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# **STUDIEN ZUR ALTÄGYPTISCHEN KULTUR**



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# STUDIEN ZUR ALTÄGYPTISCHEN KULTUR

Herausgegeben von  
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Face to face:  
Meetings between the kings of Egypt, Ḫatti and their vassals  
in the Levant during the Late Bronze Age

Mohy–Eldin E. Abo-Eliaz

*Abstract*

It seems that just like in modern politics ancient kings and rulers of different countries had to meet for certain reasons. The present study seeks to re-examine a number of evidence related to the meetings between kings and seeing each other face-to-face, specifically Egypt and Ḫatti, which have directly affected the local autonomy of the numerous small kingdoms and principalities of the region. Those meetings acted as conference diplomacy or summit-like meetings between the overlord and his vassals; reflecting the nature of the relationship between Egypt and Ḫatti and their vassals in the Levant, from around the middle of the fourteenth-century B.C.E to the twelfth century. Through the examination of the evidence the meetings were divided into three categories: (1) Invitations to meet kings, (2) Possible meetings, (3) Confirmed meetings. With a special look at the reasons for these meetings through political and ideological conceptions of Egyptians and Hittites kings and his Asiatic subjects. A comparison between the case of Egypt and Ḫatti will be made. Finally, a discussion will provide the difficulties of the possibility of the occurrence of those meetings.

*Introduction*

During the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550–1200 B.C) five great powers (Egypt, Mitanni, Babylon, Ḫatti, and Assyria) have risen and divided up control among them,<sup>1</sup> they were surrounded by subordinate vassals.<sup>2</sup> There was a need to communicate among themselves to strengthen political, military and economic dominance and control over specific regions. This was based on the so-called exchange system through a large network of messengers, scribes, and skilled personnel, specialists in useful crafts, such as medicine, magic, scholarship and even gods. The communication was also conducted through establishing political alliances, treaties, marriage alliances,<sup>3</sup> and the large quantity of the exchanged royal gifts.<sup>4</sup>

Although the economic interests are the basis of the establishment of relations, bonds between great kings were established primarily for reasons of self-interest, each dealt with the others on a one-to-one basis through deputies. Therefore, the kings give special attention – in addition to the official report of the visit – to non-official aspects, especially regarding their impressions of the personality of the king, his weaknesses and temperament to know how to deal with him in future.<sup>5</sup>

The interest or curiosity of every king to know the personality of the other king as a human; raises the question: Have the kings and princes seen and met each other face-to-face?

<sup>1</sup> M. Liverani, The Great Powers' Club, in: R. Cohen/R. Westbrook (eds.), *Amarna Diplomacy. The Beginnings of International Relations*, Baltimore 2000, 15.

<sup>2</sup> S. Jakob, *Pharaoh and his Brothers*, in: *BMSAES* 6, 2006, 12.

<sup>3</sup> E. Devecchi, *Of Kings, Princesses, and Messengers: Babylonia's International Relations during the 13<sup>th</sup> Century BCE*, in: A. Bartelmus/K. Sternitzke (eds.), *Karduniaš. Babylonien in der Kassitenzeit. Babylonia under the Kassites (UAVA 11/1)*, Berlin 2017, 112.

<sup>4</sup> K. Kopanias, *The King's Household, Royal Gifts and International Trade in the Amarna Age*, in: *KTÈMA* 40, 2015, 32.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East: The Royal Correspondence of the Late Bronze Age*, New York 2003, 79.

The starting point is a paragraph of a letter from Burnaburiyaš II, the Babylonian king: “*Would your brother hear that you are ill and still not send you his messenger?*” (EA 7:24–25). This paragraph raises a question: why the Babylonian King did not request the coming of the Egyptian king to him? The most extreme thing was the coming of delegation;<sup>6</sup> or an Egyptian messenger carrying Akhenaten’s greetings (EA 7: 21–23), or the exchange of a statue of one of the gods.<sup>7</sup> The meeting between the two kings was not a matter of discussion.

Although Bryce confirmed that kings – particularly the great ones – did not meet face-to-face,<sup>8</sup> in this article, an attempt is made to answer those previous questions through re-examining the evidence on a larger scale. The political reasons for the seeing and the meetings between the great kings will be analyzed whether meeting and seeing each other face-to-face, with vassals’ kings, or a meeting between two vassals’ kings (of equal standing) during the Late Bronze Age. Three categories are acknowledged: (1) Invitations to meet the kings (2) Possible meetings (3) Confirmed meetings.

### *1 Invitations to meet kings*

Often many of the great kings expressed their wishes to see each other, and know each other’s country (EA 15: 16–22), so they have exchanged greetings.<sup>9</sup> Or invite each other to attend the celebration of an important festival, or the inauguration of a new palace. Accordingly, the Babylonian king Kadašman-Enlil I sent to Amenhotep III to complain that the pharaoh had not invited him to attend the celebration of an important festival<sup>10</sup> in Egypt, (EA3:18–19) and then he invited Pharaoh to attend the grand opening of a new palace in Babylonia (EA3:27–9). Two points could be concluded from this invitation: (1) Either it was a formal invitation, the political significance behind it was a response to ignoring to invite him to attend the grand festival in Egypt and had not received the gifts that usually go with such an invitation.<sup>11</sup> (2) Or the Babylonian king literally intended to ignore inviting him; especially if he knows that other great kings were invited to attend that festival.<sup>12</sup> If it is true; the presence of some kings in Egypt can be assumed. Unfortunately, the evidence did not mention them.

There are also many invitations from the vassals for the great king to visit their country. Rab-Adda has asked of Akhenaten more than once to visit Byblos: “*May [the king] vis[it] his [land] and [his servant].*” (EA 74:57–62; 362: 60–61).

<sup>6</sup> W L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, Baltimore 1992, 15, n.10.

<sup>7</sup> Traveling gods and goddesses between courts was a well-known motif in the ancient Near East, in the Amarna letters reveal the journey of the goddess Shaushka to the Egyptian court of Amenhotep III. See: G. Singer, Shaushka, the Traveling Goddess, in: *TdE* 7, 2016, 43–58; J.F. Quack, Importing and Exporting Gods? On the Flow of Deities between Egypt and its Neighboring Countries, in: A. Flüchter/J. Schöttli (eds.), *The Dynamics of Transculturality. Concepts and Institutions in Motion*, London 2015, 255–277.

<sup>8</sup> T. Bryce, *Ancient Syria. A Three Thousand Year History*, Oxford 2014, 79.

<sup>9</sup> EA 7:19–25; 37–41; 17:46–50; 19: 71–74; 27:7–8, 89–92; 28:37–41; 39:10–13. The translations in this article are from W L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, Baltimore 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Perhaps one of the celebrations held by Amenhotep III on the occasion of the Sed jubilee see: C. Khüne, *Die Chronologie der internationalen Korrespondenz von El-Amarna*, AOAT17, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973, 254.

<sup>11</sup> M. van de Mieroop, *The eastern Mediterranean in the age of Ramesses II*, Oxford 2007, 106.

<sup>12</sup> Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 80.

## 2 Possible meetings

### 2.1 The meeting between Ramesses II and Ḫattušili III

There are some evidence of a possible meeting, face to face meetings between Egyptian and Hittite kings. Ḫattušili III visit to Egypt, though a subject of controversy among scholars; some references to this visit in the Egyptian and Hittites sources are made.

(a) *Reinforcing the image Ramesses amongst his subjects*: Ramesses may have felt the need for some significant achievement in the international arena to reinforce his image amongst his subjects. Perhaps the best thing was a major diplomatic achievement, therefore he agreed to the peace treaty.<sup>13</sup> He also invited Ḫattušili III to visit Egypt. It seems that Ḫattušili accepted the invitation. Ramesses wrote thus to Ḫattušili: “*My brother has written to me as follows: ‘The King, your brother, will come to you, and the King, your brother, will carry out the good proposal to visit you, and your brother will come to your side into your land in order to appear in the presence of his brother.’*”<sup>14</sup> King Ramesses was more serious in the invitation, so repeated it: “*The Sun God (of Egypt) and the Storm God (of Ḫatti), and my gods and the gods of my brother will cause my brother see his brother – and may my brother carry out this good suggestion to come and see me. And then we may see each other face to face at the place where the king (Ramesses) sits enthroned.*” Ḫattušili may have had some misgivings, Ramesses offered to meet him through his journey to Canaan: “*So, I shall go (ahead) into Canaan [i.e., where Ramesses probably had a royal residence] to meet my Brother and see him face (to face) and to receive him into the midst of my land.*”<sup>15</sup> As Edel argues, this section of a letter was a response to an important quotation from the Ḫattušili letter, which shows that Ḫattušili was ready to make the trip to Egypt.<sup>16</sup> According to Edel, The planning for the visit was in Ramesses II’s regnal year 21 – the year of the signing of the peace treaty – where the two kings are still eager to complete the meeting.<sup>17</sup>

Ramesses expresses its pleasure over the expected visit of Ḫattušili, so preparations for the visit apparently progressed to the stage where Ramesses sent his dignitaries to meet Ḫattušili in the land of Upi, doubtless, the Egyptian reception committee had been instructed to escort Ḫattušili to his appointed meeting – place with Ramesses in Canaan, whence the pharaoh himself would escort him to his new capital Pi-Ramesses.<sup>18</sup> Edel says in this context the preparations for the visit is similar to that of the royal marriage: “The marriage letters KUB III 37 and 57 have indicated that the Hittite princess, after passing through the Egyptian – Hittite border in Syria, she was received and led to Egypt. The only difference is that they are just the governors there of the provinces of Upi and Canaan, who are entrusted by the Pharaoh to the escort of the guest.”<sup>19</sup> Also, as Bryce argues Ramesses probably represented

<sup>13</sup> T. Bryce, The ‘Eternal Treaty’ from the Hittite perspective, in: BMSAES 6, 2006, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Bryce, Letters of the Great Kings, 82.

<sup>15</sup> E. Edel, Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache, Bd.1, Opladen 1994, n. 4: 19–24, n.5: 3–5; T. Bryce, The Kingdom of the Hittites, Oxford 2005, 285.

<sup>16</sup> E. Edel, Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache, Bd.2, Opladen 1994, 41.

<sup>17</sup> Edel, Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz, Bd.2, 39.

<sup>18</sup> Edel, Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz, Bd.1, obv. 8–9: 24–25; id, Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz, Bd. 2, 28, 41; Bryce, Letters of the Great Kings, 81.

<sup>19</sup> E. Edel, Der geplante Besuch Hattusilis III in Ägypten, in: MDOG 92, 1960, 18; id, Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz, Bd.1, n. 54:142–143, id, Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz, Bd.2, 42.

the proposed visit primarily as a goodwill mission which would consolidate further the good relations between the two kingdoms.<sup>20</sup>

(b) *The Marriage Stele at Abu Simbel*: In the upper portion of the Marriage Stele at Abu Simbel, Egyptian artists depicted Ḫattušili himself present at the ceremony, in the upper portion of the stele there is a seated image of Ramesses flanked by gods. The bride and her father, approaches the pharaoh from the right with their hands raised outwards in a gesture of adoration and supplication, the accompanying text states: “*The chief of Ḫatti sent, asking of [Ramesses] permanent peace. Then they [came] with [their possessions, and] their splendid [gifts] before them, of silver and gold, marvels many and great, horses to...delight the heart of his majesty, saying: ‘Behold the great chief of Ḫatti comes, bringing his eldest daughter...’*”<sup>21</sup>

(c) *Hittite Letters*: There is some evidence to show that the meeting may have already taken place. In a letter sent from Ḫattušili III to the prince of Qedi; the Hittite king is asking the prince to prepare himself to accompany the king on his journey to Egypt.<sup>22</sup> The journey was also mentioned in a letter edited by Ini-Teššup king of Karkamiš.<sup>23</sup> His name is found on ostraca in Egypt,<sup>24</sup> perhaps inscribed on the occasion to accompanying Ḫattušili in his visit to Egypt. Likewise, in a fragment of a letter KBo II, 11<sup>25</sup> Ḫattušili III states: “I will ...the road to Egypt...” which may indicate Ḫattušili’s absence from the capital.<sup>26</sup>

(d) *Prayer of Puduḫepa*: Apparently the Queen Puduḫepa had a desire to complete this visit, and remove all obstacles encountered. Some have taken Puduḫepa’s vow to heal the feet of Ḫattušili III (KUB 15.3) as an indication of his intended voyage to Egypt.<sup>27</sup> In addition to this; Puduḫepa wrote to Ramesses II after the Treaty of Peace between Egypt and Ḫatti: “*the one has never seen the other. It is our messengers who come and go between us.*”<sup>28</sup> The paragraph can be interpreted as expressing a desire to exchange visits. Especially Puduḫepa was the only Hittite queen who used to travel to the southeast region of the empire.<sup>29</sup> In the same context, Puduḫepa expresses her wish to send two of her sons to Egypt to make an inspection, to get news for her about the situation of her daughter.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, 285.

<sup>21</sup> L. McCandless, *The Makings of an Event: Encountering the Battle of Kadesh through Time*, PhD. diss., University of California 2016, 121; B. Rideout, *Cultural Change in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World: A Study of interactions between the Egyptian Empire and its Neighbors*, Thesis Diss., University of New Hampshire 2015, 41.

<sup>22</sup> Edel, in: MDOG 92, 1960, 15.

<sup>23</sup> K. Kitchen, *Pharaoh triumphant. The life and times of Ramesses II, king of Egypt*, Warminster 1982, 90.

<sup>24</sup> R. Barnett/J. Černý, *King Ini-tešub of Carchemish in an Egyptian Document*, in: JEA 33, 1947, 94.

<sup>25</sup> From the King of Arzawa to Ḫattušili III, see: A. H. Hoffner, *Letter from the Hittite Kingdom*, Atlanta 2009, 35 2–354.

<sup>26</sup> Edel, in: MDOG 92, 1960, 16.

<sup>27</sup> J. De Roos, *Materials for a Biography: The Correspondence of Puduḫepa with Egypt and Ugarit*, in: Th. P. J. van den Hout (ed.), *The Life and Times of Ḫattušili III and Tuḫaliya IV: Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Honour of J. de Roos, 12–13 December 2003 (PIHANS 103)*. Leiden 2006, 22; id, *Hittite Votive Texts*, Leiden 2007, 37; I. Singer, *Hittite Prayers*, Atlanta 2002, 104.

<sup>28</sup> Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 57.

<sup>29</sup> She appears to have visited Alalakh, Izziya and the region; see: A. Archi/F. Venturi, *Hittites at Tell Afis (Syria)*, in: Or 81/1, 2012, 45–46; id, *Tell Afis in the thirteenth century b.c.e.: Under the Rule of the Hittites*, in: NEA 76/4, 2013, 220.

<sup>30</sup> De Roos, in: Th. P. J. van den Hout (ed.), Leiden 2006, 21–22.

(e) *The visit of Prince Tudḫaliya IV to Egypt*: In addition to the visit of Prince Hišmi-Šarrura (the future King Tudḫaliya IV) during the winter months is spotted.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps a preamble visit before that of his father, (on the way the vassals in the Levant), Ḫattušili may have made this move in a Machiavellian style to know the intentions of Ramesses, even ending doubts, if his son returned from Egypt, he will go himself. Prince Ḫatti's visit refers, in one way or another, to the possibility of exchanging Royal visits; it is more likely that he met the Pharaoh face to face.

If actually happened, the meeting between Ramesses II and Ḫattušili III had happened for reason. Ḫattušili was most eager for peer acceptance of his right to sit upon the throne of Ḫatti. A visit to Egypt at the pharaoh's invitation and as his guest would provide the strongest possible foreign endorsement for the legitimacy of Ḫattušili's position, particularly in view of his own highly questionable assumption of power. Accordingly, Ḫattušili III treated the king of Assyria as a great king, despite the rejection of Urḫi-Tešub.<sup>32</sup> It was the same case regarding the treatment of Ḫattušili III towards the king of Babylonian, although Ramesses considered him as a weak king and not a great one.<sup>33</sup>

The principle of the presence of members of the royal family to Egypt is not rejected by Ḫattušili III, two daughters of Ḫattušili attended as wives of Ramesses.<sup>34</sup> After this marriage, the kings of the Near East started sending him diplomatic envoys and gifts, and strengthened Ḫattušili III's position in southern Anatolia and Assyrian and Babylonian kings.<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand, and despite all what mentioned above, many scholars believe that this meeting did not occur; Bryce argues that this invitation to visit the pharaoh did never took place because of Ḫattušili's illness in his foot, as well as having a chronic eye-disease. The Hittite king had problems within his subject territories; and had concerns about possible uprisings amongst his subjects and their neighbors. Age and physical contrasts between the two kings will negatively affect the prestige and status of Ḫattušili amongst his contemporaries, or to use the visit as propaganda for the Egyptian king.<sup>36</sup> Especially since the Egyptian king was superior in propaganda, he managed to avoid crushing defeat and inflict heavy casualties upon the Hittites.<sup>37</sup> As Bryce and Brand argue, visiting Egypt would not have increased Ḫattušili's prestige and legitimacy, but would have had precisely the opposite effect by presenting himself as an inferior to the Pharaoh and a foreign chieftain who came "begging for the breath of life" from the Egyptian ruler, so Brand talks about this the two kings played a disingenuous game of negotiations about a "summit meeting" that was, in the end, highly

<sup>31</sup> G. Shaw, *War and Trade with the Pharaohs an Archaeological Study of Ancient Egypt's Foreign Relations*, South Yorkshire 2017, 118.

<sup>32</sup> Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 77, 81, 84; D. Sürenhagen, *Forerunners of the Hattusili-Ramesses treaty*, in: *BMSAES* 6, 2006, 59.

<sup>33</sup> Hoffner, *Letter from the Hittite Kingdom*, 286–287.

<sup>34</sup> H. Klengel, *Hattuschili und Ramses. Hethiter und Ägypter: Ihr langer Weg zum Frieden*, Mainz 2002, 132–139.

<sup>35</sup> H. Klengel, *History of the Hittites*, in: H. Genz/D., Mielke (eds.), *Insights into Hittite history and Archaeology*, Paris 2011, 43.

<sup>36</sup> Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 82; id, *Ancient Syria*, 79.

<sup>37</sup> O. Šmejkal, *Ancient Egyptian State Propaganda in New Kingdom Battle of Kadesh Case Study*, Anglo-American University, Humanities and Social Sciences Major, Spring 2009, 11ff. ([https://www.academia.edu/19849394/Ancient\\_Egyptian\\_State\\_Propaganda\\_the\\_Battle\\_of\\_Kadesh\\_Case\\_Stud](https://www.academia.edu/19849394/Ancient_Egyptian_State_Propaganda_the_Battle_of_Kadesh_Case_Stud)).

undesirable to Ḫattušili III for precisely the reason that it would be viewed as an act of humiliation and homage by Ḫattušili III.<sup>38</sup> Thus, Jacob mentions that: “They were very concerned about the impression their behavior made in foreign countries and among other rulers, that is why the meeting of Ramesses and Ḫattušili did not take place even though it was desired by both parties. The reputation of the Hittite ruler would have been harmed by visiting Ramesses in Canaan, which is in the Egyptian sphere of influence.”<sup>39</sup>

The depiction accompanying the inscription showing Ḫattušili III presenting his daughter to Ramesses II in an honorable way may be only an artist’s rendition. The Hittite king never accompanied his daughter in person to Egypt. Ramesses II liked to portray himself as the leading person in this diplomatic alliance marriage with Ḫatti.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, all texts that dealt directly with this affair did not mention Ḫattušili’s arrival with his daughter.<sup>41</sup> The events of the marriage stela in Ramesses II’s regnal year 34 are probably long after the discussion of the “Possible summit”.

Another reason may be added, Ḫattušili had concerns of his detention in Egypt, because he assumed that his nephew Urḫi-Tešub is in Egypt,<sup>42</sup> thus giving Ramesses a potential card to play in Hittite dynastic politics.<sup>43</sup> Urḫi-Tešub and Ramesses may have arranged for Ḫattušili to come to Egypt to detain him in supports the right of Urḫi-Tešub in his return to the throne of Hittite.

In addition to the above, one of the reasons of received Ḫattušili an insulting letter attributed by Ramesses to an (unidentified) Assyrian king: “*You’re only a substitute for a Great King*” apparently because of the planned Egyptian trip of the Ḫattušili, as it is the duty of the vassals to the overlord, not vice versa. The letter of Ramesses was preceded by a letter from Ḫattušili, from which it is quoted here, according to Edel who suppose that the preceding Ḫattušili’s letter represents the first preparation for his cancellation from the meeting plan, Ḫattušili may have told all this to his friend Ramesses, but at first he may have been reluctant to make a definite cancellation of the visit, and may have apologized by courier only at the very last minute, when Ramesses had already dispatched his “dignitaries”.<sup>44</sup>

In any case, the foregoing reconstruction of events surrounding Ḫattušili’s meeting in Egypt is admittedly speculative; the present hypothesis is well within the realm of possibility a visit and a possible meeting between the two kings.

<sup>38</sup> Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, 285; P. Brand, *Ideological Imperatives: Irrational Factors in Egyptian – Hittite Relations under Ramesses II*, P. Kousoulis/K. Magliveras (eds.), *Moving Across Borders: Foreign Relations, Religion and Cultural Interactions in the Ancient Mediterranean*, Leuven 2007, 30.

<sup>39</sup> Jakob, in: *BMSAES* 6, 2006, 15.

<sup>40</sup> A. Van der Ryst, *Reigns of Hattušili III, Puduhepa and their son, Tudhaliya IV, ca 1267–1228 BCE*, Master Diss., University of South Africa 2016, 143.

<sup>41</sup> KRI II, 247–8; 283 (1.3–13).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. W. Helck, *Urḫi-Tešub in Ägypten*, in: *JCS* 17, 1963, 87–97; W. Wouters, *Urḫi-Tešub and Ramses – Letters from Boghazköy*, in: *JCS* 41, 1989, 226–234; Ph. Houwink ten Cate, *Urḫi-Tessub revisited*, in: *BiOr* 51, 1994, 233–259; I. Singer, *The Urḫi-Tešub affair in the Hittite – Egyptian Correspondence*, in: Th. P. J. van den Hout (ed.), *The Life and Times of Ḫattušili III and Tudhaliya IV: Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Honour of J. de Roos, 12–13 December 2003*, (Pihans 103), Leiden 2006, 27–38.

<sup>43</sup> O. Jr. Goelet/B. A. Levine, *Making Peace in Heaven and on Earth: Religious and Legal Aspects on the Treaty*, in: M. Lubetski/C. Gottlieb/S. Keller (eds.), *Boundaries of the ancient Near Eastern world: a tribute to Cyrus H. Gordon* 273, 1998, 254.

<sup>44</sup> Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz*, Bd. 2, 28, 41.

## 2.2 War Times

In times of battles it was a great opportunity to meet a large number of kings and princes and see each other; these meetings were imposed by the emergency situation at the time of the battle according to the alliances between those kingdoms, or at the instigation of the great powers.

(a) *The Battle of Megiddo*: In the Battle of Megiddo, according to the Annals of Tuthmosis III, the prince of Qadeš lead an alliance with other local princes against Thutmose III.<sup>45</sup> 360 kings with the instigation and support of Mitanni to confront the Pharaoh.<sup>46</sup> In this great meeting, the communities (Naharin, Ḫurians, and Qodians) agreed to fight Tuthmosis III in Megiddo.<sup>47</sup> This meeting was confirmed when Tuthmosis rebuked his soldiers, saying: “*every chief of every re[belli]ous [northe]rn land is inside it (Megiddo).*”<sup>48</sup> Therefore, it could be concluded that probably this battle was after a number of previous meetings in order to discuss war plans to confront the Pharaoh.

(b) *The Battle of Qadeš*: Vassal rulers were obliged by treaty to provide their overlord (Muwatalli II) with troops, and vassal or one of his sons were required to attend the head of a military division to assist the king against his enemies.<sup>49</sup> It was the largest possible meeting between overlord and his vassals in the battle of Qadeš. A question may rise here: did the kings of Syria attend this battle? Or did they have sent their troops with one of their sons or leaders especially that the treaties did not impose on them to attend personally?<sup>50</sup> According to Egyptian texts Muwatalli II had assembled an army from Ḫatti and 16 of its provinces and allies,<sup>51</sup> at Ramesses’ account that kings attended personally. Ramesses says of the Hittite king that “[*h*]e left no silver in his land; he stripped it of all its possessions and gave them to all the foreign countries in order to bring them with him to fight.”<sup>52</sup> An inscriptions referred as will to the list of Hittite allies: “*Then he caused many chiefs to come, each one of them with his chariots, and they were equipped with their weapons of warfare, the Chief of Arzawa, him of the (land of) Masa, the Chief or Arwen(?), him of Luka, him of Dardany, the Chief of Karkamiš, the Chief of Ḳarkışha, him of Haleb, the brothers of him of Ḫatti, collected in one place.*”<sup>53</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Urk. IV, 649.

<sup>46</sup> For more details about Battle of Megiddo, see: E. Cline, *The Battles of Armageddon: Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley from the Bronze Age to the Nuclear Age*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 2002; J. Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt: The New Kingdom*, Oxford 2005; A. Gabriel, *Thutmose III: The Military Biography of Egypt’s Greatest Warrior King*, Washington 2009.

<sup>47</sup> Urk. IV, 649; D. Redford, *The wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III*, Leiden 2003, 14.

<sup>48</sup> D. Redford, *The wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III*, 31.

<sup>49</sup> T. Bryce, *The Hittites at War*, in: J. Vidal (ed.), *Studies on war in the ancient Near East: Collected essays on military history*, Münster 2010, 76; J. Lorz, and I. Schrakamp, *Hittite military and warfare*, in: H. Genz/D. Mielke (eds.), *Insights into Hittite history and Archaeology*, Paris 2011, 133.

<sup>50</sup> According to vassal Hittite treaty between Muršili II and Tuppi-Teššup of Amurru, when Nušašši and Kinza rebelled against Muršili II, Ari-Teššup son Aziru led troops to assist Muršili against the rebels, see: G. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Atlanta 1996, 55.

<sup>51</sup> M. Abbas, *The Bodyguard of Ramesses II and the Battle of Kadesh*, in: ENIM 9, 2016, 113.

<sup>52</sup> W. Pearson, *Rameses II and the Battle of Kadesh: A Miraculous Victory?*, in: *AncHist* 40:1, 2010, 9.

<sup>53</sup> A. Gardiner, *The Ḳadesh Inscriptions of Ramesses II*, Oxford 1960, 10; M. De Pietri, *Relationships between Egypt and Karkemish during the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC: a brief overview*, in: E. Foa et al. (eds.), *Cultural & Material Contacts in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the International Workshop 1–2 December 2014*, Torino 2016, 10.

The Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum depicts the prince of Ḫaleb being resuscitated while held upside down by the ankles after nearly drowning in the Orontes.<sup>54</sup> This is in addition to other foreign countries, such as: Ugarit, Mushanet, Ḫedy, Inesa, Qadeš, Nuḫašše, and Kizzuwadna etc.<sup>55</sup> From my point of view, there is no more monumental occasion than this battle where the Hittite king forced his vassals to attend personally; thus we are in front of the largest meeting between King Ḫatti and his vassals in one place for the first time. Accordingly, the kings assembled saw each other face-to-face during the War Council for the preparation of war plans.

Despite the very close distance between Ramesses II and Muwattalli II in Qadeš, they did not think of a meeting before the battle to negotiate for the return to the first treaties.<sup>56</sup> Or even during the battle. Ramesses claimed that his opponent was too much a coward to face him in single combat.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, the Egyptian sources dealt very badly with describing king Hittite Muwattalli II.<sup>58</sup> Hence, the chances of meeting the two kings were impossible.

### 2.3 Possible Meeting between the Overlord and his vassals

Another possible meeting referred to by Rab-Adda admitting the visit Tušratta king of Mitanni to Sumur, and ‘Abdi-Aširta met him, Rab-Adda informs the Pharaoh (Amenhotep III) of a dialogue between them during this meeting, Tušratta said: “*How great is this land! Your land is so extensive.*” (EA 95:27–30) A wide variety of the interpretation of the relations between Mitanni and Amurru. The ranged from the hypothesis about joint activity of Mitanni and Egypt against ‘Abdi-Aširta,<sup>59</sup> hostility between Egypt and Mitanni,<sup>60</sup> to the idea of voluntary transition of Amurru under the vassalage of Mitanni, both interested in the allies against their own enemies (Šuppiluliuma for Tušratta,<sup>61</sup> rulers of petty Syrian kingdoms, such as

<sup>54</sup> McCandless, *The Makings of an Event*, 12, 18.

<sup>55</sup> Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 8, 23; KRI II, 111§45.

<sup>56</sup> About discussion in detail early treaty or treaties between Egypt and Ḫatti, See: W. Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh: A Historical Interpretation of the Battle Reliefs of King Sety I at Karnak* (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization), No 42, Chicago 1990, 31–38; I. Singer, *The Kurultama treaty revisited*, in: E. O. Forrer/D. Groddek/S. Rössle (eds.), *Šarnikzel. Hethitologische Studien zum Gedenken an Emil Orgetorix Forrer* (19.02.1894–10.01.1986), *Dresdner Beiträge zur Hethitologie* 10, Dresden 2004, 591–607; F. Breyer, *Thutmosis III. und die Hethiter. Bemerkungen zum Kurustama-Vertrag sowie zu anatolischen Toponymen und einer hethitischen Lehnübersetzung in den Annalen Thutmosis’ III*, in: SAK 39, 2010, 67–83; Sürenhagen, in: BMSAES 6, 2006, 59–67.

<sup>57</sup> Van de Mieroop, *The eastern Mediterranean in the age of Ramesses II*, 107.

<sup>58</sup> Muwattalli II described in Egyptian texts: “*The wretched Chief of Ḫatti standing (looking) back (in) fear of His Majesty*”, see McCandless, *The Makings of an Event*, 18; “despicable, fallen ruler of Ḫatti”, see: T. Prakash, *King and Coward? The Representation of the Foreign Ruler in the Battle of Kadesh Reliefs*, in: JSSEA 38, 2011–12, 142; “a coward, weak, deceitful, and has no divine backing.” Cf: Van de Mieroop, *The eastern Mediterranean in the age of Ramesses II*, 129; “*wretched fallen one of Ḫatti*” For the identification of the Hittite king see J. Mynářová, *Wretched Fallen One of Hatti or Hero? The Image of the Hittite King in the Egyptian Sources*, in: J. Mynářová (ed.), *Egypt and the Near East – the Crossroads. Proceedings of an International Conference on the Relations of Egypt and the Near East in the Bronze Age*, Prague 2010, 237–238.

<sup>59</sup> A. Altman, *The Mittanian Raid of Amurru* (EA 85: 51–55) Reconsidered, in: *Altorforsch* 30, 2003, 351.

<sup>60</sup> I. Singer, *The “Land of Amurru” and the “Lands of Amurru” in the Šausgamuwa Treaty*, in: *Iraq* 53, 1991, 72; D. Kahn, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward: The Relations between Amenhotep III, King of Egypt and Tushratta, King of Mitanni*, in: S. Bar/D. Kahn/J. Shirley (eds.), *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature*, Leiden 2011, 145–148.

<sup>61</sup> G. Wilhelm, *Suppiluliuma and the Decline of the Mittanian Kingdom*, in: P. Pfalzner/M. Al-Maqdis (eds.), *Qatna and the Networks of Bronze Age Globalism Proceedings of an International Conference in Stuttgart and Tübingen in 2009*, Bd. 2, Wiesbaden 2015, 75.

Rib-Adda, for ‘Abdi-Aširta),<sup>62</sup> If we approve Rab-Adda’s claims, there would be a meeting between the king Tušratta and ‘Abdi-Aširta.<sup>63</sup> Thus, ‘Abdi-Aširta went to meet the king of Mitanni. (EA 90:19–26) Probably in Waššukani. It seems that the result of this meeting was that ‘Abdi-Aširta gave the tribute to the king of Mitanni (EA 86:5–12).

### 3 Confirmed meetings

#### 3.1 Meeting between the Overlord and his vassals

After the battle of Megiddo, Tuthmosis III met with the surrendered princes. They swore an oath of allegiance,<sup>64</sup> e.g; the prince of Qadeš: “*His Majesty reached Qadeš. Its chieftain came out in peace to his Majesty. They were made to swear an oath of loyalty and their children likewise.*”<sup>65</sup> Also, Amenhotep II met the prince of Qadeš face-to-face who swore an oath of allegiance to the Pharaoh. The same thing was done by his children. During that visit; the prince of Qadeš has prepared an entertainment trip for his majesty to the south of the city and forests for hunting wild animals.<sup>66</sup> Probably, the prince Qadeš accompanied Amenhotep II throughout the trip.

Not all the meetings between the Egyptian king and one of his vassals were friendly; some of them were not devoid of taunting. King Amenhotep II brought Prince of Geba-šemen during their meeting to the headquarters at an Egyptian base in Megiddo to punish him.<sup>67</sup>

There is another visit of an unnamed Pharaoh, probably Thutmose IV, to the city of Sidon. Two letters of Rab-Adda are the source of this information. The first letter acknowledged the city and the probability of the king (EA85:69–72). In the second letter (EA 116: 61–63) Rab-Adda did not tell about the place of the visit or who did it! From the historical context of these letters<sup>68</sup> the king might be Amenhotep III.<sup>69</sup> There is a strong possibility that there were two visits for two kings, not one, the first by Thutmose IV to Sidon and the second

<sup>62</sup> D. Gromova, Hittite Role in Political History of Syria in the Amarna Age Reconsidered, in: UF 39, 2007, 292.

<sup>63</sup> Some scholars refers that the visit of Tušratta to Amurru was absolutely a creation of imagination of Rib-Adda, who used this argument to defame ‘Abdi – Aširta in the eyes of the king of Egypt, Cf: I. Singer, Aziru’s Apostasy and the Historical Setting of the General’s Letter, in: Sh. Izre’el/I. Singer (eds.), The General’s Letter from Ugarit. A Linguistic and Historical Reevaluation of RS 20.33, Tel Aviv 1990, 147; J. Miller, The rebellion of Ḫatti’s Syrian vassals and Egypt’s meddling in Amurru, in: SMEA 49, 2007, 548.

<sup>64</sup> D. Magnetti, The Function of the Oath in the Ancient Near Eastern International Treaty, in: AJIL 72/4, 1978, 820; E. Morris, Bowing and scraping in the Ancient Near East: an investigation into obsequiousness in the Amarna Letters, in: JNES 65/3, 2006, 193–194.

<sup>65</sup> Urk. IV, 1304.

<sup>66</sup> Urk. IV, 1301–1305; E. Morris, The Architecture of Imperialism Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt’s New Kingdom, Leiden 2005, 127.

<sup>67</sup> Y. Aharoni, Some Geographical Remarks concerning the Campaigns of Amenhotep II, in: JNES, 19/3, 1960, 183.

<sup>68</sup> According to the historical context of the letter EA 85 that mentions the presence of ‘Abdi-Aširta in Amurru, in the same letter was a meeting between ‘Abdi-Aširta and King of Mitanni, during the reign of Amenhotep III, it is known that ‘Abdi-Aširta murdered at the end of the reign Amenhotep III. See A. Altman, The fate of Abdi-Ashirta, in: UF 9, 1977, 1–10. While in the letter EA 116 that mentions the presence of Aziru in Amurru, also Rab-Adda speaks of the ascension of the new king of the throne: “*And now the gods and the sun and the Lady of Gubla have granted that you be seated on the throne of your father’s house (to rule) your land*” (EA 116: 65–68). Accordingly, what is meant by the father is Amenhotep III (who visited his vassals), and son Amenhotep IV.

<sup>69</sup> B. Bryan, The reign of Tuthmosis IV, PhD. Diss., Yale University 1980, 437; M. Kilani, Byblos in the Late Bronze Age: Interactions between the Levantine and Egyptian Worlds, PhD. Diss., University of Oxford 2016, 126.

by Amenhotep III to several cities. However, there is a meeting between an Egyptian king and his subordinates. Rab-Adda said: “*O king! Note: did not your father come out and visit (his) lands and his mayors?*” (EA 116: 61–63).

Sety I’s battle scenes at Karnak (Epigraphic Survey, Battle Reliefs of King Sety I). The final scene in the middle left Karnak register depicts Sety personally receiving homage from Lebanese rulers, who were represented in the act of “*hewing cedar trees for the great river-barge U[serha]t, and likewise for the great flagstaves of Amun*”.<sup>70</sup> It happened during his First Campaign in regnal year one, it is likely that Sety sat down with these rulers to discuss the quantities of tribute. These Lebanese rulers expressed their happiness to see the king during this meeting saying “*We live by sight you*.”<sup>71</sup> Redford suggests that the leaders of Lebanon gathered at Yenoam to meet Sety.<sup>72</sup> While Morris argues “The towering trees and textual glosses make it abundantly clear that the event took place within the famed cedar forests of the Lebanese coast, but the exact whereabouts are nowhere specified”<sup>73</sup>, Sety may well have found Byblos a suitable venue at which to receive his Lebanese vassals.<sup>74</sup>

Furthermore, the inscription on the Bentresh Stele recounts how Ramesses II traveled to Naharin to collect tribute. He met with the prince of Bactria, during which; the latter offered his daughter’s hand in marriage to Ramesses who happily accepts. The Bactrian princess returns with Ramesses II to Egypt.<sup>75</sup>

### 3.2 Appearing before the King

(a) *The Egyptian case*: According to Egyptian sources – though carrying a great deal of hyperbole and praise<sup>76</sup> – Amenhotep II mentioned a visit from the “chiefs of Mitanni”, to bring their tribute, “*to seek the peace of His Majesty*”.<sup>77</sup> The same visit was repeated during the reign of Tuthmosis IV according to the inscription on an Aten scarab.<sup>78</sup>

Concerning the vassals of the Levant, they were looking forward to seeing the face of the Egyptian king “*whose sight all lan[ds] live*.” (EA 162:48–50) The vassals had been expressed their desire to see the king in various forms: “*I may arri[ve] in the presence of the king, my lord. It is good for me to be with you. What can I do by may[self]? This is what I long for day and night*.” (EA74: 61–65) “*it would please me were I with and so at peace*” (EA 116:47). They asked repeatedly: “*When shall I see the face of the king, my lord*” (EA 147: 60). ‘Abi-Milku the ruler of Tyre had said – in an exaggerated manner – “[I] have devoted

<sup>70</sup> Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism Military*, 353.

<sup>71</sup> KRI I, 14(1, 5–6).

<sup>72</sup> D. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times*, Princeton 1992, 181.

<sup>73</sup> Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism Military*, 353.

<sup>74</sup> W. Helck, *Byblos und Ägypten*, in: E. Acquaro et al. (eds.), *Biblo. Una città e la sua cultura*, Rom 1994, 110; Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism Military*, 353; N. Grimal/M. Francis-Allouche, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Byblos*, in: CRAI.156, No.1, 2012, 281, fig.1.

<sup>75</sup> McCandless, *The Makings of an Event*, 122.

<sup>76</sup> The ideological texts like those of Amenhotep II about “chiefs of Mitanni”. The Egyptians called all foreign elites “chiefs”, or “Great Chiefs” and would not have distinguished the actual king of Mitanni from his diplomatic representatives or other Mitanni elite who all were called “chiefs” collectively. So, the hyperbole and rhetoric of Egyptian sources, in particular, is usually seen as an obstacle, facts and events may be obscured in this way.

<sup>77</sup> Urk, IV, 1326 (1.1, 4); A. Podany, *Brotherhood of kings: how international relations shaped the ancient Near East*, Oxford 2010, 168.

<sup>78</sup> Bryan, *The reign of Tuthmosis IV*, 431.

*myself to[tally] to the king, t[o seeing] the face of the king, [my] lord*” (EA 151:30–34). And it is not surprising that it comes out of them, they follow the stronger partly (EA 73: 16). King of Tyre described his imagination of the kind of meeting he wishes to have with the great king as: “*My presence will be as pleasing to the king, my lord, as when the king, my lord, charged me with the guarding of his city,*” (EA 148:18–22) in another letter says: “*Should I en[ter] before the king, [my] lo[rd], I would be afraid : ir-x-[x] ” (?), [and] unable [to speak], since the king, the sun, looked on*” (EA 155: 31–35).

According to Redford, the Canaanites kings also had to appear in the Royal Court during the important celebrations every year.<sup>79</sup> It is certain that they were met by their great king, and they were at least treated like messengers (EA 3:16–20; 7:8–9). According to hospitality rules, they shall be given food and drink in the presence of the king,<sup>80</sup> they had to wait for long times to see the King.<sup>81</sup> One of the reasons for the appearance of rulers before the king is to transfer the countries’ news to the king (EA 180: 16), or carrying a tribute (EA 263: 6–17; 270: 9–13).

However, an Egyptian king’s request to meet with one of the rulers of the Levant represented a great burden on them, so they often use various excuses, such as illness,<sup>82</sup> or cases of war against them.<sup>83</sup>

But, why were the Levantine kinglets afraid of coming to Egypt? According to some of the arguments presented by the Levantine kinglets, their enemies hear the news of their arrival to meet the king in Egypt; they hurry to attack their country (EA 263:6–17). So they requested to send an Egyptian military garrison to rescue them after that they were able to meet the Egyptian king (EA 148: 13–18; 149: 17–20; 151:12–18; 286:44–46). However, they could not avoid traveling to Egypt, to respond to the charges against them. Therefore Aziru the ruler of Amurru sent two of his sons<sup>84</sup> to meet the king (Akhenaten) (EA 156: 9–12). Perhaps as a prelude to a visit that he planned to do personally, and was continuously postponed because of Aziru’s fears of a possible Hittite act of aggression against Amurru, Aziru cites Hittite presence in Nuḫašše as an excuse to delay his departure for Egypt.<sup>85</sup> As a proof of good intention, Aziru offered to send his sons instead of him, if he cannot be present before the king in that year (EA 162:42–45). Despite the king’s approval of the offer of Aziru, taking into consideration the fact that the latter had sent several letters assuring his lord that he would come, Liverani has shown that these epistles actually convey the opposite. Rather than travelling to Egypt, Aziru used the travel condition as a way to negotiate his position towards

<sup>79</sup> Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel*, 200, pl. 21.

<sup>80</sup> R. Head, *Amarna Messengers and the politics of feasting*, in: *Maarav* 18, 1–2, 2011, 84.

<sup>81</sup> D. Warburton, *Egypt and the Near East. Politics in the Bronze Age*, Paris 2001, 73.

<sup>82</sup> EA 137:25–29 (Rab-Adda), EA 306:23–27 (Šubandu).

<sup>83</sup> EA 52: 36–39 (Akizzi), EA 149: 28–33; 150:8–13; 151: 6–12 (‘Abdi-Milku), EA 165:10–41; 166:21–30; 167:16–32 (Aziru), EA 286:39–40; 288: 31–32 (‘Abdi-Ḥeba), EA 306: 12–22 (Šubandu).

<sup>84</sup> May be old tradition since the days of Thutmose III.

<sup>85</sup> V. Cordani, *Aziru’s Journey to Egypt and Its Chronological Value*, in: J. Mynářová, (ed.), *Egypt and the Near East – the Crossroads: Proceedings of an International Conference on the Relations of Egypt and the Near East in the Bronze Age*, September 1–3, 2010, Prague 2011, 104, 108.

his Egyptian overlord.<sup>86</sup> So Aziru sent to Tutu<sup>87</sup> to ask him and the magnates of the king to put him under the oath to protect him, then he will make the journey (EA 164:31–40), which probably took place between Akhenaten's 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> years.<sup>88</sup> The duration of his stay in Egypt is unknown; may be more than a year to up or six years.<sup>89</sup>

During his meeting with the king, he faced several charges, and he had defended himself, in the letter to King Akhenaten: “*in the presence of the king, my lord, I spoke of all my affairs in the presence of the king*” (EA 161:5–8). The verb “*aqtabi*” as the past tense, rather than the future tense, in the letter Aziru seems to indicate his journey as something that has already happened.<sup>90</sup>

Aziru was not the only ruler, who went to appear before the king to answer charges. Šumu-Haddi, the ruler of a city in the north of Palestine, went to Egypt. In a letter from Yapaḥ – Hadda, the ruler of Beirut, he defended the charges against Šumu-Haddi during his appearance before the king in Egypt (EA 97:1–12).

It was not only the vassal's rulers or their sons who came to meet the king and appear before him, but this was extended to the brothers of the rulers. The ruler of Damascus, Biryawaza, sent his brother to Akhenaten; perhaps he was carrying the tribute (EA 194:20–30).

With regard to the visit of the vassal's rulers to see the Egyptian kings, it can be noted that the vassals repeat request: “*may the king, my lord, send chariots and fetch me to himself*” (EA 270:22–23; 121:60; 180: 10–23; 198:18–23). Perhaps this was part of the procedures of appearing before the king. The vassals send to ask permission of the great king to come to him, the king's approval meant sending the chariots to take the meeting of the great king.

(b) *The Hittite case:* In a stage of the anti-Hittite movement by the Syrians at the end of Akhenaten's reign. In EA 53 Akizzi of Qatna informs Akhenaten that: “*And now [Aitukam]a has written me and said, “[came] with me to the king of Ḫatti*” (EA 53:11–13), “*My lord, Aitukama has gone to land of Ḫatti*” (EA 53:24–25). This letter refers to a meeting between Aitukama and Šuppiluliuma I. It also reflects the fact that a Syro-Egyptian coalition was formed against the Hittites and their allies in Qadeš, Lapana, and Ruhizzi. D. Gromova suggests that there are several phases of pacifying the Syrian territories by the Hittites. Šuppiluliuma I tried to settle the conflict by means of diplomacy. According to his instruction, Aitukama of Qadeš sent a letter to Akizzi with a proposal “*to come with him to the king of Ḫatti,*” which was positively rejected by the ruler of Qatna (EA 53, 11–16).<sup>91</sup>

After the Hittites domination of Syrian territory; Hittites imposed treaties on their vassals. In their most common form, these documents were issued by the Hittite king, who imposed

<sup>86</sup> M. Liverani, Aziru, servitore di due padroni, in: O. Carruba/M. Liverani/C. Zaccagnini (eds.), *Studi Orientalistici in Ricordo di Franco Pintore*, Pavia: GJES 1983, 132.

<sup>87</sup> A high official, was sometimes depicted as an interpreter of foreign rulers, he had an important role before foreign delegations in the Egyptian palace at Amarna, and had a good relationship with Aziru during reign Akhenaten (EA 158, 164, 169), see: M.-E. Abo-Eliaz, Neglect and detention of Messengers in Egypt during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BCE., in: JARCE 54, 2018, 28.

<sup>88</sup> D. Redford, *History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt: Seven Studies*, Toronto 1967, 223.

<sup>89</sup> Cordani, in: J. Mynářová, (ed.), Prague 2011, 111.

<sup>90</sup> Sh. Izre'el, I. Singer, The General's Letter from Ugarit. A Linguistic and Historical Reevaluation of RS 20.33, (*Ugaritica V*, N. 20), Tel Aviv 1990, 584.

<sup>91</sup> Gromova, in: UF 39, 2007, 305.

obligations on his subordinate.<sup>92</sup> From the treaty's clauses the king was to make periodic visits to reaffirm his devotion to the Hittite ruler at a personal audience.<sup>93</sup> After the return of Aziru the king of Amurru from Egypt, he made a decisive decision to submit voluntarily to King Šuppiluliuma I and meet him.<sup>94</sup> The meeting may have happened during the one-year-campaign in Syria (1340 B.C.E) or after a very short time.<sup>95</sup> The historical introduction of the treaty between Ḫattusili III and Bentešina king Amurru mentions: “*In the time of my grandfather Šuppiluliuma, Aziru, [king of the land of Amurru], revoked [his vassalage(?) ] to Egypt, and [fell] at the feet of my grandfather Šuppiluliuma.*”<sup>96</sup> One of the most important results of this meeting was the vassal treaty between Aziru and Šuppiluliuma I, one of the conditions of which was that: “*Aziru, [must come] yearly to my Majesty, [your lord], in Ḫatti,*”<sup>97</sup> to prove his loyalty and obedience to his great king. This clause is repeated in the Hittite treaties between king Šuppiluliuma I and king Tetti of Nuḫašše.<sup>98</sup> As well as a treaty between Muršili II of Ḫatti and Niqmepa of Ugarit.<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, in year nine of the annals of Muršili II, there was a summit meeting between Muršili II and his brother Šarri-Kušuh the viceroy king of Karkamiš, in Kummanni<sup>100</sup> during celebrating the festival of Hapat.<sup>101</sup> Bryce argued that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the mounting problems in the Syrian region, and what is the best way to deal with them. Those problems included: Nuḫašše rebellion,<sup>102</sup> the increasing threat of Assyria, and Egypt's territorial ambitions in the region under Horemheb.<sup>103</sup> In addition to this; the death of their brother Telipinu in Ḫaleb, Muršili may wish to discuss the succession of the throne with Šarri-Kušuh. Also a serious of family matter on which Muršili may will have wanted his brother's advice.<sup>104</sup> Šarri-Kušuh's support of Muršili in his campaigns in Anatolia,<sup>105</sup> it worth

<sup>92</sup> E. Devecchi, “(Re-) defining the Corpus of the Hittite treaties,” in: ZAR 19, 2013, 90; id, *Treaties and Edicts in the Hittite World*, in: G., Wilhelm (ed.), *Organization, Representation, and Symbols of Power in the Ancient Near East Proceedings of the 54<sup>th</sup> Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Würzburg 20–25 July 2008*, Winona Lake 2012, 639; A. Altman, *Rethinking the Hittite System of Subordinate Countries from the Legal Point of View*, in: JAOS 123/4, 2003, 741.

<sup>93</sup> G. Beckman, *International Law in the Second Millennium: Late Bronze Age*, in: R. Westbrook (ed.), *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, 2 vols., no 72, Leiden 2003, 761.

<sup>94</sup> I. Singer, *The Treaties Between Ḫatti and Amurru*, in: *The Context of Scripture 2*, Leiden 2003, 93.

<sup>95</sup> I. Singer, *A Concise History of Amurru*, in: S. Izre'el, Shlomo, *Amurru Akkadian: A Linguistic Study II*, Atlanta 1991, 154.

<sup>96</sup> Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 95–96.

<sup>97</sup> Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 33.

<sup>98</sup> Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 51.

<sup>99</sup> RS: 17.338.

<sup>100</sup> The most important cult centre in Kizzuwadna in southern Anatolia. It is probably to be identified with Classical Comana Cappadociae, It was dedicated to the worship of the Hurrian goddess Hapat and her consort Tešub; See: T. Bryce, *The Routledge Handbook of the Peoples and Places of Ancient Western Asia: From the Early Bronze Age to the Fall of the Persian Empire*, New York 2009, 395–396.

<sup>101</sup> B. Collins, *The Hittites and their World*, Atlanta 2007, 51.

<sup>102</sup> Both brothers had been engaged for the past two years in quelling rebellions in Nuḫašše, which had the support of Egyptian forces, and Qadeš; For more details see: Miller, in: SMEA 49, 2007, 540–541; T. Bryce, *Tette and the Rebellions in Nuhassi*, in: AnSt 38, 1988, 21–22.

<sup>103</sup> About this event, see: G. Wilhelm, *Muršilis II. Konflikt mit Ägypten und Haremhab's Thronbesteigung*, in: WdO 39/1, 2009, 108–116.

<sup>104</sup> Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, 202; id, *Ancient Syria*, 69.

<sup>105</sup> Miller, in: SMEA 49, 2007, 540.

mentioning here that Šarri-Kušuh's suddenly became ill and died in Kummanni during that visit.<sup>106</sup>

One of the faithful policies between Ḫatti and the Syrian cities after the signing of the vassal treaties was the visits of the kings and princes of Syria to the Hittite court, whether to appear before the king or to choose a Hittite wife. There are two letters which may indirectly implicate in this affair. The first letter sent by Bentešina to Ḫattušili III, refers to the visit of Bentešina's father (Duppi-Tešup).<sup>107</sup> The second letter *KUB 3.56* sent by Ḫattušili III to Bentešina, refers to the visit of prince Šaušgamuwa,<sup>108</sup> (perhaps in search of a Hittite bride?).<sup>109</sup>

Niqmaddu III king of Ugarit visited the Hittite court during the reign of Tudḫaliya IV. Niqmaddu had been pleased by the fact that the face of the Hittite sun shone upon him. This meeting was mentioned in four letters to his mother Šarelli.<sup>110</sup> Letters RS 11.872, RS 16.379, RS 15.008, and RS 17.139 mention the king's audience with the Hittite great king, RS 11.872 and RS 16.379, discuss tribute given to the Hittite rulers, the letter RS 16.379 draws a connection between the presentation of tribute and military action, letters RS 16.379, RS 11.872 also deals with tribute to the Hittites, letters RS 17.139 and RS 15.008 also report on visits to the Hittite king.<sup>111</sup> Singer argues that the visit was in order to marry Eḫli-Nikkalu a Hittite princess.<sup>112</sup>

It is likely that the last Ugaritic kings neglected their vassal obligations with regard to paying homage and making regular visits to the court in Ḫatti. They thus caused mistrust and anger in the Hittite courts which were expressed in the reprimands found in many texts written by Hittite kings or princes towards at least the last three Ugaritic kings. The failure of Ibiranu, king of Ugarit, to appear before Tudḫaliya IV, according to the usual procedures prompted a strong letter of rebuke from the Hittite 'prince' Pihawalwi saying: "*Since you have assumed royal power in Ugarit, why have you not come before His Majesty?*" This is evidence that Ḫatti's grip upon its empire was seen to be loosening.<sup>113</sup> Also, Niqmadu III is reproached by Puduḫepa: "... *now, as for you did not come to (nor) did you send your embassy,*" the letter contains a clear reprimand for failing to send sufficient tribute or pay the obligatory visit to his overlord; Šuppiluliuma II blames Ammurapi for his disloyalty and for not appearing before the great king for one or two years: "*Now you (too) belong to the Sun, your lord ; you are his (cherished) personal possession (and) servant ... you have not at all acknowledged (your duty towards) the Sun, to me, the Sun, your lord, why do not you come every year?*"<sup>114</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, 203.

<sup>107</sup> KBo 8, n. 16:15–20.

<sup>108</sup> De Roos, in: Th. P. J. van den Hout (ed.), Leiden 2006, 25.

<sup>109</sup> The Treaty between Tudḫaliya IV and Šaušgamuwa of Amurru and Kurunta of Tarḫuntašša indicates that Šaušgamuwa has married a sister of Tudḫaliya IV since he was a prince; cf: Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 100; H. Klengel, *Syria 3000 to 300 B.C.: A handbook of political history*, Berlin 1992, 172.

<sup>110</sup> I. Singer, in: Th. P. J. van den Hout (ed.), Leiden 2006, 33; Ch. Thomas, *Reconceiving the House of the Father: Royal Women at Ugarit*, PhD. diss., Harvard University 2013, 53–54.

<sup>111</sup> Thomas, *Reconceiving the House of the Father*, 71, 73, 80.

<sup>112</sup> I. Singer, *A Political History of Ugarit*, in: W.G.E. Watson/ N. Wyatt (eds.) *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, Leiden 1999, 701; id, *A Political History of Ugarit*, in: *The Calm Before the Storm*, Atlanta 2011, 100.

<sup>113</sup> Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 215.

<sup>114</sup> I. Halaqya, *The Demise of Ugarit in the Light of its Connections with Ḫatti*, in: UF 42, 2011, 311–312.

Ugarit may have been one of vassal states that began to neglect their duties to their overlord,<sup>115</sup> Ugarit tried to form alliances with the enemy of Ḫatti, namely Assyria<sup>116</sup> and Egypt.<sup>117</sup>

### 3.3 Request for military assistance

(a) *The Egyptian case:* The policies between the Egyptian king and his Asiatic subjects are kind of contract; the loyalty and obedience in return for which they were granted protection, a recurring feature in Amarna letters are the petitions of assistance and help by the local petty kings to the Pharaoh.<sup>118</sup> So, according to the Amarna letters a number of meetings were held between kings and princes in case of the request for help and support, many of the kings of the Levant came to meet the Egyptian king to request help.

It can be seen that many of the kings of the vassals in the Levant sent their sons to meet the Pharaoh to request military aid. Rab-Adda sent his son to hasten the arrival of the military campaign (EA 137:34–43). Also, an unknown ruler sent his son to meet the Pharaoh to bring the chariots (EA 180: 4–9). Likewise, Arašša the ruler of Kumidu sent his son requesting help (EA 198:18–27). Certainly, they have obtained the honor of seeing the face of the Egyptian king.

(b) *The Hittite case:* During the First Syrian War of Šuppiluliuma I, a number of kings and princes hurried to request help and assistance from king Šuppiluliuma I. Shattiwaza, the son of the Mitanni king, hasten to Šuppiluliuma I to meet him for military help to retrieve his father's throne. Shattiwaza described the meeting as follows: “*At the Marassantiya River I fell at the feet of His Majesty, Šuppiluliuma, Great King, King of Ḫatti, Hero, Beloved of the Storm-god. [The Great King] took me by the hand and rejoiced over me and questioned me at length concerning all the customs of the land of Mitanni. [And when] he had heard exhaustively [about the customs] of the land of Mitanni, the Great King and Hero spoke as follows: “If I conquer Šuttarna and [the troops of] the land of Mitanni, I will not reject you but will adopt you as my son. I will stand by you and place you on the throne of your father....”*”<sup>119</sup> The

<sup>115</sup> Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 215.

<sup>116</sup> There is evidence of diplomatic contact between Ugarit and Assyria. Šalmanasar I sent a letter to the Ugaritic king Ibirāru about his victory against Tudḫaliya IV in the battle of Niḫriya, for more details; see: I. Singer, *The Battle of Niḫriya and the End of the Hittite Empire*, in: ZA 75, 1985, 100–112; M. Yamada, *The second military conflict between ‘Assyria’ and ‘Ḫatti’ in the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I*, in: RA 105, 2011, 199–220; Halaqya, in: UF 42, 2011, 315.

<sup>117</sup> Ammurāpi extensively tried reestablish political relations and an alliance with Egypt, through his request to erect a statue of Merneptah at the Ba'al Temple in Ugarit. It also initiated an exchange of gifts with Egypt, for more details see: Halaqya, in: UF 42, 2011, 316; E. Morris, *Egypt, Ugarit, the God Bacal, and the Puzzle of a Royal Rebuff*, in: J. Mynářová (ed.), *The Crossroads II, Or There and Back Again. Proceedings of an International Conference on the Relations of Egypt and the Near East in the Bronze Age, Prague 15–18, 2014*, Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Arts, Prague 2015, 315–351.

<sup>118</sup> M. Liverani, *Contrasti e confluente di concezioni politiche nell'età di El-Amarna*, in: RA 61, 1967, 2; G. Singer, *El intercambio de bienes entre Egipto y Asia Anterior desde el reinado de Tuthmosis III hasta el de Akhenaton*. *Ancient Near East Monographs – Monografías sobre el Antiguo Cercano Oriente*, vol 2. Buenos Aires: SBL & CEHAO, UCA, 2ª ed., Argentina 2008, 81; E. Pfoh, *Loyal Servants of the King: A political anthropology of Subordination in Syria-Palestine (CA. 1600–600 BCE)*, in: PALAMEDES 8, 2013, 28.

<sup>119</sup> Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 45–46; K. Kitchen, *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East, Part 1: The Texts*, Wiesbaden 2012, 382.

two men sat down for a long discussion, it was a result of this meeting hold a treaty between them.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, Šuppiluliuma entrusted to Piyaššili<sup>121</sup> his son, his chariot and troops.<sup>122</sup>

King Niqmaddu II of Ugarit also went to meet the king Šuppiluliuma I in Alalakh, Mukiš capital to pay homage to Šuppiluliuma,<sup>123</sup> after Niqmaddu's request for help in his war against an anti-Hittite coalition of the kings of Nuḥašše, Mukiš and Niya,<sup>124</sup> in the historical introduction to the treaty Šuppiluliuma I say about this meeting: "*He arrived [...] in the city of Alalakh before His Majesty, Great King,*" the result of this meeting was the conclusion of a treaty between them.<sup>125</sup> Indeed, this meeting must have occurred after the full defeat of Mukiš, and the seizure of its capital Alalakh. Moreover, Gromova argues that the meeting of kings of Ḫatti and Ugarit in Alalakh reflects the beginning of the active Hittite presence in this city.<sup>126</sup>

In the same context, Takuwa of Niya went to visit Šuppiluliuma I to ally with him. During that visit, the situation in Niya was controlled by Aki-Teššup, who stirred up the rebellion against the Hittite invasion there with Nuḥašše and Mukiš, perhaps Takuwa restored his throne with the help of Šuppiluliuma I, after Šuppiluliuma's victory over the anti-Hittite coalition of Mukiš, Nuḥašše, and Niya.<sup>127</sup>

### 3.4 Meeting for the inauguration of the Vassal rulers

Meetings were held between the great Egyptian king and the vassals of the Levant to declare their loyalty, and the oath not to break their obedience,<sup>128</sup> especially after the successful campaigns where Tuthmosis III has appointed a chief for each city, and the foreign chiefs brought their tribute to him, "*then his majesty appointed the chiefs anew for every town.*"<sup>129</sup> In accordance with local customs, his Majesty surveyed the local dignitaries with oil and appointed them kings; "*Once they brought their tribute to my majesty, they were standing upon the walls, praising my majesty so that the 'breath of life' would be granted to them. My majesty then allowed that their loyalty oaths be taken, by saying: 'Never in our lives we will carry on a rebellion against Menkhepperre', our lord, since we have seen his might and he has given*

<sup>120</sup> Podany, Brotherhood of kings, 294, 296.

<sup>121</sup> Piyaššili: subsequently called Šarri-Kusuḥ the king of Karkamiš; cf: Bryce, The Kingdom of the Hittites, 51.

<sup>122</sup> Beckman, Hittite Diplomatic Texts, 45–46.

<sup>123</sup> A. Altman, EA 59: 27–29 and the Efforts of Mukiš, Nuašše and Niya to Establish a Common Front against Šuppiluliuma I, in: UF 33, 2002, 18.

<sup>124</sup> E. Devecchi, A Fragment of a Treaty with Mukiš, in: A. Archi/R. Francia (eds.), VI Congresso Internazionale di Ittitologia. Roma, 5–9 settembre 2005, SMEA 49 (2007), 212; id, Suppiluliuma's Syrian Campaigns in Light of the Documents from Ugarit, in: S.de Martino/J.L. Miller (eds.), Proceedings of the International Symposium 'New Results and New Questions on the Reign of Suppiluliuma I', Munich, Sept. 19–20, 2011 (Eothen 19), Florence 2013, 81–97; A. Altman, The Submission of Sarrupsi of Nuhasse to Suppilulima I (CTH 53: A, obv.i, 2–11), in: UF 33, 2010, 28.

<sup>125</sup> RS.17.132, 1 9–27 (PRU IV 36; RS.17.132, 3 5–43 (PRU IV 36f; RS17.340+36; RS 17.340, 2–11; M. Astour, Ugarit and the Great Powers, in: G.D. Young (ed.), Ugarit in Retrospect, Winona Lake, Indiana, Eisenbrauns 1981, 20; F. et.al Breyer, Staatsverträge, Herrscherinschriften und andere Dokumente zur politischen Geschichte. TUAT, Neue Folge 2, Gütersloh 2005, 178.

<sup>126</sup> Gromova, in: UF 39, 2007, 289.

<sup>127</sup> Gromova, in: UF 39, 2007, 285; M. Astour, The Partition of the Confederacy of Mukiš – Nuḥašše – Nii by Šuppiluliuma: A Study in Political Geography of the Amarna Age, in: Or 38/3, 1969, 396.

<sup>128</sup> J. Mynářová, Being a Loyal Servant. Egypt and the Levant from the Perspective of Juridical Terminology of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, in: ZAR 19, 2013, 83.

<sup>129</sup> J. Galan, The Heritage of Thutmosis III's Campaigns in the Amarna Age, in: B. M. Bryan/D. Lorton (eds.), Essays in Egyptology in honor of Hans Goedicke, San Antonio 1994, 98.

us ‘breath’ according to his will.”<sup>130</sup> In the same context, a letter from Addu-nirari the king of Nuḥašše to Akhenaten gives a long description of the coronation ceremony, reminds the words of the pharaoh: “when Manahpiya, the king of Egypt, your ancestor, Made [T]a[ku], my ancestor, a king of Nuḥašše, he put oil on his head” (EA 51:2–5). The Amarna letters refer to this oath (Akkadian *māmītu*) cover also the ceremonial procedures following the act, including the slaughtering of an animal and the shared consumption of a drink or meal.<sup>131</sup>

Also, Thutmose III initiated the practice of bringing the princes of vassals’ kings of Levant to Egypt to be trained in Egyptian ways so as to prepare them to replace their fathers upon their death.<sup>132</sup> The presences of the sons of Levant kings in pharaoh’s court are found in the Amarna letters. Arasha of Kumidu mentioned: “Truly I send my own son to the king, my lord” (EA 199.15–21). ‘Abdi-Ḥeba of Jerusalem, confirms that his legitimacy as king was due to his appointment by pharaoh “neither my father nor my mother put me in this place, but the strong arm of the king brought me into my father’s house” (EA 286.10–15). Certainly, the meetings were face-to-face between the overlord and his vassals during appointed them, or their stay in Egypt; Especially in festivals and other celebrations. Thus, it can be observed many of the vassals who the king corresponded with had spent a portion of their youth in Egypt and may thus have known the king personally.

### 3.5 Witnesses to the treaties

The treaties between the allies, especially between the great king and his vassals can be described as a genuine diplomacy conference or summit-like meetings between the overlord and his vassals to sign as a witness to the treaty. In the treaty between Muwattalli II and Talmi-Šarrumma king of Ḥaleb, Šahurunuwa king of Karkamiš was a witness.<sup>133</sup> It was probably him who is referred to in the Barga arbitration<sup>134</sup> as a witness. When Tutḫaliya IV concluded his treaty with Kurunta of Tarḫuntašša, Bentešina and his son Šaušgamuwa, appeared together among the witnesses of the treaty.<sup>135</sup>

Likewise, Ini-Teššup king of Karkamiš is again mentioned as a witness, together with other dignitaries of the Hittite administration, the so-called donation in favor of Šahurunuwa, chief of the herdsmen, the prince Heshni also had appeared together with Ini-Teššup as a witness in the treaty between Ḥatti and Ulmi-Tešup of Tarḫuntašša.<sup>136</sup> Ini-Teššup was one of the witnesses of the Kurunta treaty.<sup>137</sup> It seems to be kings summoned these officials as witnesses to the treaty.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Galan, in: B. M. Bryan/D. Lorton (eds.), San Antonio 1994, 99.

<sup>131</sup> J. Mynářová, Egypt among the Great Powers and Its Relations to the Neighboring Vassal Kingdoms in the Southern Levant According to the Written Evidence: Thutmose III and Amarna, in: B. Eder/R. Pruzsinszky (eds.), Policies of Exchange. Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium B.C.E. Proceedings of the International Symposium at the University in Freiburg Institute for Archaeological Studies, 30.5–2.6.2012, OREA 2, 2012, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna 2015, 157.

<sup>132</sup> Urk. IV, 690. 2–5.

<sup>133</sup> Beckman, Hittite Diplomatic Texts, 51.

<sup>134</sup> Klengel, Syria 3000 to 300 B.C., 123.

<sup>135</sup> Klengel, Syria 3000 to 300 B.C., 172.

<sup>136</sup> R. Gurney, The Treaty with Ulmi-Tešub, in: AS 43, 1993, 23.

<sup>137</sup> About all witnesses in the documents of Hittites (Ulmi-Tešup Treaty, Šahurunuwa Text, and Bronze Tablet); see R. Bilgin, Bureaucracy and Bureaucratic Change in Hittite Administration, PhD. Diss., University of Michigan 2015, 468, 471.

<sup>138</sup> E. Devecchi, We are all descendants of Šuppiluliuma, Great King. The Aleppo Treaty Reconsidered, in: WO 40, 2010, 10.

#### 4 Meetings between kings of the equal status

If the meetings of the great kings are rare, it is different with the Levantine kinglets owners' equal status. There was a meeting between 'Abdi-Aširta and Yapaḥ-Hadda in Beirut to form an alliance (EA 85:40–43). It was directed primarily against the Egyptian presence in the Levant. 'Abdi-Aširta's meetings were repeated to form alliances with Zimredda of Sidon (EA 83: 21–26). However, there were two personages (Aziru of Amurru and Aitukama of Qadeš), the majority of complaints from rulers of petty-kingdoms of southern Syria concern their alliance were directed against Rab-Adda of Byblos and Biryawaza of Damascus,<sup>139</sup> so Aziru and Aitukama exchanged their meetings. King Akhenaten says in a letter to Aziru: “*Now the king has heard as follows, ‘You are at peace with the ruler of Qadeš. The two of you take food and strong drink together.’ And it is true*” (EA 162: 22–25). Another meeting between Aziru and his brothers with the ruler of Damascus when Aziru visited hem (EA 107: 25–33).

Moreover, there are two meetings between Rab-Adda, the king of Byblos, and 'Ammunira, the king of Beirut, the aim of the first meeting was to discuss the hostility of 'Abdi-Aširta's son against them. An alliance of friendship was held between them (EA 136: 24–29; 137: 14–19). This meeting probably resulted in an agreement on the exchange of military aid (EA 137: 69–72; 138: 51–57). There is a possibility that when Rab-Adda returned from Beirut, 'Ammunira would have accompanied him or some of his men, but Rab-Adda was not allowed to enter Byblos.<sup>140</sup> While the second meeting is considered a refuge after the expulsion of Rab-Adda from Byblos (EA 138: 19–22; 137:65–68).

Furthermore, the rulers Surata of Akka and Eandaruta of Akšapa met Šuwardata of Keilah, to support him in his war against 'Apiru; it seems that they agreed on the war of 'Apiru, who were threatening these cities. Šuwardata says: “*Surata, the ruler of Akka, and Eandaruta, the ruler of Aksapa, (these) two also have come to my aid: na-az-a-qu(have been summoned to help) with 50 chariots, and now they are on my side in the war*” (EA 366: 22–27).

#### 5 Obstacles the meetings between the kings

It should be noted that the meetings between kings are rare, during those times; there were many things that reduced the chances of kings' meeting each other:

##### 5.1 The long distances between the royal palaces

The transportation technology in this the age made travelling distances somewhat dangerous and time-consuming;<sup>141</sup> so the kings have a sense of fear of their country's exposure to internal crises threatening the throne during their absence, this justifies the complaint by Babylonian king Burnaburiyaš II that when he was ill, Akhenaten had not shown any concern, and Akhenaten's envoy sought to reassure Burnaburiyaš that this was not intentional (EA7: 18–31). This annoyance may be a result of the kings' ignorance of the distance between

<sup>139</sup> V. Cordani, Suppiluliuma in Syria after the First Syrian War: the (Non-)Evidence of the Amarna Letters, in: S.de Martino/J.L. Miller (eds.), Proceedings of the International Symposium 'New Results and New Questions on the Reign of Suppiluliuma I', Munich, Sept. 19–20, 2011 (Eothen 19), Florence 2013, 53–54; N. Na'aman, Biryawaza of Damascus and the date of the Kamid El-Loz Apiru Letters, in: UF 20, 1988, 179–193.

<sup>140</sup> Unfortunately, the letter is fragmented, and we do not know who was accompanying him to the city, cf. EA 138:55–57.

<sup>141</sup> Ch. Jönsson, Diplomatic Signaling in the Amarna Letters, in: R. Cohen/R. Westbrook (eds.), Amarna Diplomacy, Baltimore 2000, 203.

Egypt and the neighboring countries, and this is an evidence that the kings rarely went outside its borders.

### 5.2 “Waiting” as a strategy of superiority

King’s burdens and duties represented a great obstacle to meet each other. It was even difficult sometimes to meet the messengers of those kings. As happened with the son of the king of Byblos, who waited a long time without seeing the face of the king of Egypt (EA 138:78–81), or the messengers of the Assyrian king whose long waited under the sun of Egypt.<sup>142</sup> This act distressed their kings thus sending many complaints to the Egyptian king.<sup>143</sup>

### 5.3 Image of the King

The general political climate had changed since the Amarna period, disappearance and the rise of a great power of ‘The Club of Royal Brothers’, some of the members seem unconvinced of the rightfulness some of them, such as Ramesses II with Babylonian,<sup>144</sup> According to Jacob “Egypt still laid claim to world domination, at the same time, in the treaties of the Hittite rulers, the king usually appears only as ‘hero’. The same applies to Babylonia and Assyria, where royal titles increased in correspondence to the political rise. So, in no case are these ideologies of kingship compatible with the idea of equal “brothers”, therefore the ‘Great Power Club’ never met face-to-face”.<sup>145</sup>

Sometimes the kings refuse to meet anyone even his brothers. King Muwattalli II also refused to meet his brother, Ḫattušili III. He complained several times that the king did not meet him, although he was in his neighborhood. The king’s aim was to surround himself with an aura of prestige and sanctification.<sup>146</sup>

## 6 Conclusion

The exchange of visits and meeting between the kings, according to what has been introduced depended on the invitations between the great kings, some of which may amount to real visits, such as Ḫattušili III’s visit Egypt. While it is quite different between a great king and his vassals, meetings and visits are repeated yearly. It was found that there are reasons that led to the exchange of visits, meetings and seeing each other face-to-face,: (1) Declaration of loyalty (2) the inauguration of the Vassal rulers (3) Paying tribute (4) Transfer the countries’ news (5) Military aid (6) Investigation of charges (7) Witnesses to the conventions and treaties.

The meeting between the overlord and vassals was an expression of the overlord’s control over his subordinates. It appears from Aziru’s visit to Egypt that Akhenaten was able to impose his control over the most rebellious and ambitious vassal. Since the reign Tudḫaliya IV

<sup>142</sup> J. Vita, Messengers who must live or die. A Note on EA 16 and ARM XXVIII 14 [A.2114], in: W. G. E. Watson, (ed.), *He unfurled his brow and laughed. Essays in Honour of Nicolas Wyatt*, Münster 2007, 309–310.

<sup>143</sup> G. Singer, *Fortunes and Misfortunes of Messengers and Merchants in the Amarna Letters*, in: O. Drewnowska/M. Sandowicz (eds.), *Fortune and Misfortune in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 60<sup>th</sup> Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, Warsaw 21–25 July 2014, Winona Lake 2017, 153ff.; Abo-Eliaz, in: *JARCE* 54, 2018, 20–21.

<sup>144</sup> Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz*, n. 105. Obv. 56.

<sup>145</sup> Jakob, in: *BMSAES* 6, 2006, 13–15.

<sup>146</sup> J. Blasweiler, *Tarhuntassa city of king Muwattalli II and the Stormgod*, in: *Arnhem (nl)* – 6, 2014, 39.

the kings of the Hittites failed to oblige the kings of Ugarit to attend annually, according to the vassal treaties.

The Egyptian case can be pointing to two different stages of visits Egyptian kings to their vassals or vice versa; the first stage: The involvement of Tuthmosis III and Amenhotep II in the military campaigns; and therefore, sources indicate meetings between the kings and their vassals, or the vassals and the kings. The second stage: Egypt during the Amarna Age after stopped conducting annual campaigns in person (king) caused the governors Levantines to send their tribute down to Egypt by through high officials of his administration, so Amarna letters indicate to a one-sided meetings (Levantine's vassals to Pharaoh), whereas the pharaoh not wanting to visit its territory in the Levant (EA 162:39–41), and it stopped on the periodic visit of the royal archers to the different vassals were arranged, on annual basis.<sup>147</sup>

A comparison of the Egyptian and Hittite cases; showed that the Hittite kings were more keen to bring the vassals before them in annual visits, according to the treaties signed between them, whoever violates that will have transgressed the oath. (Tab.1)

There have also been meetings between kings of equal status from the rulers of the Levant, mostly to make alliances to exchange military aid against attacks on their cities. Some of the meetings have been showed shifts in the situations of countries from one ruler to another, e.g. Beirut shifted from the alliance with Amurru during reign Yapaḥ-Hadda (the meeting between 'Abdi-Aširta and Yapaḥ-Hadda), to the hostility of Amurru during reign 'Ammunira (the meeting between 'Ammunira and Rab-Adda).

**Table 1: The meetings between kings and their vassals**

Meetings	Place	Reason
<i>Prince of Qadeš ↔ 360 local princes</i>	Megiddo	Military
<i>Tuthmosis III ↔ Taku</i>	Nuḥašše	political
<i>Tuthmosis III ↔ Prince of Qadeš</i>	Qadeš	political
<i>Amenhotep II ↔ Prince of Qadeš</i>	Qadeš	political
<i>Amenhotep II ↔ Prince of Geba-šemen</i>	Megiddo	political
<i>Amenhotep II ↔ chiefs of Mitanni</i>	Thebes	political
<i>Thutmose IV ↔ Prince of Sidon</i>	Sidon	political
<i>Tuthmosis IV ↔ chiefs of Mitanni</i>	Thebes	political
<i>Amenhotep III ↔ Some of the Canaanites kings</i>	Several cities	political
<i>Amenhotep III ↔ Šumu-Haddi</i>	Thebes/ Malqata	political
<i>Tušratta ↔ 'Abdi-Aširta</i>	Sumur	Political

<sup>147</sup> M. Pintore, La Prassi della Marcia Armata nella Siria Egiziana dell'Età di El-Amarna, in: OrAnt 12, 1972, 311.

Meetings	Place	Reason
<i>'Abdi Aširta ↔ Yapaḥ-Hadda</i>	Beirut	political
<i>'Abdi Aširta ↔ Zimredda</i>	Sidon	political
<i>Akhenaten ↔ Aziru</i>	Amarna	political
<i>Akhenaten ↔ Two sons of Aziru</i>	Amarna	political
<i>Akhenaten ↔ Biryawaza's brother</i>	Amarna	political
<i>Akhenaten ↔ Rab-Adda's son</i>	Amarna	Military
<i>Akhenaten ↔ Arašša's son</i>	Amarna	Military
<i>Aziru ↔ Aitukama</i>	Qadeš	political
<i>Aziru ↔ Biryawaza</i>	Damascus	political
<i>Rab-Adda ↔ 'Ammunira</i>	Beirut	political
<i>Surata and Eandaruta ↔ Šuwardata</i>	Keilah	Military
<i>Šuppiluliuma I ↔ Shattiwaza</i>	Ḫatti	Military
<i>Šuppiluliuma I ↔ Aitukama</i>	Ḫatti	political
<i>Šuppiluliuma I ↔ Niqmaddu II</i>	Alalaḥ	Military
<i>Šuppiluliuma I ↔ Aziru</i>	Alalaḥ (probably)	political
<i>Šuppiluliuma I ↔ Takuwa</i>	Ḫatti (probably)	political
<i>Muršili II ↔ Šarri-Kusuḥ</i>	Kummanni	political
<i>Muršili II ↔ Duppi-Tešup</i>	Ḫatti	political
<i>Muwattalli II ↔ Šahurunuwa</i>	Ḫatti	Political
<i>Muwattalli II ↔ 16 of its allies</i>	Qadeš	Military
<i>Ramesses II ↔ prince of Bactria</i>	Naharin	political
<i>Ramesses II ↔ Ḫattušili III</i>	Pi-Ramesses	political
<i>Ramesses II ↔ Tudḫaliya IV</i>	Pi-Ramesses	political
<i>Ḫattušili III ↔ Šaušgamuwa</i>	Ḫatti	political
<i>Tudḫaliya IV ↔ Niqmaddu III</i>	Ḫatti	political
<i>Tudḫaliya IV ↔ Bentešina and his son Šaušgamuwa</i>	Ḫatti	political
<i>Tudḫaliya IV ↔ Ini-Teššup</i>	Ḫatti	political



Unpublished Pearl-Oyster Shell  
Bearing the Cartouche of Senwosret (I) from el-Raqaqna:  
Historical and Regional Context


Suzan Abouseteit

(Taf. 1)

*Abstract*

During my field studies in Egypt, I came across a pearl-oyster shell of great historical interest from the cemetery of el-Raqaqna in Girga district. The aim of this article is to publish and discuss this pearl-oyster shell inscribed with the royal name of Senwosret (I) within a historical and regional context. Real pearl-oyster shells and oyster-shell formed ornaments of precious metals bearing royal names are characteristic of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The historical and archaeological value of this pearl-oyster shell is investigated in the light of the different interpretations on the usage and significance of such objects. The finding of the pearl-oyster shell from el-Raqaqna in Girga district is coupled with the former finding of another similar one from Naga ed-Deir necropolis opposite Girga to shed more light on the history of this region in the Middle Kingdom and specifically during the reign of Senwosret I.

The pearl-oyster shell is engraved with the name of a king Senwosret within a cartouche. It was found during the excavation work of the SCA inspectorate office of el-Minshah in 1989/1990 at el-Raqaqna.<sup>1</sup> The pearl-oyster shell was kept at first in the magazine of Sheikh Hamad and then has come into the possession of the Sohag museum and is given the museum No. 198.<sup>2</sup>

The pearl-oyster shell has a circular outline and is engraved in its center with the name of Senwosret -  in a cartouche. Two holes were drilled for suspension through the thickest part of the shell which forms its top. The cutting of the shell is of a good quality. Its diameter is of about 11 cm. The cartouche is displayed vertically towards its lower edge. The hieroglyphs are executed with great style, presenting paleographical similarities to other known examples. Unfortunately, the shell is found in a very bad state of preservation, having a serious breakage just above the cartouche. The traces on the shell surface clearly demonstrate that it used to be actually worn during lifetime, most probably as a pendant.

<sup>1</sup> The first excavation of the necropolis was undertaken by John Garstang for the Egyptian Research Account in 1901–2: J. Garstang, *Tombs of the Third Egyptian Dynasty at Reqaqnah and Bet Khallaf*, Westminster 1904, 12.

In this respect, I would like to express my extreme gratitude to the staff members of the SCA inspectorate office at el-Minshah for their cooperation and helpful guiding. Many thanks are also due to Prof. Dr. Jochem Kahl for his useful instructions and review of this article.

<sup>2</sup> The excavation date is given as 3–4–1990 in the museum database. No further related archaeological findings are recorded. According to the excavation reports of the SCA inspectorate office of el-Minshah, the shell was found during the excavation of a group of tombs at el-Raqaqna dating to the Middle Kingdom and re-used in later periods. Most of the tombs incorporate a rectangular tomb shaft (of 3 to 6 m depth) which leads to one or more subterranean burial chambers. Few tombs take the form of a rectangular burial pit. Amongst the remarkable archaeological findings from the site of the excavated tombs are pottery vessels which contributed to the dating of the tombs and beads which formed parts of a number of necklaces. No further details in regard of the anthropological examination of the subject group of tombs are indicated.