titles (e.g. *sš Ꜥ n(y)-sw.t*, *ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) Ꜥ n(y)-sw.t*), including one (*ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr*) linked to the potentially important legal concept of 'petitioning' (*spr*). A significant number had royal connections (e.g. *rḫ-n(y)-sw.t*, *ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t*); while on the *sḏm* side it was very common for officials to also be lector priests. Finally, many of the titles they held have been categorised as

[72] As for fn. 70, but with 16 title strings. Titles with occurrence rate at 19% or above are shown – a higher rate is used in view of the much smaller sample size.

somehow 'judicial' by Philip-Stéphan, as illustrated above, although her work gives no substantive detail regarding what duties these offices entailed.

At this point, it must be highlighted that this section of the study inevitably over-represents those officials who had longer title strings, and who therefore probably had higher overall status but a lower degree of specifically legal focus. Officials who focused more narrowly on justice, and who therefore have shorter title strings, can contribute little to a study which relies on multiple titles being recorded alongside each other, and so are inevitably largely excluded from these tables. A different approach based on case studies was devised specifically for them, as explained below[73]. However, before considering these often very particular cases, it is nonetheless necessary to look in more depth at the generalised findings for the entire dataset, as summarised above.

The role of *ḥm-nṯr Mꜣꜥ.t* – 'Priest of *Mꜣꜥ.t*'

This is by far the most common title held alongside titles in the *wḏꜥ-mdw* group, and it is also common in the *sḏm* category. With 23 attestations among holders of *wḏꜥ-mdw* alone (OK1-3, 8-9, 14-16, 20-21, 23-26, 29, 32, 37-38, 41, 53-54, 58, 68), this exceptionally high frequency is unlikely to be coincidental. This is especially likely since it must be borne in mind that one of the epithets discussed earlier highlights a direct connection between the process of *wḏꜥ-mdw* and *Mꜣꜥ.t*. Its holder is described as (OK53):

> *ỉrr ḥtp.t n Mꜣꜥ.t m wḏꜥ-mdw mꜣꜥ*
>
> One who makes offerings to *Mꜣꜥ.t* by true dividing of words

This supports the interpretation that the high number of officials holding both *ḥm-nṯr Mꜣꜥ.t* and *wḏꜥ-mdw* posts is probably indicative of a practical connection. This is highly significant, as the connections between *Mꜣꜥ.t*, conventionally translated as either 'Truth' or the divine personification of this concept (*Wb*. II: 18-20), and justice have been the subject of vigorous scholarly debate. Numerous Egyptological works have argued that *Mꜣꜥ.t* was a key influence on Egyptian legal process (e.g. Assmann 1990; Morschauser 1995; Assmann *et al.* 2006), while some commentators have gone as far as labelling it an all-encompassing 'conscience' (Breasted 1934) or 'moral ideal' (Karenga 2004; Ferguson 2016), at the heart of separating 'right' from 'wrong'. However, the exact place of *Mꜣꜥ.t* in the judicial framework is exceptionally difficult to ascertain. Apart from appearing in titles, it is a term primarily connected to religious literature and very rare in records of legal proceedings. This

[73] See pp. 98-100.

study aside, the strongest evidence for this concept being explicitly connected to justice and judges comes from depictions of legal officials of the later 1st millennium BCE wearing pendants portraying *M3ᶜ.t* (Burton 1972: 223; Fay 2008: 90, fn. 11); a practice also noted by Diodorus Siculus in *The Library of History* (I: §75: 5-6)[74]:

> The latter (i.e. chief justice) regularly wore suspended from his neck by a golden chain a small image made of precious stones, which they called Truth (Ἀλήθειαν); the hearings of the pleas commenced whenever the chief justice put on the image of Truth.

This passage appears to indicate that not only was *M3ᶜ.t* used as a sign of judicial office, but that the process of hearing the case was contingent on the judge being physically connected to *M3ᶜ.t* through a pendant. The present study points to a connection between *wḏᶜ-mdw*, the 'dividing of words' which almost certainly entailed judgment, and the priesthood of *M3ᶜ.t* over two millennia before Diodorus. If so, this would mean that the involvement of *M3ᶜ.t* in practical legal cases was not a late innovation based on a concept purely theological in origin, but rather a continuation or resurrection of a tradition rooted in the Old Kingdom.

A connection between utterance and *M3ᶜ.t* can be traced to autobiographical inscriptions beyond prosopography too, even if these are confession-type statements of a predominantly religious nature. A typical example, from the tomb of *Isi* in Edfu (Edel 1954: 13, 1-3)[75], is given below:

> *[ỉr.n(=ỉ) nfr] n sp3.t=ỉ ḏd.n=ỉ M3ᶜ.t n nb(=ỉ) [wp.n(=ỉ) snn.wy] r ḥtp=sn ḏd=ỉ [nfr wḥm=ỉ nfr n sp ḏd(=ỉ) ḫt nb.(t) ḏw r rmṯ nb.(t)]*
>
> [I did good] for my nome, I said *M3ᶜ.t* for my lord, [I separated the two sides to their satisfaction, I said [good, I repeated good, never did I say anything evil to anyone]

The emphasis here is firmly and consistently on speech – *M3ᶜ.t* is said, and the passage ties this both to the separation of litigants and the idea of saying goodness. This type of religious statement, highlighting the division between 'good' which is said and 'evil' which is unsaid, seems at least in part to mirror the notion of dividing speech, *wḏᶜ-mdw*, and its connection to *M3ᶜ.t* in the judicial sphere. This could indicate deeper underlying connections between words, *M3ᶜ.t* and justice, where the

[74] Translation follows Oldfather 1933: 260-61.
[75] Note that while part of the inscription is reconstructed, this can be done with great confidence on the basis of other inscriptions – see for instance *Urk*. *I*: 195, 13; 200, 16.

religious and judicial cannot be easily disentangled. As has been shown earlier, this also closely matches ethnographic observations of customary justice in traditional societies in sub-Saharan Africa[76], and potentially strengthens the argument for Egypt belonging to that tradition.

Imy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t and the significance of *ỉp/wp*

The concept of *wp*, commonly translated as 'to open, separate' (*Wb*. I: 302), is also relevant to this study, not least because it can refer to 'judgment' in its wider usage and indeed goes on to become the standard term denoting judicial procedure after the end of the New Kingdom (Allam 1991: 109). Some scholars have argued that it already had this use in the Old Kingdom (Goedicke 1963: 333-339; Jin 2003). Among its Old Kingdom uses, it occurs in the expression *wp.n(=ỉ) snn.wy r ḥtp=sn* ('I separated the two sides to their satisfaction'), found in tomb autobiographies (e.g. *Urk.* I: 195, 13; 200, 16). However, *wp* is also difficult to study as it is frequently written in a manner indistinguishable to *ỉp*, usually meaning 'to reckon up' (*Wb*. I: 66), a term which in the Old Kingdom has a very wide range of additional lexical meanings and can denote activity of almost any kind – from planning expeditions to snake attacks (Fischer 1968: 221-23).

Out of the 59 inscriptions mentioning *wḏᶜ-mdw* included in this study, nine also contain titles mentioning *ỉp/wp* (OK6, 7, 14, 16, 21, 41, 44, 58, 61). However, one must be very cautious if arguing for any judicial implications here: while eight of these contain variations of the title *ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t*, which might initially be translated as 'overseer of judgments', most of these are followed by *ḥtp.t* ('offerings'), and this clearly serves as the object of *ỉp/wp*. Thus, it would appear that generally this should not be seen as a strictly legal title – although it might be further indication of a blurred line between the religious and judicial spheres. Indeed, it is probably not insignificant that the terms for apportioning offerings and dividing litigants – presumably both actions associated with notions of 'accuracy' and 'fairness' – could be expressed in the same way.

There are also four instances of *ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t* occurring without a further qualification relating to offerings (OK6, 7, 41, 44), and the title could also be qualified by *pr-ᶜꜣ* – 'of the great estate' (OK6) or possibly also *m pr.wy* – 'in the two houses' (OK41), without offerings being mentioned. Considering the wide range of alternative possibilities furnished by *ỉp/wp*, this is certainly not proof that the title is judicial in those instances, but it does indicate that it was not invariably linked to offerings[77].

[76] See pp. 51-62.

[77] OK41 illustrates this: here, *ỉmy rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t* and variations of *ỉmy rꜣ ỉpt.t/wp.t ḥtp.t* are clearly listed as distinct titles, confirming that the former is not an abbreviation of the latter.

There is, however, one title string where it is highly likely that an explicitly judicial use of *wp* is deployed. This is the graffito of *Sfḫ-Ptḥ Nby* at the pyramid temple of Djedkare in South Saqqara (OK44):

> *ỉmy-rꜣ wp.t*[78]*sꜣb ỉmy-ḫt sꜣ pr sḥḏ nḫt-ḫrw sḫ Ḥr ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏꜥ-mdw ỉmꜣḫ.w ḫr Ptḥ-Skr Sfḫ-Ptḥ rn=f Nby*
>
> Overseer of judgments(?); Dignitary in attendance; Guardian of the house; Inspector strong of voice of the *sḫ* of Horus; Master of secrets of dividing words; Blessed by Ptah Sokar; *Sfḫ-Ptḥ*, called *Nby*.

All of these titles, with the exception of the blessing formula and the highly non-specific *sꜣb ỉmy-ḫt*, have some law-related connotations. As well as having a title containing *wḏꜥ-mdw*, this person is also a *sꜣ pr*: a position which, at least in later periods, was associated with law enforcement (Jasnow 2003[A]: 108; Török 2009: 91, fn. 98). Furthermore, he is connected to the *sḫ* – an institution which, although very poorly understood, appears to have been similar to the *wsḥ.t* (*Wb*. IV: 229), and hence he was associated with a place where it is likely that legal cases were heard. Thus, there can be little doubt that this individual operated in the judicial sphere – and the most logical translation of *ỉmy-rꜣ wp.t* here might therefore be 'Overseer of judgments'.

Finally, there is one instance of a title involving *ỉp/wp* which follows an entirely different pattern. This is the lengthy title string from the tomb of *Wr-ḫww* in Giza (OK21), which contains the title *sꜣb sḥḏ sš.(w) n ỉp.t/wp.t* ('Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s) of the *ỉp.t/wp.t*'). This suggests that whatever the *ỉp.t/wp.t* may have been, scribes were connected to it. This in itself certainly does not prove a connection to legal administration, but nor does it discount this possibility. Indeed, when the other titles held by this official are considered, this scenario becomes very likely. *Wr-ḫww* was also a *sḥḏ sš.(w) n ḥw.t-wr.t* ('Inspector of scribes in the *ḥw.t-wr.t*') and a *ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr m ḏꜣḏꜣ.t wr.t* ('Director of scribes of petitioning in the great *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*'), so he had responsibility for scribes in two other institutions with known legal functions. He also held the titles of *sḏm.(w)-mdw m sštꜣ nb* ('Hearer of words in every secret') and *wḏꜥ-mdw m hꜣy.t* ('Divider of words in the portal'), indicating that his involvement in the legal system was probably fairly considerable. In such a context, it seems quite likely that the *wp.t* in this title string is referring to 'judgments', with scribes responsible for noting them down.

[78] As usual, a reading of *ỉp.t* would also be possible based on the signs alone, but the context here makes a judicial reading, and so *wp.t* much more likely.

Overall, while it is often impossible to work out which title strings use *wp* alongside *wḏ^{c}-mdw* to indicate another legal responsibility, it does seem highly probable that this does occur in several instances. This raises the question of what exactly *wp* may have involved, and how this differed to *wḏ^{c}-mdw*. One possibility is that the judicial use of *wp* may refer to a judgment in writing, in contrast to the oral/aural nature of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and *sḏm*. This is impossible to prove, but would be a logical explanation for the existence of scribes connected to *wp*, while there is not a single attestation of scribes of either *wḏ^{c}-mdw* or *sḏm* in this period[79]. Furthermore, the scroll determinative commonly associated with *wp* points to some connection with written documentation, while neither *wḏ^{c}-mdw* nor *sḏm* are ever written with this sign. From this, it might be tempting to infer either legal pluralism, with *wp* representing formal written procedure and the other concepts denoting oral-aural processes, or a multi-stage judicial process where *wp*, *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and *sḏm* all had a place, and where the specific stage of recording proceedings was known as *wp*. The latter seems more likely, as if *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and *sḏm* were indeed oral-aural elements of informal justice, such as those covered in the earlier discussion of ethnographic material, they would probably not have generated such a varied prosopographic record in formal contexts.

Royal connections

Seventeen title strings involving *wḏ^{c}-mdw* belong to individuals who were also *ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t* – 'one under the head of the King' (OK2-3, 7, 13-16, 22, 26, 31, 41, 43, 49, 53, 58, 67-68). The title *rḫ-n(y)-sw.t* ('King's Acquaintance') occurs in a further 11 title strings (OK3, 17-18, 20, 22, 34, 36, 42, 51-53), three of which also contain *ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t* (OK3, 22, 53). Consequently, 25 inscriptions indicate that the holder of a title containing *wḏ^{c}-mdw* was associated with the King through at least one of these two titles, although it is unknown whether these had any practical meaning beyond serving as honorific marks of royal favour. The possibility of proximity to the King, which is likely a metonym for the royal administration, is also brought out through the presence of titles with more specific meanings, such as *sš ^{c} n(y)-sw.t* ('Scribe of royal documents'), attested ten times (OK7, 13-14, 20-21, 41, 57-58, 64, 66), and *ỉmy-rꜣ kꜣ.t (nb.t) n.t n(y)-sw.t* ('Overseer of (all) royal works'), found in seven inscriptions (OK12-13, 16, 22, 28, 31, 58).

Notwithstanding the significance of the above evidence, a degree of caution must be exercised when emphasising connections between *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and royalty. While the fact that many practitioners of

[79] There were certainly practitioners of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and/or *sḏm* who were also scribes, but their scribal titles are not connected to these concepts. The only possible exception might be the Qaw el-Kebir 'letter to the dead', discussed earlier (p. 65), as it mentions scribes alongside *wḏ^{c}-mdw*. However, even here the scribes are not explicitly stated to be of *wḏ^{c}-mdw*, and the extent to which a document of this sort relates to practicalities in the world of the living is uncertain in any case. It should also be noted that this letter dates to the very end of the Old Kingdom, or even the First Intermediate Period, and may reflect subsequent changes in practice.

wḏᶜ-mdw had other titles indicating proximity to the King is beyond doubt, it must be emphasised that none of the individual titles involving *wḏᶜ-mdw* directly mentions the King at any point. Consequently, there is no proof that *wḏᶜ-mdw* was itself a process explicitly linked to royalty, merely that its practitioners may have had links to the King through their other work. Moreover, considering the great length of many of the title strings in question, the fact that some of the other titles are connected to the King should not necessarily be seen as evidence of a close connection to the royal administration. It must be remembered that the vast majority of individual titles occurring in these title strings do not mention the King, and cover a plethora of completely unrelated topics ranging from baking to gardening and sailing. However, this does not eliminate the fact that, alongside *Mꜣᶜ.t*, mention of the King is by far the most common recurring trend in the title strings. At the very least, this points to a very high status for many of the officials involved in *wḏᶜ-mdw*. In turn, this elevated status fits the model for constructing judicial credibility addressed in the earlier discussion of the ethnographic comparanda – high rank generates social respect, which is instrumental for creating and maintaining a level of authority requisite for the resolving of disputes. It seems highly likely that a process of this sort would have been at work here.

The link between *sḏm* and *ḥry-ḥb.t* – 'Lector priest': coincidence or not?

A phenomenon specific to the *sḏm* strand of the dataset is the large number of officials who were lector priests. This amounts to half of all officials involved in *sḏm*, making this the most common title held by them. While this could be coincidence, as the *ḥry-ḥb.t* title is among the most common of all Old Kingdom titles, this seems somewhat unlikely as there is no comparable number of occurrences on the *wḏᶜ-mdw* side. One possibility is that lector priests were highly respected in local communities, and therefore thought to be appropriate to hear cases. However, perhaps because justice was not their principal area of activity but rather a secondary task, they rarely went on to be involved in the culminating *wḏᶜ-mdw* phase – if this was indeed when verdicts were pronounced. Among officials with an apparently narrow judicial focus, discussed below, it is significant that *ḥry-ḥb.t* never occurs as a title. It is thus common only among those officials who were occasionally involved in *sḏm*, but always alongside other commitments. This supports the view that they were probably acting in their capacity as respected community members.

Officials with shorter title strings: the prominence of *sms.w ḥꜣy.t* – 'Elder of the portal' and *rꜣ Nḫn* – 'Mouth of Hierakonpolis'

As mentioned earlier, the above approach to prosopographic analysis pays disproportionate attention to holders of long title strings, whose role in day-to-day justice was probably relatively limited. Consequently, a parallel study was conducted taking into account only those officials whose title strings suggest a particularly high degree of focus on the judicial sphere. The defining criterion

for an official to be placed in this category was for at least 50% of their titles to have judicial connotations, as defined in the *Methodology* section of the present work[80]. Overall, eighteen officials were placed in this category (OK1, 5, 9-11, 17, 19, 23, 25, 29, 32, 37, 39, 45-47, 60-61).

Among these eighteen officials, three titles were found to occur frequently. *Ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t*, already discussed above, occurred in seven cases[81]. There were also seven attestations of *sms.w hꜣy.t*, equating to all the attestations of this title in the dataset. This greatly strengthens the argument that the *hꜣy.t* was indeed a judicial institution, as only individuals with a strong connection to justice are found to have a title linked to it. However, most noteworthy of all is the fact that ten of the eighteen officials – a majority – were found to have the title *rꜣ Nḫn*[82]. This very strongly suggests that this hitherto very poorly understood title must be judicial in nature, and that its presence may in fact be a hallmark of officials with a relatively narrow focus on legal matters. This perfectly fits the only attestations of this title in an Old Kingdom narrative context, found in the description of private legal proceedings in the *Autobiography of Weni* (*Urk*. I: 99, 3-8):

> *[rdỉ wỉ ḥm]=f m sꜣb rꜣ Nḫn [ỉb]=f mḥ.w ỉm=ỉ r bꜣk=f nb sḏm(=ỉ) ḫt wᶜ.k(wỉ) ḥnᶜ tꜣy.ty sꜣb ṯꜣ.ty m sštꜣ nb [ḫt nb.(t) ḫn]m.t m rn n n(y)-sw.t n ỉp.t-n(y)-sw.t n ḥw.t-wr.t-6 n mḥ-ỉb n ḥm=f ỉm=ỉ r sr=f nb r sᶜḥ=f nb r bꜣk=f nb*
>
> His [Majesty installed me] as Mouth of Hierakonpolis, his heart being filled with me more than any servant of his. I heard matters being alone, together with the Shrouded one, Dignitary, and Vizier, regarding every secret [and every matter pertaining] to the royal name, the royal privy apartments, and the six great enclosures, due to the favour of his Majesty towards me more than any official of his, any potentate of his, and any servant of his.

Thus, it is as a *rꜣ Nḫn* that Weni engages in *sḏm* procedures on behalf of the King. Shortly afterward, while still in this post, he was entrusted with a very high-order *sḏm* matter (*Urk*. I: 100, 13 – 101, 2):

> *šn.t ḫt m ỉp.t-n(y-sw.t r ḥmt-n(y)-sw.t wr.t ỉꜣm.t=s m sštꜣ rdỉ ḥm=f hꜣy=ỉ r sḏm wᶜ.k(wỉ) n wn.t tꜣy.ty sꜣb ṯꜣ.ty nb sr nb ỉm wp-r(=ỉ) wᶜ.k(wỉ) n ỉḳr=(ỉ) n wꜣb(=ỉ) ḥr ỉb n ḥm=f n mḥ ḥm=f ỉb=f ỉm(=ỉ) ỉnk ỉr m šš wᶜ.k(wỉ) ḥnᶜ sꜣb rꜣ Nḫn wᶜ*

[80] See pp. 29-31 (including fn. 24).
[81] See pp. 86-88.
[82] The present work renders this title as *rꜣ Nḫn* ('Mouth of Hierakonpolis'), as opposed to the equally widespread reading *ỉry Nḫn* ('One associated with Hierakonpolis'), on the grounds that the former seems a somewhat more appropriate fit for an official seemingly closely associated with speech and words, as demonstrated in this section. For more on this, see also fn. 25 on p. 33.

> Disputing of matters in the royal privy apartments against the royal wife 'great is her favour', in secret. His Majesty caused me to go down to hear, I being alone, there being not any Shrouded one, Dignitary, and Vizier, (nor) any official, therein except for me alone due to me being excellent and pure to the heart of his Majesty, and because his Majesty filled his heart with me. It was I who put (it) into writing, being alone together with a single Dignitary and Mouth of Hierakonpolis.

Thus, the connection between this title and Old Kingdom justice as borne out in title strings matches the Weni text, where it seems to confer a right of appointment to hear the most pressing cases. Indeed, it may not be coincidence that this title can be linked to the word *rꜣ* ('mouth'), considering the spoken elements of justice surrounding the concepts of 'hearing' and 'dividing words'. The emphasis on putting the process into writing, highlighted by the use of the participial statement *ỉnk ỉr m šš* ('It was I who put it into writing'), is also noteworthy. Not only does it connect the *rꜣ Nḫn* title to judicial recording, indeed stating that two such officials worked on this task, but it also points more broadly to *sḏm* being a process which could require production of written documents – and the deployment of an emphatic participial statement seems to suggest that this was of considerable importance. The implications of this may be highly significant for the development trajectory which ultimately shaped Middle Kingdom justice, and which will be discussed in the following chapter. In terms of the Old Kingdom, the overall inference is that the *rꜣ Nḫn* title had very strong judicial connotations, at both aural and scribal level.

Contextualising *wḏᶜ-mdw*: links to the concept of *sḏm*

The above findings reveal a sophisticated system for conducting *wḏᶜ-mdw* in the Old Kingdom. However, this analysis alone is incomplete, as it is simplistic to assume that all aspects of justice were encompassed in one term. An important additional consideration is that to 'divide words', officials would presumably have needed to first hear them, which throws into relief the concept of *sḏm*. Furthermore, it is accepted that a major secondary meaning of this verb was 'to judge' (*Wb*. IV: 386), so more detailed study of its uses in this period is necessary. First, one should note that ties between *wḏᶜ-mdw* and *sḏm* clearly did exist in Old Kingdom thought. The best illustration of this is found in *Pyramid Text 347b* (Goedicke 1963: 364):

> *ỉw wḏᶜ=f mdw nṯr ỉs sḏm.n=f mdw sr ỉs*
>
> He divides words as a god, after he has heard words as a *sr*-official.

While this is a religious text and therefore not necessarily indicative of judicial practice in daily life, it is nonetheless significant that *sḏm* is stated as happening before *wḏ^{c}-mdw*, with the two being distinct elements within the same overarching process. Indeed, it is interesting to note that they are also identified with different beings: while *wḏ^{c}-mdw* is divine, *sḏm* is mortal. However, the two are clearly closely linked.

Another tomb inscription of the same time, that of *Ny-^{c}nḫ Ppỉ*, provides more evidence for the connection between the concepts. Here, the two terms are not working alongside each other, but are conflated into one. A standard formula for *wḏ^{c}-mdw* is used, but the verb is replaced with *sḏm* (Goedicke 1963: 340):

ỉw=ỉ sḏm mdw ḥn^{c}=f m ḏ^{3}ḏ^{3}.t=f spš.t ỉḳr.t n.t nṯr ^{c}^{3} nb ỉmnt

I will hear words with him in his noble and excellent *ḏ^{3}ḏ^{3}.t*-court of the great god, lord of the West.

This last example is quite unusual, and overall there can be little doubt that *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and *sḏm* were not synonymous. However, it further indicates that the terms operated in the same sphere, and it is thus logical to consider the presence of *sḏm* in title strings in the same way as has been done for *wḏ^{c}-mdw*.

Sḏm in titles

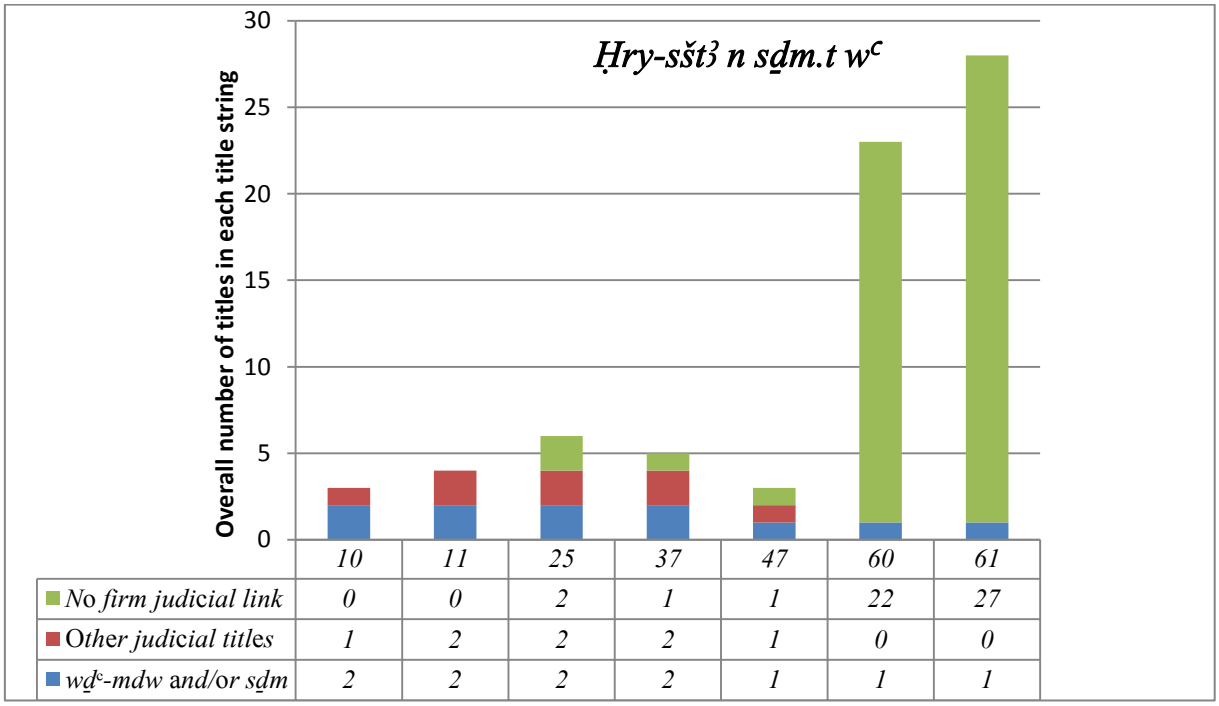
This section considers the prosopographic evidence for *sḏm* in the same way as for *wḏ^{c}-mdw* earlier. All known Old Kingdom titles containing *sḏm* are discussed, alongside the title strings in which they occur. In doing so, the present work seeks to not only develop deeper understanding of the activities of *sḏm* practitioners, but also to explore the nature of connections between this concept and *wḏ^{c}-mdw*.

ḥry-sšt^{3} n sḏm.t w^{c} – 'Unique master of secrets of hearing'

This title has two variants: *ḥry-sšt^{3} n sḏm.t w^{c}*, in five title strings (OK10, 11, 47, 60, 61), and *ḥry-sšt^{3} n sḏm.t w^{c} m ḥw.t-wr.t-6*, in two more cases (OK25, 37). It never appears with *ỉmy-r^{3} sḏm.t nb.t*, discussed below, and occurs mostly in title strings of a very different type: other than the strikingly anomalous attestations in the lengthy title strings of *Ḏ^{c}w* (OK60) and *Ḏ^{c}w-Šm^{3}ỉ* (OK61), located in the same tomb, all mentions occur in very short title strings dense in judicial content. None of the holders is of vizieral status and, apart from the aforementioned outliers, few of their titles point to high rank. Instead, they seem to have had quite narrow areas of focus in and around judicial matters: indeed, three of them also bear the title *sm^{3}^{c} wḏ^{c}-mdw* (OK11, 25, 37), which, as argued previously[83], was probably associated with the practical side of proceedings. Overall, the patterns of use for this title

[83] See pp. 70-71.

resemble those of its cognate on the *wḏ^{c}-mdw* side: *ḥry-sšt$_{3}$ n wḏ^{c}-mdw*, although the two never occur together. It may also be noteworthy that the qualifier *w^{c}* ('unique') is found in all iterations of this title: this could suggest that the quality of being alone or unique was integral to this post, although it can also be interpreted as simply an epithet of self-importance without major implications for how the function was conducted.

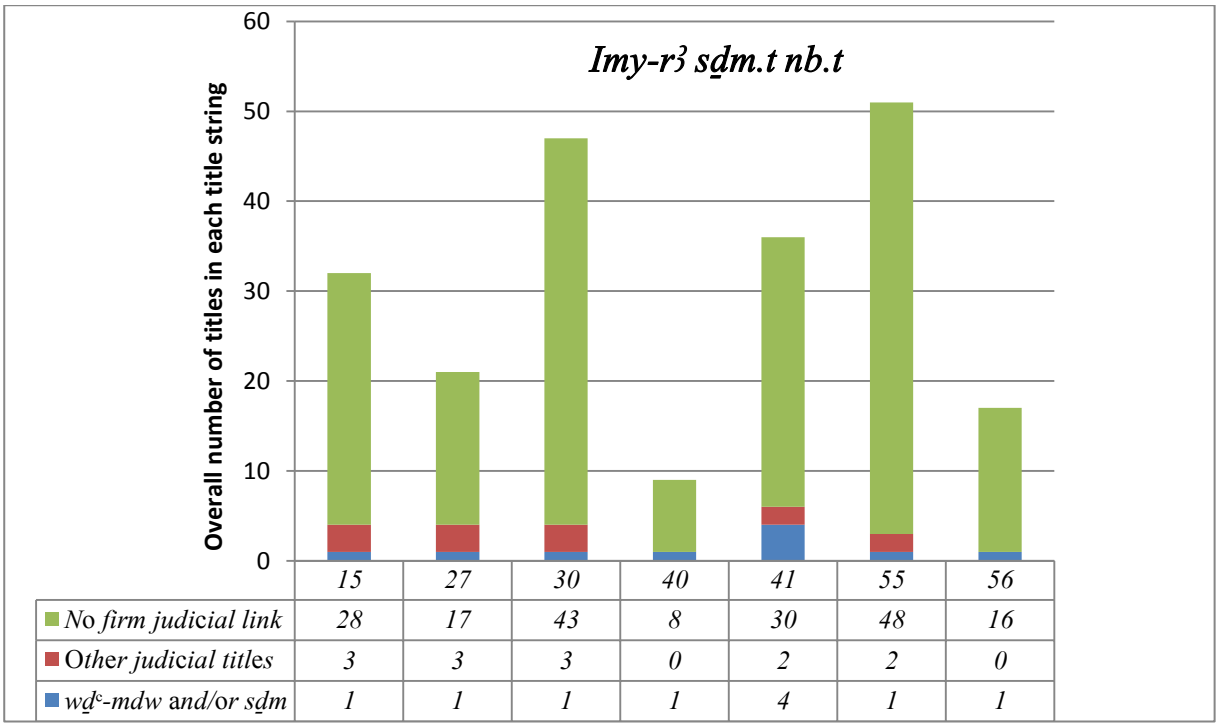


	10	11	25	37	47	60	61
No *firm judicial link*	0	0	2	1	1	22	27
Other *judicial titles*	1	2	2	2	1	0	0
wḏ^{c}-mdw and/or *sḏm*	2	2	2	2	1	1	1

Fig. 9: Graph showing compositions of title strings containing the title ḥry-sšt$_{3}$ n sḏm.t w^{c}. The numbers in the top row indicate the title strings in question (e.g. 10 refers to OK10 and 61 to OK61 in Appendix I).

ỉmy-r$_{3}$ sḏm.t nb.t – 'Overseer of every hearing'

This title, usually found in contexts markedly different to those of *ḥry-sšt$_{3}$ n sḏm.t w^{c}*, also has two forms. These are *ỉmy-r$_{3}$ sḏm.t nb.t*, attested in five title strings (OK27, 30, 41, 55, 56), and *ỉmy-r$_{3}$ sḏm.t nb.t št$_{3}$.t*, in two further examples (OK15, 40). Both types occur invariably in long title strings, accompanied on average by twenty seven other titles. The title never occurs in title strings dense in judicial content, and only one of its seven holders had a titular link to *wḏ^{c}-mdw*. Instead, it seems to be a hallmark of senior officials engaged in a broad sphere of activities, whose careers followed an entirely different trajectory to those with a seemingly narrow focus on justice, but whose role in legal matters should nonetheless not be underestimated. Four of the holders of this title were viziers (OK15, 27, 30, 55), and a fifth holder became vizier at a later stage in his career (OK41). Overall, the patterns regarding its use resemble those of what may be a parallel high-order title in the *wḏ^{c}-mdw* strand: *ỉmy-r$_{3}$ wḏ^{c}-mdw*, and it is highly likely that the involvement of these individuals in justice was very closely connected to their high social status.



	15	27	30	40	41	55	56
No *firm judicial link*	28	17	43	8	30	48	16
Other *judicial titles*	3	3	3	0	2	2	0
wḏᶜ-mdw and/or *sḏm*	1	1	1	1	4	1	1

Fig. 10: Graph showing compositions of title strings containing the title ỉmy-r3 sḏm.t nb.t. The numbers in the top row indicate the title strings in question (e.g. 15 refers to OK15 and 56 to OK56 in Appendix I).

ḫry sdm – 'One charged with hearing'

This hapax title occurs only in the very long title string of *Pḥ-r-nfr* (OK22). He also held the title *wḏᶜ-mdw*, but this was alongside forty seven titles which are generally non-judicial and include priesthoods, treasury positions and posts in royal administration. It is thus difficult to draw any conclusions about this title, although this single attestation certainly does not point to an official with a high degree of judicial focus.

sḏm.w-mdw m sšt3 nb – 'Hearer of words in every secret'

Another hapax, found only in the title string of *Wr-ḫww* (OK21), which contains a mix of judicial and non-judicial titles. He was a *wḏᶜ-mdw* linked to the *h3y.t*, *ḏ3ḏ3.t*, and *ḫw.t-wr.t*, as well as being a priest of *M3ᶜ.t* and a director of petitioning scribes. However, most of his twenty two titles are priestly or administrative. The only attestation of this title is therefore in the context of a man clearly involved in a significant amount of judicial activity, probably in a range of settings, but nonetheless not focused entirely on this field.

Wḏᶜ-mdw and *sḏm*: complementary processes with points of convergence?

A striking observation from the findings above is that both *wḏᶜ-mdw* and *sḏm* deploy *ḫry-sšt3* and *ỉmy-r3* prefixes in similar circumstances. The former usually denote officials with an apparently high degree of judicial focus, while the latter are borne by those of greater seniority whose involvement in judicial matters was one of many spheres of activity. There is not one instance of an official being

ỉmy-rꜣ and *ḥry-sšꜥ* of both concepts at once, which implies some separation in terms of how they were administered. Indeed, it is tempting to suggest parallel two-tier administrations for both concepts. However, the picture is complicated by the presence of other titles containing *wḏᶜ-mdw*, most notably *smꜣᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw* (OK11, 25, 37) and to a lesser extent also the simple *wḏᶜ-mdw* (OK10)[84], which could simultaneously be held by officials at the *ḥry-sšꜥ* level of the *sḏm* sphere. A putative summary of how these administratively parallel but practically converging systems may have worked is proposed below:

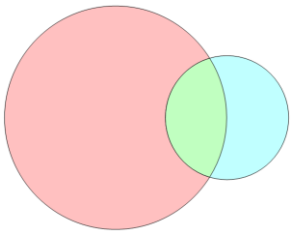
***Sḏm* strand**: 'Hearing'; perhaps a preliminary phase of investigation allowing *wḏᶜ-mdw* to then happen. Attested in 16 title strings.	***Wḏᶜ-mdw* strand**: 'Dividing words'; perhaps associated with making judgment after the case has been heard (*sḏm*). Attested in 59 title strings.
Higher/Administrative tier: ***ỉmy-rꜣ sḏm.t nb.t***: 'Overseers of every hearing – senior officials with ultimate responsibility for the process, but not regularly hearing cases.	Higher/Administrative tier: ***ỉmy-rꜣ wḏᶜ-mdw***: 'Overseers of dividing words' – senior officials responsible for overall oversight, but probably not tasked with carrying out the process on a day-to-day level.
Lower/Practical tier: ***ḥry-sšꜥ n sḏm.t wᶜ***: 'Unique Masters of secrets of hearing' – officials of a lower status and greater judicial focus, who may have actually heard the cases alone (*wᶜ*). Hapax titles: ***ḥry sḏm*** – 'One charged with hearing'; ***sḏm.w-mdw m sšꜥ nb*** – 'Hearer of words in every secret'.	Lower/Practical tier: ***ḥry-sšꜥ n wḏᶜ-mdw***: 'Masters of secrets of dividing words' – relatively junior officials with a much narrower legal focus, who actually carried out the process. Other significant titles (probably lower tier): ***wḏᶜ-mdw***: 'Dividers of words' – at least on some occasions, seems to have been firmly involved at the practical level, and holders often exhibit considerable judicial focus. Perhaps carried out activities similar to *ḥry-sšꜥ n wḏᶜ-mdw*, but maybe in a more public setting (hence the absence of *ḥry-sšꜥ*). ***smꜣᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw***: 'Enforcers of dividing words' – Probably connected to bringing the outcome of the procedure to fruition. Often had a high degree of focus specifically on justice, and regularly accompanied by titles of *rꜣ Nḫn* and/or *sms.w hꜣy.t*. Other very rare titles/epithets of unclear significance: ***wḏ wḏᶜ-mdw n ḥry.w-wḏb.w*** – 'Commander and divider of words of the diverters of offerings'; ***sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.w wḏᶜ-mdw štꜣ*** – 'Dignitary, overseer of scribes and secret divider of words'; ***ḥry-tp mdw n wḏᶜ-mdw štꜣ n ḥw.t-wr.t*** – 'Chief of words of the secret dividing of words of the *ḥw.t-wr.t*'; ***ỉrr ḥtp.t n Mꜣᶜ.t m wḏᶜ-mdw mꜣᶜ rᶜ nb ḏ.t*** – 'One who makes offerings to *Mꜣᶜ.t* by true dividing of words every day, forever'; ***ỉr.w(?) wḏ.t wᶜ-mdw mrr.w nb=f(?)*** – 'One who conducts(?) the commands and dividing of words beloved of his lord(?)'.
Key No convergence: officials engaged either in *wḏᶜ-mdw* or *sḏm*, but not both. Convergence possible: officials could have both *wḏᶜ-mdw* and *sḏm* titles. ***Extent of convergence***  Title strings with *wḏᶜ-mdw* only (left): 52 Title strings with *wḏᶜ-mdw* and *sḏm* (middle): 7 Title strings with *sḏm* only (right): 9	

Fig. 11: Summary of the wḏᶜ-mdw and sḏm strands of justice and their possible interconnections.

[84] *Wḏᶜ-mdw* titles are also held by holders of the hapax titles *ḥry sdm* (OK22) and *sḏm.w-mdw m sšꜥ nb* (OK21).

Case studies: a selection of Old Kingdom legal officials

Having now looked at the various titles frequently associated with the central judicial concepts of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and *sḏm*, as well as the institutions connected to these terms and the implications of holding particular titles with regards to status and the extent of everyday focus on justice, it is logical to apply these findings by analysing a selection of legal officials of the period. The officials chosen are typical of wider groups which they appear to represent within the judicial sphere.

The official with overwhelmingly judicial focus: *ꜣḫ.t-mḥw* (OK1)

ꜣḫ.t-mḥw almost certainly displayed an exceptionally high degree of focus on judicial matters. Out of his eight titles, only two (*ḥry-sštꜣ* and *ḥry-wḏb.w*) do not seem to have direct connections with justice. He had three titles with *wḏ^{c}-mdw*, including *ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏ^{c}-mdw*, which seems to be a diagnostic feature of officials closely involved in the practice of justice. He was also a *rꜣ Nḫn*, which again points to a close legal focus, while his *ḥm-nṯr Mꜣ^{c}.t* title indicates that he may have dispensed justice as part of his duties within the framework of *Mꜣ^{c}.t* worship. His main place of carrying out *wḏ^{c}-mdw* was the *ḥw.t-wr.t*, but he was also a *sms.w ḥꜣy.t* and so presumably judged both in the formal court environment and perhaps more informally at the portal. Thus, although almost all of his activities were judicial, he was not tied to any one location or institution, and probably engaged in justice at multiple levels, perhaps for different social strata. *ꜣḫ.t-mḥw* also had a post connected to temple offerings (*ḥry-wḏb.w*), which seems entirely logical, considering that he also had a priesthood of *Mꜣ^{c}.t*. Indeed, it seems likely that providing justice may have been a way for him to highlight a closer affinity to the goddess and the notion she represented, hence strengthening perceived ties to the divine and thereby increasing social authority for judgment purposes. This may also link back to the potential conceptual similarity between dividing words and apportioning offerings, as discussed above, while the ethnographic evidence presented earlier shows that the broad concept of divine backing for judges is common. In addition to this, involvement in the offering cult may have provided an extra source of income, which could potentially be used to augment social status even further.

The judicial official with royal connections: *Nnkꜣ* (OK37)

Nnkꜣ held almost exclusively legal titles, in addition to one title or epithet indicating royal favour (*mḥ-ꜣb n n(y)-sw.t m nḏ rn=f*). He heard cases in the *ḥw.t-wr.t-6*, probably the highest legal institution in the land which was presided over by the vizier, which is a further indication of his proximity to the centres of power. His title there, *ḥry-sštꜣ n sḏm.t w^{c}*, suggests that he had a practical role in hearing cases and was very much directly involved in proceedings, which is also a good fit for his *rꜣ Nḫn* title. He may also have had an important role in enforcing the outcomes of legal proceedings, as he was a *smꜣ^{c} wḏ^{c}-mdw*. It is striking that he has no titles at all relating to other spheres of activity, suggesting that he was the most narrowly-focused out of all the individuals holding multiple titles in the dataset.

Perhaps he could afford to maintain this level of undivided focus due to his links with high authority, which may have reduced the need for other sources of income. Alternatively, the existence of an individual like this may suggest that in certain cases remuneration for judgment was such that it could be a full-time occupation.

The scribal administrator with judicial focus: *St-kꜣ* (OK49)

St-kꜣ was above all a scribal administrator, with seven of his twelve titles connected to inspecting, overseeing or directing scribes. Three of the titles mention this in the context of slightly different varieties of *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*-court; an institution which may have been especially important in his administrative activities. However, as well as managing scribes in what was probably at least a partially legal setting, *St-kꜣ* also engaged in *wḏᶜ-mdw* in the *ḥw.t-wr.t*, which suggests that he could serve as a judge in his own right. He also held a number of other titles, including markers of royal favour such as *n(y) ns.t ḫnt.t* ('One of the foremost throne') and *ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t* ('One under the head of the King'). He also held the generic administrative title *sꜣb ᶜḏ-mr* ('Dignitary and Administrator'), and the poorly understood *wr ḫrp mḏ Šmᶜ.w* ('Great one and Director of the tens of Upper Egypt'), which probably has legal connotations (Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 52)[85]. Thus, this was a man whose main focus was on administration which was not exclusively judicial, but who could also judge cases and who enjoyed royal favour. He held no titles outside these fields.

The high official engaged in justice alongside much else: *Mḥw* (OK30)

To illustrate the contrast with the officials above, *Mḥw* is included here as an example of a high official who did have judicial titles, but whose involvement in justice probably accounted for only a relatively small part of his activities. He was a vizier, and held the highest administrative title of the *sḏm* strand: *ỉmy-rꜣ sḏm.t*. He oversaw both the *ḥw.t-wr.t* and *ḥw.t-wr.t-6*, further indicating legal involvement. However, he had a very wide range of other titles, indicating control over an extensive scribal administration, authority over the granary and treasury, multiple priestly functions, and more obscure duties such as 'directing every kilt'. It is difficult to imagine that this man could have frequently dispensed formal justice, considering the likely demands on his time by a range of other duties. At the same time, his seniority would probably have made him a logical final point of appeal in the very highest cases, and he may also have been called upon to address *ad hoc* matters of justice in the various institutions which he administered. In addition to this, the weight of his informal opinion might have been sufficient to resolve minor community disputes relatively quickly and without recourse to formal process. Moreover, the fact that he was nonetheless integrated into the system – in his case as an *ỉmy-rꜣ sḏm.t* – suggests that officials lower down whom he 'oversaw' may

[85] This is probably a variation of *wr mḏ Šmᶜ.w*, listed here in the '*Séquence juridictionnelle classique*' (p. 84). For more on this, see Helck 1954: 19.

have been able to act in his name, possibly even consulting him, and thereby deriving greater authority from a higher source. In many ways, *Mḥw* is typical of many high officials in the dataset: a man who may not have seen justice as his primary activity, but who may nonetheless have yielded significant influence over it through the respect attributed to his senior status.

Analysis: the context and mechanisms of judgment in Old Kingdom Egypt

Having looked at both the central judicial concept of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and the legal landscape in which it was located, a wider set of proposals about Old Kingdom justice is now offered below.

Systems of judgment

In trying to understand how the various concepts and officials discussed above could have fitted into a coherent judicial system or systems, it is first essential to highlight the range of terms associated with judgment in this period. While *wḏ^{c}-mdw* was the most common and the most unambiguously judicial, *sḏm* and to a certain extent *wp* could also denote actions of a judicial nature which were clearly not synonymous with *wḏ^{c}-mdw*. This in itself points to a complex system with either multiple types of judgment, multiple stages in the judging process necessitating different terms, or a combination of these two. Likewise, there is considerable variation in the places where judgment could occur, with the *ḥw.t-wr.t*, *ḥw.t-wr.t-6*, *hꜣy.t*, *wsḫ.t*, *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*, and the generic *s.wt šps.wt* all serving as venues, while the officials responsible for judgment range from those who had a near exclusive focus on it to those who also participated in a very broad range of other activities. Several possible explanations for such variety are proposed here, and are informed further by ethnographic considerations:

1) ***Distinctions between oral-aural and written judgment***

The idea of orality, which is so central to many traditional justice systems, is inherent in the very concepts of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* ('dividing words') and *sḏm* ('listening'). Neither of these is ever found as an adverbial component in scribal titles, and both place an emphasis on the spoken word. On the other hand, *wp* was written with the scroll determinative, suggesting a connection to writing, and it never refers to *mdw* ('words'). There is also a solitary attestation of this concept in a scribal title within the present dataset: *sꜣb sḫḏ sš.(w) n ỉp.t/wp.t* ('Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s) of the *ỉp.t/wp.t*') (OK21), although the aforementioned wide array of lexical meanings associated with the ambiguous *ỉp/wp* writing means that this might simply denote an accounting scribe[86].

[86] See pp. 88-90. However, even if the reading is *ỉp*, this still raises an interesting question regarding a judicial official also being an accounting scribe. There may have been important conceptual similarities between activities based on ordering of data, goods or proceedings – such as drawing up balanced accounts, apportioning offerings, and resolving legal disputes.

While conclusions cannot be drawn from this alone, the idea of a distinction between oral-aural and written judgment is strengthened further when the notion of *spr* ('petitioning') is considered. *Spr* is part of the scribal title *sš ỉry spr* ('Scribe of petitioning'), attested twice alongside titles containing *wḏᶜ-mdw* (OK53, 63), and more significantly also occurs in the relatively common *ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr* ('Director of scribes of petitioning') attested nine times across the Old Kingdom dataset (OK3, 21, 23, 24, 35-36, 53, 54, 58). Furthermore, one of these attestations (OK21) is qualified by *m ḏ3ḏ3.t wr.t* ('Director of scribes of petitioning in the great *ḏ3ḏ3.t*-court'), which explicitly connects *spr* to bureaucracy in an institution with legal functions. The possibility of *spr* playing a significant role in the judicial dynamic is also supported by evidence from later periods: it is the verb which introduces each new complaint to the judging official in the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* (Shupak 1992: 10), and the appropriate judicial responses to the act of *spr* are also discussed in considerable detail in the *Installation of the Vizier* (Faulkner 1955: 19, 4, 7, 8 – 20, 13, 14). A range of other texts dealing with legal matters and conflict resolution also mention *spr*, including the *Instructions of Ptahhotep* (Hagen 2012: 161-164)[87]. While some of this evidence is significantly later in date, the existence of *spr* in this earlier period, and in particular its connection to scribes, could be an important extra consideration when establishing the relationship between oral-aural and written judgment. This could be especially significant since it is in stark contrast to *wḏᶜ-mdw*, which has no compelling link to scribes.

A possibility might be that *spr* refers to an administrative procedure of which *wḏᶜ-mdw* could be the final result – perhaps an initial petitioning which could be recorded. It is not entirely clear how other concepts, like the oral-aural *sḏm* or the more scribal *wp*, might fit into such a framework – one possibility is that *spr* could have been a way of initiating a *sḏm* or a *wp* procedure on the route to a culminating *wḏᶜ-mdw* decision. If so, this range of judicial terms may have fitted together as follows:

Spr – Petitioning by litigants, which was both heard aurally and recorded

Sḏm – The process of listening to a case, but not necessarily making a decisive judgment

Wp – Some sort of notion involving 'separating' litigants with an emphasis on documents and recording, perhaps producing a written record of the case. Whether this was a process complementary or mutually exclusive to *sḏm* is unclear.

Wḏᶜ-mdw – Perhaps the decisive stage of judgment, ultimately 'dividing words' and reaching a conclusion. It is possible that *sḏm* and *wp* were preliminary stages leading up to this.

Sm3ᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw – The enforcement phase, where the intended consequences of the preceding *wḏᶜ-mdw* procedure were put into action.

[87] For further examples, see also Shupak 1992: 11 (fn. 41).

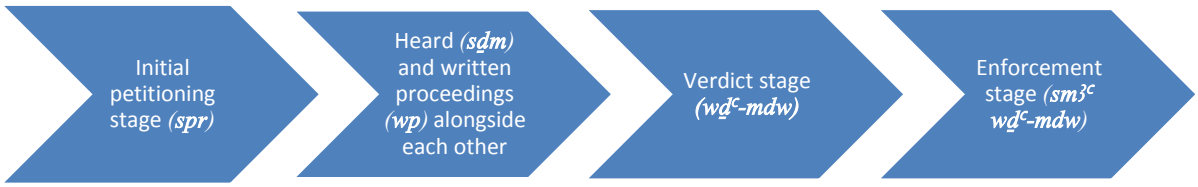


Fig. 12: Flow diagram illustrating the possible stages of legal procedure in Old Kingdom Egypt.

2) ***Distinctions between state and customary judgment***

Another layer of complexity comes from the possibility of different judicial systems, answerable to different sources of authority, coexisting at the same time. It is very likely that this legal pluralism was vital to the large-scale practice of justice across the entire country, with people from various localities and of varying social status able to access judicial provision commensurate with their position and/or degree of severity of their case. One source of judicial authority may have been the state, complete with hierarchies of officials, mechanisms of recording, and centralised bureaucratic structures, while the other source may have been informal, unrecorded and unregulated customary law. As demonstrated earlier, such multiplicity of systems is characteristic of societies with long-established communal or kinship ties upon which a state structure has been superimposed, and indeed it remains a feature of many legal systems up to the present day (e.g. Woodman 1996: 156-60; Le Roy 2004; Pirie 2013: 38-44). It seems highly probable that Old Kingdom Egypt, much like later periods (Campagno 2006: 30)[88], would have had a large element of such legal pluralism, being a complex society with a clearly defined central government but also containing distinct local communities that pre-dated the establishment of the state.

In this context, the existence of officials with a narrow judicial focus in the Old Kingdom, as for instance illustrated by some of the above case studies, seems to suggest that a relatively formal way of practicing justice did exist. Most notably, the *ḥw.t-wr.t* and *ḥw.t-wr.t-6* appear to be very firmly in the sphere of state judgment and may have been courts in an institutional, as well as a physical, sense. Each of these had bodies of scribes, and was frequently overseen by officials whose other titles indicated very senior status, including connections to the royal administration or the vizierate. On the other hand, the *ḏ3ḏ3.t* is much less common in title strings and has left a much smaller trace in the written record. It too could have scribes, as shown by the titles in which it is mentioned, but in view of how rare such titles are it would appear that a lot of activity connected to it went unrecorded, and indeed it is possible that such scribal titles were exceptional features not usually

[88] This provides an argument in favour of community and state spheres of legal influence in the New Kingdom.

found in every *ḏ3ḏ3.t*. Thus, it may be that this body was more closely connected to customary judgment, based around the decisions of local councils generally independent of the state apparatus. It may still have been influenced by the formal system, as coexisting judicial structures in a legal pluralist framework almost inevitably overlap, and the occasional presence of scribes could be a symptom of that. However, overall it seems likely that for the most past the *ḏ3ḏ3.t* was run along local lines. In the Middle Kingdom, there is a much greater body of evidence to suggest that the *ḏ3ḏ3.t* was indeed a regional council (Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 40-46), so it seems logical that it may have dispensed justice in this capacity in the Old Kingdom too.

The two remaining places to consider are the *h3y.t* and the *wsḫ.t*, which differ from the terms discussed above in that in themselves they do not denote any kind of court or council, but rather refer to elements of temple architecture. Individuals involved in *wḏ[c]-mdw*, often possessing long title strings indicative of close links to state administration, hold the title *sms.w h3y.t* ('elder of the portal') in numerous cases and in one inscription this place is even explicitly said to be where *wḏ[c]-mdw* happened – *wḏ[c]-mdw m h3y.t* (OK21). It is unclear whether the portals in question relate to entrances to courts, temples, or some other building, but the idea of judgment happening at a liminal point between an internal and external environment is potentially significant. One possibility is that judgment at the portal was, both physically and metaphorically, on the boundary between justice inside the state system – perhaps marked spatially by being inside some specific enclosed location, and customary justice outside the state system, occurring in the community and devoid of any fixed place associated with it.

An example of formal justice inside an enclosed location could well have been the *wsḫ.t*, adjudicating cases inside a temple court that may have been accessed through the *h3y.t*. This would have been a more secluded setting, probably not accessible to the majority of the population, and perhaps reflective of the fact that it was seen as a place where the gods themselves gave verdicts[89]. As has been shown above, the vast majority of officials involved in *wsḫ.t* activities were of very senior status, and the *wsḫ.t* also seems to have had a relatively strong scribal presence. This is entirely consistent with a court aimed at the elite strata of society. However, its temple setting might suggest that the *wsḫ.t* could also convene in provincial temples, thus making it geographically wider in scope than the *ḥw.t-wr.t*, which seems to have been overwhelmingly centred around the principal node of royal administration in the Memphite region.

[89] One can easily imagine this sort of venue also falling under the generic designation *st šps.t*, as discussed earlier (p. 83).

3) ***Distinctions between regions***

The diversity of terms may also be connected to regional variations in the administration of judgment. Unfortunately, very little can be inferred about this, as the vast majority of inscriptions available come from tombs in the Memphite region, and belong to officials somehow connected to the centre of royal administration or indeed the King himself. It seems highly like that places like the *ḥw.t-wr.t*, *ḥw.t-wr.t-6* and *wsḫ.t* would have been located in this administrative core owing to the multiple tiers of titles connected with them, the presence of scribes in such institutions, and the evidence for proximity to the King displayed by some of the officials who served there. Meanwhile, the *ḏ𓄡ḏ𓄡.t* probably did exist elsewhere and perhaps in many places (Jasnow 2003[A]: 905), as there is no firm evidence linking it to a heavily centralised bureaucracy. Likewise, *h𓄡y.t* appears to be a non-specific term referring to a portal, presumably of a temple, but one in almost any location.

Nonetheless, the absence of a meaningful sample of inscriptions from provincial centres means that this proposal remains speculative, especially as, despite the overall lack of evidence from these, two seals bearing *wḏ[c]-mdw* titles have been recovered from Elephantine (OK 45, 46). This would point to at least a modicum of formalised administrative activity in the provinces, although two attestations across the entire corpus do not suggest it was vast. Overall, considering the overall balance of the evidence, it is still reasonable to suggest that the judicial situation in the administrative core may not have been fully reflective of Old Kingdom Egypt as a whole. This links back to legal pluralism – perhaps the core had a greater reliance on institutionalised state judgment, backed up by a scribal bureaucracy and officials with a relatively high degree of focus specifically on judicial matters, while informal customary judgment or even strategies of conflict avoidance based on 'order without law' prevailed in provincial areas. The latter have inevitably left very little trace in the textual record.

Judges

The status and function of the judges themselves was apparently no less complex than the multi-faceted system within which they operated. An obvious problem is that, unlike later periods, the Old Kingdom has left very few texts describing the judging process. The only text which provides any insight into what court procedure may have involved is the fragmentary *Papyrus Berlin 9010* (Sethe 1926: 71)[90]:

> *ỉr ỉn Sbk-ḥtp pn ỉr(y).w-3 ỉḳr.w n.w nḫt ḥr=sn ỉrt(y)=sn b𓄡.w=k r=f nṯr mỉ-nt.t ỉr.n.t(w) ỉs pn ḫft ḏd Wsr pn [ỉm] wnn m-ḫnw Sbk-ḥtp pn ỉn=f ỉr(y).w-3pn.w [sic] ḏd md.t tn r gs=sn sk Sbk-ḥtp pn m wnm n sbỉ(n) n=f ỉr nfr ỉn.n=f ỉr(y).w-3 ḏd.w md.t t[n] r gs=sn n mn ḫt nb.(t) ỉm=f n.t Wsr pn*

[90] For an English commentary and translation, see Ganley 2002: 32, 4-8.

> If this *Sbk-ḥtp* brings three effective witnesses who are worthy, and they will carry out a 'May your power be against him, god', just as this document was drawn up in accordance with what this *Wsr* said [therein], it (i.e. the inheritance being contested) will be in the house of this *Sbk-ḥtp* as he brought these three witnesses in whose presence this matter was said. Now this *Sbk-ḥtp* may consume but cannot diminish for himself. If he does not bring the three witnesses of what was said in their presence, no belongings of this *Wsr* will remain with him.

This passage emphasises the need for both oral-aural and written evidence, showing that relatively formal cases involved both written documents, and oral-aural testimony confirming the validity of these documents. If so, the two key responsibilities of judges would have been hearing witness statements and evaluating written evidence – an interpretation which closely fits both the mixture of scribal and hearing-based titles found in the inscriptions studied here, and the well-known importance of witnesses and written contracts in later periods where evidence is more plentiful (e.g. Jasnow 2001, Jasnow 2003[B], Jasnow 2003[C], Eyre 2013: 155-97).

The long-accepted view that Ancient Egyptian society did not have full-time legal officials of any sort (e.g. Théodoridès 1971: 311; van den Boorn 1985: 18; Grajetzki 2012: 20)[91] also needs to be challenged. As shown above, while it would be rather bold to say that permanent 'lawyers' existed in Egypt in this period, a considerable degree of focus specifically on the judicial field is clearly visible in many – although certainly not all – title strings. This is particularly true among judicial practitioners of comparatively low status, while high officials holding titles like *ỉmy-rꜣ wḏꜥ-mdw* or *ỉmy-rꜣ sḏm.t nb.t* invariably had many titles from other fields too. Overall, most individuals involved in judging found in this dataset are placed somewhere between these two extremes, having additional titles revolving predominantly around *Mꜣꜥ.t*, royal affairs and literacy.

This is not surprising considering the possibility of judges having a dual function as both hearers of cases and assessors of written documents. Literacy was central to most branches of administration, and there is no reason for official state courts to have been any different. Record keeping was also important in the temple context (e.g. Posener-Kriéger 1976; Posener-Kriéger 1983; Papazian 2012), so it is logical that the same literate individuals were often both judges and priests. Indeed, alongside the 23 occurrences of *ḥm-nṯr Mꜣꜥ.t* in this dataset (OK1-3, 8-9, 14-16, 20-21, 23-26, 29, 32, 37-38, 41, 53-54, 58, 68), the officials in this study regularly held other priestly titles. Among others, there are five instances of *ḥm-nṯr Ḥw.t-Ḥr* – 'Priest of Hathor' (OK3, 20, 22, 33, 36), four of *ḥm-nṯr Ḥḳt* – 'Priest

[91] For the idea that legal officials gathered exclusively on an *ad hoc* basis, derived from the study of later periods, see Allam 1991: 110 and Lippert 2012: 5.

of Heket' (OK15-16, 22, 41), three of *ḥm-nṯr Rᶜ* – 'Priest of Ra' (OK35-36, 66), and two of *ḥm-nṯr Ḥr* – 'Priest of Horus' (OK22, 28). Eleven of the officials in this study also held *ḥm-nṯr* titles associated with royal funerary cults (OK3, 6, 16, 21, 24, 33, 40, 42, 53, 57, 66). Priestly titles other than *ḥm-nṯr* also occur: most notably, there are twelve attestations of *ḫry-ḥb.t* – 'Lector priests' (OK15, 27-28, 30-31, 40, 43, 55-56, 58, 60-61) which, as discussed earlier, are particularly common among officials with a wider range of responsibilities which incorporate the *sḏm* strand. There are also eight *sm*-priests (OK15, 28, 30, 43, 55, 58, 60, 61), four *wᶜb-n(y)-sw.t*-priests (OK6, 20, 36, 51), four *smꜣ* -priests (OK28, 30, 55, 58), and three *wt*-priests of Anubis (OK28, 55, 58). While none of these is comparable in significance to the much more common *ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t*, they do indicate that the connection between judgment and the priesthood may have been of a broader nature. Literacy was probably a key reason behind this, although ideological considerations and the legitimising function of religious authority must also be borne in mind and are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The importance of literacy may also help to explain the connections of judicial officials to royalty from a practical angle, while also introducing an ideological dimension potentially indicating links to the broader divine world of which the King was a part. In practical terms, officials functioning at administrative tiers high enough to attract formal royal recognition would probably have needed the same literacy skills as those required to conduct or oversee the written aspects of judgment. Meanwhile, in ideological terms, the very concept of hieroglyphic writing was sacred in itself, as already mentioned previously[92], and it is perhaps no coincidence that officials involved in justice in both the Old and later the Middle Kingdom sometimes also bore the title *ḫry-sštꜣ n mdw-nṯr* ('Master of secrets of divine words') (OK28, 31, 55; MK1, 15). Such connections to the King and the gods, underpinned by literacy from both practical and ideological perspectives, would have further strengthened the social standing of judicial practitioners – a phenomenon which numerous ethnographic parallels have shown to be key to projecting and maintaining authority in conflict resolution.

Another point to consider is that all of this discussion is inevitably focused very heavily on officials in the state judgment system. Even the officials with short title strings, while of lower status, were still holders of formal titles and, if anything, were more focused on and ingrained in official justice processes. If, as proposed earlier, a system of customary judgment was functioning concurrently, questions arise as to whether these state judicial officials could have been involved in it too. As the recorded evidence for customary judgment is so sparse, no definitive answer can be given. However, the fact that seven officials involved in *wḏᶜ-mdw* had the judicial title *sms.w hꜣy.t* ('Elder of the

[92] See p. 57.

portal') (OK1, 5, 11, 17, 19, 29, 39) and a further eighth one was explicitly designated as *wḏ^{c}-mdw m ḥ^{ɔ}y.t* ('Divider of words at the portal') (OK21) suggests that state judges could be involved in legal proceedings happening at the temple entrance. If, as suggested above, this was a boundary location where people from the customary system could come to the threshold of state justice, it seems highly likely that state judges were indeed involved. Further evidence potentially indicating the involvement of state judges in the customary system is the occasional mention of the *ḏ^{ɔ}ḏ^{ɔ}.t* in title strings. While only three officials with *wḏ^{c}-mdw* titles had other titles linked to this institution (OK21, 49, 53), one of these, *St-k^{ɔ}* of Giza (OK49), seems to have been very close to both: in a relatively short title string of twelve titles, he had three connected to *wḏ^{c}-mdw* and three to *ḏ^{ɔ}ḏ^{ɔ}.t*[93]. Overall, such evidence of activities at the temple gate and in the *ḏ^{ɔ}ḏ^{ɔ}.t* suggests that at least some state judicial practitioners were involved in aspects of customary judgment, although it is unclear in what capacity.

The presence of state judges in the customary system does not, however, preclude the possibility of the latter having its own judges too, perhaps recruited on a temporary basis from local communities and existing almost entirely outside the recorded, title-bearing world of state justice. The large number of lector priests, whose other activities were predominantly not judicial, included among the people engaged in *sḏm* may be at least in part a product of the more formalised elements of this. The most famous example of the wider practice of informal recruiting of respected citizens comes from New Kingdom Deir el-Medina, where a local *ḳnb.t*-court was formed in this way essentially without any state interference (McDowell 1990: 143-179)[94]. While there is no comparable documentary evidence for something of this sort in this earlier period, it would seem logical for similar bodies to have existed in the Old Kingdom, and perhaps the *ḏ^{ɔ}ḏ^{ɔ}.t*, with its seemingly low level of interference by state officials, was one such body.

It has also been proposed that some courts, and therefore judges, may have been itinerant (Jasnow 2003^{A}: 106). This could explain why certain judicial officials in the state system have titles which may be connected to customary law – while holding judicial offices in the core, perhaps they could also travel around the country and dispense customary law at the temple gate or in the *ḏ^{ɔ}ḏ^{ɔ}.t*, with courts being set up as and when they arrived. Such a hypothesis seems tempting, and would also allow local justice systems to make more effective use of seasonal variations in the availability of time to try cases – perhaps judging could be concentrated around the time of the inundation when farming

[93] It may be significant that this individual was based at Giza – a relatively small settlement with a distinct community that may have had strong emphasis on local customary law while also being under the influence of formal judicial processes in the administrative core of the state nearby. Legal pluralism could have been especially strong here, with individuals like *St-k^{ɔ}* operating on the boundaries of formal and informal procedure.

[94] This is a very comprehensive study, and provides further references.

opportunities were limited. This would also be a logical explanation for why courts outside the Memphite area left so little evidence of existence – perhaps they were transient. Further evidence in support of this, or at least in favour of a view that *wḏᶜ-mdw* could happen in different environments, is the almost 50:50 split in *wḏᶜ-mdw* titles mentioning and not mentioning secrecy. In logistical and administrative terms, it seems improbable that judgments in an informal customary system such as a temporary court could occur in secret – while this seems much more likely for a central state court with clearly defined officials possessing restricted access.

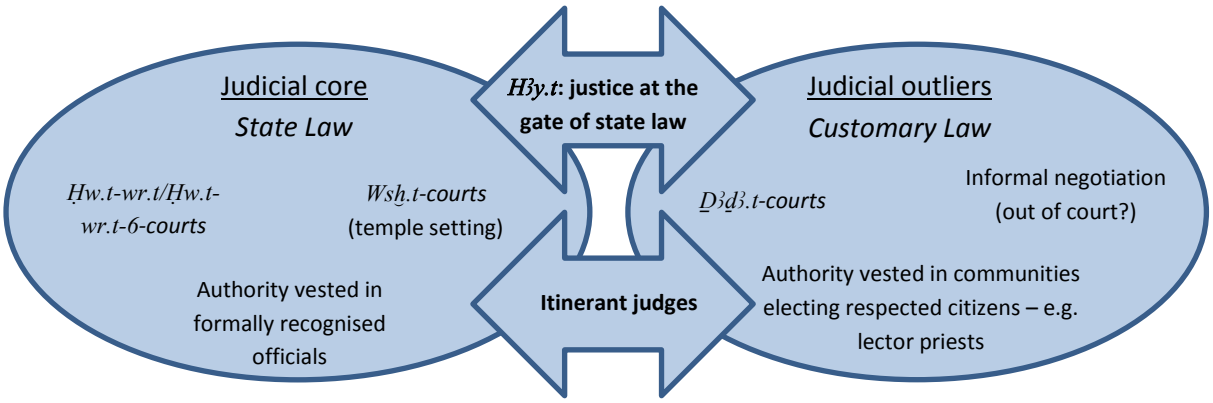


Fig. 13: Diagram showing the possible interconnections between core courts based on state judgment and provincial courts based on customary judgment in Old Kingdom Egypt.

Ideologies of judgment

Connections of judges to *M3ᶜ.t*, the priesthood and the King naturally also have serious implications for the study of the ideology of judgment. The most comprehensive and widely acclaimed study of *M3ᶜ.t* to date has argued that throughout ancient Egyptian history *M3ᶜ.t* had a dual nature as a goddess and as a more abstract idea of cosmic order immanent in all aspects of the universe (Assmann 1990: 160-74). This study proposes that the main ideological basis behind royal power was *M3ᶜ.t*, as it justified a highly centralised, monarchical social framework as a means of maintaining world order, and that consequently periods when *M3ᶜ.t* was overshadowed by cults of specific gods saw marked decreases in royal power (Assmann 1990: 237-273). This theory looks significant in the context of the present research.

One would expect, in line with the theory above, that many judges would be closely aligned to the King as they were priests of *M3ᶜ.t*. Based on the findings of this work, this appears true, and indeed it is noteworthy that the *ḥm-nṯr M3ᶜ.t* title remains common even among legal officials with a tight legal focus. Furthermore, the *wḏᶜ-mdw* procedure itself may have been considered to some extent royal: as shown earlier, the King is described as engaging in this activity when interacting with gods in the

Pyramid texts[95]. It is therefore possible that judges, or at least those involved in state judgment, channelled not only the administrative but also the religious authority of the King, upholding *M3ᶜ.t* in the process. As has been shown above, *wḏᶜ-mdw* could even be regarded as an offering to *M3ᶜ.t* in its own right[96]. If so, *wḏᶜ-mdw*, *M3ᶜ.t* and the King can perhaps be considered components of a single interlocking system, within which religion and justice cannot easily be separated.

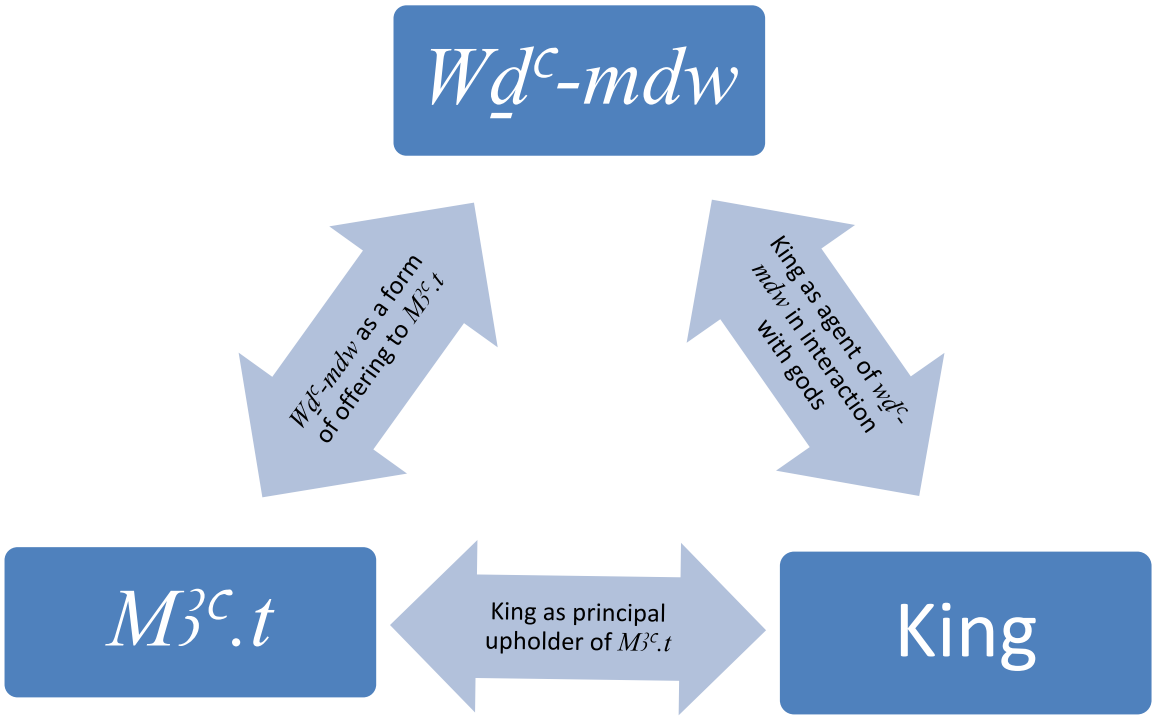


Fig. 14: Diagram showing possible interconnections between wḏᶜ-mdw, M3ᶜ.t and the King in Old Kingdom Egypt.

This interrelation between *wḏᶜ-mdw* and *M3ᶜ.t* in turn connects to broader questions regarding links between religion and judgment, and the extent to which separating the two is even meaningful. For instance, the title *ỉmy-r3 ỉp.t/wp.t* ('Overseer of reckoning/separating'), which can have legal implications in other contexts, is often associated with the giving of offerings in temples, just as the concept of *M3ᶜ.t* could be seen as an offering. The fact that officials with *wḏᶜ-mdw* titles often held other priesthoods besides *ḥm-nṯr M3ᶜ.t* also suggests potential connections to religion beyond *M3ᶜ.t*. If so, this would be mirrored by the many cultures offered earlier for ethnographic comparison, although in the Egyptian case this may also partly be due to the practical need for literacy and administrative capability in a cult setting. Finally, the recurring theme of dividing two litigants in Old Kingdom tombs must be noted (Goedicke 1963: 359-365) – here again, judgment was connected to *M3ᶜ.t* and presumably also to the afterlife.

[95] See p. 66 in the present work. For more on this, see also Goedicke 1963: 359-365.
[96] For the relevant passage, see discussion on pp. 73-74 and p. 86.

In terms of ideologies of judgment, this variety of considerations suggests that judges may have had to think about much more than just the legal and administrative dimension when hearing cases. They may have been carrying out a sacred act, with important *M3c.t*-based implications for both their current existence and potentially also the afterlife, as well as facing considerations regarding how they were channelling royal authority and, if appropriate, making use of a writing system which had divine undertones in itself. When the possibility of influences from entirely informal and unrecorded customary law is superimposed over this, a remarkably complex picture starts to emerge. Finally, one must add to this the further prospect of an 'order without law' framework, influenced by local religious beliefs (possibly but not necessarily including conceptions of *M3c.t*) and dominated by unrecorded considerations of kinship and mutual economic benefit. Thus, this was a system (or systems) in which full-time officials with intense judicial focus, individuals of higher status with a range of functions, and almost certainly also informal actors all had important parts to play. Its smooth functioning was probably ultimately seen as much as a religious and social obligation as a judicial and economic necessity.

4: People and places of judgment in the Middle Kingdom

Having constructed an initial interpretation of the Old Kingdom judicial landscape, the study may now move on to the Middle Kingdom. The judicial evolutions encountered here should be understood in the broader socio-political context of Egypt at the time: during the intervening First Intermediate Period, the country had undergone over a century of decentralisation unprecedented in the earlier dynastic epoch, which would have provided opportunities for comprehensive reform of administration at both local and ultimately national level. As power transferred away from a previously dominant King to regional rulers, it is highly likely that the judicial landscape too would have undergone change. With courts in the centre of royal power no longer as influential and operational, it is likely that the responsibilities of what had previously been formal state justice would have been subsumed by nomarchs or indeed lower-level leaders. In such circumstances, it seems almost certain that legal pluralism would have flourished: while local informal judicial practices probably already had considerable autonomy in the Old Kingdom, decentralisation would likely have given them even greater freedom to diverge from established norms as institutional and bureaucratic oversight decreased.

However, while these developments were undoubtedly significant, this period is especially challenging from an evidential perspective. The reduction in royal resources and the decline of a single administration at the apex of the state led to a fall in the production of inscriptions and administrative texts with information useful for this study. In particular, the expansive tombs of senior royal officials rich in title strings, which are such a crucial aspect of the Old Kingdom dataset, have no equivalent in the period which followed. Only with the re-establishment of a single overarching monarchy did sources conducive to analysis in this research project begin to appear in significant quantities once again. Nonetheless, the judicial landscape which yielded these later texts would have been influenced by this preceding time of administrative multipolarity, and one must acknowledge this while at the same time taking into account that certain Old Kingdom structures – especially those further away from the upheavals surrounding royal administration – probably remained largely intact.

Evidence from texts other than title strings

A much wider range of texts connected with the judicial process are preserved from the Middle Kingdom, with the dominant term associated with judging being *sḏm* while *wḏꜥ-mdw* is almost entirely discontinued. More information is also available on judicial institutions, such as the *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*

and *ḥ3y.t*, which are already known from the Old Kingdom, and previously unattested bodies like the *ḳnb.t* and *ḫnr.t*. A relatively prominent place is also retained by *M3ᶜ.t*, but for the first time the concept of *ḥp.w* ('rules') also appears. On the other hand, title strings are much more problematic as sources of evidence in this period. Firstly, they are far fewer in number. Secondly, they are generally much shorter, which may point to a different type of approach to administration and government more generally, and may have implications going far beyond the judicial sphere. Close to half of the officials in the Middle Kingdom prosopographic dataset for this study have only a single title and, while this may point to a high degree of focus on, or potentially even full-time specialisation in, given areas of work, it also hinders the analysis of patterns in title occurrence along the principles deployed for the Old Kingdom material. Consequently, prosopography cannot be used to drive the investigation forward in the same way as is possible for the Old Kingdom. Instead, it is logical to begin with a study of the richer textual material beyond title strings, returning to titles only once some initial observations have been made. As non-prosopographic textual material is for the most part identified as connected to justice through its mentions of specific judicial institutions or locations, these structures will be discussed first.

Dꜣḏꜣ.t

The *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*, already attested in the Old Kingdom, becomes somewhat easier to track in this period due to a greater number of sources. It was clearly associated with a wide range of activities, at least some of which were not judicial. For instance, the Wadi Gawasis inscription of *Int=f-ꜣḳr* makes reference to the *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t* in a context of boat building (Sayed 1977: pl. 15 d-f, 16a; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 240-241, Document 29), while *Papyrus El-Lahun 32212* shows that it could be contacted regarding administration of the grain supply (Collier & Quirke 2002: 138-141; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 269-270, Document 71). Both of these documents concern proceedings near the apex of the state, directly involving the King. On the other hand, *Papyrus El-Lahun 32112* seems to be operating on a lower tier and is more legal in nature: it is a highly fragmentary and brief communication discussing a woman, some sort of offence, a temple, and the transfer of responsibility to the *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t* (Collier & Quirke 2002: 22-23; Philip-Stéphan 2008: 267, Document 67). The *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t* is also mentioned in *Papyrus Berlin 10030B* in a context with probable legal undertones: again, the text is short and severely damaged, but involves a Deputy of an overseer of sealers being sent to resolve irregularities at a temple: the description of what was done has been lost, but both the *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t* and *ḳnb.t* were noted as involved in proceedings (Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 271, Document 74)[97]. On the Wadi Hammamat inscription of the high official *Ḥnw*, who almost certainly had some judicial responsibility as he was titular Overseer of

[97] For the original publication of the fragments, see Kaplony-Heckel 1971: 13-14 (21).

the *ḥw.t-wr.t-6*[98] and was involved in both the *wp* and *wḏ*^{c} procedures[99], it is stated that the royal *ḏ*^{3}*ḏ*^{3}*.t* was under his control (Couyat & Montet 1912: pl. 31, 114; Philip-Stéphan 2008^{A}: 243-244, Document 37). A *ḏ*^{3}*ḏ*^{3}*.t sḏmy.w* is mentioned as hearing a complex case relating to the transfer of a servant girl from private service into the employ of the inhabitants of Elephantine, with both sides needing to swear oaths to affirm their satisfaction with this outcome (Smither 1948: 32-33, pl. 7-8; Philip-Stéphan 2008^{A}: 285-288, Document 84). Finally, the *ḏ*^{3}*ḏ*^{3}*.t* is mentioned in Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446 as the institution responsible for providing unfree labourers, most probably convicts of some kind, to their final destination: the *ḫnr.t* (Hayes 1955: pl. 1-7; Philip-Stéphan 2008^{A}: 274-284, Document 82). This again suggests legal involvement.

The bureaucratic aspect of the *ḏ*^{3}*ḏ*^{3}*.t* also seems to have become more prominent, with the title *sš n ḏ*^{3}*ḏ*^{3}*.t* ('scribe of the *ḏ*^{3}*ḏ*^{3}*.t*') becoming relatively common in a wide variety of contexts ranging from El-Lahun papyri to administrative seals and even Sinai inscriptions (Ward 1982: 167, 1453-1455). None of these attestations is linked to *sḏm* or has any notable connection to justice, but they do suggest that this institution could operate at a level formal enough to necessitate record keeping. Overall, it therefore seems highly likely that in the Middle Kingdom the *ḏ*^{3}*ḏ*^{3}*.t* was an administrative body with a wide remit, with justice being one component among many. By this time it might in certain cases have developed a more rigid structure with a permanent or semi-permanent staff, and could be associated with high officials. However, the presence of regional, less formal *ḏ*^{3}*ḏ*^{3}*.t*-courts naturally cannot be excluded and indeed seems highly probable. It is noteworthy that, despite its relative prominence, there is not a single attestation of the *ḏ*^{3}*ḏ*^{3}*.t* in the title strings of Middle Kingdom officials involved in *sḏm* – this may suggest that its participation in justice was still largely based on informal methods.

H^{3}*y.t, rw.t* and other portals

The *h*^{3}*y.t* also endured as a place of justice from the Old Kingdom, and three Middle Kingdom texts provide insights into judicial proceedings connected to it. *Stela Louvre C 1*, from the reign of Senusret I and belonging to the high official *N(y)-sw.t-Mnṯw*, states that he was a *sms.w h*^{3}*y.t* ('Elder of the portal') and that '*ḥp*-laws were announced to me' – *sm*^{3}*.tw n=*^{ỉ} *ḥp.w* (Simpson 1974: pl.14; Philip-Stéphan 2008^{A}: 250-251, Document 45). *Stela Cairo JE 30770*, a decree of Intef V, mentions a scribe and a *sms.w h*^{3}*y.t* being delegated to investigate and resolve an unspecified crime involving an enemy of the King which occurred at the temple of Min in Coptos (*Les*: 98 (6-8); Philip-Stéphan 2008^{A}: 284-

[98] By this time, it is highly likely that the *ḥw.t-wr.t-6* was no longer a functional institution (see pp. 119-120 in the present work), but having a titular association with the concept may still have carried judicial undertones.
[99] While the term *wḏ*^{c} should not automatically be equated to *wḏ*^{c}*-mdw* and occurs in a very wide range of contexts (*Wb*. I: 404-407) associated with dividing, its occurrence in a context rich in other judicial titles is nonetheless suggestive of legal undertones in this instance.

285, Document 83). Finally, a fragmentary Thirteenth Dynasty royal instruction to the Vizier *ꜥnḫw* found on Recto Insertion B of *Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446* mentions a *sms.w ḥꜣy.t* writing a complaint about poor treatment of a fugitive (*wꜥr.w*), with the Vizier agreeing to subject this matter to *sḏm* (Hayes 1955: pl. 5; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 272, Document 77). These three textual attestations illustrate that officials of the *ḥꜣy.t* continued to have some involvement in legal affairs, and there is also one mention of the location among the titles of the Middle Kingdom official *Ḥnmwỉ̯*, who had a strong connection to *sḏm* through three of his five titles (MK21).

Ongoing use of the *ḥꜣy.t* in a judicial context also raises broader questions about the enduring and even possibly growing role of gateways in Middle Kingdom justice. In particular, it has been demonstrated that another title linked to gateways, *ỉ̯my-rꜣ rw.t* ('Overseer of the gateway'), although already in existence in the late Old Kingdom, became much more prominent in the Middle Kingdom (Buongarzone 1995). The possibility of officials holding this title being somehow involved in legal rulings has already been tentatively put forward (e.g. van den Boorn 1985: 8; Grajetzki 2012: 96), although none of them have any recorded connections to *sḏm* or *wḏꜥ-mdw* in their title strings. There are two reasons why a link seems conceivable and indeed highly likely: firstly, holders of *ỉ̯my-rꜣ rw.t* were invariably of very high status, holding the most senior titles in the royal administration and on one occasion even rising to the vizierate (Grajetzki 2012: 94-96). People of such status would almost certainly have had the social authority to act as arbitrators in cases, and the gateway may have been an appropriate venue for them to do this. Secondly, *rw.t* appears in two Middle Kingdom literary texts in a firmly judicial context. In the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*, the peasant complains of deficiencies in justice in the following terms (Allen 2014: 289-290: B1 248-249):

> *ỉ̯r wḏꜥ-rw.t m ḫsf.w n=f ỉ̯w=f m ỉ̯my-ḫꜣ.t n ỉ̯rr*
>
> As for the divider (i.e. judge) of the gate who ought to be punished, he is the one in authority[100].

Meanwhile, in the *Instructions of Ptahhotep*, the *rw.t* seems to be a metonym for 'court', appearing twice in quick succession in a section giving advice on behaviour during litigation. The first mention is as follows (Allen 2014: 186: 220-222):

> *ỉ̯r wnn=k m rw.t ꜥḥꜥ ḥms r nmt.w=k wdd n=k hrw tp(y)*

[100] *Lit.* 'He is one at the forefront of a taker of action'. This line is also discussed in van den Boorn 1985: 15.

> If you are at the gate, stand up and sit down in line with the steps ordained for you the first day

The second says (Allen 2014: 186: 227-228):

> *ỉw rw.t r tp-ḥsb sḫr nb ḫft ḥꜣy*
>
> The gate (operates) to a standard; every matter is in accordance with examination

Combined, these three literary mentions suggest that the *rw.t* was a place of justice associated with a set procedure, and poor legal decisions by officials there could be cause for grievance. That such literary attestations should appear at the very time when *ỉmy-rꜣ rw.t* was becoming a more common title is unlikely to be pure coincidence. Furthermore, it has also recently been demonstrated that in the Middle Kingdom the *rw.t* of the royal enclosure housing the senior administration could be used as a place where administrative appeals could be heard (Luft 2017: 182), which would be appropriate for a location with a judicial function. Overall, it therefore seems very likely that by the Middle Kingdom the *rw.t* had joined the *ḥꜣy.t* as a location where judgment could be practiced[101], although it is far from clear why the prosopographic evidence for *ḥꜣy.t* officials being involved in *sḏm* procedure is not in any way replicated for even a single *rw.t* official. One explanation might be that the *ḥꜣy.t* was a relatively generic term referring to any temple portal, while the *rw.t* was specifically the gateway to royal administration[102]. If so, it would naturally follow that more cases would be heard at various temple portals around the country than specifically at the *rw.t*, which may explain why the former is better evidenced in the prosopography of specifically judicial officials than the latter.

Finally, the wider possibility of almost any gateway or entrance on occasion serving as a place of judgment needs to be considered. Again, this is based on a reading of the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*, where the protagonist first seeks redress from a high official just as he is going out of the gate (*sbꜣ*) of his house (Allen 2014: 247-248: B1 65-67). Later on, he addresses the same official again

[101] This would also fit the trajectory of development towards the eventual *rw.t-dỉ-Mꜣꜥ.t* (see preceding chapter, pp. 78-80).

[102] This would also be appropriate for the attestation in the *Tale Eloquent Peasant*, as unbeknownst to the petitioner the official in question has a direct line of communication to the King. Its usage in the *Instructions of Ptahhotep* might seem more problematic, as these appear to denote a generic gate serving as a court. However, it could be that this text uses the term for a royal gate as it considers it the archetypal gate at which justice is served, especially since the narrator claims to himself be a senior royal official.

at the entrance (*ꜥrry.t*[103]) of an unnamed location, most probably a temple (Allen 2014: 283: 215-216), and shortly after this he delivers yet another petition at the gate (*sbꜣ*) of the temple of Harsaphes (Allen 2014: 285: 225-226). In each of these cases, it seems quite possible that the choice of location is entirely practical, with petition simply being made at the spot where the plaintiff might have the best chance to encounter the official. Any gate or doorway, through which a figure of authority was known to travel, might therefore be a logical choice even without considering the religious implications of a temple setting. This would fit the wider African conception of justice as occurring in convenient locations chosen by the participants themselves, rather than being exclusively tied to a particular spot. The fact that at least four types of entrance – *hꜣy.t*, *rw.t*, *sbꜣ* and *ꜥrry.t* – were used for this purpose lends some credence to this, suggesting that no one type of gateway had a monopoly on hosting justice.

Ḳnb.t

This body, unattested in the Old Kingdom but the dominant source of justice in the New Kingdom (Allam 1991: 110-115; Lippert 2012: 4-6)[104], makes its first appearance in texts of the First Intermediate Period. This is highly significant in itself, as it points to an origin during an era of decentralisation which might suggest that it came into being as a local replacement for earlier organs of state justice. Alternatively, it may already have existed before, but perhaps it was entirely informal and did not operate at a level high enough to warrant inclusion in the written record. In any case, the *ḳnb.t* is mentioned in the Mo'alla inscription of *ꜥnḫty.fy*, where it seems to be a council providing advice to the nomarchs of Hierakonpolis (Vandier 1950: 186, Inscription 5; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 230, Document 8). No specific judicial responsibilities are mentioned, although one can easily see how such a body could have ruled on legal matters in a world without firm boundaries between law and administration, and especially at a time when the judicial responsibilities of a nomarch would probably have been augmented by the absence of powerful central government. The *ḳnb.t* also appears on *Stela Berlin 14334*, also of the First Intermediate Period (Andreu 1991: pl. 2; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 231, Document 10). This text is short and fragmentary, and the context in which the *ḳnb.t* is mentioned is uncertain. However, it may have a more explicitly legal undertone as its owner, *In-ỉt=f*, was an *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ* ('Overseer of disputes') – a title which, as shown below, could be linked to *sḏm*. There is one other First Intermediate Period source alluding to a *ḳnb.t*: *Cairo stela fragment 25|10/17|10* (Fischer 1975: 35-37; Philip-Stéphan 2008: 230-231, Document 9). No context, other than a partial offering formula, is preserved, and even the name of the official in question is missing.

[103] It is notable that in the 18th Dynasty *Decree of Horemheb*, a variant of this term denotes a place where *hp*-law is practiced, with *hp.w n.w ꜥrꜥy.t* ('laws of the entrance) being mentioned (Kruchten 1981: 150, D4). This has prompted Kruchten to translate the word as 'court' on that page, and it seems possible that undertones of this may already be found in the Middle Kingdom *ꜥrry.t*.

[104] For New Kingdom case studies of the *ḳnb.t* in operation, see McDowell 1990: 143-186.

However, both publications of this fragment have argued for restoring the partially-preserved title of the anonymous holder as *sḏm.w-mdw m wᶜᶜw* ('hearer of words alone'), which would indicate a legal connection. Overall, these three texts therefore suggest that the *ḳnb.t* first came to some degree of prominence during the First Intermediate Period and that already at this time it may have had legal connections.

There is firmer evidence for *ḳnb.t* involvement in legal matters in the Middle Kingdom, even if the proposals of earlier commentators (Harari 1950; Favry 2004: 365) that it was already firmly established as a professionalised local court by the start of this period appear somewhat bolder than the available data might suggest. In *Papyrus Berlin 10033*, an El-Lahun document from the reign of Amenemhat III, the Governor and Overseer of priests Senusret talks about engaging in *sḏm*, and a *ḳnb.t* then appears later on in the same fragmentary line (Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 270-271, Document 73)[105]. It is impossible to reconstruct exactly how that *ḳnb.t* was related to the *sḏm* procedure, but a connection of some kind seems highly likely. Subsequent lines show that the case concerned apportionment of temple revenues – most probably the *ḳnb.t* was concerned with this. The existence of a *ḳnb.t* is also evident from other El-Lahun documents: *Papyrus El-Lahun VII, 1*, a will, mentions a *sꜣ.t ỉmy-sꜣ ḳnb.ty n w* ('daughter of a guard of a member of the district *ḳnb.t*') as the partner of the deceased (*Les*: 90, 9; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 265-266, Document 64), while *Papyrus El-Lahun 32128* mentions a *ḫnr.t n ḳnb.ty n w* ('confined space of a member of the district *ḳnb.t*') in a context of tax collection (Collier & Quirke 2002: 66-67; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 267-268, Document 68).

Evidence for the Middle Kingdom *ḳnb.t* is also found beyond El-Lahun. For instance, the lengthy biographical inscription of the nomarch *Ḥnmw-ḥtp* at Beni Hasan, dating to the reign of Senusret II, talks about him being adored by *ḳnb.t* members due to his rectitude as a ruler (Newberry 1893: pl.25-26; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 246-248, Document 40). *Ḥnmw-ḥtp* was almost certainly involved in legal matters, having the epithet *sḏm.w n=f sḏm.yw* ('One whom the hearers hear'). It seems feasible that the *ḳnb.t* in question may have assisted him in making decisions, both legal and of a broader administrative nature, or indeed that the 'hearers' who were members of it consulted him before giving judgment. In a similar vein, a *ḳnb.t* is described as adoring *Sꜣ-rnp.wt*, nomarch of Elephantine, in an autobiography dating to the reign of Senusret I (Gardiner 1908: pl. 6-8; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 251-252, Document 47)[106]. Moreover, the activity of the *ḳnb.t* also gave rise to a fairly common title directly derived from it: *ḳnb.ty* ('member of a *ḳnb.t*'), with variants *ḳnb.ty n w* ('member of the district *ḳnb.t*') and *ḳnb.ty n(y)-sw.t* – 'member of the *ḳnb.t* of the King' (Ward 1982: 178-170, 1544-1548). A

[105] For the original publication of the fragments, see Kaplony-Heckel 1971: 15-16 (24).
[106] For his title string, see MK24.

ḳnb.ty n w is recorded as giving a speech in Recto Insertion A of *Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446*, of the reign of Amenemhat III (Hayes 1955: pl. 4; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 272, Document 76); the contents of this are fragmentary, but it most probably related to the apportionment of land. It would appear that holders of this title could also be entitled to scribes, with the title *sš n ḳnb.ty* ('Scribe of a member of the *ḳnb.t*') being attested three times in the Middle Kingdom (Ward 1982: 166, 1441-1443). This body of evidence therefore suggests that the *ḳnb.t* was a feature of Middle Kingdom life, and its members could have a distinct identity which might then be translated into a title on seals and stelae.

The fact that *ḳnb.t* members could have scribes also points to an element of record-keeping in the process, suggesting at least some degree of formality. However, it should be noted that these scribes are invariably associated with members of the *ḳnb.t*: unlike the *ḏ3ḏ3.t*, which had scribes attached to it as an institution, there is no indication that the scribes of *ḳnb.t* members belonged to the *ḳnb.t* itself. They may not have been permanent administrative staff, perhaps operating only when *ḳnb.t* members called upon them. Likewise, holders of a *ḳnb.ty* title may not have been permanent members of this body, instead simply being individuals eligible to serve on a *ḳnb.t* from time to time. Thus, it is possible that it was at this stage still a rather loose body, perhaps convoked on an *ad hoc* basis to fulfil specific advisory, administrative, or legal obligations.

Ḫnr.t

Although there is arguably a solitary attestation in the Old Kingdom title string of *Mrr.w-k3* (OK28)[107], this term, conventionally translated as 'prison' (*Wb*. III: 296), first appears indisputably in graffiti created by the Hare Nome nomarchs at Hatnub during the First Intermediate Period, and by the Middle Kingdom seems to have become a prominent institution charged with providing and administering coerced labour (Quirke 1988). Perhaps the most prominent indication of this function is found in Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446; a list of unfree labourers whose work was administered, and who were themselves quite probably controlled, by a *ḫnr.t* (Hayes 1955: pl. 1-7; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 274-284, Document 82). In a perhaps more explicitly judicial context, there is unequivocal evidence of this institution sometimes being connected to *sḏm*. Especially instructive is the following passage from *Papyrus El-Lahun 32209*, a highly fragmentary letter relating to the flight of a seemingly unfree labourer (Collier & Quirke 2002: 128-130; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 269, Document 70):

[g]mi̯.m=i̯ ḥm-n(y)-sw.t Sbk-m-ḥb m=t wnn=f wˁr m=t rdi̯.n=i̯ sw r ḫnr.t n.(t) sḏm

[107] The reading in question is uncertain.

> I found the royal servant *Sbk-m-ḥb*. Look, he had fled. Look, I placed him before the confined space of hearing.

A title *sš n ḫnr.t n.(t) sḏm* ('Scribe of the confined enclosure of hearing') is also attested in a 13th Dynasty title string on the stela of *S3-Mnṯw* (MK23), while there is also a single instance of an unqualified *ḫnr.t* possessing a *sš wr* ('Great scribe') (Ward 1982: 159, 1372). Three other Middle Kingdom officials involved in *sḏm* shared stelae with relatives or close work colleagues who held the title *sš n ḫnr.t wr.(t)* ('Scribe of the great confined space') (MK5, 16, 22)[108]. Thus, it seems likely that the *ḫnr.t* could also have a scribal function in relation to the aural activity of *sḏm*, and indeed that this was sufficiently complex to require at least a two-tier hierarchy of scribes. Possibly it was a place where both the recorded results of *sḏm* procedures and the convicts themselves generated by these procedures could be kept, with scribes being in attendance to make further records if necessary. Once again, it is possible that this institution emerged in the First Intermediate Period due to a need to create localised and compact centres for administering, recording and enforcing justice in an environment where the previously relatively powerful central government could no longer assist with such matters. Such an interpretation is made more likely by the apparent collapse of the *ḥw.t-wr.t*, which had been very prominent in the Old Kingdom and seems to have had enforcement capabilities.

Ḥw.t-wr.t: the end of an institution

In contrast to the structures above, which all appear to have gained greater significance in the Middle Kingdom, the *ḥw.t-wr.t* and *ḥw.t-wr.t-6* almost certainly ceased to exist. While the latter is still occasionally found as an honorific marker of judicial power in the extended title strings of viziers (Ward 1984: 34, 248), there are no attestations of either term outside of such title strings and therefore no evidence for these bodies retaining any functional capacity. On the other hand, there is a text which explicitly points to the *ḥw.t-wr.t* being a dysfunctional institution, collapsing into disorder within a context of much wider social upheaval. The text in question is the *Admonitions of Ipuwer*, which states (Helck 1995: 29: B 55):

> *ḥwr.w ḫr ỉỉ.t m ḥw.wt-wr.wt*
>
> Wretches are coming and going in the great enclosures

[108] Note that this title poses an ambiguity in translation – if rendered *sš n ḫnr.t wr*, it could also mean 'great scribe of the confined space' with *wr* relating to the scribe, and not the *ḫnr.t*

It is widely accepted that this late Middle Kingdom text, although fictional, draws inspiration from the perceived social upheaval during the First Intermediate Period (Tobin 2003: 188-189)[109]. The fact that this is the only attestation of a *ḥw.t-wr.t* outside of honorific titles in the Middle Kingdom strongly suggests that on this occasion the *Admonitions of Ipuwer* might reflect at least in part a genuine historical phenomenon: the collapse of this institution during the decentralisation following the Old Kingdom. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that the *ḥw.t-wr.t* survived in social memory to such an extent that its demise was lamented in a text written centuries later, and that even at that time some senior officials wished to preserve a titular link to the *ḥw.t-wr.t-6*. It is far from clear if the original function of these institutions was even known at this time, but it is possible that to a certain stratum of high functionaries they continued to represent an ideal of centralised justice, gone but not entirely forgotten.

An enduring judicial concept: *M3ʿ.t*

Having discussed the principal judicial structures of the Middle Kingdom, attention may now turn to the key concepts associated with justice at this time. First of all, one must note that the connection between *M3ʿ.t* and *sḏm* is still observable in Middle Kingdom texts. The most striking example is found in two lines of a Twelfth Dynasty stela of the Overseer of the Interior *Int=f* (Budge 1912: 8, pl. 23; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 239, Document 27). The first of these explicitly states that *M3ʿ.t* could be heard:

> *ỉnk sḏm.w sḏm M3ʿ.t*
>
> I am a hearer who hears *M3ʿ.t.*

The second connects *M3ʿ.t* both to speech and to an explicitly institutionalised context:

> *ỉnk mdw m ḫ3 n M3ʿ.t spd r3 m s.wt ḥns-ỉb*
>
> I speak in the office of *M3ʿ.t*, being skilled of speech in situations of trouble.

Further evidence of a bureaucratic dimension to *M3ʿ.t*, as implied by the mention of an office, is found on a short Twelfth Dynasty pedestal inscription from Luxor which contains an offering formula to the following official (Sauneron 1975: pls. 25-27; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 248, Document 41):

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[109] This contains further references regarding the exact dating of the text: overall, while there is some disagreement over its age, there is consensus on it dating to the Middle Kingdom and relating to the First Intermediate Period.

ỉry-pᶜ.t ḫtm.w-bỉty smr wᶜ.ty sš Mỉᶜ.t m Ip.t-s.wt ỉmy-rỉ ḫtm.t Mnṯw-ḥtp

Member of the elite, Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt, Sole companion, Scribe of *Mỉᶜ.t* in the 'Most select of places', Overseer of sealings *Mnṯw-ḥtp*.

While this title string does not necessarily point to *Mnṯw-ḥtp* engaging in judicial activities, it does show that *Mỉᶜ.t* could be in need of scribes as well as hearers. While this can also be understood in a context of cultic administration, with *Mỉᶜ.t* being venerated as a goddess and the title also being linked to a temple, the link to the written word is nevertheless worth noting. This is especially true because in the Middle Kingdom the priestly title *ḥm-nṯr Mỉᶜ.t* continued to be a regular feature of officials involved in justice (MK6, 8, 14, 15), pointing to ongoing overlaps between the cultic and judicial.

A new judicial concept: *Hp*

The concept of *hp*, conventionally translated as 'law', is entirely absent from Old Kingdom inscriptions but becomes increasingly prominent in the Middle Kingdom. In most cases, it does not seem to be a legal term *stricto sensu*, instead being predominantly associated with wisdom literature and tomb autobiographies where it denotes decorous conduct appropriate for upholding *Mỉᶜ.t* (Bats 2014: 102-105). However, *hp* also occurs in titles of officials linked to *sḏm*, which may point to judicial connections in a narrower sense. For instance, the Twelfth Dynasty high official *Ḫty-ᶜnḫ*, whose connection to justice is brought out in his title *ỉmy-rỉ sḏm.t wḏᶜ.t* ('Overseer of hearing and dividing'), also had the title or epithet *dd hp.w* – 'One who gives *hp*-laws' (MK20). A slightly modified form, *dd hp.w=s* ('One who gives her *hp* -laws'), is also found in the exceptionally long title string of *Mnṯw-ḥtp* (MK15), a Twelfth Dynasty Vizier with a wide range of titles connected to *sḏm*, with the suffix after *hp.w* unambiguously referring to *Mỉᶜ.t*[110]. The Middle Kingdom also saw the appearance of titles explicitly linked to the conduct of *hp*, namely *ỉmy-rỉ hp* and *ỉry hp* (Bats 2014: 97-102), which would suggest that it could be something rather more concrete than just a general term for good conduct. The fact that several of these titles were inscribed on seals indicates that *hp* was significant from an administrative viewpoint, which would suggest that at least on occasion it could denote a notion with specific practical meaning that could have bureaucratic implications. However, it should be noted that titles containing *hp* are very rare and poorly understood, with only six attestations across the entire corpus of Middle Kingdom titles. Consequently, they yield little information regarding what such a narrower interpretation of *hp* may have entailed.

[110] The immediately preceding title is *ḥm-nṯr Mỉᶜ.t* (MK15).

Further evidence pointing to the use of *ḥp* in judicial matters is found in a number of autobiographical texts. As well as the aforementioned *Stela Louvre C 1*[111], where *ḥp.w* are said to be reported to a *sms.w ḥ3y.t*, *ḥp.w* are mentioned in a judicial context in the autobiography of *S3-rnp.wt*, nomarch of Elephantine, as part of a long self-laudatory inscription where his adherence to them allows the people to flourish[112]. While it is possible to associate this more with observing customary religious practice and conforming with autobiographic norms rather than the practicalities of law, other mentions of *ḥp.w* seem more unequivocal. For instance, a Twelfth Dynasty stela of the Overseer of the Interior *Int=f (*Budge 1912: 8, pl. 22; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 238-239, Document 26) describes him as:

> *rḫ nmt.t ḥp.w n.w ỉrỉ.t sb3.w m wḏ[c] s(n).wy*
>
> One who knows the steps and *ḥp*-laws of carrying out due process with regards to dividing two men.

In another text, the aforementioned *Papyrus Berlin 10033*, the following can be read in one highly fragmentary line (Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 270-271, Document 73)[113]:

> *sḏm r=s mỉ ḥp*
>
> Hearing regarding it in accordance with *ḥp*-law

While it is unclear what exactly this fragment refers to, the remainder of the document concerns a dispute over temple revenues, and a *ḳnb.t* is mentioned. Meanwhile, another legal text, *Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446*, mentions *ḥp* in the context of punishing escaped unfree labourers (Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 274-284, Document 82; Lippert 2012: 38, 59-63):

> *3w n ḫnr.t wr.(t) rnp.t-31 3bd-2 šmw ᶜrḳy r wḥᶜ ḫry.w=f m ḏ3ḏ3.t m 3w r ỉrỉ.t ḥp r=f n tš.w n w3w3 r 3bd-6*

[111] See section on the *ḥ3y.t* earlier in the chapter (p. 113).

[112] For references to this text, see section on the *ḳnb.t* above (p. 117).

[113] For the original publication of the fragments, see Kaplony-Heckel 1971: 15-16 (24). See also Luft 1992: Papyrus Berlin 10033, col. 3, and Bats 2014: 97.

> Announced to the great *ḫnr.t* in year 31, 2nd month of *šmw*-season, final day, to deliver those in its charge by means of the *ḏ3ḏ3.t*, in announcing the enforcement of *hp*-law against him, for those who have gone missing for over six months.

The connection between *hp* and the *ḫnr.t* is also made in the *Admonitions of Ipuwer*, where the following is seen as symptomatic of social chaos (Helck 1995: 29: B 53):

> *ỉwms hp.w n.w ḫnr.t dỉ.w r ḫnty šm.tw ms ḥr=s m ỉwy.t ḥwr.w ḥr ngỉ.t ỉm m-ḫnw mr.wt*
>
> Indeed, the *hp*-laws of the *ḫnr.t* are thrown out; verily one passes over them[114] in the public places and wretches are destroying (them) therein, in the middle of the streets.

This suggests that by the late Middle Kingdom, when this text was most probably composed[115], *hp* denoted something more concrete than just a loose sense of custom or even more specific behaviours linked to sustaining *M3ᶜ.t*: instead, it seems to have been a physical document capable of being trampled over and destroyed[116]. This raises the distinct possibility that *hp.w* may have been recorded laws or precedents, perhaps kept in the *ḫnr.t* as it was the principal centre of penal administration.

Finally, the bureaucratic aspects of the concept also appear to be highlighted in the slightly later *Stela JE 52453* of the Second Intermediate Period. While not explicitly saying that *hp* was written down, it mentions the need to comply with *hp* on multiple occasions (Lacau 1949: 22, 11-13), and concludes with the following in relation to a sale of a provincial governorship (Lacau 1949: 45, 28)[117]:

> *ỉn ḫ3 n ṯ3.ty ỉr=f r=s mỉ nt.t r hp*
>
> It is the office of the vizier which will address this in accordance with what is in the *hp*-law.

---

[114] 'Over them' seems contextually a more appropriate translation here than the literal translation of *ḥr=s* ('over it'). There can be little doubt that the phrase refers to the *hp.w*.

[115] An extra consideration is that the text probably purports to describe events in the First Intermediate Period (Tobin 2003: 188-189). However, since it is a literary composition written much later and seeking above all to convey a sense of chaos rather than reflect historical reality, it is unlikely to indicate that *hp* was indeed prominent at this earlier time.

[116] It seems unlikely that the trampling can in this case be purely metaphorical, as the description of *hp* being thrown out from a named location and then destroyed in a named location is very much consistent with a concrete object. The most recent English translation (Tobin 2003: 197: 6, 10) opts for a literal translation of this sort, as does the earlier German edition (Helck 1995: 29: B 53).

[117] For the full text, see also Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 288-290 (Document 85).

The mention of an administrative office, which would typically be associated with scribal records, is particularly telling, although this naturally does not mean that *ḥp* must exclusively refer to written law in all contexts.

Overall, this body of evidence would therefore suggest that, in the Middle Kingdom, *ḥp.w*, whatever they may have been, had emerged as a definite legal instrument which could inform judicial procedure, including *sḏm*, and which had links to institutions like the *ḫnr.t* and *ḏ𓂝ḏ𓂝.t*. At least on certain occasions, these *ḥp.w* seem to have been put into writing. The *ḥp.w* also proved enduring far beyond the Middle Kingdom: for instance, it is highly likely that these initial developments were precursors for the subsequent New Kingdom formulation *ỉr.tw ḥp.w r=f* ('the *ḥp*-law was enforced against him'), which is a major feature of legal texts such as the Horemheb Decree (e.g. Kruchten 1981: 80, 27; 83, 27) and the Nauri Decree of Seti I (e.g. Kitchen 1975: 56, 80-82).

Further traces of *sḏm* in Middle Kingdom judicial texts: obtaining evidence through the *ỉmy-r𓂝 šnṯ* ('Overseer of disputes')?

While certain texts mentioning *sḏm* have already been cited as part of the above discussion of other concepts and institutions, there are several other passages that warrant particular attention. Perhaps the most instructive is the following extract from *Papyrus El-Lahun 32200*, a fragmentary letter about the consequences of a theft, which is concerned explicitly with who was responsible for the *sḏm* procedure (Collier & Quirke 2002: 101; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 268, Document 69):

> *ỉr n𓂝 ḥ𓂝b.n=t ḥr=s [ḥr n𓂝?] ỉr.n p𓂝 wḥm.w r p𓂝 ỉṯ𓂝 m=t ḥr-ỉry pw m=t ḳsn ỉrr.t m ḫnw r ḫt nb.t ỉ(n)-ỉw wḏ sḏm ỉṯ𓂝 ỉn rmṯ nb.t wpw-ḥr ỉmy-r𓂝 šnt grt sḏm.n ỉmy-r𓂝 šnt ỉṯ𓂝 n=ỉs nḏr.tw m-ᶜ=f*
>
> With regards to what you sent on account of it regarding what the Herald had done to the thief, look, that is his responsibility. Look, what is being done in the Interior is worse than anything. Is it not decreed that a thief is judged by all people except an Overseer of disputes? However, an Overseer of disputes may judge a thief only if he is held in his hands.

While remarkably well-preserved and rich in detail compared to most instances of the legal use of *sḏm*, the text is cryptic in terms of interpretation. It seems to indicate that essentially anybody could be qualified to engage in *sḏm*, with a curious exception of the *ỉmy-r𓂝 šnṯ*[118]. This title, while not usually considered strictly judicial, has been previously identified as marking 'chiefs of police' responsible for local law enforcement (Ward 1982: 50, 390; *Wb*. IV: 498). It is certainly interesting to

[118] In the present work, this title will be rendered as *ỉmy-r𓂝 šnṯ* for the reasons given further in this section. However, it should be noted that it can also be written as *ỉmy-r𓂝 šnt*, as in *Papyrus El-Lahun 32200* above.

think why specifically these officials appear to have been singled out for exclusion from the *sḏm* process, and what exactly is meant by the proviso that they could still carry out *sḏm* if thieves were 'in their hands'. One possibility might be some degree of formalized separation, confirmed by *wḏ* ('decree'), between officials involved in law enforcement and everybody else who was not. The concept of a 'judiciary' explicitly independent from 'police' has become central to certain modern conceptions of justice (e.g. Johnson v. United States, 333 U.S. 10, 1948: Syllabus §2), and this text may suggest that Middle Kingdom practices were in some way similar.

Interpretation of this unique piece of evidence would be rendered much easier by a clear understanding of how exactly the term *šnt* should be interpreted. The word is derived either from *šnỉ* ('to discuss') (*Wb*. IV: 496), *šnỉ* ('to suppress') (*Wb*. IV: 503), or *šnṯ* – 'to fight/quarrel' (*Wb*. IV: 519). It is frequently written phonetically as *šnt*, which would point to it being an infinitive of one of the two *šnỉ* verbs[119], but it often has a determinative denoting aggression (Gardiner No. A24) which would be a better fit for the more violent term, *šnṯ*. While the translation 'Overseer of disputes' is relatively effective in masking this ambiguity, ultimately it remains uncertain whether the official in question was tasked with overseeing relatively peaceful verbal disagreements, suppressing serious violence, or even using state-approved violence to uphold some perceived due process. The lack of sources providing information on the duties of the *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ* further compounds the difficulty of understanding this term: while the title is relatively common on stelae, seals, and lists of names on papyri with no meaningful information about what it entailed (Ward 1984: 50, 390-392), only one more inscription sheds light on the activities of an *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ*. It is found in the Twelfth Dynasty biography of the *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ Ddw-Sbk* on Stela BM 566, the extract below providing an interesting account of his work (Budge 1913: 10, pl. 37; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 242, Document 33, 2-5):

> *ỉry-pᶜ.t ḥꜣ.ty-ᶜ ḫry-sšṯꜣ n ỉs.t m nd ỉmn-ỉb sỉꜣ s r tp rꜣ=f sḫꜣ.n n=f ḫt ỉmy.t=s dd bš ḥꜣ.ty ᶜmt.n=f pḥ[t]=f wᶜ.t ḫnt(y) st m stp-sꜣ hrw m sḏm md.t*
>
> Member of the elite, Count, Master of secrets of the palace in enquiring about one concealed of heart, One who perceives a man in accordance with what comes from his mouth (*lit*. 'the tip of his mouth'), One for whom the body reveals what is inside it, One who causes the heart to spit out what it has swallowed, One who has access to the private apartments, Foremost of place in the palace on the day of hearing words.

[119] If so, a more appropriate reading might then be *šn(ỉ).t*.

The coercive language here points to the *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ*, who is clearly a man of high status and royal connections, applying some form of pressure to litigants, or possibly defendants. Whether this might have amounted to physical torture is impossible to say, although the unambiguous evidence for this practice occurring in the New Kingdom (e.g. Peet 1930; Capart *et al*. 1936) makes it conceivable for this earlier period also[120]. Crucially, and in accordance with the provisions of the aforementioned *Papyrus El-Lahun 32200*, the text does not explicitly point to the *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ* conducting the *sḏm* process: he merely occupies an important place in the palace on the day when it is carried out, but his function is to gather information. This potentially strengthens the case for the *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ* being a procurer of evidence divorced from the practice of justice – perhaps he was present at the *sḏm* procedure to give an account of what he had discovered. If gathering evidence through coercive means was indeed his function, an appropriate translation for the title might in fact be 'Overseer of (judicially-sanctioned) violence' or, less literally, 'investigator' or 'detective' to emphasise the likely link to policing already proposed by Ward (1982: 50).

Even so, it is important to highlight that the *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ* may not have been the only official charged with procuring evidence through probable coercion. A passage pointing to similar practices also occurs in the Twelfth Dynasty autobiographical stela of the high official *Imn-wsr*, whose extant title string (MK6) does not include *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ*. However, the stela is fragmentary, so does not constitute definitive proof that he did not possess the title. The relevant portion of the inscription describes *Imn-wsr* in terms generally similar to those used to describe *Ddw-Sbk*, but on this occasion the official in question apparently did engage in *sḏm* (Simpson 1965: pl.14; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 238, Document 24, 8-10):

> *sḫꜣ s r tp[t] rꜣ=f ḏd.n n=f ḫt.w ỉmy.t=sn rꜣ Nḫn ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t ḥry-sšṯꜣ n sḏm.t wᶜ wbꜣ n=f nt.t m ỉb m ḥꜣp.t r rmṯ nb.t sꜣ.w ỉw.t=f n šnw.t wꜣḥ-ỉb r šdm md.t*
>
> One who perceives a man in accordance with what comes from his mouth, One to whom bodies say what is in them, Mouth of Hierakonpolis, Priest of *Mꜣᶜ.t*, Unique master of secrets of hearing, One to whom is revealed what is in the heart, it being secret to everyone (else), One whose coming gladdens the entourage, Patient of heart regarding hearing matters.

Overall, the relationship between *sḏm* and *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ* is therefore not entirely conclusive. If *Imn-wsr* was not an *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ*, then the hypothesis that this title was generally not directly associated with

[120] These offer translations of the Ramesside *Tomb Robbery Papyri*, which for example contain multiple instances of the accused being 'examined with the stick'.

carrying out *sḏm* holds true, but further complexity is added by the prospect of an official who was not an *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ* carrying out evidence procurement in a manner very similar to a confirmed *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ*. Alternatively, if *Imn-wsr* was an *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ* after all, a stronger case could be made for this title being consistently linked to torture but the universality of the provisions of *Papyrus El-Lahun 32200* would be thrown into doubt. The relatively firm conclusions which can nonetheless be drawn are that *sḏm* and *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ* were connected, that torture was an element of the justice system, and that this torture could be the responsibility of *ỉmy-rꜣ šnṯ* officials who on at least some occasions were barred from conducting *sḏm*.

Sḏm and its place in Middle Kingdom society

Other texts provide less information on the practicalities of the *sḏm* procedure, but instead give further insights about its place in society. For example, the Twelfth Dynasty Wadi Hammamat inscription of the high official *Imny* lists the following among his key lifetime achievements (Gasse 1988: Fig.1, Pl.6; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 237, Document 23, 11):

> *ỉw ỉr.n=f rnp.t-54 ḥr sḏm s-3 ḥr shry.t tꜣ*
>
> He spent 54 years hearing pairs of litigants and pacifying the land

This apparent pride in being engaged in *sḏm* is also reflected in the Twelfth Dynasty tomb autobiography of *Ḥp-ḏfꜣ=ỉ* (Montet 1928: 53-54; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 243, Document 36, 249):

> *ỉnk ḫ(w)d bw.t grg ỉḳꜣ ỉb ỉw.ty gsꜣ=f nb sḥ sḏm bw ỉḳr m ꜣḫ.t n nỉwt=f*
>
> I am a wealthy person who detests falsehood, one exact of heart who has no favourite, lord of the *sḥ*-council, one who hears excellence as a benefit for his city.

On the other hand, a dystopian situation could be marked by *sḏm* not being put to decorous use, as shown in the following two examples from the *Instructions of Ptahhotep* (Allen 2014: 262-263: B1 130; 272: B1 164-165):

> *sḏm.yw ḥr ḫnp ỉṯ.t=f*
>
> The hearer is stealing what he should (rightfully) take
>
> *mnḏm pw ᶜḏy.w sḏm.yw sm=sn pw grg*

Hearers are a winnowing basket: telling falsehood is their chaff

While such uses of *sḏm*, evoking both positive and negative imagery, are not exclusively judicial in nature, they do further exemplify how this concept could be linked to an overarching sense of decorous conduct. This is logical in view of the connections to *Mꜣᶜ.t* discussed above[121], and appears to represent continuity with the Old Kingdom tradition[122]. Another example of the link between *sḏm* and perceived good conduct comes from the Twelfth Dynasty stela of *Mnṯw-Wsr*, an official whose primary sphere of responsibility was agricultural, although obviously this does not preclude the possibility of him being recruited for hearing cases on an *ad hoc* basis. He chose to underline his positive record in the following terms (Ransom 1913: pl.1, pl.2; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 249-250, Document 44, 249):

ỉnk sḏm.w r wn-mꜣᶜ tm nmᶜ n nb ḏbꜣ.w

I am a hearer in very truth; one impartial to the provider of bribes.

Finally, *sḏm* is mentioned as the culmination of the law enforcement process in two letters of the Middle Kingdom – it now appears to be the stage at which the dispute is resolved. In the first example, the Twelfth Dynasty *Papyrus El-Lahun 13*, an older man expresses confidence that his heir will be able to claim his rights to the collection of a debt through the *sḏm* procedure even if the debtor is initially reluctant to comply (*Les*: 92, 4-7; Ray 1973):

[ỉr] tm.tw rdỉ n=k p3 tpy-r ᶜrḳ.n n=ỉ sš ḥr(y)-ḫt[m I]ỉ-m-ỉᶜt-ỉb [kꜣ]=k spr=k ḥr=f [n] sr sḏmt(y).fy st kꜣ dỉ.tw n=k [pꜣ] tpy-r

[If] the capital sum which the Scribe-under-the-seal *Iỉ-m-ỉᶜt-ỉb* promised to me is not given to you, then you should petition regarding it [to] the *sr*-official who will hear it. Then [the] capital sum will be given to you.

In the second case, a Thirteenth Dynasty royal instruction to the Vizier *ᶜnḫw* on Recto Insertion B of *Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446*, an official accused of violence conduct must undergo *sḏm* procedure, presumably prior to punishment (Hayes 1955: pl. 5; Philip-Stéphan 2008[A]: 272, Document 77, 11-15):

[121] See p. 120.

[122] One may also note that the examples from the *Instructions of Ptahhotep* are explicitly stated to be contraventions of *Mꜣᶜ.t*, providing further evidence for the link between this concept and *sḏm*.

ỉn.tw=f r ḫnw wšd.tw=f ḥr pȝ tkk ỉr.n=f ḫrw(y).fy sw m=k st sḏm.(w) ỉmỉ ỉn.tw=f m sȝw r ḫnw

"May he be brought to the Interior and questioned regarding the violation which he committed", so he says. "Look, it (i.e. the matter) is being heard. May he be brought under guard to the Interior".

Overall, these texts therefore point to *sḏm* being, at least on occasion, a concrete procedure. It could be the subject of letters and regulation, as shown above all by the aforementioned *Papyrus El-Lahun 32200* setting out the relationship of this concept to the post of *ỉmy-rȝ šnṯ*. It seems likely that sometimes it could also be aided by force, possibly amounting to torture. At the same time, from a belief-based perspective, *sḏm* in judicial contexts looks to have been associated with ideas of right conduct, being considered an activity appropriate for mention in tomb autobiographies.

Evidence from title strings

Having formed some initial understanding of various aspects of Middle Kingdom justice through the study of texts, one may now attempt to enhance it further through a return to prosopographic analysis. As mentioned before, this cannot be conducted on the same scale as for the Old Kingdom, as fewer Middle Kingdom title strings are available and those which are preserved are usually far shorter. Indeed, individuals with one or sometimes even no titles become exceedingly common, and it would seem that having a lengthy title string may no longer have been a firm prerequisite for high social status. Nonetheless, there are still sufficient instances of Middle Kingdom titles containing *sḏm* available to conduct a meaningful study. These are discussed below, starting with the most frequent.

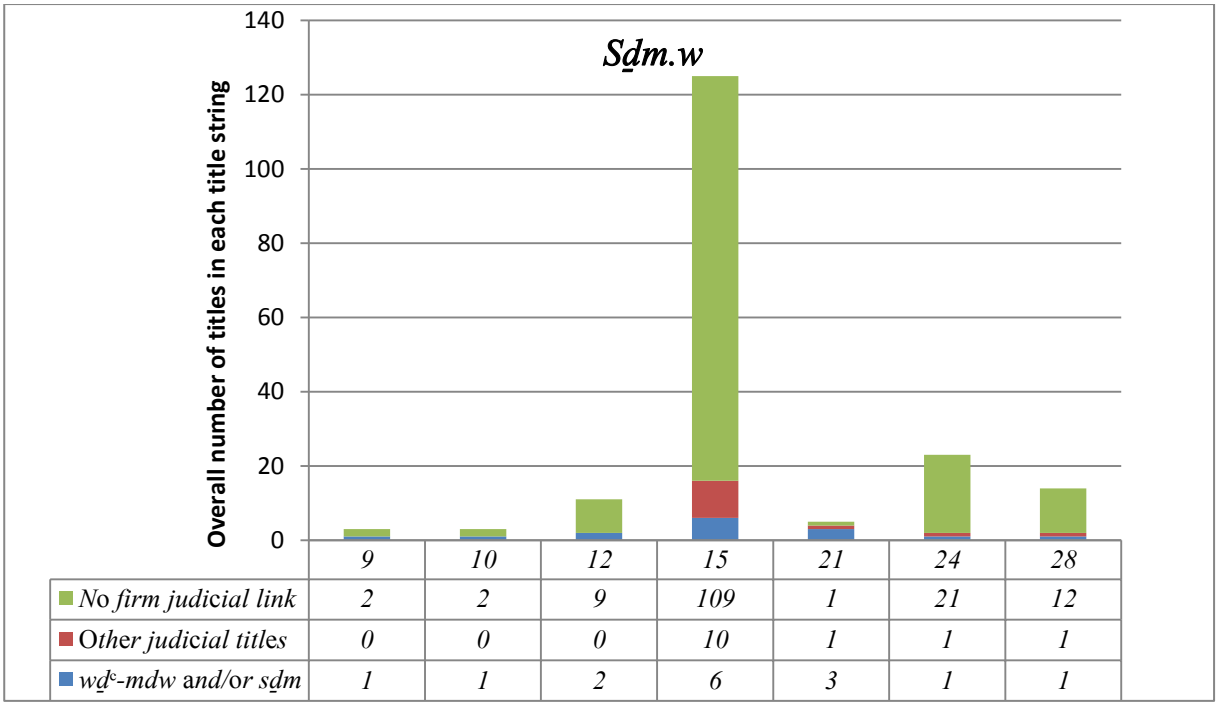
sḏm.w – 'Hearer'

This title, whose only possible Old Kingdom precursor is the solitary attestation of *sḏm.w-mdw* discussed in the preceding chapter[123], becomes the most common title related to *sḏm* in the Middle Kingdom. It is attested seven times, its six variants being:

sḏm.w mȝᶜ.t (MK12)
sḏm.w mᶜbȝy.t (MK15)
sḏm.w šnᶜ (MK10)
sḏm.w sḏm.t wᶜ (MK28)[124]
sḏm.w sḏm.t wᶜ m ỉs.t (MK21)
sḏm.w tpy (MK9)

[123] See p. 96.
[124] Possibly also MK24, but the title in question is fragmentary.

As is the norm for the Middle Kingdom, and excluding the strikingly anomalous and almost certainly archaizing title string of *Mnṯw-ḥtp* (MK15), title strings containing *sḏm.w* are generally shorter than most Old Kingdom title strings with judicial titles. However, in most cases holders of *sḏm.w* possess at least as many non-judicial titles, indicating that this title is probably not a firm indicator of narrow focus in this field. Perhaps these people were simply individuals of local renown called up to participate in judicial proceedings on an *ad hoc* basis, but not devoted to matters of this sort as their principal occupation.



	9	10	12	15	21	24	28
No *firm judicial link*	2	2	9	109	1	21	12
Other *judicial titles*	0	0	0	10	1	1	1
wḏᶜ-mdw and/or *sḏm*	1	1	2	6	3	1	1

Fig. 15: Graph showing compositions of title strings containing the title sḏm.w. The numbers in the top row indicate the title strings in question (e.g. 9 refers to MK9 and 28 to MK28 in Appendix I).

ḥry-sšṯ3 n sḏm.t wᶜ – 'Unique master of secrets of hearing'

This is the only Old Kingdom judicial title attested multiple times in the Middle Kingdom, which may indicate at least some degree of continuity of practice. It occurs in five title strings in two variants, the more common *ḥry-sšṯ3 n sḏm.t wᶜ* (MK6, 8, 21, 22) and the single attestation of *ḥry-sšṯ3 n sḏm.t wᶜ m rw.t ỉs.t* (MK14). However, while in the Old Kingdom this title is associated mostly with individuals often focused quite closely on the judicial sphere, evidence for this in the Middle Kingdom is much weaker. Only one holder of *ḥry-sšṯ3 n sḏm.t wᶜ* in this period, *Ḫnmwỉ* (MK21), has a title string pointing to justice being the dominant area of his activities. Furthermore, on average holders of this title have longer title strings in this period than in the Old Kingdom, contrary to the overall trend of shortening title strings. It therefore seems that, if anything, holders now typically had a more diverse set of duties than earlier.

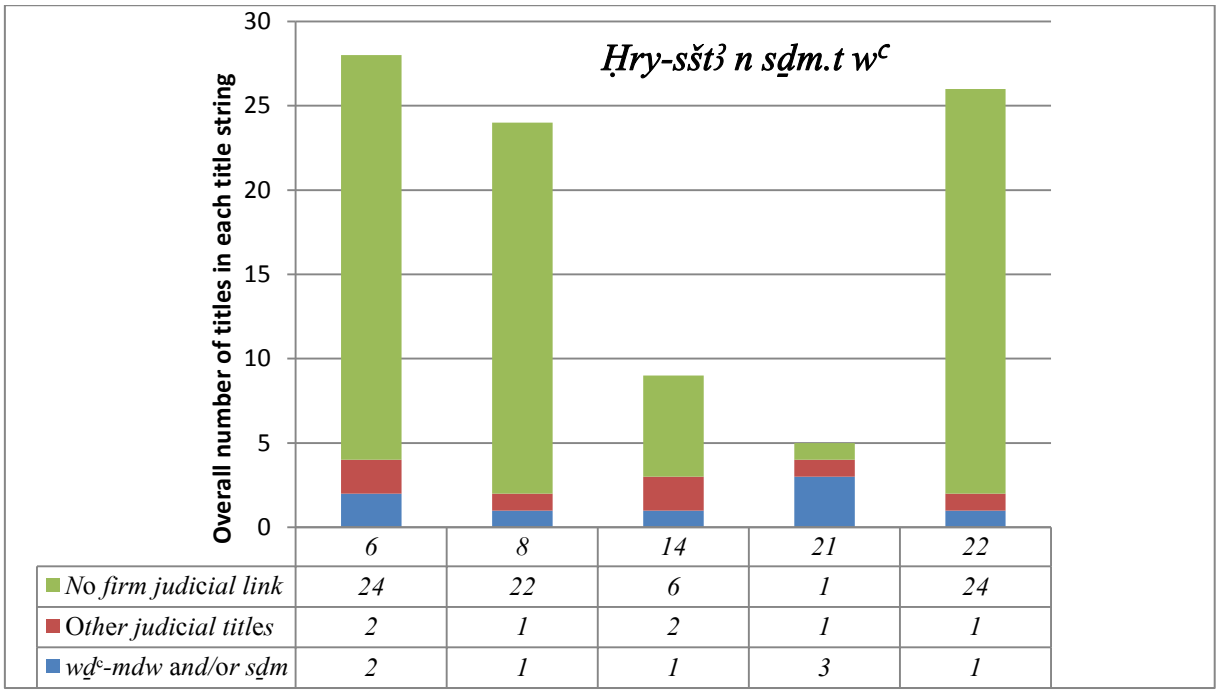


Fig. 16: Graph showing compositions of title strings containing the title ḥry-sšt3 n sḏm.t wᶜ The numbers in the top row indicate the title strings in question (e.g. 6 refers to MK6 and 22 to MK22 in Appendix I).

s3b n sḏm.t wᶜ – 'Unique dignitary of hearing'

This title is attested only twice, once as *s3b n sḏm.t wᶜ* (MK12) and once as *s3b sḏm.t wᶜ m ỉs.t* (MK21). The former attestation belongs to *Ptḥ-wr*, who also held the otherwise unattested *sḏm.w m3ᶜ.t* title but had no other obvious judicial elements among his eleven titles. The latter attestation belonged to *Ḫnmwỉ*, an official mentioned above and apparently anchored firmly in the judicial sphere. It is interesting to note that both these officials do seem to be 'unique' in their relationship to justice – *Ptḥ-wr* possesses a very rare title connected to an important judicial concept[125], while *Ḫnmwỉ* seems much more focused on judicial matters than the norm among his fellow *ḥry-ššt3 n sḏm.t wᶜ* officials.

sš wr n sḏm – 'Great scribe of hearing'

This title is remarkable in that out of its seven attestations, not once is it accompanied by any other title. The use of 'Great scribe' in the context of *sḏm* is also interesting: while this term is reasonably common in the Middle Kingdom as a standalone title, associated with senior scribes serving Overseers of sealings (*ỉmy-r3 ḫtm.t*), Viziers (*ṯ3.ty*), or Heralds (*wḥm.w*), or even connected to a confined space (*ḫnr.t*)[126], with the exception of *sḏm* it is never associated with any other abstract concept (Ward 1982: 159, 1370-1375; Fischer 1985: 34, 1371a). This may suggest that *sḏm* was deemed especially significant from an administrative perspective at this time. The title exists in four variants: the most common, *sš wr n sḏm* (MK4, 5, 13, 16), *sš wr n sḏm tpy* (MK18), *sš wr sḏmw.w*

[125] This is also written in a slightly unusual way. For more on this, see MK12 (fn. 156).
[126] See also section on *ḫnr.t* above (pp. 118-119).

(MK27) and *sš n sḏmw.w* (MK29). Thus, it seems that this may have been the sole responsibility of the scribal holders of these titles – a feature of judicial administration potentially pointing to a very high degree of narrow focus which appears to be entirely absent from the Old Kingdom. It is also noteworthy that none of these individuals has inscriptions of his own, and thus may not have been of very high status: all attestations are found either on shared stelae (MK5, 13, 16, 27), as part of the tombs of other officials (MK29), or, in two cases, on seals (MK4, 18). The seal inscriptions in particular are evidence that this office was very much functional.

sš ᶜ n(y)-sw.t sḏmw.w – 'Scribe of royal documents of hearers'

This title is attested only once (MK3), but it is significant that this scribal title too is not accompanied by any others. While conclusions drawn from one source are inevitably weak, when viewed alongside the scribal titles mentioned above this does nonetheless further strengthen the case for a bureaucracy more explicitly focused on justice, for which there is no compelling evidence in the Old Kingdom.

sš n ḫnr.t n.(t) sḏm – 'Scribe of the *ḫnrt* of hearing'

This title, also attested only once (MK23), comes from a context different to the other scribal titles. Its holder, *Sȝ-Mnṯw*, was a senior administrator of *ỉry-pᶜ.t* status. He had twelve titles, including four other scribal offices, and it seems likely that his connection to justice stemmed from a wider set of administrative duties. This one attestation offers a small glimpse into the likely diversity of different types of scribe involved in Middle Kingdom justice, as this person appears to have had duties which were much more wide-ranging compared to the scribes discussed above.

šms.w sḏm.(w?) – 'Follower of hearing' / 'Follower and hearer' / 'Follower of a hearer' (?)

This is another title known from only one source, a shared stela where it occurs without any title string (MK2). The title holder, *Iw-snb*, is unlikely to have been of high status, and the translation itself, whichever option is chosen, points to a relatively minor supporting role. One possibility might be some aspect of enforcement rather than direct involvement in the judicial process, following on from *sḏm* but not truly a part of it. Another might be that these are in fact two distinct titles, although that would be somewhat unusual as *sḏm.w* is usually associated with longer title strings. In this case, it would also be unclear what the 'follower' is hearing. A third option might be 'follower of a hearer' – perhaps a servant or apprentice of a *sḏm.w*. While the evidence available is ultimately too scant to make a meaningful judgment regarding which translation is preferable, the last option might seem most convincing for it is quite conceivable that officials at the *sḏm.w* level may have had an entourage. As shown below, they certainly could have deputies, and having apprentices would have

allowed them to train the next generation. The humble context of a shared stela in which this title occurs would also seem fitting for a relatively low-ranking apprentice of this sort.

ỉdnw n sḏmw.w – 'Deputy of hearers'

This title is attested twice (MK11, 17), and on both occasions on stelae without any further titles. The holders were probably of relatively low status, and there is no evidence regarding the nature of their activities. However, the fact that deputies for the position of *sḏm.w* existed points to a considerable degree of complexity and hierarchy in the system, and also potentially raises the prospect of these people shadowing higher officials in order to learn the skills which could ultimately see them attaining *sḏm.w* status themselves. There is nothing comparable in the Old Kingdom.

ỉmy-rꜣ sḏmw.w n ꜥ.t sšm – 'Overseer of hearers of the chamber of procedure'

The only attestation of this title is on a seal (MK26), where it is the only title mentioned. Again, while this yields no information about the activities this post entailed, it does suggest that this appointment was functional rather than honorific, and that the *sḏm.w* framework was complex enough to have both overseers and a specific location where the overseeing happened.

ỉmy-rꜣ pr n sḏmw.w – 'Overseer of the department of hearers'

Also found on a single seal (MK25), this title provides further evidence for the *sḏm.w* being a position associated with overseers, having a connection to a particular place or institution, and requiring a seal-bearing official to manage that structure. The mention of a 'department of hearers' also implies that a relatively large number of *sḏm.w* officials might have been based in a single locale.

ỉmy-rꜣ sḏm.t wḏꜥ.t – 'Overseer of hearing and dividing'

A lone attestation of this title is found in the long title string of *Ḥty-ꜥnḫ* (MK20). It is the only instance of a title of the *ỉmy-rꜣ sḏm.t* type from the Middle Kingdom, in contrast to seven attestations of this title type in the Old Kingdom. It is most interesting to note that the concept of *sḏm* has been combined with *wḏꜥ* here[127]: the title is unique in this regard, and this is especially striking as the previously important concept of *wḏꜥ-mdw* becomes much less significant in the Middle Kingdom. However, the vast majority of other titles held by *Ḥty-ꜥnḫ* have no firm judicial connotations, and the considerable length of the title string is highly atypical for the Middle Kingdom. Thus, very little can be said about the possible responsibilities connected to this title, and an entirely honorific usage designed to underline a general commitment to good conduct remains plausible.

[127] For more on *wḏꜥ* when not part of *wḏꜥ-mdw*, and why this still may be judicially significant, see p. 113 (fn. 99).

ỉry sḏm.t md.t – 'One connected to hearing matters'

This is another title known only from the aforementioned exceptionally long title string of *Mnṯw-ḥtp* (MK15). As with all titles known from there only, it is deeply unclear whether it is linked to any specific function beyond conveying the general idea that this individual considered the notion of *sḏm* to be somehow important.

ḫry n sḏm – 'Chief of hearing'

There are two attestations of this title (MK19), both on the same family stela of *Ḫmm* and his three descendants. One descendant has this title only, whereas another has it alongside an apparently non-judicial title connected to bringing offerings. The only other title present in the family, borne by *Ḫmm* himself and another descendant, is *sš n ḫnr.t wr.(t)* ('Scribe of the great confined space'). Thus, in this family, the positions of *ḫry n sḏm* and the scribal and quite probably also judicial *sš n ḫnr.t wr.(t)* seem to have been held simultaneously by different family members. As there was definitely an institution known as the *ḫnr.t n.(t) sḏm* ('Confined space of hearing') at this time, known both from another title (MK23)[128] and from a fragmentary El-Lahun letter (Collier & Quirke 2002: 129)[129], it is logical to assume that the family members collaborated in it. This may point to judicial offices being hereditary, with junior family members learning from their elders and thereby ensuring continuity in the profession. Such an inference is further supported by the evidence for *sḏm.w* officials having deputies and possibly apprentices, as discussed above.

Epithets mentioning *sḏm*

The epithets *ḫtm r⸗f ḥr sḏm.t⸗f* ('One whose mouth is sealed regarding what he hears'), and *nfr sḏm* ('Excellent of hearing) both occur in the exceptionally long title string of the vizier *Mnṯw-ḥtp* (MK15)[130], while the epithet *wꜣḥ-ỉb r sḏm md.t* ('Benevolent one with regards to hearing words') occurs in the shorter but still unusually long title string of *Imn-wsr* (MK6). These are all self-laudatory: their significance was probably predominantly theological, designed to highlight the good conduct of the individuals in question within a funerary framework, and they provide no additional information on the practicalities of *sḏm* as a procedure. However, the fact that at least some officials chose to highlight their proficiency in this process in such a context is noteworthy, as it points to an ongoing interweaving of the judicial and religious spheres, already evidenced by the dual role of *Mꜣᶜ.t* and the varied deployments of *wḏᶜ-mdw*.

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[128] Also see above, *sš n ḫnr.t n.(t) sḏm* (p. 132).
[129] *Papyrus UC 32209*: 1,3 – 1,6; 2,3 – 2,6)
[130] At 125 titles in length, this title string is a distant outlier in the Middle Kingdom dataset. A shorter title string exhibiting some similarities to it is discussed later (pp. 140-141).

Remnants of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* in the Middle Kingdom

While there can be little doubt that the dominant judicial concept had shifted from *wḏ^{c}-mdw* to *sḏm* by the Middle Kingdom, and the significance of this will be discussed shortly, prior to this it should be noted that *wḏ^{c}-mdw* did not disappear entirely. The following passage threatening retribution in a divine court to those failing to provide invocation offerings, recorded on the Twelfth Dynasty *Stela Liverpool M. 13846*, illustrates that *wḏ^{c}-mdw* could still be invoked (Gardiner & Sethe 1928: pl.II; Philip-Stéphan 2008^{A}: 301-302, Document 99, 6-7):

> *ỉr tmty.fy ỉr ḫft spr(=ỉ) ḥr=f m-bꜣḥ m mtr m sbḫ.t n.t wḏ^{c}-mdw*
>
> As for one who will not act accordingly, I will petition on account of him before (as a witness?) at the portal of dividing words.

While the religious context here means that this should not be interpreted as firm evidence for the continued practice of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* in daily life, this is at least a sign that the concept was not forgotten. It is also interesting to note that once again there is a connection to gateways, which have already been shown to be connected to justice both in the Old and Middle Kingdoms through the title *sms.w hꜣy.t*. Much like *hꜣy.t*, the term *sbḫ.t* mentioned here refers to a temple portal (*Wb*. IV: 92; Spencer 1984: 162-168), although it is mostly used in religious literature and this is the only attestation of it as a place of judgment, perhaps because the stela concerns justice in the afterlife rather than in daily life.

Furthermore, there are also three instances of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* (including a variant spelling *wḏ^{c}-md.t)* occurring in title strings of the Middle Kingdom: each time, the concept is found in hapax titles, and could conceivably be purely honorific or deliberately archaic, but nonetheless this is further evidence for *wḏ^{c}-mdw* still being a part, however small, of the Middle Kingdom legal landscape. The titles in question are discussed below.

ỉmy-rꜣ wḏ^{c}-mdw – 'Overseer of dividing words'

The only Middle Kingdom attestation of this title is in the variant form of *ỉmy-rꜣ wḏ^{c}-mdw nb štꜣ* (MK1). It is found within a string of fourteen titles, with none of the others having strong judicial connections. Very little can be inferred from this, other than that justice was probably not a particularly major area of focus for the holder, *Iỉ-ḥr-nfr.t*. However, it is noteworthy that this title, which is relatively well attested in the Old Kingdom, did survive into the Middle Kingdom. It may well be purely honorific, as *ỉmy-rꜣ wḏ^{c}-mdw* was generally associated with officials of senior status in the Old Kingdom, although it is unclear why this should have been qualified by *nb stꜣ* on this occasion. A

distinct possibility might be that this was a hereditary title, perpetuated by the family as a way of maintaining prestige in the local community but no longer endowed with significant judicial functions.

ḥry-tp wḏ^{c}-md.t – 'Chief of dividing matters'

Like many others, this title is known only from the exceptionally long title string of *Mnṯw-ḥtp* (MK15). Many of the titles in that text appear to be archaising or honorific, and it is impossible to tell which of the rarer titles had practical significance and which did not. It should be noted that *ḥry-tp wḏ^{c}-md.t* is not a title attested in the Old Kingdom, so it is difficult to argue that it was passed down from a period when *wḏ^{c}-mdw* was regularly practiced. It could be that this hapax title was an invention of its bearer, who wished to stress his connection to an ancient concept but may not have had full familiarity with the exact form of original *wḏ^{c}-mdw* titles. The subtle change in spelling, with *mdw* shifting to *md.t*, might support such an interpretation. In any case, the fact that a high official at this level was still choosing to mention this concept on his stela is at least evidence that it retained a degree of cultural importance, even if most practical meaning had been lost.

ṯ^{3}.ty ỉmy-r^{3} sr.w nb.(w) n wḏ^{c}-md.t – 'Vizier and overseer of all dignitaries of dividing matters'

This title is attested once only, in a string of seven titles in the Wadi Hammamat rock inscription of *Imn-m-ḥ^{3}.t* (MK7). This compound title looks to be a single unit in its own right, as the text subsequently lists *ṯ^{3}.ty* as a different title alongside the above. The other titles in the title string are primarily indicators of the very highest status possible, emphasising the extensive sphere of influence of this official. This title too should probably be understood in such a context, linking back to established Old Kingdom tropes of the Vizier as chief judicial official, and it probably does not point to an active role in actually conducting the *wḏ^{c}-mdw* process. As in the preceding example, the change of spelling from *mdw* to *md.t* might suggest that understanding of the original concept was imperfect by this time. However, the fact that *Imn-m-ḥ^{3}.t* nonetheless chose to mention this as a way of conveying seniority does suggest that the process still had cultural meaning in the Middle Kingdom, even if the term was but a prestigious relic from bygone times.

Middle Kingdom legal officials: the emergence of new scribal identities?

Out of the 29 Middle Kingdom officials who had titles linked to *sḏm* or, in rare cases, *wḏ^{c}-mdw*, fourteen had no other titles and only twelve had title strings longer than five titles in length. Consequently, prosopographic analysis following the methodology used for the generally lengthy and more numerous Old Kingdom title strings is largely unsuitable in a Middle Kingdom context. Likewise, much of the data cannot be illustrated with case studies in the same way, as these rely on analysing multiple titles held by the same individual to develop an understanding of their activities and any areas of specific focus. If an individual possesses only a single title, this is clearly not viable.

Consequently, the section below will discuss the officials possessing only one title in a single group, and will then provide several case studies of the relatively rare officials with longer title strings, as done for the Old Kingdom.

Judicial officials holding only one title

The table below and overleaf lists all the officials in the dataset who have only a single title (*fig. 17*):

Official	Title	Translation
Sbk-ḥr-ḥb (MK25)	*ỉmy-rꜣ pr n sḏmw.w*	Overseer of the department of hearers
Snbty.fy (MK26)	*ỉmy-rꜣ sḏmw.w n ᶜ.t sšm*	Overseer of hearers of the chamber of procedure
Nḫy (MK17)	*ỉdnw sḏmw.w*	Deputy of hearers
Bbỉ (MK11)	*ỉdnw n sḏmw.w*	Deputy of hearers
Snb (MK19)[131]	*ḫry n sḏm*	Chief of hearing
Iw-snb (MK2)	*šms.w sḏm.(w?)*	Follower of hearing/Follower and hearer/ Follower of a hearer(?)
Ibỉ (MK3)	*sš ᶜ n(y)-sw.t sḏmw.w*	Scribe of royal documents of hearers
Šms.w-mr.w (MK27)[132]	*sš wr n sḏmw.w*	Great scribe of hearers
Ipw-ᶜnḫ (MK4)	*sš wr n sḏm*	Great scribe of hearing
Nb-pw (MK5)[133]	*sš wr n sḏm*	Great scribe of hearing
Ptḥ-Ḥr.ty (MK13)	*sš wr n sḏm*	Great scribe of hearing
Nb-wp (MK16)	*sš wr n sḏm*	Great scribe of hearing

[131] On stela of *Ḫmm*.
[132] On stela of his father, also called *Šms.w-mr.w*.
[133] On stela of *Imny*.

Ḥr-Wsr (MK18)	*sš wr n sḏm tp(y)*	Chief great scribe of hearing
Unnamed (MK29)[134]	*sš n sḏmw.w*	Scribe of hearers

Fig. 17: Table showing Middle Kingdom judicial officials with one title only.

Eight out of these fourteen officials are scribes, which may suggest that by this time individuals working in this field could devote their full attention to that occupation. Indeed, there is only one attestation of a scribal title linked to *sḏm* held by an official with multiple titles: *sš n ḫnr.t n.(t) sḏm* ('Scribe of the confined space of hearing') (MK23). This is an isolated case, and is typologically rather different to the other scribal titles as its main association is with *ḫnr.t* rather than just the concept of *sḏm*, as in all other cases. Overall, the period therefore seems to have been associated with a proliferation of *sḏm* scribes holding no other title – individuals who, judging from their relatively humble inscriptions, were presumably not especially senior. This is in marked contrast to the Old Kingdom, where scribal titles are a fundamental part of many long title strings, and were often held by individuals filling the very highest echelons of the administration.

It is also noteworthy that the titles *sḏm.w* ('Hearer') and *ḫry-sšt3 n sḏm.t wᶜ* ('Unique master of secrets of hearing') are never found alone, even though they are the most common titles in the Middle Kingdom dataset. As shown above, they are invariably found in title strings which regularly exceed ten titles in length. This would suggest that officials actively involved in running the *sḏm* process – rather than just scribes tasked with recording it – continued to have other responsibilities too, and were of higher status. Similarly, the rare instances of *wḏᶜ-mdw* still occurring in the Middle Kingdom are invariably found in long title strings of officials of the very highest status (MK1, 7, 15). They are all designated as *ỉry-pᶜ.t* ('Member of the elite'), and two of the three are Viziers. If this concept was still practically connected to resolving disputes, rather than being purely honorific, it seems likely that it too was still carried out by high-ranking and multi-faceted practitioners. Thus, the specialisation in the scribal lower ranks of the judicial administration was most probably not matched by the people responsible for the judging itself.

[134] Minor unnamed official in tomb scene of *Ḏḥwty-Nḫt*.

Case studies: a selection of Middle Kingdom legal officials

The official with multiple titles, but with a consistent focus on justice: *Ḫnmwỉ* (MK21)

Ḫnmwỉ is alone among Middle Kingdom officials in having a very strong legal connection but also having multiple titles and probably relatively high status, including possible ties to the King. He was linked to the *hꜣy.t* ('portal') and was therefore probably involved in judgment at the gate, a phenomenon likely dating back to the Old Kingdom. However, he was a *sꜣb sr hꜣy.t* ('Dignitary and official of the portal'), and not a *sms.w hꜣy.t*, which seems to have been the Old Kingdom norm. Both *sꜣb* (*Wb.* III: 421-422) and *sr* (*Wb.* IV: 188-189) are exceptionally common and unspecific elements of a title, but neither are unusual for a judicial setting and indeed in the New Kingdom *sr* would go on to become a common term for denoting any member of a *ḳnb.t* (McDowell 1990: 143-186). This may point to subtle changes in how judgment at the portal was conceived, although the title is not attested in this form anywhere else.

The strong connection of *Ḫnmwỉ* to an *ỉs.t* ('chamber') as a place where *sḏm* was being conducted is also noteworthy, potentially pointing to judging in another institutionalised setting or indeed travelling out from this place to the portals discussed earlier[135]. While *ỉs.t* is a highly unspecific term, it can denote a location in the royal domain (*Wb.* I: 127) and considering that *Ḫnmwỉ* was apparently in royal favour, it seems likely that it should be understood as such here. As this official is described as *wᶜ* ('unique') in this setting, he may have had a very specific focus on matters of justice in a formal context. The fact that he was also a *ḫry-sštꜣ n sḏm.t wᶜ* ('Unique master of secrets of hearing') seems to fit this suggestion, although it should be noted that in the Middle Kingdom this title was more often held by officials who also had other responsibilities beside justice.

Finally, it is important to highlight that particular caution must be exercised when analysing this official, as no inscriptions or monuments of *Ḫnmwỉ* himself have been preserved. His titles are only known from two shared family stelae, and it is possible that these do not convey all the titles he possessed, especially if the list was extensive, due to the need to accommodate other individuals too. However, the titles listed are likely to have been those of the greatest importance, so it remains likely that *Ḫnmwỉ* was closely associated with justice and considered it his principal occupation.

[135] See pp. 113-116.

The Old Kingdom-style royal confidant and administrator with major judicial roles: *Mnṯw-ḥtp* (MK14)

Apart from the absence of *wḏ^{c}-mdw*, the title string of *Mnṯw-ḥtp* is largely reminiscent of the title strings of a range of Old Kingdom officials with relatively narrow judicial focus. He was a priest of *M^{3}^{c}.t* and a *r^{3} Nḫn* ('Mouth of Hierakonpolis'), both titles which in the Old Kingdom would usually indicate an official for whom justice was a priority[136]. As shown above, *M^{3}^{c}.t* continued to be important in the judicial setting in the Middle Kingdom too, and it is plausible that the *r^{3} Nḫn* title also continued to have legal implications. This is difficult to quantify for the Middle Kingdom as the number of judicial title strings is much reduced, but seems quite likely considering the overall similarity of this title string to Old Kingdom precursors. *Mnṯw-ḥtp* was almost certainly an individual of high status, with three titles indicating royal favour. Much like *Ḫnmwỉ*, the locations where *Mnṯw-ḥtp* engaged in *sḏm* are specified: the *rw.t* and *ỉ^{3}s.t*. While neither term is particularly well understood, in view of his royal connections involvement in a formal and perhaps centralised court setting seems quite likely, as does peripatetic judging at multiple portals. However, unlike *Ḫnmwỉ*, *Mnṯw-ḥtp* definitely was involved in activities outside the narrow judicial sphere: he was a scribe of the army and held the generic senior administrative title *s^{3}b ^{c}ḏ-mr* ('Dignitary and Administrator'), as well as one other title of uncertain reading. Thus, it seems likely that this man had close connections to justice and perhaps a high degree of influence in decision-making due to his senior titles and royal backing, but ultimately he was probably not a full-time judicial official.

The high official with limited formal legal involvement: *Ḫty-^{c}nḫ* (MK20)

Ḫty-^{c}nḫ is a representative example of a relatively small number of Middle Kingdom officials who, while possessing certain judicial titles, had very long title strings also containing a wide range of other titles and indicating very high status. *Ḫty-^{c}nḫ* had thirty titles, which is still far less than the 125 titles accumulated by the most title-rich member of this category of officials, the Vizier *Mnṯw-ḥtp* (MK15). However, the distribution of titles of the two men is broadly similar: both have titles linked to administration, the priesthood, royal favour, military matters, and justice. In the case of *Ḫty-^{c}nḫ*, his principal legal title was *ỉmy-r^{3} sḏm.t wḏ^{c}.t* ('Overseer of hearing and dividing'), while the title *dd hp.w* ('One who gives *hp*-laws') also appears to point to some legislative authority. Perhaps he had the ability to promulgate laws in his capacity as a local governor, or alternatively create legal precedents from verdicts passed down in hearings over which he presided. However, the remaining 28 titles seem to have no connection to justice, which makes it likely that legal matters were only a small part of the remit of this high official. Thus, it would seem that officials involved in justice at the higher tiers of administration could continue to be remarkably diverse in their duties, in contrast to the

[136] See pp. 86-88 for *ḥm-ntr M^{3}^{c}.t* and pp. 92-93 for *r^{3} Nḫn*.

narrower focus on judicial matters by individuals at lower levels, and especially in the scribal ranks. Other than the absence of *wḏ^{c}-mdw*, this pattern is also broadly true of high officials in the Old Kingdom, and indeed the title string of *Ḥty-^{c}nḫ* would not feel out of place in that context. This raises the possibility that, again like in the Old Kingdom and in the previously discussed ethnographic parallels, this man may have been called upon to also adjudicate cases informally; not because he held any specific office demarcating him as a judge, but rather because the seniority and range of his administrative activities would have made him respected by the local community, of which he was almost certainly the most high-ranking member.

Analysis: the context and mechanisms of judgment in Middle Kingdom Egypt

With an initial study of the Middle Kingdom material pertaining to judgment complete, there is now a possibility to propose a model for the overall functioning of justice in this period in comparison to the Old Kingdom. Prior to constructing such a model, it is essential to set forth the key findings thus far:

1) **The ascendancy of *sḏm***

Perhaps the most obvious finding (*fig. 18*, overleaf) is the increase in the use of *sḏm* in judicial contexts and the near-complete abandonment of the previously dominant *wḏ^{c}-mdw*, which is henceforth found exclusively in honorific and religious contexts. Other concepts which had previously been relatively prominent in judicial settings, such as *ỉp/wp* and *spr*, are also no longer found in titles on a regular basis.

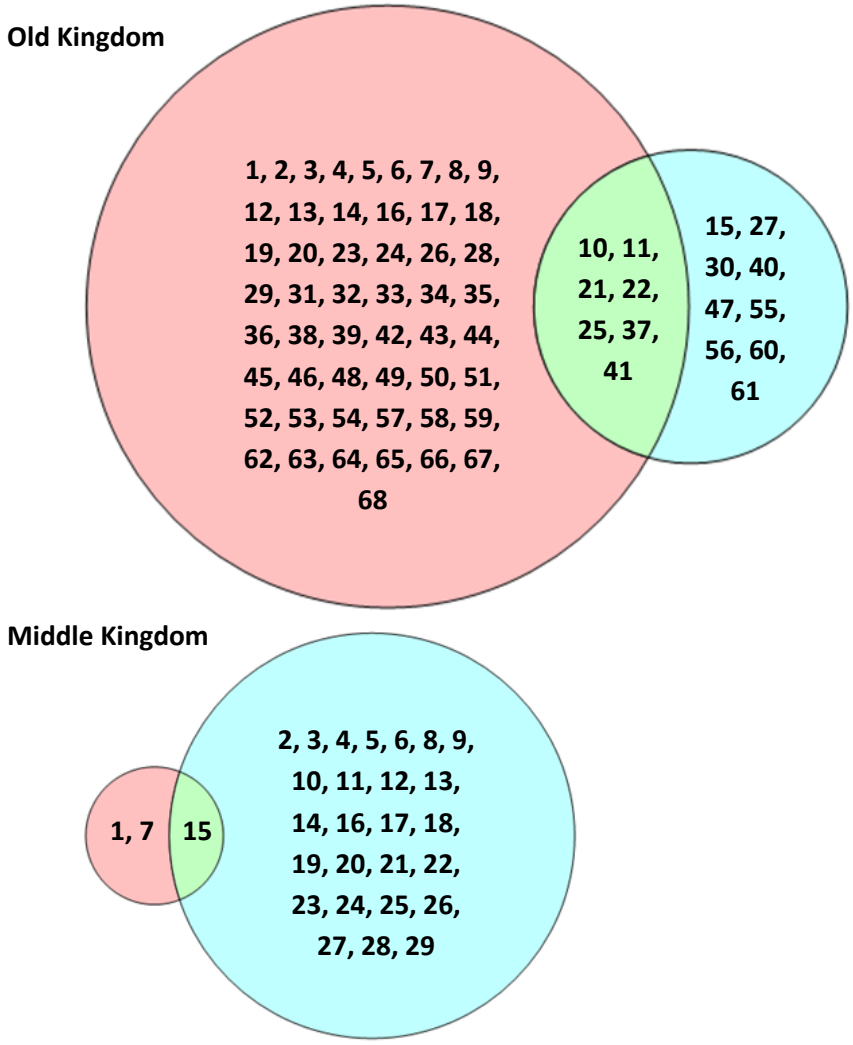


Fig. 18: To-scale Venn diagrams illustrating the number of attestations of wḏ^{c}-mdw (left) and sḏm (right) in the Old Kingdom (top) and in the Middle Kingdom (bottom). The numbers inside each circle relate to individual inscriptions found under that number in the relevant section of the appendix. Numbers in overlapping sections denote inscriptions containing both wḏ^{c}-mdw and sḏm.

2) ***The decline of long title strings***

While the average length of Middle Kingdom title strings of judicial officials is overall only slightly shorter than that of their Old Kingdom counterparts (*fig. 19*), it can quickly be seen that this superficial similarity is in fact due to a relatively small number of Middle Kingdom outliers (MK6, 8, 15[137], 20, 22) which often appear purposefully archaising and are not representative of the corpus as a whole. When the focus is switched exclusively to short title strings, it becomes apparent that these are much more usual in the Middle than in the Old Kingdom (*figs. 20 & 21*, overleaf). Indeed, it is quite common for officials in this time to have but a single title, which is exceptionally rare in the Old Kingdom.

[137] MK15 is especially anomalous: at 125 titles in length, it is by far the longest in the entire dataset and contains a wide range of archaic or hapax titles. Its presence alone is capable of creating a noticeable distortion in the average length.

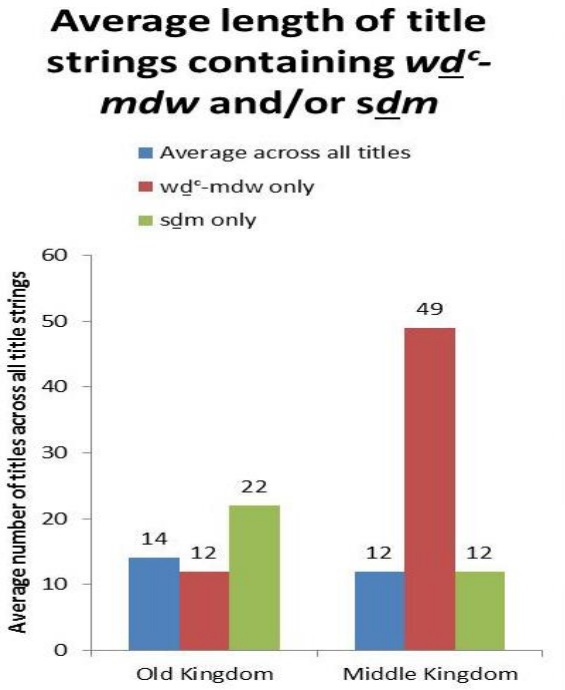


Fig. 19: Graph showing average lengths of title strings in the Old and Middle Kingdom.

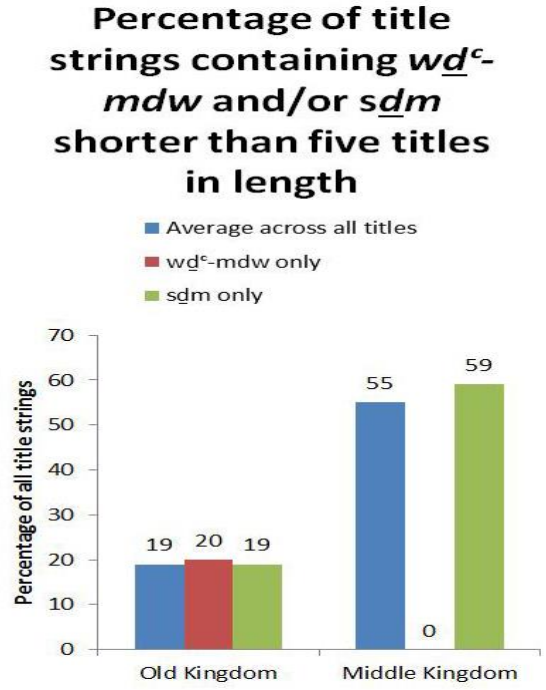


Fig. 20: Graph showing proportion of title strings less than five titles in length in the Old and Middle Kingdom.

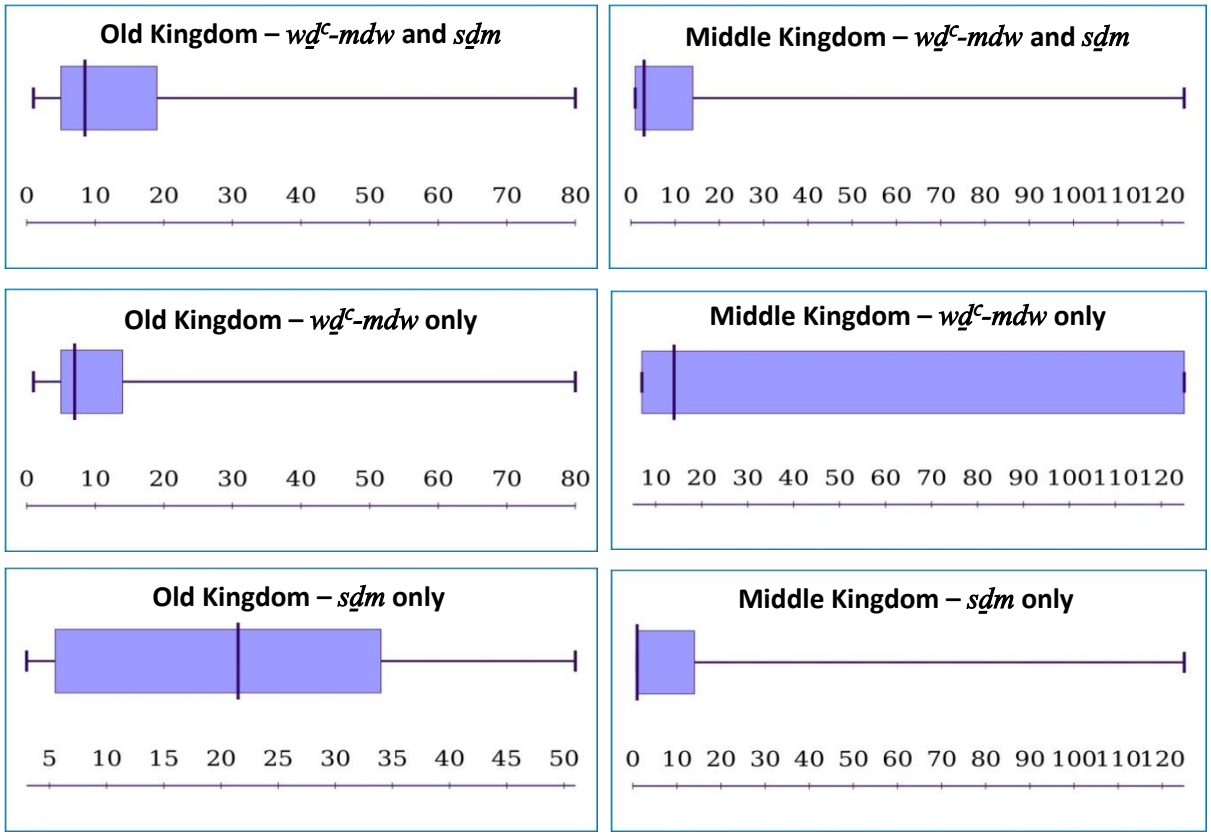


Fig. 21: Box-and-whisker plots illustrating standard and outlying title string lengths for the Old and Middle Kingdoms. While the plot for the Middle Kingdom wḏᶜ-mdw title strings has been included for the sake of consistency, it can effectively be disregarded as it has been populated on the basis of only three title strings (MK1, 7, 15) as wḏᶜ-mdw is all but extinct as a functional title in this period. Note how all the other plots consistently point to Middle Kingdom title strings having not only shorter overall lengths, but also less variation in length illustrated by reduced interquartile ranges.

3) ***The proliferation of lower-level judicial scribes***

Scribes of *sḏm* have an important place in the evidential record of the Middle Kingdom, and they almost invariably have no other titles. Scribes also become increasingly visible in judicial institutions, including the *ḳnb.t*, *ḏ3ḏ3.t*, and *ḫnr.t*. There is no comparable phenomenon in the Old Kingdom.

4) ***M3ᶜ.t endures; Hp appears***

M3ᶜ.t continued to play an important role in judicial matters, with a number of officials involved in *sḏm* still being priests of *M3ᶜ.t* like in the Old Kingdom. An 'Office of *M3ᶜ.t*' and 'Scribe of *M3ᶜ.t*' are also attested, albeit each on only one occasion, which may suggest that growing bureaucratisation was leaving its mark here too. At the same time, the period also saw the introduction of a new concept, *ḥp*, which apparently represented concrete and possibly written rules in accordance with which *sḏm* could be conducted. It is possible that the increase in scribal activity led to the appearance of recorded laws and precedents, although none of these survive.

5) ***Evolutions in the institutional landscape***

New institutions like the *ḳnb.t* and *ḫnr.t* came to prominence, after first appearing in inscriptions of the First Intermediate Period. The *ḏ3ḏ3.t* retained its judicial involvement, with a more noticeable scribal presence, and justice at the *h3y.t* and other portals also seems to have continued. On the other hand, the *ḥw.t-wr.t* and *ḥw.t-wr.t-6* almost certainly ceased to exist on the ground. The fact that they continued to play a role in cultural memory among the *literati*, as evidenced by honorific title strings and the *Admonitions of Ipuwer*, may point to the emergence of a discrepancy between the institutional legal landscape in practice and the archaising, idealised legal landscape of the past with which certain individuals still wished to be associated.

6) ***Enduring connections to royalty, but not for everyone***

The extent of proximity of judicial officials to the King or the royal administration does seem to have reduced, but – perhaps somewhat surprisingly – not by an large margin (*fig. 22*, overleaf):

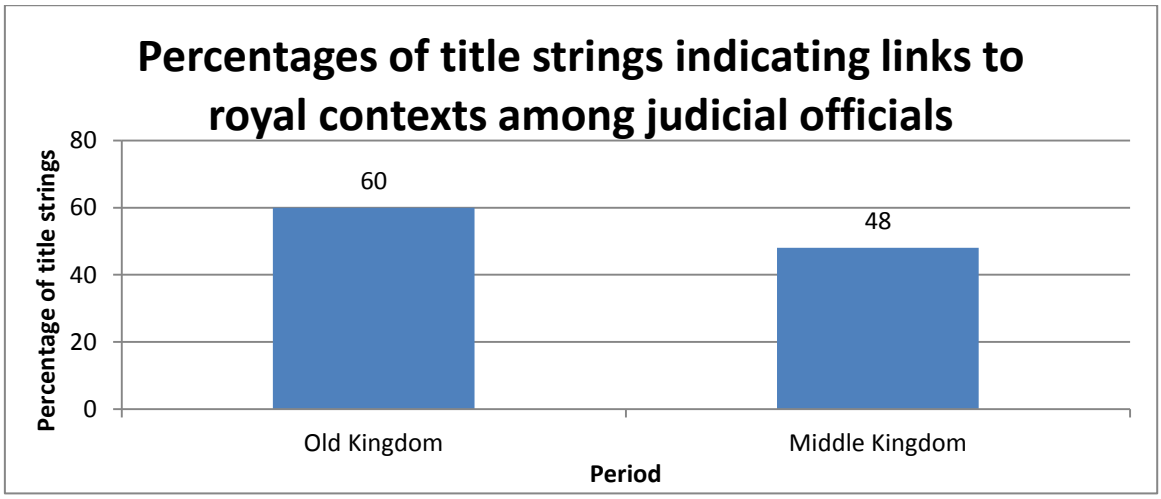


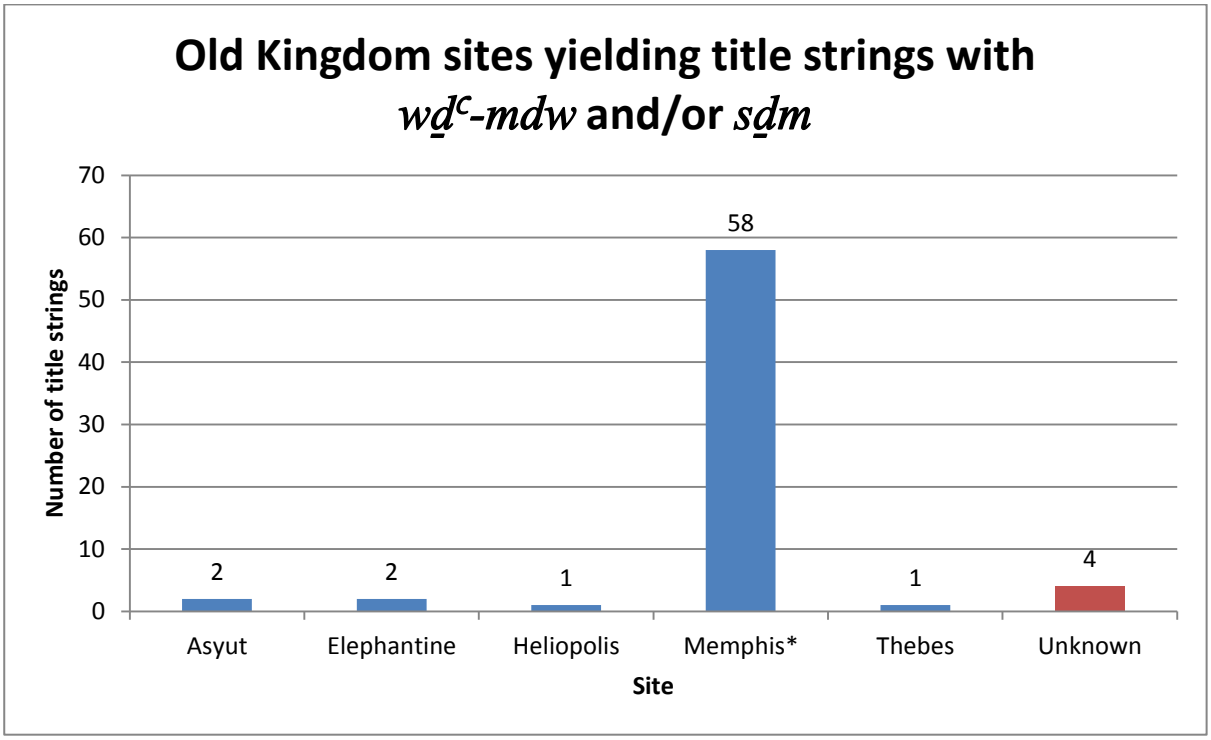
Fig. 22: Graph to show the relative percentages of title strings indicating links to royal contexts in the Old and Middle Kingdom. Note that the data has been standardised to percentage format to account for differences in sample size: the Old Kingdom percentage reflects a total of 41 from 68 title strings, while the Middle Kingdom percentage corresponds to 14 from 29. In view of differences in sample size, the significance of this reduction should not be overstated. Instead, the main conclusion from this is that many legal officials continued to be involved in royal matters.

A more significant reduction might have been expected since Old Kingdom judicial officials were predominantly individuals of very high rank from the administrative core, whereas Middle Kingdom officials often seem to have been of lower status and possibly based in the provinces. However, a sizeable reduction is not observed: instead, it appears that Middle Kingdom officials who retained a range of titles were still likely to retain royal connections, and the small reduction which is in evidence is wholly a consequence of officials with very short title strings or one title only, who are almost entirely absent from the Old Kingdom evidence. This points to there being a gulf between two types of judicial official in the Middle Kingdom: high-status individuals with royal connections and multiple functions, and lower status specialists – usually scribes – without royal connections and perhaps engaged in only a single line of work. From this, it is also tempting to assume that the former might have been based in or near the royal residence, perhaps occasionally travelling out to hear cases elsewhere, while the latter may have been permanently settled in the provinces. Unfortunately, this last hypothesis is difficult to verify as a high proportion of the Middle Kingdom title strings have no known provenance.

Additional observations based on the provenance of the evidence

Alongside the five key inferences above, significant insights can be revealed by the known provenance of the Middle Kingdom evidence, limited as it is, as opposed to that of the Old Kingdom. Firstly, it is noteworthy that although the overall number of Middle Kingdom title strings in the dataset is smaller, they come from a slightly greater variety of sites (*fig. 23*, overleaf). Although the numbers in question are too small to be conclusive, this might suggest that bureaucratised justice

capable of leaving a written record was beginning to spread beyond a single administrative core, which seems to have been encapsulated by the Memphite region in the Old Kingdom.



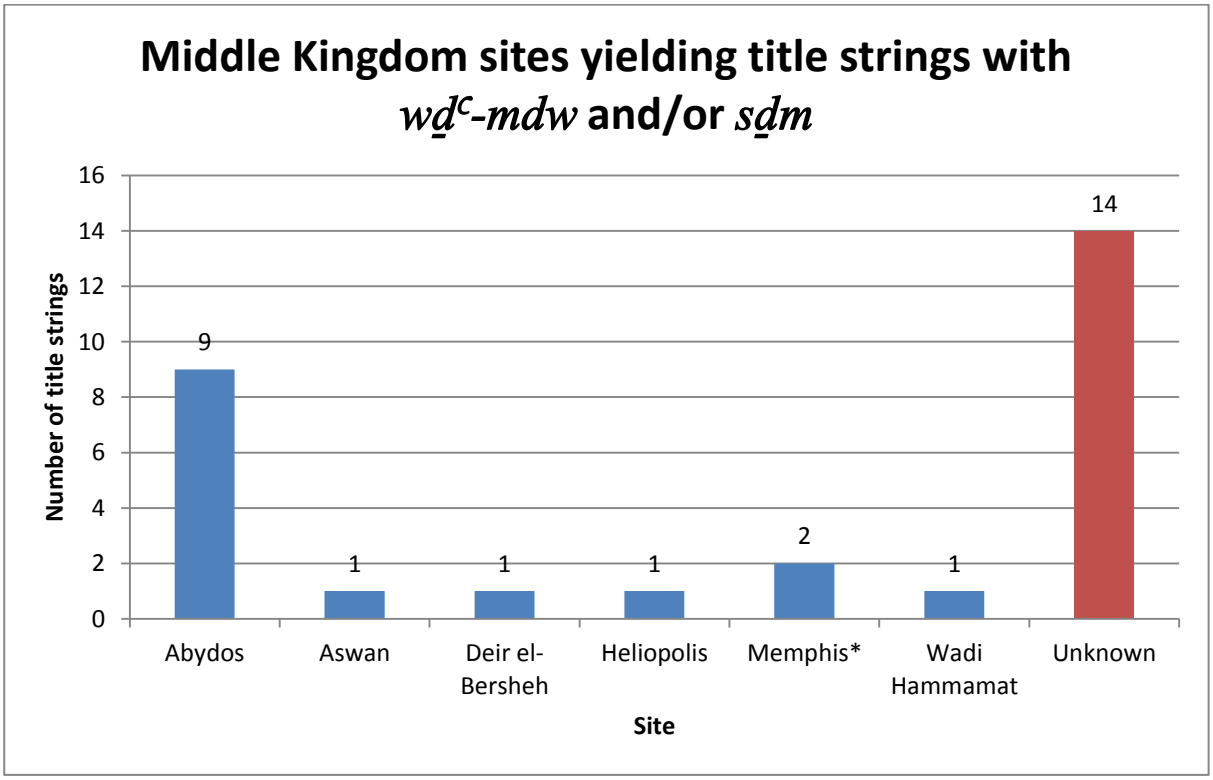


*Fig. 23: Graphs showing the number of title strings yielded by different findspots in the Old and Middle Kingdom. *NB. The 'Memphis' category includes finds at Giza, Saqqara, and Dahshur. It should also be heavily emphasised that the 'unknown' category is much greater for the Middle Kingdom, which makes it likely that a greater number of additional findspots have been overlooked than is the case for the Old Kingdom.*

The media upon which titles are found are also different for the Old and Middle Kingdoms. While Old Kingdom material is overwhelmingly derived from tomb inscriptions, Middle Kingdom material

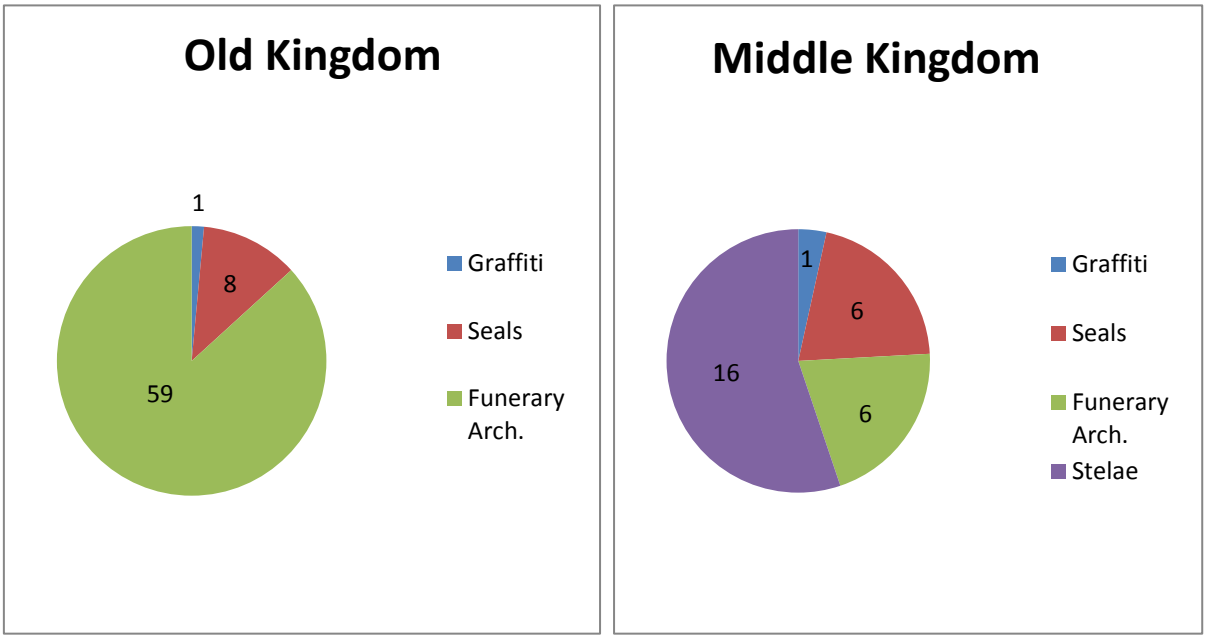


Fig. 24: Composition of Old and Middle Kingdom title string datasets by text medium: note how the Old Kingdom material is dominated by funerary architecture, whereas the Middle Kingdom is characterised by a much more even split.

comes from a much more even distribution of sources (*fig. 24*). This would suggest that while Old Kingdom title-bearing judicial practitioners were almost exclusively exceptionally wealthy individuals capable of erecting fine tombs, their Middle Kingdom counterparts were often rather more humble economically and evidence for them comes from less grandiose settings. In particular, stelae are a rich source of Middle Kingdom evidence, but are absent from the Old Kingdom dataset. While this could of course be associated with broader cultural differences between the two time periods rather than being specifically applicable to judicial practitioners, the trend is still suggestive in view of all the other evidence.

Ties between *sḏm* and scribes and the simplification of the formal judicial process

The fact that *sḏm* became much more prominent at a time when the role of scribes also seems to have augmented raises the interesting prospect of a possible linkage between the phenomena. The title *sš wr n sḏm* ('Great scribe of hearing'), and various forms thereof[138], became relatively common in the Middle Kingdom. This indicates that a direct connection between scribes and *sḏm* did exist, but it does not offer any indication as to how this came to be. In the Old Kingdom, neither scribes of *sḏm* nor scribes of *wḏᶜ-mdw* are attested. However, one passage in the *Autobiography of Weni*, quoted in

[138] See pp. 137-138 (*fig. 17*).

the previous chapter (*Urk*. I: 100, 13 – 101, 2)[139] is potentially highly significant as it mentions the official carrying out *sḏm* before highlighting that he subsequently committed the process to writing. It is noteworthy that at the time of Weni, *wḏᶜ-mdw* was by far the more common term associated with judgment, but on the only occasion where the committal of proceedings to writing is mentioned, the judicial term deployed is *sḏm*. While this argument from a single source is naturally limited in its force, it is nonetheless tempting to postulate that in the later Old Kingdom *sḏm* procedure may have already involved generating records, perhaps as part of an initial investigation ultimately leading to a final judgment – the *wḏᶜ-mdw*. This final judgment might have relied on these records, but might not have produced any new documentation, hence leading to no equally significant link between scribes and *wḏᶜ-mdw*.

Such a proposal would explain why the ascendancy of *sḏm* and the proliferation of scribes occurred in tandem: as *sḏm* became the dominant aspect of formal justice, it propelled to prominence the scribal posts which might have already been linked to it in the Old Kingdom. By the Middle Kingdom, this may have been seen as part of a wider connection between the concepts of *sḏm* and *sš* ('writing'), as seems to be illustrated in this passage from the conclusion of the *Teaching of the Vizier Kagemni* (Allen 2014: 166: 2,4-2,5):

ỉr nt.t nb.t m sš ḥr pȝ šfd.w sḏm st mỉ ḏd=ỉ st

As for everything in writing upon the scroll, hear it as I say it

This suggests that the process of *sḏm* could also be seen as the conduit by means of which people accessed recorded information – *sš*. In the text above, the writing is said (*ḏd*), rather than read, and the individual consulting it receives the text aurally (*sḏm*). The greeting *nfr sḏm=k* ('may your hearing be good'), often found at the end of correspondence (Loktionov 2017: 283), further corroborates the view that writing was heard, as does the fact that the Middle Egyptian verb *šdỉ* ('to read') strongly implies reading aloud, simultaneously meaning 'to recite' (*Wb.* IV: 563-564). Thus, if scribes and the written record became more prominent in the Middle Kingdom, it is entirely logical that *sḏm* would proliferate too. That this coincided with the appearance of *ḥp*, which may have been written law and, as shown earlier[140], could be associated with *sḏm*, further corroborates this theory. However, one must accept that the concept of *sḏm* might have been of two types: actually hearing oral-aural proceedings, and hearing records.

[139] See pp. 92-93.
[140] See p. 122.

Meanwhile, the apparently non-scribal element of formal justice, *wḏ^{c}-mdw*, collapsed. Perhaps it was subsumed into an extended *sḏm* procedure with greater scribal involvement, which now included not only hearing the initial judicial investigation but also engaging with the written record and ultimately the final phase of giving the verdict. The case for such a simplification is further strengthened by the marked decline in the use of *ỉp/wp* and *spr* in prosopography and administrative contexts – as argued earlier, these may have represented additional stages of the judicial process in the Old Kingdom[141], but perhaps these too were subsumed into an overarching concept of *sḏm* by the Middle Kingdom. What may have been a final enforcement stage of justice, *sm^{c} wḏ^{c}-mdw*, also seems to have disappeared and it is conceivable that its fate could have been the same as that of the other discontinued stages. Thus, if what had initially been a five-stage process had indeed been conflated in its entirety into *sḏm*, it would logically follow that the bureaucratic apparatus around *sḏm* would also have needed to expand substantially. This would explain not only the increase in the number of scribes, but also the narrow nature of their work as revealed by them invariably not having any other title. If *sḏm* was indeed now such a vast field of activity, it would naturally require a higher degree of undivided attention which could only be provided by officials focusing exclusively on this task.

The changing nature of *wḏ^{c}-mdw*: from religion and justice to religion alone?

While the hypothesis above might explain how *sḏm* and scribes contributed to changes in justice from the Old to the Middle Kingdom, it does not provide a reason for why *wḏ^{c}-mdw* should have declined in use so dramatically. The scale of the collapse of this term in practical judicial contexts is impossible to underestimate. In the Old Kingdom, it is by far the dominant concept related to justice, found in 59 title strings of judicial officials and unambiguously denoting practical judicial procedure in the only papyrus giving details of a legal case, *Papyrus Turin CG 54002*. In the Middle Kingdom, it is found in only three title strings, in all of which it appears to be purely honorific, and not a single inscription or papyrus mentions the term in practical judicial use even though the body of available evidence is much larger. Overall there can be little doubt that *wḏ^{c}-mdw* was not a feature of usual Middle Kingdom judicial practice.

However, as shown earlier, *wḏ^{c}-mdw* could still be invoked in a religious context in the Middle Kingdom. This seems to be a continuation of the Old Kingdom tradition, as in that period the term was already used on funerary stelae, in the *Pyramid Texts*, and in the 'letter to the dead' from Qaw el-Kebir[142]. Furthermore, some Old Kingdom holders of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* were also involved in apportioning temple offerings, and in one instance the practice of *wḏ^{c}-mdw* itself is explicitly said to be a form of

[141] See p. 102 (*fig. 12*).
[142] See p. 65.

offering to *Mꜣᶜ.t*[143]. Indeed, it seems highly likely that this might be linked to the later concept of *wḏᶜ rmṯ*, which by the New Kingdom had become an established element in a common religious text inscribed on the walls of royal temples. Here, *wḏᶜ* is seen as an essential aspect of royal activity and, significantly, it is found alongside mention of provision for *Mꜣᶜ.t* and temple offerings (Assmann 1989: 58)[144]:

> *ỉw rdỉ.n Rᶜ n(y)-sw.t N tp tꜣ n ᶜnḫ.w r nḥḥ ḥnᶜ ḏ.t ḥr wḏᶜ rmṯ ḥr sḫtp nṯr.w ḥr sḫpr Mꜣᶜ.t ḥr sḫtm ỉsf.t ỉw dỉ=f ḥtp.wt n.(t) nṯr.w pr.t-ḫrw n ꜣḫ.w*
>
> Ra has placed King N on the land of the living for everlasting and eternity, dividing (i.e. judging) people, satisfying gods, causing *Mꜣᶜ.t* to come into being and causing falsehood to be destroyed. He gives offerings to the gods and invocation offerings to the deceased.

Consequently, it would be quite wrong to suggest that the abandonment of this concept in practical judicial settings beyond the Old Kingdom meant that it left cultural and theological memory, and a degree of continuity in its application can certainly be traced from a religious perspective. If *wḏᶜ-mdw* were indeed in many ways a religious context from the outset, as seems highly likely, its prominent role in Old Kingdom legal affairs can be explained by the significant involvement of temples in justice at the time, with the temple-based *wsḫ.t* being one of the leading types of court and judicial officials frequently being involved in temple duties, such as apportionment of offerings. In the Middle Kingdom, while it is likely that religion continued to play a role in shaping judicial matters by influencing the rationale behind verdicts, it would seem that the *wsḫ.t* was no longer involved and judicial officials no longer had such active involvement in temple matters. This is illustrated by the prosopographic data: while many of the practitioners of justice in the Old Kingdom had priestly titles, this was not usually true of the Middle Kingdom. As justice increasingly left the temples, with new non-temple bodies like the *ḫnb.t* emerging and non-priestly scribes acquiring more influence, it follows that *wḏᶜ-mdw* may have been forced out of the formal judicial structure. The reason it continued to be present in the honorific title strings of certain very senior officials involved in justice might be because it was still a theologically powerful concept connected to an ability to make decisions perceived as 'just'.

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[143] See pp. 73-74, 86.

[144] This text exists in 11 iterations which range in date from the New Kingdom to the Ptolemaic period. For detailed studies addressing this, see Assmann 1970 and Betrò 1990.

Middle Kingdom justice in context: the long-term effects of decentralisation

As has been demonstrated earlier, several important components of the Middle Kingdom justice system, most notably the *ḳnb.t* and *ḫnr.t*, were in fact already active during the First Intermediate Period[145]. It is likely that the other structural changes, such as the decline of the *ḥw.t-wr.t*[146] and *wsḫ.t* as judicial bodies, the simplification of the judging process, and the rise of the scribes also occurred at this time. When these developments are considered in light of the fundamental changes in the Egyptian political order associated with this period, most notably the temporary decline of centralised royal authority, it becomes possible to put forward a theory for why the justice system evolved in this way.

As royal authority waned, centralised state departments including the formal judicial administration would have become harder to support. The *ḥw.t-wr.t*, probably centred in the Memphite region, possessing a sizeable administrative staff and reliant largely on senior officials in royal favour, would have been particularly vulnerable to this. Since its apparent primacy seems to have depended heavily on its location in the administrative heart of Egypt, it may have become redundant once power began to ebb away to the provinces where local community leaders and courts could take over its affairs. Indeed, its demise may even have been seen as symbolic of the decline of the Old Kingdom order, as suggested by the aforementioned passage from the *Admonitions of Ipuwer*[147]. The same fate probably also met the *wsḫ.t*, which had strong links to both the royal administration and official religious practices, and probably sat in major temples under royal patronage. The most important body to emerge in the place of these Old Kingdom courts was probably the *ḳnb.t*, which likely originated as a group of advisors to a nomarch but assumed wider judicial duties as the powers of central government became increasingly limited. Similarly, the administration of law enforcement and the punishment of offenders, most likely previously done in the *ḥw.t-wr.t*, would have needed to shift to a decentralised institution capable of operating at a local level. This may have been the *ḫnr.t*.

Changes of this sort would have inevitably had an impact on the sort of officials involved in judicial practice. The high degree of centrality associated with formal justice in the Old Kingdom would have meant that senior officials in the royal administration, concentrated around the Memphite region, would have lived and worked in proximity to it. Considering the high level of prestige associated with their status, the ethnographic parallels discussed earlier would strongly suggest that they were called

[145] See pp. 116-119.
[146] See pp. 119-120. In this discussion, the term *ḥw.t-wr.t* also encompasses *ḥw.t-wr.t-6*. While these two terms are probably not synonyms, as discussed in the Old Kingdom chapter (pp. 75-76), they were both controlled by senior members of the centralised administration with strong royal connections, and may be taken together for the purposes of the argument presented here.
[147] See pp. 119-120.

upon to adjudicate cases even when this was not the primary sphere of their activities, and this is indeed confirmed by Old Kingdom title strings. However, even in the Old Kingdom, judicial officials operating away from this administrative core appear to have functioned in a different way: there are only two recorded instances of such officials in this period, found on seal impressions from Elephantine, but in both cases the individuals in question had but a single title[148]. In the First Intermediate Period, the decline of centralised authority would have seen provincial officials take over responsibility for justice and, probably as was already the case in the Old Kingdom, these people did not have the wealth or high status of the Memphite royal administrators who had preceded them. This raises a potential question about how these more minor judicial practitioners were able to retain the social credibility to pass binding verdicts – and whether their authority was as great as that of their predecessors. In any case, the multitudes of titles which had previously been available – some of which presumably were also endowed with the possibility of income from royal sources – greatly dwindled in the First Intermediate Period as the nomarchs now effectively running their own micro-states did not have comparable wealth. Thus, judicial officials began to have fewer titles, concentrating more exclusively on justice as other areas of potential income dried up. By the time Egypt was re-established as a unitary state in the Middle Kingdom, the relatively new phenomenon of lower-level judicial officials with fewer titles might have already become too ingrained to reverse.

The reduction in resources can also explain the simplification of the judicial process. As has been shown earlier[149], formal justice in the Old Kingdom may have had as many as five constituent elements: *spr, sḏm, wp, wḏ^{c}-mdw* and *sm$_{3}^{c}$ wḏ^{c}-mdw*, relying on a vast body of office-holders to carry out different parts of the procedure. A simplification, with *sḏm* now equating to the whole procedure, would have cut costs and probably reduced staff numbers to a level manageable for local rulers. It may also have been more reflective of customary local traditions, which probably had procedures far simpler than those in the formal 'courts' of the Old Kingdom, with less emphasis on categorising judicial actors into specific offices. Without a strong centralised bureaucracy but nonetheless still facing a justice system reliant at least in part on written records, it seems likely that nomarchs would have prioritised the training of scribes at local level. These were no longer subservient to major institutions or high officials in a central administrative heartland, often fulfilling multiple roles in different departments, but were instead lower-level, provincial officials equipped explicitly for the purpose of *sḏm* in their specific local context. As the size of what had been the overall state administration shrank, officials focusing on a particular sphere of activity in a given region may have been expected to devote themselves to it more comprehensively: it seems likely

[148] See discussion of the possible procedures leading up to *wḏ^{c}-mdw* in the Old Kingdom chapter (pp. 101-102).
[149] See p. 102 (*fig. 12*).

that at this time a professional identity of a 'judicial scribe' may have been born. In turn, their training in this specific field, as well as the broader knowledge of writing possessed by such judicial practitioners, probably helped to generate the social authority and credibility which ethnography shows to be so significant in decentralised adjudication contexts. In an environment where the centralised state was no longer able to hand down authority sanctioned by a supreme Pharaonic power from above, this would have been crucial.

Moving into the Middle Kingdom, there is a logical explanation for why the rulers of a re-united Egypt may have chosen to maintain this state of affairs after reunification had been achieved. First and foremost, they may have been compelled to do so by the force of necessity. With the old centralised institutions like the *ḥw.t-wr.t* and *wsḫ.t* no longer in existence and a number of offices connected to them all but abolished, recreating them might not have been practically possible. Ancient Egyptian occupations were often hereditary, with younger practitioners relying on their forebears to learn the necessary skills, so if an office had not been in existence for several generations, restoring it may have been exceptionally challenging. Indeed, in view of the decline in centralised record-keeping during the First Intermediate Period, it is far from certain that the new Middle Kingdom administration even knew what exactly the Old Kingdom offices had entailed. Secondly, the new system may have had elements considered beneficial in any case: there was now scope for relatively formal justice to be carried out and recorded effectively in the provinces, without a need to direct matters to a central administrative area, which could have allowed for quicker resolution of cases, reduced the burden on senior officials, and perhaps also cut logistical costs. Furthermore, a decentralised system where specific tasks were delegated to different officials of relatively low rank, rather than concentrated in the hands of a select few magnates with great power in multiple spheres, could have prevented the rise of overmighty subjects. The accumulation of power in the hands of such provincial officials had been a key contributing factor behind the decline of the Old Kingdom, so rulers of the reunited Middle Kingdom would have had good reason to preclude a recurrence. Indeed, it is this connection between bolstering state authority and reforming justice which may have lain at the very heart of the evolutionary process, as will be discussed in the upcoming concluding chapter.

Finally, it must be highlighted that the Middle Kingdom itself was essentially founded by a former nomarch – Mentuhotep II, who began his career as a local ruler in Thebes. It has already been shown, most notably in the case of mortuary architecture, that his ascendancy over all of Egypt led to certain provincial traditions specific to his region becoming state norms (Badawy 1966: 53; Arnold 1979: 34). Consequently, it seems quite logical to propose that such an extension of local practices and modes

of thinking may also have extended into other domains, including archaeologically less tangible ones like justice. In making no attempt to restore the Old Kingdom infrastructure of formal justice, Mentuhotep II and his successors were perpetuating elements of the system out of which they had themselves emerged, developing it to fit the requirements of a reunified state but retaining its fundamental principles.

The place of informal justice in the Middle Kingdom

The fundamental challenge of studying informal justice, namely the lack of textual evidence, is as severe in the Middle as it is in the Old Kingdom. However, a number of changes are nonetheless implied by the evidence available. Firstly, the *ḏ3ḏ3.t* was becoming more bureaucratised: in the Old Kingdom, it was probably predominantly an oral-aural local assembly dispensing customary law, but in the Middle Kingdom the growing influence of regional scribes seems to have made its mark here too. As shown earlier[150], not only do scribal titles connected to the *ḏ3ḏ3.t* become reasonably common, but records of judicial procedures occurring in the *ḏ3ḏ3.t* also appear for the first time. This does not necessarily mean that this body moved away from its likely roots as an informal assembly where local disputes could be adjudicated by respected members of the community without formal judicial offices, but it does suggest that, at least in some cases, proceedings in the *ḏ3ḏ3.t* were now recorded. This may point to a different conception of the less formal variety of justice in this period – perhaps the oral-aural method was no longer deemed fully sufficient, and words had to be recorded as well as spoken. The case for this is strengthened further by the presence of scribes at the *ḳnb.t* and *ḫnr.t*, also localised institutions which might have been accessible to non-elites. However, it is naturally possible that other courts or informal judgment assemblies without any provision for recording still continued to exist – and by virtue of this lack of provision, they are now absent from view.

Alongside the possible introduction of scribes into the informal justice system, it is likely that changes were happening in the sphere of justice at the temple. Judgment inside the temple, in the *wsḫ.t*, appears to have been discontinued, although this may have had little effect on most of the non-elite population as the *wsḫ.t* previously seems to have been a venue for formal cases conducted by high officials near the centre of royal administration. However, the continued existence of the *sms.w ḥ3y.t* title, as well as episodic references to other entrances, would suggest that justice at the temple portal remained. In the case of *sms.w ḥ3y.t*, it should be noted that the officials who bore this title in the Middle Kingdom seem to have been rather more illustrious than their Old Kingdom predecessors:

[150] See pp. 112-113.

in the three texts which mention them[151], one (*Stela Cairo JE 30770*) refers to a *sms.w ḥ3y.t* being sent by the King himself to investigate temple irregularities, another (Recto Insertion B, *Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446*) involves the *sms.w ḥ3y.t* writing directly to the Vizier, and the third (*Stela Louvre C 1*) states that the *sms.w ḥ3y.t* reviewed *ḥp*-laws and therefore probably oversaw a fairly formal and prescriptive judicial procedure. Thus, all of these men seem to have been part of the higher echelons of justice, in two cases having very senior connections. This might have given them the social standing and credibility necessary to adjudicate in accordance with customary principles at the temple portal, perhaps acting as a link between the worlds of formal and informal justice. If so, just as has already been proposed for the Old Kingdom, the location would once again be acting as a liminal space in more ways than one – providing access both to a temple and to high judicial authority. As in the Old Kingdom, it again seems possible that the officials in question might have been itinerant, perhaps going from temple to temple. *Stela Cairo JE 30770* explicitly mentions a *sms.w ḥ3y.t* fulfilling his duties by travelling to a temple probably a considerable distance from his point of departure, so it seems logical that officials of this sort might have visited other temples along the way. Incidentally, this same stela also informs us that the *sms.w ḥ3y.t* travelled in the company of a scribe – once again bringing to the fore the closer relationship between scribes and judicial officials in this period.

The picture this paints is one of informal local justice probably becoming considerably closer to the formal model, both in terms of structure and in terms of space. The formal model had become simplified, it was now conducted locally rather than in a central administrative region, and the officials responsible for it were now for the most part less senior and perhaps socially embedded in the communities which they served. Bureaucracy, always a tenet of formal justice, was probably starting to penetrate into the customary sphere too and temple portals continued to link the official and the unofficial. Compared to the relatively clear boundary between formal and informal justice visible in the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom material seems to indicate a much more blurred frontier. Since this new legal landscape had emerged from decentralisation and a lack of firm unitary state oversight in the First Intermediate Period, such a convergence does not seem overly surprising.

[151] See discussion on *ḥ3y.t* earlier in this chapter (pp. 113-114).

5: A theory of judicial evolution from the Old to the Middle Kingdom

Having developed an understanding of the specific nature of the Egyptian legal landscapes in the Old and Middle Kingdoms, this work will now conclude by assessing the broader significance of this in terms of legal pluralism theory and its implications for administration and the balance of power between formal state control and informal, often provincial, actors. To aid with this, this final chapter begins by proposing two new terms, denoting legal frameworks which are at first sight very similar, but possess fundamental structural differences on deeper investigation:

i) *True legal pluralism* – A legal framework wherein multiple systems of justice exist and are administered through different state organs or other socially accepted structures, such as formal court bureaucracies found alongside oral-aural mediation. These distinct justice systems are capable of functioning entirely independently of one another, and generally derive legitimacy from different sources, like government authority or perceived ties to the land rooted in local custom. A very large variety of terms connected to justice might be an indicator of true legal pluralism, although it may also simply point to a highly complex state bureaucracy.

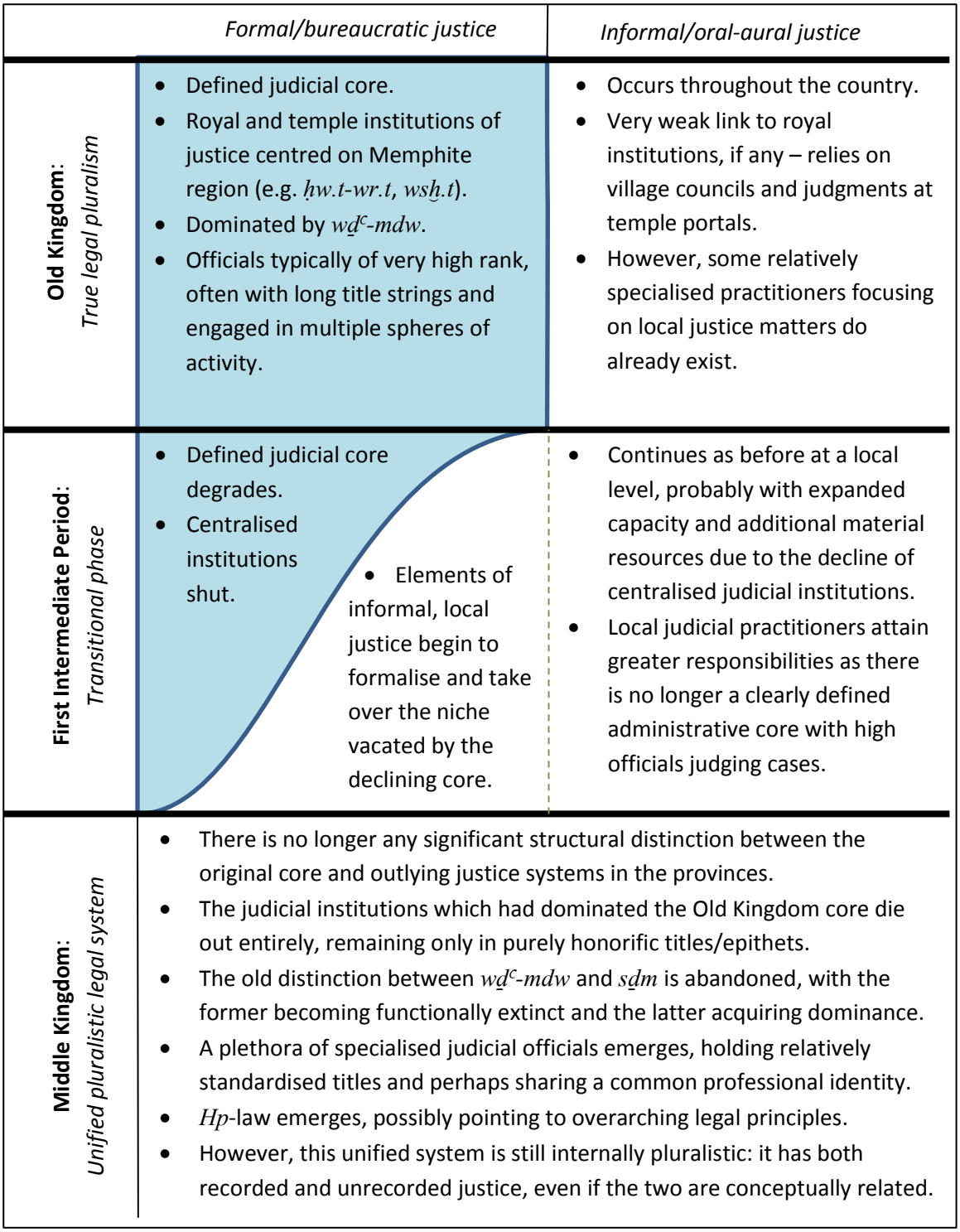
ii) *Unified pluralistic legal system* – A single overarching judicial model which is to some degree relevant to all regions and inhabitants of a polity, but aspects of which can be manifested in very different forms and the intellectual underpinning of which contains interwoven elements derived from distinct judicial traditions. Such a system is pluralistic in that it still might have state and non-state actors and may seek conflict resolution through both written and oral-aural forms, but its practitioners have a clearer identity as members of a wider and more standardised judicial framework. Such a system might be expected to generate somewhat fewer legal terms and titles than true legal pluralism.

The relationship between legal pluralism and central government: implications for Egypt

It has been argued that policies designed by strong central government have often viewed legal pluralism as 'a problem in need of solution' (Halliday 2013: 263), as it reduces or indeed eliminates its capacity to exercise meaningful control over the people or socio-administrative structures nominally subject to it. One pressing practical issue is that access to justice is uneven, being largely determined by the specific locality where people live and not the nation state to which they belong (Pimentel 2014: 64). This makes 'nation building' particularly difficult for central government, as people are thought unlikely to consider themselves a single collective if they live under substantially different laws (Cowen 1962: 547). Finally, legal pluralism can cause central governments

administrative problems, such as determining which individuals are subjected to which legal system and where boundaries between systems lie (Merry 1988: 871), as well as the extent to which the legal authority of one system might override that of the other (Pimentel 2014). In contrast to this, a unified legal system has been seen as a way of making justice more efficient and standardised for all participants in it (Ashman & Parness 1974: 2-5), as well as contributing to a stronger sense of 'nationhood' among those encompassed by it (Grotenhuis 2016: 85, 92).

While the observations above are associated primarily with modern states, and theoretical discourse on the contemporary concept of 'nationhood' appears rather anachronistic in an ancient setting, certain aspects of the theory postulated therein are nonetheless potentially highly significant for Ancient Egypt. The reduction in the gap between formal and informal justice in the Middle Kingdom, accompanied by a seemingly greater level of bureaucracy and standardisation of judicial titles, may in fact represent something more profound than a shift from one sort of legal pluralism to another: it may denote the emergence of a legal system that was fundamentally more unitary in nature. This does not mean that Middle Kingdom justice was always conducted in the same way: as shown earlier, that was clearly not so, and proceedings continued to occur at different levels of formality and in a range of settings. However, there does seem to have been a more homogenous overarching judicial superstructure – based around the concept of *sḏm*, its increasingly professionalised practitioners, and possibly recorded or at least relatively well-defined *ḥp*-law – which had a consistent impact on the practicalities of justice in a way which differed to the *ad hoc* procedures of the Old Kingdom. The implications of this for the extent to which the state controlled justice, and just as importantly for how its judicial authority was perceived by the population, could be vast. This is outlined in *fig. 25* (overleaf).



Key – Justice systems	
	Original core justice system
	Original outlying justice system
----------	Notional boundary between formal and informal justice

Fig. 25: Model showing the evolution of Ancient Egyptian justice from true legal pluralism to a unified pluralistic legal system.

Cementing the power of central government through judicial homogenisation

Building on the model set forth in *fig. 25,* this section will propose a theory for understanding judicial evolution from the Old to the Middle Kingdom from a perspective of expanding and consolidating wider governmental control. This approach has its foundation in the widely accepted observation that the Middle Kingdom saw administrative change resulting in the gradual elimination of quasi-independent nomarchs and their replacement with royally appointed local governors (Cruz-Uribe 1987; Franke 1991: 51-55). The Old Kingdom had declined in major part due to nomarchs becoming overmighty, and the central government of the Middle Kingdom appears to have been wary of a recurrence of this threat. Changes in the justice system may have been part of a wider strategy of limiting the power of the provinces and their leaders, introducing greater elements of division in provincial power structures by creating new officials with specific tasks related to state-wide concepts, and serving as a constant reminder of the overarching power of central government by creating new notions of how justice should be administered.

New officials: specialised judicial practitioners separate from holders of high office

This work has shown that in the Old Kingdom, formal justice appears to have been almost exclusively in the hands of senior officials strongly connected to the administrative core of Egypt. The extent to which such officials focused on justice varied, but almost all of them also had other responsibilities. It seems likely that many of these officials would have been self-sufficient in terms of their ability to settle disputes either within their home regions, if they were peripatetic and could travel between the administrative core and provincial areas, or in the centralised institutions for which they were responsible. In any case, it would appear that the high officials of the core could hear cases themselves without reliance on any other judicial practitioners. Meanwhile, the provinces seem to have had very few formally recognised judicial officials, and most probably relied overwhelmingly on unwritten customary law of the type discussed in chapter 2. While this is now unseen in the evidential record, this phenomenon was probably very important indeed and would have handed great judicial authority to nomarchs or other local chiefs, as such people would have had the highest levels of social credibility. Such a situation points to a very fragmented legal landscape, where both formally recognised high officials in the administrative core and community leaders in the periphery would have had near absolute agency regarding judicial decisions made within their own sphere of influence. There is little to suggest that these spheres of influence communicated with one another in any noteworthy manner, meaning that justice in different parts of the country might have assumed very different forms based on the individual preferences of highly authoritative judicial practitioners, and without any significant overarching framework.

In the Middle Kingdom, the situation was different. Probably at least partly as a result of the political upheavals in the First Intermediate Period, new, specialised judicial practitioners emerged for the first time in significant numbers and probably throughout the country, rather than in a narrow administrative core. Crucially, the authority of these practitioners could not have rested on high social status, as in the Old Kingdom, for they do not appear to have been especially senior. Many only had a single title, and they were almost certainly far less wealthy than their Old Kingdom counterparts. Instead, their defining feature and probable source of authority was an association with the concept of *sḏm*. Thus, formal justice was no longer overwhelmingly in the hands of either magnates based in the Memphite region or provincial overlords combining adjudication with a range of other duties. Rather, while senior officials undoubtedly did retain involvement in justice to a degree, they were now supplanted in many of their functions by lower level practitioners focusing specifically on *sḏm*. This may have brought a degree of greater standardisation to the experience of justice across the country, while simultaneously reducing the chasm between the administrative core and the provinces and curtailing the exclusive control over formal justice previously exercised by the very top social strata. Symptomatic of this process is the collapse of the old institutions of the core, such as the *ḫw.t-wr.t* and *wsḫ.t*, and the rise or consolidation of institutions most probably originally associated with customary law in outlying areas, such as the *ḏ͗ḏ͗.t*, *ḳnb.t* and various portals. The near-extinction of the term *wḏ^{c}-mdw*, associated predominantly with the Old Kingdom judicial elite in the administrative core, also matches this pattern.

These developments fit in well into the wider socio-political dynamic of the time: challenging the autonomy of often hereditary administrative magnates and establishing in their stead appointed officials. For instance, it has been shown that central Pharaonic government in the 12th Dynasty was disrupting continuities in the succession of nomarchs by educating their children in the royal court and far away from their traditional territories, with a view to subsequently appointing them to senior posts unconnected to their nomes while local administration was turned over to officials lacking prior connections with the land (Franke 1991: 55-65). As demonstrated in the ethnographic section of this work, ties to the land are usually a crucial aspect of credibility in local customary justice, so disrupting them would have had serious implications. By encouraging the rise of lower-ranking, local officials deriving authority not from the land or status but from a concept associated with formal justice, *sḏm*, the central government was effectively tightening its control over judicial power in the provinces while simultaneously filling the judicial and administrative vacuum left by the old hereditary magnates.

At this point, one must highlight that this theory does not suggest that the lower-level *sḏm*-linked officials of the Middle Kingdom had any direct connections to the central government: on the contrary, it is highly likely that they were local people whose offices first emerged in the provinces as a result of extra resources becoming available to provincial administrations during the political fragmentation of the First Intermediate Period. However, their emergence was successfully harnessed by the newly re-established centralised state as a mechanism for providing justice based on its own formal concepts and without relying on local elites which had proven to harbour ambitions of excessive power in the past. Thus, from a judicial perspective the state appears to have turned the consequences of initial decentralisation to its long-term advantage.

New concepts: the extension of *sḏm* and the emergence of *ḥp*

These evolutions in the judicial landscape were not only characterised by changes in personnel or indeed institutions – they were also conceptual. The first mentions of *ḥp* in the Middle Kingdom suggest that the idea of judging on the basis of more concrete and possibly recorded law was gaining strength. This is consistent with the increase in the number and influence of judicial scribes and the expansion of the concept of *sḏm* which, as shown earlier, probably encompassed uptake of recorded material through recitation rather than just hearing. Taking into account ethnographic parallels, the emergence of these phenomena closely matches what one might expect: as the power of magnates tied to the land and possessing innate social authority dwindled, the core base for successful implementation of customary law would have been weakened, thereby providing an operating space for a different judicial model supplied by central government. Within this model, the fundamental judicial philosophy might have remained largely unchanged, as for instance demonstrated by ongoing references to *Mɜʿ.t*. However, the way in which its implementation was conceived seems to have become much more standardised, with individual judicial practitioners now having far less agency than before.

The consequences: a unified pluralistic legal system?

In view of the above observations, the present work concludes that the judicial framework which emerged in the Middle Kingdom might best be termed a *unified pluralistic legal system*. Compared to the Old Kingdom, it was unified in the sense that *sḏm* now represented a single dominant feature of judicial administration, while *ḥp* probably provided an overarching framework outlining how it was to be conducted. Distinctions between the old administrative core and outlying areas – between high officials practising formal justice and local figures relying on oral-aural conflict resolution – likely became less significant, with a body of low-level title-holders emerging and perhaps developing a distinct identity as specifically judicial practitioners. In terms of ethnographic parallels, one must note that this integration of relatively minor local adjudicators into an overarching state justice system

closely matches better-studied principles of recent colonial administrations in sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. Hamnett 1975: 89-92; Le Roy 2004: 102-103), where the transformation of local practitioners into officials of the state has been used to create hitherto non-existent ties between the formal administration and provincial communities. Furthermore, this can also neatly fit into the aforementioned narrative of 'nation building' through the emergence or imposition of widespread judicial similarities across a state (Cowen 1962: 547) – bringing people into a single cultural conception of social ordering by transferring judicial agency away from *ad hoc* judgments by high officials towards a less personal system underpinned by state principles. The possible significance of such unifying elements in the Egyptian context has to be noted, especially in a political setting which had recently experienced a fragmentation the recurrence of which government sought to prevent.

On the other hand, it is likely that there was no absolute transformation and Egyptian justice in the Middle Kingdom remained in many ways pluralistic. Indeed, as demonstrated in chapter 2, it appears that traditional justice practices could prove remarkably enduring, with certain elements persisting for millennia. A strong argument can be made for echoes of the very distant judicial past still being in evidence in Egypt of the 19th Century. Thus, even if *sḏm* and *ḥp* rendered judicial process more homogenous than previously, and the significance of customary ties to the land had been weakened, it seems almost certain that the parallel existence of written and oral-aural justice would have inevitably continued. The two may have now operated within a relatively unified conceptual framework, but there can be little doubt that the practical experience of justice would have continued to display significant differences depending on place, the nature of the dispute, and the seniority of officials overseeing it. The number of disparate judicial concepts and offices may have been reduced, but the fundamental reality of a large state consisting of distinct provinces and regional identities would have remained. Thus, while there may no longer have been a clearly delimited judicial core and outliers as in the Old Kingdom, and justice appears to have started emerging as a distinct discipline in its own right, there is no evidence for the changes being sufficient to classify the country as obeying a single set of laws and effectively adopting legal monism. By denoting Middle Kingdom Egypt as a *unified pluralistic legal system*, one is able to occupy a position between these two extremes.

6: Closing discussion and implications for further research

While the present work has thrown into relief certain broad trends in the long-term evolution of justice in the earlier periods of Egyptian history, as well as for the first time using ethnography to tentatively fill in evidential gaps in the judicial dataset, it should represent but a point of departure for this strand of research. Given below are four possible avenues which might be opened as a result of the foundations laid in the preceding pages.

Extending the present approach into the New Kingdom

While the chronological scope of this work is limited to the end of the Middle Kingdom, it must naturally be emphasised that these findings can also serve as an important starting point for future studies of later periods in Egyptian legal history. Evolution in Egyptian justice clearly did not stop in the Middle Kingdom, and so a similar treatment of what followed is in order. Judicial evolution in the New Kingdom presents a number of avenues for enquiry. Firstly, the possibility of uptake of foreign judicial concepts must be considered. This includes Semitic cultures from the wider Ancient Near East, as a result of growing diplomatic, commercial and military contacts with Egypt – an idea which has already been proposed (Lorton 1977: 50; Loktionov 2016), but without any detailed investigation to accompany it. It also includes the implications of closer Egyptian ties with Nubia during the New Kingdom, which may have had the potential to introduce additional legal concepts from sub-Saharan Africa, and which has not yet been subjected to any notable study. Secondly, the impact of further political fragmentation in the Second Intermediate Period leading up to the New Kingdom, including the conquest of Lower Egypt by the Hyksos, requires further research. A comparison with what has already been inferred about legal evolution during the First Intermediate Period would be especially interesting here. Ideally, this should be done in conjunction with the previous point on elements of foreign law entering the country, as the period was characterised by non-native rule across a number of key administrative centres.

Alongside such new features of judicial evolution lacking parallels in earlier periods, certain concepts and institutions already prominent in this work endured into the New Kingdom. Among these are the concepts of *sḏm*, *ḥp* and *Mꜣʿ.t*, as well as institutions such as the *ḳnb.t*, *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t* and *ḫnr.t*. Charting the continued development of each of these into a more recent phase of Egyptian legal history would represent another noteworthy step forward, especially since the available body of both prosopographic and wider textual data is considerably greater for the New Kingdom than for preceding periods. When combined with the present work, the resulting study would be

chronologically the broadest survey of judicial evolution within a single state conducted to date, incorporating two millennia of data[152].

Sḏm: a conceptual study

As well as extending the chronological scope, more detailed investigations at a conceptual level could also yield interesting new insights. While much scholarly attention has already been devoted to *M3ᶜ.t* (e.g. Assmann 1990; Morschauser 1995; Teeter 1997; Menu 2015) and to a lesser extent *hp* (Nims 1948; Bats 2014), nothing comparable has been published on *sḏm*. However, the present work has shown that, at least in certain judicial contexts, it may be time to re-assess the meaning of this term, which may conceivably have gone beyond the standard translation of 'hearing' or 'listening' and also incorporated notions of hearing what was written – and so effectively 'reading'. Such a study would require a substantial investment of time and resources, considering how common the term is across its full range of meanings over a vast expanse of time. Furthermore, the very fact that this word has such a rich variety of possible translations in different contexts would pose a formidable challenge and yield a plethora of interpretations for almost any attestation. Nonetheless, initiating such a project would represent a step towards developing a better understanding of a concept so often mentioned in Egyptology[153], but the significance of which is yet to be fully grasped. This would have important implications not only for the study of Egyptian justice, but also for wider approaches to studies of Egyptian orality, literature and wider intellectual traditions.

Unlocking a new understanding of, and approach to, Ancient Egypt in an African setting

One of the major aims of the present work has been to use ethnographic material from traditional African contexts, as well as Egypt itself, to shed light on what unrecorded aspects of Ancient Egyptian justice may have resembled. In doing so, this research has inevitably not been able to provide comprehensive proof that such ethnographically recorded practices are accurate reflections of ancient procedures, but many of the insights obtained this way are likely to be instructive on the balance of probability. This raises a much wider issue going far beyond legal Egyptology, which is the prospect of reassessing the current approach to using wider African material in the study of Ancient Egypt, and the existing attitudes towards projects which seek to investigate wider connections between Ancient Egypt and other African cultures.

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[152] Indeed, such a project might then be extended into the First Millennium BCE too, although the growing influence of Greek judicial practices in this time would probably make direct comparison far harder. However, the appearance of an Egyptian legal history from the Old to the New Kingdom, capable of chronologically linking up with the existing relatively comprehensive scholarship on matters of First Millennium BCE justice, would certainly be useful in helping scholars of such later times to situate their research in a wider setting of legal evolution.

[153] The fact that *sḏm* is often among the first words introduced in almost any grammar of Egyptian is a case in point. Its use as a verbal paradigm in countless introductory language classes has created an orthodoxy of translating it as 'to hear', which it is perhaps time to reassess.

The experience of this research indicates that both Egyptology and other branches of area studies have much to gain from a closer level of interaction than is currently the case. As noted previously, somewhat ill-tempered debates around Afrocentrism, the legacy of colonialism and the harnessing of Ancient Egypt for political gain have greatly limited possibilities for such interaction in recent years. It is hoped that the present work will go some way to illustrating that Egyptologically rigorous research making use of wider African material to inform data analysis is not only possible, but can also yield novel results that could not be derived in any alternative fashion. This might in turn lead to this approach being adopted in other Egyptological studies too, and in particular in those concerned with intangible, oral-aural intellectual culture which can often be absent from both textual and archaeological records.

Integrating Egyptology into broader discourse on comparative law and legal evolution

This study has initiated the process of integrating the study of Ancient Egyptian law within a wider intellectual framework developed by legal theorists outside Egyptology – namely, legal pluralism. However, in so doing it has retained the original Egyptian designations for key judicial terms, such as *wḏꜥ-mdw*, *sḏm*, *Mꜣꜥ.t* and *hp*, rather than attempting to force ancient notions into modern legal designations such as 'criminal' and 'civil' law. The limitation of this approach is that by avoiding such anachronisms it introduces terminology which non-Egyptological legal scholars will struggle to understand. Currently the present writer cannot see any compelling solution to this dilemma other than a slow and gradual process of introducing non-Egyptologists with an interest in legal history to the original Egyptian terms, accompanied with suitably worded commentary and published in outlets read by such people. While hoping for the success of such an initiative might at first seem overly optimistic, it may yet be a task worth attempting, especially when one considers the ongoing impact of another ancient and yet very widely referenced judicial framework – Roman Law. It would be naïve to think that Ancient Egyptian justice might achieve a comparable degree of visibility in the modern environment of academic law, but at least aiming to significantly increase discourse around this topic in that field does seem reasonable.

Appendix I – Prosopographic data

Old Kingdom title strings

1: ꜣḫ.t-mḥw: 5th-6th Dynasty tomb, Giza

(after Giza Archives: Akhetmehu G 2375)

*sꜣb sms.w hꜣy.t**

*rꜣ Nḫn**

wḏꜥ-mdw štꜣ n ḥw.t-wr.t

ḥry-sšꜣ

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣꜥ.t**

ḥry-wḏb.w

ḥry-tp mdw n wḏꜥ-mdw štꜣ n ḥw.t-wr.t

ḥry-sšꜣ n wḏꜥ-mdw

Dignitary and Elder of the portal*

Mouth of Hierakonpolis*

Secret divider of words of the great enclosure

Master of secrets

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣꜥ.t**

Diverter of offerings

Chief of words of the secret dividing of words of the great enclosure

Master of secrets of dividing words

2: ꜣḫ.t-ḥtp: 5th Dynasty chapel, Saqqara

(after Davies 1901: pl. 28-29)

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

mdw rḫy.t

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣꜥ.t**

*ḫrp wsḫ.t**

ỉmy-rꜣ nỉw.t nfr mr Ḏd-kꜣ-Rꜥ

*tꜣyty sꜣb ṯ3ty**

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) ꜥ n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ wḏꜥ-mdw nb

ỉwn knm.wt

ỉmy-rꜣ pr.wy-ḥḏ

ỉmy-rꜣ šnw.ty

One under the head of the King

Staff of *rḫy.t*-people

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣꜥ.t**

Director of the *wsḫ.t*-court*

Overseer of the pyramid town "Beautiful is the pyramid of Djedkare"

Shrouded one, Dignitary, and Vizier*

Overseer of scribe(s) of royal documents

Overseer of every dividing of words

Pillar of *knm.wt*-people

Overseer of the two treasuries

Overseer of the two granaries

3: ꜣḫ.t-ḥtp: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after Mariette 1889: 424-25)

sms.w ḫrw (?)

rḫ-n(y)-sw.t

ḥm-nṯr Ḥw.t-Ḥr nb.t n.t Iwnw

sš n sꜣ

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ wp.(w)t ḥtp.(w)-nṯr m pr.wy

sꜣb sḥḏ sš.(w)

sꜣb ꜥḏ-mr

*ỉmy-rꜣ ḥw.t-wr.t wsḫ.t**

ḥm-nṯr nfr s.wt Wnỉs

sꜣb sḥḏ sš.(w)

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏꜥ-mdw nb ḥw.t-wr.t

sms.w nfr wr.t

n(y) ns.t ḫnt.t

mdw rḫy.t

ỉwn knm.wt

*ḥm-nṯr M3ᶜ.t**

*ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr**

Elder of voice(?)

King's Acquaintance

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Hathor, lady of Heliopolis

Scribe of the phyle

One under the head of the King

Overseer of reckoning/separating offering(s) in the two houses

Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s)

Dignitary and Administrator

Overseer of the great enclosure and the *wsḫ.t*-court*

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of "Beautiful are the places of Unas"

Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s)

Master of secrets of every dividing of words of the great enclosure

Exceedingly good elder

One of the foremost throne

Staff of *rḫy.t*-people

Pillar of *knm.wt*-people

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *M3ᶜ.t**

Director of scribe(s) of petitioning*

4: Iwn-n-mn.w: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after Mariette 1889: 445)

ỉmy-r3 wḏᶜ-mdw

ḫrp sš.(w)

Overseer of dividing words

Director of scribes

5: Ipỉ: 6th Dynasty inscription in tomb of his father, ***Ptḥ-špss-ỉmpy***, Saqqara:
(after Munro 1984: 93, fig. 3):

*sꜣ sms.w hꜣy.t**
*sms.w hꜣy.t**
smꜣᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw

Son of the Elder of the portal*
Elder of the portal*
Enforcer of dividing words

6: Imy-st-kꜣ=ỉ: 6th Dynasty tomb, Giza
(after Junker 1943: 209-11)

ḫnty-š pr-ᶜꜣ
ỉmy-ḥ.t ḫnty.(w)-š pr-ᶜꜣ
sḥḏ ḫnty.(w)-š pr-ᶜꜣ
ỉmy-rꜣ ḫnty.(w)-š pr-ᶜꜣ
ỉmy-rꜣ st ḫnty.(w)-š pr-ᶜꜣ
ᶜ n(y)-sw.t ᶜ.t n(y)-sw.t
ỉmy-rꜣ ḫry.w ᶜ ᶜ n(y)-sw.t
ỉry sḏꜣ.wt pr-ᶜꜣ
ḥry-sštꜣ
ḥry-sštꜣ n nb=f
sꜣb ᶜḏ-mr pr-ᶜꜣ
wḏᶜ-mdw m s.wt špṣ.wt n.(t) pr-ᶜꜣ
ỉmy-rꜣ ᶜḥꜣ.(w)
ỉmy-rꜣ ᶜḥꜣ.(w) pr.wy
ỉmy-rꜣ šwy pr-ᶜꜣ
ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t
ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t pr-ᶜꜣ
smr wᶜ.ty pr
ỉmy-ỉb nb=f
wᶜb n(y)-sw.t
ḥm-nṯr Ḥwfw

Ḫnty-š -official of the great estate

One associated with *ḫnty-š*-officials of the great estate

Inspector of *ḫnty-š*-officials of the great estate

Overseer of *ḫnty-š*-officials of the great estate

Overseer of the place of *ḫnty-š*-officials of the great estate

(One of the?) royal document of the royal documents

Overseer of those under the document of the royal document(s)

One associated with the treasures of the great estate

Master of secrets

Master of secrets of his lord

Dignitary and Administrator of the great estate

Divider of words in the noble places of the great estate

Overseer of warrior(s)

Overseer of warrior(s) of the two houses

Overseer of weaving of the great estate

Overseer of reckoning/separating

Overseer of reckoning/separating of the great estate

Sole companion of the house

One in the heart of his lord

Royal *wᶜb*-priest

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Khufu

7: Ir-n-ỉḫ.t: 6th Dynasty tomb, Giza

(after Hassan 1950: 9-11)

ỉmy-rỉ ỉp.t/wp.t nṯr m pr.wy

ỉmy-ḫt ḥm.(w)-nṯr wr Ḫᶜ=f-Rᶜ

sḫḏ ḥm.(w)-nṯr nṯr Mn-kỉ.w-Rᶜ

ỉmy-rỉ ỉp.t/wp.t

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

ḫrp ỉry(w) mḏỉ.t

sỉb ỉmy-rỉ sš.(w)

ḥry-sštỉ n wḏᶜ-mdw

sš ᶜ n(y)-sw.t

ḥry-sštỉ n sḏỉ.wt nṯr

sꜣb sḫḏ ỉry.(w) mḏꜣ.t

sꜣb ᶜḏ-mr

(ny) ns.t ḫnt.t

sꜣb ỉmy-ḫ.t ỉry.(w) mḏꜣ.t

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t ḥtp.t nṯr

Overseer of divine reckoning/separating in the two houses

One associated with the *ḥm-nṯr*-priests of "Great is Khafre"

Inspector of *ḥm-nṯr*-priests of "Menkaure is a god"

Overseer of reckoning/separating

One under the head of the King

Director of those of the scroll

Dignitary and Overseer of scribe(s);

Master of secrets of dividing words

Scribe of royal documents

Master of secrets of the treasures of the god

Dignitary and Inspector of those of the scroll

Dignitary and Administrator

(One of the) foremost throne

Dignitary and One associated with those of the scroll

Overseer of reckoning/separating divine offerings

8: Iḥꜣ: 5th-6th Dynasty inscription in tomb of ***Nfr***, Giza

(after Junker 1943: 74-76)

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

sḫḏ wᶜb.(w) ꜣḫ.t-Ḫwfw

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t**

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏᶜ-mdw

Dignitary and Overseer of scribe(s)

Inspector of *wᶜb*-priests of "Horizon of Khufu"

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣᶜ.t**

Master of secrets of dividing words

9: Iḫy: 5th Dynasty tomb, Giza

(after Junker 1943: 76)

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t**

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏᶜ-mdw

sḥḏ ꜣḫ.t-Ḫwfw

Dignitary and Overseer of scribe(s)

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣᶜ.t**

Master of secrets of dividing words

Inspector of "Horizon of Khufu"

10: Iḫy: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after Maspero 1889: 202)

*rꜣ Nḫn mꜣᶜt[SIC]**

wḏᶜ-mdw m ḥw.t-wr.t-6

ḥry-sštꜣ n sḏm.t wᶜ

True mouth of Hierakonpolis*

Divider of words of the six great enclosures

Unique master of secrets of hearing

11: Iḫy: 6th Dynasty tomb, Thebes

(after Pirenne 1935: 103)

ḥry-sštꜣ n sḏm.(t) wᶜ

*rꜣ Nḫn**

*sms.w hꜣy.t**

smꜣᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t-6

Unique master of secrets of hearing

Mouth of Hierakonpolis*

Elder of the portal*

Enforcer of dividing words of the six great enclosures.

12: Ittỉ: 5th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after Murray 1905: pl. 18)

sms.w ỉs m pr.wy

ỉmy-rꜣ ḥ wr Šmᶜ.w

ỉmy-rꜣ wḏᶜ-mdw n wsḫ.t

ḫrp ᶜḏ.wy n(y)-sw.t

ḫrp bnr(y.w)

ỉmy-rꜣ kꜣt nt n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ mstt(y.w)

Elder of the chamber in the two houses

Overseer of the great southern palace

Overseer of dividing words in the *wsḫ.t*-court

Director of the two edges of the King

Director of confectioner(s)

Overseer of royal works

Overseer of quarry-workers

13: Idw: 5th Dynasty(?) tomb, Giza

(after Junker 1947: 69-70; 78)

*tꜣy.ty sꜣb ṯꜣ.ty**

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

mdw rḫy.t

ỉwn knm.wt

ỉmy-rꜣ ḥw.t-kꜣ

sꜣb ᶜḏ-mr

ỉmy-rꜣ wḏ.t nb.t štꜣ.t n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ w[ḏ.t…]

sš ᶜ n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) ᶜ n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ wᶜb.t

ỉmy-rꜣ wᶜb.ty

[ỉmy-rꜣ] ỉ[s].wy n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ šnw.ty

ỉmy-rꜣ pr.wy-ḥḏ

ỉmy-rꜣ gs.wy

ỉmy-rꜣ ḫnw

ỉmy-rꜣ sḫt nb.t

ỉmy-rꜣ kꜣt nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy rꜣ rꜣ-pr

ỉmy-rꜣ […]

[ḥry]-sštꜣ n(y)-sw.t

ḥry-[sštꜣ n wḏᶜ-mdw[154]*]*

ỉmy-ỉb n nb=f m tꜣ.wy

Shrouded one, Dignitary and Vizier*

One under the head of the King

Staff of *rḫy.t*-people

Pillar of *knm.wt*-people

Overseer of the enclosure of the bovine

Dignitary and Administrator

Overseer of every secret royal command

Overseer of commands […]

Scribe of royal documents

Overseer of scribe(s) of royal documents

Overseer of the purification building

Overseer of the two purification buildings

[Overseer] of the two royal chambers

Overseer of the two granaries

Overseer of the two treasuries

Overseer of the two halves

Overseer of the interior

Overseer of every field

Overseer of all royal works

Overseer of the chapel

[154] This can be reconstructed with reasonable confidence on the basis of textual parallels in other tombs (see Junker 1947: 78).

Overseer of […]

[Master] of secrets of the King

Master [of secrets of dividing words]

One in the heart of his lord in the two lands

14: Idw: 6th Dynasty tomb, Giza

(after Simpson 1976: 30-31)

ỉwn knm.wt

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t ḥtp.(w)-nṯr m pr.wy

*ỉmy-rꜣ ḫw.t-wr.t**

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) mr.t

wḏꜥ-mdw

mdw rḫy.t

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣꜥ.t**

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏꜥ-mdw

ḫnty-š Mn-nfr-Ppy

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

smꜣꜥ wḏꜥ-mdw

sḫḏ wꜥbw ꜣḫt-Ḫwfw

sḫḏ wꜥbw Wr-Ḫꜥ=f-Rꜥ

sš ꜥ n(y)-sw.t

sš ꜥ n(y)-sw.t ḫft ḥr

sš mr.t

Pillar of *knm.wt*-people

Overseer of reckoning/separating offerings in the two houses

Overseer of the great enclosure*

Overseer of scribes of the *mr.t*-people

Divider of words

Staff of *rḫy.t*-people

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣꜥ.t**

Master of secrets of dividing words

Ḫnty-š-official of “Established and beautiful” of Pepy

One under the head of the King

Enforcer of dividing words

Inspector of *wᶜb*-priests of “Horizon of Khufu”

Inspector of *wᶜb*-priests of “Great is Khafre”

Scribe of royal documents

Scribe of royal documents in front of the face

Scribe of the *mr.t*-people

15: ᶜnḫ-m-ᶜ-Ḥr-Ssỉ: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after Kanawati & Hassan 1997: 11-2)

ỉwn knm.wt

ỉmᶜ-ȝ

ỉmy-ỉs Nḫn

ỉmy-rȝ ỉs.wy

ỉmy-rȝ pr.wy-ḥḏ

*ỉmy-rȝ ḥw.t-wr.t**

ỉmy-rȝ sš.(w) ᶜ n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rȝ sš.wy

ỉmy-rȝ sš.wy mȝᶜ

ỉmy-rȝ sš.wy n sḫmḫ-ỉb

ỉmy-rȝ sḏm.t nb.t štȝ.(t)

ỉmy-rȝ šn tȝ nb

ỉmy-rȝ kȝ.t

ỉmy-rȝ kȝ.t nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rȝ kȝ.t nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t m tȝ r ḏr=f

ỉry-pᶜ.t

mnỉw Nḫn

mdw rḫy.t

mḏḥ sš n(y)-sw.t

ḥȝ.ty-ᶜ

*ḥm-nṯr Mȝᶜ.t**

ḥm-nṯr Ḥḳt

ḥry-sštȝ n wḏ.t-mdw nb.t

ḥry-sštȝ n wḏ.t-mdw nb.t štȝ.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

ḥry-sštȝ n n(y)-sw.t m st=f nb.t

ḥry-tp Nḫb

ḫnty-š Ḏd-sw.t-Ttỉ

ḫry-ḥb.t ḥry-tp

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

sm

sḥḏ ḥm.(w)-nṯr Ḏd-sw.t-Ttỉ

*tꜣy.ty sꜣb tꜣ.ty**

Pillar of *knm.wt*-people

Gracious of arm

One in the chamber of Hierakonpolis

Overseer of the two chambers

Overseer of the two treasuries

Overseer of the great enclosure*

Overseer of scribe(s) of royal document(s)

Overseer of the two bird marshes

True overseer of the two bird marshes

True overseer of the two bird marshes of pleasure

Overseer of every secret hearing

Overseer of all vegetation

Overseer of works

Overseer of all royal works

Overseer of all royal works in the entire land

Member of the elite

Herdsman of Hierakonpolis

Staff of *rḫy.t*-people

Master royal scribe

Count

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣꜥ.t**

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Heket

Master of secrets of every word command

Master of secrets of every secret royal word command

Master of secrets of the King in every place of his

Chief of El-Kab

Ḫnty-š-official of “Enduring are the places of Teti”

Chief lector priest

One under the head of the King

Sm-priest

Overseer of *ḥm-nṯr*-priests of "Enduring are the places of Teti"

Shrouded one, Dignitary, and Vizier*

16: ᶜnḫ-m-ᶜ-kꜣ: 5th Dynasty(?) tomb, Saqqara

(after Mariette 1889: 217-18)

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

sꜣb ᶜḏ-mr

(ny) ns.t ḫnt.t

ỉwn knm.wt

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏ.t-mdw n(y)-sw.t

wr mḏ Šmᶜ.w

ỉmy-rꜣ kꜣ.t n.t n(y)sw-wt

ỉmy-rꜣ s.wt ḥtp.(w)t ḏfꜣ.w

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t**

*ỉmy-rꜣ ḫw.t-wr.t**

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏᶜ-mdw

*ḫrp sš.w wsḫ.t**

*ỉmy-rꜣ wsḫ.t**

ỉmy-rꜣ pr ᶜḥꜣ.(w)

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t ḥtp.t n(y)-sw.t

ḥry-sštꜣ n nṯr≈f

ḥm-nṯr Ḥḳt

ḥm-nṯr Sꜣḥw-Rᶜ

ḥm-nṯr s.wt Iwnw

ḥm-nṯr st-ỉb nb rᶜ nb

ỉmy-ỉb nb≈f

One under the head of the King

Dignitary and Administrator

(One of) the foremost throne

Pillar of *knm.wt*-people

Master of secrets of royal word command(s)

Magnate of the tens of Upper Egypt

Overseer of royal works

Overseer of the places of offerings and provisions

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣᶜ.t**

Overseer of the great enclosure*

Master of secrets of dividing words

Director of scribes of the *wsḫ.t*-court*

Overseer of the *wsḫ.t*-court*

Overseer of the house of warrior(s)

Overseer of reckoning/separating royal offerings

Master of secrets of his god

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Heket

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Sahure

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of the places of Heliopolis

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of the favour of the lord every day

One in the heart of his lord

17: ᶜnḫ-m-sꜣ=f: 4th-5th Dynasty tomb, Giza

(after Hassan 1950: 147)

rḫ-n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ sr.w

*sꜣb sms.w hꜣy.t**

*sꜣb rꜣ Nḫn**

smꜣᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw

King's Acquaintance

Overseer of *sr*-officials

Dignitary and Elder of the portal*

Dignitary and Mouth of Hierakonpolis*

Enforcer of dividing words

18: ᶜnḫ-m-ṯnnt: 5th-6th Dynasty tomb, Giza

(after de Cenival 1975: 67)

rḫ-n(y)-sw.t

sꜣb sḥḏ sš.(w)

sꜣb sš.(w)

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏꜥ-mdw

wḏꜥ-mdw štꜣ

King's Acquaintance

Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s)

Dignitary of scribe(s)

Master of secrets of dividing words

Secret divider of words

19: ꜥnḫ-m-ṯnnt: 6th Dynasty lintel, Giza(?)

(after Fischer 1960: 303, pl. 3)

sꜣb sꜣ pr

ỉmy-ḫ.t

*sms.w hꜣy.t**

smꜣꜥ wḏꜥ-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t

*sꜣb rꜣ Nḫn**

Dignitary and Guardian of the house

One in attendance

Elder of the portal*

Enforcer of dividing words of the great enclosure

Dignitary and Mouth of Hierakonpolis*

20: Wr-ỉr-n-Ptḥ: 5th Dynasty chapel, Saqqara

(after de Cenival 1975: 67)

rḫ-n(y)-sw.t

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

sꜣb sḥḏ sš.(w)

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣꜥ.t**

ḥry-sštꜣ wḏꜥ-mdw mꜣꜥ

ḥry-sštꜣ

sš n ꜥ n(y)-sw.t

ḥm-nṯr Ḥw.t-Ḥr Rᶜ m st-ỉb Rᶜ

wᶜb n(y)-sw.t

King's Acquaintance

Dignitary and Overseer of scribe(s)

Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s)

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mɜᶜ.t**

True master of secrets of dividing words

Master of secrets

Scribe of royal documents

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Hathor and Ra in the favour of Ra

Royal *wᶜb*-priest

21: Wr-ḫww: Late 5th Dynasty tomb, Giza

(after Hassan 1944: 237-8)

ỉry-ḫ.t n(y)-sw.t

sš ᶜ n(y)-sw.t (n) pr-ᶜɜ

sɜb ỉmy-rɜ sš.(w)

*sɜb sḫḏ sš.(w) n ḥw.ty-wr.t(y) ỉmy wr.t ḫnw**

sɜb sḫḏ sš.(w) n ỉp.t/wp.t

sḫḏ sš.(w) pr mḏɜ.t

ḥry wḏb

ỉmy-rɜ st-ḏfɜ

*ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr m ḏɜḏɜ.t wr.t**

ỉmy-rɜ gs ỉmy wr.t ᶜɜ Ḥr

ỉmy-rɜ mšᶜ nfr.w

sḏm.(w)-mdw m sštɜ nb

sḫḏ

wḏᶜ-mdw m hɜy.t

*ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr**

pḫr mḥ m šwy.t

*sḫḏ sš.(w) n ḥw.t-wr.t**

*ḥm-nṯr Mɜᶜ.t**

ḥm-nṯr Wsỉr

ḥm-nṯr Mn-kɜ.w-Rᶜ

ḥm-nṯr Nfr-ỉr-kȝ-Rᶜ

ḥm-nṯr st-ỉb Rᶜ [Nfr-ỉr-kȝ-Rᶜ]

One concerned with royal affairs

Scribe of royal document(s) of the great estate

Dignitary and Overseer of scribes

Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s) of the two great enclosures in the *wr.t* of the interior*

Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s) of reckoning/separating

Inspector of scribe(s) of the house of the scroll

Master of diverting offerings

Overseer of the place of sustenance

Director of scribe(s) of petitioning in the great *ḏȝḏȝ.t*-court*

Overseer of half of that which is in the great *wr.t* of the pyramid *Ḥr*

Overseer of the gang of recruits

Hearer of words in every secret

Inspector

Divider of words in the portal

Director of scribe(s) of petitioning*

One who encloses and fills in the shade

Inspector of scribes of the great enclosure*

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mȝᶜ.t**

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Osiris

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Menkaure

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Neferirkare

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of the favoured place of Ra [of Neferirkare]

22: Pḥ-r-nfr: 4th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after Junker 1939: 64-72)

ỉry-ḫ.t pr-ḥḏ

sḥḏ rḫ.t pr-ḥḏ

ḫry ḫtm pr-ḥḏ

ỉmy-rȝ ḥw.t ḥmᶜ

ỉmy-rȝ ḥw.t šn.t

ỉmy-rȝ pr-ḥḏ

ḫry sḏm

wḏ-mdw ḥry.(w)-wḏb.w

ỉmy-rꜣ pr ꜥḏ

ỉmy-rꜣ ḥw.t mꜣ(ꜥ).t(?)

ḫrp sḥ

ỉmy-rꜣ pr ḥry.(w)-wḏb.w

wḏꜥ-mdw

ḫrp rtḥ.(w) fsw.(w)

ỉmy-rꜣ ḥw.t nḏ.t ḥṯ

ỉmy-rꜣ ḥw.t nḏ.t ḥṯ

ḫrp bnr(y.w)

ỉmy-rꜣ ḥw.t šmꜥ.t

ỉmy-rꜣ pr šnꜥ ḫn.w ꜥfty.(w)

ỉmy-rꜣ pr šnꜥ (Tꜣ)-mḥw ꜥfty.(w)

ỉmy-rꜣ šnw.t nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

ḥḳꜣ ḥw.t ꜥꜣ.(t) ḥw.t sn

ḥꜣ.ty-ꜥ Ḏdw(?)

ḥḳꜣ ḥw.t ꜥꜣ.t pr Iwnw pḫr Iwnw

ḥḳꜣ ḥw.t ꜥꜣ.t ḥw.t ḥḳꜣ

sꜣb nḫt-ḫrw(?)

ḥry sḳr(?)

ḥḳꜣ n(y)-sw.t pr ỉmn.t

ḥḳꜣ ḥw.t ꜥꜣ.t ḥw.t mr=s-ꜥnḫ

ḥḳꜣ ḥw.t ꜥꜣ.t w bỉty

ḥḳꜣ ḥw.t ꜥꜣ.t rꜣ wr

ꜥḏ-mr Ṯb-nṯr

ỉmy-ḫ.t Ḥꜣ

ḥm-nṯr Ḏḥwty

ḥm-nṯr Spdw

ḥm-nṯr Ḥḳt

ḥm-nṯr Ḥr

[ḥm-nṯr] Ḥw.t-Ḥr

rḫ-n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ kꜣ.t nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

wr mḏ Šmꜥ.w

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

ḥḳꜣ ḥw.t ꜥꜣ.t ḥw.t ỉḥ.t

ᶜḏ-mr sbꜣ Ḥr ḫnty-pt

ḥm-nṯr Ḥr ḫnty dmḏ.t

ḥm-nṯr Swty ḫnty ḥw Sṯr.t

ᶜḏ-mr ḫꜣs.t ḏmnt.t

ḫrp ḏꜣrr.wt

ᶜḏ-mr ḏmnt.t

One concerned with affairs of the treasury

Inspector of accounts of the treasury

Seal-bearer of the treasury

Overseer of the *ḥmᶜ*-enclosure

Overseer of the enclosure of washing(?)

Overseer of the treasury

One charged with hearing

Word command(er) of the diverter(s) of offerings

Overseer of the house of cow fat

Overseer of the enclosure of *Mꜣᶜ.t*(?)

Director of the *sḥ*-hall

Overseer of the house of the diverter(s) of offerings

Divider of words

Director of baker(s) and cook(s)

Overseer of the enclosure of grinding the *ḥṯ*

Overseer of the enclosure of grinding the *bw*

Director of confectioners

Overseer of the Upper Egyptian enclosure

Overseer of the brewers' storehouse of the Interior

Overseer of the brewers' storehouse of Lower Egypt

Overseer of every royal granary

Governor of the great enclosure of the "Enclosure of the *sn*"

Count of Busiris

Governor of the great enclosure of the estate of Heliopolis and the surroundings of Heliopolis

Governor of the great enclosure of "Enclosure of the governor"

Dignitary and Strong-voiced one(?)

One who smites(?)

Royal governor of the western estate

Governor of the great enclosure “Enclosure of she-loves-life”

Governor of the great enclosure of the *w*-settlement of the King of Lower Egypt

Governor of the great enclosure of the “Great door” settlement

Administrator of Sebennytos

One associated with the *Ḥ*ꜣ

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Thoth

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Soped

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Heket

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Horus

[*Ḥm-nṯr*-priest] of Hathor

King’s Acquaintance

Overseer of all royal works

Magnate of the tens of Upper Egypt

One under the head of the King

Governor of the great enclosure of “Enclosure of the cow”

Administrator of the “Star of Horus, foremost of the sky”

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Horus, foremost of the quay;

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Seth, foremost of smiting (in) the *sṯrt*-settlement

Administrator of the western desert

Director of the vineyards

Administrator of the West

23: Ptḥ-ḥtp: 6th Dynasty inscription in tomb of his father, ***St-kꜣ***, Giza

(after Junker 1944: 201)

sꜣb sḫḏ sš.(w)

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

*ḥry-sštꜣ n ḥw.t-wr.t**

[ḥry-s]štꜣ n wḏꜤ-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏꜤ-mdw štꜣ n ḥw.t-wr.t

*ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr**

n(y) ns.t ḫnt.t

sꜣb Ꜥḏ-mr

*ḥm-nṯr MꜣꜤ.t**

Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s)

Dignitary and Overseer of scribe(s)

Master of secrets of the great enclosure*

Master of secrets of dividing words of the great enclosure

Master of secrets of secretly dividing words of the great enclosure

Director of scribe(s) of petitioning*

One of the foremost throne

Dignitary and Administrator

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣᶜt**

24: Ptḥ-ḥtp Iỉ-n-ᶜnḫ: 6th Dynasty(?) tomb, Saqqara

(after Hassan & Iskander 1975[B]: 7)

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

sꜣb sḫḏ sš.(w)

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

*ḫrp sš.(w) ḥw.t-wr.t**

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏᶜ-mdw

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t**

ḥm-nṯr Wsỉr ḫnty Ḏdw

ḥm-nṯr Sꜣḥw-Rᶜ

ḥry-sštꜣ

*ḫrp wsḫ.t**

*ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr**

sꜣb sḫḏ ỉry.(w) mḏꜣ.t

Dignitary and Overseer of scribe(s)

Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s)

Overseer of scribe(s)

Director of scribe(s) of the great enclosure*

Master of secrets of dividing words

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣᶜ.t**

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Osiris, foremost of Busiris

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Sahure

Master of secrets

Director of the *wsḫ.t*-court*

Director of scribes of petitioning*

Dignitary and Inspector of those of the scroll

25: Ptḥ-Špss-Impy: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after de Cenival 1975: 65-6)

*sꜣb rꜣ Nḫn**

ꜥꜣ n ỉrw.w

wr ht

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣꜥ.t**

ḥry-sšṯꜣ n sḏm.t wꜥ m ḥw.t-wr.t-6

smꜣꜥ wḏꜥ-mdw

Dignitary and Mouth of Hierakonpolis*

Great one of the crew

Chief of the *ht*-bread

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣꜥ.t**

Unique master of secrets of hearing in the six great enclosures

Enforcer of dividing words

26: Mꜣ-nfr: 5th Dynasty(?) tomb, Saqqara

(after Mariette 1889: 266)

sꜣb ꜥḏ-mr Šmꜥ.w

sꜣb ꜥḏ-mr

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣꜥ.t**

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t n ỉb nb=f n st-ỉb nb=f

*ḫrp wsḫ.t**

ḥm Ḥr ḳꜥ(?)

ḥm-nṯr wr

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉs.wy n ḫry.(w)-ḫtm pr ḥry.(w)-wḏb.(w)

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

n(y) ns.t ḫnt.t

wr Šmꜥ.w

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) ꜥ.t n(y)-sw.t

[…] n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

ḫrp sš.(w) r ḫrp sš.(w) nb

ỉwn knm.wt

[…] n wḏ.(t)-mdw nb.t n.(t) n(y)-sw.t

mdw rḫy.t

wḏ wḏꜥ-mdw n ḥry.(w)-wḏb.(w)

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏ.t nb.t n.(t) n(y)-sw.t

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t wr

sš Šmꜥ.w

Dignitary and Administrator of Upper Egypt

Dignitary and Administrator

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣꜥ.t**

One under the head of the King of the heart of his lord and of the favour of his lord

Director of the *wsḫ.t*-court*

Servant of Horus of *ḳꜥ*(?)

Great *ḥm-nṯr*-priest

Overseer of the two chambers of the seal-bearer(s) of the house of the diverter(s) of offering(s)

One under the head of the King

One of the foremost throne

Great one of Upper Egypt

Overseer of scribe(s) of royal document(s)

[…] of the King

Overseer of scribes

Director of scribes more than any director of scribes

Pillar of *knm.wt*-people

Master of secrets of every royal word command

Staff of *rḫy.t*-people

Command(er) and divider of words of the diverter(s) of offerings

Overseer of every royal command

Great one under the head of the King

Scribe of Upper Egypt

27: Mrrỉ: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after Hassan & Iskander 1975c: 25-6)

ỉry-pᶜ.t

ḥ3.ty-ᶜ

ỉmy-r3 nỉw.t

*t3y.ty s3b ṯ3.ty**

ḫry-ḥb.t ḥry-tp

ỉmy-r3 k3.t nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-r3 sš.(w) ᶜ n(y)-sw.t

sš mḏḥ n(y)-sw.t

ḫtm.w-bỉty

smr wᶜ.ty

ỉmy-r3 ỉs.wy n ḫkr.(w) n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-r3 pr.wy-ḥḏ

ỉmy-r3 sḏm.(t) nb.(t)

ỉmy-r3 šnw.ty

ỉmy-r3 Šmᶜ.w

ỉm3-ᶜ

ỉmy-r3 s.wt špss.wt pr-ᶜ3

*ỉmy-r3 ḥw.t-wr.t-6**

ỉmy-ỉb n n(y)-sw.t ḫnty t3.wy=f

*t3y.ty sšm.t ṯ3.ty**

mḏḥ ḳd.w n(y)-sw.t m pr.wy

Member of the elite

Count

Overseer of the pyramid town

Shrouded one, Dignitary, and Vizier*

Chief lector priest

Overseer of all royal works

Overseer of scribe(s) of royal document(s)

Master royal scribe

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Sole companion

Overseer of the two rooms of the royal ornament(s);

Overseer of the two treasuries

Overseer of every hearing

Overseer of the two granaries

Overseer of Upper Egypt

Gracious of arm

Overseer of the noble places of the great estate

Overseer of the six great enclosures*

One in the heart of the King at the forefront of his lands

Shrouded one, Guide, and Vizier*

Master builder of the King in the two houses

28: Mrr.w-kꜣ: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after Firth & Gunn 1926: 131-36)

ỉry-pˁ.t

ḥꜣ.ty-ˁ

*tꜣy.ty sꜣb ṯꜣ.ty**

ḫry-ḥb.t ḥry-tp

ỉmꜣ-ˁ

smr wˁ.ty

wt Inpw

ḏꜣ?) Inpw

smꜣ Inpw

ḥry wr.w

sš mḏꜣ.t nṯr

ḫrp ỉꜣ.t nb.t nṯr.t

ˁ Skr

ˁ Ḥḳt

ḫrp ns.ty

ḫrp ḥw.wt n.t mw

ỉmy-rꜣ pr-n(y)-sw.t nb

stp-sꜣ

ḫry-ḥb.t

ḥry-sštꜣ n pr dwꜣ.t

ḥry-sštꜣ n mdw-nṯr

ỉmy-ỉb n n(y)-sw.t ḫnty ỉdb.wy=f

ỉmy-rꜣ dd,t pt ḳmꜣ.t tꜣ

ḫtm.w-bỉty

mdw Ḥp

sm

ḫrp šnḏw.t nb.t

ꜥḏ-mr P(y)w

wr ỉd.t

ḫw-ꜥ(?)

ḥḳꜣ Bꜣt

ḫrp Iꜣkmt(?)

ỉmy-rꜣ ḫnr.t(?) n(y)-sw.t

sms.w snw.t

wr mꜣ.w m pr.wy

ỉmy-rꜣ ḳbb.wy m pr-ꜥꜣ

ỉry-ꜥꜣ Dwꜣ.w

ḥm-nṯr Ḥr ỉmy šn.t

ỉmy-rꜣ s.wt špṯ.wt pr-ꜥꜣ

ỉmy-rꜣ pr.wy-ḥḏ

ỉmy-rꜣ šnw.ty

ỉmy-rꜣ pr pḫr.t

ỉmy-rꜣ sḫ.ty ḥtp.(w)t t ḥnḳ.t kꜣ.(w) ꜣpd.(w)

ỉmy-rꜣ gs.wy swnw.w pr-ꜥꜣ

*ỉmy-rꜣ ḥw.t-wr.t-6**

rꜣ P nb

ỉmy-rꜣ wꜥb.ty

ỉmy-rꜣ pr.wy-nbw

ỉmy-ỉs Nḫn

sꜣ.w Nḫn

ḥry-tp Nḫb

sḏty n(y)-sw.t wr

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) ꜥ n(y)-sw.t

smꜣ Inpw

ḫry nws n Wꜣḏyt

ḥry-sštꜣ n mꜣꜣ.t wꜥ

sḫm nṯr.w

ỉmy-rꜣ ꜥḥ nṯr Šmꜥ.w

smꜣ Ḥr

wr mꜣ.w

ꜥḏ-mr sbꜣ Ḥr ḫnty-pt

ḫrp ḥw.wt n.t dšr.t

ḫrp smsw.w Ḥr nṯr.w

wr-5 m pr Ḏḥwty

mdw Ḥsꜣt

ỉmy-ỉb n(y)-sw.t m st=f nb.(t)

sḥd ḥm.(w)-nṯr Ḏd s.wt sꜣ-Rꜥ Ttỉ

ḥry-sšꜣ n wḏꜥ-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t-6

wḏ-mdw n sr.w

ḥm bꜣ.w P

ỉmy-rꜣ ḫkr(?) n(y)-sw.t nb

ỉmy-ỉs

ḥm bꜣ.w Nḫn

ḥry-sšꜣ n štꜣ.w pt

ỉmy-rꜣ šy(?) pr-ꜥꜣ

sḥḏ ḥm.(w)-nṯr ḫnt(y.w)-š Ḏd s.wt sꜣ-Rꜥ Ttỉ

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉs.wy n ỉmꜣ n(y)-sw.t

ḥry-sšꜣ n wḏ.t-mdw nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ kꜣ.t nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

ḫrp ỉbṯ Ḥr

Member of the elite

Count

Shrouded one, Dignitary, and Vizier*

Chief lector priest

Gracious of arm

Sole companion

Wt-priest of Anubis

Ḏꜣ(?)-priest of Anubis

Smꜣ-priest of Min

Chief of the great ones

Scribe of the scroll of the god

Director of every divine office

Arm of Sokar

Arm of Heket

Director of the two thrones

Director of enclosures of water

Overseer of every royal estate

(One of) the palace

Lector priest

Master of secrets of the morning house

Master of secrets of divine words

One in the heart of the King and Foremost of his two banks

Overseer of that which is given by the sky and produced by the earth

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Staff of the Apis-bull

Sm-priest

Director of every kilt

Administrator of those of Buto

Great one of fragrance

One who is *ḫw* of arm(?)

Ruler of *B3t*

Director of *I3kmt(?)*-settlement

Overseer of the confined space(?) of the King

Elder of the *snw.t*-house

Greatest of seers in the two houses

Overseer of the two cool places in the great estate

Doorkeeper of the *Dw3.w(?)*

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Horus who is in anger(?)

Overseer of the noble places of the great estate

Overseer of the two treasuries

Overseer of the two granaries

Overseer of the house of prescription

Overseer of the two fields of offerings – bread, beer, oxen and fowl

Overseer of the two boat sides of the physicians of the great estate

Overseer of the six great enclosures*

Mouth of every Butite

Overseer of the two purification buildings

Overseer of the two treasuries (of gold)

One in the chamber of Hierakonpolis

Guardian of Hierakonpolis

Chief of El-Kab

Great foster-child of the King

Overseer of scribe(s) of royal documents

Smꜣ-priest of Anubis

One under the *nwṯ* of Wadjet

Master of secrets of that which is seen alone

Power of the gods

Overseer of the palace of the god of Upper Egypt

Smꜣ-priest of Horus

Greatest of seers

Administrator of the "Star of Horus, foremost of the sky"

Director of the enclosures of the red crown

Director of followers of Horus and the gods

Great one of five in the temple of Thoth

Staff of Hesat

One in the heart of the King in every place of his

Inspector of *ḥm-nṯr*-priests of "Enduring are the places of son of Ra Teti"

Master of secrets of dividing words in the six great enclosures

Word command(er) of *sr*-officials

Servant of the *bꜣ*-souls of Buto

Overseer of all royal adornment

One in the chamber

Servant of the *bꜣ*-souls of Hierakonpolis

Master of secrets of the secrets of the sky

Overseer of the two lakes(?) of the great estate

Inspector of *ḥm-nṯr* -priests and *ḫnty-š* -official(s) of "Enduring are the places of son of Ra Teti"

Overseer of the two chambers of royal graciousness(?)

Master of secrets of every secret royal word command

Overseer of all royal works

Director of the bird-trap of Horus

29: Mḥw: 5th Dynasty tomb, Giza

(seriously damaged; after Smith 1958: 56-57)

sꜣb smsw

sḫḏ ḥry.(w)-wḏb.(w)

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏꜥ-mḏw nb štꜣ n ḥw.t-wr.t

*sꜣb rꜣ Nḫn**

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣꜥ.t**

Dignitary and Elder

Inspector of diverter(s) of offerings

Master of secrets of every secret dividing of words of the great enclosure

Dignitary and Mouth of Hierakonpolis*

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣꜥ.t**

30: Mḥw: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(After Altenmüller 1998: 34-37)

ỉwn knm.wt

ỉmꜣ-ꜥ

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉs.wy ḫkr n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ wꜥb.ty

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t m pr.wy

ỉmy-rꜣ wḥꜥ.w

ỉmy-rꜣ wḏ.t-mdw nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ pr.wy-nbw

ỉmy-rꜣ pr.wy-ḥḏ

ỉmy-rꜣ nỉw.wt

ỉmy-rꜣ nỉw.wt mꜣ.wt

*ỉmy-rꜣ ḥw.t-wr.t**

*ỉmy-rꜣ ḥw.t-wr.t-6**

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) ꜥ n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) ḫry.(w)-ḫtm mḏꜣ.t

ỉmy-rꜣ sḏm.t nb.t

ỉmy-rꜣ Šmꜥ.w

ỉmy-rꜣ šnw.ty

šnw.ty kꜣ.t nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ gs-pr

ỉmy-rꜣ gs.wy-pr

ỉmy-rꜣ gs.wy-pr.wy

ỉry-pᶜ.t

ỉry nfr-ḥꜣ.t

sꜣb ᶜḏ-mr

mdw rḫy.t

mdw Ḥp

ḥꜣ.ty-ᶜ

ḥry-sšꜣ

ḥry-sšꜣ n wḏ.t-mdw nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

ḥry-sšꜣ n pr dwꜣ.t

ḥry-tp Nḫb

ḥḳꜣ ḥw.t

ḫrp ỉꜣ.t nb.t nṯr.t

ḫrp m nṯr.w

ḫrp ḥw.wt n.t

ḫrp šnḏw.t nb.t

ḫry-ḥb.(t)

ḫry-ḥb.(t) ḥry-tp

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

sm

smꜣ Mỉnw

smr wᶜ.ty

sḫḏ ḥm.(w)-nṯr Mn nfr mry-Rᶜ

sḫḏ ḥm.(w)-nṯr Ḏd s.wt Ttỉ

ḫtm.w-bỉty

*tꜣy.ty sꜣb ṯꜣ.ty**

Pillar of *knm.wt*-people

Gracious of arm

Overseer of the two chambers of royal ornaments

Overseer of the two places of purification

Overseer of reckoning/separating in the two houses

Overseer of trappers

Overseer of every royal word command

Overseer of the two treasuries (of gold)

Overseer of the two treasuries

Overseer of towns

Overseer of new towns

Overseer of the great enclosure*

Overseer of the six great enclosures*

Overseer of scribe(s) of royal document(s)

Overseer of scribes and seal-bearers of the scroll

Overseer of every hearing

Overseer of Upper Egypt

Overseer of the two granaries

Overseer of all royal works

Overseer of half of the estate

Overseer of the two halves of the estate

Overseer of the two halves of the two estates

Member of the elite

One associated with “beautiful of face”

Dignitary and Administrator

Staff of *rḫy.t*-people

Staff of the Apis-bull

Count

Master of secrets

Master of secrets of every royal word command

Master of secrets of the morning house

Chief of El-Kab

Estate governor

Director of every divine office

Director by means of the gods

Director of the enclosures of the *n.t*-throne

Director of every kilt

Lector priest

Chief lector priest

One under the head of the King

Sm-priest

Smꜣʿ-priest of Min

Sole companion

Inspector of *ḥm-nṯr*-priests of "Established and beautiful" of Meryre

Inspector of *ḥm-nṯr*-priests of "Enduring are the places of Teti"

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Shrouded one, Dignitary, and Vizier*

31: N(y)-ᶜnḫ-Rᶜ: 5th Dynasty tomb, Giza

(after Hassan 1943: 151)

sꜣ n(y)-sw.t

smr wᶜ.ty

ḥry-sšꜣ n pr-dwꜣ.t

ḥry-sšꜣ n n(y)-sw.t m s.wt=f nb.t

ḥry-sšꜣ n n(y)-sw.t n mdw-nṯr

ḫry-ḥb

ỉmy-rꜣ kꜣ.t nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

sms.w ỉs

ỉwn knm.wt

mdw rḫy.t

*ḫrp wsḫ.t**

wḏ wḏᶜ-mdw mꜣᶜ n ḥry.(w)-wḏb.(w)

ỉmy-ỉb n nb=f

Son of the King

Sole companion

Master of secrets of the morning house

Master of secrets of the King in every place of his

Master of secrets of divine words

Lector priest

Overseer of all royal works

One under the head of the King

Elder of the chamber

Pillar of *knm.wt*-people

Staff of *rḫy.t*-people

Director of the *wsḫ.t*-court*

True command(er) and divider of words of the diverter(s) of offerings

One who is in the heart of his lord

32: N(y)-ᶜnḫ Snfrw Ffȝ: 4th Dynasty tomb, Dahshur

(after de Morgan 1903: 13)

[ḥry]-sštȝ n wḏᶜ-mdw

n(y) ns.t ḫnt.t

*ḥm-nṯr Mȝᶜ.t**

[ḥry]-sštȝ n wḏᶜ-mdw m ḥw.t-wr.t-6

sȝb sḫḏ sš.(w)

Master of secrets of dividing words

One of the foremost throne

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mȝᶜ.t**

Master of secrets of dividing words in the six great enclosures

Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s)

33: N(y)-Mᶜȝ.t-sd: 5th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(After Mariette 1889: 329)

*sȝb rȝ Nḫn**

smȝᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw mȝᶜ

*ḥry-sštȝ n ḥw.t-wr.t**

ḥm-nṯr Ḥw.t-Ḥr m st-ỉb Rᶜ

ḥm-nṯr ȝḫ.(t) Nfr-ỉr-kȝ-Rᶜ

ḥry-sšṯȝ

ḥm-nṯr bȝ.w nṯr Nfr=f-Rᶜ

ḥm-nṯr Mn s.wt N(y)-wsr-Rᶜ

ỉrr mrr.t n.(t) nb=f

Dignitary and Mouth of Hierakonpolis*

True Enforcer of dividing words

Master of secrets of the great enclosure*

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Hathor and Ra in the favour of Ra

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of the "Horizon of Neferirkare"

Master of secrets

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of the *bꜣ*-souls of the god Neferefre

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of "Enduring are the places of Nyuserre"

One who does what is loved by his lord

34: N(y)-kꜣ.w-ḥr: 5th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(seriously damaged; after Quibell 1909: pl. 63)

rḫ-n(y)-sw.t

ḥry-sštꜣ […]

ḥm-nṯr […] Rᶜ […]

sš

smꜣᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw

King's Acquaintance

Master of secrets […]

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of […] Ra […]

Scribe

Enforcer of dividing words

35: Nfr-ỉr.t-n=f: 5th Dynasty(?) tomb, Saqqara

(after Mariette 1889: 327)

*ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr**

ḥm-nṯr Rᶜ m st-ỉb Rᶜ Iwnw

sꜣb sḫḏ sš.(w)

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

ḥry-sštꜣ wḏᶜ-mdw ḥw.t-wr.t

sꜣ pr wr mr.t

Sꜣḥw-Rᶜ sḫḏ ḥm.(w)-nṯr

Director of scribe(s) of petitioning*

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Ra in the favour of Ra of Heliopolis

Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s)

Dignitary and Overseer of scribe(s)

Master of secrets of dividing words of the great enclosure

Guardian of the great house of *mr.t*-people of Sahure

Inspector of *ḥm-nṯr*-priest(s)

36: Nfr-ỉr.t-n=f: 5th Dynasty(?) chapel, Saqqara

(after van de Walle 1978: pls. 5, 7, 11)

*ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr**

ḥm-nṯr Rᶜ m st-ỉb Rᶜ Nḫn Rᶜ

sꜣb sḫḏ sš.(w)

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏᶜ-mdw

sḫḏ ḥm.(w)-nṯr sꜣ wr mr.t Sꜣḥw-Rᶜ Ḥw.t-Ḥr

wᶜb n(y)-sw.t

sꜣb sš.(w)

[…] kꜣ.t nb.t n.t sḫ.t

rḫ n(y)-sw.t

ḥm-nṯr Ḥw.t-Ḥr wṯs.t kꜣ.t=s

Director of scribe(s) of petitioning*

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Ra in the favour of Ra and the shrine of Ra

Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s)

Dignitary and Overseer of scribe(s)

Master of secrets of dividing words

Inspector of *ḥm-nṯr*-priests and the great phyle of the *mr.t*-building of Sahure and Hathor

Royal *wᶜb*-priest

Dignitary of scribe(s)

[…] of all works of the field

King's Acquaintance

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Hathor, the throne, and her works

37: Nnkꜣ rn=f nfr Ppy-Nnꜣ: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after *Urk.* I, 260: 8-10)

*rꜣ Nḫn**

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t**

mḥ-ꜣb n n(y)-sw.t m nḏ rn=f

smꜣᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw

ḫry-sšṯꜣ n sḏm.t wᶜ m ḫw.t-wr.t-6

Mouth of Hierakonpolis*

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣᶜ.t**

Confidant of the King in uttering his name

Enforcer of dividing words

Unique master of secrets of hearing in the six great enclosures

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38: Rᶜ-wr: 5th Dynasty tomb, Giza

(after Junker 1938: 234)

sꜣb ꜣmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

wr mḏ Šmᶜ.w

ḫry-sšṯꜣ n wḏᶜ-mdw šṯꜣ n ḫw.t-wr.t

sꜣb ᶜḏ-mr

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t**

Dignitary and Overseer of scribe(s)

Magnate of the tens of Upper Egypt

Master of secrets of secret dividing of words in the great enclosure

Dignitary and Administrator

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣᶜ.t**

39: Ḥwỉ: 6th Dynasty inscription in tomb of his father, ***Ptḥ-Špss-Impy***, Saqqara:
(after Munro 1984: 93, fig. 3):

*sꜣ sms.w hꜣy.t**
*sꜣb rꜣ Nḫn**
smꜣᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw

Son of the Elder of the portal*
Dignitary and Mouth of Hierakonpolis*
Enforcer of dividing words

40: Ḥwỉ: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara
(after Drioton 1943: 502)

ḫnty-š mr Ḏd s.wt Ttỉ
ḥm-nṯr mr Mn nfr Ppy
ỉmy-rꜣ ḫnty.(w)-š
ḫry-ḥb.(t) ḏbꜣ.t
ỉmy-rꜣ Šmᶜ.w
ỉmy-rꜣ sḏm.t nb.t štꜣ.(t)
ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏ.(t)-mdw nb.t štꜣ.t
ḥry-sštꜣ n ỉp.t/wp.t štꜣ.t
ḥry-sštꜣ n pr dwꜣ.t

Ḫnty-š-official of the pyramid “Enduring are the places of Teti”
Ḥm-nṯr-priest of the pyramid “Established and beautiful” of Pepy
Overseer of *ḫnty-š*-officials
Lector priest of the robing room
Overseer of Upper Egypt
Overseer of every secret hearing
Master of secrets of every secret word command
Master of secrets of secret reckoning/separating
Master of secrets of the morning house

41: Ḥsi: 6th Dynasty chapel, Saqqara

(after Kanawati & Abder-Raziq 1999: 11-13)

Before vizieral appointment:

ỉwn knm.wt

ỉmy-ỉb n n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉs n pr ḥry.(w)-wḏb.w

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉs n mr.t

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉs n ḫry.(w)-ḫtm.t

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t [m pr.wy]

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t ḥtp.t-nṯr [m pr.wy]

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t ḥtp.t-ntr m Tꜣ-mḥw Šmᶜ.w ḏr.w

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t ḥtp.t-ntr m tꜣ r ḏr=f

ỉmy-rꜣ wḏᶜ-mdw nb štꜣ n ḥw.t-wr.t-6

ỉmy-rꜣ wḏᶜ-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t-6

ỉmy-rꜣ n pr ḥry.(w)-wḏb.w

ỉmy-rꜣ n ḫry.(w)-ḫtm.t

*ỉmy-rꜣ ḥw.t-wr.t**

ỉmy-rꜣ sḏm.t nb.t

ỉmy-ḫt ḥm.(w)-nṯr Ḏd s.wt Tỉ

wᶜb Ḏd s.wt Tỉ

mty n sꜣ

mdw rḫy.t

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t**

ḥm-nṯr Ḥḳt

ḥry-sštꜣ

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏᶜ-mdw

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏ.t nb.t

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏ.t-mdw nb.t [štꜣ.t]

ḥry-sštꜣ n n(y)-sw.t m st=f nb.t

ḫnty-š Ḏd s.wt Tỉ

ḫrp sš.(w)

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

sꜣb ᶜḏ-mr

sꜣb sš

sꜣb sḫḏ sš.(w)

sš ᶜ n(y)-sw.t ḫft ḥr

sš n sꜣ

sḫḏ ḥm.(w)-nṯr Ḏd s.wt Ttỉ

Pillar of *knm.wt*-people

One in the heart of the King

Overseer of the chamber of the house of the diverter(s) of offerings

Overseer of the chamber of the *mr.t*-people

Overseer of the chamber of seal-bearer(s)

Overseer of reckoning/separating (in the two houses)

Overseer of reckoning/separating offerings (in the two houses)

Overseer of reckoning/separating offerings in all of Lower and Upper Egypt

Overseer of reckoning/separating offerings in the entire land

Overseer of every secret dividing of words in the six great enclosures

Overseer of dividing words in the six great enclosures

Overseer of the house of the diverters of offerings

Overseer of seal-bearer(s)

Overseer of the great enclosure*

Overseer of every hearing

One associated with the *ḥm-nṯr*-priests of “Enduring are the places of Teti”

Wᶜb-priest of “Enduring are the places of Teti”

Controller of a phyle

Staff of *rḫy.t*-people

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣᶜ.t**

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Heket

Master of secrets

Master of secrets of dividing words

Master of secrets of every command

Master of secrets of every secret word command

Master of secrets of the King in every place of his

Ḫnty-š-official of “Enduring are the places of Teti”

Director of scribes

One under the head of the King

Dignitary and Overseer of scribes

Dignitary and Administrator

Dignitary and Scribe

Dignitary and Inspector of scribes;

Scribe of royal documents in front of the face

Scribe of the phyle

Inspector of *ḥm-nṯr*-priests of “Enduring are the places of Teti”.

After vizieral appointment:

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) ˁ n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ kꜣ.t nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

mdw Ḥpw

mdw Ḥsꜣt

rꜣ P nb

ḫtm.w-bỉty

*tꜣy.ty sꜣb ṯꜣ.ty**

Overseer of scribe(s) of royal documents

Overseer of all royal works

Staff of the Apis-bull

Staff of Hesat

Mouth of every Butite

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Shrouded one, Dignitary, and Vizier*

42: Ḫnw: 4th Dynasty(?) tomb, Giza

(after James 1961: 9, pl. 9)

rḫ-n(y)-sw.t

sḥḏ ḫnty.(w)-š

ḥry-sštꜣ

*sms.w ḥꜣy.t**

smꜣˁ wḏˁ-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t

sḥḏ wˁb.(w)

ḥm-nṯr Mn-kꜣ.w-Rˁ

King's Acquaintance

Inspector of the *ḫnty-š*-officials

Master of secrets

Elder of the portal*

Enforcer of dividing words in the great enclosure

Inspector of *wᶜb*-priests

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Menkaure

43: Sbky: 6th Dynasty tomb, Heliopolis

(after Daressy 1916: 199-204)

*ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) ᶜpr.w m ḥw.t-[wr.t]**

ḫry-sštꜣ n wḏᶜ-mḏw m ḥw.t-wr.t-6

ḥꜣ.ty-ᶜ

ḫtm.w-bỉty

smr wᶜ.ty

wr mꜣ.w

ỉt nṯr

sšn Nḫby(?)

wr n pt

sm

ḫrp sḫm.ty nb.t

ḫry-ḥb.t ḥry-tp

ỉmy-rꜣ gs.wy-pr

rḫ ᶜ.t nṯr(?)

ḫry-ḥb

ỉmy-rꜣ ḫnw

ᶜ.t nṯr(?)

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) ᶜpr.w m pr.w

ỉmy-rꜣ pr […]

Overseer of scribe(s) of equipment in the great enclosure*

Master of secrets of dividing words in the six great enclosures

Count

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Sole companion

Greatest of seers

Father of the god

Weaver connected to El-Kab(?)

Great one of the sky

Sm-priest

Director of every double crown

Chief lector priest

Overseer of the two halves of the estate

One who knows the limb of the god(?)

Lector priest

Overseer of the Interior

Limb of the god(?)

One under the head of the King

Overseer of scribe(s) of equipment of the houses

Overseer of the house […]

44: Sfḫ-Ptḥ Nby: 6th Dynasty graffito, temple of Djedkare, Saqqara

(after Fischer 1961: 172)

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉp.t/wp.t

sꜣb ỉmy-ḫt

sꜣ pr

sḥḏ nḫt-ḫrw sḫ Ḥr

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏꜥ-mdw

Overseer of reckoning/separating

Dignitary in attendance

Guardian of the house

Inspector strong of voice of the *sḫ* of Horus

Master of secrets of dividing words

45: Smn-[...]: Late 2nd/Early 3rd Dynasty seal impression, fortress southern area, Elephantine (after Pätznick 2005: 339, No.134)

wḏ^{c}-mdw

Divider of words

46: Smn-sꜣ-psḏ.t: Early 4th Dynasty seal impression, fortress southern area, Elephantine: (after Pätznick 2005: 327, no.111)

wḏ^{c}-mdw

Divider of words

47: Snḏm-ỉb: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara
(after Buhl 1969: 199-200 & Pl. I)

ḥm-nṯr m-ḫt mr Mn nfr Ppy
*sꜣb rꜣ Nḫn**
ḥry-sštꜣ n sḏm.t w^{c}

Ḥm-nṯr-priest attached to the pyramid "Established and beautiful" of Pepy
Dignitary and Mouth of Hierakonpolis*
Unique master of secrets of hearing

48: Sḥtpw: 5th Dynasty tomb, Giza
(after Junker 1953: 52)

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)
*ḫrp wsḫ.t**
ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏ^{c}-mdw

Dignitary and Overseer of scribe(s)
Director of the *wsḫ.t*-court*
Master of secrets of dividing words

49: St-kꜣ: 6th Dynasty(?) tomb, Giza

(after Junker 1944: 198)

sꜣb sḫḏ sš.(w)

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) wḏꜥ-mdw štꜣ

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) wḏꜥ-mdw štꜣ n ḥw.t-wr.t

*ḫrp sš.(w) m ḏꜣḏꜣ.t wr.t**

ḫrp sš.(w) m ḏꜣḏꜣ.t wr.t n.t nṯr ꜥ

*ḫrp sš.(w) m ḏꜣḏꜣ.t**

wḏꜥ-mdw štꜣ n ḥw.t-wr.t

n(y) ns.t ḫnt.t

wr ḫrp mḏ Šmꜥ.w

sꜣb ꜥḏ-mr

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s)

Dignitary and Overseer of scribe(s)

Dignitary, Overseer of Scribes and Secret divider of words

Dignitary, Overseer of Scribes and Secret divider of words of the great enclosure

Director of scribes in the great *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*-court*

Director of scribes in the great *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*-court of the great god*

Director of scribes in the *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*-court*

Secret divider of words of the great enclosure

One of the foremost throne

Great one and Director of the tens of Upper Egypt

Dignitary and Administrator

One under the head of the King

50: Špss-bꜣ: 5th-6th Dynasty tomb, Giza

(after Curto 1903: 55-58)

sꜣb ꜥḏ-mr

n(y) ns.t ḫnt.t

ḫry-sštꜣ n wḏꜥ-mdw ḥw.t-wr.t

ḫry-sštꜣ n sḏꜣ.wt nṯr

sḥd pr-ᶜ3

ḥry-sšt3 n n(y)-sw.t m pr-ᶜ3

wḏᶜ-mdw m s.wt šps.(wt)

Dignitary and administrator

One of the foremost throne

Master of secrets of dividing words of the great enclosure

Master of secrets of the treasures of the god

Inspector of the great estate

Master of secrets of the King in the great estate

Divider of words in the noble places

51: K3-ᶜpr: 5th Dynasty(?) tomb, Saqqara

(after Hassan 1950: 155)

wr mḏ Šmᶜ.w

ỉmy-r3 wr Ḫᶜ=f-Rᶜ

wᶜb n(y)-sw.t

ḥry-sšt3

sm3ᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t

rḫ-n(y)-sw.t

Magnate of the tens of Upper Egypt

Overseer of “Khafre is great”

Royal *wᶜb*-priest

Master of secrets

Enforcer of dividing words in the great enclosure

King’s Acquaintance

52: K3-ᶜpr: 5th Dynasty(?) tomb, Giza

(after Hassan 1936: 155)

rḫ-n(y)-sw.t

dns(y?)

sḳdw d[ns](?)

sḫḏ n sr.(w)

n(y) ns.t ḫnt.t

wḏᶜ-mdw m ḥw.t-[wr.t]

wḏ-mdw n ḥry.(w)-wḏb.w

ỉmy-rꜣ mšᶜ

ỉmy-rꜣ šnw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ sr.(w)

King's Acquaintance

(One of?) the *dns*-boat

Sailor of the *dns*-boat(?)

Inspector of *sr*-official(s)

One of the foremost throne

Divider of words in the great enclosure

Word command(er) of the diverter(s) of offerings

Overseer of the gang/army

Overseer of the granary

Overseer of *sr*-official(s).

53: Kꜣ-m-nfr.t: 5th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after Mariette 1889: 247-49)

sꜣb ᶜḏ-mr

n(y) ns.t ḫnt.t

ỉwn knm.wt

wr mḏ Šmᶜ.w

*ḫrp sš.(w) wsḫ.t**

*sš ỉry spr**

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t**

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

mdw rḫy.t

wr Šmᶜ.w

wḏ-mdw n ḥry.(w)-wḏb.w

*ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr**

ḥry-šṯꜣ nb≡f

rḫ-n(y)-sw.t

ḥry-sšt3 n wḏ.(t)-mdw nb.t nt.t n ỉm3ḫ.w

ḥry-sšt3

ỉmy-r3 sš.(w) mr.t

ḥry-sšt3 wḏ-mdw n n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy st-ỉb Rc

ḥm-nṯr Iwnw

ḥm-nṯr 3ḫ.(t) Nfr-ỉr-k3-Rc

ḥry-sšt3 ỉm3ḫ.w ḫr nṯr=f

ỉrr mrr.t n nb=f

*ỉmy-r3 wsḫ.t**

wḏ-mdw ỉs n ḥry.(w)-wḏb.w

ḥry-sšt3 n wḏc-mdw

ḥry-wḏb.(w) m ḥw.t-cnḫ

*ḫrp wsḫ.t**

wcb 3ḫ.(t) ḫc.(w) S3ḥw-Rc

ỉmy cc.w Rc

ḥm-nṯr mn s.wt N(y)-wsr-Rc

ḥm-nṯr S3ḥw-Rc

ḥm-nṯr Ḥc=f-Rc

ỉrr mrr.t n nb=f rc nb

Dignitary and Administrator

One of the foremost throne

Pillar of *knm.wt*-people

Magnate of the tens of Upper Egypt

Director of scribe(s) of the *wsḫ.t*-court*

Scribe of petitioning*

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *M3c.t**

One under the head of the King

Staff of *rḫy.t*-people

Great one of Upper Egypt

Word command(er) of the diverter(s) of offerings

Director of scribes of petitioning*

Master of secrets of his lord

King’s Acquaintance

Master of secrets of every word command which is of the blessed one

Master of secrets

Overseer of scribes of the *mr.t*-people

Master of secrets and word command(er) of the King

One in the favour of Ra

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Heliopolis

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of the "Horizon of Neferirkare"

Master of secrets blessed one before his god

One who does what is loved by his lord

Overseer of the *wsḫ.t*-court*

Word command(er) of the chamber of the diverter(s) of offerings

Master of secrets of dividing words

Diverter of offering(s) in the enclosure of life

Director of the *wsḫ.t*-court*

Wᶜb-priest of the "Horizon of appearances of Sahure"

One in the rings of Ra

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of "Firm are the places of Nyuserre"

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Sahure

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Khafre

One who does what is loved by his lord every day

Titles on five statues from his tomb in Saqqara (CG 61, 65, 66, 181, 377)

(after Borchardt 1911: 53-54, 57, 125, 199)

sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

*ḫrp sš.(w) m wsḫ.t ᶜꜣ.(t)**

sꜣb sḫḏ sš.(w)

ḫrp sš.(w)

ḥry-sštꜣ

*sꜣb ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) m ḏꜣḏꜣ.t wr.t**

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t nb.t ᶜnḫ**

*ḥry-sštꜣ n ḥw.t-wr.t**

ỉrr ḥtp.t n Mꜣᶜ.t m wḏᶜ-mdw mꜣᶜ rᶜ nb ḏ.t

rḫ-n(y)-sw.t

*ḥry-sštꜣ ḏꜣḏ3.t wr.t**

Dignitary and Overseer of scribe(s)

Director of scribes in the great *wsḫ.t*-court*

Dignitary and Inspector of scribe(s)

Director of scribe(s)

Master of secrets

Dignitary and Overseer of scribe(s) in the great *ḏ𓄡ḏ3.t*-court*

Ḥm-nṯr -priest of *M𓄡ᶜ.t*, Lady of life*

Master of secrets of the great enclosure*

One who makes offerings to *M𓄡ᶜ.t* by true dividing of words every day, forever

King's Acquaintance

Master of secrets of the great *ḏ𓄡ḏ3.t*-court*

54: K𓄡-ḫr-Ptḥ Ftkt: 6th Dynasty tomb, Giza

(after Junker 1947: 111, 173)

s𓄡b ᶜḏ-mr

s𓄡b ỉmy-r𓄡 sš.(w)

wr mḏ Šmᶜ.w

n(y) ns.t ḫnt.t

*ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr**

ḫrp sš.(w)

ỉmy-r𓄡 Inb-ḥḏ Ḥm

ỉmy-r𓄡 nỉw.wt m𓄡.(w)t n.t Nfr Issỉ

ỉmy-r𓄡 šnw[.ty]

sḥḏ wᶜb.(w) 𓄡ḫ.t Ḫwfw

*ḥm-nṯr M𓄡ᶜ.t**

ḥry-sšt𓄡 n wḏᶜ-mdw

Dignitary and Administrator

Dignitary and Overseer of scribes

Magnate of the tens of Upper Egypt

One of the foremost throne

Director of scribe(s) of petitioning*

Director of scribe(s)

Overseer of Memphis and Letopolis

Overseer of new towns of “Beautiful is Isesi”

Overseer of the two granaries

Inspector of scribes of “Horizon of Khufu”

Ḥm-nṯr -priest of *Mȝᶜ.t**

Master of secrets of dividing words

55: Kȝ-gm.n=ỉ: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after Firth & Gunn 1926: 105-8)

ỉmy-ỉs Nḫn

sȝ.w Nḫn

ḥry-tp Nḫb

ᶜḏ-mr sbȝ Ḥr ḫnty-pt

ḥry-sšṯȝ n ỉp.t/wp.t štȝ.(t)

sḥḏ ḥm.(w)-nṯr mr Ḏd s.wt sȝ-Rᶜ Ttỉ

*tȝy.ty sȝb ṯȝ.ty**

ỉmy-rȝ sš.(w) ᶜ n(y)-sw.t

*ỉmy-rȝ ḥw.t-wr.t-6**

ỉmy-rȝ sḏm.t nb.t

ỉmȝ-ᶜ

smr wᶜ.ty

ḥry-sštȝ n mȝȝ.t wᶜ

ỉmy-rȝ ỉs.wy n ỉmȝ.t n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rȝ pr.wy wᶜb.t

ḫtm.w-bỉty

ỉmy-rȝ Šmᶜ.w Tȝ-mḥw

ỉmy-rȝ šnw.ty

ỉmy-rȝ pr.wy-ḥḏ

sm

ḫrp šnḏw.t nb.t

ḫrp ḥw.wt n.t ḥḏ.t ḏšr.t

ḥry-sštȝ n mdw-nṯr

ḫrp ỉȝt nb.t nṯr.t

ḥry-sštȝ

rȝ P nb

ḫrp ḥw.wt n.t dšr.t

wr mꜣ.(w) Iwnw

ỉmy-rꜣ n wḏ.t-mdw nb.(t) n.t n(y)-sw.t

ỉry nfr-ḥꜣ.t

ỉmy-rꜣ pr.wy-nbw

[ỉmy-ỉb n n(y)-sw.t ḫnty] ỉdb.wy=f

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉs.wy n ḫry.(w)-ḫtm

ỉmy-rꜣ tꜣ r ḏr=f Šmᶜ.w Tꜣ-mḥw

ỉmy-rꜣ wḏ.t nb.t

ỉmy-ỉs

[ỉmy-rꜣ] ỉp.t/wp.t m tꜣ r ḏr=f

ỉmy-rꜣ sš n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ gs.wy-pr

ỉmy-rꜣ kꜣ.t nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ nỉwt Ḏd s.wt Ttỉ

ḥꜣ.ty-ᶜ

ḫry-ḥb.t ḥry-tp

sš mḏꜣ.t nṯr

ỉry-pᶜ.t

sḫm nṯr.w

ỉmy-rꜣ Šmᶜ.w

sḥḏ mr Ḏd s.wt Ttỉ

ỉmy-rꜣ sš pr

wt Inpw

smꜣ

One in the chamber of Hierakonpolis

Guardian of Hierakonpolis

Chief of El-Kab

Administrator of the “Star of Horus, foremost of the sky

Master of secrets of secret reckoning/separating

Inspector of *ḥm-nṯr*-priest(s) of the pyramid “Enduring are the places of son of Ra Teti”

Shrouded one, Dignitary, and Vizier*

Overseer of scribe(s) of royal document(s)

Overseer of the six great enclosures*

Overseer of every hearing

Gracious of arm

Sole Companion

Unique master of secrets of what is seen

Overseer of the two chambers of royal graciousness

Overseer of the two houses of purification

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Overseer of Upper and Lower Egypt

Overseer of the two granaries

Overseer of the two treasuries

Sm-priest

Director of every kilt

Director of the enclosures of the white and red crowns

Master of secrets of divine words

Director of every divine office

Master of secrets

Mouth of every Butite

Director of the enclosures of the red crown

Greatest of seers of Heliopolis

Overseer of every royal word command

One associated with “beautiful of face”

Overseer of the two treasuries (of gold)

[One in the heart of the King, foremost] of his two banks

Overseer of the two chambers of seal-bearers

Overseer of the entire land, Upper and Lower Egypt

Overseer of every command

One in the chamber

[Overseer] of reckoning/separating in the entire land

Overseer of the royal bird marsh

Overseer of the two halves of the estate

Overseer of all royal works

Overseer of the pyramid town “Enduring are the places of Teti”

Count

Chief lector priest

Scribe of the divine scroll

Member of the elite

Power of the gods

Overseer of Upper Egypt

Inspector of the pyramid “Enduring are the places of Teti”

Overseer of the bird marsh of the estate

Wt-priest of Anubis

Smꜣ-priest

56: Twtw-Išfy: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after Kanawati & Hassan 1997: 55)

smr wꜤ.ty

ỉmy-rꜣ sḳbb.wy

ỉmy-rꜣ š.wy pr-Ꜥꜣ

ỉmy-rꜣ šnw.ty

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏ.t-mdw nb.t štꜣ.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ pr.wy-ḥḏ

ḫry-ḥb.t

ỉmy-rꜣ sḳbb.wy pr-Ꜥꜣ

ỉmy-rꜣ Ꜥbw-rꜣ n(y)-sw.t

ḥry-sštꜣ n pr-dwꜣ.t

ỉmy-rꜣ sḏm.t nb.t

ḥry-sštꜣ n n(y)-sw.t m st=f nb.t

ỉmy-rꜣ sḫ.ty ḥtp.(wt)

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.wy

ỉmy-rꜣ šn tꜣ nb

ỉmy-rꜣ bꜣw n sḫmḫ-ỉb

ỉmy-rꜣ dd.t pt ḳmꜣ.t [tꜣ]

Sole companion

Overseer of the two cool places

Overseer of weaving(?) of the great estate

Overseer of the two granaries

Master of secrets of every secret royal word command

Overseer of the two treasuries

Lector priest

Overseer of the two cool places of the great estate

Overseer of the royal repast

Master of secrets of the morning house

Overseer of every hearing

Master of secrets of the King in every place of his

Overseer of the two fields of offerings

Overseer of the two bird marshes

Overseer of all vegetation

Overseer of the pleasure boat

Overseer of that given by the sky and provided (by the earth)

57: Tỉ-snb-Iry: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after El-Khouli & Kanawati 1988: 7)

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w)

ỉmy-rꜣ s.wt šps.wt pr-ꜥꜣ

ỉmy-rꜣ st pr-ꜥꜣ

ỉmy-rꜣ st ḫnty.(w)-š pr-ꜥꜣ

wḏꜥ-mdw m s.wt šps.wt n.t pr-ꜥꜣ

ḥm-nṯr Ḏd s.wt Tỉ

ḥry-sštꜣ n sḫ.t ḥtp.(w)t

ḥry-tp ḏꜣ.t

ḫnty-š Ḏd s.wt Tỉ

sꜣb ꜥḏ-mr pr-ꜣꜥ

sš ꜥ n(y)-sw.t

smr pr

sḫḏ ḫnty.(w)-š pr-ꜥꜣ

šps n(y)-sw.t

Overseer of scribe(s)

Overseer of the noble places of the great estate

Overseer of the place of the great estate

Overseer of the place of *ḫnty-š*-official(s) of the great estate

Divider of words in the noble places of the great estate

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of "Enduring are the places of Teti"

Master of secrets of the fields of offerings

Chief of clothing

Ḫnty-š-official of "Enduring are the places of Teti"

Dignitary and Administrator of the great estate

Scribe of royal documents

Companion of the house

Inspector of *ḫnty-š*-official(s) of the great estate

Royal noble

58: Ttw: 6th Dynasty tomb, Saqqara

(after Firth & Gunn 1926: 151-54)

sḫḏ ḥm.(w)-nṯr Mn nfr Mry-Rᶜ

*tʒy.ty sʒb ṯʒ.ty**

n(y) st-ỉb nb=f

ỉry-pᶜ.t

ḥʒ.ty-ᶜ

ḫry-ḥb.t ḥry-tp

smr wᶜ.ty

sms.w snw.t

ᶜʒ Dwʒ.w(?)

ḫw-ᶜ(?)

ḥḳʒ Bʒt

sḫm nṯr.w

sš mḏʒ.t nṯr

ỉmy-rʒ ỉp.t/wp.t ḥtp.(w)t-nṯr m pr.wy

ỉmy-rʒ sš.wy pr.wy

*ḫrp sš.(w) ỉry.(w) spr**

*ḥm-nṯr Mʒᶜ.t**

ḫnty-š Mn nfr Mry-Rᶜ

smʒ Ḥr

ḫrp ỉʒt nb.ṯ nṯr.t

sm

ḫrp šnḏw.t nb.t

ᶜḏ-mr P

ḥry-tp Nḫb

wt Inpw

ỉmʒ-ᶜ

ḫry-ḥb

ḫrp ḥw.wt n.t dšr.t

sš ᶜ n(y)-sw.t

ḫtm.w-bỉty

ỉmy-rꜣ s.wt šps.wt pr-ᶜꜣ

ỉmy-rꜣ wᶜb.ty

ỉmy-rꜣ ḥw.t nbw

ỉmy-rꜣ ḫnw

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ ḫry.(w)-ḫtm

ỉmy-rꜣ pr ḥry.(w)-wḏb.(w)

ỉmy-rꜣ ḥꜣ.t m Šmᶜ.w Tꜣ-mḥw

ḫrp ns.ty

ḥrp Iꜣkm.t(?)

ᶜ Skr

ᶜ Ḥḳt

wr-5 pr Ḏḥwty

ỉmy-rꜣ šnw.ty

ỉmy-rꜣ kꜣ.t nb.t n.t n(y)-sw.t

*ỉmy-rꜣ ḥw.t-wr.t-6**

ḥry-sštꜣ n wḏᶜ-mdw

smꜣ Mỉnw

ḥry-sštꜣ n pr dwꜣ.t

ỉmy-ỉs

sꜣ.w Nḫn

ỉmy-rꜣ ỉs.wy ḫkr.t n(y)-sw.t

ỉmy-rꜣ pr.wy-ḥḏ

Inspector of *ḥm-nṯr*-priests of “Firm is the beauty of Meryre”

Shrouded one, Dignitary, and Vizier*

One of the favour of his lord

Member of the elite

Count

Chief lector priest

Sole companion

Elder of the *snw.t*-house

Door(keeper?) of the *Dwꜣ.w*(?)

One who is *ḫw* of arm(?)

Governor of *Bꜣt*

Power of the gods

Scribe of the divine scroll

Overseer of reckoning/separating divine offerings in the two houses

Overseer of the two bird marshes of the two houses

Director of scribe(s) of petitioning*

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣꜥ.t**

Ḫnty-š-official of “Firm is the beauty of Meryre”

Smꜣ-priest of Horus

Director of every divine office

Sm-priest

Director of every kilt

Administrator of Buto

Chief of El-Kab

Wt-priest of Anubis

Gracious of arm

Lector priest

Director of the enclosures of the red crown

Scribe of royal documents

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Overseer of the noble places of the great estate

Overseer of the two purification buildings

Overseer of the enclosure of gold

Overseer of the Interior

One under the head of the King

Overseer of seal-bearer(s)

Overseer of the house of the diverters of offerings

Overseer of *ḥꜣ.t*-land in Upper and Lower Egypt

Director of the two thrones

Director of *Iꜣkm.t*-settlement(?)

Arm of Sokar

Arm of Heket

Great one of five in the temple of Thoth

Overseer of the two granaries

Overseer of all royal works

Overseer of the six great enclosures*

Master of secrets of dividing words

Smꜣ-priest of Min

Master of secrets of the morning house

One in the chamber

Guardian of Hierakonpolis

Overseer of the two chambers of the adornment of the King

Overseer of the two treasuries

59: Dꜣtỉ: 4th-5th Dynasty inscription in tomb of ***Snḏm-ỉb,*** Giza

(after Simpson 1980: 31)

ỉmy-rꜣ pr n ḏt=f

ḫrp sš.(w)

sš n šꜣ ḥm.(w)-kꜣ

smꜣꜥ wḏꜥ-mdw n wsḫ.t

sḥḏ sš.(w)

sꜣb

Overseer of the house of his estate

Director of scribe(s)

Scribe of the phyle of *ḥm-kꜣ*-priests

Enforcer of dividing words in the *wsḫ.t*-court

Inspector of scribes

Dignitary

60: Dꜥw: 6th Dynasty Inscription in tomb of his father, ***Dꜥw-Šmꜣỉ*** (see ***61*** below),Deir el-Gebrawi

(after Davies 1902: 2)

ḥꜣ.ty-ꜥ

ḥry-tp ꜥꜣ Tnỉ

ḫry-ḥb.(t) ḥry-tp

sm

ḫrp šnḏw.t nb.(t)

ḫrp km.t

ḥry-tp ꜥ3 ḏw=f

smr wꜤ.ty

wr sn.t

ḫrp m nṯr.w

ḫrp ḥw.wt n.t dšr.t

ꜥ3(y?) Ḫnsw

ḫw-ꜥ(?)

ḥḳ3 B3t

sš mḏ3.t nṯr

ḫrp i3t nb.t nṯr.t

ḫrp ns.ty

ḥwt(y?) ꜥ3.t

ḫtm.w-bi3ty

ḥḳ3 ḥw.t

ḥry-sšt3 n sḏm.t wꜤ

i3my ꜥ3

r3 Šmꜥ.w

Count

Great chief of the Thinite nome

Chief lector priest

Sm-priest

Director of every kilt

Director of the *km.t*-jar

Great chief of (the nome) “His mountain”

Sole companion

Great one of the *sn.t*-building

Director by means of the gods

Director of the enclosures of the red crown

(One of) the gate of Khonsu(?)

One who is *ḫw* of arm(?)

Governor of *B3t*

Scribe of the divine scroll

Director of every divine office

Director of the two thrones

(One of?) the great enclosure

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Estate governor

Unique master of secrets of hearing

One who is at the door

Mouth of Upper Egypt

61: Dᶜw-Šmʒʔ: 6th Dynasty tomb, Deir el-Gebrawi

(after Davies 1902: 1-2)

ʔry-pᶜ.t

ḥʒ.ty-ᶜ

mdw Ḥp

rʒ P nb

ḫrp ʔbṯ Ḥr

sʒ.w Nḫn

ḥry-tp Nḫb

ḫtm.w-bʔty

ḥry-tp ᶜʒ Ṯnʔ

ḥwt(y?) ᶜʒ.t

ʔmy-rʒ Šmᶜ.w

ḥḳʒ ḥw.t

smr wᶜ.ty

ḫry-ḥb.(t) [ḥry-tp]

sḥḏ ḥm.(w)-nṯr mr Mn-ᶜnḫ Nfr-kʒ-Rᶜ

ḥm-nṯr m-ḫt mr Mn-ᶜnḫ Nfr-kʒ-Rᶜ

ḫnty-š mr Mn-ᶜnḫ Nfr-kʒ-Rᶜ

ḥry-tp ᶜʒ ḏw=f

ʔmy-rʒ šnw.ty

ʔmy-rʒ pr.wy-ḥḏ

ʔmy-rʒ sš.wy

wᶜb [???]

ʔmy-rʒ ʔp.t/wp.t ḥtp.(w)-nṯr m pr.wy

sm

ḫrp šnḏw.t nb.(t)

[ḥry-]s[štʒ n sḏm].t wᶜ

ỉmy ꜥ3

r3 Šmꜥ.w

Member of the elite

Count

Staff of the Apis-bull

Mouth of every Butite

Director of the net of Horus

Guardian of Hierakonpolis

Chief of El-Kab

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Great chief of the Thinite nome

(One of) the great enclosure

Overseer of Upper Egypt

Estate governor

Sole companion

[Chief] lector priest

Inspector of *ḥm-nṯr*-priest(s) of the pyramid “Enduring of life” of Neferkare

Ḥm-nṯr-priest attached to the pyramid “Enduring of life” of Neferkare

Ḫnty-š-official of the pyramid “Enduring of life” of Neferkare

Great chief of (the nome) “His mountain”

Overseer of the two granaries

Overseer of the two treasuries

Overseer of the two bird marshes

Wꜥb-priest of ???

Overseer of reckoning/separating offerings in the two houses

Sm-priest

Director of every kilt

Unique [**master of**] **se**[**crets of hearing**]

One who is at the door

Mouth of Upper Egypt

62: Anon: 3rd Dynasty(?) seal and seal impression of an official of King Sanakht
(after Kaiser *et al*. 1982: 304)

wḏ^{c}-mdw
ḫtm.w-mḥw pr-n(y)-sw.t Ḥr Sꜣ-nḫt

Divider of words
Lower Egyptian sealer of the royal domain of Horus Sanakht

63: Anon: 5th Dynasty inscription of unnamed family member in tomb of ***Kꜣ-m-nfr.t***, Giza
(seriously damaged; after Hassan 1936: 134)

[ḥry]-sšṯꜣ n wḏ^{c}-mdw
*sš ỉry spr**
ỉmy-rꜣ pr ḥ^{c}w.w
ỉmy-rꜣ pr […]

[**Master**] **of secrets of dividing words**
Scribe of petitioning*
Overseer of the house of boats
Overseer of the house of […]

64: Anon: 4th Dynasty seal impression of an unnamed official of King Menkaure (Giza Sealing 7)
(after Nolan 2010: 183-184)

[sš] ^{c}.t
ḫry-tp sbꜣ(?)
Ḥr kꜣ-ḫt […]
sš ^{c}.t n(y)-sw.t
sš ḫry.t n(y)-sw.t
smꜣ^{c} wḏ^{c}-mdw

Scribe of documents
One under the sunshade(?)
Bull-bodied Horus (Menkaure) […]

Scribe of royal documents

Scribe of the royal writing case

Enforcer of dividing words

65: Anon: 4th Dynasty seal impression of an unnamed official of King Khafre (Giza Sealing 2719)

(after Nolan 2010: 217)

[…] s […]

[Ḥr] wsr-ỉb […]

[… ỉr.w?] wḏ.t wḏᶜ-mdw mrr.w [nb=f?]

[…]

Strong-hearted [Horus] (Khafre) […]

[… **One who conducts**] **the commands and dividing of words beloved** [**of his lord**]

66: Anon: 5th Dynasty seal of an unnamed official of King Sahure (Berlin 20380)

(after Kaplony 1981: 190)

[ḥm-nṯr] Sꜣḥw-Rᶜ Nḫn-Rᶜ

[ḥm-nṯr] Rᶜ Nḫn-Rᶜ

ḥm-nṯr Sꜣ[ḥw-Rᶜ]

(s)mꜣᶜtˢᴵᶜ wḏᶜ-mdw n wsḫ.t n(y)-sw.t

sš [n(y)-sw.t]

[sš] ᶜ n(y)-sw.t

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Sahure of Nekhenre sun temple

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Re of Nekhenre sun temple

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Sahure

Enforcer of dividing words in the *wsḫ.t*-court of the King

Royal scribe

Scribe of royal documents

67: Anon: 6th Dynasty seal of an unnamed official of King Pepy Mery-Tawy (BM 47460)
(after Kaplony 1981: 376)

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t pr-ꜥ
smꜣꜥ n wḏꜥ-mdw
mdw rḫy.t
ỉwn knm.wt
mḏḥ ḳs.ty(?)
ḥm-nṯr Rw.ty
ḫnty ḥw.t-nṯr
ḥry-sšṯꜣ n ỉst Skr m ḥb

One under the head of the King and the great estate
Straightener of dividing words
Staff of *rḫy.t*-people
Pillar of *knm.wt*-people
Master *ḳs.ty*-official(?)
Ḥm-nṯr-priest of the Double-lion god
Foremost of the temple
Master of Secrets of the Chamber of Sokar at the festival

68: Anon: 6th Dynasty seal of an unnamed official of King Pepy Mery-Tawy (BM 51083)
(Kaplony 1981: 378)

ḫry-tp n(y)-sw.t
ḫry-sšṯꜣ n wḏꜥ-mdw n ḥw.t-wr.t
mdw rḫy.t
ỉwn knm.wt
*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣꜥ.t**
mꜣꜣ nfr.w nb=f
ḥry-sšṯꜣ n wḏ.t
ỉrr ḥss.t nb=f
ỉrr wḏ.t nb=[f]

One under the head of the King
Master of secrets of dividing words of the great enclosure

Staff of *rḫy.t* -people

Pillar of *knm.wt*-people

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mɜʿ.t**

One who sees the beauties of his lord

Master of secrets of commands

One who does what is favoured by his lord

One who does the commands of his lord

Middle Kingdom title strings

1: Iỉ-ḥr-nfr.t: 12th Dynasty stela, Abydos[155]:

(after Schäfer *et al*. 1913: 170, 1204)

ỉry-pʿ.t

ḥɜ.ty-ʿ

ḫtm.w-bỉty

smr wʿ.ty

ỉry-pʿ.t rmn(?) Gb

ḫnt(y) st r st smɜ Ḥr

wr ỉd.t m pr n(y)-sw.t

nb fɜw m ḥr-ỉb šn.ty

ỉmy-rɜ ḫtm

ḥry-sštɜ n mdw-nṯr

ỉmy-rɜ wḏʿ-mdw nb štɜ

ḥry-sštɜ n Nb.ty

[ḏb]ɜ Wrt-ḥkɜw

ḥry-tp [Nḫ]b

Member of the elite

Count

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Sole companion

Member of the elite of the processional shrine(?) of Geb

---

[155] This stela is better known for a detailed description of Osirian rituals and other services to the King conducted by this official, but nothing connected to *sḏm* or *wḏʿ-mdw* is mentioned in the text.

Foremost of place with regard to the place of arrival of Horus

Great of fragrance in the royal estate

Lord of splendour in the midst of dispute

Overseer of the seal

Master of secrets of divine words

Overseer of every secret dividing of words

Master of secrets of the Two Ladies

One who [resto]res Weret-Hekau

Chief of [El-K]ab

2: ***Iw-snb***: 12th Dynasty(?) inscription on shared stela, Abydos:

(after Lange & Schäfer 1902: 315, 20302)

šms.w sḏm.(w?)

Follower of hearing/Follower and hearer/Follower of a hearer(?)

3: ***Ibỉ***: 12th Dynasty tomb portal, provenance unknown:

(after Budge 1914: pl. 6)

sš ᶜ n(y)-sw.t sḏmw.w

Scribe of royal documents of hearers

4: ***Ipw-ᶜnḫ***: 12th Dynasty(?) seal, provenance unknown:

(after Martin 1971: 15, 120)

sš wr n sḏm

Great scribe of hearing

5: Imny: 13th Dynasty shared stela, Abydos

(after Mariette 1880: 321, 905)

Imny himself:

ỉry-pᶜ.t

ḥ3.ty-ᶜ

ḫtm.w-bỉty

smr ᶜ3 n mr.wt

ỉmy-r3 pr

wr wp.t

Member of the elite

Count

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Companion great of love

Overseer of the house

Great of reckoning

Other officials on stela[156]:

sš n ḫnr.t wr Nṯr-pw-Ptḥ

ỉmy-r3 ᶜḫnwty ỉmy-r3 ỉmy.w-r3 Ms=tw

sš wr n sḏm *Nb-pw*

sš n ḫnr.t wr.(t) Tỉtỉ

ỉḫms n ᶜt Dỉ-snb

ỉmy-r3 st Snb-sw-m-[...]

ỉmy-r3 st Ḥtp-sn.wy

sš wḏḫw Ḥtr

ỉmy-r3 ḥm.w-nṯr n Sbk-Šd.ty Sbk-ḥtp

Scribe of the great confined space, *Nṯr-pw-Ptḥ*

Overseer of the audience chamber and Overseer of overseers, *Ms=tw*

Great scribe of hearing, *Nb-pw*

Scribe of the great confined space, *Tỉtỉ*

[156] Excludes people without titles and women who possess only the standard *nb.t-pr* designation.

Attendant of the chamber, *Dỉ-snb*

Overseer of the seat, *Snb-sw-m-[...]*

Overseer of the seat, *Ḥtp-sn.wy*

Scribe of the offering table, *Ḥtr*

Overseer of the *ḥm-nṯr*-priests of Sobek of Crocodilopolis, *Sbk-ḥtp*

6: Imn-wsr: 12th Dynasty stela fragment, provenance unknown:

(after Simpson 1965: pl. 14)

ỉmy-rꜣ Šmᶜ.w

rḫ n(y)-sw.t mꜣᶜ mry=f

ỉrr ḥss.t=f nb.t m ḫr.t-hrw n.t rᶜ nb

mḏd wꜣ.t n.t [....] sw

nb ỉmꜣ.t

ᶜꜣ mr.wt

ᶜḳ-ỉb

s n tp-ḥsb

mn ṯb.t ḥr nmt.t

wꜣḥ-ỉb [...] m nhrhr

mḥ-ỉb n(y)-sw.t m dr n ḫfty

ᶜḳ-ỉb=f m shr.t tꜣ.wy

ḥry-sšꜣ m mᶜbꜣy.t

sỉdd ḫꜣk.w-ỉb

km s r tp.t rꜣ=f

ḏd.n n=f ḫt ỉmy.t=sn

*rꜣ Nḫn**

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t**

ḥry-sšꜣ n sḏm.t wᶜ

wbꜣ n=f nt.t m ỉb m ḥꜣp.t r rmṯ nb.t

sꜣ.w ỉw.t=f n šny.t

wꜣḥ-ỉb r sḏm md.t

nḫ mꜣr nḥm

ỉwty sw šw m ỉr.t ỉsft

dd pr s-2 ḥtp.(w) m pr.w n.w rꜣ=f

sᶜr md.t ᶜrḳ.n=f

srḫ tp-rd n ỉw.t(y)=sy

ỉḳr st-ns

Overseer of Upper Egypt

True King's Acquaintance beloved of him

One who does everything favoured of him in the daily course of every day

One who adheres to the path of […] him

Possessor of grace

Great of affection

Intimate friend

A man of the correct method

Firm of sandal and quiet of step

Benevolent one […] in instability

Confidant of the King in subduing the enemy

Intimate friend of his in quietening the two lands

Master of secrets in the court of 30

One who makes impotent the disaffected

One who totals up a man in accordance with his speech

One to whom bodies say that which is in them

Mouth of Hierakonpolis*

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mỉʿ.t**

Unique master of secrets of hearing

One to whom opens up that which is in the heart, hidden from all (other) people

Guardian of his coming of the entourage

Benevolent one with regards to hearing words

Protector of the poor man and the have-not

One devoid of lacking, namely doing wrong

One who causes two men to come forth satisfied with that which has come from his mouth

One who forwards words once he has completed the matter

One who causes to know the rules of that which is to come

Excellent of the place of the tongue

7: Imn-m-ḥ3.t (future King Amenemhat I, founder of 12th Dynasty): Late 11th Dynasty, rock inscription, Wadi Hammamat[157] (after Couyat & Montet 1912: 77-78, 110)

ỉry-pᶜ.t
ḥ3.ty-ᶜ
ỉmy-r3 nỉwt
ṯ3.ty ỉmy-r3 sr.w nb.(w) n wḏᶜ-md.t
ỉmy-r3 dd.t pt ḳm3.t t3 ỉnn.t Ḥᶜp(y)
ỉmy-r3 n ẖt nb.(t) m t3 pn r ḏr=f
*ṯ3.ty**

Member of the elite
Count
Overseer of the city
Vizier and Overseer of all dignitaries of dividing matters
Overseer of that given by the sky, provided by the earth, and brought by the Nile
Overseer of everything in this land in its entirety
Vizier*

8: Int=f-Twtw: 12th Dynasty stela, provenance unknown:
(after Budge 1913: pl. 3)

ỉry-pᶜ.t
ḥ3.ty-ᶜ
ẖtm.w-bỉty
smr wᶜ.ty
wr n n(y)-sw.t
ᶜ3 n bỉty
ḫry-sšt3 n sḏm.t wᶜ
ᶜ wr m ỉ3t=f m sr=f
ỉmy-ḥ3.t wr.w ỉmy.w-ỉb Ḥr nb ᶜḥ ỉmnt n smnḫ sw
sḫ3 r-ᶜ.wy=f
mnḫ=f r dỉ n nb-t3.wy=f 3w=f
mḥ-ỉb n n(y)-sw.t

[157] This inscription is better known for the description of a "miraculous" gazelle birth which precedes the title string.

ꜣd.w ỉmꜣ

rwd ḫn pr

ꜥm mr.t nb=f

smnḫ n mr.t=f st=f

ỉrr ḥss.t

ḥs.n sw ršḫt(?)

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣꜥ.t wꜥ**

ḥry ḫw sw(?)

ḫrp ỉꜣ.t nb.t […]

[…] n […] ỉmy-rꜣ […] n=f mt(?)

ỉmy-rꜣ ḥwn.w nfr.w

ỉmy-rꜣ mšꜥ

Member of the elite

Count

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Sole companion

Magnate of the King

Great one of the King of Lower Egypt

Unique master of secrets of hearing

Great-armed one in his office and in his nobility

One in front of the magnates in the heart of Horus, lord of the western palace of ennobling himself

Revealing of his actions

He is effective with regards to giving his breadth to his Lord of the Two Lands

Confidant of the King

One aggressive and gracious

One firm in settling and coming forth

One who knows the love of his lord

Producer of expediency of his love of his place

One who does what is favoured

One whom *ršḫt(?)* favoured

Unique *ḥm-nṯr*-priest of *Mꜣꜥ.t**

One atop the *ḫw sw(?)*

Director of every office […]

[...] Overseer [...]

Overseer of recruits

Overseer of the army

9: *ꜥšꜣw*: 12th Dynasty(?) seal, provenance unknown:

(after Martin 1971: 33, 367)

ḫtm.w-bỉty

ỉmy-rꜣ ḫtmw.w

sḏm.(w) tp(y)

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Overseer of sealers

Chief hearer

10: *ꜥkỉ*: 13th Dynasty seal, provenance unknown:

(after Martin 1971: 34, 379)

ḫtm.w-bỉty

ỉmy-rꜣ ḫtmw.w

sḏm.(w) šnꜥ

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Overseer of sealers

Hearer of the detaining establishment

N. B. For a stela of almost certainly the same *ꜥkỉ* ¸with identical titles, see Franke & Marée 2013: 38.

11: *Bbỉ*: 12th Dynasty stela, provenance unknown:

(after Boeser 1909: 6, 16/pl. 14)

ỉdnw n sḏmw.w

Deputy of hearers

12: Ptḥ-wr: 12th Dynasty statue, Memphis

(after Schäfer *et al*. 1913: 146, 8808)

ỉry-pᶜ.t

ḥ3ty-ᶜ

ᶜ3 ḥs.wt n rᶜ nb

m3ᶜ m ḥw.t-ỉṯ

s3b n sḏm.t wᶜ

ỉmy-ỉb m stp-s3

sṯnn Ḥr nb ᶜḥ

ḫtm.w-bỉty

ỉmy-r3 pr wr

rḫ n(y)-sw.t

sḏm.(w) m3ᶜ.t

Member of the elite

Count

Great of favour every day

True one in the enclosure of seizing

Unique dignitary of hearing

One in the heart in the palace

One who exalts Horus, lord of the palace

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Great overseer of the house

King's Acquaintance

Hearer of what is true[158]

13: Ptḥ-Ḥr.ty : 12th Dynasty(?) shared stela, Abydos:

(after Lange & Schäfer 1902: 104-105, 20087*f*)

sš wr n sḏm

Great scribe of hearing

---

[158] A translation of 'hearer of *M3ᶜ.t*' may also be possible, but in this instance the writing appears to indicate 'things which have the quality of *m3ᶜ*' (i.e. 'what is true') rather than the goddess/abstract concept of *M3ᶜ.t per se*.

14: Mnṯw-ḥtp: 12th Dynasty stela, provenance unknown

(Gayet 1886: pl. 31)

rḫ-n(y)-sw.t mry=f

*rꜣ Nḫn**

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t**

ḥry-sšṯꜣ n sḏm.t wᶜ m rwy.t ỉst

sꜣb ᶜḏ-mr

rḫ-n(y)-sw.t mꜣᶜ mry=f

mn ṯb.t ḥr nmt.t n.w wꜣ.t n.t nb tꜣ.wy

< ???>

sš mšᶜ

King's Acquaintance beloved of him

Mouth of Hierakonpolis*

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣᶜ.t**

Unique master of secrets of hearing in the *rwy.t*-court and in the chamber

Dignitary and Administrator

True King's Acquaintance beloved of him

Firm of sandal and quiet of step on the roads of the lord of the two lands

<???>

Scribe of the army

15: Mnṯw-ḥtp: 12th Dynasty stela, Abydos:

(after Lange & Schäfer 1908: 150-158, 20539)

ỉry-pᶜ.t

*tꜣy.ty sꜣb ṯꜣ.ty**

*rꜣ Nḫn**

*ḥm-nṯr Mꜣᶜ.t**

*dd ḥp.w=s**

ḫnty ỉꜣ.wt=s

mn ỉs.w ṯꜣš.w

wp ḫrp r sn.w=f

ỉmy ỉr.ty ḥnmm.t

shr r tꜣ r ḏr=f

*s n M3c.t**

ḫnt(y) t3.wy

mty m3c mỉ Ḏḥwty sn.w=f m shr.t t3wy

ỉry-pc.t m wp.t nb.(t)

ḥry-tp wḏc-md.t

dd ḫt r st ỉr.t

ḫtm.w-bỉty

ỉmy-r3 ḫtm.t

ḥ3.ty-c

ỉmy-r3 k3.t nb.(t) n.(t) n(y)-sw.t

srwḏ p3wty.w dd t3 pn [ḥr m ?]

rḫ.w=f mỉ wḏ nṯr ỉr sw

nḫ m3r

nḥm ỉwty sw

dd pr sn.wy ḥtp.(w) m pr.w n r3=f

sš n Ḏḥwty ḥry ns=f

ckȝ r tḫ.w

mỉty m ḫ3 sn.w n(y)-sw.t m nḏ-ḥr n w3ḥ-ỉb

ỉry sḏm.t md.t

mỉty nṯr m wnw.t=f mnw.w m ḏbc.w=f

ỉr i3t mỉ "ry smḥ ỉb n n(y)-sw.t ḫnt(y) t3.wy

mry=f m-m smr.w

sḫm-ỉr=f m-m sr.w

ḫnty st r sm3 st Ḥr

s n wcy.w b3.w n=f ỉb

*ỉry-pc.t r <???> wsḫ.t**

gm md.t n.t ch P

rḫ ỉmy-ḫt nb.t

dd s r wn=f m3c

gm ḫt g33.w wr

*srdỉ gr n ḏd sw M3c.t n ỉỉ ḥr sw3ḥ-ỉb ỉwty sn.w**

nfr sḏm

ỉḳr ḏd

sr whc tss.t Ṯnn

ḫnt(y) ḥḥ.w m s

mnḫ rḫ n=f rn=f m3c[t] n-mr.wt šwy m ỉr.t ỉsft

s3ỉ ỉw.t=f šny.t

sỉddy sb ḥr n(y)-sw.t

sḏm.(w) mᶜbȝy.t

dd rwd=f m ḫȝsty.w sgrḥ.n=f ḥry.w-šᶜ

sḥtp Stty.w ḥr ỉrt=sn

sḫm-ỉry=f m ỉdb.wy

ḥry-tp n km.t dšr.t

dd wḏ.w n Šmᶜ.w nỉwt

ỉp ỉry ỉdr n Tȝ-mḥw

šm.w bw nb m šw=f

ỉmy ỉr.ty n rḫy.t

dd kȝ.t

sḫnt ỉȝt nb

sḫr(y) ᶜȝ mr.wt

snw n n(y)-sw.t

*ỉmy wsḫ.t ᶜȝ.t**

smr mry nb=f

ỉrr ḥss.t nb=f m ḫr.t-hrw n.t rᶜ nb

sm

ḫrp šnḏw.t nb.t Ḥr Inpw

ḫnt(y)-š

šms.w ḥm-nṯr

ḥry-wḏb.(w)

ỉry-pᶜ.t m s.wt ḏsr.w(t) pr mdw

rȝ ḫrw=f m pr bỉty

ḥry sgr n šnw.t

wᶜ n n(y)-sw.t ỉwty sn.w=f

*sᶜr Mȝᶜ.t r ᶜḥ**

wḥm.w ᶜȝ n bw-nfr

wᶜ wr

sᶜnḫ rḫy.t

ỉỉ.w n=f wr.w m ks.w

ỉry rw.ty pr n(y)-sw.t

*ḥm-nṯr Mȝᶜ.t ỉwn.t dšr.t**

ỉmy-rȝ ḫȝs.t ỉmnt.t

ḫrp wr.w Šmᶜ.w Mḥw

mdw rḫy.t

ỉwn knm.wt

ḥm-nṯr Ḥr ḫrd

ḥry-(s)štꜣ n pr-ꜥnḫ ḫꜥ Sty

ỉmy-rꜣ wsḫ.t Ḥr nb=f

ḥm-nṯr Tỉ

ḥry-tp ꜥꜣ n ỉmꜣ n(y)-sw.t

smꜣy n ḥꜥ.w nṯr wr n pt wꜥ

wr šnp[ꜣ]w ꜥnty

ḫw ḥḳꜣt

ỉmy-rꜣ šnw.ty

ỉmy-rꜣ pr.wy-ḥḏ

ỉmy-rꜣ pr.wy-nbw

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.(w) n n(y)-sw.t ḫft ḥr

smr wꜥ.ty

ḥry-sštꜣ n mdw-nṯr

ỉmy-rꜣ gs.wy pr.wy gs pr

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.wy n sḫmḫ-ỉb

ỉmy-rꜣ pr.wy-ḥḏ-nbw

ỉry-pꜥ.t mr[t] nṯr

ỉb wꜥ n bỉty smtr n=f

ỉwn Šmꜥ.w n pr n(y)-sw.t

šms.w nb=f r ỉw.t=f ꜥḳ-ỉb=f

ḫnt(y) […] snw.w

ḥꜣ nb=f m wꜥꜥw m […] pr.w

ỉmy-ỉb n nb=f mꜣꜥ

ḏd.w n=f md.t

ḥꜣp ḥbs.t

ḫnty ỉdb.wy

sꜥr md.t r-ḫnw kꜣr

gm ṯs snḏm ḳsn.t

ꜥḥꜥ.w nb=f ḥr ḫrw […]

tkn mꜣꜥ

rḫ ḫr.t ỉb

ꜣḫ ḏd ḥr ỉb n nb=f

wr snḏ m-ḫnw pr-n(y)-sw.t

nḏs m ht.w

mnḫ ḏd

ḥry sšm ꜥḥ

ḫtm r³=f ḥr sḏm.t=f

sr wḥ^{c} ṯss.t

ḥry-sšt³ n n(y)-sw.t m st=f nb

ḫry-ḥb.(t) ḥry-tp m³^{c}

Member of the elite

Vizier, Dignitary and Shrouded one*

Mouth of Hierakonpolis*

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *M³^{c}.t**

One who gives her *hp*-laws*

Foremost of her offices

Firm of chambers and boundaries

One who reckons up and directs regarding his fellow

One in the eyes of the sun folk

One who pacifies the entire land

Man of *M³^{c}.t**

Foremost of the two lands

Precise one who guides his fellow like Thoth in pacifying the two lands

Member of the elite in every reckoning

Chief of dividing matters

One who gives things to the place of duty

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Overseer of the seal

Count

Overseer of all royal works

One who perpetuates the primeval deities who put in place this land

Whose knowledge is in accordance with the command of the god who made him

One who protects the pauper

One who rescues the nobody

One who causes both parties to come forth satisfied with his utterances

Scribe of Thoth and Chief of his speech

Accurate one towards the drunkard

Equal in the rule of conduct of the fellow of the King in greeting of benevolence

One connected to hearing matters

Equal of the god in his service and the jars in his fingers

One who exercises office like one connected to gladdening the heart of the King, foremost of the two lands

Beloved of him among the companions

One having power among the dignitaries

Foremost of place regarding uniting the place of Horus

Man of the unique ones to whom the heart is brought(?)

Member of the elite regarding the <???> of the *wsḫ.t*-court*

Finder of words of the Buto palace

One who knows every thought

One who places the man in his true being

Great finder of dues

Silencer of one who has not said *M3ʿ.t*, who has not come under benevolence, who has no fellow*

Excellent of hearing

One excellent of speech

Official who loosens what is tied of Tjenen

Foremost of millions, namely men

Efficacious one to whom is known his true name in order to be lacking in doing wrong

One whose coming the entourage awaits

One who makes impotent the rebel on account of the King

Hearer of the house of the thirty

One who causes him(self) to succeed regarding the desert-dwellers after pacifying those upon the sand

One who pacifies the Asiatics in what they do

One having power on the two banks

Chief of the black land and the red land

One who gives decrees to the Upper Egyptian City (Thebes)

Reckoner and withholder of Lower Egypt

One who goes everywhere in his light

One in the eyes of the *rḫy.t*-people

One who conducts works

Promoter of every office

Captain great of affection

Fellow of the King

One in the great *wsḫ.t*-court*

Companion beloved of his lord

One who does what is favoured by his god every day

Sm-priest

Director of every kilt of Horus and Anubis

Ḫnty-š-official

Follower and *ḥm-nṯr*-priest

Diverter of offering(s)

Member of the elite in the sacred places of the house of the word

Mouth of his voice in the house of the King of Lower Egypt

Chief of silence of the entourage

Unique one of the King, who has no fellow

One who raises *Mꜣꜥ.t* to the palace*

Great herald of goodness

Great unique one

One who animates the *rḫy.t*-people

One to whom the magnates come in bowing

One connected to the two gates of the royal estate

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of *Mꜣꜥ.t* of the pillared hall and the desert*

Overseer of the western deserts

Director of magnates of Upper and Lower Egypt

Staff of *rḫy.t*-people

Pillar of *knm.wt*-people

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Horus-the-Child

Master of secrets of the house of life arising in Nubia

Overseer of the *wsḫ.t*-court of Horus his lord

Ḥm-nṯr-priest of Ti(?)

Great chief of the royal tent

Companion of the limbs of the god, unique great one of the sky

Magnate of the people of clothing of Anty

Protector of rulership

Overseer of the two granaries

Overseer of the two treasuries

Overseer of the two treasuries (of gold)

Overseer of royal scribes in front of the face

Sole companion

Master of secrets of divine words

Overseer of the two halves of the two estates and half of the estate

Overseer of the two bird marshes of pleasure

Member of the elite beloved of the god

Overseer of the two treasuries (of silver and gold)

Unique heart of the King of Lower Egypt who bears witness to him

Pillar of Upper Egypt of the royal estate

Follower of his lord up to his goings and one with access to his heart

Foremost […] of the fellows

Attendant of his lord in private in […] the estates

True one in the heart of his lord

One to whom words are said

Mysterious of cloth

Foremost of the two banks

One who raises words within the chapel

One who finds a happy resolution for difficulty

Helper of his lord through voice […]

True one who draws near

One who knows the condition of the heart

One beneficial in speech regarding the heart of his lord

Great of respect inside the royal estate

Commoner with those who call out(?)

Potent of speech

Chief leader of the palace

Whose mouth is sealed regarding what he hears

Official who loosens what is tied

Master of secrets of the King in every place of his

True chief lector priest

16: Nb-wp : 12th Dynasty(?) shared stela, Abydos:

(after Lange & Schäfer 1908: 196-198, 20562*f*)

sš wr n sḏm

Great scribe of hearing

Tỉtỉ (on same stela; in the same register as *Nb-wp* and probably closely connected to him)

*sš n ḫnr.t wr.(t)**

Scribe of the great confined space

17: Nḥy: 13th Dynasty shared stela, provenance unknown:
(after Cramer 1936: 107, 3)

ỉdnw sḏmw.w

Deputy of hearers

18: Ḥr-Wsr: 12th Dynasty(?) seal, provenance unknown:
(after Martin 1971: 87, 1117)

sš wr n sḏm tp(y)

Chief great scribe of hearing

19: Ḫmm and family: 12th Dynasty(?) stela, Abydos
(after Maspero 1890: 116, 26)

Ḫmm himself:

*sš n ḫnr.t wr.(t)**

Scribe of the great confined space*

Snb (on same stela; relation to ***Ḫmm*** unclear):

ḫry n sḏm

Chief of hearing

Wṯs-snb (on same stela; son of ***Snb***):

*sš n ḫnr.t wr.(t)**

Scribe of the great confined space*

Ḫmm (on same stela; son of ***Ḫmm***):

ḥry n sḏm

ḥry-šst[SIC] *n ỉn.w ꜥ*

Chief of hearing

Master of secrets of great offerings

20: Ḫty-ꜥnḫ: 12th Dynasty false door, Heliopolis:

(after Simpson 2001: 12-13, figs. 1-2)

ỉmy-rꜣ ḥm.w-nṯr

ỉry-pꜥ.t

ḥꜣ.ty-ꜥ

ḥry-tp n tꜣ r ḏr=f

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.w

ḫry-ḥb.t ḥry-tp

wr n n(y)-sw.t

ꜥꜣ n bỉty

ḫry-tp ꜥꜣ n ḥḳꜣ-ꜥnḏ ỉꜣb

*dd hp.w**

sḫnt ỉꜣ.wt

ỉmy-rꜣ sḏm.t wḏꜥ.t

šm.w n=f wr.w […]

mỉty n(y)-sw.t m shry.t tꜣ.wy

ḥsy=f m ḫr.t-hrw

ỉrr wḏ.t ḥm=f nn sn.t-ḥr ỉm

ḫrp ỉry.(w) ḫt-n(y)-sw.t

wr m ỉꜣt=f

ꜥꜣ m sꜥḥ=f

ḫnty st

ꜥ3 mr.wt

dd snḏ […]

sgrḥ n=f ḥry.w šꜥ

ỉmy-r3 ḥw.t-nṯr

ḫtm.w-bỉty

smr wꜥ.ty

dd wḏ.w n Šmꜥ.w wp.wt n T3-mḥw

ḥry-tp m-m smr.w

sm

ḫrp šnḏw.t nb.t

Overseer of *ḥm-nṯr*-priests

Member of the elite

Count

Overlord of the entire land

Overseer of scribes

Chief lector priest

Magnate of the King

Great one of the King of Lower Egypt

Great overlord of the eastern *ḥḳ3-ꜥnḏ*-nome

One who gives *hp*-laws*

Foremost of offices

Overseer of hearing and dividing

One to whom the magnates come […]

One like the King in pacifying the two lands

Favoured of him in the daytime

One who does what his Majesty commands without carelessness

Director of those concerned with royal matters

Magnate in his office

Great in his dignity

Foremost of place

Great of love

One who brings about fear

One who pacifies the sand-dwellers for him

Overseer of the temple

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Sole companion

One who gives commands to Upper Egypt and instructions to Lower Egypt

Overlord among the followers

Sm-priest

Director of every kilt

21: Ḫnmwỉ: 12th Dynasty(?) inscription on stela of his mother, ***Snt-ỉt=s***, Abydos:

(after Lange & Schäfer 1902: 15-16, 20016)

sꜣb sḏm.t wꜥ m ỉst

mḥ-ỉb n(y)-sw.t m nḏ rn=f

ḥry-sštꜣ n sḏm.t wꜥ

Unique dignitary of hearing in the chamber

Confidant of the King in uttering his name

Unique master of secrets of hearing

Ḫnmwỉ: 12th Dynasty inscription on shared stela also mentioning his mother, ***Snt-ỉt=s***, Abydos:

(after Lange & Schäfer 1902: 16-17, 20017)

*sꜣb sr hꜣy.t**

sḏm.(w) sḏm.t wꜥ m ỉst

Dignitary and official of the portal*

Unique hearer of hearings in the chamber

22: Ḫnmw-ḥtp: 12th Dynasty tomb, Dahshur

(after de Morgan 1895: 19-22)

ỉry-pꜥ.t

ḥꜣ.ty-ꜥ

sm

ḫrp šnḏw.t nb.t

ḫry-ḥb.t ḥry-tp

sš ᶜ nṯr

mr.(w)ty(?)

ḥry-sšṯ ḥ[…]t

ỉmy-rꜣ šnw.ty

ỉmy-rꜣ sš.wy n sḫmḫ-ỉb

mḥ-ỉb n(y)-sw.t

ḫnty-š

ᶜḳ-ỉb=f

ḫnty rḫy.t

dd.w n-=f nb.w n ḥs.w

ỉmy-ḫꜣ.t sᶜḥ.w

ḫtm.w-bỉty

smr wᶜ.ty

ỉmy-rꜣ pr wr

ḥry-sšṯ n sḏm.t wᶜ

ỉmy-rꜣ nỉwt

*tꜣy.ty sꜣb ṯ.ty**

rꜣ P nb

ỉmy-ỉs Nḫn

sꜣw Nḫn

[…] ỉmy-rꜣ mšᶜ n nfr.w […]

Member of the elite

Count

Sm-priest

Director of every kilt

Chief lector priest

Scribe of divine documents

Beloved one

Master of secrets of […]

Overseer of the two granaries

Overseer of the two bird marshes of pleasure

Confidant of the King

Ḫnty-š-official

His intimate friend

Foremost of the *rḫy.t*-people

One to whom is given gold of favour

One in front of the nobles

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Sole companion

Great overseer of the house

Unique master of secrets of hearing

Overseer of the pyramid town

Shrouded one; Vizier and Dignitary*

Mouth of every Butite

One in the chamber of Hierakonpolis

Guardian of Hierakonpolis

[…] Overseer of the army of recruits […]

23: S3-Mnṯw: 13th Dynasty stela, provenance unknown:

(after Budge 1912: pl. 21)

ỉry-pˁ.t

ḥ3.ty-ˁ

ḫtm.w-bỉty

smr-wˁ.ty

ỉmy-ỉb Ḥr nb ˁḥ

ỉrr ḥss.t=f rˁ nb

sš ˁ n(y)-sw.t

sš n ḫnr.t n.(t) sḏm

sš n ṯm3

ḥsb ỉt-mḥw m Šmˁ.w T3-mḥw

*sš n ḫnr.t ˁ3**

sš ˁ.t n n(y)-sw.t ỉmy-r3 k3.t m t3 r ḏr=f

Member of the elite

Count

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Sole companion

One in the heart of Horus, lord of the palace

One who does what is favoured of him every day

Scribe of royal documents

Scribe of the confined space of hearing

Scribe of the mat

Reckoner of Lower Egyptian barley in Upper and Lower Egypt

Scribe of the great confined space*

Scribe of royal documents and Overseer of works in the entire land

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24: S3-rnp.wt: 12th Dynasty tomb, Aswan[159]:

(after Gardiner 1908: 124-125, pls. VI-VII; Sethe 1935: 1-7)

ỉry-pˁ.t

ḥ3.ty-ˁ

ḫtm.w-bỉty

smr-wˁ.ty

ỉmy-r3 ḥm.w-nṯr n Stt nb.t 3bḏw

mḥ-ỉb n n(y)-sw.t m ḥw.t-wr.t

*r3 Nḫn m pr Stt**

Nḫb.y m pr nsr(?)

ḥry-tp ḥm.w

ḥry-sšt3 n n(y)-sw.t m mšˁ

sḏm.w sḏm.t [wˁ ?]

ỉỉ n=f t3.wy tm.w

[…] ˁḳ-[ỉb] n(y)-sw.t […]

smỉ n=f ỉnw Mḏ3.w m b3k.w ḥḳ3.w ḫ3s.t

sḏr m-ḫnw ḥw.t-nṯr rˁ nb ḥb ˁ3

šsp ḥnḳ.t m špss.(w) dd.(w) n(y)-sw.t m ˁḥ

ḥry ḥkn.w m dp.t-nṯr ḫft-ḥr nṯr

ḥry bỉ3.t nb Stty.w ḥr mw btš

ˁḳ-ỉb.w ḥr-s3 mry.t

ỉmy-r3 ˁḥˁ.w wr m pr-n(y)-sw.t

spdd pr.wy-ḥḏ

ḥry dmỉ.w T3-sty

nᶜᶜ.w mnỉ.w ḫr st ḥr=f

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[159] Tomb also has autobiography, which talks about this nomarch being favoured by the King and mentions the usual tropes of clothing the naked and feeding the hungry. Neither *sḏm* nor *wḏˁ-mdw* are mentioned.

Member of the elite

Count

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt

Sole companion

Overseer of *ḥm-nṯr*-priests of Satis, Lady of Elephantine

Confidant of the King in the temple

Mouth of Hierakonpolis in the house of Satis*

One of El-Kab in the *nsr*-house(?)

Chief of servants

Master of secrets of the King in the army

[Unique?] hearer of hearings

One to whom the two lands come in full

[…] Intimate [friend] of the King […]

One to whom the offerings of the Medjay are reported in the tribute of the desert chiefs

One who rests within the temple on the day of the great festival

One who receives gifts of choice things which the King gives in the palace

Master of celebration in the divine boat before the god

Master of every marvel of the Nubians upon the hostile water

Intimate friend over the harbour

Great overseer of ships in the royal estate

Supplier of the two treasuries

Master of the quays of Nubia

He who travels by water and he who moors being under his charge

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25: Sbk-ḥr-ḥb: 12th Dynasty(?) seal, provenance unknown:

(after Martin 1971: 110, 1418)

ỉmy-rꜣ pr n sḏmw.w

Overseer of the department of hearers

26: Snb.ty=fy: 12th Dynasty(?) seal, provenance unknown:
(after Martin 1971: 122, 1591)

ỉmy-rꜣ sḏmw.w n ˁ.t sšm

Overseer of hearers of the chamber of procedure

27: Šms.w-mr.w and family: 13th Dynasty(?) stela, provenance unknown:
(after Schäfer *et al*. 1913: 201, 7288)

Šms.w-mr.w himself:

ḫtm.w-bỉty
sš ˁ n(y)-sw.t n ḫft ḥr

Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt
Scribe of royal documents in front of the face

Šms.w-mr.w (on same stela; son of ***Šms.w-mr.w***):

sš wr sḏmw.w

Great scribe of the hearers

Šms.w-mr.w-ˁnḫ (on same stela; son of ***Šms.w-mr.w***):

ỉmy-rꜣ pr

Overseer of the house

***28: Dỉ-n.y-ˁnḫ Kms*:** 12th Dynasty(?) fragmentary shared stelae, Abydos:
(after Lange & Schäfer 1908: 209-211, 20571; 381-382, 20748)

mry nb=f mꜣˁ n st-ỉb=f rḫ st-rd=f m pr-n(y)-sw.t
*sˁr Mꜣˁ.t n nb=f**

smỉ n=f ḫr.t tȝ.wy

dd tp-rd n smr.w m ỉr.t ʿḥʿ.w ḥms.t

sḏm.(w) sḏm.t wʿ

ỉmy-rȝ ʿḫnwty n ḥȝ n ỉmy-rȝ ḫtm.t Dỉ-n.y-ʿnḫ

ḫrp ʿḥʿ.w n(y)-sw.t

ỉry-pʿ.t

ḥȝ.ty-ʿ

wr nḏm.t(?)

ʿȝ mr.wt

mn ḥs.wt m stp-sȝ

ỉmy-rȝ ʿḫnwty

ḫrp kȝ.t

Beloved of his lord, guided of his place of favour, who knows his station in the royal estate

One who causes the ascent of *Mȝʿ.t* for his lord*

One who reports to him the condition of the two lands

One who gives instructions to the companions in how to live life

Unique hearer of hearings

Overseer of the audience chamber of the office of the Overseer of sealings

Director of ships of the King

Member of the elite

Count

Great of sweetness(?)

Great of affection

Firm of favour in the palace

Overseer of the audience chamber

Director of works

29: **Unnamed official** in the tomb of ***Ḏḥwty-Nḫt***: 11th – 12th Dynasty tomb, Deir el-Bersheh

(after Griffith & Newberry 1895: 17-26):

***sš n sḏmw.w*[160]**

Scribe of the hearers

[160] This title almost certainly belonging to an unnamed minor official, and not to the high official and vizier *Ḏḥwty-Nḫt* himself, which is considered a possibility in the initial publication.

Titles of ***Ḏḥwty-Nḫt*** himself:

[…] šd nḫn.w
sḥtp s.wt ḥw.t-nṯr
mdw r ḫrw […]
[…] ḥry-sšṭ3 m-dȝ psḏ.t dmd.t
ȝmy-ḥ3.t […]
ḥ3.ty-ʿ
ḫrp ns.ty
ȝmy-r3 ḥm.w-nṯr Wsȝr nb ʿnḫ t3.wy
ʿḥ3.w Mḥw
ȝry-pʿ.t
ȝmy-r3 nȝwt
*t3y.ty s3b ṯ3.ty**
*ȝmy-r3 ḥw.t-wr.t-6**
[…] ḫnr […]
ȝmy-r3 ḥm.w-nṯr n Ḏḥwty nb Ḫmnw
rḫ n(y)-sw.t
ḥ3.ty-ʿ Šmʿ.w
h3.ty-ʿ m pr-n(y)-sw.t
ȝmy-r3 ḥm.w-nṯr-5 m pr Ḏḥwty

One who rescues the child
One who pacifies the places of the temple
Word according to voice […]
[…] Master of secrets among the entire Ennead
One in front […]
Count
Director of the two thrones
Overseer of *ḥm-nṯr*-priests under “Osiris, lord of the life of the two lands”
Warrior of Lower Egypt
Member of the elite
Overseer of the town
[Shrouded one], Dignitary and Vizier*
Overseer of the six great enclosures*
[…] confine […]

Overseer of *ḥm-nṯr*-priests of Thoth, lord of Hermopolis

King's Acquaintance

Count of Upper Egypt […]

Count in the royal estate

Overseer of the five *ḥm-nṯr*-priests in the estate of Thoth

Appendix II – Descriptions of informal and irregular justice in 19th and early 20th Century Egypt

D1. Trial of an Egyptian thief caught by the French military

(Denon 1803: 230-231)

A criminal came before General Desaix. Those that brought him said, “he is a thief; he has stolen some guns from the volunteers, and has been taken in the act.” How much we were surprised to see the robber a boy of twelve years old, beautiful as an angel, with a large sabre wound in his arm, which he looked at without emotion. He presented himself to the general, whom he perceived to be his judge, with an air of firmness and simplicity, and (so great is the charm of native grace) not a person present could preserve his anger. He was asked who bid him steal these guns? “Nobody.” What had induced him to do it? “I do not know; it was the great God.” Had he parents? “Only a mother, very poor and blind.” The general told him, if he confessed who sent him, he should be released; if not, he should be punished as he deserved. “I have already told you, nobody sent me, it was God alone that put it into my head:” then laying his cap at the feet of the general, he said, “there is my head, you may cut it off!” Fatal religion, in which vicious principles and positive laws urge man to heroism and to wickedness! – “Poor little wretch,” said the general, “let him go”. He saw that his sentence was passed; he looked at the general, then at the soldier who was leading him off, and, guessing the meaning of what he could not understand, he parted with a smile of confidence.

D2. Egyptian attitudes to revenge as a form of justice without governmental oversight

(Lane 1908: 108-109) *[Written c.1836]*

Cases of blood-revenge are very common among the peasantry of Egypt, who, as I have before remarked, retain many customs of their Bedawee ancestors. The relations of a person who has been killed, in an Egyptian village, generally retaliate with their own hands rather than apply to the government, and often do so with disgusting cruelty, and even mangle and insult the corpse of their victim. The relations of a homicide usually flee from their own to another village, for protection. Even when retaliation has been made, animosity frequently continues between the two parties for many years; and often a case of blood-revenge involves the inhabitants of two or more villages in hostilities, which are renewed, at intervals, during the period of several generations.

Retaliation for unintentional wounds and mutilations is allowed, like as for murder; “eye for eye,” etc; but a fine may be accepted instead, which the law allows also for unintentional injuries. The fine for a member that is single (as the nose) is the whole price of blood, as for homicide; for a member of which there are two, and not more (as a hand), half the price of blood; for one of which there are ten (a finger or toe), a tenth of the price of blood: but the fine of a man for maiming or wounding a woman is half of that for the same injury to a man; and that of a free person for injuring a slave varies according to the value of the slave. The fine for depriving a man of any of his five senses, or dangerously wounding him, or grievously disfiguring him for life, is the whole price of blood.

D3. Torture and punishment of criminals

(Lane 1908: 114-115) *[Written c.1836]*

When a person denies the offence with which he is charged, and there is not sufficient evidence to convict him, but some ground of suspicion, he is generally bastinaded, in order to induce him to confess; and then, if not before, when the crime is not of a nature that renders him obnoxious to a very heavy punishment, he, if guilty, admits it. A thief, after this discipline, generally confesses, “The devil seduced me, and I took it.” The punishment of the convicts is regulated by a system of arbitrary, but lenient and wise, policy: it usually consists in their being compelled to labour, for a scanty sustenance, in some of the public works; such as the removal of rubbish, digging canals, etc; and sometimes the army is recruited with able-bodied young men convicted of petty offences.

D4. Processes for appointing senior judicial officials, and their functions

(Lane 1908: 115-116) *[Written c.1836]*

The “Ḳáḍee” (or chief judge) of Cairo presides in Egypt only a year, at the expiration of which term, a new Ḳáḍee having arrived from Constantinople, the former returns. It was customary for this officer to proceed from Cairo, with the great caravan of pilgrims, to Mekkeh, perform the ceremonies of the pilgrimage, and remain one year as Ḳáḍee of the holy city, and one year at El-Medeeneh. He purchases his place privately of the government, which pays no particular regard to his qualifications; though he must be a man of some knowledge, an ‘Osmanlee (that is, a Turk), and of the sect of the Ḥanafees. His tribunal is called the “Maḥkemeh” (or Place of Judgment). Few Ḳáḍees are very well acquainted with the Arabic language; nor is it necessary for them to have such knowledge. In Cairo, the Ḳáḍee has little or nothing to do but to confirm the sentence of his “Náïb” (or deputy), who hears and decides the more ordinary cases, and whom he chooses from among the ‘Ulamà of Istambool, or the decision of the “Muftee” (or chief doctor of the law) of his own sect, who constantly resides in

Cairo, and gives judgment in all cases of difficulty. But in general, the Náïb is, at the best, but little conversant with the popular dialect of Egypt; therefore, in Cairo, where the chief proportion of the litigants at the Maḥkemeh are Arabs, the judge must place the utmost confidence in the "Básh-Turgumán" (or Chief Interpreter), whose place is permanent, and who is consequently well acquainted with all the customs of the court, particularly with the system of bribery; and this knowledge he is generally very ready to communicate to every new Ḳáḍee and Náïb. A man may be grossly ignorant of the law in many important particulars, and yet hold the office of Ḳáḍee of Cairo: several instances of this have occurred; but the Náïb must be a lawyer of learning and experience.

D5. Corruption as a major factor in judicial proceedings

(Lane 1908: 118-121) *[Written c.1836]*

The rank of a plaintiff or defendant, or a bribe from either, often influences the decision of the judge. In general the Náïb and Muftee take bribes, and the Ḳáḍee receives from his Náïb. On some occasions, particularly in long litigations, bribes are given by each party, and the decision is awarded in favour of him who pays highest. This frequently happens in difficult law-suits; and even in cases respecting which the law is perfectly clear, strict justice is not always administered; bribes and false testimony being employed by one of the parties. The shocking extent to which the practices of bribery and suborning false witnesses are carried in Muslim courts of law, and among them in the tribunal of the Ḳáḍee of Cairo, may be scarcely credited on the bare assertion of the fact: some strong proof, resting on indubitable authority, may be demanded; and here I shall give such proof, in a summary of a case which was tried not long since, and which was related to me by the Secretary and Imám of the Sheykh El-Mahdee, who was then Supreme Muftee of Cairo (being the chief Muftee of the Ḥanafees), and to whom this case was referred, after judgment in the Ḳáḍee's court.

A Turkish merchant, residing at Cairo, died, leaving property to the amount of six thousand purses, and no relation to inherit but one daughter. The seyyid Moḥammad El-Maḥrooḳee, the Sháh-Bandar (chief of the merchants of Cairo), hearing of this event, suborned of a common felláḥ, who was the bowwáb (or door-keeper) of a respected sheykh, and whose parents (both of them Arabs) were known to many persons, to assert himself a son of a brother of the deceased. The case was brought before the Ḳáḍee, and, as it was one of considerable importance, several of the principal 'Ulamà (learned men) of the city were summoned to decide it. They were all bribed or influenced by El-Maḥrooḳee, as will presently be shewn; false witnesses were brought forward to swear to the truth of the bowwáb's pretensions, and others to give testimony to the good character of these witnesses. Three thousand purses were adjudged to the daughter of the deceased, and the other half of the

property to the bowwáb. El-Maḥrooḳee received the share of the latter, deducting only three hundred piasters, which he presented to the bowwáb.

The chief Muftee, El-Mahdee, was absent from Cairo when the case was tried. On his return to the metropolis, a few days after, the daughter of the deceased merchant repaired to his house, stated her case to him, and earnestly solicited redress. The Muftee, though convinced of the injustice which she had suffered, and not doubting the truth of what she related respecting the part which El-Maḥrooḳee had taken in this affair, told her that he feared it was impossible for him to annul the judgment, unless there were some informality in the proceedings of the court, but that he would look at the record of the case in the register of the Maḥkemeh. Having done this, he betook himself to the Báshà, with whom he was in great favour for his knowledge and inflexible integrity, and complained to him that the tribunal of the Ḳáḍee was disgraced by the administration of the most flagrant injustice; that false witness was admitted by the ‘Ulamà, however evident and glaring it might be; and that a judgment which they had given in a late case, during his absence, was the general talk and wonder of the town. The Báshà summoned the Ḳáḍee and all the ‘Ulamà who had tried this case, to meet the Muftee in the Citadel; and when they had assembled there, addressed them, as from himself, with the Muftee’s complaint. The Ḳáḍee, appearing, like the ‘Ulamà, highly indignant at this charge, demanded to know upon what it was grounded. The Báshà replied that it was a general charge, but particularly grounded on the case in which the court had admitted the claim of a bowwáb to a relationship and inheritance which they could not believe to be his by right.

The Ḳáḍee here urged that he had passed sentence in accordance with the unanimous decision of the ‘Ulamà then present. “Let the record of the case be read,” said the Báshà. The journal being sent for, this was done; and when the secretary had finished reading the minutes, the Ḳáḍee, in a loud tone of proud authority, said, “And I judged so.” The Muftee, in a louder and more authoritative tone, exclaimed, “And thy judgment is false!” All eyes were fixed in astonishment, now at the Muftee, now at the Báshà, now at the other ‘Ulamà. The Ḳáḍee and the ‘Ulamà rolled their heads and stroked their beards. The former exclaimed, tapping his breast, “I, the Ḳáḍee of Miṣr, pass a false sentence!” “And we,” said the ‘Ulamà, “we, Sheykh Mahdee! We, ‘Ulamà el-Islám, give a false decision!” “O Sheykh Mahdee,” said El-Maḥrooḳee (who, from his commercial transactions with the Báshà, could generally obtain a place in his councils), “respect the ‘Ulamà as they respect thee.” “O Maḥrooḳee,” exclaimed the Muftee, “art thou concerned in this affair? Declare what part thou hast in it, or else hold thy peace: go, speak in the assemblies of the merchants, but presume not again to open thy mouth in the council of the ‘Ulamà!”

El-Maḥrooḳee immediately left the palace, for he saw how the affair would terminate, and had to make his arrangements accordingly. The Muftee was now desired, by the other ʻUlamà, to adduce a proof of the invalidity of their decision. Drawing from his bosom a small book on the laws of inheritance, he read from it, "to establish a claim to relationship and inheritance, the names of the father and mother of the claimant, and those of his father's father and mother, and of his mother's father and mother, must be ascertained." The names of the father and mother of the pretended father of the bowwáb the false witnesses had not been prepared to give; and this deficiency in the testimony (which the ʻUlamà, in trying the case, purposely overlooked,) now caused the sentence to be annulled. The bowwáb was brought before the council, and, denying the imposition of which he had been made the principal instrument, was, by order of the Báshà, very severely bastinaded; but the only confession that could be drawn from him by the torture which he endured was, that he had received nothing more of the three thousand purses than three hundred piasters. Meanwhile, El-Maḥrooḳee had repaired to the bowwáb's master: he told the latter what happened at the Citadel, and what he had foreseen would be the result, put into his hand three thousand purses, and begged him immediately to go to the council, give this sum of money, and say that it had been placed in his hands in trust by his servant. This was done, and the money was paid to the daughter of the deceased.

In another case, when the Ḳáḍee and the council of the ʻUlamà were influenced in their decision by a Báshà (not Moḥammad ʼAlee), and passed a sentence contrary to law, they were thwarted in the same manner by El-Mahdee. This Muftee was a rare example of integrity. It is said that he never took a fee for a fetwà. He died shortly after my first visit to this country. I could mention several other glaring cases of bribery in the court of the Ḳáḍee of Cairo; but the above is sufficient.

D6. The role played by oaths in upholding social order

(Lane 1908: 123) *[Written c.1836]*

The sentinel, or guard, calls out to the approaching passenger, in Turkish, "who is that?" and is answered, in Arabic, "a citizen". The private watchman, in the same case, exclaims, "attest the unity of God," or merely, "attest the unity." The reply given to this is, "there is no deity but God," which Christians, as well as Muslims, object not to say; the former understanding these words in a different sense to the latter. It is supposed that a thief, or a person bound on any unlawful undertaking, would not dare to utter these words.

D7. Arbitrary punishments determined spontaneously by law enforcement officials

(Lane 1908: 123-124) *[Written c.1836]*

The chief of the police had an arbitrary power to put any criminal or offender to death without trial, and when not obnoxious, by law, to capital punishment; and so also had many inferior officers, as will be seen in subsequent pages of this work: but within the last two or three years, instances of the exercise of such power have been very rare, and I believe they would not now be permitted. The officers of the Ẓábiṭ (chief of police) perform their nightly rounds with the military guards merely as being better acquainted than the latter with the haunts and practices of thieves and other bad characters; and the Ẓábiṭ himself scarcely ever exercises any penal authority beyond that of beating or flogging.

D8. Judicial proceedings arising from a tax dispute

(Lane 1908: 130-132) *[Written c.1836]*

Another occurrence may here be aptly related, as a further illustration of the nature of the government to which the people of Egypt are subjected. A felláḥ, who was appointed Náẓir (or governor) of the district of El-Manoofeeyeh (the southernmost district of the Delta), a short time before my second visit to Egypt, in collecting the taxes at a village, demanded of a poor peasant the sum of sixty riyáls (ninety faḍḍahs each, making a sum total of a hundred and thirty-five piasters, which was then equivalent to about thirty shillings). The poor man urged that he possessed nothing but a cow, which barely afforded sustenance to himself and his family. Instead of pursuing the method usually followed when a felláḥ declares himself unable to pay the tax demanded of him, which is to give him a severe bastinadoing, the Náẓir, in this case, sent the Sheykh el-Beled (village chief) to bring the poor peasant's cow, and desired some of the felláḥeen to buy it. They saying that they had not sufficient money, he sent for a butcher, and desired him to kill the cow, which was done: he then told him to divide it into sixty pieces. The butcher asked for his pay; and was given the head of the cow. Sixty felláḥeen were then called together; and each of them was compelled to purchase, for a riyál, a piece of the cow.

The owner of the cow went, weeping and complaining, to the Náẓir's superior, the late Moḥammad Bey, Deftardár (finance minister). "O my master," said he, "I am oppressed and in misery: I had no property but one cow, a milch cow: I and my family lived upon her milk; and she ploughed for me,

and threshed my corn; and my whole subsistence was derived from her: the Náẓir has taken her, and killed her, and cut her up into sixty pieces, and sold the pieces to my neighbours; to each a piece, for one riyál; so that he obtained but sixty riyáls for the whole, while the value of the cow was a hundred and twenty riyáls, or more. I am oppressed and in misery, and a stranger in the place, for I came from another village; but the Náẓir had no pity on me. I and my family are become beggars, and have nothing left. Have mercy upon me, and give me justice: I implore it by thy ḥareem."

The Deftardár, having caused the Náẓir to be brought before him, asked him, "where is the cow of this felláḥ?" "I have sold it," said the Náẓir. "For how much?" "For sixty riyáls." "Why did you kill it and sell it?" "He owed sixty riyáls for land: so I took his cow, and killed it, and sold it for the amount." "Where is the butcher that killed it?" "In Manoof." The butcher was sent for, and brought. The Deftardár said to him, "why did you kill this man's cow?" "The Náẓir desired me," he answered, "and I could not oppose him: if I had attempted to do so, he would have beaten me, and destroyed my house: I killed it; and the Náẓir gave me the head as my reward."

"Man," said the Deftardár, "do you know the persons who bought the meat?" The butcher replied that he did. The Deftardár then desired then desired his secretary to write the names of the sixty men, and an order to the Sheykh of their village to bring them to Manoof, where this complaint was made. The Náẓir and butcher were placed in confinement till the next morning; when the Sheykh of the village came, with the sixty felláḥeen. The two prisoners were then brought again before the Deftardár, who said to the Sheykh and the sixty peasants, "Was the value of this man's cow sixty riyáls?" "O our master," they answered, "her value was greater." The Deftardár sent for the Ḳáḍee of Manoof, and said to him, "O Ḳáḍee, here is a man oppressed by this Náẓir, who has taken his cow, and killed it; and sold its flesh for sixty riyáls. What is thy judgment?" The Ḳáḍee replied: "he is a cruel tyrant, who oppresses every one under his authority. Is not a cow worth a hundred and twenty riyáls, or more? And he has sold this one for sixty riyáls: this is tyranny towards the owner."

The Deftardár then said to some of his soldiers, "take the Náẓir, and strip him, and bind him." This done, he said to the butcher, "butcher, dost thou not fear God? Thou hast killed the cow unjustly." The butcher again urged that he was obliged to obey the Náẓir. "Then," said the Deftardár, "if I order thee to do a thing wilt thou do it?" "I will do it," answered the butcher. "Slaughter the Náẓir, and said the Deftardár. Immediately, several of the soldiers present seized the Náẓir, and threw him down; and the butcher cut his throat, in the regular orthodox manner of killing animals for food. "Now, cut him up," said the Deftardár, "into sixty pieces." This was done: the people concerned in the affair, and many others, looking on; but none daring to speak. The sixty peasants who had bought the meat

of the cow were then called forward, one after another, and each was made to take piece of the flesh of the Náẓir, and to pay for it two riyáls; so that a hundred and twenty riyáls were obtained from them. They were then dismissed; but the butcher remained. The Ḳáḍee was asked what should be the reward of the butcher; and answered that the head of the Náẓir should be given to him; and the butcher went away with his worse than valueless burden, thanking God that he had not been more unfortunate, and scarcely believing himself to have so easily escaped until he arrived at his village. The money paid for the flesh of the Náẓir was given to the owner of the cow.

D9. Judicial process against Egyptian villagers accused of stealing from a British traveller

(Duff Gordon 1969: 140-142) *[Written c.1862-1869]*

Yesterday we had a strange and unpleasant day's business. The evening before I had my pocket picked in Karnac by two men who hung about me, one to sell a bird, the other one of the regular 'loafers' who hang about the ruins to beg, and sell water or curiosities, and who are all a lazy, bad lot, of course. I went to Seleem, who wrote at once to the Shaikh-el-Beled of Karnac to say that we should go over next morning at eight o'clock to investigate the affair, and to desire him to apprehend the men.

Next morning Seleem fetched me, and Mustapha came to represent English interests, and as we rode out of Luxor the Shaikh-el-Ababdeh joined us, with four of his tribe with their long guns, and a lot more with lances. He was a volunteer, and furious at the idea of a lady and a stranger being robbed. It is the first time it has happened here, and the desire to beat was so strong that I went to act as counsel for the prisoner. Everyone was peculiarly savage that it should have happened to me, a person well known to be so friendly to *el Muslimeen*.

When we arrived we went into a square enclosure, with a sort of cloister on one side, spread with carpets where we sat, and the wretched fellows were brought in chains. To my horror, I found they had been beaten already. I remonstrated, 'What if you had beaten the wrong men?' '*Maleysh*! (Never mind!) we will beat the whole village until your purse is found.' I said to Mustapha, 'This won't do; you must stop this.' So Mustapha ordained, with the concurrence of the Maōhn, that the Shaikh-el-Beled and the *ghaffir* (the keeper of the ruins) should pay me the value of the purse. As the people of Karnac are very troublesome in begging and worrying, I thought this would be a good lesson to the said Sheykh to keep better order, and I consented to receive the money, promising to return it and to give a napoleon over if the purse comes back with its contents (3½ napoleons). The

Shaikh-el-Ababdeh harangued the people on their ill-behaviour to Hareemát, called them *harámee* (rascals), and was very high and mighty to the Shaikh-el-Beled.

Hereupon I went away to visit a Turkish lady in the village, leaving Mustapha to settle. After I was gone they beat eight or ten of the boys who had mobbed me, and begged with the two men. Mustapha, who does not like the stick, stayed to see that they were not hurt, and so far it will be a good lesson to them. He also had the two men sent over to the prison here, for fear the Shaikh-el-Beled should beat them again, and will keep them here for a time. So far so good, but my fear now is that innocent people will be squeezed to make up the money, if the men do not give up the purse.

I have told Shaikh Yussuf to keep watch how things go, and if the men persist in the theft and don't return the purse, I shall give the money to those whom the Shaikh-el-Beled will assuredly squeeze, or else to the mosque of Karnac. I cannot pocket it, though I thought it quite right to exact the fine as a warning to the Karnac *mauvais sujets*. As we went home the Shaikh-el-Ababdeh (such a fine fellow he looks) came up and rode beside me, and said, 'I know you are a person of kindness; do not tell this story in this country. If Effendina (Ismail Pasha) comes to hear, he may "take a broom and sweep away the village."' I exclaimed in horror, and Mustapha joined at once in the request, and said, 'Do not tell Mr Ross or anyone in Egypt. The Shaikh-el-Ababdeh is quite true; it might cost many lives.' I, of course, promised at once – so please do not allude to the affair in writing to Janet as I shall not mention it to any travellers.

The whole thing distressed me horribly. If I had not been there they would have beaten right and left, and if I had shown any desire to have anyone punished, evidently they would have half killed the two men.

D10. Comments on the nature of justice in Egypt by a British traveller

(Duff Gordon 1969: 151-152) *[Written c.1862-1869]*

I told you how my purse had been stolen and the proceedings thereanent. Well, Mustapha asked me several times what I wished to be done with the thief, who spent twenty-one days here in irons. With my absurd English ideas of justice I refused to interfere at all, and Omar and I had quite a tiff because he wished me to say, 'Oh, poor man, let him go; I leave the affair to God'. I thought Omar absurd but it was I who was wrong.

The authorities concluded that it would oblige me very much if the poor devil were punished with a 'rigour beyond the law', and had not Shaikh Yussuf come and explained the nature of the proceedings, the man would have been sent up to the mines in Fazogli *for life*, out of civility to me, by the Mudîr of Keneh, Ali Bey. There was no alternative between my 'forgiving him for the love of God' or sending him to a certain death by a climate insupportable to these people.

Mustapha and Co. tried hard to prevent Shaikh Yussuf from speaking to me, for fear I should be angry and complain at Cairo, if my vengeance were not wreaked on the thief, but he said he knew me better, and brought the *procès verbal* to show me. Fancy my dismay! I went to Seleem Effendi and to the Cadi with Shaikh Yussuf, and begged the man might be let go, and not sent to Keneh at all. Having settled this, I said that I thought it right that the people of Karnac should pay the money I had lost, as a fine for their bad conduct to strangers, but that I did not require for the sake of the money, which I would accordingly give to the poor of Luxor in the mosque and in the church (great applause from the crowd).

Then the Cadi made me a fine speech, and said I had behaved like a great *Emeereh*, and one that feared God, and Shaikh Yussuf said he knew the English had mercy in their stomachs, and that I especially had Mussulman feelings (as we say, Christian charity).

Did you ever hear of such a state of administration of justice. Of course, sympathy here, as in Ireland, is mostly with the 'poor man' in prison – 'in trouble,' as we say. I find that accordingly a vast number of disputes are settled by private arbitration, and Yussuf is constantly sent for to decide between contending parties, who abide by his decision rather than go to law; or else five or six respectable men are called upon to form a sort of amateur jury, and to settle the matter. In criminal cases, if the prosecutor is powerful, he has it all his own way; if the prisoner can bribe high, he is apt to get off. All the appealing to my compassion was quite *en règle*.

D11. Legal investigation into tomb robberies

(Bell 1888: 38-39)

Suspicion was aroused in the neighbourhood of Thebes by the sale of mummies, scarabei, small blue idols, and other precious things found in the tombs, and as all such rifling the abodes of the dead is illegal, inquiry was made into the matter. It was discovered that four Arab brothers named Abd-er-Rasûl, who lived in the tombs close by the Ramesseum, had found some tombs, broken into them, robbed them of their contents, and sold them to all willing to buy. Professor Maspero, in the year

1881, caused Ahmed Abd-er-Rasûl to be arrested, and he was imprisoned for two months in the Keneh. It was in vain that he was entreated and threatened, and that the bastinado was used as a last resort, he steadily refused to disclose the secret. But his brother Mohammed was more open to persuasion, and yielded under the promise of a large *backsheesh* to tell all he knew.

D12. Trial of Egyptian villagers accused of attacking British travellers

(Edwards 1899: 386-387)

The Idle Man went betimes to Assûan, where he was received in private by the Governor and Mudîr. Pipes and coffee were handed, and the usual civilities exchanged. The Governor then informed his guest that fifteen men of Torrigûr had been arrested; and that fourteen of them unanimously identified the fifteenth as the one who struck the blow. “And now,” said the Governor, “before we send for the prisoners, it will be as well to decide on the sentence. What does his Excellency wish done to them?” The Idle Man was puzzled. How could he offer an opinion, being ignorant of the Egyptian civil code? And how could the sentence be decided upon before the trial? The Governor smiled serenely. “But,” he said, “this is the trial.”

Being an Englishman, it necessarily cost the Idle Man an effort to realise the full force of this explanation – an explanation which, in its sublime simplicity, epitomised the whole system of the judicial administration of Egyptian law. He hastened, however, to explain that he cherished no resentment against the culprit or the villagers, and that his only wish was to frighten them into a due respect for travellers in general.

The Governor hereupon invited the Mudîr to suggest a sentence, and the Mudîr, taking into consideration, as he said, his Excellency’s lenient disposition – proposed to award to the fourteen innocent men one month’s imprisonment each; and to the real offender two months’ imprisonment, with a hundred and fifty blows of the bastinado.

Shocked at the mere idea of such a sentence, the Idle Man declared that he must have the innocent set at liberty, but consented that the culprit, for the sake of example, should be sentenced to the one hundred and fifty blows – the punishment to be remitted after the first few strokes had been dealt. Word was now given for the prisoners to be brought in.

The gaoler marched first, followed by two soldiers. Then came the fifteen prisoners – I am ashamed to write it! – chained neck to neck in single file. One can imagine how the Idle Man felt at this moment.

Sentence being pronounced, the fourteen looked as if they could hardly believe their ears; while the fifteenth, though condemned to his one hundred and fifty strokes ("seventy five to each foot," specified the Governor), was overjoyed to be let off so easily.

He was then flung down; his feet were fastened soles uppermost, and two soldiers proceeded to execute the sentence. As each blow fell, he cried: "God save the Governor! God save the Mudîr! God save the Howadji!" When the sixth stroke had been dealt, the Idle Man turned to the Governor and formally interceded for the remission of the rest of the sentence. The Governor, as formally, granted the request, and the prisoners, weeping for joy, were set at liberty.

The Governor, the Mudîr, and the Idle Man then parted with a profession of complements; the Governor protesting that his only wish was to be agreeable to the English, and that the whole village should have been bastinadoed, had his Excellency desired it.

D13. A story of two foolish judges

(Blackman 2000: 270-271) *[Recorded c.1927]*

Once upon a time a judge had a wife who was always telling him that he invariably gave judgment in favour of men and never of women. To this accusation the judge replied, "Oh, my dear wife, I think that women are very inferior to men; they are always in need of our help."

As the judge continued to pay no attention to what his wife said, she became angry with him and said to herself, "I will find a way in which to punish my husband."

So one day the wife told her husband to buy some meat and a melon for dinner. After she had prepared these things a friend came, and she offered *him* the meat for his dinner and cooked some lentils for her husband. She then cut out the inside of the melon and poured water inside the rind, which had been left whole. She brought also some fish and put them inside the melon-rind in the water.

When her husband came to take his dinner as usual she brought him the lentils.

He was much surprised when he saw this, and said to her, “What is the matter? I bought meat, not lentils.”

So she said to him, “This is all that you bought: you must eat it.” So he ate.

After he had eaten the lentils she took a knife and began to cut the melon into pieces, and then started laughing. Her husband said, “What is the matter with you?” She replied, “My dear husband, you must come and see the fish which are in this melon.”

The man was very surprised to see such a curious thing, and he went outside his house, where there were some people sitting, and said to them, “I have bought a melon inside which there are fish. I shall invite you to some of these fish tomorrow.”

The next day he sent out his invitations to the people who had promised to dine with him on the fish. When the guests arrived he said to his wife, “Bring the fish!” So she came forward and said, “O my husband, do fish live in melons? What is the matter with you? O people, you must perceive that the judge has become mad!” So they took him to the asylum and made someone else judge in his place.

When they asked the poor man every day the names of the days of the week he repeated them correctly, but when they asked him, “Where do fish live?” he replied, “Fish live in melons.”

One day the woman went to visit her husband and said to him, “When they ask you ‘Where do fish live?’ you must say, ‘They live in water, in ponds and rivers and lakes.’ ” Then they let him go free, and when he arrived at his house the people came to salute him.

One night his wife said, “I can make you judge again and make the other judge mad!” She then told him that he must go to the market and buy some milk. So he went and bought it. Then she said, “We are going to invite the new judge to eat with us, and I am going to tell you something that you must say. When I hang a bag of skin filled with milk on your neck, I shall milk you, and you must make a noise such as buffaloes make.” So her husband said, “Very well, I will do so.”

The woman invited the new judge, and when he came to the house she began to laugh, saying, “I am going to milk my husband, but I am ashamed to do this before you!” The judge replied, “Are husbands milked?” to which she answered, “Yes, they give good milk, and you are going to see it for yourself.”

Then the woman called her husband and began to milk him from the skin which was concealed under his clothing. The new judge was very much astonished when he saw this, especially when he ate the food which she had prepared with the milk. After he had eaten he asked the wife, “How can a husband give milk?” to which she answered, “If you wish to be milked you must go to a street which leads to the market, and then you must take off all your clothes and begin to eat grass. When anyone speaks to you do not reply, but make a noise like a buffalo. After that you will give good milk.”

So he went and carried out her instructions. While he was thus engaged the inhabitants of the town passed by and saw what he was doing. “What is the matter with you, O our judge?” they asked. He did not answer them, but made a noise like a buffalo. Then they said that the judge had become mad, and they took him to the asylum and brought the old judge and restored him to his position.

D14. Comments on the place of revenge in village disputes

(Blackman 2000: 132-134) *[Recorded c.1927]*

One of the customs that one would be glad to see die out in Egypt in the blood-feud. As far as I can gather from scholars acquainted with the ancient history of the country, this custom does not seem to be a native one. I fancy it must have been introduced into Egypt at the time of the Arab conquest. It is a very terrible custom, and one that will be very difficult to abolish, for many of these family feuds have persisted for several generations, and still continue with no sign of abatement. The weapons used in connexion with blood-feuds are often the same as those used in inter-village fights, though firearms are sometimes employed. The rule is, so I was told, that the murderer, or a member of his family, must be killed by the avenger with exactly the same form of weapon as he (the murderer) used, and, if possible, on the very spot where the murder to be avenged was committed.

One day, as I was riding through the cultivation, an Egyptian friend of mine who was with me pointed to a certain place in the fields where a man had lately been strangled by a large handkerchief being tightly knotted round his throat. Shortly afterward, my friend told me, vengeance was taken by a member of the victim’s family, who killed one of the murderer’s relatives in the same way and on the exact site of the crime. Moreover, the same number of knots was tied in the handkerchief used by the avenger as had been tied in the handkerchief used by the original murderer.

On another occasion the train in which I was travelling stopped close to a certain village in Middle Egypt. I noticed that the place was in great commotion; crowds of people had collected in the streets, and there were two or three motors drawn up, evidently belonging to Government officials.

In a palm-grove opposite the village were groups of people, mostly women, seated round objects covered up with black cloaks such as are often worn by the men. Presently my servant came to the door of my carriage to tell me what was the matter. His information, collected from various persons on the spot, was practically the same as what I was told later by the officials themselves. It seems that in the village in question there is a long-standing feud between two families, one of which is weak, the other strong. About eight months previously the strong family had fought with the weaker one, and had either killed or severely wounded – I forget which – some of its members. The weak family was not in a position to take immediate revenge, but bided its time, determining to retaliate sooner or later. During the night before my visit fifteen members of the more powerful family had been out in their fields, as water had been turned on for irrigation purposes. It is always necessary on these occasions to see that the water is conducted into the proper channels, and also that no one steals it by altering its course. The men thus employed were widely separated from each other, and during their watch they all fell asleep. The weaker family knew that this might well happen and so give them the long-desired opportunity of taking their revenge. A number of them, therefore, set off from the village at night, and, creeping up to their sleeping enemies, beat them so severely with *nabābīt* (sticks) that those they did not kill outright they injured so terribly that they were not expected to live – I never heard definitely how many actually were killed, though one rumour, happily an exaggeration, I believe, put the number as high as twelve.

The law of blood-revenge is one of the greatest obstacles to justice with which the police officials have to contend. It is most difficult to obtain evidence, because the witnesses know that, should what they say result in a criminal's conviction, his relatives will certainly take revenge. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that criminals sometimes escape punishment, in spite of the skill and patience displayed by many of the officials in unravelling the mass of conflicting evidence. To this skill and patience I can myself testify, and also to the obstinate refusal of witnesses to give any incriminating evidence, for I have been present over and over again at criminal investigations.

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