The Stela of the Official Mentuhotep¹
(UC 14333 in London)

A royal offering of Osiris, lord of Busiris, the great lord, lord of Abydos, giving an invocation offering of bread and beer, cattle and fowl, a thousand of linen and clothing, every good and pure thing for the worthy of attention/honored, member of the elite, high official, overseer of the priests, Mentuhotep, begotten of Hapi, justified.

He says: I was enduring, prosperous and loyal (lit. one who adheres to the path), one to whom his lord gave his love, I was a senior of the privy-chamber (lit. place of secrets), well-disposed/patient, free of hostility, gentle facing (lit. standing opposite) a powerful man.

Love was among (lit. in the group of) the courtiers, the great ones of the palace, and

¹ These notes are based on the article of H. Goedicke, JEA 48 (1962), pp. 25-35. The translation follows Goedicke’s with some deviations that are discussed in detail.
² Circumstantial/imperfective sdm.f.
³ [Sin. B186].
⁴ Perfect relative form with suppressed coreferent n.f.
⁵ Not attested word; from the context, it should be an antonym of wšh-ib “patient” (lit. lasting/set of heart).
⁶ In his analysis of The Instructions Addressed to Kagemni (JEA, 32 (1946) 71-74), Gardiner argued that ḫḥs is the exact opposite of im“gentle.”
⁷ Circumstantial/imperfective sdm.f in adverb clause expressing concomitant action.
⁸ Wörterbuch III, 388.
the appearance-in-glory (the king) therein, when I entered before/into the presence his lord (and) the great ones around him (lit. under his end).

\textit{iriw-sbht}^{9} \textit{h3m.y}^{10} \text{r ph(i)}^{11} \text{ntr}^{12} \text{hm im}

The gatekeepers bowed down until I reached (lit. my reaching) the place where the majesty was.

\textit{prr(i) im}^{13} \text{i}^{14} \text{w3(i)}^{14} \text{hzwt m hr n bw-nb}.

When(ever) I went out form there (the Palace), my heart was honored, (and) blessing was in the face of everyone.

\textit{ir.n \text{hm.f nn n bhk.f n-r'3t-n mdd-mpn(i)}, ir.n.f w(i) m \text{hm-ib hm.f m iwn(i)}^{16} \text{tp t\text{sp3t.f}}

His majesty did this for his servant inasmuch as/because of my loyalty. He made me his majesty’s trusty/confidant in Iuni of his foremost nome.

\textit{rh-hm hr mrt w(i) bw-nb hr dw3 ntr hr nht n w3h(i) tp t\text{t3 n-r'3t-n hzz}^{17} w(i) \text{hm.f r}^{18} \text{k(i)w(i) hprw n nwt tn}

Inasmuch as his majesty was favoring me more than others who were in this town, wise and ignorant were loving me, everyone was praising/thanking god for me, (and) praying for my lasting on earth.

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9 Plural prepositional nisbe construction, lit. “ones pertaining to the gate.”
10 Subject-stative construction with 3PL ending \textit{y}.
11 Infinitive (governed by the preposition \textit{r}) with suppressed suffixed pronominal subject.
12 Indirect relative clause introduced by \textit{ntr} with suppressed coreferent.
13 Emphatic construction with emphasized initial adverb clause, see Allen (15.1.2). \textit{prr} is the imperfective active participle of \textit{pri}.
14 Subject + stative construction.
15 Gardiner (§181).
16 Iuni, the Greek Hermomithis (present-day Armant) was the early capital of the Theban nome (replaced by Thebes during the 11th Dynasty).
17 Emphatic construction signaled by the imperfective relative form \textit{hzz}.
18 Comparative, lit. “with respect to.”
I was the one who educated the young and buried all the old and the wretched. I gave bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked.

I am the son of Nepri, a husband of Tayet, one for whom the provider-of-cattle-wealth brought about oxen, possessor of fine things of all valuable stones of the abode of Khnum who created mankind.

(When) the 25th year low inundation occurred I did not let my nome starve. I have given them Upper Egyptian barley and emmer, I did not let misery occur there until high inundations came. I supplied (necessities) for children with what I have given and I was anointing (lit. of) widows.

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19 Participial statement.
20 The y ending in MS/MPL imperfective active participles is typical; Allen (23.5).
21 Gardiner (§468, 6).
22 Nepri is the god of the grain; the filial relationship is metaphoric. The definite and indefinite articles are used to differentiate between direct and indirect genitives as suggested by Bakir, JEA, 52 (1966), pp. 34-38.
23 The goddess of weaving.
24 Perfect relative form.
25 Wörterbuch IV, 235.
26 Goedicke noted that Khnum was linked to the first cataract region from which the valuable stones may have come from. The reference to Khnum (and his potter’s wheel) as a creator god is well-known.
27 Negated perfective sdm.f followed by prospective/subjunctive sdm.f.
28 Circumstantial/imperfective sdm.f emphasizing repeated action.
29 r sdm.f “until he heard,” Allen (22.14).
30 Prospective/subjunctive sdm.f with the impersonal pronoun tw.
31 This expression also occurs in the Stela of Merer (Cracow) in this web site.
There was no wretched commoner in my (life)time. I struggled to cause that I would be loved so (lit. in order) that my name would be good (and I would be declared) justified/true of voice in the necropolis.

My instructions to my children are as follows (lit. in saying): Contentment, patience /benevolence, (and) no strife (lit. no fighting) with a commoner. (There is) no harsh master (who) is beloved.

Be well-disposed (lit. incline the heart) to him who tells his miseries and (he) who pours out his heart (lit. wipes/empties out the concerns of his belly). Listen to his speech, remove his misery, (since) a man is placed/ordained according to his true being. Moreover, be silent when desire is suppressed. Bow (lit. bend the arm) to everyone, not hiding the face from the hungry.

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32 Negative infinitive.
33 nn A negation of existence; mry is a perfective passive participle.
34 The sign was intended here.
35 The translation here differs from Goedicke’s. He points out that the use of the negative verb tm (in a previous clause and in the last clause here) indicates that the verb forms heading the clauses are infinitives. In addition, negated infinitive does appear in line 14 below. The context, however, may equally allow imperatives expressing ‘advice for conduct.’
36 Passive and not prospective/subjunctive of rdi as the latter uses the base stem dl.
37 Gardiner (§178).
38 Passive form of the circumstantial/imperfective sdm.f in adverb clause expressing concomitant action.
39 See also the Stela of Merer (Cracow), line 4, in this web site.
40 Negative infinitive.
41 A pw B nominal sentence with pw moved forward inside the noun + adjective combination drt im3t “gentle hand.” mrrt is an imperfective passive participle.
42 The spelling is influenced by inm “skin.”
A gentle hand is what is desired. “Who is alone, people?” There should be no resistance (lit. there is not any fighting) against an agent, against any seal-bearer of the Palace (lit. house), but to say: “Be well-disposed!”

Do not grieve (lit. burden) against a petitioner until he said what he came for. When the papyrus-roll of obligations to the treasury of commoners, widows, and orphan(s) is reported, reduce (lit. make) its amount to fractions to let him who fell into misery relieved (lit. breathe).
The good character of a man is more to him than thousands of giving (lit. what is given) in fact.
The testimony of people is this declaration of a senior and speech of an inferior:
‘The monument of a man is his goodness. The (one of) evil character is (the one who is)
forgotten.’ If it happens (just) as it has been said, my name will (continually) be good and lasting
in my town, my monument of eternity will not fall into ruin.

54 Perfective passive participle.
55 Circumstantial/imperfective $sdm.f$.
56 Negated emphatic prospective $sdnw.f$/prospective $sdm.f$. 