THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE AMARNA LETTERS TOWARDS A STUDY OF SYRO-PALESTINIAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE (2).

TERMINOLOGY FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL AND DIPLOMATS

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ABSTRACT

Egyptian domination under the 18th and 19th Dynasties deeply influenced political and social life in Syria and Palestine. The correspondence between Egypt and her vassals in Syria and Palestine in the Amarna age, first half of the fourteenth century B.C., preserved for us in the Amarna letters, written in cuneiform on clay tablets discovered in 1887, offer several terms that can shed light on the social structure during the Late Bronze Age. In the social stratification of Syria and Palestine under Egyptian rule according to the Amarna letters, three classes are discernible: 1) government officials and military personnel, 2) free people, and 3) half-free people and slaves. In this study, I shall limit myself to the first, the upper class. This article deals with terminology for military personnel and diplomats.

TERMINOLOGY FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL

Terms in connection with the military organisation

As an introduction to this section, two surveys about military organisation during the Amarna time (18th Dynasty) and the Ramessids (19th and 20th Dynasties) can be mentioned here. First, Pintore (1972) deals with transit of troops and epistolary outlines in Egyptian Syria of the El-Amarna time; secondly, Montet, an Egyptologist of great distinction, discusses the Egyptian army and warfare (Montet 1958). Texts, mostly in the rock tombs at Amarna, are written in a style of hyperbolic praise and gratitude to the king and the Akin, the sun disc, as that of general Ramose (Kemp 2012:41). Such loyal leaders of the army had to provide building material (sandstone) by forced labour (Kemp 2012:63, 74). The study of the military connotation of the root mgg (magagu) in the Amarna letters and elsewhere by Kottsieper (1988) is instructive.
Since Amosis I began with the Egyptian conquest of Palestine and Syria in approximately 1565 B.C., an occupation that lasted for more than three centuries with far-reaching consequences for both parties (Drower 1970:14ff., 63ff.), the Egyptian army was indispensable for order and peace. During the 19th and 20th Dynasties a clear distinction was made between the infantry (msʿw) and the charioteers (t-nt-htr).\(^1\)

Two classes are to be included in the infantry, namely mnf3/yt, “soldiers” and nfrw, “recruits” (Wb II:80, 254 respectively; Faulkner 1953:43–44). Under the Ramessids soldiers were well fed and equipped (Kemp 2012:146). Soldiering had become a hereditary profession, and they all owed property. We shall now try to determine the character and status of the military class in Palestine and Syria according to the Amarna letters.

**Infantry**

**Auxiliary troops**

ʿAdbi-aširtu asks the pharaoh for šābē tillati, “auxiliary troops” (EA 60:12; see AHw:1358). Rib-haddi uses this term (82:18) and šābē rēsūti (EA 126:44; cf. AHw:972). Behind Akkadian tillatu, rēsūtu, Ugaritic ʿdr, (Tropper 2008:16), Hebrew ʿzr and Aramaic ʿdr is the concept “salvation, deliverance” (Rainey 1973:139–142). The šābē ḫurri (EA 60:14; see Weber EAT:1225 n. 1), a term that follows the reference to auxiliary troops, may be some Hurrian soldiers that supported the auxiliaries. The Egyptian ḥr(y) and Hebrew ḥōrī have the same meaning (see Burchardt 1910 II n. 733, 734; KBL:333 s.v. ḥōrī III).

\(lū\) mes maṣṣartu, \(^2\) “garrison troops”

Here we have a Semitic term, derived from the root nṣr, “to watch, protect” (AHw:755), thus “watchman, custody” (AHw:620). It indicates the kind of troops that

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2. EAT:1465. The uncontracted form manṣarta is to be found in EA 238:11 and 244:35; the latter is read by Moran (1953:79) as manṣartas. The Egyptian equivalent is ʿiwʿyt (Faulkner 1953:44).
Rib-haddi requested (EA 78:39; 79:15; Lambdin 1953:77). In 79:15, 16 purpose is expressed by the infinitive: {\textit{lámēs} ma(s)arta an[na n]əšar āl šarri}, “garrison troops to guard the city of the king.”\(^3\) In EA 76:30ff. Rib-haddi complains that formerly archers used to come out to inspect the lands, but now Šumur, the king’s garrison-city (āl maṣartikunu) has been turned over to the \textit{capiru} while the king remained silent! Rib-haddi asks for a large archer host to drive out the enemies. In the Egyptian garrison cities there were garrisons, still under the authority of the pharaoh and sent by him to places where they were needed. Their numbers were not large, fifty to one hundred men (see, e.g., EA 238:11).

\textit{Ṣābu and awīlu}

A hundred \textit{awīlūtu} and a hundred \textit{šābē} of Kaši are mentioned together with thirty chariots (EA 127:35–37), perhaps the same as the \textit{awīlūt} \textit{mā} \textit{Miṣri} (line 18) and the \textit{šābē Kaša} in line 22 (Weber \textit{EAT}:1229). Both terms with the general meaning “men” may also indicate soldiers. The two hundred men and the hundred soldiers of Kaši from outside Syria and Palestine would help Rib-haddi until the arrival of the large army of archers.

The term \textit{awīlū}(LÚ) “free man” (Muntingh 1991:175–180) also indicates a soldier (Lambdin 1953:77), similar to the Biblical Hebrew \textit{‘iš}, “\textit{nāšīm} (Youngblood 1961:95). Rib-haddi requires four hundred men and thirty teams of horses to guard the city against the \textit{GAZ} (EA 85:19–22; cf. lines 75–79). When Byblos has been surrounded by \textit{Aziru}, Rib-haddi asks for 50–100 men of Meluḥā (Kaši = the biblical Cush = Nubia; see Weber \textit{EAT}:1100) and fifty chariots (EA 132:56, 57).

In a letter of Biryawaza, prince of Upu in the Damascus region, we come across a remarkable statement concerning local military forces: “Behold, I am in front of the royal archers, together with my troops (\textit{šābē-ia}) and my chariots, and together with my brethren and together with my \textit{capiru} and together with my Suteans (\textit{bedawin})”

Terminology for military and diplomatic personnel in the Amarna letters


Ṣābē ḫurāde

[Ṣ]ābē ḫu[r]āde (EA 57:5), ṣābē ḫurādika (17:8) and ṣābē ḫur[a]d (1:82) are to be interpreted in the light of Middle-Assyrian ḫurādu, the mobilised population of the kingdom, and the Ugaritic ḥrd, a term for “army”.4 In Middle Assyrian, Middle Babylonian, and the Amarna letters ḫurādu indicates a kind of soldier and seems to be a Hurrian (Urartian) loanword. EA 57, the only letter from the vassal correspondence that mentions the ṣābē ḫurādē is too fragmentary to interpret.

Ṣābē šēpē, “foot-soldiers, infantrymen” (cf. above šepū, “foot” in other terms)

Rib-haddi writes to Ḥaya, the vizier, that ‘Abdi-ašīrtu’s auxiliary host is only strong because of the ‘apiru. Therefore Rib-haddi asks for fifty teams of horses and two hundred foot-soldiers (ṣābē šēpē) to withstand ‘Abdi-ašīrtu in Šigata until the archer host goes out, preventing him to collect the ‘apiru and take Šigata and Ambi (EA 71:21–31). Ṣābē šēpē written with the Sumerogram ĖRÌN ₃₃ GÌR ₃₃, can be compared with ERÌN ₃₃ GÌR ₃₃-ṣu-₃₃ (EA 149:62), ERÌN ₃₃ GÌR (170:22), and with LÚ GÌR (148:14, 26, 44; 151:69) which leads to the conclusion that in Canaanite Amarna ERÌN ₃₃ GÌR = LÚ GÌR. LÚ GÌR is then equivalent to Hebrew ‘iš ragli, “men on foot” (Judges 20:2 etc.; see Youngblood 1961:95). In EA 170, written to the king, probably not the pharaoh but Aziru, the “author” informed him about two large military actions of the Hittites. In the second, led by Zitana against the land Nuhašše (lines 19–25) there were 90 000 infantrymen involved, many more than the small

numbers elsewhere mentioned. Moran (1992:140 n. 5) accepts the above-mentioned reading and translates the expression with “infantry (men)”.

Chariotry

ṣābē piṭātu (Egyptian pḏtyw), “archer troops”

The Egyptian garrisons in Palestine and Syria were mainly composed of Egyptian and Nubian archers (Albright 1966:10). Rainey\(^7\) may be quite right that there is no need to translate piṭātu as archer-troops, and that it has become a term for the regular army units in contrast to auxiliaries (tillatu) and garrison troops (maṣṣartu). It must have comprised a large military unit, perhaps a brigade or larger. In the Amarna letters, Rainey continues, the term represents a unit of the regular army. On the other hand, in those days archers were indispensable as they could strike further than the other soldiers, especially when standing on a chariot. Furthermore, in the Amarna letters there is no question about large military units. When reading the letters, one is impressed with the smallness of the garrisons, which were considered adequate by the local princes: 50, 100, or 200, while the prince of Byblos would be satisfied with 200 to 600 infantry and 20 to 30 chariots (Albright 1966:12; Pintore 1972:102ff.).

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7. Rainey (1974:297, 307). See also Bernhardt (1971:139) who renders ṣābē piṭāti “expeditionary forces”, and not equipped with a specific kind of weapon, viz. bow and arrows (contra Albright 1966:7). He adds, however (n. 21), that this parlance may be explained by the fact that archers formed an important part of all expeditionary troops. Na’amān also supports Rainey by regarding ṣābē piṭāti as the task force (Na’amān 1979:677, 679, 682). The last reference (EA 65:12) is in connection with the organisation of the Egyptian campaign to the north. It should be added that Faulkner (1953:45) already translated ṭs pḏt and ḫṛy pḏt respectively as “captain of a troop” and “commander of a troop” during the Empire though on p. 41 he mentions the ḫṛy-pḏt, “bowman” (Middle Kingdom).
In such small units, a number of archers would have been quite effective. EA 82:19 refers to archers who followed the auxiliary troops (103:25–29). In 137:90–103 one reads successively of troops (šāḇē), archer troops and warriors of the king (šāḇē šarrī). The letters frequently refer to archer troops of the king (166:4, 5). ‘Adbi-ḥeba regards the speedy arrival of the royal archers as the only means of rescue from the ‘apiru (286:51–55; see Moran 1984:299). Rib-haddi could ask the same in connection with ‘Abdi-aširtu’s threat. Horses and infantry would help until the arrival of the archers (76:33–42; 79:14–17, 29–32), who were under the supervision of an officer (iḥripiṭa; see above).

The maryannu and their chariots
One argument in support of a Hurrian element among the Hyksos, says van Seters (1966:183–184), has to do with the introduction of the horse and chariot into Egypt. Although the Mitannians had some competence with the light chariot in warfare and the training of horses to pull them, this skill must rather be associated with the Indo-Aryan war class, the maryannu (see above) and not with the early Hurrians. The idea that the Hyksos overwhelmed Egypt with chariots is highly dubious. The earliest record of Egyptians encountering chariots in battle is in their Asian campaigns. Depictions of an archer, standing on a chariot, with his drawn bow, are a well-known sight on reliefs. Thus, we may assume that the native princes in Syria and Palestine became familiar with chariots via the maryannu and not as a result of the earlier Hyksos movement. In the Levant the chariots, the maryannu, occupied a leading place in society as a corps d’élite around the king and his family. Though ownership of chariots and horses may originally have been confined to a small, exclusive Indo-Aryan aristocracy, we find among the maryannu-names of the fifteenth century and later those of the mixed Hurrian and West Semitic population of Canaan (Drower 1969:14–15). When the pharaohs marched north into Palestine and Syria in the fifteenth century, they encountered many Hurrians, and among the prisoners taken were maryannu with their chariot teams. They, as the rulers in their cities, were

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persuaded to send their children to Egypt to be educated there (see Part 1). The term maryannu does not appear anywhere in the Amarna letters, except for Schroeder’s conjecture of EA 107:43, but the narkabtu, “chariot”, is often mentioned (EAT:1482). The reason for the absence of the term maryannu in the Amarna letters, concerned with diplomacy, is that significance is attributed to position and function and not social status. In the Hurrian letter of Tušratta EA 24, col III:32 the term mariyanarti = maryannuship (?) is found (Reviv 1972:221, n. 31); Laroche (1980 s.v. mariyanni). In Knudtzon’s transcription of the text (1899a:144) the word in question is ma-ri-a-an-na-ar-ti-la-an, translated in Moran (1992:67) by Wilhelm with “war charioteers”. AHw:611 s.v. mar(i)annu lists a Hurrian form thereof. On the gloss mar-ia-nu-ma, with its Canaanite plural formation, see Moran (1992:181 n. 3).

lú meš širma

This term probably denotes the chariot-drivers. All the references are from letters written by Rib-haddi. He has širma-men at his disposal, but not horses and chariots (?) to attack the pharaoh’s enemies (EA 107:37–46). In 108:8–19 he states that the sons of ‘Abdi-aširtu have taken the king’s horses and chariots and that they have given širma-men and officers (lú mes wima) to the land of Su(ba)ru as hostage. In line 15 ši-ir-ma glosses an uncertain term lú meš ----, but Knudtzon here adds critical remarks (EAT:474 note b, 534 note e; cf. 1899b:282ff.), that one has probably the same signs in EA 107:42; 108:15 and 124:51. From the context Knudtzon suggested for širma the meaning “chariot fighter” or “chariot-driver”, a term that is perhaps of Egyptian origin (see Weber EAT:1206; Ebeling EAT:1523). Ranke, however, could not find an equivalent in Egyptian (Ranke 1910:25). Moran stated that the gloss ši-ir-ma, being considered a word, is in fact the phonetic spelling of the ideogram KEŠDA plus enclitic –ma (cf. wi-i-ma in 108:16), and the writing is almost identical to the Old Babylonian writing (Moran 1950:166), but recently he rejects the reading of the

175) gives several examples of Egyptian syllabic orthography, e.g., ma=ra=ya=na, m=ra=ya=na, etc. Jabin, king of Canaan who reigned in Hazor and had 900 chariots of iron, oppressed the poorly equipped Israelites (Judges 4:3). His general, Sisera, used chariots in the battle with Israel (v. 13). In the Song of Deborah this fact is related in Judges 5:22: “Then loud beat the horses’ hoofs with the galloping, galloping of his steeds”.
logogram as KEŠDA and the explanation of the gloss as identification of the sign (1992:182 n. 2.) He tentatively translates the term by “charioteers”.

Rainey (1978:94) still connects šir-ma, a type of military personal, with LÙ.MEŠ KEŠDA; for the latter, see Borger (1988:101 n. 152). He tentatively translates the term by “charioteers”.

Instead of Knudtzon’s reading of EA 107:43 n[ar]kabta (MAR) ia-nu-ma, Schroeder (1918:col. 126) reads, as a gloss, mar-ia-nu-ma, “maryannu’s are at my disposal, but I do not have horses …” This means that a foreign term, written with the same sign in EA 107 and 108, is respectively explained by maryannu and lú meš širma, which, in their turn, explain each other.

The lú meš miši (mš) and the navy

Ships were also used for attack. EA 151:64–68 refers to the crew (šābū). The Amarna letters give us a good picture of Syrian and Egyptian shipping in those days. We can see the rise of the Syrians to a seafaring people and the decline of Egyptian supremacy at sea.  

In the Amarna letters lú meš miši are connected with shipping. Only the letters of Rib-haddi refer to this group of people (Campbell 1964:78; Moran 1969:94). Both Campbell and Moran (also Moran 1992:174 n. 1) include EA 101 in the correspondence of Rib-haddi (contra Cavaignac 1955:136; Albright 1966:5). Rib-haddi writes in EA 101:3–9 that the miši-men are not to enter the land of the Amorites for the Amorites have killed ‘Abdi-aširtu in order to be able to pay Mitanni some tribute. Weber erroneously interpreted lines 3–6 as if the miši-men killed ‘Abdi-aširtu (EAT:1198). Rib-haddi’s city, Byblos, was saved when at the height of his

9 For miši instead of Knudtzon’s milim see Weber (EAT:1198) and Ebeling (EAT:1470). Lambdin (1953:75–77) accepts the reading miši, derived from the Egyptian mš, “an army, troops”. By means of the Coptic he reconstructs the vocalisation of the latter. CAD M II:122 s.v. miši accepts the Egyptian derivation of the word, and translates “army, troop”. For mš(w) see above.

10 See Säve-Söderberg (1946:31–70) on naval activity in the eastern Mediterranean during the Egyptian 18th Dynasty, especially pp. 62ff.

success ‘Abdi-aširtu was killed, either by his compatriots (Moran 1969) or more likely by an Egyptian task force in Šumur (Singer 1991:145).

Of special interest are the references to the ships of the miši-men (EA 101:4, 33; 105:27; 110:48, 52 (?)). They undoubtedly were men of the army whose ships visited the coastal cities, and seem to act independently and contacted the pharaoh (126:63).

The miši can also be part of the Egyptian military fleet (Helck 1962:264; cf. Smith 1949:78). Lambdin (1953:77) concludes that all the references support the assumption that miši is identical with the Egyptian army (msm). If Lambdin has correctly restored EA 110:50–52, then Rib-haddi refers to the miši-ships as the transport service of the pharaoh, a conclusion supported by lines 63ff. In Amurru, however, the miši could manipulate events for their own profit, as happened so often in those days.

\[\text{Ṣe/irdanu}\]

All the references are from correspondence of Rib-haddi. He tells that a foreigner threatened him with a dagger, but he killed him. Then he writes something about a šerdanu (EA 81:15–17, part of a fragmentary text). Perhaps the šerdanu saved Rib-haddi’s life. In EA 122 Rib-haddi complains that he has no troops and provisions. Paḥura further harmed him by sending nomadic Suteans who killed a šerdanu (lines 31–35; cf. 123:13–15). The šerdanu probably belonged to Rib-haddi’s bodyguard (Strobel 1976:190). In EA 81:16 Moran translates “a širdanu” (singular) while he uses the plural in 122:35 and 123:15, “širdanu a term that probably has nothing to do with the šrdn, one of the Sea Peoples mentioned in Egyptian documents” (Moran 1992:393). They were soldiers, seamen, who set sail with their ships from the coastal cities. Three different interpretations of this term have been brought to the fore:

1) It is an Egyptian word and indicates a kind of troop. The Egyptian term Šrdn was used for one of the Sea Peoples from Sardinia, who, as allies of Libya,

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12 See Burchardt (1910 II:N. 876; Weber EAT:1166; Ebeling EAT:1550). Ranke (1910:25) regarded the Šrdn as a kind of Egyptian troops, but was not sure whether the Amarna term šerdanu was also used for troops. He read, in fact, either d or t. Weber (EAT:1605) (“Nachträger”), cites Ranke who questions that in the 3 EA-texts they were soldiers and Egyptian Šrdn, one of the Sea Peoples who attacked Egypt in the time of Ramesses II.
attacked Egypt. In the time of Ramesses II those taken as prisoners of war were in Egyptian service as the bodyguard of the king and later as mercenaries. Whether they could possess land property like the Egyptians is a question (Faulkner 1953:45). Ramesses III allowed them to live peacefully in their own towns and in the army of the pharaoh they were brave warriors (Montet 1958:226, 231, 234, 244).

2) Is the šerdanu of the Amarna letters the same as the Egyptian Šrdn? Albright suggested that the Amarna references are probably to be connected with the word šerda, accusative of šerdu, “servant” of the verb that appears in Ugaritic as ṭrt (Gordon 1965:507 no. 2755; see below), Hebrew šrt “to serve”. It is related to the Akkadian noun (w)ardu, “servant”, and the verb urrudu, “to serve”. The term šerdanu in the Amarna letters has no connection with the Sardinians who do not appear as mercenaries in Egyptian inscriptions for the following century and more. This explanation sheds light on the problematic trtn, trtnm which Virolleaud associates with the Hebrew šērēt, “he served” (see Gordon 1965:507 no. 2755). The term, as [šrt]nm in PRU II 28:3 is repeated in 29:9; 30:4 and 31:5 where a certain military association is to be surmised. The –n at the end of the word is to be explained as a denominative of the qatalan-type as Hebrew qiṭṭalôn,

13 For a Sardinian origin see Weber (EAT:1166–1167). Cf. Wb (IV:529); Albright (1961 (1942):261 n. 102; 1952:262); Lundman (1954–56:147–148); Scharff (1950:157); AHw:1216 (Egyptian or Hurrian loanword? from Sardinia?); Strobel (1976:194ff.). Two other sea peoples mentioned in the Amarna letters are the Lukku (EA 38:10) and the Danunu (EA 117:92; 151:52). See Strobel (1976:177, 178, 202). According to Gardiner (1961:259) the first Egyptian mention of the Šerdanu was at the beginning of the reign of Ramesses II. They were pirates and later gave their name to Sardinia, though at this time they were dwelling in a different part of the Mediterranean. Danuna above in EA 117:92, uncertain reading, and in 151:52 a geographical name, was a kingdom in eastern Cilicia (Moran 1992:389); Lukki in 38:10 was a country, location of which in southern and western Asia Minor is debated (Moran 1992:390). Moran does not refer here to the Sea Peoples.

14 For some references to Šrdn in Egyptian texts, see Wilson’s translations in ANET:255 with n. 2; 476 with n. 22; Strobel (1976:190ff.). Albright (1950:166, 167, especially n. 18). Gardiner (1961:259) also accepts a later date for the arrival of the šerdanu. For the verb urrudu D-form of arādu (denominative of (w)ardu), “to serve” in the Amarna letters see Ebeling (EAT:1377–78 s.v. arādu I; AHw:63 s.v. arādu II; Izre’el 1978:41–42). Izre’el points out that the scribes sometimes confused stems and forms arādu I with (Akkadian) arādu II (*warādu) “to come down”.

15 Albright (1950:166, 167, especially n. 18).
qiṭlôn or qatlôn (Bauer-Leander 1962:498–501). If this is the explanation, then one has to look for a root šrt/d in Ugaritic as in Hebrew (see Tropper 2008:123). We should add here the international legal document drawn up before a Hittite qartappu (17.122; PRU IV:234). A case between a certain Iliwa and Amaraddu, son of Mutba‘al, the lūše-erdan[a] is settled and Iliwa discharged (lines 1–10).

Nougayrol relates the šerdanu to the same term in the Amarna letters and the Egyptian Šrdn (PRU IV:263). “Servant” is a possible meaning for the Ugaritic šerdanu. However, if one takes the role of the Hittite qartappu into consideration, thus during the Hittite supremacy in North Syria, it is not anachronistic to accept that this may be an isolated example of an Egyptian Šrdn. In this context we may add Liverani’s discussion for the phrase “grove of oak trees of (the) šer(i)d/tanu” in PRU III:109 (16.251:4–6) and p. 131 (15.118:4–6), comparing it with the Biblical toponym ‘ēlôn/’allôn + personal name. The šerdanu, he says, was known as a mercenary soldier in those times, and he cites certain Ugaritic texts as well as EA 81:16; 122:35; 123:15 (Liverani 1977:212–216). Here he does not apply the “servant” explanation.

3) Recently Aartun (1985:cols 22–27) offered a new explanation, starting with the Ugaritic trtnm. As there is no root ţrt in Ugaritic or any other Semitic language, he considers the well-attested root ţrd, “to castrate” (Canaanite *t>d). Castration was a very common practice, as we also know from the Bible. This interpretation would be satisfactory for Ugaritic trtnm/Ugaritic-Akkadian lū še-er-da-[n]al/Amarna lū ši-ir-da-ni/Egyptian šrdn, concludes Aartun. They were used in the palaces, in the royal harems, but also for other purposes, even military. See now Tropper (2008:135 s.v. trtn “eine Berufsbezeichnung od. eine soziale Klasse, Pl trtnm hurro-akk. šartennu/širtennu, ein Richter”). Aartun offers a well-founded interpretation, even if one renders the Amarna term with “servant” while the Egyptian Šrdn is here excluded. On the other hand, one has to allow for Egyptian šrdn- mercenaries when reading later texts such as the Ugaritic PRU IV:17.112.
Civil military force

Besides the Egyptian military forces who remained loyal to Egypt and on which the native princes in Syria and Palestine depended so much, there were also civil military forces that either supported or opposed Egypt. There were the šābē GAZ (EA 74:14, 21), soldiers of the GAZ (‘apiru). Over against the šābē of the cities of ‘Aziru whom Zimreda mustered for a sea-attack on Tyre, stood the pharaoh’s infantry, EA 51:64ff. The šābē of the sons of ‘Abdi-aširtu threatened Beirut (EA 138:101–103). The interesting reference to the army, chariots, brothers, SA.GAZ and Suteans of Biryawaza (EA 195:24–32) has already been discussed above. From the evidence that is available, one may deduce that there were military forces, some in the service of the ḫazannūtu, who were neither Egyptian nor at the disposal of Egypt. They were opposing Egypt, and perhaps they stood in the maryannu tradition.

Status of the Egyptian soldier

In sharp contrast to the Ramessid pride that professional Egyptian soldiers were well fed and equipped (see above), we read about the complaints of ‘Abdi-heba of Jerusalem that the Nubian garrison, stationed in Jerusalem, plundered his residence and nearly killed him. As a result of insufficient supplies and payment, Egyptian troops and mercenaries had to fend for themselves in an already plundered land. Although ‘Abdi-heba has pleaded for troops, he now requests that they should be quartered elsewhere because he is unable to supply food to the hungry troops (Campbell 1960:18, 19; Albright 1966:10, 11). Also the small numbers of soldiers that the native kings ask for, point to a disintegration. We may still speak of a military class that operated in Syria and Palestine during the Amarna age, but they had already lost much of their professional honour. On the other hand, we may accept that

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17 EA 287:33ff.; see ANET:488 n. 18 and Feigin (1944:441ff.).
soldiers, opposing Egypt, especially in the far north, were fed by the local people, or took care of themselves under different circumstances.

**AMARNA DIPLOMACY**

**Messengers and envoys**

In international diplomacy the messenger (*mār šipri*) was indispensable. The *rābišu* could act as messenger. The kings were insistent upon the good treatment of their messengers. Kadašman-Enlil I of Babylon complains that Amenophis III of Egypt is keeping back his messenger for six years, as a result of indifference (EA 3:13, 14; see Kühne 1973:121 n. 609). Furthermore, the gifts that he has sent, are inferior (lines 15ff.). Burnaburiaš II, also of Babylon, expected that Amenophis IV would send a messenger with good wishes to him when he was ill. Merodach-baladan of Babylon sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been ill (2 Kings 20:12). Because the Suteans, nomads in the Syrian desert, have been threatening his messengers, Aššur-uballit I of Assyria argues that useful messengers should be protected, especially when they are working in a foreign country. The king of Alašia (Cyprus) asks the pharaoh to return his messenger and that an annual exchange of messengers should be arranged (EA 33:24–32; cf. 34:9–12, 17ff.).

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19 *EAT*:1523; *AHw*:616; Munn-Rankin (1956:99–108).
20 EA 7:18 cf. lines 24, 25 and see Kühne (1973:60 n. 294; 121 and n. 613). For further references to Burnaburiaš’s messenger(s) see EA 8:30–34; 10:8–10. Mane, the messenger of Amenophis III, has come to take the daughter of Tušratta, king of Mitanni, to marry the pharaoh (EA 20:8, 9; see Adler 1976:136–137). On Mesopotamian historiography and the Amarna letters Liverani (2001:307) states that the fact that most letters written by Burnaburias II (EA 6–11) make use of a recurring pattern of clear historiographic character seems to have escaped notice until now. Good relations of long standing have been inherited from earlier kings, and so they should send greeting to each other (EA 7:137ff.; see Ungnad 1916 col. 182; Moran 1992:15 n. 13).
22 For Alašia = Cyprus see Kühne (1973:85).
Thus it is clear that the royal messengers who crossed Syria and Palestine by means of the main caravan routes, and also those that stayed in the courts of the native kings, must have played an exceptionally important role and formed an elite. The duties of the royal envoy were manifold. He had to inform his king about the neighbouring countries, their people, chiefs and kings, their political interests, the internal situation and the power of the country. He carried the diplomatic correspondence, the tablets (tuppu). If he did not know the language of the other country, an interpreter was provided. If he knew the language, he could act as interpreter (targumannu). 23

The unknown sender in Ugarit (EA 47) complains that the pharaoh has ignored his messenger. That the messengers of Tunip “stayed on with” (ašbunim) the pharaoh (EA 59:14) probably means that they communicated with him. Also these messengers, as diplomats, enjoyed a high status. Rib-haddi objects that his messenger has been regarded as inferior to the messenger of the king of Acco (EA 88:46–48; see Youngblood 1961:319). When Şu mur fell into the hands of the sons of ‘Abdi-aširtu, the messenger of Rib-haddi, whom he had sent thither, was probably maltreated (EA 116:6–28).

The messenger had the authority of his sender behind him. ‘Aziru asks the pharaoh to send a messenger in order to take delivery of everything, including ships and wood, that the pharaoh has expected from ‘Aziru (EA 160:33–37). The native princes had to respect the royal messenger as Zimridda of Lachish did (EA 329:13–20).

In EA 151:20 and 152:56 Abi-milku of Tyre writes to the pharaoh that he has looked to the uputi of the pharaoh. In 151:20 (cf. 152:56) the phrase ana mirûti is glossed by u-pu-ti which is to be regarded as the Egyptian term wpwty, “envoy”. 24

24 See Ranke (1910:26 with n. 1). While Weber did not understand the meaning of uputi (EAT:1252–53), Ebeling (EAT:1540) considered the Egyptian wpwt as the probable origin of the term. See Albright (1937:196, especially notes 4 and 5; 1966:7). Albright interpreted mirûtu as “mission”, while AHw:658 considers the word as probably derived from a Canaanite mar’e and translates the phrase ana mirûti “I prepare myself to see the king”.
Akkadian equivalent of *wpw.ty nsw* (Helck 1962:260) is *lāmār šipri ša šarri* “messenger of the king”, “royal messenger” (EA 329:13, 14).

### The scribe (*tupšarru*)

The Akkadian term for “scribe”, a loanword from the Sumerian DUB.SAR, is also found in the Hebrew Bible in the form *ta/ifsār* (Nahum 3:17; Jer 51:27).Šaḥšiḥa in EA 316:16 is probably the Egyptian *šḥ-š. ‘t (š’.wt)*, a “letter writer”. In the Amarna correspondence, as elsewhere, the scribes played a very important role. The anonymous scribe of the Jerusalem letters is a very interesting character (see Rainey 1978:141–150; Cochavi and Rainey 2007). On the other hand, characteristic of the letters of ‘Abdi-heba of Jerusalem is also the postscripts directed to the pharaoh’s scribe, with the request to bring over the message of the letter in “beautiful words”, that is, well-reasoned (Weber *EAT*:1334–1335). The native rulers knew that the pharaoh often did not pay attention to their urgent requests for help. It is clear that the royal scribe was not merely a copyist, but a man of high status who could really influence the pharaoh. Ahmose, fan-bearer (n. 11, Part 1), was a royal scribe. Ahmose and Apy, both royal scribes, were owners of two rock tombs at Amarna (Kemp 2012:125; see also pp. 122 (4.1), 126 (4.2), 129, 143 (4.2 tomb of Ahmose)).

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26 Albright (1946a:20 no. 53); Lambdin (1953:77 n. 27); Mettinger (1971:47 cf. 22ff., 27ff.). Moran (1992:348 n. 4) regards the term as an Egyptianism and translates it by “scribe”.

scribe and steward like Shebna in Isaiah 22:15 (Part 1) who died before his tomb was finished (Kemp 2012:251) is depicted on a statue carved in the shrine at the back of his tomb chapel at Amarna (Kemp 2012:247 [7.18]).

One genre of ancient Egyptian literature encouraged ‘scribes’ to revel in a sense of superiority, contrasting, with contempt, the lives of others following different callings, from craftsman to soldiers. The picture is one of a marked division of society, a classic instance of the us-versus-their view of life …. It is reasonable to conclude that material culture barely distinguished, if it distinguished at all, scribe from non-scribe. Scribes might dream of urban villas for themselves or their teachers, but most must have lived in houses that resembled those occupied by the people they were taught to despise …. The scribal attitude was a cult of withdrawal, of inner separation. (Kemp 2012:270–271)

Only postscript of EA 286, lines 61–64, (Muntingh 1989:254) bears on the contents of the main letter; those in 287:64–68, 288:62–65, and 289:47–50 are more general. Finally, the same scribe was employed by more than one ruler as EA 174–176 and 363 reveal (Moran 1975:155 n. 1). These letters are virtually duplicates of the same letter sent by each of four rulers.

To conclude this section on Amarna diplomacy we may recall what has been stated above (Part 1, n. 12) about the importance of the term *ubāru*, “resident-alien, residing foreign delegate” for the study of the ancient Near Eastern international relations in the Late Bronze age.

**CONCLUSIONS**

A century after the discovery of the Tell el-Amarna archive the letters are, for the period concerned, virtually our only source for the study of the social structure in Syria and Palestine under Egyptian domination. With all the other available cuneiform tablets dating from the Amarna age, still less than 1% of the Amarna archive, an overvaluation of the latter and disproportion is inevitably the result (see Edzard
Therefore, Syro-Palestinian social structure should be studied in the light of all the available epigraphic material. As to the lexicography, the Amarna archive not only produced a few Hurrian terms and a letter (EA 24), but Hurrian influence can also be detected in the vassal correspondence. With Egypt, the ruling power, it is understandable why the scribes resorted to some Egyptian terms in connection with the government and the military organisation. Middle-Babylonian, the language in which the Amarna letters are written and an example of Western Peripheral Akkadian, is at present studied in the light of specific groups of Amarna letters which helps to determine the parlance of an area. As some of the Akkadian terms are so general, they should be studied not only as Akkadian and in connection with the place of origin, but even in connection with the person(s) involved. Finally, as Canaanite was the vernacular of the scribes, the letters that originated from Syria and Palestine are to be understood as essential Canaanite. Besides collation of the tablets with the original and an increasing knowledge of Western Peripheral Akkadian, it is the progressive understanding of the letters as written in “the language of Canaan” that has contributed so much towards the interpretation of the Amarna letters and the social structure that they reflect.

ABBREVIATIONS (TEXT AND BIBLIOGRAPHY)

Special:
EA: Text references in Knudtzon 1915
EAS: Rainey 1970
EAT: Knudtzon 1915
Wb: Erman-Grapow 1926

Others:
AfO: Archiv für Orientforschung
AHw: Von Soden 1965–1981
AJA: American Journal of Archaeology
ANET: Pritchard 1955
BASOR: Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BZAW: Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD: The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
Terminology for military and diplomatic personnel in the Amarna letters

IEJ: Israel Exploration Journal
JAOS: Journal of the American Oriental Society
JCS: Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JEA: Journal of Egyptian Arcaeology
JESHO: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JNES: Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JSS: Journal of Semitic Studies
KBL: Koehler-Baumgartner 1953
MDOG: Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin
MIO: Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung
OA: Oriens Antiquus
OLZ: Orientalististische Literaturzeitung
PRU II: Virrolleaud, 1957
PRU IV: Nougayrol, 1956
RA: Revue d’Assyriologie et d’Archeologie Orientale
RB: Revue Biblique
RSO: Rivista degli Studi Orientali
SVT: Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
UF: Ugarit-Forschungen
VT: Vetus Testamentum
ZA: Zeitschrift für Assyriologie
ZAW: Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZAS: Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde
ZDPV: Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins

BIBLIOGRAPHY


(AHw)


Additional bibliography

After the completion of the present study an important textbook appeared: Obsomer, C and Favre-Briant, S 2015. Hieroglyphic Egyptian. A practical grammar of Middle Egyptian. Brussels: Safran Publishers. Middle Egyptian or Classical Egyptian was used during the first half of the second millennium, which is contemporary with the Amarna age.