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THE INSTALLATION OF THE VIZIER

By R. O. FAULKNER

THE text from the tomb of Rekhmirēʿ at Thebes—with fragmentary replicas in the tombs of Woser and Ḥepu—which gives the address by the king to his newly appointed vizier, wherein are laid down the principles which should govern the minister's conduct of his office, is one of the best known of Egyptian secular inscriptions, but the problems it presents are by no means entirely solved. It was first published in 1900 by Newberry, *The Life of Rekhmara*, pls. 9 and 10, and his version is still of value in that it shows the state of the inscription as it was at the beginning of the century. The first edition to show the texts of Rekhmirēʿ, Ḥepu, and Woser[a] in parallel, together with translation and commentary, was that of Gardiner in *Rec. trav.* 26, 1 ff. (1904); in 1906 Breasted printed a translation in his *Ancient Records*, II, §§ 665 ff.; while in 1907 Sethe republished the text in *Urkunden*, IV, 1086 ff.[b] He returned to the subject, this time with translation and commentary, in his *Einsetzung des Veziers* (*Untersuchungen*, V, 49 ff., 1912), but thereafter the topic slumbered until Davies published his monumental *Tomb of Rekh-mi-rēʿ at Thebes* in 1943. In this publication he gave the results of an exhaustive study of the tomb; in Vol. II (Plates) he records on pls. 14–15 all that was then visible of the Installation text, and on pls. 116–18 he gives his collation of all three versions,[c] while on pp. 85 ff. of Vol. I (Text) he provides a translation. As regards the hieroglyphic text, Davies's great skill and long experience in the copying of tomb inscriptions makes him the final court of appeal, and it is in the highest degree improbable that anyone will succeed in extracting more than he has done. His translations, however, are somewhat bold and free, and here and there it seems to me that he has failed to see the true drift of the text, so that I have ventured with some trepidation on the launching of a new rendering. My own version is frequently worded somewhat differently from its most recent predecessor, but it has seemed unnecessary to devote space to minor differences; only those passages where our views are really divergent will be discussed below. Figs. 1–3 give the basic text reconstituted as far as possible from Davies's collation.

The Introduction

Instructions enjoined upon the vizier Rekhmirēʿ. The Court was admitted to the audience-hall of Pharaoh, and it was ordered that the newly appointed vizier Rekhmirēʿ should be ushered in.

The Speech of Pharaoh

(1) *Thus said His Majesty to him:* [*Look*][1] *to the office of the vizier,* (2) *be vigilant concerning* [*all that*] *is done*[2] *in it, for it is the mainstay of the entire land. Now as for the vizierate,*[3] *it certainly is not pleasant; indeed it is as bitter as gall.*[4] *See,*[5] (3) *he is*[6] *copper*

[a] Hereinafter cited as R., H., and W. respectively.

[b] It is to this text that the allusions to Sethe refer.

[c] It is upon this that the following translation is based.

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Introduction

The Speech of Pharaoh

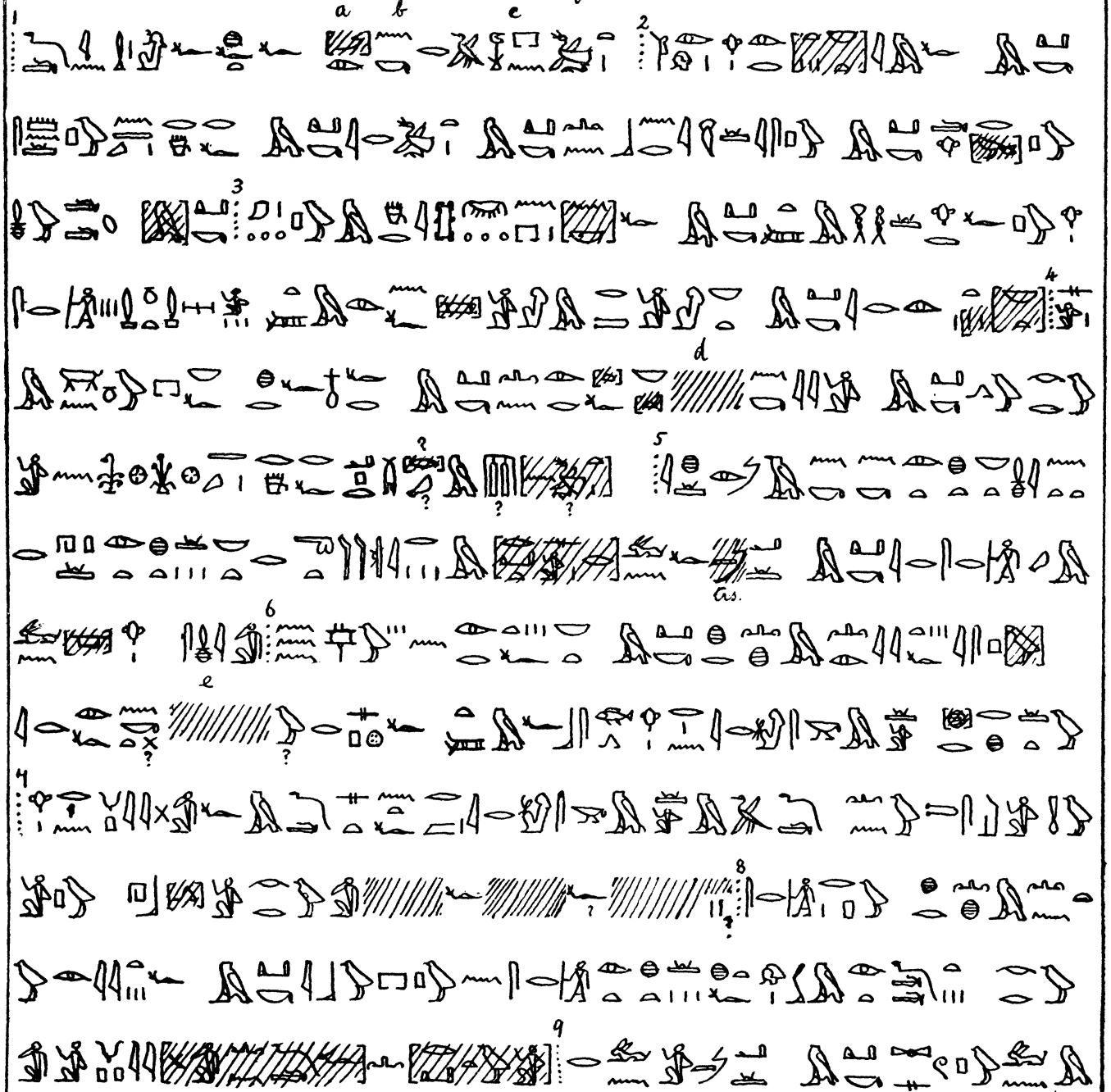


FIG. 1. THE INSTALLATION OF THE VIZIER

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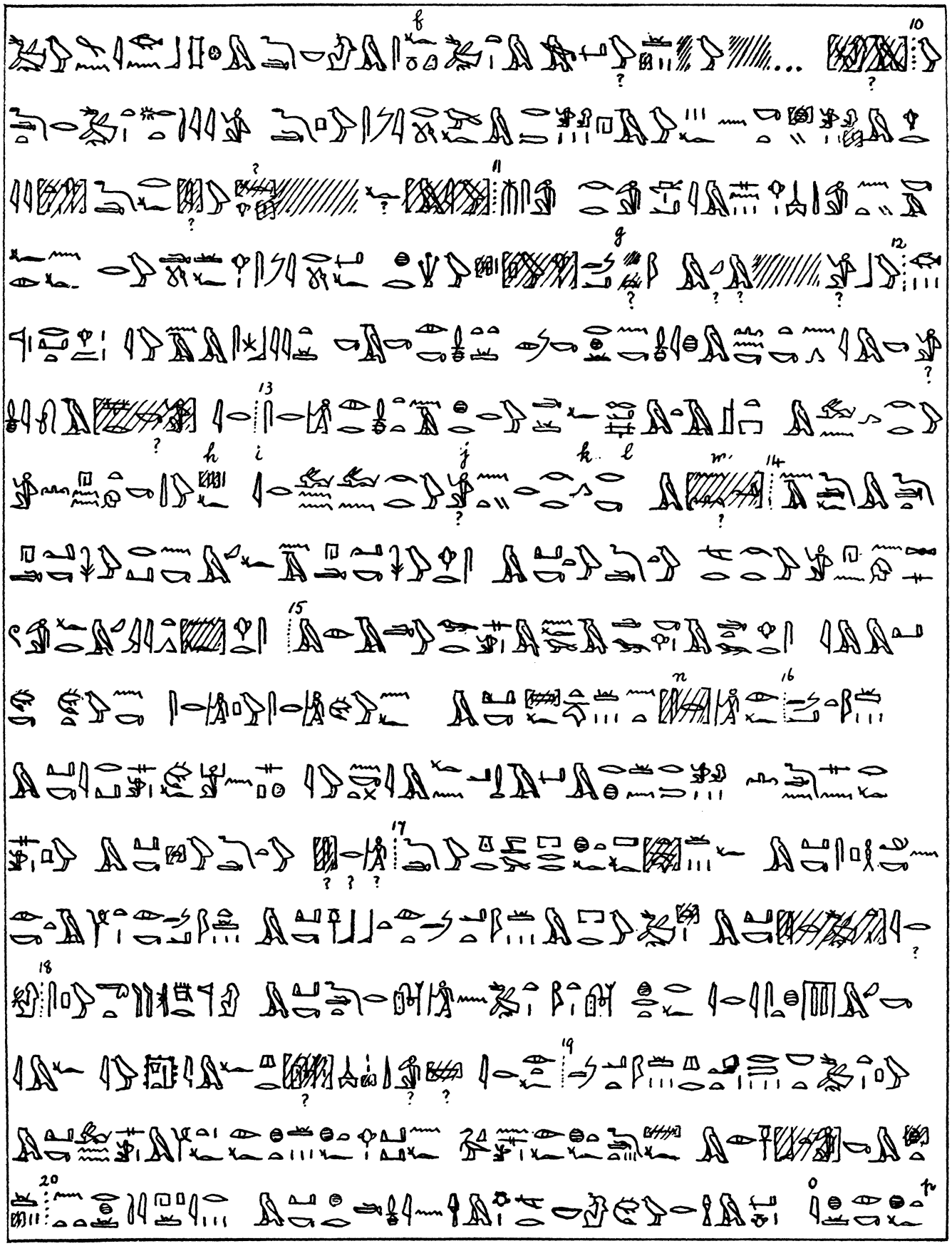
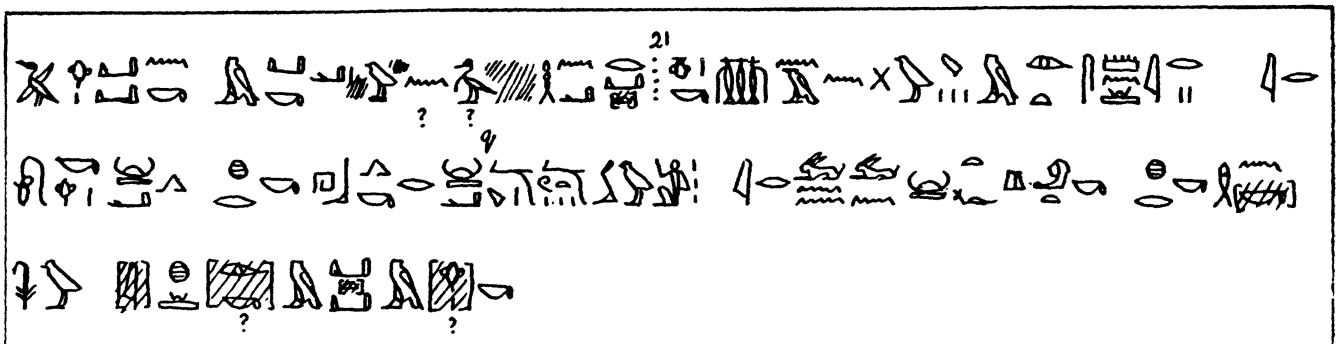


FIG. 2. THE INSTALLATION OF THE VIZIER

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Textual Notes

a. This and other restorations are dealt with in the Commentary.

b. R. has for as often; this error is henceforward corrected without comment.

c. H. has ; in R. there seems insufficient room for .

d. Restore perhaps ? See Commentary.

e Restore perhaps ?. See Commentary.

f. Cf. W.

g. Newberry has .

h. So apparently Davies; Newberry omits the plural strokes.

i-l So W.; R. is very defective.

j. W. has , which is an inferior reading; R. has a vague trace, probably of .

k. So W., but in this context would be more appropriate.

m. Davies ? This is difficult to fit to any known verb as it stands, but it may be the slightly misread remains of or 'reject', see Commentary.

n. H. only, but R. invariably employs the full writing.

o-p. So R. and W. Newberry has inexplicably , whence Sethe's text.

q. W. det. .

FIG. 3. THE INSTALLATION OF THE VIZIER

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enclosing the gold of his [master's][7] house; he is one who does not turn his face towards magistrates or councils,[8] and who does not make for himself [a partisan] of anyone.[9] See, as for [all] that a man does[10] (4) *in his master's household, he will be happy,[11] and there is nothing which he does[12] . . . for anyone else.[13]*

See, there come the petitioner(s)[14] of Upper[15] and Lower Egypt, even the entire land,[16] equipped [for (?)] hearing (?) in the [vizier's] hall (?);[17] (5) *therefore you should see[18] that everything is done in accordance with what is in the law and that everything is done exactly right when [placing a man on] his vindication.[19] Now as for a magistrate who judges in public,[20]* (6) *wind and water make report of all that he does, and there is no one who is ignorant of his deeds.[21] If he makes a [mis]take (?) concerning his case (?),[22] and it is not pointed out by (?) the (proper) official (?),[23] it shall be made known* (7) *by the pronouncing of his decision (?),[24] which is to be made in the presence of the (proper) official[25] in the words: 'I will not deliver a verdict (?),[26] but will send the petitioner [to another court (?)]* (8) *or magistrate', and his deeds will not be unknown.[27] See, the magistrate's safeguard is to act in accordance with regulations, in doing what has been said;[28] a petitioner who has been judged [shall not say: 'I have] not [been placed]* (9) *on my vindication.'[29] See, it is a maxim which is in the Book of Memphis,[30] being the word of the Sovereign,' the mercy (?)[31] of the vizier and . . .[32]*

[Beware (?)][33] (10) *of what was said of the vizier Akhtoy; the saying was that he impoverished his associates for the benefit of others, through fear[34] lest it should be said of him [that he] . . .[wrongfully (?)].[35]* (11) *When one of them appealed against a judgement which he[36] had devised and executed,[37] he[38] succeeded[39] because of his (unjust) impoverishment. Now [that is] more [than] justice.[40]*

Do not judge (?) [unfairly (?)],[41] for (12) *God abhors partiality. This is a teaching; act accordingly. Regard him whom you know like him whom you do not know, him who is near you like him who is far [from you];[42] as for* (13) *the magistrate who acts thus, he will be successful here in this place.[43] Do not pass over a petitioner before you have attended to his pleas. If there is[44] a petitioner who would appeal to you, do not reject (?)[45]* (14) *what he has to say as something which has (already) been said, (but) dismiss him (only) when you have caused him to hear why you dismiss him, for men say that a petitioner prefers that his speech should receive attention to the judging of that for which [he has] come.[46]* (15) *Do not wrongfully show anger with a man, (but) be angry over that over which one should be angry; inspire respect[47] for yourself that men may respect you, for the magistrate who is respected is a (real) magistrate. See, the (real) worth of a magistrate is that he does* (16) *justice, but if a man inspires excessive respect,[48] there is something wrong about him, in the opinion of the people; they do not say of him: 'He is a (good) man.' Again, men say that a magistrate* (17) *who speaks falsehood is one who will go forth in proportion to his worth,[49] but you will succeed in exercising this office and doing justice.[50] See, what is desired is the doing of justice by the fiat (?)[51] of the vizier. Now [as for the vizier],* (18) *he has been its[a] rightful guardian since (the time of) God.[52]*

See, men say of the vizier's chief scribe, 'Scribe of Justice'[53] is said of him. And as for the office in which you judge, there is a spacious room in it full of [the records (?) of all (past)]

[a] I.e. of justice.

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judgements.[54] *As for him who shall do*[55] (19) *justice before all men, he is the vizier. See, a man shall continue in his office if he acts in accordance with the charge given to him, and a man is clear of character*[56] *if he acts according to what has been said to him. Do not do your* [*own will*][57] *in matters* (20) *whereof the law is known; further, it befalls*[58] *the contentious man that the Sovereign prefers the respectful man to the contentious; act therefore in accordance with the charge given to you.*

See . . .[59] *and pay* (21) *attention to the ploughlands when making confirmation thereof.*[60] *If you are absent from* (?) *an investigation,*[61] *you shall send the overseers of lands, chief sheriffs*[62] *and* w'rtw[63] *to investigate. If there is anyone who shall have made investigation before you,*[64] *you shall question him; thus* [*shall you act* (?)] *in respect of what has been laid to your* [*charge*].[65]

Commentary

(1) The restoration [], which goes back to Gardiner and Sethe, is surely correct.  (with  for  as often in R.) is reflexive dative reinforcing the imperative, Gardiner, *Eg. Gramm.*[2] § 337, 2.

(2) Restore  as already Gardiner and Sethe.

(3) Cf. Sethe, *Einsetzung*, 6, 39; Gardiner, *Sinuhe*, 89.

(4) The emphatic words 'certainly', 'indeed' seem the best way of rendering in modern English the repeated *mk*, the purpose of which is to stress the contrast between what one might imagine the vizierate to be and what it really is.

(5) So W.; the restoration [] is obvious.

(6) Taking *pw* to refer now to the vizier himself. Davies takes it as referring to the vizierate, and accordingly renders 'it is'.

(7) So Gardiner and Sethe. The size of the lacuna in R. seems to demand the restoration [] with genitival *n*.

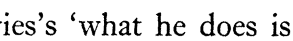
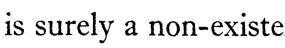
(8) I.e. who does not favour them. The position of *pw* indicates that  is to be understood as 'his face' and to be taken with the preceding *wꜣḥ*, so that Davies's rendering 'it is to have no consideration for himself or for the officials of the magistracy' falls to the ground; for *wꜣḥ*+noun+*ḥr*, lit. 'lay something on', cf. *Urk.* IV, 367, 9. Again, I am somewhat sceptical of his interpretation of *srw ḏꜣḏꜣt* as a direct genitive 'officials of the magistracy'; to me a co-ordination seems more probable, especially as in the present text *sr* is itself best rendered 'magistrate'.

(9) Sethe restores  'partisan' after *ir n·f*, and the space and sense both fit. For the word cf. Sethe, *Lesestücke*, 68, 24 (); *Urk.* IV, 972, 1 (sing.); the sense of the whole passage is surely that the vizier is to take sides with neither high nor low. For this reason Davies's version 'and not to make slaves (?) of the general public', though not impossible, seems not to fit the context.

(10) For  see W. In the following short lacuna restore presumably [], to which corresponds the doubtful (read ?) of R.

(11) *Ḥr·f nfr*; hardly 'it will be good' which would require *ḥr·s nfr·tỉ*. Davies's rendering 'he speaks approvingly' is impossible; not only is such a use of *ḥr* unprecedented, but also *nfr* cannot have the sense he assigns to it.

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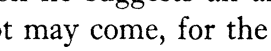
(12) Davies's 'what he does is not . . .' again is hardly possible;  (read ) is surely a non-existential sentence 'there is nothing which he does. . . .'

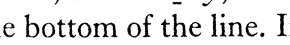
(13) One would expect something like '[which is good] for anyone else', perhaps restoring the old perfective [], but in such a case *nfrt* would have to bear a different sense and be used with a different subject from the preceding *ḫr·f nfr*. No alternative suggests itself to me.

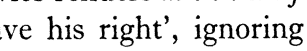
(14) Singular for plural, *pars pro toto*.

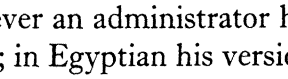
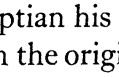
(15) Davies's  appears to be a slip; Newberry has , and the traces on Davies's pl. 14 confirm this.

(16) Taking *tȝ r-ḏr·f* as in apposition to *šmʿw mḥw* as does Davies. In footnote 40 to his translation he suggests an alternative rendering, 'Lo, a petitioner of Upper and Lower Egypt may come, for the whole land is furnished with a (single?) court of the vizier', but this version not only yields a poorer sense but also takes no account of the  (?) *sḏm* read by him before *m ḫȝ*.

(17) I would suggest that the clause beginning with *ʿpr* should be restored as  'equipped [for] hearing in the [vizier's] hall'; just fits the lacuna above , while *n ṯȝty*, which is inevitable in this text after *ḫȝ*, again just fills the lacuna at the bottom of the line. In this case, *ʿpr* will be an old perfective referring back to *sprw*, the sense being that the litigants come to judgement equipped with their documents and so forth.

(18)  is *sḏm·f* form with reinforcing dative; for the writing of the verb cf. Gardiner, *Eg. Gramm.*² § 448.

(19) Davies renders *m . . . wn·f mȝʿ* as a negative imperative, 'Do not (?) . . . that (?) he may have his right', ignoring Sethe's restoration  (cf. also R. 8–9). However, this restoration yields such good sense that it should most probably be retained; the expression is so strikingly similar to our 'put a man on trial' in the Courts of Justice as to carry conviction.

(20) Davies has grasped the general sense of this passage, but his actual translation, 'Lo, whenever an administrator hears cases, let there be publicity (?)' is grammatically impossible; in Egyptian his version would have to read something like . In the original,  stands for *sḏm m wn-ḥr*, the *m* doing double duty, as elsewhere in this text; the restoration [] is due to Sethe. Curiously enough, Newberry, upon whom Sethe depends, omits the .

(21) The reading *ỉs pw* after *ỉryt* is certain; Sethe's elaborate restoration from here on is entirely vitiated by Davies's text.

(22) The next few passages are very difficult, and I am by no means confident that I have fully grasped their meaning, but so far as I can see the sense is that if the vizier should inadvertently make an error, and it is not pointed out immediately by the Clerk of the Court, but is discovered later, the vizier is to publicly announce that he will refrain from delivering a verdict in the case in question, but will refer it to another judge; if this be the correct view, the reason for such action would be to relieve the vizier of any suspicion of covering up his mistake. Davies renders the first clause as 'If he does anything unseemly, and he is to blame (?)'; the first part of this is not very far

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removed from my own view, except that he is thinking of misconduct rather than inadvertent error; *r sp·f*, which could mean 'according to his fault', is presumably what Davies renders over freely 'and he is to blame (?)'. Unfortunately the ambiguity of the noun *sp* precludes a definite decision between our two versions. In the lacuna after *nkt* one is tempted to restore [], following R. 16, but in that case the following  must belong to [*ḏ*]*w*, and the det.  is lacking.

(23) Davies's version 'he is not to be reinstalled (?) on the authority of an acting official' is grammatically impossible, for *nn bs·tw·f* is what would be required; furthermore, there has been no question of the suspension of the vizier, and therefore none of his reinstallation, which in any case would surely be done by the king in person, and not by an official. Actually *tm·f* must be a conditional negative referring back to the masc. *nkt*, lit. 'if he does something wrong (?) . . . and if it does not flow forth upon the mouth of the official, it shall be made known . . .' etc.; for the two virtually homophonous verbs *bz* 'instal' and *bś* 'flow forth', cf. Gardiner, *Sinuhe*, 71; *Wb.* I, 473–4. For *ḥr r n* Davies has 'on the authority of', a rendering which in any case is questionable; the literal meaning 'upon the mouth of' seems to me to fit the context.

(24) Davies's 'men shall learn of it *ḥr r n wpy·f* on the authority of his proper judge (?)' does not fit at all well into the picture; on *ḥr r n* see above. The crux of this clause is *wpy*, and Davies, in note 42 to his translation, admits the precariousness of his rendering. If *ḥr r n* is taken quite literally here also, then *wpy* must refer to a person, but the absence of the det.  speaks against this, and I am inclined to conjecture that *wpy* here means 'decision'—perfective passive participle of *wp*, lit. 'something judged'—and that *ḥr r n* must be understood in the figurative sense 'by the utterance of'.

(25) Lit. 'in saying it on his part in the presence of the official'; the vizier is to announce in open court his decision not to proceed with the case. Davies has 'by a pronouncement with regard to it, he (the judge) being associated with the acting official'. Here again disregard of the rules of grammar has led him astray; he has clearly taken *ntf* as the subject of a clause with adverbial predicate—*ntf r-gs ỉry-sšm*—which is virtually impossible. Actually *ntf* indicates the semantic subject of the infinitive *ḏd*, cf. Gardiner, *Eg. Gramm.*[2] § 300, where this very passage is among those quoted to illustrate this construction.

(26) Lit. 'it is that I will not lift up my voice'.

(27) Our respective versions of the rest of this difficult section are not far apart in essentials, though worded rather differently. Nevertheless, where in the lacuna I guess the restoration ['to another court (?)'] or something like it, Davies has 'to be judged by the vizier'; clearly in his view it is his hypothetical judge (*wpy*) who is speaking, but it is difficult to ascertain exactly what picture of the proceedings Davies had formed in his mind.

(28) Davies's text supersedes Sethe's here. The former translates 'in execution of current instructions', but I see in this phrase rather a reference to what has already been laid down by precedent.

(29) Restoring [][] with Sethe, except that for his  we should have the *śḏm·f* form *rdỉ·tw·ỉ*. The traces in Davies are very doubtful,

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and can hardly be held to contradict this restoration; his (?) might well be , his (?) could be the of *·tw*, and the two vertical strokes which he shows at the bottom of the column might in fact be the sides of the trunk of . Davies renders somewhat differently from myself: 'then a litigant who is judged [may say, "There has been no impediment] to my having my right"', but it is difficult to see how he would have restored the passage; in the first lacuna (before) there seems space for another square before *ḏd·f*, where Sethe puts , while his 'there has been no impediment' is very hard to fit to the traces he saw; the Egyptian version of this would be something like .

(30) An utterly obscure allusion. Davies renders 'Lo, it is a maxim which is (as binding) as the formulary (?) of Memphis', but there is no need for the parenthesis, which to my view distorts the sense; there is no difficulty about rendering *wn m* simply as 'which is in'. For the writing of the name of Memphis cf. Gauthier, *Dict. géogr.* I, 81.

(31) Davies renders *sfnw* as 'severity (?)'; it is hard to choose between *zfn* 'be merciful' (*Wb.* III, 443) and *śfn* 'be harsh' (IV, 115), but in view of the general trend of the text the former alternative is perhaps preferable. In either case the word apparently refers to the customary bearing of the vizier towards those who attend his court.

(32) The words following *ṯ3ty* defeat me. Davies renders 'or as the naming by edicts (?)', evidently taking as the verb *dm* 'pronounce' someone's name, but this sign originally read *ḥsḳ* 'decapitate', cf. *Pyr.* 635. 962. Neither suggestion seems to fit very well into the context.

(33) Restoring [], the being at the top of line 10. The suggestion 'Beware' is due to Davies.

(34) Restoring []; a trace of ∩ is visible.

(35) Restoring []; *m iwms* was first suggested by Gardiner. Davies's 'for fear of the objection that he was partial. Therein he favoured the unjust' is surely going somewhat beyond his brief in the present state of the text. Otherwise there seems no essential difference between our respective versions.

(36) 'he' refers to the vizier Akhtoy.

(37) It is by no means clear why *k3·f* should be in the *śḏm·f* form and *ir·n·f* in the *śḏm·n·f*. It is an easy way out to suggest that the ancient copyist may have dropped an *n* from *k3·n·f*, but in point of fact his work is not impeccable, witness the frequent for , and the miswriting of *rwd·f* below.

(38) The appellant.

(39) For read .

(40) Restoring with Gardiner and Sethe.

(41) Such seems to have been the drift of this battered clause, but it is hard to decide exactly what to restore in the lacuna after *sḏm*.

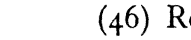
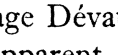
(42) Restoring [] on the model of the preceding ; this seems preferable to Sethe's [] and fills the space better.

(43) Presumably the vizier's hall; Davies 'in this department'.

(44) Reading with W.; judging from the spacing R. can have had only.

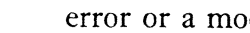
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(45) The traces in Davies suggest the verb *nỉ* 'reject'; for the writing with  cf. *Pyr.* 1230; *Peas* B1, 110. Sethe's restoration [] must therefore be discarded.

(46) Read  by combining R. and W.; cf. also the somewhat similar passage Dévaud, *Ptahhotep*, 264 ff., see Davies, translation, note 45. This disposes of the apparent  which puzzled the earlier commentators.

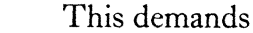
(47) I.e. 'fear' in the sense of the awe a great if benevolent authority should inspire in those under it; 'fear' in the sense of 'terror' is not intended here.

(48) Lit. 'behold, if a man gives the fear of him a million times'.

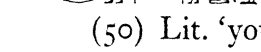
(49) I.e. will get the ill-repute he deserves. At the bottom of l. 16 R. is apparently to be read [], though W. shows  after *ḏd·tw*; there is no space for this in R., and the sense does not seem to require it, so that we may have here either an ancient error or a modern misreading of the of *sr*. Alternatively, the text of W. may have differed from that of R.; another such instance occurs in l. 21, where W. has  and R. . If the reading *ḏd·tw sr* is accepted, we will have here a sentence with nominal predicate, *sr ḏdw grg* being the subject and *prr ḥft šft·f* the predicate. Davies's rendering of the passage is difficult to reconcile with the text as it stands; it runs: 'Lo, it is false to say that an official who speaks crookedly will get on in proportion to his luster' (*sic*). This demands too much space in the lacuna at the bottom of l. 16, and furthermore the construction seems all wrong; his version would read in Egyptian .

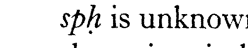
(50) Lit. 'you will arrive at "You exercise this office and do justice" '; the causative *sp̣ḥ* is unknown to *Wb.* in this sense and writing. The passage points a contrast between the unjust judge who gets his due deserts and the good vizier who will make a success of his new duties. Davies has 'Lo, thou wilt reach (a point) where "Thou doest thy office" and "Thou doest right" (are one)', but the parentheses are unnecessary and spoil the sense.

(51) For  read perhaps *prw-n-r* 'utterance'. Davies has 'Lo, the ideal is that right-dealing should constitute the success of the vizier', which seems not only over-free but also to miss the point.

(52) At the end of l. 17 I would suggest , with the suffix *·s* referring back to *mɔ͗ct*; Sethe's [] cannot be reconciled with the traces seen by Davies. The use of *ỉry* in the sense given to it here is unusual, but there seems no doubt as to the reading of W.: one would expect *sɔ͗w*. Davies's reading *s(ỉ)pw* at the top of l. 18 (see his note 46) is ruled out by the preceding *ỉry*, and in any case it would almost certainly have had the dets. . His rendering 'Lo, his role has been the exercise of exact supervision from the divine age down' must therefore be discarded.

(53) In his note 47 Davies strangely suggests an alternative reading *sšyt mɔ͗ct* 'handwriting of Māʿet' for which I can see no grounds whatever.

(54) Restoring *ỉw wsḫt ỉm·f ḥr* []; so already Davies, except that he favours *mḏɔ͗wt* rather than *sšw*, see his note 48.

(55) The *śḏm·ty·fy* form; for the  see W.

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(56) *Bꜣḳ n·s* is adjectival predicate+dative, cf. Gardiner, *Eg. Gramm.*² § 141; for the sense of *bꜣḳ* cf. Gardiner & Sethe, *Letters to the Dead*, note on 1, 3.

(57) Sethe restored [𓂋𓏏𓅱𓈖] 'any delay', but Davies has a clear 𓂋, which points rather to the reading 𓂋[𓏏𓄿𓅱]𓂋 'your will'; this fills the lacuna better and is more in accord with the context, which constitutes a prohibition of arbitrary decisions. Davies had already arrived at this conclusion.

(58) *Dmi n*, lit. 'it touches to'; I can find no precisely similar use among the examples of *dmi n* quoted by *Wb.* v, 454–5.

(59) Reading 𓇋𓏏𓈖𓂝𓄿𓂧𓈖𓏛 with Davies, pl. 118. The following *ḥnꜥ rdit* points to this obscure passage containing a direction to the vizier, but it seems impossible even to guess what originally stood there. On Davies's pl. 15 𓈖 is fairly certain and 𓄿 quite so, but it requires more than the eye of faith to read 𓂧𓈖 in the remaining traces, though Davies must have had what seemed to him good grounds for his reading. Newberry has 𓈖𓄿, where 𓈖 has lost the hand and the following stroke is absent, and the rest is a lacuna down to the 𓈖 of *ḥnꜥ*. Sethe restored 𓇋𓏏𓈖[𓇋𓂋𓏏𓊪], but this is too much for the available space, nor can it be reconciled with Davies's text. He translates the damaged clause as 'Lo, this is the part of a co-worker to give', etc., but it is hard to see how he arrives at this; for 'co-worker' he may have been thinking of the Old Egyptian 𓎛𓐍𓎛 'mate', overlooking that *ḥnꜥ* here almost certainly governs the following infinitive.

(60) I.e. of the boundaries of the holdings of the respective tenants; I much doubt whether *smn* can ever bear the meaning 'organization' assigned to it by Davies.

(61) 𓂋𓏏𓅓𓊪𓇋𓊪𓋴, taking *wꜣ* in the sense of 'be far'. Davies has 'If thou gettest into difficulties when making an inquiry', but again I question if there is any justification for assigning this sense to *wꜣ*.

(62) So W.: the 𓎛𓏏𓐍𓎛𓏏𓊪 of R. is clearly a blunder.

(63) I agree with Davies that the *wꜥrtw* of R. is preferable to the *wḥmw* of W.; 𓎡𓄿 and 𓎟𓄿 are easily confused.

(64) R. 𓂋𓏏𓈙𓈙𓈙𓊪𓈖𓂋𓏏𓂧𓂋; for *wḥꜥ* W. has 𓋴𓄿𓂝 reading perhaps 𓋴𓄿[𓊪𓈖]𓂋𓏏𓂧𓂋 'who shall have come before you'. Note the use of the *śḏm·ty·fy* form to express the future perfect; *ḫr-ḥꜣt* is presumably to be interpreted temporally. Davies has completely misunderstood the closing phrases of the inscription in his 'If the person who is to make inquiry be a superior official, then ask him, "What hast thou done in the matter which was put in thy charge?" '

(65) Reading [𓂋]𓁐[𓊪]𓇋𓏛[𓈖]𓇋[𓏏]𓂋; Davies regards *ỉḫ* here as the interrogative particle and consequently would have to read [𓊪𓂋] next following, but *ỉḫ* elsewhere in this text is the particle introducing a desired future consequence (Gardiner, *Eg. Gramm.*² § 228), and there seems no reason for taking a different view here, especially as a final injunction is an appropriate and natural way of ending a text of this nature. We agree in reading *dd*[*t*] *m* [*ḫr*]·*k* at the end.

On re-reading the text of the Pharaoh's speech to his newly appointed vizier, one cannot refrain from remarking once again on the high standard of conduct expected

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from the greatest of all Egyptian officials. Rank is not to be regarded as an opportunity for aggrandizement and enrichment, and while the recipient of this high honour was certainly much gratified by his selection for it, the Pharaoh points out most explicitly that the responsibilities it involves are far from enjoyable. Favour is to be shown to none, neither high nor low, neither friend nor stranger, and in deciding those cases which come within the vizier's purview, he must not step outside the limits laid down by law and precedent; there is, however, a hint that where these fail, he may act on his own judgement; 'do not do your [own will] *in matters whereof the law is known*'. At the same time, he is to give as much latitude as possible to petitioners stating a case, and if his decision goes against them, he is to make his reasons clear. A noticeable point is the attention paid to public opinion, which must have been a real force even in those far-off days; not only must justice be done, it must appear to be done. As has often been remarked before, the standard of conduct inculcated would not disgrace any civilized nation; if practice often fell short of precept, at least the ideal to be aimed at was clearly seen.

One remarkable point about this text is the absence of any reference to criminal procedure. Even in the 'Duties' inscription the penal powers of the vizier seem to be confined to the punishment of local officials who maltreat his messengers,[a] and it would appear as if his judicial functions dealt solely with civil cases. Probably in Ancient Egypt there was no equivalent of our Central Criminal Court; murder, assault, robbery, and riot were doubtless dealt with by the local police and magistracy, and only the very occasional *cause célèbre* would come under the eye of the vizier, who, nevertheless, could have access to the criminal archives in case of need;[b] possibly records of all criminal cases throughout the land were filed in a central office in the capital.

[a] *Urk.* IV, 1108–9.

[b] Loc. cit.

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