

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 (*ms^cw*) 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 hurri* (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 *hr(y)* and Hebrew *ḥōrī* have the same meaning (see Burchardt 1910 II n. 733, 734; *KBL*:333 s.v. *ḥōrī III*).

lú 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

¹ See *Wb* II:155 for *mš^cw* and p. 197 for *n.t htr* “Wagenkämpfer”. Cf. Montet (1958:226) infantry (*meshâou*) and charioteers (*tentheteri*); Faulkner (1953:43); van Seters (1966:184) (*t3nt-htry*).

² *EAT*:1465. The uncontracted form *maṣṣarta* is to be found in EA 238:11 and 244:35; the latter is read by Moran (1953:79) as *maṣṣarta5*. The Egyptian equivalent is *ʿiw^cyt* (Faulkner 1953:44).

Rib-haddi requested (EA 78:39; 79:15; Lambdin 1953:77). In 79:15, 16 purpose is expressed by the infinitive: ^{lú} ^{més} *ma(š)sarta a[na n]ašār āl šarri*, “garrison troops t[o g]uard 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 mašartikunu*) has been turned over to the ^c*apiru* 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).

Šābu and awīlu

A hundred *awīlūtu* and a hundred *šābē* of Kaši are mentioned together with thirty chariots (EA 127:35–37), perhaps the same as the *awīlūt māi Mišri* (line 18) and the *šābē Kaša* in line 22 (Weber *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 *awīlu*(LÚ) “free man” (Muntingh 1991:175–180) also indicates a soldier (Lambdin 1953:77), similar to the Biblical Hebrew *‘iš*, “*nāšīm* (Youngblood 1961:95). Rib-haddi requires four hundred men and thirty teams of horses to guard the city against the *GAZ* (EA 85:19–22; cf. lines 75–79). When Byblos has been surrounded by ^c*Aziru*, Rib-haddi asks for 50–100 men of Meluḥa (Kaši = the biblical Cush = Nubia; see Weber *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 (*šābē-ia*) and my chariots, and together with my brethren and together with my ^c*apiru* and together with my Suteans (*bedawin*)”

³ Moran (1950:81); Youngblood (1961:199–200). For the translation “garrison troops” see also Albright-Mendenhall *ANET*:483 (EA 137:10) and 485 (244:35), and Rainey (1974:297). Cf. now Moran (1992:149) for EA 79:15 “garrison”. The pronominal suffix –*kunu* in *āl mašartikunu* (EA 76:36) is probably a plural of majesty (Moran 1950:147 n.5).

(EA 195:24–30; see Albright 1966:15; Moran 1992:273). In EA 197:13–23 he writes that the king of Busruna (biblical Bosoran, “fortification”); see Marassini 1971:86) and the king of Halunnu waged war against him to kill him.

Šābē hurāde

[*Š*]ābē hu[r]āde (EA 57:5), *šābē hurādika* (17:8) and *šābē hur[ā]d* (1:82) are to be interpreted in the light of Middle-Assyrian *hurādu*, the mobilised population of the kingdom, and the Ugaritic *hrd*, a term for “army”.⁴ In Middle Assyrian, Middle Babylonian, and the Amarna letters *hurādu* 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 *šābē hurādē* is too fragmentary to interpret.

***Šābē šēpē*, “foot-soldiers, infantrymen” (cf. above *šēpū*, “foot” in other terms)**

Rib-haddi writes to Ḫaya, the vizier, that ‘Abdi-aširtu’s auxiliary host is only strong because of the ‘*apiru*. Therefore Rib-haddi asks for fifty teams of horses and two hundred foot-soldiers (*šābē šēpē*) to withstand ‘Abdi-aširtu in Šigata until the archer host goes out, preventing him to collect the ‘*apiru* and take Šigata and Ambi (EA 71:21–31). *Šābē šēpē* written with the Sumerogram ÉRÍN^{mes} GÌR^{mes}, can be compared with ERÌN^{mes} GÌR^{mes}-šū-nu (EA 149:62), ERÍN^{mes} GÌR (170:22), and with LÚ GÌR (148:14, 26, 44; 151:69) which leads to the conclusion that in Canaanite Amarna ERÌN^(mes) 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

⁴ *AHW*:357 s.v. *hurādu I*, “Wachmann, -soldat”. *CAD* H:244 defines *hurādu* as a type of soldier, an Akkadian loanword in Urartian. Heltzer (1979:245–253) relates the term to Middle Assyrian *hurādu* and Ugaritic *hrd*. Adler (1976:280) regards *hurādi*, “warrior, soldier” as a Hurrian word (cf. Urartean *hurādi*). Stieglitz (1981:371ff.) discusses Ugaritic *hrd* as a Hurrian loanword. See also Rainey (1978:73) and Tropper (2008:52) on Ugaritic *hrd*, “Bezeichnung einer militärischen Truppe im Dienste des Königs (rekrutiert aus Dörfern)” and refers to the Hurrian and Akkadian as above.

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

Chariotry

šābū piṭātu (Egyptian *pḏtyw*), “archer troops”⁶

The Egyptian garrisons in Palestine and Syria were mainly composed of Egyptian and Nubian archers (Albright 1966:10). Rainey⁷ 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 (*maššartu*). 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.).

⁵ Cf. Smith (1947:38–40), “nine thousand troops, infantry”. Dietrich and Loretz (1969:15–23, especially 22) refers to von Schuler’s reading *ERÍN^{mes} GIRPI* = Akkadian *šābē šēpē*, “Fussoldaten” (1956:228 col. IV line 3; 233). See *AHw*:1215, *šābū s.* (^{mes}) “Infanteristen”. On the Hittite role in political history of Syria in the Amarna age see Gromova (2007).

⁶ For the Egyptian see *Wb* I:570. Gardiner (1950:566) renders *pḏt* “bow, foreign people, troop” and *pḏty*, “bowman, foreigner”. For the connection with *piṭāti* see, inter alia, Ranke (1910:16–17); Ebeling (*EAT*:1492); Albright (1946a:14 n. 16); Albright and Moran (1948:246 n. 16); Albright (1966:7); Youngblood (1961:72–74); Rainey (*EAS*:75–76; 1974:297, 307). *AHw*:871 s.v. *pi(t)ṭātu* (<Egyptian *pḏ.ty*) plural tantum, “Bogenschilder”; Rainey (1978:87).

⁷ Rainey (1974:297, 307). See also Bernhardt (1971:139) who renders *šābē 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’aman also supports Rainey by regarding *šābē piṭāti* as the task force (Na’aman 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 *ṯs pḏt* and *ḥry pḏt* respectively as “captain of a troop” and “commander of a troop” during the Empire though on p. 41 he mentions the *’iry-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 (*šābē*), archer troops and warriors of the king (*šābē šarri*). 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 (*iḥripīta*; 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 chariotry 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 chariotry, the *maryannu*, occupied a leading place in society as a *corps d’elite* 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.⁸ They, as the rulers in their cities, were

⁸ *Maryannu* = *mryn* in Egyptian. For *mar-ya-na* in Egyptian syllabic orthography see Albright and Lambdin (1957:118). Cf. Burchardt (1910 II N. 470). Hoch (1994:135–137 n.

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. *mari(j)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 meš*} *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 LÚ.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^c*) and the navy⁹

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.¹⁰

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.¹¹ 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^c*, “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^c(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.

¹¹ Moran (1950:70, 162; 1969:94–99; 1975:158). Cf. Liverani (1971:265 n. 64). The term ^{isu} *eleppu*, “ship, boat” in the instances above is glossed in EA 245:28 by the Canaanite word *a-na-yi* = Hebrew *’ōnī* (EAT:1375; cf. HAL:69 s.v. for the Hebrew cognate).

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 (*ms^{vc}*). 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.

Še/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 ^{li}*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.¹² The Egyptian term *Šrdn* was used for one of the Sea Peoples from Sardinia, who, as allies of Libya,

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.¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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 *trt* (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.¹⁵ 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 [*šr*]*tnm* 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 *qatalān*-type as Hebrew *qittālôn*,

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.).

¹⁵ 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”.

qiḷlôn or *qaḷlôn* (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 Iluwa and Amaraddu, son of Mutba‘al, the ^{lu} še-er-da-n[a] is settled and Iluwa 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 *trnm*. As there is no root *trt* in Ugaritic or any other Semitic language, he considers the well-attested root *trd*, “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 *trnm*/Ugaritic-Akkadian ^{lu} še-er-da-[n]a/Amarna ^{lu} 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. *trn* “eine Berufsbezeichnung od. eine soziale Klasse, Pl *trnm* 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*).¹⁶ 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 *hazannūtu*, 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.¹⁷ 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

¹⁶ The only meaning of *šābu*, according to *EAT*:1502 is “warrior”; cf. Rainey (*EAS*:78). *AHW*:1072 for Middle-Babylonian, including the Amarna letters, renders “soldiers”, “labourers”; cf. *CAD* S:46,50. In EA 69:21 *šābu* has the meaning “man, inhabitant”. See also Rainey (1978:90). Cf. the Hebrew root *šb*’ with its cognates and derivatives (*HAL*:933–935).

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 DIPLOMACY¹⁸

Messengers and envoys

In international diplomacy the messenger (*mār šipri*) was indispensable.¹⁹ 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.²⁰ 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.²¹ The king of Alašia (Cyprus)²² 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.).

¹⁸ See Cohen and Westbrook (2000).

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).

²¹ EA 16:43–55. See Kühne (1973:83 n. 418; 120). For *idu*, “wages” of the messengers in line 30, see Sachs (1937–39:371–372) and *AHw*:365. Note Moran's translation of EA 16:43–45, “Why should messengers be made to stay constantly out in the sun and so die in the sun?” (Moran 1992:39).

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 Šumur 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 Zimrida 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 The

²³ For the royal messenger and his duties see Mohammed (1959:119–122) and Cohen and Westbrook (2000, with full references). The term *targumannu* (*tar-gu-ma-an-na*, EA 11:6, 10(?), 16; 21:25 appears in the correspondence of Burnaburiaš and Tušratta. See *EAT*:1529; *AHw*:1329 with cognates in Ugaritic, Hittite and Aramic; Adler (1976:333).

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 ^{lii}*mār 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).²⁵ *Šahšihā* in EA 316:16 is probably the Egyptian *sh-š. ‘t (š’.wt)*, a “letter writer”.²⁶ In the Amarna correspondence, as elsewhere, the scribes played a very important role.²⁷ 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)). Apy,

CAD M II:110 s.v. *mirūti* agrees, interpreting the word as a West Semitic loanword “seeing”, glossed by *ubuti*. Both *AHW* and *CAD* do not seem to accept an Egyptian origin of the last word. For the Egyptian term see *Wb* I:303; *wpw.t (‘pw.t)* “message command”, etc. and p. 304 *wpw.ty (‘pw.ty)*, “messenger, commissioner”. Moran (1992:239 n.1), with Grave (1982) take the gloss *ū-bu-dī* in EA 151:20 and *u-bu-ud* in 152:56 as reflecting West Semitic *‘bd* and translate “the *service* of the king” (tentative). See, however, Grave (1982:166 n.30).

²⁵ *EAT*:1532 s.v. *tupšaru*; *AHW*:1395–96: in Amarna ^(lii) *tupšar šarri*. Cf. Mettinger (1971:47, 51) and Berhardt (1971:143–144). For Ugarit, see Rainey (1968:126–147) and for the Hebrew form *HAL*:362, and Hittite hieroglyphic Laroche (1956:26–29).

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”.

²⁷ See Muntingh (1991a) on Mari, and Charpin (2010:29 ff.) etc. with figure 6 a Neo-Assyrian bas-relief representing two standing scribes (southwest palace of Nineveh) and reference to the Amarna royal letters (p. 118). For the role of the Egyptian scribes in the days of the Ramesids, see Montet (1958:107, 113, 164, 209 and especially in administration, pp. 252–253). J. Begrich’s excellent treatment of the influence of the Egyptian offices of scribe (*sh*) and oral secretary (*whmw*) and the Davidic *sōfēr* and *mazkîr* (2 Sam 8:16–17) is pertinent in this connection (Albright 1946b:367).

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-them 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

1985:248ff.). 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:

<i>AfO</i> :	Archiv für Orientforschung
<i>AHw</i> :	Von Soden 1965–1981
<i>AJA</i> :	American Journal of Archaeology
<i>ANET</i> :	Pritchard 1955
<i>BASOR</i> :	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
<i>BZAW</i> :	Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CAD</i> :	The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

<i>HAL:</i>	Hebräischens und Aramäisches Lexicon zum Alten Testament, dritte Auflage, Leiden 1967–1996
<i>IEJ:</i>	Israel Exploration Journal
<i>JAOS:</i>	Journal of the American Oriental Society
<i>JCS:</i>	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
<i>JEA:</i>	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
<i>JESHO:</i>	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
<i>JNES:</i>	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
<i>JSS:</i>	Journal of Semitic Studies
<i>KBL:</i>	Koehler-Baumgartner 1953
<i>MANE:</i>	Monographs on the Ancient Near East. Malibu: Undene Publications
<i>MDOG:</i>	Mitteilugen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin
<i>MIO:</i>	Mitteilugen des Institus für Orientforschung
<i>OA:</i>	Oriens Antiquus
<i>OLZ:</i>	Orientalistische Literaturzeitung
<i>PRU II:</i>	Virrolleaud, 1957
<i>PRU IV:</i>	Nougayrol, 1956
<i>RA:</i>	Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archeologie Orientale
<i>RB:</i>	Revue Biblique
<i>RSO:</i>	Rivista degli Studi Orientali
<i>SVT:</i>	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
<i>UF:</i>	Ugarit-Forschungen
<i>VT:</i>	Vetus Testamentum
<i>ZA:</i>	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie
<i>ZAW:</i>	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>ZAS:</i>	Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprace und Altertumskunde
<i>ZDPV:</i>	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins

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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.