

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND MISCOMMUNICATION:
EGYPTIAN DIPLOMACY IN THE NEW KINGDOM PERIOD

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BY
ZITING WANG

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation delves into the diplomatic interactions of New Kingdom Egypt with other Near Eastern countries and provides a fresh perspective by examining these interactions through the lens of intercultural communication, shedding light on the complexities and challenges faced during the period. The dissertation comprises three main chapters, each addressing a distinct aspect of intercultural communication.

The first chapter focuses on verbal and nonverbal communication, exploring the diplomatic correspondence exchanged between Egypt and other nations. Through an analysis of the language, rhetoric, and symbolism employed in these communications, it unravels the intricacies and potential miscommunications that might have occurred.

The second chapter investigates the role of gift exchange in intercultural communication. It examines the physical attributes of gifts and the contexts in which they were exchanged, shedding light on the messages conveyed and the perceptions they may have engendered between different political players.

The third chapter delves into the policy of diplomatic marriage and how cultural values and political ideologies influenced this practice among nations during the New Kingdom period. By studying the dynamics of matrimonial alliances and their implications, this chapter elucidates the interplay between culture, politics, and intercultural communication.

Through a meticulous examination of historical records, inscriptions, and archaeological evidence, this dissertation provides valuable insights into the complexities and nuances of intercultural communication during the New Kingdom period. By understanding the challenges and potential miscommunications that arose, this study contributes to a better comprehension of ancient diplomacy and its enduring significance.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the Late Bronze Age, the political landscape of the Near East was dominated by an evolving roster of great powers, including Egypt, Mittani, Hatti, Assyria, Babylonia, Ahhiyawa, and for a brief period, Arzawa. Nestled among these formidable forces and under their shadows, numerous smaller states pledged their allegiance to their powerful neighbors, who used them as buffers in peacetime and as proxies during military conflicts. This was a time of mercurial fortunes; no single power ever possessed the military prowess to dominate all others. Therefore, diplomacy, as the art and practice of conducting negotiations between nations, began to eclipse war as the more desirable strategy for managing intricate relations between the great powers. As a result, the Late Bronze Age witnessed the flourishing of an international system¹ (named the Amarna system after the place where the first large corpus of diplomatic correspondence was discovered), which is regarded by some scholars as the first of its kind in the ancient Near East.²

1.1. Literature Review

The intensive diplomatic exchanges between countries linked by this international system generated a profusion of records, among which the Amarna Letters and the diplomatic texts from Boğazköy

¹ A set of states in regular contact and interaction. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook, “Introduction: The Amarna System,” in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

² Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook, “Introduction: The Amarna System,” in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 4-12. Cohen and Westbrook acknowledged that the history of international relations could be traced to the early 3rd-millennium BCE; nevertheless, the narrow geopolitical horizons of diplomacy in earlier periods do not warrant the postulation of the existence of an international system. This view has been increasingly disputed by scholars working on the Eblaite and Mari materials, e.g., Bertrand Lafont and Dominique Charpin, who claimed that a fully-fledged international system already existed before the Amarna period. Bertrand Lafont, “International Relations in the Ancient Near East: The Birth of a Complete Diplomatic System,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 12, no. 1 (2001): 39–60. Dominique Charpin, “*Tu es de mon sang*”: *les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019).

are particularly well-known and thoroughly studied. These ancient records, a large percentage of which were composed in Akkadian (the lingua franca of the time) or Hittite, have inspired a large and continually growing body of scholarship on various facets of Late Bronze Age international relations and diplomacy. In general, these studies can be divided into three categories based on their primary interest and approach: 1) linguistic and philological analysis, 2) reconstruction of chronology and historical events, and 3) thematic studies that investigate diplomatic protocols and the principles of exchange. The ensuing literature review delves into a comprehensive analysis of existing scholarly works that pursue these avenues of research, highlighting the unique perspective of this dissertation and providing context for the insights this study intends to contribute to the field.

1.1.1. Earlier Scholarship: Three Main Categories

Studies that focus on the linguistic and philological intricacies of the ancient sources predominantly draw upon the diplomatic letters. They are mainly concerned with the idiosyncrasies exhibited by language subgroups, i.e., letters from a particular country or region,³ language contact and interference,⁴ loan-words,⁵ and the distinctive practices of ancient scribes.⁶ Beyond their inherent scholarly worth, these scholarly

³ Sally W. Ahl, *Epistolary Texts from Ugarit: Structural and Lexical Correspondences in Epistles in Akkadian and Ugaritic* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 1973). Hans-Peter Adler and Tushratta, *Das Akkadische des Königs Tušratta von Mitanni* (Kevelaer: Butzon und Bercker, 1976). Ronald F. Youngblood, “The Amarna Correspondence of Rib-Haddi, Prince of Byblos (EA 68-96)” (Philadelphia, Dropsie College, 1980).

⁴ Stanley Gevirtz, “On Canaanite Rhetoric. The Evidence of the Amarna Letters from Tyre,” *Orientalia* 42 (1973): 162–77. Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, “Canaanite Influence in the Akkadian Texts Written by Egyptian Scribes in the 14th and 13th Centuries B.C.E.,” *Ugarit Forschungen* 21 (1989): 39–46. Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, “Egyptian Influence in the Akkadian Texts Written by Egyptian Scribes in the Fourteenth and Thirteenth Centuries BCE,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 49, no. 1 (1990): 57–65. Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, “Egyptian Influence in the Amarna Texts,” *Ugarit Forschungen* 29 (1997): 95–114.

⁵ Yoshiyuki Muchiki, *Egyptian Proper Names and Loanwords in North-West Semitic* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999).

⁶ William L. Moran, “The Syrian Scribe of the Jerusalem Amarna Letters,” *Unity and Diversity. Essays in the History, Literature and Religion of the Ancient Near East. Baltimore and London*, 1975, 146–66. Nadav Na’aman, “On Gods and Scribal Traditions in the Amarna Letters,” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 22 (1990): 247–55. Shlomo Izre’el, “The Amarna Glosses: Who Wrote What for Whom? Some Sociolinguistic Considerations,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 15 (1995): 101–22. Juan-Pablo Vita, “On the Lexical Background of the Amarna Glosses,” *Sur le fond lexical des commentaires d’Amarna* 39, no. 2 (2012): 278–86. Mandell, Alice H. “Scribalism and Diplomacy at the Crossroads

investigations significantly facilitated one's understanding of these historical documents, laying the foundation for a plethora of diverse studies.

A significant number of scholars direct their intellectual inquiry towards the issues of chronology, a focus inspired by the wealth of personal names, prosopographical data, and historical overviews of bilateral relationships preserved within the Amarna Letters and the Hittite diplomatic texts.⁷ Through meticulous analysis of the relevant texts in conjunction with radiocarbon and astronomical data, some of them have proposed many interstate synchronisms that have serious implications for second-millennium chronology.⁸

Other studies in this category explore specific events or historical episodes; emblematic cases include the dispute between Tušratta and Akhenaten concerning the missing gold statues (EA 26, EA 27),⁹

of Cuneiform Culture." Ph.D., University of California, 2015. Nicolas Wyatt, "The Evidence of the Colophons in the Assessment of Ilmilku's Scribal and Authorial Role," *Ugarit Forschungen* 46 (2015): 399–446.

⁷ Rowton, Michael B. "Comparative Chronology at the Time of Dynasty XIX." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 19, no. 1 (1960): 15–22. Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs: A Study in Relative Chronology* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1962). Trevor R. Bryce, "The Nature of Mycenaean Involvement in Western Anatolia," *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 38, no. 1 (1989): 1–21. Miller, Jared L. "Amarna Age Chronology and the Identity of Nibhururiya in the Light of a Newly Reconstructed Hittite Text." *Altorientalische Forschungen* 34, no. 2 (2007): 252–93. Yigal Bloch, "Setting the Dates: Re-Evaluation of the Chronology of Babylonia in the 14th-11th Centuries B.C.E. and Its Implications for the Reigns of Ramesses II and Hattusili III," *Ugarit Forschungen* 42 (2010): 41–95. Rita Gautschi, "A Reassessment of the Absolute Chronology of the Egyptian New Kingdom and Its 'Brotherly' Countries," *Ägypten Und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 24 (2014): 141–58.

⁸ Manfred Bietak et al., eds., *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.: Proceedings of an International Symposium at Schloss Haindorf, 15th-17th of November 1996 and at the Austrian Academy, Vienna, 11th-12th of May 1998* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000). Manfred Bietak and Ernst Czerny, eds., *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C. II: Proceedings of the SCIEM 2000 - EuroConference, Haindorf, 2nd of May - 7th of May 2001* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2003). Manfred Bietak and Ernst Czerny, eds., *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C. III: Proceedings of the SCIEM 2000-2nd EuroConference Vienna, 28th of May-1st of June 2003* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007).

⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 84-89.

the enigmatic Daḥamunzu/Zannana Affair,¹⁰ the flight and sojourn of Urḫitešub at the court of Ramesses II,¹¹ the first Hittite marriage,¹² and the conflicts among Egyptian and Hittite vassal states, etc.¹³

In addition, there are scholars who dedicate themselves to providing a diachronic overview of the foreign relations of a particular country or diplomatic interactions between two countries. For instance, Brinkman's work examines documents that illuminate Babylonia's foreign relations spanning from 1600

¹⁰ In the wake of the death of an Egyptian king who was childless, his widow Daḥamunzu (a transliteration of the Egyptian title *t' ḥm.t ny-swt* "the royal wife") sent a letter to Šuppiluliuma I, asking him for a Hittite prince as her future husband. Pleasantly surprised but rightly suspicious, Šuppiluliuma I sent a high official to Egypt to investigate the situation. Having received confirmation of the validity of the queen's offer, Šuppiluliuma I dispatched one of his sons Zannanza to Egypt, but he died under mysterious circumstances en route. Although the Egyptians denied any responsibilities, Šuppiluliuma I held them accountable and invaded Egyptian territory in retaliation. This strange diplomatic episode was recorded in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, composed during the reign of his son Muṣṣili II. Hans G. Güterbock, "The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Muṣṣili II," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 10, no. 2 (1956): 41–68, 75–98; Mario Liverani, "Zannanza," *Studi Micenei Ed Egeo-Anatolici* 14 (1971): 161–62. Alan R. Schulman, "Ankhesenamūn, Nofretity, and the Amka Affair," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 15 (1978): 43–48. William J. Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh: A Historical Interpretation of the Battle Reliefs of King Sety I at Karnak* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1985), 26–34. Trevor R. Bryce, "The Death of Niphururiya and Its Aftermath," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 76, no. 1 (1990): 97–105. Theo P. J. van den Hout, "Der Falke und das Kücken: der neue Pharao und der hethitische Prinz?," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 84, no. 1 (1994): 60–88. Francis Breyer, "Egyptological Remarks Concerning Daḥamunzu," *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 20 (2010): 445–51. Grigorios Kontopoulos, "Tutankhamun's Widow Pledge: True or False? A Different Perspective of Diplomatic Marriage as Recorded in Šuppiluliuma's Biography," in *Amarna in the 21st Century*, ed. Christian Huyeng and Andreas Finger (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2015), 206–35.

¹¹ Philo H. J. Houwink ten Cate, "The Sudden Return of Urḫi-Teššub to His Former Place of Banishment in Syria," in *The Life and Times of Hattusili and Tuthaliya IV: Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Honour of J. de Roos, 12–13 December 2003, Leiden*, ed. Theo P. J. van den Hout and Carolien H. van Zoest (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2005), 1–8.

¹² Marjorie Fisher, "A Diplomatic Marriage in the Ramesside Period: Maathorneferure, Daughter of the Great Ruler of Hatti," in *Beyond Hatti: A Tribute to Gary Beckman*, ed. Billie J. Collins and Piotr Michalowski (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 75–119.

¹³ Amnon Altman, "The Revolutions in Byblos and Amurru during the Amarna Period and Their Social Background," in *Bar-Ilan Studies in History*, ed. Pinhas Artzi (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1978), 3–24. Yuval Goren, Israel Finkelstein, and Nadav Na'aman, "The Expansion of the Kingdom of Amurru According to the Petrographic Investigation of the Amarna Tablets," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 329 (2003): 1–11. Jared L. Miller, "The Rebellion of Hatti's Syrian Vassals and Egypt's Meddling in Amurru," *Studi Micenei Ed Egeo-Anatolici* 50 (2008): 533–54. Amnon Altman, "Ugarit's Political Standing in the Beginning of the 14th Century BCE Reconsidered," *Ugarit Forschungen* 40 (2008): 25–64. Elena Devecchi, "Amurru between Ḫatti, Assyria, and Aḫḫiyawa: Discussing a Recent Hypothesis," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 100, no. 2 (2010): 242–56.

to 625 BCE.¹⁴ Both Kitchen and Spalinger review Egyptian-Hittite relations during the Amarna Age.¹⁵ Vassos, meanwhile, investigates the relations between Cyprus and Egypt throughout the Second Intermediate Period and the 18th Dynasty.¹⁶ Miller's recent contribution sheds light on the political interactions between Kassite Babylonia and its brotherly countries – namely Assyria, Egypt, and Hatti – during the Amarna Age.¹⁷

The last category of scholarly research on Late Bronze Age diplomacy consists of thematic studies that aim to outline the basic framework of the Amarna international system by analyzing modes of diplomatic interactions (e.g., diplomatic correspondence, diplomatic gift exchange, diplomatic marriage), reconstructing diplomatic protocols, as well as principles of exchange.

Seminal works on the Late Bronze Age diplomatic system include *Amarna Diplomacy*, in which the contributors treat topics like the Late Bronze Age international system, Egyptian foreign and imperial policy, diplomatic practices, international law, trade, geopolitics, collection of intelligence, etc.¹⁸ Many of their conclusions are thought-provoking and refreshing, and their collective efforts opened up new avenues of research and demonstrated the enormous potential of interdisciplinary research.

Mynářová's *Language of Amarna* undertakes a deep analysis of the corpus of Amarna Letters and presents a comprehensive study of diplomatic terminology and procedures.¹⁹ In a similar vein, Edel's

¹⁴ Brinkman, John A. "Foreign Relations of Babylonia from 1600 to 625 B.C.: The Documentary Evidence." *American Journal of Archaeology* 76, no. 3 (1972): 271–81.

¹⁵ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs: A Study in Relative Chronology* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1962). Anthony J. Spalinger, "Egyptian-Hittite Relations at the Close of the Amarna Period and Some Notes on Hittite Military Strategy in North Syria," *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* 1 (1979): 55–90.

¹⁶ Vassos Karageorghis, "Relations between Cyprus and Egypt. Second Intermediate Period and XVIIIth Dynasty," *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 5 (1995): 73–79.

¹⁷ Jared L. Miller, "Political Interactions between Kassite Babylonia and Assyria, Egypt and Hatti during the Amarna Age," in *Karduniaš: Babylonia under the Kassites*, ed. Alexa Bartelmus and Katja Sternitzke, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Boston: de Gruyter, 2017), 93–111.

¹⁸ Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook, eds., *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

¹⁹ Jana Mynářová, *Language of Amarna - Language of Diplomacy: Perspectives on the Amarna Letters* (Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2007).

edition of the Egypto-Hittite correspondence provides an extensive discussion of the epistolary style that characterizes these Ramesside diplomatic letters.²⁰ The mechanism of the diplomatic messenger system has also drawn scholarly attention. Holmes' 1975 article examines the Amarna messengers' multifaceted roles, which range from sustaining communication, negotiating treaties, and facilitating gift exchange to concluding diplomatic marriages.²¹ McLaverty-Head approaches the same subject from the perspective of the politics of feasting; he seeks to demonstrate that instead of oriental "hospitality", it was the need to increase one's own prestige that determined whether a royal host would celebrate the arrival of diplomatic messengers with public feasts.²² Furthermore, Singer's *Fortunes and Misfortunes of Messengers and Merchants in the Amarna Letters* presents a synthetic treatment of the Amarna messenger system; in this article, he elaborates upon the recruitment, training, commissioning functions, reception, and treatment of messengers, as well as travel and logistical issues.²³

Another channel of diplomatic interaction, i.e., diplomatic gift exchange, has been the focus of numerous inquiries over the years. In his seminal work entitled *Prestige and Interest: International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.*, Liverani delves deep into various aspects of the interstate exchange of goods (including royal women), including its patterns, principles, and ideology.²⁴ Following Polanyi, Liverani recognizes a distinction between "reciprocal" and "redistributive" patterns of exchange. However, he cautions the readers that these two patterns are not employed as descriptive models of different networks of exchange, but as interpretive, mental models of a reality that in itself does not

²⁰ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 2.

²¹ Y. Lynn Holmes, "The Messengers of the Amarna Letters," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 95, no. 3 (1975): 376–81.

²² Ronan McLaverty-Head, "Amarna Messengers and the Politics of Feasting," *Maarav* 18 (2011): 79–87.

²³ Graciela G. Singer, "Fortunes and Misfortunes of Messengers and Merchants in the Amarna Letters," in *Fortune and Misfortune in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Olga Drewnowska and Małgorzata Sandowicz (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 143–64.

²⁴ Mario Liverani, *Prestige and Interest: International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (Padua: Sargon, 1990), 205-39.

belong to any pattern.²⁵ To corroborate his argument, Liverani conducts three case studies: Hatshepsut's Punt expedition, the *Story of Wenamun*, and the Annals of Thutmose III, to illustrate the interaction of ideology with practical transactions between countries of different political structures and technological levels.²⁶ He further explores how the Egyptians exploited the propagandistic value of different patterns of circulation: trade, tribute, and gift. Taking a macroscopic approach, Liverani constructs an overarching interpretive framework for the study of diplomatic transactions, and many of his ideas, e.g., interdependence, have been taken up and elaborated upon by other scholars.²⁷ In stark contrast, Feldman's *Diplomacy by Design* zooms in on the objects that were presumably employed for diplomatic gift exchange, i.e., international koiné objects, and discusses how their physical features made them suitable for such a purpose.²⁸

With regard to the institution of diplomatic marriage, Pintore's 1978 monograph *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII* constitutes a major contribution.²⁹ While previous studies in the form of short articles have treated this subject,³⁰ Pintore's book dives into details and presents a comprehensive overview of this political institution. He studies thirty diplomatic marriages (twelve of which were concluded between Egypt and another ancient Near Eastern country), evaluating their documentation and elucidating their conventions. As Schulman notes in his book review, while earlier

²⁵ Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 7.

²⁶ Mario Liverani, *Prestige and Interest: International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (Padua: Sargon, 1990), 240-66. It is noteworthy that all three examples are Egyptian; however, this does not necessarily mean that other ancient Near Eastern countries attached no ideological value to the international exchange of goods.

²⁷ Carlo Zaccagnini, "The Interdependence of the Great Powers," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 141-53. Kevin Avruch, "Reciprocity, Equality, and Status-Anxiety in the Amarna Letters," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 165-73.

²⁸ Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an "International Style" in the Ancient Near East, 1400 - 1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

²⁹ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Oriens antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1978).

³⁰ Wolfgang Röllig, "Politische Hieraten im Alten Orient," *Saeculum* 25, no. 1 (1974): 11-23. Maria G. Biga, "Matrimoni dinastici nel Vicino Oriente Antico," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 51, no. 1/4 (1978): 1-5.

scholars approach the subject from a political or historical perspective, Pintore's primary interest lies in understanding the institution of diplomatic marriage itself, with a particular emphasis on its sociological and cultural aspects.³¹

Published one year later, Schulman's influential article examines both direct and indirect evidence of diplomatic marriages between the Egyptian court and other ancient Near Eastern courts during the New Kingdom period.³² Schulman's broad survey reveals intriguing patterns, which suggest that the Egyptian attitude towards diplomatic marriage was shaped by a balance of power among the Near Eastern states and ideology.³³ The divergent accounts of diplomatic marriages in cuneiform documents and Egyptian records reflect the clash between the practical procedures of a diplomatic marriage and Egypt's ideologically charged matrimonial policy.³⁴ In the context of this discussion, Meier proposes in his 2000 article, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," that the Egyptian policy of unilateral diplomatic marriage did not encounter vehement objection from other ancient Near Eastern kings because of their divergent views on the giving of princesses in diplomatic marriages.³⁵ Although Meier's suggestion requires some refinement, his insightful analyses underscore the potential of re-examining Late Bronze Age diplomacy from the perspective of intercultural communication.

³¹ Schulman, Alan R. Review of *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, by Franco Pintore. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101, no. 4 (1981): 455–56.

³² He also included two pieces of tantalizing evidence for a possible diplomatic marriage between the Hyksos and the Theban court, see Alan R. Schulman, "Diplomatic Marriage in the Egyptian New Kingdom," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 38, no. 3 (1979): 181.

³³ Alan R. Schulman, "Diplomatic Marriage in the Egyptian New Kingdom," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 38, no. 3 (1979): 187-91.

³⁴ Alan R. Schulman, "Diplomatic Marriage in the Egyptian New Kingdom," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 38, no. 3 (1979): 191-92.

³⁵ Samuel A. Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 165–73.

1.1.2. Limitations of Earlier Scholarship

Admittedly, all these three types of approaches have their own constraints. For instance, the first approach treats ancient diplomatic sources as reservoirs of linguistic and philological data, downplaying their value as historical or diplomatic documents. Studies that adopt the last approach concentrate on reconstructing diplomatic protocols and principles of exchange that were universally applicable; they pay comparatively little attention to the influence that divergent regional traditions exerted on these diplomatic conventions. In addition, there are three critical areas in which these studies sometimes lack depth or sophistication: 1. They rely heavily or even solely on textual resources; 2. They presume the existence of an overarching diplomatic system (i.e., the Amarna System) and universally applicable diplomatic protocols that underwent little change during the Late Bronze Age; 3. They tend to underestimate Egyptian influence on the evolution of diplomatic protocols.

With respect to the use of data, the majority of these studies lean heavily on textual analysis and primarily utilize cuneiform sources found at Amarna in Egypt and at Boğazköy in Turkey. The rich pictorial evidence depicting the presentation of foreign gifts/tributes from the tombs of New Kingdom Egyptian elites remains underutilized by scholars of Late Bronze Age diplomacy, even though it has been thoroughly studied by Egyptologists from artistic, historical, and socioeconomic perspectives. Even though the Egyptian pictorial evidence has been occasionally referred to, it is often deemed less reliable than the cuneiform sources due to perceived Egypt-centric bias. On the other hand, few Egyptologists (with notable exceptions like Edel, Kitchen, Mynářová, and Morris) have demonstrated any interest in the study of Egypt's diplomatic interactions with the ancient Near East combining both cuneiform and Egyptian sources, even though the works of Moran, Rainey, and Kitchen have enabled scholars who are not trained in cuneiform to study those documents in translation.

Indeed, the vast majority of studies neglect to incorporate any archaeological evidence in their analyses. Admittedly, such an endeavor is not without its challenges, given the widely dispersed and varied nature of the archaeological materials. The Amarna Letters provide extensive inventories of diplomatic

gifts, yet identifying their archaeological comparanda is often hindered by an imperfect understanding of the vocabulary and the development of an international art style. The latter problem is particularly acute. Determining whether an object is a diplomatic gift involves the laborious task of dating, identifying styles, determining places of origin, and applying applicable explanatory frameworks. Nevertheless, archaeological discoveries such as the tomb of the three foreign wives of Thutmose III, the large commemorative scarabs of Amenhotep III, and the Egyptian artifacts found at various Mycenaean sites have direct bearings on diplomatic exchanges; as such, they deserve careful consideration in comprehensive studies on Late Bronze Age diplomacy.

Studies that are primarily concerned with unraveling “historical truths” and reconstructing the complex international system that shaped dealings between states (i.e., diplomatic conventions, protocols, and ideology of the kinship terminologies) tend to posit the existence of an overarching diplomatic system (termed the “Amarna System”) that largely remained the same throughout the Late Bronze Age. They promote the view that the Ancient Near Eastern kings, even the powerful Egyptian pharaohs, abided by the rules of this international system in order to participate in diplomatic exchanges with their peers. However, instead of an overarching system encompassing the whole Ancient Near East, it is probably more appropriate to speak of interlocking and competing systems with many common features as well as their own idiosyncrasies. In addition, these established rules and conventions were susceptible to the influence of the diplomatic players as their powers waxed and waned.

Although the Mesopotamian-Syrian origin of many diplomatic practices, protocols, and the *lingua franca* is undeniable, it does not mean that late-comers to the diplomatic game could not challenge the established rules or introduce new rules themselves. However, there seems to be a certain reluctance to admit Egyptian influence on the diplomatic system, and a tendency to regard Egyptian practices and policies as aberrant when they deviated from “established” rules without investigating the reasons behind such noncompliance. These anti-Egyptian biases are manifest in studies of diplomatic communication, gift exchange, and marriage:

1. While it is justifiable to view Egyptian adoption of the diplomatic *lingua franca*, epistolary style, and kinship terminology for diplomatic correspondence as an expediency, additional motivations may have persuaded the pharaohs to “compromise” their image and prestige.
2. Regarding diplomatic gift exchange, the pharaohs generally operated based on the principles of equality and reciprocity. Yet, scholars like Liverani have noted how Egyptian ideology was manifested in these interstate exchanges.³⁶ Similarly, Morris’ work illustrates how ideology exerted great influence on the interstate exchange of goods between Egypt and its foreign vassals, the intricacies of which could not be fully appreciated without a proper understanding of the Egypt-centric ideology and worldview.³⁷ As Liverani and Morris have demonstrated, a juxtaposition of cuneiform and Egyptian sources and a joint consideration of principles of exchange and ideology can generate fresh insights into the mechanics of Late Bronze Age diplomatic exchange.
3. Egypt’s distinctive, if not notorious, policy of unilateral diplomatic marriage, encapsulated by Amenhotep III’s assertive statement to Kadašman-Enlil (EA 4: 4-22), has traditionally been interpreted as indicative of the Egyptian kings’ chauvinistic attitude towards foreign countries. However, few attempts have been made to interpret this seemingly condescending statement from a pragmatic perspective.

This brief survey of major synthetic works on international relations and diplomacy in the ancient Near East reveals multiple limitations of earlier scholarship. While this dissertation could not remedy all these issues, it does aspire to address some of them by taking a more holistic approach.

³⁶ Gary M. Beckman, review of *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 BC*, by Mario Liverani, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122, no. 4 (2002): 873–74.

³⁷ Ellen Morris, “Egypt, Ugarit, the God Ba’al, and the Puzzle of a Royal Rebuff,” in *There and Back Again: The Crossroads II: Proceedings of An International Conference Held in Prague, September 15-18, 2014*, ed. Jana Mynářová, Pavel Onderka, and Peter Pavúk (Prague: Charles University in Prague, 2015), 315–51. Ellen Morris, “Exchange, Extraction, and the Politics of Ideological Money Laundering in Egypt’s New Kingdom Empire,” in *Policies of Exchange: Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2nd Millennium B.C.E: Proceedings of the International Symposium at the University of Freiburg, Institute for Archaeological Studies, 30th May - 2nd June 2012*, ed. Birgitta Eder and Regine Pruzsinszky, vol. 2, *Oriental and European Archaeology* (Wien: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2015), 167–90.

1.2. Methodology

This dissertation aims to explore the New Kingdom Egyptian state's diplomatic interactions with other ancient Near Eastern polities from the perspective of intercultural communication. In the simplest terms, intercultural communication refers to the communication between people from two different cultures.³⁸ As a discipline, it studies how culture affects communication between people of diverse religious, social, ethnic, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. Culture can significantly influence an individual's preference for how to encode messages, what media they choose for conveying them, and the way they interpret messages. When the sender and receiver of the message come from different cultural backgrounds, the latter may interpret the message based on his own set of values, beliefs, and expectations that are drastically different from those of the sender of the message. Intercultural communication studies focus on understanding the discursive process of communication, potential pitfalls in the course of a dialogue, and the development (or lack thereof) of intercultural communication sensitivity and competence.

The adoption of a *lingua franca* and the development of communication protocols could greatly facilitate communication between linguistically and culturally diverse people. However, other objective and subjective factors like the balance of power, ethnocentrism, communication context, motivation, trust, and cultural stereotypes could exert a great impact on the outcome of communication. Successful intercultural communication also requires empathy, recognition, and respect for cultural differences. As an analytical tool, communication theory has been applied to anthropology, cultural studies, linguistics, psychology, and international business.

The founding father of intercultural communication studies is Edward T. Hall, an American anthropologist who is renowned for his development of key concepts such as proxemics, high-context and

³⁸ Guo-Ming Chen and William J. Starosta, *Foundations of Intercultural Communication* (University Press of America, 2005), 20.

low-context cultures, monochronic and polychronic time.³⁹ Hall's experiences of living and working with native people, serving in the army, and teaching communication skills to foreign service personnel prompted him to think about how culture influenced the pattern of communication between people. Another key figure in this field is Raymond Cohen, one of the pioneers to adopt an intercultural approach to the study of international communication⁴⁰ because it sheds new light on problems like negotiation. Cohen's work delves into the implications of intercultural incompatibilities in international relationships, highlighting several desirable qualities of this approach as a guide for creative research.

For the first time, this dissertation plans to systematically apply an intercultural approach to the study of all three modes of diplomatic interactions: verbal and nonverbal communication, diplomatic gift exchange, and diplomatic marriage. During the Late Bronze Age, diplomatic players exhibited varying levels of intercultural communication sensitivity and competence. The adoption of Akkadian as the *lingua franca* and the existence of established diplomatic protocols did not prevent intercultural miscommunications from happening. Nevertheless, over time, with sustained diplomatic interactions, many cultures managed to enhance their intercultural communication competence by developing varied strategies. This research aims to identify and analyze instances of intercultural miscommunication in order to determine their probable causes and the reactions of the involved parties. It seeks to investigate verbal and nonverbal communications at an interpersonal level, as well as social and cultural communications at a macro level, e.g., the communication and collision of different customs and ideologies. This study is less concerned about facts (the "what" questions), but more about the process of communication ("how" and "why" questions). The following questions will guide the research:

1. What constituted the strengths and constraints of each mode of intercultural communication?

³⁹ Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959). Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966). Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture*, Anchor Books ed. (New York: Anchor Books, 1989).

⁴⁰ Raymond Cohen, "International Communication: An Intercultural Approach," *Cooperation and Conflict* 22, no. 2 (1987): 63–80.

2. Did the diplomatic conventions and protocols remain static, or were they subject to change and modification?
3. How were issues that fell outside the purview of established conventions handled by the intercultural communicators?
4. Which objective and subjective factors featured prominently in intercultural communication, and how did they shape its patterns and outcomes?
5. Was there any diachronic change discernible in the modes of interactions?
6. Did the diplomatic players develop or enhance their intercultural communication sensitivity and competence over time?
7. Which ancient Near Eastern diplomatic conventions were embraced or rejected by the Egyptian kings, and what motivated their decisions?

This dissertation treats the diplomatic documents for what they are: sources generated by various forms of interactions between diplomatic players from drastically different cultural backgrounds. In addition, it incorporates contemporary Egyptian pictorial evidence. Despite past criticism and neglect due to perceived Egypt-centric biases, it holds great potential for enriching the understanding of Egypt's diplomatic interactions with the outside world during the Late Bronze Age.

1.3. Dataset: What Questions Can and Cannot be Answered

A predilection to rely exclusively or primarily on cuneiform evidence has prevented scholars from fully appreciating the complexity of the Late Bronze Age diplomatic system. A good case in point is the consensus that Egypt, as a late-comer to the diplomatic game, largely complied with the diplomatic conventions established by its ancient Near Eastern neighbors⁴¹ (except for its policy of unilateral

⁴¹ For instance, Egypt accepted the usage of Akkadian as the diplomatic language and adopted kinship terminologies in order to facilitate diplomatic exchanges with other ancient Near Eastern countries. Meier, Samuel A. "Diplomacy and International Marriages." In *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, edited by Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook, 165–73. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

diplomatic marriage).⁴² Though largely valid, this view is simplistic and underplays Egyptian struggles to reconcile its political ideology with the practical need of joining the international system, which is evident from Egyptian sources. For this reason, this dissertation attempts to correct this predilection for cuneiform evidence by integrating Egyptian evidence with bearings on international relations and diplomacy, which helps remedy the lack of appreciation of Egyptian influences on diplomatic conventions and practices. Furthermore, a synthetic analysis of cuneiform and Egyptian evidence precipitates a contextualized understanding of Egyptian foreign policy, diplomatic strategy, and its implementation.

This dissertation integrates a wide range of textual corpora and archaeological datasets that are chronologically disparate and geographically diverse. Concerning cuneiform textual sources, it draws information from the Amarna Letters⁴³ and diplomatic documents (Ramesside correspondence and treaties) from Boğazköy.⁴⁴ In 2004, Mora and Giorgieri published a comprehensive edition of the correspondence between the Hittite and the Assyrian courts: *Le lettere tra i re ittiti e i re assiri ritrovate a Ḫattuša*.⁴⁵ Before its publication, these letters had only been published and studied individually by Hittitologists and Assyriologists whose primary interests are not necessarily historical. The publication of these state letters (most of which date to the mid- and late-13th century BCE) in a single volume, supplemented with philological comments, historical evaluation, and an extensive bibliography, undoubtedly provides a strong stimulus to research on Hittite-Assyrian relations. Although this corpus is smaller and less well-preserved

⁴² According to the Babylonian king, Amenhotep III justified his rejection of the former's request to marry an Egyptian princess, stating that "From time immemorial no daughter of the king of Egy[pt] is given to anyone." (EA4: 4-22), William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 8.

⁴³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

⁴⁴ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994); Beckman, Gary M. *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*. Writings from the Ancient World 7. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996; Harry A. Hoffner, *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009); Kenneth A. Kitchen and Paul Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012).

⁴⁵ Clelia Mora and Mauro Giorgieri, *Le lettere tra i re ittiti e i re assiri ritrovate a Ḫattuša* (Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N., 2004).

than the Amarna Letters and the Ramesside correspondence, it greatly extends the chronological span covered by diplomatic letters. Additionally, it helps remedy some of the inherent biases of Assyrian chronicles and literary texts, on which we are heavily dependent for reconstructing Assyria's diplomatic history during the 14th and 13th centuries BCE.

Compared to cuneiform records, the value of Egyptian sources (textual and pictorial) for the study of Egyptian foreign relations and diplomacy has been underestimated even by Egyptologists. Admittedly, Egyptian textual sources, especially those of royal authorship, are notoriously biased and full of hyperbole. However, when due caution is exercised, the Egyptian sources can be fruitfully exploited to supplement and corroborate (or refute) cuneiform sources. For instance, in EA 1, the Babylonian king Kadašman-Enlil bitterly complained to Amenhotep III that the latter did not review his chariots separately from those of the mayors, which apparently constituted a serious insult (EA 1:88-98).⁴⁶ This accusation is by no means baseless, since numerous foreign gift/tribute presentation scenes from Egyptian elite tombs depict all foreigners as submissive to the pharaoh, without any visual cues to differentiate delegations from Pharaoh's peers and subjects. Instead of political affiliations, foreigners were grouped according to the geographical locations of their countries.⁴⁷

The extensive campaign records and commemorative inscriptions of the New Kingdom kings were commissioned by their royal patrons primarily for self-aggrandization. Despite their formulaic structure and bombastic hyperbole, they preserved some historical information that may have a kernel of truth and could be compared to other categories of evidence. A prime example would be Thutmose III's extensive Annals, which documented Egypt's initial diplomatic contacts with Hatti, Babylonia, and Assyria.⁴⁸ While royal inscriptions dating to the 19th and 20th Dynasties, i.e., the Ramesside Period, have been published by

⁴⁶ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

⁴⁷ Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pl. 37.

⁴⁸ James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 190, 202.

Kitchen in the multi-volume *Ramesside Inscriptions (KRI)*,⁴⁹ the 18th Dynasty royal inscriptions have not yet been collected and compiled in a single volume. Until today, the most comprehensive publication of 18th Dynasty royal inscriptions remains Breasted's *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty*.⁵⁰ While Breasted must be recognized for this magnum opus, many of his translations have become outdated. In case a more updated and accurate translation is not available, the writer will supply her own translation based on hieroglyphic copies published by Sethe in *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie (Urk IV)*.⁵¹ Furthermore, private inscriptions – especially (auto-)biographies of imperial officials and military officers – are examined to extract relevant information and introduce a non-royal perspective.⁵² This study demonstrates that the inherent biases and underlying ideologies of these Egyptian sources do not necessarily constitute obstacles to interpretation if one exercises due caution and subjects them to critical analysis.

Since inherent biases plague both cuneiform and Egyptian sources, one must put them in juxtaposition in order to achieve a more holistic understanding of Egyptian foreign relations on both a practical and an ideological level. For instance, the Amarna correspondence consists mainly of letters addressed to the Egyptian kings⁵³ and provides an outside perspective that, if not balanced with other evidence, could potentially distort our understanding of Egypt's interactions with other Near Eastern polities. As an example, judging from their letters to the pharaoh, the Near Eastern great kings seemed to

⁴⁹ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vols. I-V (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993-2008).

⁵⁰ James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906).

⁵¹ Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, *Urkunden des Ägyptischen Altertums*, IV (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1906).

⁵² Edward F. Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, ed. Edmund S. Meltzer (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990); William J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, ed. Edmund S. Meltzer (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); William K. Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Elizabeth Froom, *Biographical Texts from Ramesside Egypt*, ed. John Baines (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007).

⁵³ Several of them are composed by the Egyptian king, but scholars disagree whether they are drafts, archival copies, or original letters that for unknown reasons failed to be sent.

have an insatiable appetite for gold, on which Egypt held a monopoly. To satisfy this appetite, they would employ a wide range of negotiation strategies (praises, threats, and guilt-pressuring) and even be willing to make humiliating concessions. Given this seemingly ubiquitous desire for gold, the Egyptian king frequently used the supply of gold as a bargaining chip to gain the upper hand during the negotiations. However, one might ask to what extent this great emphasis on gold could be attributed to the one-sidedness of the letters, most of which were addressed to the main supplier of gold in the ancient Near East during the Late Bronze Age. One might speculate that had the Babylonian diplomatic archive been preserved, letters filled with requests for horses would have been discovered.⁵⁴

On the other hand, Egyptian royal inscriptions, produced by and intended for the consumption of Egyptian elites, projected an Egypt-centric tributary system in which subservient foreigners came in peace bearing *inw* “gifts/tribute” to beg the Pharaoh for *tʿw n nh* “breath of life”. This celebration of a ubiquitous desire for the “breath of life” concealed the indisputable fact that the Pharaoh reciprocated foreign rulers with material goods. Moreover, its indiscriminate use to describe transactions of entirely different nature (and in conjunction with the term *dbh* “to beg”) underplayed the difference in the status of foreign rulers while elevating the Pharaoh above all other great kings in the eyes of the domestic audience. In this case, how international exchanges of goods were characterized in the diplomatic correspondence and the Egyptian sources reflects the conflicts between the reality of a multipolar international system in which Egypt was not always the dominant power and an Egypt-centric royal ideology.

⁵⁴ In a letter from Ḫattušili III to Kadašman-Enlil, the former refuted the latter’s excuse for cutting off his messengers due to troubles caused by the Ahlamu, claiming that he should have enough horses and chariots to provide escort for his messengers: “In the land of my brother horses are more plentiful than straw. Should I indeed have dispatched a thousand chariots to meet your messenger in Tuttul, so that the Ahlamu would have kept their hands off?” Beckman 1996: 134. In the same letter, Ḫattušili III urged Kadašman-Enlil II to send him fine Babylonian stallions: “Send me [horses], in particular tall stallion foals. The stallions which your father [sent me and the horses which] my brother has [up until] now sent me are good but too short . . . Send me, [my brother, horses], in particular foals. There are already many short horses in my land.” (rev. 62-6). Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 137. The Hittite and Assyrian kings might have been asked for silver and tin respectively. Mario Liverani, *The Ancient Near East: History, Society and Economy*, trans. Soraia Tabatabai (London: Routledge, 2014), 216.

1.4. Layout of Chapters

This dissertation consists of three main chapters that examine the three main forms of diplomatic interactions: verbal and nonverbal communication, diplomatic gift exchange, and diplomatic marriages. The chapter on verbal and nonverbal communication analyzes both verbal and nonverbal diplomatic communication between the ancient Near Eastern kings, focusing on what communication problems arose during the transmission and interpretation of messages and what strategies and tools were employed to cope with these challenges. The first section will highlight the complexity of the communication system by evaluating its hierarchical structure, the interference of intermediaries and third parties, and the long-distance nature of Late Bronze Age diplomacy. It will discuss the concept of illusional/ambiguous intercultural intelligibility created by shared symbols in the cultures of two interlocutors and present examples that show the development of intercultural communication sensitivity/competence. The second section will be devoted to the previously under-studied nonverbal form of communication and how it could be effectively employed for diplomatic signaling. This will be followed by an evaluation of the utilities and limitations of these two forms of communication in terms of intentionality, ambiguity, credibility, confidentiality, and size of the audience.

To showcase how the diplomatic players developed intercultural communication competence, this chapter presents a case study of the phrase “Breath of Life” (Egyptian *tʿw (n) ’nh*), which has not been studied at length by others. It will examine the occurrence of the “Breath of Life” in various genres of Egyptian texts and investigate how it evolved from a term intimately associated with ideas of vitality and rebirth in religious/funerary texts to a circumlocution charged with Egypt-centric ideology in royal and private inscriptions that celebrate Egyptian dominance over foreign countries in the New Kingdom. Then it will turn to the cuneiform evidence, i.e., the Amarna Letters, to analyze how and why it entered the repertoire of diplomatic vocabulary.

The next main chapter investigates the multifaceted phenomenon of diplomatic gift exchange, the frequency of which served as a barometer of interstate relations during the Late Bronze Age. While there

was undeniably a social aspect to diplomatic gift exchange, the sheer volume of goods exchanged and the mercantile tone of certain kings demanding payment for their gifts sometimes betrayed the economic nature of such exchanges. As a matter of fact, debates over the nature of such exchanges and how they were perceived by the ancients divided scholars into opposing camps, advocating for either a modernist or a primitivist model.⁵⁵ However, as Liverani points out, a phenomenon as complex and multifaceted as the interstate circulation of goods should not be analyzed from a single perspective.⁵⁶ The study of diplomatic gift exchange has generated a large body of scholarship that approached the subject from a variety of perspectives: exchange pattern,⁵⁷ principles of exchange,⁵⁸ negotiation strategy, etc. Even so, there is still room for further research, e.g., ideological motives for participation in diplomatic gift exchanges.

This chapter refrains from categorizing these interstate exchanges using modern definitions. Instead, it approaches the subject from the perspective of intercultural communication and looks into how the Late Bronze Age kings communicated with each other through the physical features of gifts and their exchange contexts. The first section embarks on a comparative study of the Egyptian and foreign conceptual framework of diplomatic gift exchange and examines the interplay between principles of exchange and ideologies. An array of case studies is presented to illustrate how factors like the balance of power between the exchange partners and diverse motivations for engaging in gift exchange shaped patterns of communication and exchange. The succeeding section argues that akin to diplomatic letters, gifts – particularly manufactured goods – could bear encoded messages and serve as effective tools of

⁵⁵ Kemp argues that the ancient peoples perceived diplomatic gift exchange as a form of state-sanctioned trade; while Bleiberg favors the opinion that they had no concept of trade outside of reciprocal gift-giving. Barry J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* (London: Routledge, 2006). Edward Bleiberg, *The Official Gift in Ancient Egypt* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996).

⁵⁶ Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 141-45.

⁵⁷ Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 141-50.

⁵⁸ Kevin Avruch, “Reciprocity, Equality, and Status-Anxiety in the Amarna Letters,” in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 154–64.

communication. While diplomatic letters communicated through vocabulary, syntax, epistolary style, greeting formula, and materiality (exemplified by the size and clay texture of the tablet), diplomatic gifts communicated through their materials, iconography, design, craftsmanship, and customized features. As will be shown, the Late Bronze Age diplomatic players were well aware that messages could be communicated by the exchange context; in fact, some of them would deliberately manipulate and reinvent the exchange context to advance their own interests at the expense of their diplomatic partners.

The final principal chapter explores the subject of diplomatic marriage, an age-old institution employed to create blood ties between two royal houses and strengthen the imagined bond of brotherhood created by kinship terminologies, verbal and nonverbal communication, and gift exchange. It is often stated that diplomatic marriages served to seal new alliances and strengthen existing cordial relations between two royal houses. However, how valid is this assumption when examined against empirical evidence? This chapter examines real cases of diplomatic marriage to assess its effectiveness as a diplomatic tool and a form of intercultural communication. The first section provides a classification of diplomatic marriages based on the balance of power between the wife-giver and the wife-taker to establish an analytical framework. It also presents a brief overview of the characteristics of each type of diplomatic marriage. The subsequent section examines the marriage procedures and discusses how the culturally diverse contracting parties navigated this process, negotiating with each other as well as the established conventions. The third section evaluates the allegedly unwavering Egyptian policy of unilateral diplomatic marriage, succinctly epitomized by Amenhotep III's condescending statement: "From old, the daughter of an Egyptian king has not been given in marriage to anyone" (EA4: 4-22).⁵⁹ Egyptian gold certainly incentivized the ancient Near Eastern great kings to dispatch their sisters/daughters to the Egyptian court. Additionally, Meier proposes that a fortuitous coincidence also helped make such an arrangement acceptable and even agreeable to both parties, i.e., an ancient Near Eastern king viewed the giving of a royal princess as an expression of his

⁵⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 8.

sovereignty, while the opposite was true for the Egyptian king.⁶⁰ This section proposes that Meier's argument is only valid in certain cases and does not apply to diplomatic marriages involving the Egyptian kings. Instead, a more promising avenue of research would involve understanding the unique Egyptian stance on diplomatic marriage by exploring the critical roles played by Egyptian royal women in religion, high-level politics, and dynastic succession.

⁶⁰ Meier, Samuel A. "Diplomacy and International Marriages." In *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, edited by Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook, 165–73. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

CHAPTER 2. VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION: FRIENDSHIP AND FRUSTRATION

“Communication is to diplomacy as blood is to the human body. Whenever communication ceases, the body of international politics, the process of diplomacy, is dead, and the result is violent conflict or atrophy.”¹

The significance of communication in diplomacy could never be overstated, either in the ancient Near East or in the modern world. Verbal and nonverbal communication are two important options in the diplomatic toolkit. Verbal communication includes written messages (i.e., diplomatic letters) and oral messages (relayed through intermediaries or in-person). In contrast, nonverbal communication, also known as diplomatic signaling, refers to other extra-linguistic forms of communication utilizing body gestures, time, space, and human agents, etc. Following this division, the first two main sections of this chapter investigate how the ancient Near Eastern kings employed both verbal and nonverbal communicative methods for sustaining contact and conducting diplomatic transactions. The last section performs a comparison of verbal and nonverbal communications in terms of intentionality, ambiguity, credibility, confidentiality, and audience targeting, in order to highlight their suitability for different purposes and contexts.

This chapter employs a culture-interactional approach,² which focuses on micro-level interactions between individuals of different cultures, to examine the verbal and nonverbal diplomatic communications between the ancient Near Eastern kings. It examines how an individual’s communication behaviors were

¹ Van Dinh Tran, *Communication and Diplomacy in a Changing World* (Norwood: Ablex Publishing Cooperation, 1987), 8.

² Helen Spencer-Oatey and Peter Franklin, *Intercultural Interaction: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Intercultural Communication* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 4.

influenced by their cultures (e.g., scribal culture, epistolary tradition, and religious beliefs), social and political roles, expectations, goals, and so on. In addition, consideration is given to the importance of the communicative context, mechanisms, and intersubjective processes, which also influenced the way the interlocutors communicated.

2.1. Verbal communication

In Late Bronze Age diplomacy, verbal communication employed both written letters and oral speeches, for conveying ideas and conducting negotiations.

2.1.1. Written Communication

Due to the great geographical span of the Late Bronze Age diplomatic network, long-distance communications took precedence over face-to-face interactions, which occasionally took place when a great king traveled to the periphery of his empire or when a vassal presented himself before his suzerain. This means that the predominant manner of diplomatic communication was correspondence, which employed Akkadian as lingua franca and followed a stylized format.

2.1.1.1. Lingua Franca and Stylized Format

Interstate verbal communication is called “a highly sophisticated verbal exercise” by Raymond Cohen.³ Shared mechanisms (e.g., a lingua franca, shared codes of interpretation, and stylized format) adopted by the international society for communication may give a superficial impression of intercultural intelligibility. However, they are just some of the prerequisites for achieving this purpose. They may help reduce intercultural miscommunication and misunderstanding but do not eliminate them. As a case in point, the almost universal adoption of Akkadian as lingua franca in Late Bronze Age diplomacy and the general

³ Raymond Cohen, *Theatre of Power: The Art of Diplomatic Signalling* (London: Longman, 1987), 19.

adherence to a highly standardized epistolary style in diplomatic letters did not eliminate intercultural miscommunications.

Diplomatic correspondence could be divided into different categories based on a variety of criteria. In terms of content and depth of communication, there were routine communications and substantive correspondence. Routine communications consisted mainly of administrative orders from a great king to his vassals and confirmation of obedience from the latter to the former. Substantive correspondence between Egypt and other great powers primarily focused on diplomatic gift exchange and marriage, whereas those exchanged between Egypt and its Levantine vassal states dwelled on matters like local political development and military activities. The deeper the level of communication, the higher the possibility of intercultural miscommunications. Understandably, intercultural miscommunications tended to occur in substantive correspondence, since routine communications are usually highly formulaic. However, this does not mean that misunderstandings did not arise due to disputes over epistolary styles, e.g., the form of address.

2.1.1.2. Professional Competence and Personal Disposition of the Diplomatic Apparatus

The professionalism of the diplomatic apparatus is instrumental to achieving success in intercultural communication. With regard to written communication, this pertains to the competence of scribes who were in charge of processing the diplomatic letters. Textual and archaeological evidence attests to a certain degree of institutionalization of the Egyptian administrative apparatus to cope with the need for managing international relations and conducting diplomatic exchanges. The bilingual scholarly tablets found in the House of Life at Amarna indicate that Egyptian scribes received training in the lingua franca of Late Bronze Age diplomacy.⁴ The linguistic skills and cultural knowledge of scribes can profoundly

⁴ Shlomo Izre'el, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets* (Groningen: Styx, 1997), 4-13.

impact the effectiveness of a letter and how it is received by the addressee.⁵ In fact, some scribes attached postscripts in their letters entreating fellow scribes to apply their language skills when processing and translating the letters. Abdi-Ḥeba of Jerusalem's scribe attached a postscript to the Egyptian royal scribe: "[T]o the scribe of the king, my lord: Message of Abdi-Ḥeba, your [ser]vant. Present eloquent words to the king, my lord. Lost are all the lands of the king, my lord." (EA 286: 61-64)⁶ This request seemed necessary because Abdi-Ḥeba was communicating bad news about land loss to the king. In a subsequent letter asking the king to send a garrison to Jerusalem, the content of the postscript was adjusted accordingly to fit the tenor of the letter: "Say to the scribe of the king, my lord: Message of Abdi-Ḥeba, your servant. I fall at (your) feet. I am your servant. Present eloquent words to the king, my lord: I am a soldier of the king. I am always yours." (EA 287: 64-70).⁷

A much less discussed issue, on which extant sources shed little light, is the personal disposition of the scribe who translated the letter and/or presented its content to the recipient king. Though the meaning of the letter must be rendered faithfully, he wielded much power over how expressive and eloquent the translated text would be. In view of this, it is hardly surprising that some scribes warmly greeted their fellow scribes in postscripts (EA 32: 14-20) and appeared obsequious occasionally (EA 287: 64-70).⁸

Despite the establishment of a complex system of diplomatic communication, the adoption of a *lingua franca*, and the employment of trained scribes and experienced messengers, intercultural miscommunications (over both substantive matters and etiquette) still arose in Late Bronze Age diplomatic interactions. The following sections study such cases in detail to reveal their causes and how the interlocutors had to seek effective means to bridge the enormous linguistic, cultural, and ideological barriers between them to achieve success in intercultural communication.

⁵ A ruler's personality, literary competence, and degree of familiarity with diplomatic conventions could also exert great influence on the final form of a letter if he dictated its content to his scribe.

⁶ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 327.

⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 328.

⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 103, 328.

2.1.1.3. Intercultural Misunderstandings over Substantive Matters

A prime example of intercultural misunderstandings over substantive matters was found in an acrimonious letter of Ḫattušili III to the Babylonians. The matter of contention concerned foreign intervention in royal succession; the divergent views of the Hittite king (who considered his offer to intervene as showing support) and his Babylonian correspondents (who viewed it as unsolicited interference) may have further strained the tenuous relationship between Ḫatti and Babylonia. As will be discussed later, the Egyptians subscribed to the latter, Babylonian view on this subject, and these two polarized views were formally recognized and institutionalized in the Egyptian and Hittite versions of the Ramesside peace treaty between the two countries.

Ironically, despite Ḫattušili III's own unusual path to power and worry about foreign intervention in Hittite royal succession, he concerned himself with Babylonian royal succession in a patronizing manner. Ḫatti and Babylonia maintained close ties with each other throughout the Late Bronze Age; Kadašman-Turgu of Babylonia even cut off diplomatic correspondence with Egypt to stand in solidarity with Ḫattušili III.⁹ After the death of Kadašman-Turgu, Ḫattušili III sent a letter to the Babylonian nobles to express his condolences and declare his support for the new king Kadašman-Enlil II, who was then still a child. Ḫattušili III later recounted this “well-intended” gesture in a letter to Kadašman-Enlil II.¹⁰ To the dismay of Ḫattušili III, his good intentions were not well-received by the Babylonian officials (in particular the anti-Hatti vizier Itti-Marduk-balaṭu under whose tutelage Kadašman-Enlil II ruled at that time¹¹) who were offended by what

⁹ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 133-5.

¹⁰ Ḫattušili III recounted how he mourned for the deceased Kadašman-Turgu and acted swiftly to protect the latter's progeny in emotional words. He urged the new Babylonian king to consult diplomatic records and inquire of human witnesses to verify his claims: “[After] I had fulfilled [my mourning responsibilities] for your father, I dried my tears and [immediately] dispatched a messenger, writing to the noblemen of Babylonia as follows: ‘If you do not protect the progeny of my brother in regard to rule, I will become hostile to you. I will come and conquer Babylonia. But if an enemy somehow arises against you, or some matter becomes troublesome for you, write to me so that I can come to your aid.’ But my brother was a child in those days, and they did not read out the tablets in your presence. Now are none of those scribes still living? Are the tablets not filed? Let them read those tablets to you now.” Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 133-4.

¹¹ Jared L. Miller, “Political Interactions between Kassite Babylonia and Assyria, Egypt and Ḫatti during the Amarna Age,” in *Karduniaš: Babylonia under the Kassites*, ed. Alexa Bartelmus and Katja Sternitzke, 2 vols.

they saw as his condescending attitude and unsolicited intervention in the Babylonian royal succession.¹² Ḫattušili III vehemently rejected Itti-Marduk-balaṭu's accusations and expressed his willingness to take no offense, since Kadašman-Enlil II was young when these unpleasant exchanges took place.¹³

It is surprising that Ḫattušili III wrote with such self-righteous indignation, considering how he seized the Hittite throne by overthrowing his nephew Muṣšili III, the rightful heir to the Hittite throne. Itti-Marduk-balaṭu's claim that he wrote to them in a patronizing manner may not be totally unfounded, since Ḫattušili III offered young Kadašman-Enlil II the unsolicited advice to establish a reputation by defeating greatly outnumbered foreign enemies.¹⁴ However, it is unreasonable to assume that Ḫattušili III intentionally or knowingly behaved in such a manner to offend the Babylonian king. After he ascended to the throne, Kadašman-Enlil II realigned himself with Egypt by resuming diplomatic exchanges with the Egyptian king and probably reduced the frequency of diplomatic contact with Ḫatti, signaling a cooling off

(Boston: Walter de Gruyter Inc., 2017), vol. 1, 100. Elena Devecchi, "Of Kings, Princesses, and Messengers: Babylonia's International Relations during the 13th Century BC," in *Karduniaš: Babylonia under the Kassites*, ed. Alexa Bartelmus and Katja Sternitzke, 2 vols. (Boston: Walter de Gruyter Inc., 2017), vol. 1, 115.

¹² Ḫattušili III used vivid expressions to convey his frustration: "I wrote these words to them with good intentions, but Itti-Marduk-balaṭu - whom the gods have caused to live far too long, and in whose mouth unfavorable words never cease - he froze my heart with the words he wrote to me: 'You do not write to us like a brother. You pressure us as if we were your subjects.'" Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 133-34.

¹³ Ḫattušili III placed all blame on Itti-Marduk-balaṭu and absolve Kadašman-Enlil II of any wrongdoing because of his young age: "I wrote to them with good intentions: 'The progeny of my brother Kadašman-Turgu shall be protected,' but Itti-Marduk-balaṭu wrote this to me ... I have by no means taken the word of Itti-Marduk-balaṭu to heart. In those days my brother was a child, and Itti-Marduk-balaṭu, that evil man, spoke as he pleased. How should I take his word seriously?" Ḫattušili III's words were reminiscent of what Tušratta wrote to Amenhotep III: "When I sat on the throne of my father, I was young, and UD-ḫi had done an unseemly thing to my country and had slain his lord. For this reason he would not permit me friendship with anyone who loved me." (EA 17: 11-20). See Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 134. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 41.

¹⁴ Thus wrote Ḫattušili III: "I have heard that my brother has become a grown man and regularly goes out to hunt. [I rejoice] greatly that the Storm-god has exalted the name of my brother Kadašman-Turgu. [...] go and plunder an enemy land in this manner so that I might hear about it. [...] my [brother] defeated. Furthermore, my brother: They have said [that my brother is] a king whose weapons have been stowed and who just sits around. Do they not say this about him? [...] Do not keep sitting around, my brother, but go against an enemy land and defeat the enemy! [Against which land] should [my brother] go out? Go against a land over which you enjoy three- or fourfold numerical superiority." Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 137.

of the Babylonian-Hittite relationship.¹⁵ As it was not in Ḫattušili III's interest to further dampen this troubled relationship, he could be offering a self-serving advice if the unnamed enemies were their common enemy, i.e., the Assyrians.

Furthermore, this senior Hittite king may have genuinely felt an obligation to look out for the young Babylonian king, whose late father had proven himself a loyal Hittite ally. To Ḫattušili III's dismay, his "well-intended" advice hit a nerve and came across as patronizing to his Babylonian correspondents. Whatever Ḫattušili III's true intention may have been, his actions further strained the deteriorating relationship between Ḫatti and Babylonia. Unfortunately, Tudḫaliya IV, Ḫattušili III's son and successor, did not learn from the mistake of his father and offered similar advice to his Assyrian counterpart (Tukulti-Ninurta I),¹⁶ which he recounted in a letter to Baba-ahu-iddina, one of the most prominent Assyrian officials who was active during the reigns of Šalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I.¹⁷ However, Tudḫaliya IV's move makes more sense if viewed through the lens of realpolitik; his subsequent mention of the land of Papanḫi betrayed his true concern: the rumors he heard about Tukulti-Ninurta I's planned attack on this Hittite vassal.¹⁸ Hence, his "advice" is little more than a thinly veiled threat intended to dissuade the Assyrian king from encroaching upon Hittite territories.

Ḫattušili III was probably playing the Assyrians against the Babylonians because he was very aware of the two countries' complicated relationship during the Late Bronze Age. Assyria was a Mittanian vassal during the first half of the Late Bronze Age; having gained its independence and attained the status of a

¹⁵ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 135.

¹⁶ Tudḫaliya IV wrote to the Assyrian king: "Because his father died, and he [has just seated himself] upon the throne [of his father], the campaign on which he goes for the [first] time should be one on which he enjoys three- or fourfold numerical superiority." Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 141.

¹⁷ Clelia Mora and Mauro Giorgieri, *Le lettere tra i re ittiti e i re assiri ritrovate a Ḫattuša* (Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N., 2004), 155-56, 168-71.

¹⁸ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 142.

great power under the leadership of Aššur-uballiṭ I/Eriba-Adad I,¹⁹ it immediately started flexing its muscles by meddling with Babylonian royal succession. Though the contemporary Babylonian king Burna-Buriaš II had attempted to block the rise of Assyria through diplomatic means, Aššur-uballiṭ I managed to defuse this enmity and conclude an alliance with him. Burna-Buriaš II not only reconciled with Aššur-uballiṭ I but also married his daughter Muballiṭat-Šērū'a to buttress this newly minted alliance.²⁰ The offspring of this union, Karaindaš (the 20th Kassite king), was murdered by disgruntled Babylonians who were probably averse to the idea of a half-Assyrian on the throne.²¹ When anti-Assyrian factions installed Nazi-Bugaš (the 21st Kassite king) as king,²² Aššur-uballiṭ I promptly invaded Babylonia to avenge his grandson and appointed a puppet ruler, i.e., Kurigalzu II (the 22nd Kassite king).²³ Kurigalzu II quickly renounced his loyalty to the Assyrians and turned openly hostile as a new Assyrian king Enlil-nīrārī I (ca. 1317 – 1308 BCE) succeeded Aššur-uballiṭ I.²⁴ Successive Assyrian and Babylonian kings inherited the animosity from their fathers; as a result, the first half of the 13th century witnessed countless military clashes between Babylonia and Assyria and re-drawings of their borders in the aftermath of these battles.²⁵ These prolonged and inconclusive battles may have seriously drained both countries' economic resources and manpower

¹⁹ The current scholarly consensus dates Assyrian independence to the reign of Aššur-uballiṭ I, but Reculeau has recently argued that Assyria freed itself from Mittani under Eriba-Adad I. Hervé Reculeau, "Assyria in the Late Bronze Age," in *The Oxford History of the Ancient Near East: Volume III: From the Hyksos to the Late Second Millennium BC*, ed. Karen Radner, Nadine Moeller, and Daniel T. Potts (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 721–25.

²⁰ Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, Texts from Cuneiform Studies 5 (Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin, 1975), 171.

²¹ Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin, 1975), 159.

²² Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin, 1975), 159.

²³ Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin, 1975), 159. From now on, it became common for Babylonia and Assyria to try to intervene in each other's royal succession.

²⁴ Jared L. Miller, "Political Interactions between Kassite Babylonia and Assyria, Egypt and Ḫatti during the Amarna Age," in *Karduniaš: Babylonia under the Kassites*, ed. Alexa Bartelmus and Katja Sternitzke, 2 vols. (Boston: Walter de Gruyter Inc., 2017), vol. 1, 101.

²⁵ Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin, 1975), 160-1.

until a peace treaty was finally established between Adad-nīrārī I (grandson of Enlil-nīrārī I, ca. 1295 – 1264 BCE) and Nazi-Maruttaš (the 23rd Kassite king).²⁶

Kadašman-Enlil II and the Babylonian nobles would have been quite familiar with such humiliating histories and the ever-present Assyrian menace, as these events took place three or four generations earlier. Ḫattušili III sought to take advantage of the situation by pitting the Babylonians and the Assyrians against one another, however, his patronizing attitude undoubtedly offended the Babylonian king, who considered himself equal to the Hittite king (and rightly so). This partly explains why what seemed to Ḫattušili III a well-intended and selfless act was interpreted very differently by the Babylonians. In Ḫattušili III's defense, his offer to "protect" the progeny and chosen heir of Kadašman-Turgu may have been made without any malicious intent: the Hittite kings had cultivated a symbiotic relationship with their subjects from the beginning of Hittite history. Due to the seemingly convoluted system of royal succession and bloody internecine struggles within the royal family, contenders to the Hittite throne (both rightful heirs and usurpers) relied heavily on the support of nobles and high officials to obtain and secure the throne.²⁷ The Old Kingdom king Ḫattušili I issued a bilingual edict to justify his decision to appoint his grandson (the future Muršili I) as his chosen heir and command various influential groups in the Hittite society to pledge their loyalty to the young prince.²⁸

In addition to seeking internal support, the Hittite kings expected their foreign treaty partners (both rulers of peer polities and vassals) to help secure the smooth transition of royal power in Ḫatti. Many Hittite treaties (both parity and subjugation treaties) included a special clause that bound their treaty partners to

²⁶ This is known from the *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta*. Jared L. Miller, "Political Interactions between Kassite Babylonia and Assyria, Egypt and Ḫatti during the Amarna Age," in *Karduniaš: Babylonia under the Kassites*, ed. Alexa Bartelmus and Katja Sternitzke, 2 vols. (Boston: Walter de Gruyter Inc., 2017), vol. 1, 101. See also Peter B. Machinist, "The Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I: A Study in Middle Assyrian Literature" (New Haven, Yale University, 1978), 78.

²⁷ Theo P. J. van den Hout, "The Proclamation of Telipinu (1.76)," in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 194–98.

²⁸ Gary M. Beckman, "Bilingual Edict of Ḫattušili I (2.15)," in *The Context of Scripture. Volume II: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), vol. 2, 79–81.

such an obligation to support the Hittite great king's designated heir, even if it entailed military intervention.²⁹ This clause was typically reciprocal, the only exception occurring in the year 21 peace treaty between Egypt and Ḫatti.³⁰ Arguably, this clause was expunged from the Egyptian version of the treaty at the request of Ramesses II to prevent Ḫattušili III and future Hittite kings from interfering with Egyptian royal succession. Indeed, memories of a recent failed attempt to place a Hittite prince on the Egyptian throne (i.e., the Daḫamuzu Affair) and its repercussions may still have been alive, and this tragic incident may have served as an admonition for the early 19th Dynasty rulers.

Egypt's non-intervention policy was reciprocal - neither was Ramesses II interested in intervening in Hittite royal succession, judging from the fact that he only took Muršili III into his custody after repetitive requests by Ḫattušili III.³¹ Ramesses II's reluctance is in line with the non-intervention policy of the 18th Dynasty kings, who generally refrained from intervening in the royal succession of Egypt's peer polities. During the reign of Amenhotep III, a certain Uḫi assassinated the Mittanian king Artašumara and ruled as a regent; this interrupted the frequent and friendly exchanges between Egypt and Mittani (EA 17:11-20).³² Nevertheless, Amenhotep III adopted a laissez-faire policy, and diplomatic contact was not resumed until Tušratta regained control.³³

²⁹ The treaty between Tudḫaliya IV and Šaušgamuwa of Amurru contained a clause that made it Šaušgamuwa's sworn duty to protect the Hittite great king: "Protect My Majesty as overlord. And later protect the sons, grandsons, and progeny of My Majesty as overlords. You shall not desire some other overlord for yourself. This matter shall be placed under oath for you." Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 98-100.

³⁰ Kenneth A. Kitchen and Paul Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 573-93.

³¹ Ramesses II's reluctance to take Muršili III into custody could not have been made more explicit: "And what you wrote to me about the matter of Urḫitešub (Muršili III) as follows: 'It is not the case that he went to the land of Qinsa or the land of Ḫalba or the land of Kizzuwatna' - so you wrote to me. See, I do not understand these words that you wrote about this matter of Urḫitešub, as follows: 'Bring him into the land of Egypt!' I don't know where he is, and he has fled like a bird." (KBo 1.15 + 19 (+) 22, rt. 22-5) (English translation by the author based on Edel). Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 58-64.

³² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 41.

³³ Pinhas Artzi, "The Diplomatic Service in Action: The Mittani File," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 206.

Ultimately, the misunderstanding between Ḫattušili III and the Babylonian nobles stemmed from their divergent understanding of the proper procedure of royal succession. While the Hittites deemed it a standard practice to seek support from internal and foreign allies (both brother countries and subjects), the Babylonians considered royal succession a strictly internal affair and frowned upon foreign intervention. This was amply demonstrated by their adamant opposition to Assyrian interference with Babylonian royal succession. Unsurprisingly, Ḫattušili III's "well-intended" injunctions to the Babylonian nobles came across as patronizing and offensive to the Babylonian nobles, who considered their king an equal of Ḫattušili III. Furthermore, despite the geographical distance between the two countries, the prospect of a Hittite intervention was still daunting because it was the expeditionary forces of Muršili I that brought an end to the Babylonian dynasty of Hammurabi.

Different power dynamics and relations between diplomatic partners would result in different types of misunderstandings. Therefore, intercultural misunderstandings between a great king and his vassals typically stemmed from their divergent perceptions of mutual obligations. Examples are abundant in the correspondence between Egyptian kings and their Levantine subjects. While the Hittites managed relations with their vassals with written treaties which were periodically renewed when circumstances called for it, the Egyptian mechanism for regulating relations with its Levantine vassals remains elusive.³⁴ The binding instrument may have been a renewable loyalty oath (called *sdḏf-tryt* in Egyptian) instead of written treaties.³⁵ Regulation of suzerain-vassal relations with divine oaths instead of written treaties is known from in later

³⁴ William J. Murnane, "Imperial Egypt and the Limits of Power," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 104.

³⁵ An example of such an oath may have been preserved in the Annals of Thutmose III, sworn by the defeated Levantine city rulers after the Battle of Megiddo: "We shall not repeat (doing) evil towards (King) Menkheperre – may he live forever and ever – our lord, in our lifetime, since we have seen his power and he has given us breath (i.e., life) at his pleasure. It is his father [Amun-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands] who did it; it is surely no human action." William J. Murnane, "Imperial Egypt and the Limits of Power," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 105.

periods of Egyptian history, lending some support to this hypothesis.³⁶ The administration of divine oaths was supplemented by Egyptian attempts to indoctrinate the hostage-sons of vassal rulers of an Egypt-centric ideology and provide incentives for acculturation to cultivate their loyalty to the pharaoh.³⁷

Although one should refrain from making an argument *ex silentio*, it is quite telling that there is not a single piece of evidence for the use of vassal treaties by the Egyptians for imperial administration. Arguably, this assumed absence of formal written treaties lent some elasticity to the relationships between Egypt and its vassal states and saved substantial administrative efforts to keep the treaties up to date with the change of reigns. However, it was prone to cause problems when circumstances demanded a clearer definition of mutual obligations. In fact, the lack of clearly defined mutual obligations may account for the vassals' periphrastic/circumlocutory negotiation strategy with the Egyptians in the Amarna Letters; rather than simply making a claim to rights stipulated in formal treaties, they felt the need to persuade their Egyptian overlord and justify their requests.³⁸

³⁶ Tefnakht (founder of the 24th Dynasty) swore an oath of loyalty in the temple after his surrender to king Piye, saying: "I will not disobey the king's command. I will not thrust aside his majesty's words. I will not do wrong to a count without your knowledge. I will only do what the King said. I will not disobey what he has commanded." Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume III: The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 79-80.

³⁷ A vassal ruler affectionately recalled his years in Egypt to emphasize his loyalty to the pharaoh: "May the king, my lord, inquire of Yanhamu, his commissioner. When I was young, he brought me into Egypt. I served the king, my lord, and I stood at the city gate of the king, my lord. May the king, my lord, inquire of his commissioner whether I guard the city gate of Azzatu and the city gate of Yapu, and (whether) where the archers of the king, my lord, march, I m[arch] with them. And indeed, now that I have [p]la[ced] the ... of the yoke: *hu-ul-lu* of the king, my lord, on my neck, I carry it." (EA 296: 23-35). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 338-9. This policy of acculturating the heirs of foreign vassals by educating them in Egyptian courts was implemented in both the Levant and Nubia. That it achieved remarkable success in some cases is illustrated by the discovery of the tomb of a Nubian prince Heqanefer (meaning "good ruler") at Toshka in Lower Nubia. This highly acculturated vassal ruler chose to depict himself as an Egyptian (in Egyptian costume) in his own tomb, whereas he was shown with a dark complexion in Nubian costume in a tribute presentation scene in the tomb of the Viceroy of Kush Amenhotep called Huy (TT40). William K. Simpson, *Heka-Nefer and the Dynastic Material from Toshka and Arminna* (New Haven and Philadelphia: Peabody Museum of Natural History of Yale University and University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, 1963), 2-17.

³⁸ William J. Murnane, "Imperial Egypt and the Limits of Power," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 106.

Furthermore, the absence of formalized, written treaties led to the development of considerable gaps in the interpretation of relations and mutual obligations.³⁹ While the Egyptian vassals considered the defense duty to be reciprocal, the Egyptians subscribed to an Egypt-centric worldview and did not consider themselves bound to such an obligation.⁴⁰ Pharaoh's seemingly peremptory commands and unresponsiveness to his vassals' desperate calls for help resulted from a laissez-faire policy that advocated minimal intervention in local affairs unless Egypt's own interests were at stake. This policy proved to be a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it allowed the Egyptians to commit fewer economic and military resources to imperial administration; on the other hand, it permitted ambitious vassals like the Amurrite kings to interpret their defense duties in a liberal way to legitimize their territorial expansions at the expense of other Egyptian vassals.⁴¹ It may have turned away Egyptian vassals who were disappointed by Egypt's failure to offer them provisions and military assistance when they were in desperate need.

³⁹ Misunderstandings in the vassal letters resulting from the difference in language, cultural background, and ideology between Egypt and its Canaanite vassals have been systematically treated by Na'aman. See Nadav Na'aman, "The Egyptian-Canaanite Correspondence," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 125–38. For a linguistic explanation for misunderstandings concerning the guarding issue, see Mario Liverani, "Political Lexicon and Political Ideologies in the Amarna Letters," *Berytus* 31 (1983): 49–51. However, Liverani's argument is disputed by Na'aman, who contended that such a misunderstanding resulting from cultural and ideological gaps was unlikely to arise after a century of Egyptian rule over Canaan. Nadav Na'aman, "The Egyptian-Canaanite Correspondence," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 134.

⁴⁰ The Amarna Letters reveal that not every desperate plea for military assistance was heeded. The Egyptian forces were only instructed to intervene in local conflicts when Egyptian interests were at stake, e.g., Amenhotep III put an end to Abdi-Aširta's expansionist military activities because they escalated to a scale that upset the regional balance of power and posed a threat to local Egyptian rule (EA 132: 8-18). Even though Akhenaten routinely ignored Rib-Hadda's requests for help, the latter could not accuse him of a failure to fulfill his protective duty (EA 132: 37-50). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 214. William J. Murnane, "Imperial Egypt and the Limits of Power," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 104–5.

⁴¹ The king of Amurru justified his occupation of the Egyptian administration center of Šumur by claiming that he acted in the interest of the Egyptian king and promised to rebuild this city (EA 160: 20-30). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 246.

2.1.1.4. Intercultural Misunderstandings over Etiquette

The previous section discussed misunderstandings over substantive issues like disparate views on foreign intervention in royal succession and divergent interpretations of mutual obligations. This section discusses misunderstandings arising from matters of etiquette, e.g., culturally specific epistolary formulae. And in the same way that the intercultural communicators managed to settle their disputes over substantive matters by seeking common points while reserving difference, they ingeniously harmonized their different perspectives on matters of etiquette by graciously agreeing to compromises that eventually led to the cross-pollination of cultural traditions and the creation of hybrid styles.

A contentious exchange between Šuppiluliuma I and an anonymous Egyptian king over the form of address in diplomatic letters illustrates how intercultural miscommunications and misunderstandings could arise from regional variations in cultural norms and conventions. It also forcefully illustrates that the use of a lingua franca and established epistolary style for diplomatic correspondence did not preclude intercultural miscommunications, a point made earlier in this chapter.

In Late Bronze Age diplomatic letters, most correspondents adhered to a highly formulaic style, especially in the address section.⁴² Nevertheless, a universal consensus had not been achieved concerning every detail. The influence of regional epistolary styles in international diplomatic letters is occasionally detected due to scribal negligence and deliberate modification. Clashes and reconciliations between regional epistolary styles and the international convention resulted in diachronic changes that helped to distinguish the Amarna Letters and the Ramesside correspondence.

A Hittite letter (EA 42) in the Amarna corpus illustrates how the clashes between local practices and the international convention could lead to frictions or even open conflicts between the correspondents. In his letter to the Egyptian king Ḫuriya, Šuppiluliuma I protested in strong terms that his Egyptian counterpart upset the *entente cordiale* between Egypt and Ḫatti by giving precedence to his own name in

⁴² For a study dedicated to the forms of address and greeting formulae, see Jana Mynářová, *Language of Amarna - Language of Diplomacy: Perspectives on the Amarna Letters* (Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2007).

the address: “And now, as to the tablet that [you sent me], why [did you put] your name over my name? And who (now) is the one who upsets the good relations [between us], and is su[ch conduct] the accepted practice? My brother, did you write [to me] with peace in mind? And if [you are my brother], why have you exalted [your name], while I, for [my part], am tho[ught of as] a [co]rpse. [I have writ]ten [the names ...]... but your name [... I will bl]ot out. ...” (EA 42: 15-26).⁴³

Ultimately, this dispute over which royal name should take precedence arose from the divergence between the international convention and the Hittite epistolary tradition. In Late Bronze Age diplomatic correspondence, it was customary to name the addressee first using the formula “Say to PN. Thus PN2”.⁴⁴ This form of address, typical of Akkadian texts of the Old Babylonian period, does not indicate the relative social status of the correspondents.⁴⁵ Following normal Hittite practice, on the contrary, the addressor would name himself first when corresponding with his equals or his inferiors.⁴⁶ From the perspective of Šuppiluliuma I, the flipped form of address (“Thus PN: Say to PN2”) undoubtedly signaled the Egyptian king’s intention to project himself as a superior and was thus utterly unacceptable.

Upon closer examination, Šuppiluliuma I’s accusation against Ḫuriya was unfounded. He could not press charges against the Egyptian king for naming himself first as the addressor because he was guilty of the same offense in EA 41.⁴⁷ If Šuppiluliuma I was insinuating that the Egyptian king should in no circumstance put his own name first, then his accusation constituted a blatant violation of the principles of

⁴³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 115-16.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, xxii.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* This form of address characterized texts found in Babylonia, the Diyala region, and Mari (after the importation of Ešnunlean scribal practices under Yaḥdun-Lîm). However, contemporary letters composed by Old Assyrian merchants paid attention to hierarchical order and named the most important person first. This practice was probably borrowed by the Hittites. On the eastern fringe of the Near East, in letters of the sukkalmah of Elam, the “overlord” of all Amorite kings until his war with Babylon and Mari, the name of the most prominent person also took precedence. Dominique Charpin, “‘Ainsi parle l’empereur’ à propos de la correspondance des sukkal-mah,” in *Susa and Elam. Archaeological, Philological, Historical and Geographical Perspectives: Proceedings of the International Congress Held at Ghent University, December 14-17, 2009*, ed. Katrien De Graef and Jan Tavernier, *Mémoires de la délégation en Perse* 58 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 341–53.

⁴⁶ Harry A. Hoffner, *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 27.

⁴⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 114.

equality and reciprocity, which guided diplomatic exchanges between equals during the Late Bronze Age.⁴⁸ If the Egyptian king yielded, it would be tantamount to admitting that he was a subject of Šuppiluliuma I, thus undermining Egypt's image as a great power.

With regards to Šuppiluliuma I's accusation that the pharaoh gave priority to his own name, one could offer two possible explanations. The first possibility is that the Egyptian king was simply imitating and accommodating the Hittite practice, which inadvertently infuriated rather than pleased Šuppiluliuma I. On the other hand, it is equally possible that the Egyptian king was likewise provoked by Šuppiluliuma I's own disregard of the diplomatic convention by using the reversed address formula and retaliated by following suit. Unfortunately, the extant evidence does not permit the drawing of a decisive conclusion.

The Arzawa letters, which slightly predated the Hittite letters, may be cited to bolster the first possibility. A quick survey of the Amarna Letters suggests that the Egyptian kings tended to follow what the diplomatic protocol (Akkadian *parṣu* "protocol, accepted practice") prescribed when corresponding with their equals.⁴⁹ In addition to the allegedly offensive letter cited by Šuppiluliuma I, two other letters in the Amarna archives sent by the Egyptian king employed the flipped form of address: EA 31 (Amenhotep III to Tarḥundaradu of Arzawa) and EA 5 (Amenhotep III to Kadašman-Enlil of Babylon).⁵⁰ In view of the small sample size of the Anatolian letters, the statistics may not be representative. However, it is revealing that in the majority of the cases in which the Egyptian king deviated from the international diplomatic protocol, he was corresponding with countries within the sphere of Hittite political and cultural influence. In EA 32, the Arzawa scribe entreated his Egyptian colleague to compose future letters in Hittite, and the

⁴⁸ Mario Liverani, "The Great Powers' Club," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 20-1.

⁴⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1.

⁵⁰ Another letter that deviated from the normal form of address is EA 34, sent by the king of Alašiya to the Egyptian king (Rainey: Akhenaten). The address of the letter reads: "Message of the king of Alašiya to the king of Egypt, my brother ..." (EA 34: 1-6). There is insufficient evidence to put forward a satisfactory explanation for this deviation, which was presumably not well-received by the pharaoh because the subsequent Alašiyian letters re-adopted the traditional form of address. *Ibid*, 105.

latter presumably obliged (EA 32: 24-25).⁵¹ Considering the Egyptians' accommodating attitude regarding the diplomatic language, they may have decided to show their knowledge of and respect for the Hittite-Anatolian epistolary tradition by switching the order of address in EA 31 (which named the sender Amenhotep III first).⁵²

In contrast, EA 5 may be interpreted to lend support to the second hypothesis, i.e., the Egyptians deliberately employed the flipped form of address to communicate displeasure and project a sense of superiority. It is perplexing why the flipped form of address was used in EA 5 while the standard "Say to PN. Thus PN2" form of address was attested in EA 1. One wonders if this was an intentional switch to implicitly project an image of Amenhotep III as a superior of his Babylonian brother or a careless mistake, a slip on the part of the Egyptian scribe. The evidence is ambiguous. But it is an indisputable fact that from the time of Amenhotep III until the Ramesside period, Babylonia had been treated by Egyptian kings like a second-rank great power, and its kings had never been accorded the same respect as the Mittanian and Hittite kings. Indeed, the pharaoh's failure to show adequate respect for his Babylonian brother constantly put significant strain on Egyptian-Babylonian relations. Kadašman-Enlil I bitterly complained about the humiliation Amenhotep III subjected him to by reviewing his chariots among those of the mayors (EA 1: 88-98),⁵³ sending him meager amounts of diplomatic gifts (sometimes of inferior quality) (EA 3: 13-22),⁵⁴ and rejecting his proposal to marry an Egyptian princess (or even an Egyptian woman posing as a princess) (EA 4: 4-22).⁵⁵ Things did not improve after the accession of Akhenaten, who dispatched a small escort for his Babylonian bride and infuriated the Babylonian king Burna-Buriaš II (EA 11: 16-22).⁵⁶ Equally revealing of the Egyptian attitude towards Babylonia *vis-à-vis* its more immediate neighbors Mittani and

⁵¹ Ibid, 103.

⁵² Ibid, 101. Although in this case, this intercultural adaptation works in favor of the Egyptian king and projected him as the politically superior party.

⁵³ Ibid, 2.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 7.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 8.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 21.

Ḫatti is the differential treatment of Babylonian and Mittanian/Hittite princesses, which will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 4 on diplomatic marriage.

Unfortunately, the letter of protest by Šuppiluliuma I is severely damaged, and no following letters have been preserved to shed light on subsequent developments. Egyptian-Hittite relations rapidly deteriorated in the post-Amarna/Akhenaten period and completely soured in the aftermath of the Daḫamunzu Affair.⁵⁷ When textual evidence became available again for diplomatic correspondence between Egypt and Ḫatti in the reign of Ramesses II, the issue seemed to have already been resolved through a compromise. To a certain extent, the Hittite epistolary tradition prevailed since the Hittite royal couples named themselves first when writing to Ramesses II, as if they were writing to one of their vassals, e.g., the king of Ugarit.⁵⁸ Correspondingly, they had to accept the disgrace of having the names of their social inferiors (e.g., Egyptian princes and officials) precede their own when they were the recipients of letters from Egypt (see KUB 3.70⁵⁹ and KBo 28.48⁶⁰). In a similar vein, less emphasis was placed on relative sociopolitical status in diplomatic correspondence between the Egyptian king and Hittite vassals since they employed an address formula reserved for correspondence between equals during the Amarna period.⁶¹

⁵⁷ The prevailing scholarly opinion is that the Egyptian queen who sent a desperate appeal to Šuppiluliuma I was the widow of Tutankhamun, queen Ankhesenamun. Trevor R. Bryce, “The Death of Nibhururiya and Its Aftermath,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 76, no. 1 (1990): 97–105. However, Miller, based on his new reconstruction of a text (KUB 19.15 + KBo 50.25) which mentions an individual named ’Arma’a (which he equates with Horemheb), asserts that an equation of Nibhururiya with Smenkhkare is more plausible. Jared L. Miller, “Amarna Age Chronology and the Identity of Nibhururiya in the Light of a Newly Reconstructed Hittite Text,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 34, no. 2 (2007): 252–93.

⁵⁸ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 119.

⁵⁹ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 122.

⁶⁰ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 33.

⁶¹ Ramesses II addressed the king of Mira thus: “Thus says Wasmuaria satepnaria, Great King, [King of Egypt], son of the Sun-god, Ramses, Beloved of Amon: Say to Kupanta-Kurunta, king of the land of Mira: Now I [am well, My houses], my sons, my infantry, my horses, my chariots, and everything in all of my lands is exceedingly well. May you, the king, the king of Mira, be well! [May] your land [be well]!” (KBo 1.24 + KUB 3.23 + KUB 3.84). Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 74-5. See also Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 124.

Meanwhile, in diplomatic correspondence between the Hittite great king and his vassals, the former's name was expected to precede that of his subject, whether he was the addressor or the addressee of the letter.⁶²

In the prolonged negotiation concerning the proper address formula between Egypt and Ḫatti, the Egyptian epistolary tradition also made its impact felt in the Ramesside correspondence between the two royal courts, which was illustrated by the insertion of royal epithets in the address. For instance, Ramesses II included many of his royal epithets in a letter to the Hittite prince Tašmi-Šarrumma: “[Thus says Wasmuaria] satepnaria, [Great King, King of Egypt, son of the Sun-god, Ramses], Beloved of Amon, [Great King, King of] Egypt: [Say to] Tashmi-Sharrumma, my son ...”⁶³ The employment of uniquely Egyptian royal titles in diplomatic letters exchanged between the pharaohs and other great kings represented a departure from the established epistolary style prevalent during the Amarna Age, according to which all great kings were simply identified as the great king of the country they ruled.⁶⁴ Egyptian royal titularies were found exclusively in vassal letters during the Amarna Period. This restricted use should probably be attributed to the asymmetrical power relationship between the correspondents. Arguably, the appending of elaborate pharaonic titles represented a deliberate effort to emphasize the divine nature of the Egyptian king and distinguish him from his mortal counterparts. Apparently, the Egyptian scribes did not feel obliged to adhere to the established epistolary style as stringently in the vassal letters. While the Egyptian vassals, eager to ingratiate themselves with their Egyptian correspondents, promptly picked up such implicit hints and employed these pharaonic titles to flatter their Egyptian overlord.⁶⁵

⁶² Thus, a letter from Šuppiluliuma I to Niqmaddu of Ugarit (Beckman no.19) opened with: “Thus says My Majesty, Great King: Say to Niqmaddu ...” whereas a letter from Šattuara II of Ḫanigalbat to Tudḫaliya IV addressed the Hittite king first: “Say to Your Majesty, my father: Thus says the king of Ḫanigalbat, your son: May Your Majesty, my father, be well.” Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 119, 142.

⁶³ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 123.

⁶⁴ The only possible exception is attested in EA 41 (if one follows Moran's reconstruction), in which Šuppiluliuma I employed the traditional Hittite royal title “the Sun” (EA 41: 1-3). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 114.

⁶⁵ Surata of Akka wrote to the king thus: “In accordance with what has issued from the mouth of the Sun from the sky, so is it done.” (EA 232: 12-20). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 291.

In the Amarna Age, diplomatic letters were often highly formulaic and contained a high percentage of standardized expressions, e.g., the greeting formula in letters exchanged between fellow great kings. During the Ramesside period, however, one observes a cross-pollination of Egyptian and Hittite epistolary traditions and diplomatic procedures,⁶⁶ one example of which has been discussed above (i.e., the employment of pharaonic titles in the Ramesside correspondence).⁶⁷ Other examples include the frequent invocation of the Sun god and the Storm god, the composition of parallel letters, and the practice of parallel diplomacy.

In the Ramesside epistolary practice, scribes frequently embellished their letters with greeting formulae in the name of the sun gods and the storm gods, perhaps due to the Egyptian and the Hittite's shared dedication to their respective solar and storm deities. A letter from the Egyptian prince Šutaḥapšap to Ḫattušili III reads: "The sun god and the weather god should inquire (also) about the well-being of the great king, the king of the land of Ḫatti, my father, and they should inquire about the peace and brotherhood of the great king, the king of the land of Egypt, with the great king, the king of the land of Ḫatti, his brother, prosper forever, and they (the gods) should cause the years of the great king, king of the land of Egypt, and the years of Ḫattušili, the great king, king of the land of Ḫatti, his brother, by being pacified (the two kings) in beautiful peace and by being fraternized forever in beautiful brotherhood." (KUB 3.70, vs. 17-22, rt. 1-7).⁶⁸ This passage may contain an implicit reference to the peace treaty, which was sanctified by the storm gods and the sun gods. In fact, invocation of the Sun god and the Storm god along with other treaty deities of the Hittite and Egyptian pantheon became a prominent feature of the Ramesside correspondence.

Another innovation in diplomatic procedure occurred during the Ramesside Age, when the Egyptians embraced the Hittite practice of sending parallel letters and engaged in a form of parallel

⁶⁶ Three Amarna scholarly tablets (EA 356, EA 357, and EA 372) employed tinted points (mostly red), which were inspired by Egyptian verse points, to indicate metre boundaries; thus, they attest to a blending of Near Eastern and Egyptian scribal traditions. Shlomo Izre'el, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets* (Groningen: Styx, 1997), 46-47.

⁶⁷ These changes may be gradual and accumulative. However, due to the uneven chronological distribution of the textual evidence, it is impossible to trace their development from the mid-14th to the mid-13th century BCE.

⁶⁸ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 34-7.

diplomacy with the Hittites. Diplomatic correspondence dating to the Amarna Age reveals that male kings and officials dominated conversations. Occasionally, the faint voice of a queen or a betrothed princess was heard when she echoed the message of her husband-king in a bland style (EA 48) or sent a formulaic letter of greeting of no substance to her future husband (EA 12).⁶⁹ Very rarely was a queen treated as an independent and competent diplomatic partner, the only exception perhaps being the Egyptian queen Tiye, the wife of Amenhotep III. Judging from the Mittani letters, her husband confided in her highly confidential diplomatic affairs (EA 28: 42-49, EA 29: 108-118), and she maintained her own channel of communication with the Mittanian queen (wife of Tušratta) (EA 26: 58-63).⁷⁰ Even so, Tušratta was reluctant to recognize her as an equal diplomatic partner during Amenhotep III's reign, routinely neglecting her in the greetings of his letters to her husband (EA 23: 1-12, EA 24: 1-7).⁷¹ It was only after the accession of the idiosyncratic Akhenaten that Tušratta grudgingly acknowledged Tiye's political clout and her influence on her son (EA 29: 65-8) in a desperate attempt to salvage the deteriorating relations between Egypt and Mittani.⁷²

The Ramesside era witnessed the entry of another queen of exceptional strong personality, personal charisma, and diplomatic talent like Tiye into the international diplomatic arena, i.e., Puduḥepa, the wife of Ḫattušili III. An innovation in the diplomatic procedure (i.e., parallel letters) may be attributed to the unprecedented level of her involvement in diplomatic affairs and the recognition she received from foreign kings. The phenomenon of parallel letters (called “doppelspurigen Korrespondenz” by Edel) is observed in the Ramesside correspondence between the Egyptian and the Hittite court. In this two-track

⁶⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 120, 24.

⁷⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 91, 95, 85.

⁷¹ Tušratta's earlier letters either greeted Amenhotep III's wives collectively (EA 20: 1-7, EA 21: 1-12, 24: 1-7) or only gave prominence to Amenhotep III's Mittanian brides Giluḥepa and Taduḥepa (EA 17: 1-10, EA 19: 1-8, EA 23: 1-12). See William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 41, 43, 47, 50, 61, 63.

⁷² Tušratta wrote: “[Now I went o]n reflecting, thinking, ‘Naphureya is my brother. That we love, [that] is in our hearts. It is going to become 10 times gr[ea]ter [th]an what there was with Nimmureya, his father, for Teye, his mother, the [prin]cipal and favorite wife of [Nimmureya], is alive, and she will expose before Naphureya, [the son of Nim]mureya, her husband, the fact that we always loved (each other) very, very much.’” (EA 29: 65-68). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 94.

correspondence, Ramesses II sent letters of similar structure and content to both Ḫattušili III and the Hittite queen Puduḫepa. The letters exchanged between Ramesses II and Puduḫepa served as definitive proof that Puduḫepa managed diplomatic affairs as a recognized partner of Ramesses II, wielding considerable political authority alongside Ḫattušili III (and later her son Tudḫaliya IV).⁷³ That the practice of sending parallel letters was not an ephemeral phenomenon was suggested by the discovery of two parallel letters dating to the reign of Šuppiluliuma II in the Urtenu archive in Ugarit.⁷⁴

In addition to parallel letters, due to strong Hittite influence, there developed a system of parallel diplomacy, in which individuals of similar rank and status engage in diplomatic dialogues and other interactions. Perhaps to accommodate the needs of parallel diplomacy, Egyptian royal princes who were traditionally excluded from diplomatic activities were allowed to engage in diplomatic dialogues during this period. This is evidenced by KBo 28.47, a letter from Ramesses and the princes Šutahapšap, Riamašeša and all other sons of Ramesses II to Ḫattušili (KBo 28.47, obv. 1-5).⁷⁵ This new development partly resulted from and reflected the increasingly prominent role of Ramesside princes in politics compared to their 18th Dynasty predecessors.

2.1.1.5. Illusional and Ambiguous Intercultural Intelligibility

Shared symbols and signs in the cultures of two interlocutors sometimes create the illusion of intercultural intelligibility when mutual understanding is only partial and ambiguous. The use of animal metaphors in the Amarna Letters is a case in point. Animal metaphors are relatively common in the Amarna

⁷³ Puduḫepa was in charge of the marriage negotiations, hammered out all the details herself to secure the best terms for her daughter (whom Ramesses II promised to appoint as his great royal wife) (KUB 21.38), and may have personally escorted the marriage party into Hittite-controlled territories in northern Syria (KUB 26.89, obv. 15-18). See Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 214-5, 216-23.

⁷⁴ Lackenbacher, Sylvie, and Florence Malbran-Labat. "Ugarit et les Hittites dans les archives de la 'Maison d'Urtenu.'" *Studi micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* 47 (2005): 227-40. Trevor R. 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* (London: Routledge, 2009), 11.

⁷⁵ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 30.

corpus. As a common and familiar part of human society, dogs were referenced numerous times in the letters as a symbol of humbleness, lowliness,⁷⁶ and baseness, as well as positive traits like loyalty, faithfulness, and alertness.

In his constant stream of letters to the Egyptian king, Rib-Hadda of Byblos regularly accused his archenemies, i.e., the Amurrite kings, of disloyalty and denounced them as dogs (EA 71: 16-22, EA 76: 7-16, EA 79: 34-47, EA 84: 1-37, EA 85: 63-74, EA 104: 14-26, EA 124: 20-26).⁷⁷ Rib-Hadda also applied this demeaning metaphor to the sons of the Amurrite king Abdi-Aširta (EA 125: 40-45, EA 129: 4-12) and the *'apiru* who consorted with the Amurrite kings to take his cities (EA 91: 1-5).⁷⁸ The dog metaphor undoubtedly had pejorative connotations in these contexts because it was used frequently in conjunction with the word “traitor.” Rib-Hadda was presumably denouncing the Amurrite kings and their followers as lowlifes who shamelessly aspired for something they did not deserve and took Egyptian territories for themselves. This sentiment was explicitly expressed in EA 104, in which Rib-Hadda denounced the sons of Abdi-Aširta for taking Ullassa: “Who are the sons of Abdi-Aširta, the servant and the dog? Are they the king of Kaššu or the king of Mittani that they take the land of the king for themselves?” (EA 104: 14-26).

⁷⁹

The association of humans with dogs seemed humiliating since Egyptian kings subjected defeated enemies to humiliation by treating them like dogs. The Middle Kingdom king Amenemhet I proudly claimed that “I made the Asiatics do the dog walk.”⁸⁰ The practice of treating defeated enemies like animals was also found in the Mesopotamian political tradition, e.g., Sargon of Akkad captured the king of Uruk

⁷⁶ Rib-Hadda, after being ousted by his brother from Byblos, wrote to the Egyptian king and described his miserable condition that “Now I am living in Beirut like a dog”. (EA 138: 94-109). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 222.

⁷⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 140, 146, 149, 155, 157, 177, 203.

⁷⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 205, 209, 165.

⁷⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 177.

⁸⁰ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 137.

Lugalzagesi and took him back to Akkad with a dog collar around his neck.⁸¹ Such humiliating treatment of enemies as punishment may be inspired by the association between animalistic imagery and uncivilized or foreign peoples, which was attested in literary works like the *Epic of Gilgamesh*,⁸² the *Curse of Agade*,⁸³ and the *Kulamuwa Inscription*.⁸⁴ It is noteworthy that in EA 109, Rib-Hadda applied the dog metaphor to the Egyptians when he lamented that the prolonged absence of a strong Egyptian force from the Levant had emboldened the rebels of Amurru: “Previously, on seeing a man from Egypt, the kings of Canaan fled bef[ore him, but] now the sons of Abdi-Aširta make men from Egypt prowl about [like do]gs.” (EA 109: 35-55).⁸⁵ Moran suggests that the verb in the sentence and the dog metaphor referred to how the Egyptians moved around restlessly and stealthily instead of marching to advance in an orderly fashion.⁸⁶ In any case, this comparison may not have been well received by the Egyptian recipient of this letter.

Dogs could have acquired a bad reputation due to their saprophagous behavior, which was described in both Egyptian and Hittite textual records. In the New Kingdom *Tale of the Two Brothers*, the elder brother Anubis killed his disloyal wife and cast her to the dogs;⁸⁷ similarly, in the Demotic *Story of Setne*, the slaughtered children of Setne were fed to cats and dogs.⁸⁸ In the *Indictment of Madduwatta*, the

⁸¹ Jack Finegan, *Archaeological History of the Ancient Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979), xlix.

⁸² Maureen G. Kovacs, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989). Andrew George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Text*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁸³ Jerrold S. Cooper, ed., *The Curse of Agade* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983).

⁸⁴ The Kulawuma Inscription eulogized the accomplishments of Kulawuma (a king of Sam'al), who taught the local Muškabim-people how to live a civilized life because “Before the former kings, the Muškabim were living life like dogs.” K. Lawson Younger Jr., “The Kulamuwa Inscription (2.30),” in *The Context of Scripture. Volume II: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), vol. 2, 147–8.

⁸⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 183-84.

⁸⁶ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 184, note 11.

⁸⁷ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 207.

⁸⁸ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume III: The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 135.

Hittite king admonished Madduwatta, the treacherous and ungrateful vassal: “And the father of My Majesty saved you from the sword of Attarissiya ... Otherwise, dogs would have devoured you from hunger.”⁸⁹

Despite the above-mentioned negative associations, dogs possessed many positive attributes as guards, hunting partners, pets, and trusted companions. The *Instructions of Any*, a New Kingdom wisdom text, praised the dog for its loyalty and obedience: “The dog obeys the word, and walks behind its master.”⁹⁰ Intef II of the 11th Dynasty was so fond of his dogs that he carved their images on his funerary stela so that they could accompany him in the afterworld. Abdi-Aširta of Amurru was undoubtedly aware of the Egyptians’ fondness for dogs and capitalized on it. In his letter to Amenhotep III, he prided himself as a dog, apparently a symbol of loyalty and obedience in this context: “I am a servant of the king and a dog of his house, I guard all Amurru for the king, my lord.” (EA 60: 6-9).⁹¹ Abdi-Aširta’s employment of the dog metaphor was very likely intentional, for it makes a powerful rebuttal of the accusation lodged against him by Rib-Hadda.

In a similar manner, Artamanya the ruler of Širibašana answered the king’s command to prepare for the arrival of Egyptian archers enthusiastically, comparing himself to an obedient dog: “As you have written me to make preparations before the arrival of the archers, who am I, a mere dog, that I should not go?” (EA 201: 9-16).⁹² This self-comparison to a dog as a symbol of loyalty would be easily comprehensible and compelling from an Egyptian perspective, for the popular Middle Kingdom story *Tale of Sinuhe* contains a similar reference.⁹³

⁸⁹ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 145.

⁹⁰ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 144.

⁹¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 131-32.

⁹² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 277. Self-deprecation, which was common to vassal language, was very likely intended here.

⁹³ Praising the might and fame of the pharaoh abroad, Sinuhe proclaimed: “I do not mention Retenu (Syria) - it belongs to you like hounds.” Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 230.

In other cases, however, the meaning of dog metaphors may be ambiguous. In a letter to the Egyptian king, Pu-Ba‘lu of Yurša promised to heed royal orders: “As to [R]eanapa, the commissioner [of the kin]g, <my> lord, what the king, my lord, commanded (through him), [is mig]hty like the command of the Sun in the sky. [Wh]o is the dog that would not [ob]serve the orders of the king, my lord, [the Sun] f[ro]m the sky?” (EA 315: 13-18).⁹⁴ Pu-Ba‘lu seemed to be particularly fond of this expression, as he repeated it in EA 316 (10-15).⁹⁵ It was found in the letters of other vassal rulers like Šur-Ašar of A[h]tiašna (EA 319: 15-23)⁹⁶ and Yidya of Ašqaluna (Ashkelon) (EA 320: 20-25, EA 323: 17-23).⁹⁷ In these contexts, the Egyptian vassals were either comparing themselves to obedient dogs of the pharaoh (as dogs are expected to obey orders) or denouncing anyone who disobeyed royal commands as lowly dogs and traitors.⁹⁸

2.1.1.6. Development of Intercultural Communication Competence

The Late Bronze Age diplomatic interlocutors were not oblivious to the various hindrances to achieving mutual understanding in intercultural communications. In fact, they made deliberate efforts to enhance their intercultural communication competence: e.g., invoking the divine for establishing trust and adopting of cultural traits of one another.

The establishment of mutual trust is the key to effective intercultural communications. In the Ancient Near East where religious faith was pervasive, intercultural interlocutors frequently invoked the

⁹⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 348.

⁹⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 348.

⁹⁶ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 350.

⁹⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 350, 352.

⁹⁸ Ambiguous dog metaphors are found in Egyptian texts as well, e.g., the *Stela of Piye* recounted the conquests of Tefnakht (the founder of Egypt’s short-lived 24th Dynasty) thus: “The Chief of the West, the count and grandee in Netjer, Tefnakht ... has conquered the entire West from the coastal marshes to Itj-tawy, sailing south with a numerous army, with the Two Lands united behind him, and the counts and rulers of domains are dogs at his feet.” In this context, the dog metaphor may be employed to highlight the lowliness/submissiveness and/or the loyalty of the counts and rulers of domains. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume III: The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 68.

divine to establish mutual trust and facilitate communication. In diplomatic correspondence, the writer routinely included blessings in the name of the divine for the recipient. In a letter to an Egyptian official (the vizier?), Rib-Hadda of Byblos wrote: “May Aman and the Lady of Gubla (Byblos) establish your honor in the presence of the king, your lord.” (EA 95: 1-6).⁹⁹ Rib-Hadda also invoked Amun in his greeting formulas when he wrote to Egyptian officials like Ḥaya (EA 71: 1-6) Amanappa (EA 86: 1-5; EA 87: 1-7).¹⁰⁰ These courteous greetings demonstrate the writer’s basic knowledge of the religion and culture of the addressee.¹⁰¹ Another example of cultural sensitivity was supplied by EA 19, in which Tušratta invoked the chief deities of the Hurrian and the Egyptian pantheon, i.e., Teššup and Amun, to express his heartfelt feelings that the intimate personal bonds between him and Amenhotep III should remain strong forever: “May the gods grant it, and may Teššup, my lord, and Aman make flour[ish] for evermore, just as it is now, this mutual love of ours” (EA 19: 9-16).¹⁰²

Diplomatic actors routinely sought to enhance the authenticity of their statements through an invocation of the divine. Thus, Aziru of Amurru assured the Egyptian king: “[As] you are like Ba[al] and you are like the Sun, [then h]ow could (any) [serva]nts li[e] to my lord, [my god]?” (EA 159: 5-10).¹⁰³ Similarly, Rib-Hadda of Byblos swore an oath in the name of the gods of the land of Egypt, perhaps hoping that it would carry more weight than an oath sworn in the name of his own gods: “Do not be silent concerning your servant since [g]reat is the hostility of the ‘*apîru* troops against <him>. And as the gods of yo[ur] land live, ued up are our sons and <our> daughters, (and) the wood of our houses f[or] payment to the

⁹⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 169.

¹⁰⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 140, 158, 159.

¹⁰¹ This cultural awareness and sensitivity might have been deliberately cultivated in the process of diplomatic communication. A letter from the pharaoh to Mililu of Gazru concluded with the following passage: “And know that the king is hale like the Sun. For his troops, his ch[ariot]s, his horses, all goes very well. Aman has indeed put the Upper Land, the Lower Land, where the sun rises, where the sun sets, under the feet of the king”(EA 369: 24-32). It was undoubtedly inspired by New Kingdom royal inscriptions and hymns to the sun god - both genres of texts highlight the king’s association with the solar deity and state god Amun and the latter’s endorsement of pharaonic control over everything that the sunlight touches. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 366.

¹⁰² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 43.

¹⁰³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 245.

land of Yarimuta to preserve our lives.” (EA 74: 13-19).¹⁰⁴ Before entering into the presence of the king to account for his treacherous deeds, the cunning Aziru managed to extract oaths from the Egyptian officials to not do him any harm (EA 164: 35-44).¹⁰⁵

Egyptian vassals frequently invoked the divine to buttress their claims in their reports to the pharaoh. In several cases, the oath was sworn in the name of the pharaoh, who assumed the status of an oath deity. Abdi-Ḥeba of Jerusalem solemnly swore: “As (long as) the king, my lord, lives, I will say to the commissioner of the king, my lord, “Why do you love the ‘*apîru* and hate the city [rulers]?”” (EA 286: 16-21).¹⁰⁶ From the Egyptian perspective, these oaths would be considered binding since the pharaoh was conceived as semi- or fully divine and venerated as an oath deity by his Egyptian subjects. Egyptian texts dating to the New Kingdom period (in particular legal texts) abound with oaths sworn in the name of the pharaoh.¹⁰⁷

More significantly, great and small kings swore oaths and signed treaties in the name of the deities who simultaneously served as divine witnesses and judges who would mete out severe punishments to anyone who violated their oaths.¹⁰⁸ Despite the occasional breach of oaths or misconduct, divine sanction

¹⁰⁴ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 455.

¹⁰⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 252.

¹⁰⁶ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 1107.

¹⁰⁷ John A. Wilson, “The Oath in Ancient Egypt,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 7, no. 3 (1948): 129–56.

¹⁰⁸ In a letter to Kupanta-Kurunta of Mira-Kuwaliya, Ramesses II declared his intention to observe the treaty signed between him and Ḫattušili III: “The written version of the oath which [I made] for the Great King, the King of Ḫatti, my brother, has been set at the feet of [the Storm-god] and before the Great Gods. They are the witnesses [to the words of the oath]. And the written version of the oath which the Great King, [the King of Ḫatti, my brother], made for me [has been set] at the feet of the Sun-god of [Heliopolis] and before the Great Gods (including Amun?). They are the witnesses to the words [of the oath]. I have taken the oath and will not abandon it. In your heart [do] not [trust] in the false words which you have heard.” Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 125.

in the form of natural calamities and military defeats was generally feared.¹⁰⁹ The great kings passionately appealed to their gods to preserve the established peace and friendship themselves,¹¹⁰ and the Levantine city rulers followed their example.¹¹¹ During the Mari Age, gods were sent to one's allies to preside over oath-swearing and treaty-signing ceremonies when the two kings could not meet in person;¹¹² they probably traveled in the form of anthropomorphic statues, though they could also be represented as symbols, especially weapons.¹¹³ This practice was not attested during the Late Bronze Age, during which deities were “virtually” present during intercultural communications.¹¹⁴

The utilization of oaths in a legal context in diplomatic encounters is also known. Kadašman-Enlil II of Babylonia accused Bentešina of Amurru of cursing his land, which was unsurprisingly denied by the latter. The matter reached the Hittite king Ḫattušili III, who decided that Bentešina had to prove his own innocence by swearing an oath in the presence of the Babylonian messenger Adad-šar-ilani.¹¹⁵

Invoking the divine constituted an effective intercultural communication strategy, for it also helped to promote amity between the interlocutors. This is perfectly illustrated by the emotional appeal of the Arzawan scribe of EA 32, who tactfully entreated the gods to bestow blessings upon his Egyptian

¹⁰⁹ Raymond Westbrook, “International Law in the Amarna Age,” in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 31.

¹¹⁰ Tušratta wrote to Amenhotep III: “May the gods grant it, and may Teššup, my lord, and Aman make flour[ish] for evermore, just as it is now, this mutual love of ours.” (EA 19: 9-16). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 43.

¹¹¹ Abi-Milku of Tyre reported to the Egyptian king that the rebellious Zimredda of Sidon and the men of Arwada exchanged oaths before launching a joint military campaign against Tyre, a loyal city of the pharaoh (EA 149: 54-62). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 236.

¹¹² Panagiotis Kousoulis and Konstantinos D. Magliveras, eds., *Moving Across Borders: Foreign Relations, Religion, and Cultural Interactions in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Dudley: Peeters, 2007), 201.

¹¹³ Dominique Charpin, “*Tu es de mon sang*”: *les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 47-92.

¹¹⁴ Gods did travel and occasionally serve as divine envoys during the Late Bronze Age, which was attested in one Amarna letter (EA 23: 13-17) and a letter from Merneptah to an Ugaritic king (RS 88.2158). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 61. Sylvie Lackenbacher, “Une lettre d’Égypte,” in *Études Ougaritiques I. Travaux 1985-1995*, ed. Marguerite Yon and Daniel Arnaud, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 14 (Paris: Éditions recherche sur les civilisations, 2001), 241.

¹¹⁵ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 136.

counterpart before asking the latter for a favor: “May Nabu, the king of wisdom, (and) Ištanuš of the Gateway graciously protect the scribe who reads this tablet, and around you may they graciously hold the(ir) hands. You, scribe, write well to me; put down, moreover, your name. The tablets that are brought here always write in Hittite!” (EA 32: 14-25).¹¹⁶

In addition to invoking the divine, Late Bronze Age diplomatic interlocutors frequently resort to intercultural adaptation, i.e., adjustment of their communicative behaviors, to decrease the probability of being misunderstood. This communicative strategy was commonly employed by Egyptian vassals who embellished their letters with phrases or figures of speech of Egyptian origin. This practice is comparable to the strategy of mirroring in interpersonal communications. Mirroring is the behavior of copying someone else during communication with them – in displaying similar postures, gestures, or tone of voice. Mirroring a conversation partner can reflect rapport or a desire to please.

Some of the phrases of Egyptian origin include: dirt/footstool under the feet and variations (EA 60: 3, EA 136: 3, EA 141: 4-5, EA 142:3), solar metaphors (e.g., Sun from the sky) (EA 106: 1-7; EA 195: 16-23), north wind (EA 147: 9-15), head in the king’s hand (EA 264: 11-19),¹¹⁷ and the breath of life (EA 100: 33-44, EA 164:4-17). The diplomatic use of the phrase “breath of life” constitutes a prime example of how intercultural adaptation can improve intercultural intelligibility.

The concept of “breath of life” could be traced back to the beginning of Egyptian history. Old Kingdom religious texts made it abundantly clear that the ancient Egyptians were acutely aware of the correlation between the act of breathing and the state of living. The Pyramid Texts furnish us with abundant

¹¹⁶ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 103.

¹¹⁷ Tagi of Ginti-kirmil (a city in the coastal plain of the Carmel ridge) described how the Egyptian king had total control over his fate: “Moreover, as far as we are concerned, it is to you that my eyes (are directed). Should we go up into the sky: *ša-me-ma*, or should we go down into the netherworld, our head: *ru-šu-nu* is in your hand.” (EA 264: 11-19). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 313.

examples of such a connection. Numerous spells express the deceased's keen wish to receive the breath of his life (*tꜣ(w)ꜣn ꜥnh*), breathe joy and partake in an abundance of god's sacrifices.¹¹⁸

Indeed, "breath" (*tꜣw*) has been intimately associated with "life" (*ꜥnh*) in mythological, religious, funerary, and magical/medical texts throughout the Pharaonic period. With the advent of the New Kingdom, the significance of breath for revitalizing the dead continued to be reflected in numerous Book of the Dead spells with the specific purpose of enabling the dead to breathe air (*ssn.t tꜣw*) in the netherworld. In a military context, the defeated foreign enemies were often depicted as prostrating before the Pharaoh and pleading for the "breath of life," which could mean a royal pardon to spare their lives.¹¹⁹ After the vigorous campaigns of the Thutmose kings established stable Egyptian rule in the Levant, this term continued to be employed to exalt the Pharaoh's benevolence during Egypt's peaceful interactions with foreigners. For instance, it routinely accompanied stereotypical scenes of foreigners coming to Egypt bearing tributes/gifts in order to entreat the Pharaoh for the "breath of life" (*tꜣw (n) ꜥnh*). This exchange of tribute/gift (*ꜥnw*) for the "breath of life" (*tꜣw (n) ꜥnh*) became a celebrated and recurrent topos in both royal and private inscriptions.¹²⁰

The semantic range of the "breath of life" (*tꜣw (n) ꜥnh*) was further expanded by its employment in international diplomatic correspondence, especially the vassal letters in the Amarna archive.¹²¹ By adding

¹¹⁸ PT511, §1158a, Pepi I. Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 187-88.

¹¹⁹ Shlomit Israeli, "tꜣw n ꜥnh ('Breath of Life') in the Medinet Habu War Texts," in *Jerusalem Studies in Egyptology, Ägypten und Altes Testament* 40 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 271 – 83.

¹²⁰ The tomb of Ḥuya at Amarna (AT1) featured a depiction of a gift/tribute presentation ceremony in the 12th regnal year of Akhenaten; the accompanying text reads: "All foreign countries are united together and the islands in the middle of the "Great Green" bring the tributes for the king on the great throne of Akhenaten to receive deliveries from every foreign country because they are given the breath of life." Amarna tomb of Ḥuya (AT1) and Meryre II, see Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), 9.

¹²¹ In these letters, the Egyptian word *tꜣw* "breath" was translated as *šāru* or *šeḥu*. According to the Chicago Akkadian dictionary, the word *šāru* has a wide range of meanings: 1. wind; 2. cardinal point, direction; 3. air, flatus; 4. breath, emanation; 5. emptiness, nothingness, vanity, lies, falsehoods. And *šeḥu* has the basic meaning "wind" and the derived meaning "breath, emanation". While both *šāru* and *šeḥu* are written syllabically in the Amarna Letters, the Akkadian equivalent of *ꜥnh* "life" was written logographically as TIL.LA (the underlying word being *balātu*).

the 1st personal singular possessive pronoun *-ia*, the term was transformed into a royal epithet “the breath of my life” (*šāri* TIL.LA-*ia*), with which the Pharaoh was affectionately addressed by Ammunira of Beirut (EA 141:2, EA 142:1, EA 143:1-2), Zimredda of Sidon (EA 144: 2), and Šuwardata (EA 281: 3). Apparently, this epithet was reserved only for the king of Egypt. In view of the Egyptian origin of this concept, its cultural significance might have easily been lost in translation and thus fail to appeal to the vanity of other great kings.

In the main body of the letters, the “breath of life,” in its full-fledged form, appeared only once in a letter from Abi-Milku of Tyre (EA 147) as part of a laudatory speech. There are many more examples of its adapted usage, i.e., in the form of *šāru ša šarri* (written *ša-ru ša* LUGAL, “breath of the king”) or *šeḫu tābu* (written *še-ḫu* DÙG.GA, “the sweet breath”), which arguably denoted a message of the king (verbal or written).¹²² Two quotes from Abi-Milku of Tyre will be sufficient to demonstrate the point. In EA 146, he solicited a reply from the Pharaoh, writing: “The sweet breath [of life belongs t]o my lord, [my Sun, and I], your servant, am guar[ding Tyr]e, the city of the king, [my] lor[d, and waiting f]or the brea[t]h of [the king. For m]e [there is to be hostility] until [the breath] of the king (*šār šarri*) com[es] to m[e] with power.” (EA 146:6-13).¹²³ When he indeed received a message from the king, he praised the latter profusely for granting his wish: “Before the arrival of the messenger of the king, my lord, breath had not come back; my nose was blocked. Now that the breath of the king has come forth to me, I am very happy and: *a-ru-u* (he is satisfied), day by day. Because I am happy, does the earth not pr[osp]er? When I heard the gracious me[sse]nger from my lord, all the land was in fear of my lord, when I heard the sweet breath and the gracious messenger who came to me.” (EA 147: 22-38).¹²⁴

¹²² Examples in which the “breath” supposedly denoted a royal message include EA 100:36 (Irqata), EA 137 (Byblos), EA 141 (Beirut), EA 145 (Sidon), EA 146 (Tyre), EA 147 (Tyre), EA 149 (Tyre), EA 164 (Amurru), EA 179 (unknown), EA 297 (Yapahu of ?), and EA 281 (Šuwardata of ?).

¹²³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 232.

¹²⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 233.

Egyptian vassals used this potent metaphor to solicit a swift response from Pharaoh, by comparing their desire for a message with their need for air to breathe. Abi-Milku of Tyre skillfully turned his request into a rhetorical question: “What is the life of a palace attendant when breath (*ša-a-ru*) does not come forth from the mouth of the king, his lord?” (EA 149:21-27).¹²⁵ Perhaps the most eloquent of them all was the writer of EA 179, who made abundantly clear his earnest wish to receive a royal message by phrasing his request in the imperative mood: “May [the king, my lord], my [g]od, my Sun, send back word. And brea[the (*up-ša*) on] the servant of the king, my lord!” (EA 179:11-13).¹²⁶

One might argue that this semantic shift reflects a lack of understanding of the phrase's original meaning; however, a careful analysis of the letters containing this metaphor renders this highly unlikely. Many letters originated from cities with long-established and close ties with the Egyptian court like Byblos and Ugarit, and it is difficult to imagine that these rulers, who might have been present at the tribute/gift presentation ceremonies or even grew up in the Egyptian court as political hostages, would be ignorant of the meaning of this ideologically charged Egyptian term. Rather, this reinterpretation of an Egyptian term seems more likely to be a calculated strategy to curry favor from the Pharaoh and the Egyptian administration. Considering the reluctance of the Egyptian authority to intervene in local issues that did not pose any threat to Egyptian rule, an efficient way to attract the attention of Pharaoh and secure a reply would be to adopt expressions that resonated with the Egyptians. Evidence from the Amarna Letters seems to corroborate this suggestion. The Egyptian vassals were eager to request “breath (of life)” from the Pharaoh due to their urgent need for provisions or military assistance issued by royal commands.

The use of “breath” as a metaphor for royal message is paralleled by the use of “life” as a synonym for material sustenance and military support in the vassal letters.¹²⁷ For instance, Arašša of Kumidu

¹²⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 236.

¹²⁶ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 262.

¹²⁷ See EA 45: 30-35 (Ugarit), EA 53: 63-70 (Akizzi?), EA 136: 37-46 (Rib-Hadda from Beirut), EA 198: 17-31 (Kumidu), and EA 215: 7-19 (Bayawa?). See William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 118, 126, 217, 276, 283-4.

skillfully phrased his request for provisions as a supplication for “life”: “May the king, my lord, accept (me) and give me life (*li-ba-lu-ut-ni*), for I have neither horse nor chariot. May it please the king, my lord, to give life to his servant. Truly, I send my own son to the king, my lord, and may the king, my lord, give me life.” (EA 198:17-31).¹²⁸ This passage would make an excellent footnote to a scene in the tomb of Menkheperresonb (TT86), which depicts two foreigners in procession (fig. 2.1). The figure on the left, with distinctive Syrian style attire and hairstyle, presented a small nude boy (undoubtedly his son and heir to the throne) to the Pharaoh in exchange for his “breath of life”; he was identified by the caption as *wr n t-n-pw* “the great one of Tunip.”¹²⁹

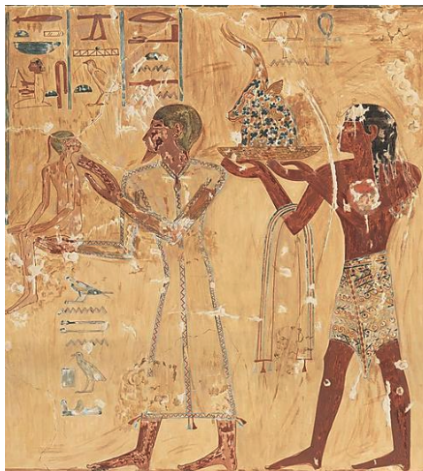


Figure 2.1 The ruler of Tunip presents his son to the pharaoh in exchange for the Breath of Life. “Nina de Garis Davies | Foreigners, Tomb of Menkheperresonb | Twentieth Century; Original New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 6, 2021, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544600>.

The Egyptian vassals phrased their requests for provisions and military assistance in a very diplomatic manner, employing the metaphor of “life” to stress that the timely delivery of provisions and military assistance constituted a matter of life or death for them. Since both “breath” and “life” emanated from the Pharaoh, he was most appropriately addressed as “the breath of my life” by his vassals. This

¹²⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 276.

¹²⁹ Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Menkheperresonb, Amenmose, and Another* (Nos. 86, 112, 42, 226) (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1933), pl. XX.

privileged epithet performed a double duty: on the one hand, it recognized the Egyptian king's unique status; on the other hand, it served as a gentle reminder of his protective duty towards his vassals.

It is interesting to note that the ruler of Byblos (Rib-Hadda) and the ruler of Tyre (Abi-Milku), both of whose cities were plagued by a shortage of supplies and drawn-out conflict with their aggressive neighbors, employed antithetical strategies when writing to the pharaoh. As the most prolific writer among Egyptian vassals, Rib-Hadda bombarded the pharaohs with over sixty letters recounting his dire situation and desperate need for help. Unfortunately for Rib-Hadda, his dogged persistence was met by a callous response from the annoyed pharaoh. In stark contrast, the extant letters from Abi-Milku of Tyre number ten in total (EA 146 – 155), and it seems that his requests were partially granted by the pharaoh in the last letter if we can assign some credibility to lines 7 – 17 in EA 155: “The king ordered that the breath (of life) be given to his servant and to the servant of Mayati, and water: *mi-ma* be <given> for his drink, but they (Egyptian officials?) have not acted in accordance with the command of the king, my lord.”¹³⁰

2.1.2. Communication through Intermediaries

The first half of the first section of this chapter has analyzed verbal communications conducted through diplomatic correspondence, the second part is dedicated to a comprehensive study of verbal communications through intermediaries and face-to-face communication.

2.1.2.1. Communication through Messengers

The professional competence of diplomatic messengers could determine the outcome of their mission. In the words of Stearns, “Communication is the essence of diplomacy. There has never been a good diplomat who was a bad communicator.”¹³¹ Therefore, it is essential to ensure that the intended message comes through and to exclude the interference of irrelevant or confusing information in diplomatic

¹³⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 241.

¹³¹ Monteagle Stearns, *Talking to Strangers: Improving American Diplomacy at Home and Abroad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 112.

communication. The onerous burden of relaying messages, conducting negotiations, and ironing out differences falls upon the diplomatic messengers. It is their job to minimize misunderstanding by clarifying any ambiguities in the diplomatic letters or modifying the wording of the written message (euphemistically) when it is desirable to remain ambiguous and non-committal.

It can be inferred from the Amarna Letters that a large volume of communication between Egypt and its diplomatic partners was conducted verbally.¹³² In such cases, messengers would have to memorize messages and repeat them verbatim days and even months later. One can enumerate a wide range of reasons certain information may not have been committed to writing: 1. Space on the tablet was limited; 2. The message was confidential and not suitable to be committed to writing (in case they were intercepted by enemies);¹³³ 3. Certain information was to be delivered at the discretion of the messenger (those entrusted with plenipotentiary power) based on his assessment of the political situation in the receiving country;¹³⁴ 4.

¹³² Scattered evidence in diplomatic correspondence suggests that written messages were delivered orally to the host king by the messenger (KUB 3.36, obv. 12-14), hence the opportunity for oral elaboration. Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 52-3.

¹³³ In EA 56, Akizzi informed the pharaoh how an Egyptian messenger was taking a circuitous tour in the Levant, assessing the local political situation and forging a pro-Egypt and anti-Hatti alliance: “My lord’s messenger came to me and said as follows: ‘I [journeyed about] in Mittani, and there were 3 or 4 kings who were host[ile to] the king of Hatti, al[l of whom] were [at] my disposal.’” (EA 56: 36-42) The messenger operated with oral instructions from the king/senior Egyptian officials presumably because he was instigating rebellions within territories not controlled by the Egyptians. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 129. The Kamose stela preserves a vivid account of the capture of a Hyksos messenger sent to the Kushite king, carrying a message that proposed a military alliance against the native Egyptian dynasty. Harry S. Smith and Alexandrina Smith, “A Reconsideration of the Kamose Texts,” *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 103, no. 1 (1976): 61. Amenhotep II claimed to have intercepted a Mittanian messenger in the Sharon plain, with a tablet kept in a strapped bag hanging around his neck. An Amarna period letter (from Tagi of Ginti-Kirmil to his overlord Lab’aya of Shechem) found at Beth She’an was probably intercepted by the Egyptian authority. It may have been inscribed on a small cylinder seal to protect the confidentiality of its content because its correspondents were plotting rebellious activities against their Egyptian overlord. Both Tagi and Lab’aya are known in several Amarna Letters which referred to their treachery, including one from Abdi-heba of Jerusalem (EA 289: 11-36) specifically mentioning Beth She’an. Wayne Horowitz, “An Inscribed Clay Cylinder from Amarna Age Beth Shean,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 46, no. 3/4 (1996): 208–18. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 332-3.

¹³⁴ A Hittite messenger carried with him both a “letter of peace” and a “letter of war” to the Assyrian court; he was authorized to exercise his own discretion and decide which letter to deliver depending on the situation. In fact, a messenger’s superior knowledge of current affairs and external realities could influence the disposition of his king and his country’s foreign policy. This was related in a letter from a king of Assyria to the last king of Ugarit, Ammurapi (RS 34.165). Sylvie Lackenbacher, “Nouveaux documents d’Ugarit. I. Une lettre royale,” *Revue d’Assyriologie et d’archéologie orientale* 76, no. 2 (1982): 142–49. Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 72, 114.

The sender anticipated the risk of rejection of his message and desired to retain the ability to deny making the offer in case of a negative response (and avoid losing face in such a humiliating situation) etc.¹³⁵

Verbal communication was instrumental in diplomatic negotiations for hammering out the details of a mutually satisfactory agreement before it was committed into writing. While low-ranking diplomatic messengers were no more than simple letter-bearers, high-ranking diplomatic envoys were entrusted with the duty of conducting negotiations as the representative of his king. These authorized messengers (endowed with immense freedom and power of discretion) could take the lead in high-level negotiations without having to go constantly back-and-forth between his sender and the recipient king. In the words of Jönsson and Hall in *Essence of Diplomacy*, “Latitude can be useful in floating one’s own ideas informally, constraint can be useful in negotiations.”¹³⁶ On the other hand, more latitude means more responsibility.

Persuasion and negotiation skills are principal skills of diplomatic messengers. When the situation demands it, they should be able to defend their sender in a foreign court. An example of persuasion is provided by an Egyptian messenger who managed to soothe the anger of the Babylonian king who considered it a personal slight when the Egyptian had failed to inquire about his illness (EA 7: 14-32).¹³⁷

Language competence and cultural sensitivity are essential skills in the diplomatic toolkit. Some would even claim that they are prerequisites for becoming a diplomatic messenger. Even though interpreters customarily accompanied messengers, an envoy who speaks the language of the partner is better equipped to fulfill his job. A good (long-term) exposure to other cultures enables one to discern the different layers of cultural behavior (not just the surface, but the underlying elements) and build sustained contacts across cultures.

The credibility of interlocutors and messengers seems to be a constant concern of many senders and recipients of diplomatic letters. For a messenger to complete his task, he needed to build up credibility

¹³⁵ Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 106.

¹³⁶ Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 108.

¹³⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 13.

and establish a long-term reputation, which would help to facilitate future negotiation. A credible messenger who has won the confidence of his host constitutes a valuable asset to his sender. His ability to smooth communications would serve both parties well by significantly reducing the costs of communication.

Some kings recognized the need to monitor the behavior of their messengers because some of them might deviate from the accepted code of behavior in pursuit of their own interests. Tudḫaliya II of Ḫatti specifically instructed his vassal, Šunaššura of Kizzuwatna, to not trust the messenger in case his words contradicted the written message on a tablet: “In regard to a tablet which I, My Majesty, send you - a tablet upon which words have been set down - and the words <of> the messenger, which he speaks orally in response to you - if the words of the messenger are in agreement with the words of the tablet, trust that messenger, O Sunashshura. But if the words of the speech of the messenger are not in agreement with the words of the tablet, you, Sunashshura, shall certainly not trust the messenger and shall certainly not take to heart the evil content of that report of his.”¹³⁸

This formal stipulation concerning the potential duplicity of diplomatic messengers seemed to be a necessary preventive measure. The morality of messengers is a highly contentious issue during the Late Bronze Age; doubts concerning their credibility and protestations over their misconduct abound in the Amarna Letters. In EA 1, Amenhotep II accused the messengers of Kadašman-Enlil I of lying about whether gifts had been given to them by the Egyptian king: “Now, we are brothers, you and I, but I have quarreled because of your messengers, since they report to you saying, ‘Nothing is given to us who go to Egypt.’ Those who come to me – has a single one of them ever come [and not] received silver, gold, solemn garb, every sort of finery, [more than i]n any other country? He does not tell the truth to the one who sends him!” (EA 1: 62-77).¹³⁹ If Amenhotep III’s accusation was vindicated, then the guilty Babylonian messengers may have been lying to their king to enrich themselves. A similar incident is known from a letter of Ramesses II to Ḫattušili III (KUB 3.43 + KUB 3.126 + KBo 28.35), in which the former informed the latter

¹³⁸ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 20.

¹³⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

that he had not received the golden cup which the Hittite king claimed to have dispatched.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, when an exchange of goods was concerned, it was preferable to record the transaction details in writing (i.e., inventory lists) to prevent any possible disputes.¹⁴¹ The standard expression “I send XX through/in the hand/care of PN1 as a gift for PN2 ...” was employed to establish a particular messenger’s responsibility for delivering goods consigned to him. Variations of this phrase were employed to recognize the receipt of gifts.¹⁴² The repetitive phrase in Ramesses II’s letter (KUB 3.43 + KUB 3.126 + KBo 28.35) “It is not the case that the PN1 who came to me had it brought to me as a gift from PN2 for PN3 ...” is also reminiscent of this standard expression.

2.1.2.2. Communication through Vassal States

It was not uncommon for the Levantine city-states to act as intermediaries between their suzerain and another great power. Just as they were used as proxies in indirect military conflicts between the great powers, they performed a similar role in diplomatic interactions. Though not allowed to pursue an

¹⁴⁰ In his letter, Ramesses II enumerated all the Hittite and Egyptian messengers who had come to him and none of them brought the said gold cup: “See, I have now heard all the words my brother wrote to me over and over again, as follows: “Didn’t you receive the gold cup (?) that I had brought to you?” - that’s how you’ve recently written (again). Who is the one you ordered to bring it to me? I don’t know any people who would have brought it to me. It is not the case that the PN who came to me had it brought to me as a gift from my brother or as a gift from the Great Queen of the Land of Ḫatti; it is not the case that Hešni, who came to me, had it brought to me as a present for the princes; but the presents that were brought to us were beautiful, according to what you said; it is not the case that Upammuwa, who came to me, had it brought to me as a present for the *mubarru* priests; it is not the case that the PN who came to me had it brought to me as a gift from my brother for the sun god with the words: “May it be laid before the face of the sun god!” It is not the case that the PN who came to me had it brought to me as a gift from my brother for the sons of the land of Egypt with the words: “...” It is not the case that Tuttu, who came to me came and had it brought to me as a gift from the land of Ḫatti for the sons of the land of Egypt; (for) I have seen his gifts, which you commanded him to bring for the sons of the land of Egypt.” (KUB 3.43 obv. 3-11 + KUB 3.126 obv. 4-12).

¹⁴¹ When a Babylonian physician died in Ḫatti and his property needed to be transported to Babylon, a list of his property was composed, presumably to deter anyone from embezzling any goods: “They (the property which Ḫattušili III gifted the physician) are written down, and I have sent the tablet to my brother so that my brother can hear it.” Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 136.

¹⁴² Tagi of the coastal plain of the Carmel ridge wrote to the king to acknowledge his receipt of royal gifts: “[And] the king, my lord, [s]ent a present to me in the care of Taḫmaya, and Taḫmaya gave (me) a gold goblet and 1[2 se]ts of linen garments. For the information [of the kin]g, my lord.” (EA 265: 7-15). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 314.

independent foreign policy, they could maintain contact with other great powers with the permission of their suzerain and were expected to inform the latter of any relevant information. Thus, the king of Ugarit Ammistamru reported to the pharaoh his communication with another king (assumed to be the Hittite king): “Moreover, the king of [...] wrote: ‘Why ...[...] and] do you seize [...]’. A second time he wrote [to me], and thus he sp[oke: ‘...] and to Egypt [...]. If you sen[d ..., I will ...’ Indee[d, I am a servant] to the Su[n, my lord.]” (EA 45: 22-29).¹⁴³ Aitakama of Kadesh, as a Hittite agent/intermediary, approached Akkizi of Qatna (an Egyptian vassal) to convince him to join the Hittite camp (EA 53: 11-16).¹⁴⁴

Such mediated communication is a discrete and deniable mechanism for conducting indirect negotiation, which was frequently employed by great powers when poaching vassals from other great powers since a direct approach tended to fail. The king of Nuḥasse Addu-nirari reported to his Egyptian overlord how he turned down such an offer by the King of Ḫatti: “And the king of Ḫatti [wrote to me about an alliance]. My lord, [I rejected] (the offer of) tablets of treaty obli[gations], and [I am (still) a servant of] the king of Egypt, [my lord].” (EA 51: rs.1-6).¹⁴⁵

Between two great powers with cordial relations, a vassal state (often due to its strategic location) could function as a facilitator of peace rather than an instigator of trouble. During the Ramesside period, the ruler of Amurru served as an intermediary between the Egyptian and the Hittite great kings, and his kingdom served as a relay station for the diplomatic gifts Ramesses II dispatched to Ḫatti (KUB 3.51, rev. 2-12).¹⁴⁶ The two viceregal kingdoms of Carchemish and Aleppo occupied a prominent position in the Hittite imperial system. As formally recognized delegates of the Hittite great king in Syria, the two viceroys acted as intermediaries between him and his Syrian subjects.

¹⁴³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 118.

¹⁴⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 125.

¹⁴⁵ Moran was skeptical about the veracity of his statement; in his opinion, the Hittite king Šuppiluliuma I would not have sent the treaty tablets (as a formality) unless an alliance has been agreed upon. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 122, note 2.

¹⁴⁶ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 19.

2.1.2.3. Communication through Great Powers

Conversely, a great king and a non-affiliated small king could establish diplomatic contact through the intermediary of the suzerain of the latter. For instance, diplomatic correspondence between Egyptian kings and Hittite vassals was typically transferred through the Hittite capital Ḫattuša. One can propose at least two possible reasons for such indirect/mediated communication:

1. The Hittite imperial government could, in this way, conveniently monitor communications between Hittite vassals and other great powers to prevent the two from conspiring against Ḫatti. The need for supervision is understandable because the vassals' foreign policy had to align with that of their suzerain's. Supervising communications between one's vassals and another great power was instrumental for sustaining the integrity of one's own alliance.

2. Occasionally the need arose for the Hittite king to act on behalf of his vassals. According to a letter from Ramesses II to Ḫattušili III (KBo 28.24, rev. 6-18), the latter requested medicine from the Egyptian king on behalf of Kuruntiya (the king of Tarḫuntassa), who was afflicted with an eye disease.¹⁴⁷ Ramesses II graciously obliged and sent effective medicine through the messenger Pariamaḫu.¹⁴⁸

The role of intermediaries was often thrown into relief in situations of adverse bilateral relations. A trusted and impartial intermediary could break a diplomatic impasse and make immense contributions to transforming the Late Bronze Age diplomatic network.

2.1.2.4. Communication through Political Allies and Patrons

Mediated communications also existed on an interpersonal level, as correspondents cultivated person-to-person linkages in order to further their interests with the help of political allies and patrons at a foreign court. Though in-person communication was generally more effective than verbal communication

¹⁴⁷ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 82-5.

¹⁴⁸ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 82-5.

through diplomatic correspondence, due to political and technological restraints, most ancient Near Eastern kings conducted diplomatic exchanges through traveling messengers. Since the institution of permanent embassy was yet to be invented, the need arose for them to cultivate political allies and patrons (e.g., imperial officials, scribes in the imperial chancellery) in countries with whom they maintained diplomatic contacts to protect and promote their interests. Egyptian officials like messengers, commissioners, and viziers commonly served as the intermediaries between the Pharaoh and his vassals. The diplomatic archives supplied us with numerous examples in which the writer urged his recipient to inquire of his officials to verify the authenticity of the writer's claims (EA 148: 41-47; EA 155: 65-71).¹⁴⁹

The official Yanḥamu was known to be favorably disposed towards Rib-Hadda, who frequently urged the pharaoh to inquire of him about local matters (EA 131: 57-62)¹⁵⁰ and slanders (EA 127: 23-29)¹⁵¹ against the king of Byblos. In a letter to an Egyptian official (whose name has not been preserved), Rib-Hadda implored the recipient to intercede on his behalf: "Furthermore, entreat the king, [your] lo[r]d that he hasten] the coming forth of the re[gular troops]" (EA 69: 30-37).¹⁵² In another letter to Amanappa, Rib-Hadda vented his anger on the former for his failure to persuade the king to send forth military assistance: "Why have you been negligent, not speaking to the king, your lord, so that you may come out together with archers and fall upon the land of Amurru?" (EA 73: 6-11).¹⁵³ Later in the same letter, Rib-Hadda reiterated his request with emotive wording, reminding Amanappa of his moral duty to protect him: "Report this matter in the presence of the king, your lord, for you are father and lord to me, and to you I have turned. You know my conduct when you were in [Š]umur; I am your [l]oyal servant. So speak to the

¹⁴⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 235, 242.

¹⁵⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 213.

¹⁵¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 207.

¹⁵² Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 441.

¹⁵³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 141.

king, [your] lord, that an auxiliary force be [s]en<t> t[o] me with all speed” (EA 73: 33-45).¹⁵⁴ Judging from subsequent letters, Amanappa did oblige to Rib-Hadda’s request; nonetheless, his intervention turned out to be ineffectual and only gave Rib-Hadda false hope (EA 87: 8-24).¹⁵⁵

To maintain the goodwill of their patrons at the Egyptian court, the rulers of city-states flattered them. Aziru’s letters to Tutu were characterized by obsequiousness. For instance, in EA 164, he presented himself as a humble servant of the pharaoh and Tutu, whom he derived great joy from serving.¹⁵⁶ In addition to obsequious adulation, lavish gifts were not spared to secure the goodwill of Tutu: “Moreover, a[s] you in that place are my father, whatever may be the request of Tutu, my f[at]her, just write and I will grant it” (EA 158: 10-13).¹⁵⁷ Aziru was unequivocal about what he expected in return for the gifts: “[And] you are in the personal service [of the king], my [lord. Hea]ven forbid that treacherous men have spoken maliciously [again]st me in the presence of the king, my lord. And you should not permit them. [And a]s you are in the personal service [of the king, m]y lord, representing me, you should not permit malicious talk [ag]ainst me.” (EA 158: 20-31).¹⁵⁸ Aziru’s investment seemed to have paid off; Tutu may have been instrumental in securing the exoneration and release of Aziru when he was detained in Egypt for his treacherous behaviors.¹⁵⁹

Tutu was not Aziru’s only point of contact at the Egyptian court. Judging from the fact that he addressed another Egyptian official Ḥay affectionately as his “brother” (EA 166: 1-5), he must have

¹⁵⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 142.

¹⁵⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 159.

¹⁵⁶ “Ḥatip has come and brought the gracious and sweet words of the king, my lord, and I am quite overjoyed. My land and my brothers, the servants of the king, my lord, and the servants of Tutu, my lord, are overjoyed when the breath of the king, my lord, comes. I did not deviate from the orders of my lord, my god, my Sun, and from the orders of Tutu, my lord.” (EA 164: 4-17). See William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 251.

¹⁵⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 244.

¹⁵⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 244.

¹⁵⁹ In a recent article, Zangani juxtaposed cuneiform evidence (Aziru’s letters) and Egyptian evidence (i.e., Tutu’s autobiography in his tomb at Amarna) to show they echoed each other in emphasizing Tutu’s role of authority and representation before Akhenaten, which made him an ideal political patron who could effectively defend Aziru against accusations of treachery. Federico Zangani, “Textual Evidence for the Diplomatic Role of the Egyptian Official Tutu from Amarna,” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 33, no. 2022 (n.d.): 45–56.

enjoyed an amicable relationship with this official as well.¹⁶⁰ In a similar fashion, he could confidently count on the archer-commander Puwuru to vouch for his loyalty before the king if necessary (EA 171: 14-21).¹⁶¹

The Egyptian vassals did not always see eye to eye with the Egyptian officials. When these intermediaries acted against their interests, the vassals resorted to various measures to cultivate links with other officials who were willing to represent and defend their interests in front of the pharaoh. Thus, the king of Ugarit urged the Egyptian king to consult someone else other than Ḫanya, who was probably not favorably disposed towards Ugarit (EA 47: 22-30).¹⁶² Another solution is character assassination. Rib-Hadda denounced the men who spoke ill of him before the Egyptian king as treacherous and implored the king to ignore the slanders: “Since the commissioners are alive, let me tell about all their deeds so the king will know that I am a loyal servant of his. May the king pay [n]o attention to the slanders against his loyal [ser]vant that [a treacherous man] may utter before [the king, m]y [lord] ...” (EA 119: 21-32).¹⁶³ In addition to undermining the credibility of hostile Egyptian officials, Rib-Hadda boldly recommended the king appoint a certain individual as the commissioner (EA 66: 8-10).¹⁶⁴ Another vassal who was entangled in bitter disputes with local Egyptian authorities, Abdi-Heba of Jerusalem, strived to circumvent the intermediaries by appearing before the king to defend his case (EA 286: 39-47; 288: 30-32).¹⁶⁵

On the other hand, there were also negative examples in which hostile intermediaries purposefully obstructed the flow of diplomatic correspondence. When Tušratta first ascended the throne, a certain Uthi who had murdered Tušratta’s brother Artasumara seized power and forced Tušratta to cut off diplomatic

¹⁶⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 254.

¹⁶¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 258.

¹⁶² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 119.

¹⁶³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 197.

¹⁶⁴ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 433.

¹⁶⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 175.

relations with Mittanian allies including Egypt (for fear of foreign intervention?).¹⁶⁶ Similarly, Ḫattušili III of Ḫatti blamed the Babylonian official Itti-Marduk-balaṭu for the cutting off of diplomatic correspondence between Ḫatti and Babylonia early in the reign of Kadašman-Enlil II, refusing to accept the Babylonian king's explanation which condemned the Aḫlamu and the Assyrians for blocking the passage of Babylonian messengers (KBo 1.10 + KUB 3.72, obv. 36-54).¹⁶⁷ These examples reveal a general awareness of the influential role of intermediaries in intercultural communications, and forcefully demonstrate why creating a network of contacts and allies was part and parcel of diplomacy.

2.1.2.5. Communication through Royal Family Members

It was not uncommon for royal family members, e.g., queens, to serve as intermediaries when diplomatic communications hit a roadblock. In his earlier letters to Amenhotep III, Tušratta did not give any recognition to the Egyptian queen Tiye but sent greetings to his sister who had married the Egyptian king (EA 17: 1-10, 41-45; EA 19: 1-8).¹⁶⁸ If Tušratta had entertained the hope that his sister could act as an intermediary between him and Amenhotep III, this idea was doomed from the beginning because even the inscriptions on the commemorative scarabs that celebrated the arrival of the Mittanian princess put the spotlight on Tiye.¹⁶⁹ It was only after the death of Amenhotep III, and a diplomatic impasse started to develop between Akhenaten and Tušratta, that the latter started coming to terms with reality and sending greetings to Tiye in letters to her son (EA 27; EA 28). He even addressed a letter specifically to her (EA 26) to entreat her to intercede on his behalf in the episode of the missing statues of solid gold.¹⁷⁰ The same

¹⁶⁶ Tušratta recounted this humiliating incident in his letter to Amenhotep III requesting for a renewed alliance: “When I sat on the throne of my father, I was young, and UD-*hi* had done an unseemly thing to my country and had slain his lord. For this reason, he would not permit me friendship with anyone who loved me.” (EA 17:11-20). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 41.

¹⁶⁷ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 134.

¹⁶⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 41-2, 43.

¹⁶⁹ Orly Goldwasser, “A ‘Kirgipa’ Commemorative Scarab of Amenhotep III from Beit-Shean,” *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 12 (2002): 191–93.

¹⁷⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 84-5.

letter attests to the existence of a parallel channel of communication between Tiye and Yuni, the wife of Tušratta (EA 26: 58-63).¹⁷¹

Another Amarna royal woman who played a relatively limited and passive role in diplomatic affairs was Mayati (Meritaten), the daughter of Akhenaten who married Smenkhkare. The letter of Burna-Buriaš to Akhenaten featured a fleeting mention of Mayati (Meritaten) (EA 10: 43-49).¹⁷² Abi-Milku of Tyre referred to himself as the “servant of Mayati” (EA 155: 7-17) and his city the “city of Mayati” (EA 155: 40-47) even though the political implications of these references remain elusive. Curiously, the name of Nefertiti, the prominent Egyptian queen who wielded enormous power during her husband’s reign, was not attested in the Amarna Letters. Pictorial evidence from two Amarna elite tombs depicts her presiding over the year 12 diplomatic gifts/tribute presentation along with Akhenaten. Besides that, nothing is known about her involvement in Egypt’s diplomatic activities during the reign of her husband.¹⁷³

Just as queen Tiye served as the intermediary between Tušratta of Mittani and her son Akhenaten, the Hittite queen Puduḥepa managed to exert her agency in the diplomatic correspondence she exchanged with Ramesses II. However, the influence of Tiye and Puduḥepa in diplomatic affairs stemmed primarily from their personal charisma and political wisdom, their male counterparts’ lack of interest in managing diplomatic affairs and reduced ability to do so. Their appearance on the internal stage was but a flash in the pan, and the diplomatic system remained male-dominated throughout the Late Bronze Age.

The exclusion of male royal family members from imperial administration and diplomacy by the Egyptians begs many questions. In contrast to female members of the royal family, Egyptian royal princes are difficult to track in textual and pictorial records before the reign of Seti I in the early 19th Dynasty. In the 18th Dynasty, few princes held titles outside the realm of the military and the priesthood or temple

¹⁷¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 85.

¹⁷² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 19.

¹⁷³ Akhenaten openly acknowledged the potential influence of Nefertiti (and hence royal women) on him concerning internal affairs in inscriptions on the boundary stelae at Amarna: “I shall make Akhet-Aten for the Aten, my father, in this place ... Nor shall the King’s Chief Wife say to me, ‘Look, there’s a nice place for Akhet-Aten someplace else,’ nor shall I listen to her.” William J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, ed. Edmund S. Meltzer (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 76-7.

administration.¹⁷⁴ They played a negligible role in imperial administration and diplomatic activities,¹⁷⁵ in stark contrast to their Hittite counterparts. For the Hittites, empire-building was truly a family enterprise. Royal sons and other members of the royal family were groomed to become military leaders and were even appointed as vassal rulers by the Hittite king. They fought side by side with their king in battle, shared the burden of administration, and partook in reaping the fruits of imperial expansion in exchange. While Egypt's restrictive policy prohibited Egyptian princes from participating in imperial and diplomatic affairs, Hittite princes frequently assumed the roles of diplomatic intermediaries. For instance, when the Ugaritic king Ibiranu failed to fulfill his vassal duty, prince Piḫa-walwi dispatched him a letter of reprimand and instructed him to make amends.¹⁷⁶ The situation changed, however, during the reign of Ramesses, when royal sons figured prominently on the monuments of their father and played active roles in diplomatic activities. It remains unclear how much of this development was attributable to Hittite influence, and how much of it stemmed from the desire to secure dynastic succession by empowering the royal progeny.

The above discussion of diplomatic communications through various intermediaries helps to conjure up a web of communication that facilitated the effective functioning of the Late Bronze Age diplomatic system. Different intercultural interlocutors were connected by numerous agents: e.g., diplomatic messengers, imperial officials, and other kings (great and small). Since communication was mediated, messages were subject to distortion (both deliberate and unintentional) during the transmission process. The most effective way to reduce distortion is to get rid of intermediaries and arrange in-person meetings between the interlocutors, which will be examined in detail below.

¹⁷⁴ Megaera C. Lorenz, *The Role of Male Royal Offspring in 18th Dynasty Egypt* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2017), 501-15.

¹⁷⁵ Interestingly, despite the exclusion of royal sons from political and diplomatic life in the 18th Dynasty, the Egyptian term for the Viceroy of Kush is "King's Son of Kush". Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: The Griffith Institute, 1991), 207.

¹⁷⁶ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 121.

2.1.3. In-person Meetings

Just as multiple choices were available for conducting mediated, oral communications, in-person communications could take several forms, e.g., the meetings between great kings and vassals, between multiple vassals, and between multiple great kings.

2.1.3.1. In-person Meetings between a Great King and a Small King

Distance is a significant factor in both interpersonal and interstate relations. However, unlike the Middle Bronze Age, during which the geopolitical horizon was much smaller and the Syro-Mesopotamian kings could arrange in-person meetings with relative ease,¹⁷⁷ the Ancient Near Eastern kings rarely had the luxury to do so during the Late Bronze Age. Only occasionally did the great kings venture into foreign lands, and when they did so, it was usually to conduct military campaigns.

Considering the great distances and available means of transportation, such long-distance journeys, if undertaken, would have been costly, time-consuming, and arduous. Additional considerations against undertaking a journey abroad include internal instabilities and external threats that may be caused by the king's prolonged absence from home (EA 151: 4-11).¹⁷⁸ Internal stability constitutes a grave concern for both great and small kings. Even though Kadašman-Enlil I of Babylonia bitterly complained about not receiving an invitation from Amenhotep III to attend a great festival (EA 3: 13-22), it is improbable that he would have embarked on a journey to Egypt had he received the invitation.¹⁷⁹

In addition to regular payment of tributes, the duties of a vassal included periodic visits to his overlord. It was first and foremost a matter of projecting imperial power and prestige. While the Egyptian

¹⁷⁷ Dominique Charpin, *"Tu es de mon sang": les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 47-92.

¹⁷⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 238. When Takuwa of Niya came before Šuppiluliuma I during the latter's campaign in Syria, Takuwa's brother stirred up trouble in Niya and formed an anti-Hittite alliance. Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 39.

¹⁷⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 7.

king sat comfortably and motionless on the imperial throne, looking composed and awe-inspiring decked in his regalia, the foreign envoys traveled from all corners of the empire to pay him homage. Playing with the politics of motion and motionlessness/quiescence, this contrast between the centripetal movements of the envoys and the static condition of the Egyptian king emphasized imperial power and the superior status of the Egyptian king. As stipulated in many of the subordinate treaties, some Hittite vassals were obligated to visit their overlord periodically.¹⁸⁰ The Egyptian vassals were expected to do the same to demonstrate their loyalty and admiration for their Egyptian overlord (it was a prerogative of the suzerain not to return a visit). It remains unknown, however, how often a vassal was expected to visit Egypt and pay homage to the king. Evidence from the Amarna archive indicates that their presence was demanded by the king himself in many cases, e.g., Šuwardata of Gath received such an instruction to appear before the king: “The king, my lord, has written me, ‘Enter and pay me homage.’ Into the presence of the king, my lord! Would that it were possible to enter into the presence of the king, my lord, to receive the ... and the ... of the king, my lord.” (EA 283: 7-13).¹⁸¹

Furthermore, a personal visit to the king constituted a loyalty test. By undertaking such a journey, the vassal surrendered himself to the Egyptian authority, which would scrutinize his behavior and mete out punishments if necessary. If found guilty, he might be detained at the Egyptian court for an indefinite amount of time (and risk being overthrown by his own people at home) or even face the death penalty. Understandably, vassals like the kings of Amurru who engaged in double-dealing would seek to avoid appearing before the pharaoh at all costs. Of course, refusal to appear before the king when demanded without legitimate excuses could invoke the wrath of the king. The most popular strategy employed by

¹⁸⁰ The treaty between Tudḫaliya II and Šunaššura of Kizzuwatna includes a section on paying homage to the great king: “Sunashshura must come before His Majesty and look upon the face of His Majesty. As soon as he comes before His Majesty, the noblemen of His Majesty <will rise> from their seats. No one will remain seated above him. As soon as <he wishes>, he may go back to the land of Kizzuwatna. Whenever His Majesty summons him, ‘Come before me!’ - if he does not wish to come, whichever his sons His Majesty designates must come before His Majesty. But he will definitely not have to pay tribute to His Majesty.” Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 15.

¹⁸¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 323.

Egyptian vassals to defer such requests was to inflate local instability or external threats (especially from Mittani or Ḫatti), emphasizing the acute need for them to remain in their kingdom in order to better defend Egyptian territory for the benefit of the king (e.g., EA 165: 18-27).¹⁸²

Few Egyptian vassals could outperform Aziru of Amurru in the art of deception, as he successfully managed to defer his overdue visit for an extended period of time. Tired of his excuses, the Egyptian king sent him an ultimatum, ordering him to come in person or send his son on his behalf (EA 162: 42-54).¹⁸³ Despite this strongly worded letter, Aziru presumably only undertook the journey after he extracted material incentives (EA 169: 16-39)¹⁸⁴ and an oath from the Egyptian officials promising not to do him any harm during his stay in Egypt (EA 164: 35-44).¹⁸⁵ In a similar vein, Abi-Milku of Tyre dispatched a letter to excuse his absence by casting his neighbor as the villain: “I am the dirt under the sandals of the king, my lord ... My intention has been to go to see the face of the king, my lord, but I have not been able, due to Zimredda of Sidon. He heard that I was going to Egypt, and so he has waged war against me” (EA 151: 4-11).¹⁸⁶

The outcast Rib-Hadda, perhaps with more genuine wishes to visit and implore the king to be restored to power,¹⁸⁷ was prevented by his old age from undertaking the journey: “I personally am unable to enter the land of Egypt. I am old and there is a serious illness in my body. The king, my lord, knows that the gods of Gubla (Byblos) are holy, and the pains are severe, for I com<mit>ted sins against the gods.

¹⁸² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 253.

¹⁸³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 249.

¹⁸⁴ In a letter from Aziru’s son to the Egyptian official Tutu, the former reported that the kings of Nuḫašše accused him of selling his father to the king of Egypt for gold. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 256.

¹⁸⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 252.

¹⁸⁶ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 238.

¹⁸⁷ This earnest wish to appear before the king largely derived from self-serving interest. As Morris rightly pointed out, Rib-Hadda was far less trustworthy than he made himself out to be. He was probably not a model subject from the perspective of the Egyptian authorities, as he made incessant demands for provisions and military assistance but was full of excuses when requests were made of him by the Egyptians. Ellen F. Morris, *Ancient Egyptian Imperialism* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018), 178-9.

Accordingly, I shall not enter the presence of the king, my lord.” (EA 137: 27-51).¹⁸⁸ Instead, he sent his own son as his representative. Other Egyptian vassals, e.g., Aziru of Amurru, the anonymous writer of EA 180, and Šubandu, who was probably a ruler of a city in southern Canaan, had done the same when they were unable or unwilling to appear before the Egyptian king but hard-pressed to do so.¹⁸⁹

Abi-Milku of Tyre used a promised visit as a bargaining chip to request gifts from the Egyptian king: “May the king send 20 palace attendants to guard his city in order that I may go into the king, my lord, and see his face.” (EA 149: 6-20).¹⁹⁰ He reiterated his request for palace attendants in EA 150: “I am like th[i]s m[a]n (Abi-Milku’s predecessor?). Should a single soldier guard the city of the king, my lord, then I would go in to behold the face of the king, my lord.” (EA 150: 4-13).¹⁹¹ Similarly, Abdi-Ḫeba of Jerusalem blamed external threats for his failure to enter into the king’s presence and implored the king to send a garrison so that he could visit Egypt (EA 286: 32-52).¹⁹²

The degree of compliance among vassals may vary depending on various factors, e.g., the balance of power between them and their suzerain and their strategic importance to their overlord. A vassal tended to default on his duty when he sensed a weakening of imperial control. The Hittite prince Piḫa-walwi sent a letter to reprimand the new Ugaritic king Ibiranu for his failure to visit the Hittite capital to pay homage to the great king (probably Tudḫaliya IV) and present his tribute, which constituted his two primary vassal duties. Piḫa-walwi ordered Ibiranu to make quick amends in order to soothe the anger of the Hittite great king.¹⁹³ On top of these offenses, Ibiranu neglected his duty to provide military assistance to his Hittite

¹⁸⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 218.

¹⁸⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 263, 344.

¹⁹⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 236.

¹⁹¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 237.

¹⁹² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 326.

¹⁹³ Piḫa-walwi wrote: “Why have you not come before His Majesty since you have assumed the kingship of the land of Ugarit? And why have you not sent your messengers? Now His Majesty is very angry about this matter. Now send your messengers quickly before His Majesty, and send the king’s presents together with my presents.” Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, *Writings from the Ancient World* 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 121.

overlord, blatantly violating the treaty between Ḫatti and Ugarit, concluded by Muṣili II and Niqmepa (the grandfather of Ibiranu).¹⁹⁴ As Bryce pointed out, as a personal compact between suzerain and vassal, vassal treaties needed reaffirmation every time a new ruler ascended his throne, and it was typically done through a personal visit by the vassal to pay homage to his suzerain; therefore, Ibiranu's lack of action may indicate his reluctance to pledge his allegiance to Tudḫaliya IV and renew the tributary relationship between Ḫatti and Ugarit.¹⁹⁵ Ibiranu's default may have resulted from his increasing doubt about whether he should maintain his allegiance to the Hittite king, in view of the waning of Hittite power and the prospect of Assyrian ascendancy.¹⁹⁶ Ibiranu's defiance sent a strong signal to the international community that he was drifting away from his Hittite overlord; the latter could hardly afford to allow him to act with impunity, for it would set a bad precedent and encourage other Hittite vassals to follow suit.

Despite all these examples of disobedience, most vassal rulers presumably did comply with imperial orders and paid personal visits to their overlords. When they did, their conduct must have conformed to the court rituals and cultural norms of the suzerain country. The Middle Kingdom *Tale of Sinuhe* preserved a detailed account of the protagonist's audience with the pharaoh, which provides some hints on what a vassal king might experience at the Egyptian court, since Sinuhe had essentially established a living abroad as a nomadic chief and was treated like one at the Egyptian court before he was purified and hence Egyptianized again: "When it dawned, very early, they came to summon me. Ten men came and ten men went to usher me into the palace. My forehead touched the ground between the sphinxes, and the

¹⁹⁴ For the clauses on offensive and defensive alliance in the treaty between Muṣili II of Ḫatti and Niqmepa, see Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 60-61.

¹⁹⁵ Trevor R. Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East: The Royal Correspondence of the Late Bronze Age* (London: Routledge, 2003), 215.

¹⁹⁶ Ibiranu was a contemporary of Tudḫaliya IV and Arnuwanda III (the penultimate king of the Hittite empire), which means he ruled at a time when the sun was setting on the Hittite empire. Early in his reign, Tudḫaliya IV suffered a humiliating defeat at the hand of the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta I (during the Battle of Niḫariya), who sent an inciting letter to Ibiranu boasting about his victory against the Hittite king. This may have seriously eroded Ibiranu's confidence in his Hittite overlord's ability to protect his kingdom, which emboldened him to openly defy the Hittite great king. Trevor R. Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East: The Royal Correspondence of the Late Bronze Age* (London: Routledge, 2003), 217.

royal children stood in the gateway to meet me. The courtiers who ushered through the forecourt set me on the way to the audience-hall. I found his majesty on the great throne in a kiosk of gold. Stretched out on my belly, I did not know myself before him, while this god greeted me pleasantly. I was like a man seized by darkness.”¹⁹⁷ Concerning proper conduct in the palace, the Hittite vassal Huqqana (king of Ḫayaša) received specific instructions in the vassal treaty between him and Šuppiluliuma I; he was warned not to divulge any secret the king confided in him¹⁹⁸ or approach any palace women.¹⁹⁹ The Stela of Piye, dated to Egypt’s 25th Dynasty, furnishes a fascinating example of how vassal rulers were denied a royal audience due to their failure to observe religious taboos.²⁰⁰ The examples made it abundantly clear that the ability of a ruler to maintain control over his empire to a large extent manifested in his ability to summon his subordinates to the court (as a fulfillment of vassal duty) and make them conform to the code of conduct at the court, cultural norms, and laws of the host country.

2.1.3.2. In-person Meetings between Small Kings

The geographical compactness of the Levantine region and the comparative ease of overland and maritime travel greatly facilitated the exchanges of people, goods, and ideas between the city-states.

¹⁹⁷ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 231.

¹⁹⁸ The treaty clause stipulates: “[In respect to the fact that] they now bring you up to my palace, and that [you hear about (?)] the customs of the palace - it is important! You shall not [divulge] outside the palace what [you ...] or what you hear. Or if I, My Majesty, [impart] to you [my] innermost thoughts and [reveal] my concerns to you - if I have [singled out] some person for favor, saying: ‘This person behaves well, so I, My Majesty, will treat him well’ - if you go and repeat this matter to him - (it shall be placed under oath for you). Or if I have singled out a person for harsh treatment saying: ‘This person is evil, so I, My Majesty, will treat him harshly’ - if you go and repeat this matter to him - (it shall be placed under oath for you).” Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, *Writings from the Ancient World* 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 27.

¹⁹⁹ Huqqana was warned thus: “Beware of a woman of the palace. Whatever sort of palace woman she might be, whether a free woman or a lady’s maid, you shall not approach her, and you shall not go near her. You shall not speak a word to her.” Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, *Writings from the Ancient World* 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 28.

²⁰⁰ The stela records: “Now the kings and counts of Lower Egypt who came to see his majesty's beauty, their legs were the legs of women. They could not enter the palace because they were uncircumcised and were eaters of fish, which is an abomination to the palace. But King Namart entered the palace because he was clean and did not eat fish. The three stood there while the one entered the palace.” Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume III: The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 80.

Although it was relatively easy for the Levantine city-state rulers to journey about and visit each other, they were not given free rein to interact with each other, especially if they belonged to opposing political camps. The vassals of great kings should align their political agenda with the foreign policy of their suzerain.

When Aziru of Amurru, a self-proclaimed loyal Egyptian vassal, held a banquet with the ruler of Qadesh (who was an early recruit of the Hittite king), his action immediately raised suspicion and sent an alarming signal to the Egyptian king. Aitakama of Qadesh, another Hittite proxy, championed the Hittite cause of expansion in northern Syria and instigated Akizzi of Qatna to transfer his allegiance to the Hittite king (EA 53: 4-16).²⁰¹ As expected, the pharaoh sent a strongly-worded letter to Aziru, demanding an explanation for this duplicitous behavior (EA 162: 22-29).²⁰² Aziru's action seemed alarming to the Egyptian king for good reasons, as a communal meal constituted one of the customary ceremonies associated with the formation of an alliance between Mesopotamian kings during the Old Babylonian period.²⁰³ Subsequent developments proved that the pharaoh's suspicion was well-founded, as Aziru defected from the Egyptian camp and became a client of the Hittite empire. Therefore, it is justifiable to claim that Aziru's dealings with the ruler of Qadesh foreshadowed his switch of allegiance to the Hittite king and violated the rule of submission, which prohibits a vassal from maintaining relations with great kings who are not his suzerain.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 125.

²⁰² "Now the king has heard as follows, 'You are at peace with the ruler of Qidša, the two of you take food and strong drink together.' And it is true. Why do you act so? Why are you at peace with a ruler with whom the king is fighting?" (EA 162: 22-29). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 249.

²⁰³ Raymond Westbrook, "International Law in the Amarna Age," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 38. Banquets also played a role in Late Bronze Age diplomatic encounters, which had a strong social aspect. Burna-Buriaš of Babylonia apparently felt obliged to offer an explanation to the pharaoh for his failure to hold a banquet in honor of the Egyptian messengers (EA 7: 8-13). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 13.

²⁰⁴ Rodolfo Ragonieri, "The Amarna Age: An International Society in the Making," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 47-8.

The Hittites imposed even more stringent rules on their vassals concerning unauthorized contacts with Hittite enemies (both great and small kings) and their representatives. For instance, in the *Indictment of Madduwatta*, the Hittite king Arnuwanda I recounted how his father imposed an oath upon this vassal that he was not to establish diplomatic contact with other polities without authorization.²⁰⁵ In addition, Madduwatta was instructed to seize any messenger sent by Attarissiya (the ruler of Aḫḫiya), an enemy of the Hittite king, and send him to the latter.²⁰⁶ In a similar vein, the suzerain treaty between Tudḫaliya IV and Šaušgamuwa of Amurru clearly laid out the Amurrite king's obligations to sever economic ties with Assyria and intercept Assyrian envoys passing through his land.²⁰⁷

2.1.3.3. In-person Meetings between Great Kings

In contrast to the Mari Age (18th century BCE) when the Syro-Mesopotamian city rulers met face-to-face and established alliances through communal meals whenever they could,²⁰⁸ the Late Bronze Age international system embraced a much wider geopolitical region, which significantly changed the mode of interaction between the great kings. While the Levantine city rulers occasionally traveled long-distance to visit the capital of their suzerain, the great kings maintained contact with each other through their messengers. The Hittite queen Puduḫepa lamented in her letter to Ramesses II: “We great kings are brothers, but one never saw the other; our messengers, who go back and forth between us – let us (at least) step in

²⁰⁵ “The person who is an enemy to [the father of His Majesty] and [to] Ḫatti shall be an enemy [to you], Madduwatta ... [And] you shall not send anyone on a diplomatic mission to any [land on your own authority. You shall] not [be an enemy] to anyone [on your own authority], nor shall you practice ... against anyone on your own authority.” To the dismay of the Hittite king, not only did Madduwatta transgress his oath, but he was also bold enough to block passage for diplomatic messengers and tribute-bearers on their way to visit the Hittite king. Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 146-49.

²⁰⁶ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 146.

²⁰⁷ The treaty stipulates: “Since the King of Assyria is the enemy of My Majesty, he shall likewise be your enemy. Your merchant shall not go to Assyria, and you shall not allow his merchant into your land. He shall not pass through your land. But if he should come into your land, seize him and send him off to My Majesty. [Let] this matter [be placed] under [oath] (for you.)” Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 101.

²⁰⁸ For detailed discussions see: Dominique Charpin, “*Tu es de mon sang*”: *les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 47-92.

front of our messengers to ask about the condition!” (KUB 3.24 + KUB 3.59, obv. 15 – 17).²⁰⁹ Puduḫepa traveled to Amurru to send off her daughter to Egypt;²¹⁰ however, she probably did not enter Egyptian territories along with the marriage party but entrusted the escort duty to local Egyptian vassals.

Evidence is scanty for in-person meetings between the great kings during the Late Bronze Age. To start with, coordinating such high-level meetings presents many logistical challenges and requires meticulous planning ahead of time. Numerous factors need to be taken into consideration, e.g., meeting time and venue, size of the retinue, security measures, accommodation, meeting procedure, agenda, etc. Furthermore, there were ideological barriers: when one king paid a visit to another in his capital, it may imply that the former was politically subordinate to the latter (unless such visits were reciprocal and between close allies). Therefore, if two kings of equal status were contemplating an in-person meeting, the optimal solution is to choose a middle ground between their own kingdoms or a location within neutral territories. In any case, proposals of in-person meetings between great kings were extremely rare and generally not given serious consideration in the Amarna Age. Instead, they were tactfully employed by great kings (as Kadašman-Enlil I of Babylonia did) as bargaining chips to gain leverage in negotiations.²¹¹

It is worth noting that the Ramesside correspondence preserved evidence for a genuine proposal for an in-person meeting between the Hittite and Egyptian great kings. In KBo 28.1 (obv. 15-24), Ramesses II expressed his enthusiasm about Ḫattušili III’s suggestion for an in-person meeting and proposed to

²⁰⁹ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 138-40.

²¹⁰ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 129.

²¹¹ Kadašman-Enlil I of Babylonia was apparently upset that Amenhotep III did not send him an invitation to a great festival (EA 3: 13-22); he nonetheless invited the latter to a palace opening to demonstrate his forgiveness and affection for his Egyptian brother (EA 3: 23-31). One wonders, even if the pharaoh had extended him an invitation, would the Babylonian king have embarked on a journey to Egypt? William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 7. The Babylonian king’s frustration at Amenhotep III’s failure to invite him to the festival was one of the symptoms of what Liverani termed the “enlarged village” syndrome, which represents a literal understanding of the “enlarged village” model for understanding international relations. Although the “enlarged village” model is more suitable for understanding international relations than the nuclear family model, it has its own limitations. Mario Liverani, “The Great Powers’ Club,” in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 18-9.

receive him in the land of Kinahhi (Canaan) within Egyptian territory.²¹² In a subsequent letter (KBo 8.14, obv. 3-9), Ramesses II laid out concrete plans for ensuring the security of his Hittite counterpart during the proposed in-person meeting: he promised to expel any hostile parties from the vicinity of the meeting venue and informed Hattušili III that he had dispatched high officials to receive him in the land of Upi.²¹³ Unfortunately, it cannot be inferred from extant evidence whether the proposed meeting actually took place.²¹⁴

2.2. Nonverbal Communication and Diplomatic Signaling

While a considerable part of the relations between Egypt and other ancient Near Eastern polities was conducted by verbal orders and verbal negotiation, there were ways for them to communicate nonverbally. As Jönsson and Hall remarked in their book *Essence of Diplomacy*, “Successful communication requires more than a mutually understood language.”²¹⁵

Just as we consciously or unconsciously look for and interpret nonverbal cues such as facial expressions and body gestures in interpersonal communications, verbal communication is by no means the only channel through which states communicate with each other. During the Late Bronze Age, nonverbal communication constituted a key component of diplomatic encounters between the Ancient Near Eastern kings. They employed nonverbal forms of communication for sending diplomatic signals when they wished to convey their intentions in a more nuanced manner or to reach a wider audience (see below for examples and detailed discussions). Nevertheless, diplomatic signals could also be verbal (e.g., a suggestion made

²¹² Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 22-3.

²¹³ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 24-5.

²¹⁴ Abo-Eleaz pointed out that Hattušili III might have shunned the proposed meeting in Egyptian territory for fear of being detained by Ramesses II. The latter probably had Urhi-tešub in his custody and may decide to reinstall the dethroned Hittite king as a puppet. Mohy-Eldin E. Abo-Eleaz, “Face to Face: Meetings between the Kings of Egypt, Hatti and Their Vassals in the Levant during the Late Bronze Age,” *Studien zur Altaegyptischen Kultur* 48 (2019): 6.

²¹⁵ Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 72.

outside a formal negotiation process as a probe to gauge the intention of the other party) and a combination of verbal and nonverbal messages.²¹⁶

During in-person interactions, cues like posture, gesture, facial expressions, body movement, and dress can give clues about status, role, identity, and feeling.²¹⁷ As diplomatic encounters during the Late Bronze were typically long-distance and mediated through messengers, diplomatic signals were typically communicated through actions. The detention of diplomatic messengers is a universally understood diplomatic signal for conveying displeasure; furthermore, this was a power game - he who detained the messenger for an extended period of time could gain prestige by appearing as the one less in need of the relationship and this could give him leverage in diplomatic negotiations. In the same vein, an interruption in the exchange of diplomatic letters signals the severance of diplomatic ties, which may be temporary or permanent.

When it comes to composing and sending diplomatic signals, there is huge potential for creativity. As a general principle, a diplomatic signal is sent through a deviation from protocol. A common method is varying the level at which a foreign envoy is received through upgrading/downgrading social gestures honoring guests, e.g., banquet, accommodation, royal audience, etc. These gestures were especially indicative when they were not mandatory under local customs or demanded by international diplomatic protocols.

Diplomatic signals can be sent through action as well as the lack thereof. Delaying response to letters is a typical method for signaling one's unwillingness to communicate. Such restrained responses are far more common than open expressions of annoyance at being overwhelmed by too many letters in extant diplomatic letters.²¹⁸ In a similar vein, an interruption of diplomatic traffic indicates a cooling of relations,

²¹⁶ Amenhotep III's commemorative scarabs were inscribed with Hieroglyphic texts; however, their selective distribution to Egyptian officials and Egypt's Levantine vassals also sent a nonverbal message of inclusion and exclusion.

²¹⁷ Raymond Cohen, *Theatre of Power: The Art of Diplomatic Signalling* (London: Longman, 1987), 2.

²¹⁸ Unsurprisingly, these complaints were directed towards Rib-Hadda of Byblos, the most prolific writer in the Amarna archive, who in turn voiced his grievances in his replies: "How can the king say, 'Why does Rib-Hadda keep sending a tablet to his lord?'" (EA 106: 30-40); EA 117 shows that the pharaoh was especially annoyed at Rib-

a signal which Ḫattušili III promptly picked up and responded to in his letter to Kadašman-Enlil II: “Look, my brother, how I keep sending [my messengers] out of love for my brother, while my brother does not send his messenger. Does [my brother] not know [this]? Every word which my brother sent me I will retain. [Only if two kings] are hostile do their messengers not travel continually between them. Why, [my brother], have you cut off [your messengers]?”²¹⁹

2.2.1. Types of Diplomatic Signals

Having introduced the concept of nonverbal diplomatic signaling, it is now appropriate to move forward and discuss the various types of signals, such as positive and negative signals, and the wide range of methods of diplomatic signaling, e.g., through representatives and proxies, through the exchange of gifts or delivery of tribute, and through the level of ceremonialization.

2.2.1.1. Positive and Negative Signals

One can send a diplomatic signal through multiple ways, e.g., 1. The choice and treatment of representatives/proxies; 2. The exchange of diplomatic gifts and other forms of exchange; 3. The payment of tribute goods and fulfillment of other vassal duties; 4. The level of ceremonialization. Furthermore, diplomatic signals could send both positive and negative messages (see Table 2.1).

Hadda's dogged insistence: “Indeed, the king, my lord, keeps saying, ‘Why do you alone keep writing to me?’ Here is my situation ...” (EA 117: 1-9). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 179, 193. See also: Mario Liverani, *Three Amarna Essays*, trans. Matthew J. Adams, Monographs on the Ancient Near East, 1:5 (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1979).

²¹⁹ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 134.

Table 2.1 Diplomatic signals for sending positive and negative messages.

Diplomatic signals	Positive	Negative
Treatment of messengers	Warm welcome	Cold treatment
Diplomatic correspondence	Constant exchange of letters	Delayed response/interruption of correspondence
Level of representation/rank of messengers	High status messenger	Low status messenger
Detention of messengers	Exceptional cases	Mostly negative
Diplomatic gift exchange	Frequent exchange of desired gifts	Delayed delivery/withholding gifts
Tribute payment	Timely delivery of demanded goods	Default on payment
Diplomatic marriage	Symmetrical and reciprocal arrangements	Asymmetrical and nonreciprocal arrangements
Degree of ceremonialization	High	Low

2.2.1.2. Signaling through Representatives

As diplomatic relations were mainly conducted through representatives during the Late Bronze Age, the choice (by the sender) and the reception (by the host king) of representatives were capable of communicating encoded diplomatic messages.

In the ancient Near Eastern diplomatic system that placed so much emphasis on prestige, the level of representation constituted a major matter of consideration in bilateral and multilateral communications. Though a universal nomenclature of diplomatic ranks was yet to be developed, a system of differentiation certainly existed within the diplomatic corps of each country.²²⁰ The choice of messengers could send a strong diplomatic signal to the receiving party and indicate the sender's attitude towards his diplomatic

²²⁰ For instance, the Egyptians differentiated between their charioteer-envoys of different ranks. Mohamed R. Abbas, "A Survey of the Diplomatic Role of the Charioteers in the Ramesside Period," in *Chasing Chariots. Proceedings of the First International Chariot Conference (Cairo 2012)*, ed. André J. Veldmeijer and Salima Ikram (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2013), 17–27.

partner. Obviously, dispatching a higher-level diplomatic messenger shows respect and genuine intentions for conducting communication and negotiation, whereas sending a low-level messenger sends a signal of coolness or disapproval.²²¹ The Hittite kings would send their sons as messengers to Kizzuwatna when this former vassal state enjoyed some degree of independence from Hittite rule.²²² As Kizzuwatna returned to the Hittite orbit, its king was expected to appear before the Hittite king when summoned; if he did not wish to go, one of his sons (not just any official) had to fulfill this obligation on his behalf.²²³ When Ḫattušili III attempted to negotiate peace with Piyama-radu, a Hittite enemy who was stirring up trouble in Hittite subject territories in western Anatolia, the latter requested that the Hittite Crown Prince be sent to conduct him into the presence of the Hittite king.²²⁴

Hence, the level of representation was a prominent matter in Late Bronze Age diplomacy that could make or break a negotiation. It is in this context that one should understand the severity of the Babylonian king's sending of a mere ass-herder as his messenger to Amenhotep III (EA 1: 17-21); it undoubtedly sent a negative diplomatic signal and was probably perceived by Amenhotep III as a deliberate act of provocation.²²⁵ Indeed, a diplomatic messenger should be able to demonstrate the admirable qualities of his country and the advantage of maintaining close friendly relations with it through his personality, manners, hospitality, and erudition.²²⁶

²²¹ Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 85. Tušratta sent his chief minister Keliya to Egypt (EA 17: 46-50). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 42. Precedents for sending similarly high-ranking officials were known from the Mari archives; Zimri-Lim's vizier Habdu-Malik was dispatched on a peace mission to Andarig and Kurda (text 26.392). Wolfgang Heimpel, *Letters to the King of Mari: A New Translation, with Historical Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 127.

²²² Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 12.

²²³ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 15.

²²⁴ Harry A. Hoffner, *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 302.

²²⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1.

²²⁶ Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 114.

When a diplomatic messenger arrived at his destination, how he was treated by the host king depended upon many factors: the political status of his sender, the relationship between his sender and his host, and his own status. The host king could manipulate a deviation from the standard and expected treatment to show that he held his diplomatic partner in high esteem, or to snub the latter and express displeasure. While kind gestures might not be reciprocated, mistreatment (whether intentional or not) was often considered as a deliberate slight and solicited swift retaliation.

Undoubtedly, how a diplomatic messenger was received should ideally have befitted his own rank and that of his sender. When a messenger arrived at his destination, his first point of contact would likely have been an official appointed by the king. The significance of the rank of such an official was undoubtedly on the mind of one Hittite official, as he deferred meeting with envoys of the Kaška people and referred them to a higher-ranking colleague (HKM 71: 3-15).²²⁷

Theoretically, the diplomatic messengers were entitled to an audience with the host king when they reached their destination. Nevertheless, ample evidence from diplomatic archives suggests that such honor was not automatically granted to all diplomatic messengers, to the dismay of their senders. After Rib-Hadda was expelled by his treacherous brother, he fled to Beirut and dispatched his son to the Egyptian court to request military assistance. Perhaps unwilling to interfere but reluctant to openly reject his pleas, the Egyptian king gave his son cold treatment by detaining him in Egypt while simultaneously denying him a royal audience (EA 138: 71-93).²²⁸

The honor of having a royal audience was presumably reserved for “valuable” vassals and their messengers. Nonetheless, even messengers dispatched by these individuals were not exempt from being

²²⁷ This letter from the Commander of the Chariot-warriors to his colleague Kaššū reads: “Regarding what you wrote to me, as follows: ‘Lord, if only you would drive down here! The Kaška men keep saying: ‘If only the Commander of the Chariot-warrior would drive here, we would make peace!’ You keep writing to me like that! (But) are you not a lord (too)? Furthermore, they call you Commander of the Military Heralds, and I am Commander of the Chariot-warriors. Why have you actually deferred(?) to me? Why have you not met with their envoys? Are you not a great lord?’” Harry A. Hoffner, *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 227-8.

²²⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 222.

denied access to the king. In EA 47, a king of Ugarit (whose name was not preserved) voiced his frustration that his messenger was denied a royal audience: “[Moreover, I sen]t my messenger to my lord, but my lord did not question him. [And to a]ll the messengers of [other] kings [you gi]ve your tablet. You send (them), [but] your own messenger(s) [you (also) sen]d to them. To me, however, [and to] my messenger(s) [you have not giv]en your tablet, and your own messenger you have not sent [to m]e. [Am I treated in accordance] with the loyal<ty> of my heart?” (EA 47: 12-21).²²⁹ His drastic reaction was justifiable. As a hub of eastern Mediterranean trade, the coastal city of Ugarit enjoyed a privileged status among Egypt's Levantine vassals. Its kings felt entitled to use a unique hybrid greeting formula²³⁰ that distinguished them from other more subservient Egyptian vassals (EA 45: 1-7, EA 49: 1-16),²³¹ and even bluntly requested gifts from the pharaoh (EA 49: 17-26).²³² The pharaoh's denial of a royal audience probably sent an alarming signal to the Ugaritic king who dispatched EA 47, which may have expedited Ugarit's switch of allegiance to the Hittites in the late Amarna period.

On the other end of the spectrum, Egyptian messengers were typically treated with honor and respect. Tušratta of Mittani never tired of reminding Amenhotep III of how he treated the latter's messengers and their retinue with exceptional honor, e.g., inviting them to the *kimru*-feast (EA 27: 99-103).²³³ In EA 21, Tušratta made the remarkable claim that he treated Amenhotep III's messenger and the

²²⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 119.

²³⁰ Niqmaddu greeted the king in EA 49: “To the king, the Sun, my lord. Message of Niqm-Adda, your servant: I fall at the feet of the king, the Sun, my lord, May all go well for the king, the Sun, my lord, [h]is housh[old], his ch[ief wife], for his (other) wives, for [his sons, ... the ar]chers, for [everything else belonging to the king], the Sun, my lord.[...]” (EA 49: 1-16). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 120. It is a hybrid of the prostration formula used by Egyptian vassals and the more egalitarian greeting formula employed by fellow great kings. In *Bowing and Scraping in the Ancient Near East*, Morris systematically analyzed the greeting formulas used by Egypt's vassals and demonstrated their value for studying the internal structure of the Egyptian empire. She devised a method for ranking the greeting formula on a scale from 1 to 5 (from the least to the most obsequious) and Ugarit was on the top of the list as its kings were allowed to employ exceptionally high-status greeting formulas. Ellen F. Morris, “Bowing and Scraping in the Ancient Near East: An Investigation into Obsequiousness in the Amarna Letters,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 65, no. 3 (2006): 179–96.

²³¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 117, 120.

²³² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 120.

²³³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 89.

interpreter like gods and lavished them with gifts (EA 21: 24-32).²³⁴ When the Babylonian king was unable to grant the Egyptian envoys an audience and banquet with them, he proactively sent an explanatory letter to the pharaoh to ensure that no misunderstanding would arise and that the latter would not interpret this as a deliberate slight. Tudḫaliya II of Hatti showed favor to his newly subjugated vassal Šunaššura of Kizzuwatna by assuring the latter that the Hittite noblemen will rise from their seats when Šunaššura entered into the Hittite king's presence (CTH 41 and 131, A i, 38-44).²³⁵ Beckman interpreted this honorary treatment as a face-saving device to comfort Šunaššura during his annual visit to the Hittite court.²³⁶ The meaning of the rising of a seated audience to show respect was probably understood in Egypt. One of the Amarna scholarly tablets (EA 357) contains the myth of Nergal and Ereškigal; the story related how Ereškigal (mistress of the underworld) threatened to kill the god who did not rise before her messenger.²³⁷

For a foreign envoy, a royal audience with the Egyptian king could prove to be a bewildering and exhilarating experience. In the process, nonverbal communication could be used by the Egyptian king as a means of reinforcing imperial hegemony through highly ritualistic acts, e.g., prostration before the pharaoh or even kissing the dirt beneath his feet.²³⁸ When such obsequiousness could not be performed in person, they were expressed in written forms, i.e., highly elaborate greeting/prostration formulas, in the Amarna Letters.²³⁹ An intriguing question is how closely they mimic the rituals of obeisance performed during face-to-face meetings with the king. The iconographical evidence shows all foreigners doing obeisance to the

²³⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 50.

²³⁵ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 15.

²³⁶ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 4.

²³⁷ The god Nergal, who offended Ereškigal by remaining seated in front of her messenger, was forced by his father to reconcile with Ereškigal. Instead of making amends, he resorted to violence and ended up taking her as wife. Shlomo Izre'el, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets* (Groningen: Styx, 1997), 51-55.

²³⁸ According to the Stela of Piye, this manner of doing obeisance to the king survived into the Nubian period. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume III: The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 80.

²³⁹ Ellen F. Morris, "Bowling and Scraping in the Ancient Near East: An Investigation into Obsequiousness in the Amarna Letters," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 65, no. 3 (2006): 179-96.

king in a similar manner (which represented an idealized, Egypt-centric worldview); however, the messengers of great kings probably were exempt from such demeaning ways of paying homage.²⁴⁰

Proxemics, i.e., the use of space and distance, is another essential aspect of nonverbal communication. A highly ritualized type of royal audience, the gift/tribute presentation ceremony, best illustrates the potential of using proxemics for the material expression of power relations and ideology. As the focal point of the ceremony, the king was usually enthroned on a raised platform or in a kiosk/pavilion accessible through stairs, which physically elevated him above the foreign envoys even though he was in a sitting position. Being forced to look up to the king (in a literal sense), the foreign guests were constantly reminded of the pharaoh's superior status.²⁴¹ In a similar vein, the venue of the royal audience, which was usually a palatial setting, could serve to impress and intimidate the envoys and remind them of the pharaoh's elevated status and power.

The preeminent position of the pharaoh as a divine king could be thrown in relief not only by the spatial organization, but also by emphasizing the hierarchical structure of communication. For instance, evidence suggests that communication between the Egyptian king and foreign envoys was mediated by Egyptian officials or envoys. Limiting direct access to the pharaoh increased the social distance between him and the foreign envoys, which further accentuated his unique status.

The use of motion and motionlessness/quiescence to emphasize asymmetrical power relations was observed when foreign envoys moved to approach the pharaoh and perform the rituals of obeisance while the latter remained motionless on his throne. From the Egyptian perspective, this unilateral/centripetal movement symbolized voluntariness, i.e., the foreigners took the initiative to pay homage to the pharaoh due to his renown and preeminent power (instead of coercive measures). Furthermore, Egyptian textual and pictorial evidence often associated foreign tribute-bearers with the four cardinal points so that the pharaoh

²⁴⁰ As the chariot-viewing incident illustrates, indiscriminate treatment of messengers sent by great kings and small kings violated diplomatic protocols and was not deemed acceptable (EA 1: 88-98). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2-3.

²⁴¹ cf. the balcony of the Queen of the United Kingdom and the Pope.

could proudly claim to be receiving tributes from all four corners of the world and, by implication, assert universal dominion.²⁴² Last but not least, the Egyptian king could employ another tool in his diplomatic toolkit, i.e., chronemics (the use of time), to assert authority over foreign envoys. The excruciating experience of the Assyrian messengers, who were forced to stay in the sun for long periods of time, prompted a letter of protest from the Assyrian king (EA 16: 43-55).²⁴³

Indeed, the gift/tribute presentation ceremony represents the epitome of intentional and symbolic communication through ritual performance. This nonverbal system of communication relied on shared understandings of its constitutive elements and patterns, which can be acquired with more ease than linguistic skills. One can imagine how the foreign envoys marveled at the sight of the awe-inspiring image of the king, the monumental setting, the diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds of other foreign envoys, and the dazzling array of exotic gifts/tributes. Indeed, the ubiquitous motif of bound captives in the palatial setting and on the pharaoh's regalia undoubtedly sent shivers down the spines of some Egyptian subjects of dubious loyalty. A well-orchestrated gift/tribute presentation ceremony could simultaneously serve multiple purposes: awing pharaoh's Egyptian and foreign subjects, enhancing his reputation in the international community, and even promoting an Egypt-centric ideology often at odds with reality.²⁴⁴

Diplomatic messengers were occasionally honored with gifts.²⁴⁵ The variable quality and quantity of gifts bestowed upon diplomatic messengers reflected a gradation of dignity with which the envoys were

²⁴² Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna. Part III: The Tombs of Huya and Ahmes* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), 9, pls. XIII, XIV. This association between royal control over four corners of the world and universal dominion is attested in Late Bronze Age Mesopotamian royal eulogies, e.g., the *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I*: "He who (controls) the entire four directions, the awe-inspiring one – the assembly of all the kings fear him continually." Peter B. Machinist, "The Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I: A Study in Middle Assyrian Literature" (New Haven, Yale University, 1978), 66-7.

²⁴³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 39.

²⁴⁴ What is more, the rigid ritual structure of the ceremony deprived the participants of the opportunity to voice any objection on the spot, which, in the eyes of other participants, may signify acquiescence.

²⁴⁵ In Middle Babylonian times, not only the heads of a diplomatic mission but also ordinary troops received gifts when deployed abroad, e.g., Babylonian troops received gifts in Mari (text 26.274). Wolfgang Heimpel, *Letters to the King of Mari: A New Translation, with Historical Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 572. On this topic, see also: Dominique Charpin, "Tu es de mon sang": *les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

received. The differential treatment of messengers was based on their own status, the status of their sender, the relationship between their sender and host, and various other factors. Both great and small kings were keenly aware of the political significance of the bestowal of gifts, and they were constantly monitoring it as a barometer of bilateral relationships. Upset by the differential treatment accorded to his messenger and that of the king of Akka, Rib-Hadda of Byblos beseeched the Egyptian king to honor his messenger with even more gifts as a recognition of Byblos' undying loyalty to Egypt (EA 88: 40-51).²⁴⁶ A letter from the elders of Irqata revealed that pharaonic gifts were valued by Egypt's Levantine vassals as symbols of royal favor and patronage that could effectively deter malicious neighbors: "May he (the pharaoh) grant a gift to his servant(s) so our enemies will see this and eat dirt (i.e., to be defeated)" (EA 100: 33-44).²⁴⁷

Occasionally, diplomatic messengers had to endure mistreatment or face punishment for his own misconduct or as a result of his sender's actions. Statistically, the detention of diplomatic messengers was the most commonly employed method to send a diplomatic signal, usually for expressing displeasure and exerting pressure on their sender.²⁴⁸ However, the meaning of detaining messengers could be quite equivocal, and it did not necessarily forebode an open conflict. The detention of diplomatic messengers could signal an intention to reduce the frequency of communication due to the addressee's inability or unwillingness to fulfill requests by the addressor. Therefore, when verbal warnings did little to prevent Rib-Hadda of Byblos from bombarding the pharaoh with a constant stream of letters (EA 117: 1-9), the Egyptian

²⁴⁶ Small kings were eager to jockey for more power and prestige in diplomatic interactions, in much the same way as the great kings. Vassal rulers could be equally vocal when they felt mistreated or slighted by their overlord; thus, Biridiya of Megiddo complained that he was treated with contempt by the king and honored less than his less important (Rainey: younger) colleagues (EA 245: 36-47). Such differential treatment evidently caused him concerns that Egypt was placing less value on its relationship with Megiddo. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 160-61, 299.

²⁴⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 172-3, note 8.

²⁴⁸ This practice is widely attested in both ancient and modern civilizations. Su Wu, a Chinese diplomat of the Western Han Dynasty, was detained on a mission to the Xiongnu and spent 19 years in captivity, during which time he endured much hardship. Even during his years in servitude herding sheep, he always held onto the imperial staff (given to imperial messengers) and used it as a shepherd's rod. He was greatly praised and rewarded for his undying loyalty to the Han Dynasty after his return to China. In contrast, the modern practice of expressing displeasure/protest is to declare a diplomat *persona non grata* and expel him from his country of accreditation.

king detained his messengers to deprive him of the means of sending letters.²⁴⁹ Deeply disturbed and anxious, Rib-Hadda pleaded with his overlord to release his messengers (EA 117: 10-21).²⁵⁰ His desperate pleas seemed to have been unheeded since he repeated this request in a later letter (EA 126: 34-42).²⁵¹ In this case, the Egyptian king detained Rib-Hadda's messengers to implicitly communicate a negative answer to the latter's requests for provisions and military assistance. Amenhotep III may have employed the same strategy to suppress Kadašman-Enlil I's insatiable appetite for more Egyptian gold (EA 3: 13-22).²⁵²

The Egyptian kings were constantly accused by fellow great kings and Egyptian vassals of detaining their messengers for an extended period of time (EA 3: 13-22).²⁵³ Hattušili III bitterly complained that his messenger was stranded in Egypt for too long (KUB 3.34, rev. 8-9).²⁵⁴ Perhaps aware of the Egyptian kings' notorious habit of withholding messengers, the Assyrian king proactively urged his Egyptian brother not to subject his messengers to the same ordeal in his first letter to the latter (EA 15: 16-22).²⁵⁵ The detention of messengers was an effective means for exerting pressure on their sender because many diplomatic messengers were people of status in their home country and occupied prominent positions in the administration.²⁵⁶ How a king reacted when his envoy was detained depended on the power relations between him and the host king. Therefore, while Rib-Hadda of Byblos could only humbly plead with the Egyptian king to release his messenger (EA 83: 30-37),²⁵⁷ the Mittanian king retaliated by withholding the

²⁴⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 193-94.

²⁵⁰ "And the two men from Egypt whom I sent to the palace have not come out. Did I not write to the king, 'There is no one to bring my tablet to the palace. It is these two men that must bring a tablet to the king.' And now, as they have not come out, I am accordingly afraid and I have turned to my lord." William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 193.

²⁵¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 205-6.

²⁵² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 7.

²⁵³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 7.

²⁵⁴ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 184-85.

²⁵⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 38.

²⁵⁶ The Mittanian messenger Keliya was Tušratta's chief minister (EA 17: 46-50). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 42.

²⁵⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 153.

envoy pharaoh requested when confronted with the same situation (EA 29: 155-61).²⁵⁸ This countermeasure could prove to be particularly effective against the Egyptians, who dreaded the prospect of dying abroad, being denied a proper Egyptian burial, and hence an afterlife.²⁵⁹ In the *Story of Wenamun*, the ruler of Byblos admonished Wenamun not to invoke his wrath; otherwise, the Egyptian envoy would share the fate of the envoys of Khaemwese (who may have been a vizier of Ramesses IX), who died abroad after spending seventeen years in detention.²⁶⁰

Since the activities of diplomats were closely monitored and scrutinized for meaning, a potentially provoking gesture such as the detention of messengers demanded an explanation if it resulted from objective, uncontrollable factors. Thus, the king of Alašiya informed the Egyptian king that the Egyptian messenger was forced to stay in Alašiya for three years because a pandemic was ravaging his country; he would presumably remain in Alašiya until circumstances became safe for travel again (EA 35: 35-39).²⁶¹ Ḫattušili III, on the other hand, reacted with sarcasm and mockery to Kadašman-Enlil II's claim that the

²⁵⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 96.

²⁵⁹ In the *Story of Sinuhe*, the hero, despite having established a prosperous life abroad, yearned to return to Egypt so that he could be buried in the Egyptian manner: “What is more important than my corpse be buried in the land in which I was born! ... May I be conducted to the city of eternity! May I serve the Mistress of All! May she speak well of me to her children; may she spend eternity above me!” The king of Egypt graciously granted his wish and promised to grant him an Egyptian burial with all necessary funeral provisions: “A night is made for you with ointments and wrappings from the hand of Tait. A funeral procession is made for you on the day of burial; the mummy case is of gold, its head of lapis lazuli. The sky is above you as you lie in the hearse, oxen drawing you, musicians going before you. The dance of *mww*-dancers is done at the door of your tomb; the offering-list is read to you; sacrifice is made before your offering-stone. Your tomb-pillars, made of white stone, are among (those of) the royal children. You shall not die abroad! Not shall Asiatics inter you. You shall not be wrapped in the skin of a ram to serve as your coffin. Too long a roaming of the earth! Think of your corpse, come back!” See Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 229-30. It is worth noting that wrapping the corpse with animal skin, a burial practice considered to be barbaric by the Egyptians, seems to have been meted out as a punishment to Egyptians who have committed abominable crimes. A recent re-examination of the so-called “Screaming Mummy”, a poorly mummified mummy with a gaping mouth and wrapped in sheepskin, lends support to its traditional identification as Prince Pentaweret, a son of Ramesses III who was involved in a harem conspiracy against his father. It may not be a far-fetched assumption that his body was wrapped in animal skin instead of pure, white linen because capital punishment was deemed not harsh enough for his offense. Therefore, he deserved to suffer eternally in the afterlife. Bob Brier, “The Mystery of Unknown Man E,” *Archaeology* 59, no. 2 (2006): 36–42.

²⁶⁰ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 228.

²⁶¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 108.

suspension of diplomatic correspondence should be attributed to the dangers posed to Babylonian envoys by hostile Assyrians and Ahlamu tribesmen.²⁶²

An assault on a messenger's person or dignity was justifiably regarded as an offense against his sender. Nonetheless, in some cases, the definition of "mistreatment" was less clear-cut. For example, in EA 16, Aššur-uballiṭ I of Assyria complained that Akhenaten forced his envoys to stay under the scorching sun (EA 16: 43-55).²⁶³ The Assyrian king may have been referring to an outdoor religious ceremony that the devout king conducted in honor of Aten in the latter's open-air temples²⁶⁴ (or an Awarding of Gold ceremony²⁶⁵) (see figs. 2.2 and 2.3 below). Akhenaten's inclusion of foreigners in court life indicated an interest in making his court appear cosmopolitan, despite accusations of negligence by his Levantine vassals and the prevailing scholarly opinion that he lacked any interest in foreign affairs.

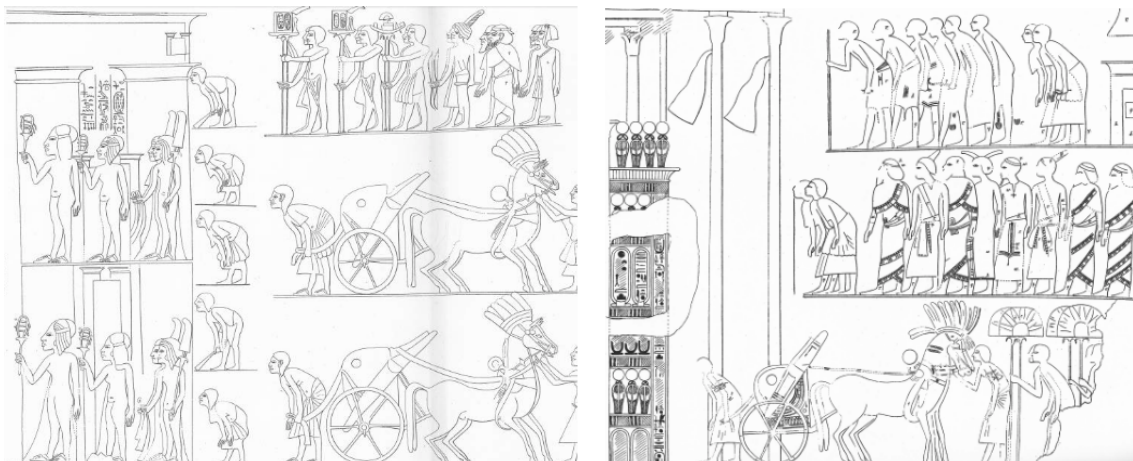


Figure 2.2 (Left) Foreign guests attending a religious ceremony at the Aten temple. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part I: The Tomb of Meryra* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1903), pl. 25.

Figure 2.3 (Right) Foreigners at the Awarding of Gold ceremony. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pl. 33.

²⁶² Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, Writings from the Ancient World 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 134.

²⁶³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 39.

²⁶⁴ Interpretation by Redford, see Donald B. Redford, *Akhenaten, the Heretic King* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 235.

²⁶⁵ During this ceremony, Akhenaten and his chief wife Nefertiti emerged from the Window of Appearance (a balcony-like structure) and tossed valuable items like gold collars at high officials being rewarded beneath the window. Barry J. Kemp, "The Window of Appearance at El-Amarna, and the Basic Structure of This City," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 62 (1976): 81–99.

The Egyptian elites undoubtedly considered participation in such ceremonies an exceptional honor and a great opportunity to show their dedication to the king's religious reforms, as many of them depict their participation in their tombs at Amarna. However, due to linguistic and cultural barriers, the Assyrian messengers probably did not fully comprehend the significance of such ceremonies and therefore could not relate to such feelings. Understandably, they considered the experience of observing the ceremony physical abuse rather than an honor and bitterly complained to their sender, who resorted to sarcasm to convey his displeasure over the ordeal which his messengers were subjected to: "Why should messengers be made to stay constantly out in the sun and so die in the sun? If staying out in the sun means profit for the king, then let him (a messenger) stay out and let him die right there in the sun, (but) for the king himself there must be a profit."²⁶⁶ The protest by the Assyrian king is a perfect example of how intercultural misunderstandings can arise in verbal as well as nonverbal communications.

2.2.1.3. Signaling through Exchange of Diplomatic Gifts

Another means for sending diplomatic signals was through violating the principle of reciprocity that governed diplomatic gift exchange during the Late Bronze Age. This principle required that the value of a counter-gift should equal or (ideally) exceed the value of the gift received.²⁶⁷ In a way, the quantity and quality of gifts served as barometers of interstate relations. The Ancient Near Eastern kings would not hesitate to send a message of displeasure or signify a cooling down of relations by withholding expected gifts, sending gifts of inferior quality, or sending counter-gifts of less value than the gifts received.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 39.

²⁶⁷ Kevin Avruch, "Reciprocity, Equality, and Status-Anxiety in the Amarna Letters," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 165–73.

²⁶⁸ Diplomatic signaling through the exchange of gifts was attested in the Mari letters. The Ešnunneans rejected the visitation gifts of the envoy of Išme-Dagan and subsequently turned down the latter's request for military assistance: "[To my lord speak! Your servant Yasim-El (says), 'Haqba-Hammu wrote me] as follows: 'The Ešnunnean [] to []. And Isme-Dagan entered Ekallatum. Mut-Askur, the son of Išme-Dagan, who went for additional troops to Ešnunna—they did not accept his visitation gift. . . . that man, and they pushed him aside. They did not give him any troops, and he returned empty-handed.' This, Haqba-Hammu wrote me." (text 26.428). Wolfgang Heimpel, *Letters*

The episode of the missing solid gold statues, which dragged on in several Mittani letters, nicely illustrates this point. At that particular juncture of history, external threats were piling up for the Mittani empire.²⁶⁹ As the value of Mittani as a political ally continued to diminish, Akhenaten might have deemed it unnecessary to send the solid gold statues promised by his father Amenhotep III in order to sustain the cordial relations between the two countries. In anticipation of the imminent downfall of Mittani, Akhenaten adopted a rather aloof attitude towards Tušratta, who reminisced in vain about intimate relationships between Egypt and Mittani and close personal ties between him and Amenhotep III.²⁷⁰ Nonetheless, if the two countries' interests did not align, all the rhetoric and good intentions would not produce any lasting impact. In the end, realpolitik had won the day.

Withholding diplomatic gifts at critical junctures carries even more significance. A telling example is Šalmaneser I's failure to send proper congratulatory gifts upon Ḫattušili III's accession to the throne.²⁷¹

to the King of Mari: A New Translation, with Historical Introduction, Notes, and Commentary (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 363.

²⁶⁹ In the east, Assyria had broken free from the yoke of Mittani and was seeking to be recognized by Egypt as a great power. In the west, the Hittite kingdom, having recovered from a period of weakness under the strong leadership of Šuppiluliuma I (1344 – 1322 BCE), was poised to expand into Syria again. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 184-85.

²⁷⁰ Tušratta's frustration probably largely stemmed from the gradual realization that the deteriorating relationship between Egypt and Mittani could not be salvaged, judging from Akhenaten's neglect of his desperate pleas and nostalgia. Tušratta tried to establish another line of communication and sway the opinion of Akhenaten through his mother Tiye (EA 26, 27, 28). However, the deterioration of relationship is an irreversible process; Tušratta's nostalgic recapitulations of previous cordial relationships were met with a deaf ear. Akhenaten apparently adopted a pragmatic approach to diplomacy and refused to be restrained by ideological notions or moral obligations. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 84-91.

²⁷¹ The Hittite king voiced his grievances in a letter to the latter: "Did [my brother (?)] not send you appropriate gifts for greeting? But when I assumed kingship, [then] you did not send a messenger to me. It is the custom that when kings assume kingship, the kings, his equals in rank, send him appropriate [gifts of greeting], clothing befitting kingship, and fine [oil] for his anointing. But you did not do this today." (CTH173 = KBo 1.14) Following the prevailing opinion, Beckman identified the unnamed Assyrian king as Adad-nīrārī I; however, as Mora and Giorgieri have argued, a synchronism between Šalmaneser I and Ḫattušili III is more likely. Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, *Writings from the Ancient World* 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 140. Clelia Mora and Mauro Giorgieri, *Le lettere tra i re ittiti e i re assiri ritrovate a Ḫattuša* (Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N., 2004), 57-58. Mauro Giorgieri, "Das Verhältnis Assyriens zum Hethiterreich," in *Assur - Gott, Stadt und Land: 5. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 18.-21. Februar 2004 in Berlin*, ed. Johannes Renger, *Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 5 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), 177.

Both divine sanction²⁷² and recognition by fellow kings and vassals²⁷³ were necessary for an ancient Near Eastern king to acquire legitimacy for his rule. Considering the unusual circumstances in which Ḫattušili III rose to power, Šalmaneser I's inactivity at this sensitive timing could have signaled a refusal to recognize his legitimacy. This interpretation may receive corroboration from a letter of Ramesses II to Ḫattušili III, which included a quote from the Assyrian king denouncing Ḫattušili III as a substitute of a great king (KBo 8.14, obv. 10).²⁷⁴ Unfortunately, this section of the letter is poorly preserved; therefore, the context of this reference remains unknown.

2.2.1.4. Payment of Tributes and Fulfillment of Vassal Duties

Another type of interstate economic transaction - the payment of tribute - was endowed with rich political meaning. The payment of tribute was a material expression of a tributary relationship between its sender and recipient, and the punctual payment of tribute was considered an expression of fealty.²⁷⁵ In the

²⁷² Divine sanction of the pharaoh's universal dominion constituted a recurrent theme in royal inscriptions. Furthermore, visual representations of Egyptian kings receiving symbols of dominion and authority from the divine graced the walls of numerous Egyptian temples. On the wall of the sanctuary of Speos Artemidos, Seti I is depicted receiving a scepter from a goddess. See Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings. Vol. IV: Lower and Middle Egypt (Delta and Cairo to Asyut)*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 164. The scene atop the Stela of Hammurabi and the Mari Investiture Scene (both kings receiving the rod and ring, symbols of authority from the divine) showcased how this notion was deeply rooted in the Syro-Mesopotamian political and cultural traditions as well. Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an "International Style" in the Ancient Near East, 1400 - 1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 83-4.

²⁷³ It was courteous and perhaps demanded by diplomatic protocol to notify foreign allies and vassals when a new king ascended the throne. The Hyksos ruler Apophis sent a letter of protest to the newly ascended ruler of Kush who failed to do so: "From the hand of the ruler of Avaris. Awoserre the son of Re Apophis greets the son of the ruler of Kush. Why do you ascend as ruler without letting me know?" Harry S. Smith and Alexandrina Smith, "A Reconsideration of the Kamose Texts," *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 103, no. 1 (1976): 48-76. Thutmose II's Aswan inscription, which celebrates the king's coronation, mentioned the delivery of tribute by Nubians and Asiatics. James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 49.

²⁷⁴ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 25.

²⁷⁵ In one of his Plague Prayers (CTH 376.A), Muršili II bemoaned that many neighboring polities and peoples turned hostile against Ḫatti and severed their tributary relationships with it. Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 52-3.

aftermath of a military defeat, it signified an acknowledgment of the hegemonic power of the victor and often a request to enter into a tributary relationship.²⁷⁶

Just as the value of diplomatic gifts measured the strength of friendship between great kings, the quality of tribute goods reflected the loyalty and devotion of a vassal to his overlord. With growing doubts about the Hittite king's ability to protect him, Ibiranu of Ugarit neglected his vassal duty to visit the Hittite great king in his capital and sent only paltry gifts to the Hittite nobles. Unsurprisingly, the Hittite viceroy promptly sent him a strongly-worded letter of reprimand concerning his dubious behaviors: “Your messenger which you have sent to Ḫatti, and the presents which you have conveyed to the Great Men are quite inadequate ... Did I not write to you in these terms: ‘Send to the Chief of the Tablets a gift of outstanding quality?’ So why have you not shown him the respect to which he is due by sending him such a gift? Why have you acted thus?” (RS 34.136, 5-21)²⁷⁷

In addition to defaulting on tribute payments, Ibiranu’s reluctance to fulfill his military obligations (clearly stipulated in the vassal treaties) caused even greater concern for the Hittite authority. Ibiranu’s unwillingness to comply forced the Hittite authority to adopt coercive measures and send officials to review his troops.²⁷⁸ When Ibiranu eventually answered a second Hittite demand for military assistance, he did it half-heartedly and retained the best fighting men to protect his own country.²⁷⁹ Ibiranu’s reluctance to

²⁷⁶ This symbolic value of tribute payment was not forgotten during the Nubian period of Egyptian history (the 25th Dynasty, 747-656 BCE). As Piye’s troops swept across Egypt, defeated local rulers threw themselves on their bellies and presented lavish tribute goods to this Kushite ruler to appease him and recognize his suzerainty. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume III: The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 72-3.

²⁷⁷ Trevor R. Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East: The Royal Correspondence of the Late Bronze Age* (London: Routledge, 2003), 216. Florence Malbran-Labat, “Lettres (no 6-29),” in *Une bibliothèque au sud de la ville: les textes de la 34e campagne (1973)*, ed. Pierre Bordreuil, Ras Shamra-Ugarit 7 (Paris: Éditions recherche sur les civilisations, 1991), no. 7: 29-30.

²⁷⁸ Trevor R. Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East: The Royal Correspondence of the Late Bronze Age* (London: Routledge, 2003), 216.

²⁷⁹ Unsurprisingly, this obstinately uncooperative attitude provoked the Hittite Viceroy of Carchemish; despite his stern warnings, the Ugaritic king remained recalcitrant. Nevertheless, this choice is perfectly understandable since his own kingdom was facing threats from the marauding Sea Peoples. Michael Heltzer, “Some Thoughts about the Last Days of Ugarit,” *Ugarit Forschungen* 37 (2005): 371–75. Ibiranu’s successor Niqmaddu III inherited this noncompliant policy and neglected Hittite demands for troops for construction work in Alalakh. Letters discovered in the Urtenu archive reveal that threatening letters from the Viceroy of Carchemish did not intimidate him; an unknown writer tried to appeal to the conscience of this recalcitrant king: “Does His Majesty not treat you as a son

commit his troops to Hittite campaigns against Assyria betrayed a lack of trust in the Hittite empire's ability to protect its vassal kingdoms.

While a reluctance to fulfill one's vassal duties signals a centrifugal tendency, the dutiful performance of them does not necessarily demonstrate unquestionable loyalty. A case in point is that the Amurrite king, a self-claimed loyal Egyptian vassal, was simultaneously in a tributary relationship with the Egyptian king and the Mittanian king (EA 101: 1-10).²⁸⁰ The double-dealing behaviors of the Amurru kings were not restricted to this. While he repeatedly inflated the threat of Hittite aggression to justify his delayed journey to Egypt (EA 165: 18-27), he was simultaneously consorting with Hittite vassals, e.g., banqueting with the king of Qadesh (EA 162: 22-29) and supplying Hittite messengers with provisions (EA 161: 47-56).²⁸¹ Accused by the Egyptian authority of this offense and unable to deny it, he promised to perform the same duty for his Egyptian overlord (EA 161: 47-56).²⁸² These double-dealing activities gave strong hints of the Amurrite king's secret designs to defect to the enemy camp; however, the Egyptians failed to pick up the signals, which led to substantial territorial losses. In their defense, the Egyptians may have been deceived by the Amurrite king's remarkable diligence in paying tributes, despite warnings from Ili-Rapah of Byblos: "May the king <not> pay attention to the property which Aziru is sending to him. The property

of him? Then why don't you listen to [his] wor[ds]?" (RSO 23.33 = RS 94.2506). Elena Devecchi, "A Reluctant Servant: Ugarit under Foreign Rule during the Late Bronze Age," in *A Stranger in the House – the Crossroads III. Proceedings of an International Conference on Foreigners in Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern Societies of the Bronze Age Held in Prague, September 10–13, 2018*, ed. Jana Mynářová, Marwan Kilani, and Sergio Alivernini (Prague: Charles University, 2019), 127–32.

²⁸⁰ Such duplicitous behaviors may have been rather common among vassal kings whose kingdoms were sandwiched between great powers. A letter from Rib-Hadda of Byblos seems to imply that Abdi-Aširta was executed by the Mittanian king for his failure to pay tributes (of quality?): "Moreover, why is there war [against] the king? Is it not Haya? [No]w, the ships of the army are not to enter the land of Amurru, for they have killed Abdi-Aširta, since they had no wool and he had no garments of lapis lazuli or MAR-stone color: *bu-bu-mar* (?) to give as tribute to the land of Mittana." (EA 101: 1-10). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 174. Rainey offers a completely different translation; based on his interpretation of the text, Rib-Hadda was accusing the leader of the Egyptian fleet, the vizier Haya, of not seizing the opportunity to kill Abdi-Aširta when the latter did not have the goods to bribe the Mittanians for help. Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 553, 1445.

²⁸¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 253, 249, 248.

²⁸² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 248.

that he is sending is things of Šumur and the property of the city ruler of the king whom he slew.” (EA 139: 29-40).²⁸³ The case of Aziru, when placed in juxtaposition with that of Rib-Hadda of Byblos, forcefully demonstrated that concrete actions were more convincing than verbal protestations of loyalty.

2.2.1.5. Level of Ceremonialization

Diplomacy is a game of power and prestige. While the majority of diplomatic exchanges involve only a small group of high officials and their kings out of considerations of efficiency and confidentiality, some of their aspects are prone to ceremonialization for royal propaganda. In fact, the pomp and circumstance of diplomacy could disclose the substance of diplomatic processes because the development of diplomatic norms has been deeply intertwined with those of rituals and ceremonies.

The degree of ceremonialization of a diplomatic encounter or event serves as a fairly accurate indicator of the power dynamic between its participants and the importance attached to it by its organizer. One example that throws this point in sharp relief is the pomp and circumstance which characterized the diplomatic marriage between Amenhotep III and Giluḥepa: a long diplomatic tango that preceded the consummation of the marriage, the completion of proper rituals like the anointing of the bride, and public display of dowry, etc. Moreover, to celebrate the arrival of Giluḥepa in the company of her large retinue, Amenhotep III issued numerous large commemorative scarabs to his Egyptian and Levantine subjects.²⁸⁴ Their wide distribution in archaeological contexts demonstrated the importance that Amenhotep III attached to this event, which was communicated to the international community in no vague terms.²⁸⁵ In stark

²⁸³ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 715.

²⁸⁴ C. Blankenberg-Van Delden, “More Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenophis III,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 62 (1976): 74–80. C. Blankenberg-Van Delden, “Once Again Some More Commemorative Scarabs of Amenophis III,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 63 (1977): 83–87. Orly Goldwasser, “A ‘Kirgipa’ Commemorative Scarab of Amenhotep III from Beit-Shean,” *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 12 (2002): 191–93.

²⁸⁵ C. Blankenberg-Van Delden, “More Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenophis III,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 62 (1976): 74–80. C. Blankenberg-Van Delden, “Once Again Some More Commemorative Scarabs of Amenophis III,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 63 (1977): 83–87. Orly Goldwasser, “A ‘Kirgipa’

contrast, the arrival of the second Mittanian princess did not seem to be marked by pageantry. The different levels of ceremonialization of the two Mittanian marriages may be attributed to the fact that the first marriage was concluded when Mittani was still at the peak of its power, whereas the second one took place when this great power was on the verge of crumbling.

Similar to the first Mittanian marriage, a high level of ceremonialization marked the first Hittite marriage between Ramesses II and Ḫattušili III's daughter, known by her Egyptian name Maathorneferure. In place of large commemorative scarabs, Ramesses II commissioned a group of commemorative stelae in prominent temples in Egypt proper and Nubia to celebrate this joyful event.²⁸⁶ The lunettes of these stelae feature a fictional scene in which Ḫattušili III presented his daughter to Ramesses II, who was in the company of two Egyptian gods²⁸⁷ – though judging from textual evidence, it was probably Puduḥepa who accompanied her daughter during part of her long journey to Egypt. The traveling marriage party must have been quite a spectacle for the Levantine rulers, some of whom were entrusted with escort duties by Ramesses II. The inscriptions below the lunette record the fantasized visit by the Hittite king, the ceremonial reception of the marriage party during which Egyptians mingled with the Hittites, and a great banquet.²⁸⁸ All in all, the high level of ceremonialization of this marriage accorded with the status of Ḫatti as a superpower and Egypt's most prominent foreign ally in the early 19th Dynasty.

In stark contrast to the ceremonial reception of Giluḥepa and Maathorneferure, the daughters of Egyptian vassals who entered the Egyptian harem were essentially presented by their fathers to the pharaoh

Commemorative Scarab of Amenhotep III from Beit-Shean," *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 12 (2002): 191–93.

²⁸⁶ Marjorie Fisher, "A Diplomatic Marriage in the Ramesside Period: Maathorneferure, Daughter of the Great Ruler of Ḫatti," in *Beyond Ḫatti: A Tribute to Gary Beckman*, ed. Billie J. Collins and Piotr Michalowski (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 75–119.

²⁸⁷ James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume III. The Nineteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1927), 182.

²⁸⁸ James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume III. The Nineteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1927), 182-6.

like tribute items (EA 99: 10-20).²⁸⁹ Arguably, their royal parents were in no position to conduct marriage negotiations on their behalf. They might enjoy a life of luxury and comfort in the Egyptian harem,²⁹⁰ however, they could never aspire to be more than a minor royal wife or entertain any hope of receiving social calls from messengers of their native countries. The majority of them lived a life of obscurity and remained anonymous posthumously, except the three Syrian wives of Thutmose III (Menhet, Menwi, and Merti) whose shared tomb was discovered on the west bank of Thebes.²⁹¹

2.2.2. Interpretation of Nonverbal Messages

The interpretation of nonverbal messages could be a tricky matter, one of the reasons being that verbal and nonverbal messages might supplement or contradict each other. Ideally, the message conveyed by diplomatic signals would have been in harmony with what the words communicated. However, diplomatic signals are often at variance from what verbal messages communicate. When such an occasion arises, diplomatic signals might be a more accurate indicator of the current state of relations between the two countries. In any case, the interpretation of diplomatic signals is a highly complex process, and there is ample scope for miscommunications and misunderstandings. Various factors, including intentionality, timing, context, and convention, need to be carefully considered. The cultural specificity of signals (e.g., bodily gestures) is another issue. Sensitivity to cultural traits and customs of the host country, then as now, would be essential for ensuring that diplomatic signals were interpreted as intended.

²⁸⁹ A pharaoh instructed the king of Ammiya to send his daughter along with other tribute goods thus: “Prepare your daughter for the king, your lord, and prepare the contributions: [2]0 first-class slaves, silver, chariots, first-class horses.” See William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 171.

²⁹⁰ Christine Lilyquist, James E. Hoch, and Alexander J. Peden, *The Tomb of Three Foreign Wives of Tuthmosis III* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003).

²⁹¹ Christine Lilyquist, James E. Hoch, and Alexander J. Peden, *The Tomb of Three Foreign Wives of Tuthmosis III* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003).

2.3. Comparison & Interplay of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

In interstate communications during the Late Bronze Age, the interlocutors relied on both verbal and nonverbal messages. The production and transmission processes of nonverbal messages/diplomatic signals were less regulated by established conventions than diplomatic correspondence. Therefore, diplomatic signals might enable the Near Eastern kings to communicate with more flexibility and creativity. The choice to solely utilize one type of message or a combination of both was based upon an assessment of their utility for the interlocutor's specific communicative needs.

2.3.1. Intentionality

Communications could be intentional (i.e., the message is deliberately composed and purposive) or unintentional (i.e., an individual's action triggers a response in others without his/her awareness). While intentionality characterized the majority of written messages because diplomatic letters were generally carefully composed by their senders and inscribed by a trained scribe following well-established diplomatic convention, it did not form an integral part of nonverbal messages.²⁹² In other words, as long as an act evoked a certain emotion or response and was interpreted as a deliberate act, it could be understood as a diplomatic signal. For example, Kadašman-Enlil I claimed that Akhenaten's sending of a small military escort to conduct his daughter to Egypt was tantamount to a serious insult; if he consented to such contemptuous treatment of his daughter, it would severely undermine his image as an esteemed great king in the eyes of his neighbors (EA 11: 16-22).²⁹³ Kadašman-Enlil I had legitimate reasons to worry whether this considerable shrinkage of escort troops represented a deliberate slight, considering that Amenhotep III

²⁹² Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall, "Communication: An Essential Aspect of Diplomacy," *International Studies Perspectives* 4, no. 2 (2003): 190.

²⁹³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 21.

had dispatched 3000 soldiers to escort his Babylonian bride (EA 11: 23-28).²⁹⁴ If one presumes Akhenaten's innocence, this incident showcases how nonverbal (mis)communication can occur even if only one participant is engaged. In contrast, verbal communication involves at least two correspondents who are fully aware of their participation in the conversation.

The ancient Near Eastern kings and their representatives were certainly aware of the fact that the production of nonverbal messages could be inadvertent, and exercised caution to avoid a situation where an unintended meaning was derived from an innocent gesture. Hence, the king of Alašiya deemed it necessary to send an explanatory note to his Egyptian counterpart concerning the delayed return of Egyptian messengers, lest the pharaoh misconstrue a well-intended gesture as a negative diplomatic signal (EA 35: 35-39).²⁹⁵ On the other hand, an intentional diplomatic signal was not always detected by its intended receiver, as the unfortunate miscommunication between Rib-Hadda and Akhenaten illustrates: the former clearly failed to receive the encoded message to reduce the frequency of his letters communicated by the latter's silent treatment.

2.3.2. Ambiguity

Nonverbal messages/diplomatic signals usually operate in gray areas not governed by diplomatic etiquette and can be constructed with more ambiguity. While explicit and unambiguous messages are conducive to communication, some degree of ambiguity may be desirable under certain circumstances in diplomacy. Oftentimes, interlocutors preferred diplomatic signals to verbal communications exactly because of the former's ambiguity, which was considered constructive. Such "constructive ambiguity"²⁹⁶ could be employed to communicate unpleasant information, retain some degree of flexibility, and hide duplicity and deception.

²⁹⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 21.

²⁹⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 108.

²⁹⁶ Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall, "Communication: An Essential Aspect of Diplomacy," *International Studies Perspectives* 4, no. 2 (2003): 198.

Some messages were unsuitable to be conveyed linguistically. Diplomatic messages committed into writing are difficult to retract. In contrast, nonverbal communication allows diplomatic players to communicate with more ambiguity and flexibility. Growing increasingly weary of Rib-Hadda's constant stream of letters, Akhenaten denied his messenger the gifts given to messengers sent by other vassals (EA 88: 40-51).²⁹⁷ Because he did not openly reject Rib-Hadda's desperate pleas for military assistance, the pharaoh could easily deny responsibility for the loss of Egyptian territories in the Levant even if he had been willfully ignorant of local political developments. Verbal communications, especially when committed to writing, did not have such deniability.

Nonverbal messages/diplomatic signals were often used to communicate unpleasant things with tact and courtesy. A host king could communicate a snub by treating a diplomatic messenger with coolness, e.g., denying him the chance of a royal audience. The inherent ambiguity of diplomatic signals enabled the Near Eastern kings and their representatives to communicate subtly, which helped prevent the outbreak of open hostilities. Šalmaneser I's withholding of coronation gifts for Ḫattušili III (discussed above) clearly signaled his doubts about the latter's legitimacy, without openly expressing his reluctance to recognize it. It was understandable that the Assyrian king had reservations about openly declaring his support for Ḫattušili III since the dethroned Muršili III was still at large and diligently scheming to retake his throne with the support of loyalist subjects and foreign allies.²⁹⁸ As expected, Šalmaneser I's withholding of expected gifts was perceived as a deliberate insult by Ḫattušili III, who was zealous in seeking recognition of his legitimacy by fellow great kings.²⁹⁹ Given the scanty and fragmentary nature of preserved Hittite-Assyrian correspondence, the subsequent development of this historical episode remains unknown. In any case, the Assyrian king could defend himself (disclaim any malicious intent) by pleading ignorance of the

²⁹⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 160-1.

²⁹⁸ If one adopts a more sinister view of the gesture, perhaps the Assyrian king purposefully withheld coronation gifts, which would have represented formal recognition of legitimacy, to gain leverage over the Hittite king.

²⁹⁹ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, *Writings from the Ancient World* 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 140.

tradition of sending coronation gifts or negligence. This case perfectly illustrates how nonverbal communication, being open to interpretations, allowed the diplomatic actors to communicate with constructive ambiguity.

One must admit that despite the apparent utility of ambiguity in diplomacy, it has its limitations. The ambiguity of diplomatic signals renders it difficult to ascertain which signals are genuine/deceiving and intentional/unintentional.³⁰⁰ The plight and eventual downfall of Rib-Hadda sufficiently illustrate the counterproductive aspects of ambiguity in diplomatic interactions. The Egyptian authority's use of ambiguous diplomatic signals (instead of a blunt answer) to convey a negative response to his requests may have misled him. Indeed, he continued to harbor the hope that his Egyptian overlord would restore him to power even in exile (EA 137: 78-104).³⁰¹

2.3.3. Credibility

In retrospect, it may be difficult to understand Akhenaten's callous response to Rib-Hadda's desperate pleas for military assistance and his remarkable tolerance of the Amurrite kings' aggressive expansion and duplicitous behaviors. The answer to this puzzling question may be multifaceted. At the macro level, Egypt's divide-and-rule imperial policy condoned and even encouraged a healthy degree of competition among its Levantine vassals. On a micro and interpersonal level, Aziru of Amurru's diligent payment of tributes (EA 160: 41-44) and his personal visit (EA 168) to Egypt unequivocally communicated his willingness to serve the pharaoh.³⁰² In contrast, Rib-Hadda, a self-proclaimed loyal servant of the king, routinely requested provisions and military assistance from Egypt while giving little in return. Despite repeated expressions of keen wishes to visit the king, Rib-Hadda sent his son in his stead to Egypt (EA 137:

³⁰⁰ Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 76.

³⁰¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 219.

³⁰² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 246, 255-56.

27-51).³⁰³ Without the benefit of hindsight, the Amurrite king's actions and the diplomatic signals they sent may seem more credible/convincing than the lip service of Rib-Hadda.

2.3.4. Confidentiality

Verbal communication is more confidential than nonverbal communication, and this feature makes things easier in many aspects. For instance, it effectively prevents undesirable interference from third parties, which tends to complicate bilateral communications.³⁰⁴ During the Amarna Age, the treacherous Egyptian vassal Tagi of Ginti-Kirmil sent a letter in the guise of a cylinder seal to his overlord Lab'aya of Shechem, reporting to the latter his dealings with the Egyptian king.³⁰⁵ The historical scenario reconstructed by Horowitz (i.e., this secret missive was written when Tagi was openly loyal to the pharaoh but also owed his allegiance to Lab'aya) nicely explains the need to disguise the letter in order to keep it secret from the Egyptian authorities.³⁰⁶ Admittedly, interested third parties, if determined, could always find ways (e.g., intercepting messengers) to acquire relevant information on verbal communication. Thus, having heard about Aššur-uballit I's diplomatic overture to the pharaoh, the Babylonian king dispatched a letter of protest to his Egyptian brother and urged him to turn the Assyrian messengers away empty-handed (EA 9: 19-38).³⁰⁷

The relative confidentiality of verbal communication (especially when conducted orally), on the other hand, renders it more difficult to achieve consistency across generations because verbal

³⁰³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 218.

³⁰⁴ Jealousy and rivalry among Egypt's foreign partners often complicated their relations with Egypt, e.g., the Egyptian king's unequal treatment of messengers from Byblos and Akka disgruntled and wounded the feelings of Rib-Hadda (EA 88: 40-51). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 160-1.

³⁰⁵ Wayne Horowitz, "An Inscribed Clay Cylinder from Amarna Age Beth Shean," *Israel Exploration Journal* 46, no. 3/4 (1996): 208-18.

³⁰⁶ Wayne Horowitz, "An Inscribed Clay Cylinder from Amarna Age Beth Shean," *Israel Exploration Journal* 46, no. 3/4 (1996): 213-14.

³⁰⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 18.

communications typically reach a small audience (usually the king and his inner circle). Once one interlocutor is replaced by his successor or colleague, a new diplomatic cycle begins, and unfulfilled promises made by the previous king or official may not be honored by his successor. Tušratta of Mittani found himself in such an awkward situation when Akhenaten sent him gilded gold statues instead of the solid gold statues promised by Amenhotep III (EA 26, 27, 29).³⁰⁸ Having exhausted all negotiation strategies in his diplomatic toolkit, he called upon the influential queen mother Tiye as his witness (EA 26).³⁰⁹ The problem of a lack of consistency was exacerbated by the limited scribal and administrative efforts channeled towards building institutional memory in the Egyptian diplomatic establishment: excavations in the Records Office at Amarna suggest that outdated diplomatic letters were periodically discarded rather than archived.³¹⁰

2.3.5. Size of Audience and Audience Targeting

Compared to written communication, diplomatic signals tend to be more public and can reach a multitude of audiences. For instance, the exchange of diplomatic gifts, commonly witnessed by the domestic audience and international guests, advertised cordial relations between the exchange partners better than diplomatic letters filled with professions of mutual love. In a similar vein, the size of the military escort for a princess could hardly be kept secret from inquisitive observers, e.g., those kings whose countries the marriage party had to traverse. Hence, diplomatic signaling is highly useful in multilateral diplomacy, or when there is the need to address multiple audiences (internal and external).³¹¹

³⁰⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 84-96.

³⁰⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 85.

³¹⁰ Jana Mynářová, *Language of Amarna - Language of Diplomacy: Perspectives on the Amarna Letters* (Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2007). In contrast, the Hittite state chancellery served as a repository of institutional memory for it functioned as a deposit for diplomatic correspondence, treaties and other imperial documents. Royal scribes worked diligently to make copies of these records for safekeeping and future access. Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, *Writings from the Ancient World* 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).

³¹¹ Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 76.

Abi-Milku's request for just one single Egyptian soldier demonstrates the potential of using diplomatic signaling in bilateral and multilateral communications between the ancient Near Eastern polities during the Late Bronze Age. This king of Tyre sugarcoated his request for military assistance by praising the deterrent effect of only a single Egyptian soldier: "Should a single soldier guard the city of the king, my lord, then I would go in to behold the face of the king, my lord" (EA 150: 4-13).³¹² The presence of even just one Egyptian soldier would be sufficient to send a diplomatic signal to potential enemies that Tyre was under the aegis of Egypt, and any aggression against it was tantamount to declaring war against this great power. In the words of Morris, "... dead Egyptians were far more likely to occasion a significant armed reprisal than Canaanite casualties."³¹³

As a master of diplomatic signaling, Amenhotep III issued a series of large commemorative scarabs to his Egyptian and Levantine subjects to celebrate the arrival of a Mittanian princess Giluḥepa/Kirgipa (a daughter of Šuttarna II). Six Giluḥepa/Kirgipa scarabs have been preserved: one from in the necropolis of Hermopolis (Tunah el-Gebel), one from Buto (Tell Fara'in), three of unknown provenance, and one from an excavation at Beth She'an in Canaan.³¹⁴ It is very plausible, as Goldwasser suggested, that they served as "official royal announcements" to garner prestige and send a diplomatic signal to the Ancient Near Eastern kings (in particular the Mittanian king) that Amenhotep III attached a lot of importance to this marriage union. The choice of the scarab as the medium for communication is ingenious; as an immediately recognizable Egyptian cultural symbol, scarabs (both Egyptian imports and local imitations) enjoyed great popularity in the Levant during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages.³¹⁵ Sending out marriage announcements

³¹² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 237.

³¹³ In *Ancient Egyptian Imperialism*, Morris convincingly argued that modest numbers of Egyptian soldiers and undefended bases in the Levant served as tripwires — meaning they gave the empire an excuse to invade should anything happen to their property or personnel. Ellen F. Morris, *Ancient Egyptian Imperialism* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018), 183, 200.

³¹⁴ Orly Goldwasser, "A 'Kirgipa' Commemorative Scarab of Amenhotep III from Beit-Shean," *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 12 (2002): 191–3.

³¹⁵ Daphna Ben-Tor, "Egyptian-Canaanite Relations in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages as Reflected by Scarabs," in *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature: Proceedings of a Conference at the University of Haifa, 3-7 May 2009*, ed. Shay Bar, Dan'el Kahn, and J. J. Shirley (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 23–43.

on commemorative scarabs would help ensure that the news of the arrival of the Mittani princess traveled far and wide.

The sender of diplomatic signals could achieve audience targeting if he chose to do so. Arguably, not every Levantine vassal was on the imperial mailing list and privileged enough to receive a commemorative scarab. The ruler of Beth She’an was considered worthy of being notified and partaking in the celebration because the town was an Egyptian administrative center in the Levant. This selective notification may be intended to stimulate the Egyptian vassals to jockey for the favor of the Egyptian king.³¹⁶

Table 2.2 Comparison of verbal and nonverbal communications.

	Verbal	Nonverbal
Intentionality	Intentional	Intentional/inadvertent
Ambiguity (Explicitness)	Less ambiguous	More ambiguous
Flexibility/Deniability	Less flexible	More flexible
Credibility	Less credible	More credible
Confidentiality	Highly confidential	Less confidential
Audience	Small audience	Wider audience

2.4. Summary

In summary, this chapter revolves around a single question: how did cultural differences influence the way people communicated during diplomatic encounters in the Late Bronze Age? This research question is prompted mainly by the desire to understand why miscommunications arose so frequently, given the almost universal adoption of a lingua franca and well-established diplomatic protocols. To address this

³¹⁶ Seen in this light, Kadašman-Enlil’s frustration over being left out of the guest list when Amenhotep III celebrated a great festival becomes very understandable (EA 3: 13-31). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 7.

question, it is necessary to give equal recognition to the two channels of diplomatic communication: verbal and nonverbal. The former, which consists of written and oral communication, has been the primary focus of scholarly attention because of the preponderance of diplomatic correspondence in extant evidence. The latter, for which evidence is harder to identify/come by, could potentially create a burgeoning field of research that will significantly supplement the current understanding of diplomatic communication in the ancient world.

As the research question is bipartite, this chapter first proceeds to investigate the phenomenon of verbal communication, starting with written communication. As one combs through the textual evidence, which has more bearings on the subject matter, it becomes clear that intercultural miscommunications arose over both substantive matters (e.g., foreign intervention in royal succession and mutual obligation between suzerains and vassals) and matters of etiquette (e.g., epistolary styles). By comparing these cases, it is found that the relative balance of power between them largely determined their communicative behaviors and how they resolved their disagreements. In some intriguing cases, however, perceptible cultural differences did not blatantly obstruct diplomatic communications but created the illusion of intercultural intelligibility. The divergent interpretations of animal metaphors in the correspondence between the pharaoh and his Levantine vassals abundantly illustrate this point.

Aware of the ever-present danger of intercultural miscommunication and the risks it entails, conscious efforts were made to develop intercultural communication competence. For instance, diplomatic correspondents frequently invoked the divine to establish trust and boost the credibility of their statements due to the pervasiveness of religious beliefs in the Late Bronze Age world. Additionally, many intercultural interlocutors intentionally imitated the communicative behaviors of their correspondent (e.g., borrowing from the other party's repertoire of phrases and expressions) to establish rapport, facilitate communication, and increase the receptivity of their requests.

Another constitutive element of verbal communication is oral communication, mediated or direct. The former was more common, as the Late Bronze Age diplomatic system encompassed vast areas of the ancient Near East. When oral communication was conducted through intermediaries, its effectiveness

depended upon various factors, including the professional competence of the intermediaries, their social/political status, and subjective factors like their personal disposition and credibility. In numerous cases, the interlocutors demonstrated a conscious effort to select the most appropriate intermediary to get their message across and minimize misunderstandings. Even though in-person, direct oral communication is theoretically the most effective way for intercultural communication, evidence with bearings on it is meager, and this paucity probably reflects what happened in reality. Except for personal visits by a vassal to his overlord, in-person meetings between the ancient Near Eastern kings were presumably extremely rare because of a wide range of issues: e.g., logistical challenges, political and ideological considerations, security concerns, and linguistic barriers. Despite all these obstacles, tantalizing evidence suggests that in-person meetings between the great kings have been proposed (even though partial preservation of evidence made it impossible to determine if such plans were ever executed). Nonetheless, one can still entertain the hope that future discoveries may shed more light on the subject.

Compared to verbal communication, the use of nonverbal communication in Late Bronze Age diplomacy, which is the focus of the second major section of this chapter, is a much less researched topic. As an integral component of diplomatic communication, nonverbal communication could supplement verbal communication or play the dominant role in certain contexts. It was typically employed to send diplomatic signals since it afforded the interlocutors much room for creativity and maneuver. Diplomatic signals could be composed and conveyed in a variety of nonverbal ways, e.g., the treatment of diplomatic envoys, the exchange of diplomatic gifts, the fulfillment of vassal duties, and the level of ceremonialization. The general principle is to enlarge the discrepancy between expectation and reality by deviating from diplomatic norms.

In a sense, verbal and nonverbal communication were like the two sides of the same coin. The Ancient Near Eastern kings and their representatives would need to carefully assess their utilities and make judicious choices to fulfill their communicative needs. The third and last major section of this chapter compares verbal and nonverbal communication in terms of intentionality, ambiguity, credibility, confidentiality, and size of the audience, in order to determine their suitability for different communicative

purposes and contexts. This comparative analysis reveals that neither verbal nor nonverbal communication is inherently superior to the other; the decision to solely utilize one channel or a combination of both was contingent upon a plethora of factors.

CHAPTER 3. DIPLOMATIC GIFT EXCHANGE: STRUCTURAL AND MATERIAL ASPECTS

“Through systems of initial and counter exchange - and accompanying ethics of obligation - prestation extends kin and political networks. It is precisely in this sense that all gifts are diplomatic for they serve as agents of both social and political bonding and fracturing.”

- Cecily Hilsdale¹

This chapter focuses on diplomatic gift exchange as a means of intercultural communication and its utility. In Late Bronze Age diplomatic correspondence, intercultural communication was achieved through the media of written and oral messages, representatives, and intermediaries. Diplomatic gift exchange enabled another form of mediated communication and presence.² The study of diplomatic gift exchange in Late Bronze Age diplomacy has generated a large body of scholarship that approaches the subject from a variety of perspectives: e.g., types of goods exchanged,³ exchange patterns,⁴ principles of

¹ Cecily J. Hilsdale, “Diplomacy by Design: Rhetorical Strategies of the Byzantine Gift” (Chicago, The University of Chicago, Department of Art History, 2003), 213.

² Bourdon uses three useful criteria for comparing and analyzing the various forms of mediated presence: 1. Dialogue-dissemination; 2. Time lag; 3. Level of disembodiment. Jérôme Bourdon, “From Correspondence to Computers: A Theory of Mediated Presence in History,” *Communication Theory* 30, no. 1 (2020): 64–83.

³ Amanda H. Podany, *Brotherhood of Kings: How International Relations Shaped the Ancient Near East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 243-64.

⁴ Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 141-50.

exchange,⁵ bargaining strategies,⁶ social-psychological analysis,⁷ ideological frameworks of exchange,⁸ and analysis of archaeological comparanda described in textual evidence.⁹ However, as Feldman keenly observed, the methodologies of these past studies are generally biased: on the one hand, art-historical studies place undue emphasis on formal and stylistic features in order to search for cultural origins and hence tend to ignore social and historical considerations; on the other hand, studies that focus on the socio-political dynamics of Late Bronze Age international relations prioritize the use of historical and textual sources, often failing to combine them with pictorial and artifactual evidence.¹⁰ Hence, there is always room for more studies on this heavily researched topic, as long as one can identify a new perspective or employ an improved methodology. Indeed, very few studies have approached the subject from the perspective of intercultural communications.

This chapter demonstrates that messages could be communicated by the gifts themselves, their exchange context, reception, possession, and retransfer. Due to the availability of evidence, it primarily focuses on the messages encoded in the gifts and their exchange context. This chapter is divided into two

⁵ Kevin Avruch, "Reciprocity, Equality, and Status-Anxiety in the Amarna Letters," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 165–73.

⁶ Carlo Zaccagnini, "The Interdependence of the Great Powers," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 141–53.

⁷ Daniel Druckman and Serdar Güner, "A Social-Psychological Analysis of Amarna Diplomacy," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 174–88.

⁸ Edward Bleiberg, *The Official Gift in Ancient Egypt* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 90-114, Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 160-65.

⁹ Zipora Cochavi-Rainey and Christine Lilyquist, *Royal Gifts in the Late Bronze Age, Fourteenth to Thirteenth Centuries B.C.E.: Selected Texts Recording Gifts to Royal Personages* (Beersheba: Ben-Guryon University of the Negev Press, 1999); Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an "International Style" in the Ancient Near East, 1400 - 1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans, eds., *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008).

¹⁰ Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an "International Style" in the Ancient Near East, 1400 - 1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 90.

main sections. The first section gives an overview of the Egyptian conceptual framework for diplomatic gift exchange and compares it with the perspective of its foreign exchange partners. It examines the theatrical aspect of Egypt's involvement in the international exchange of gifts and tribute. It investigates how such exchanges became ceremonialized and morphed into a state ceremony that epitomized the power and opulence of the Egyptian empire. The second section of this chapter looks into how diplomatic messages could be encoded in the material properties of exchanged goods and communicated through them. It seeks to explore how meaning could be generated and communicated by the exchange context, possession, and retransfer of gifts and tribute goods. It will zoom in on gift exchanges in practice and investigates how they conform to and diverge from the ideal principles of diplomatic gift-giving, i.e., reciprocity and equality.

3.1. The Egyptian vs. Foreign Perspective: Similarities and Differences

3.1.1. The Egyptian Conceptual Framework

In the words of Feldman, in Late Bronze Age diplomacy, “kings of culturally disparate states interacted with one another in an idealized rhetorical mode of parity and reciprocity.”¹¹ This statement is largely borne out by the cuneiform evidence, even though undercurrents of jealousy, discontent, and self-interest existed and constantly threatened to disrupt this system of exchange — this was how diplomatic gift exchange operated in practice. On an ideological level, however, the exchange partners often had antithetical interpretations of these interstate interactions. The following section will illustrate this by

¹¹ Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an “International Style” in the Ancient Near East, 1400 - 1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 8.

dissecting the Egyptian conceptual framework for diplomatic gift exchange and comparing it with those of its foreign exchange partners.

3.1.1.1. Ceremonialization of Exchange: The Presentation of Gifts and Tribute (*ms inw*) Ceremony

Diplomacy is a game of power and prestige. While most diplomatic exchanges, conducted verbally, involved only a small group of kings, high officials, and scribes due to considerations of efficiency and confidentiality, some of their aspects were prone to ceremonialization for royal propaganda. In fact, the pomp and circumstance of diplomacy could disclose the substance of diplomatic processes because the development of diplomatic norms has been deeply intertwined with those of rituals and ceremonies. The Egyptian kings acted swiftly to exploit the propagandistic value of diplomatic gift exchange for their political agenda. They did so by presiding over elaborate public ceremonies during which vassal rulers and foreign ambassadors presented their tribute or diplomatic gifts to the Egyptian king, conjuring up the image of an Egypt-centric tributary system.

The ancient Egyptians referred to the ceremony as *ms inw* “bringing/presenting of *inw*”.¹² The word *inw*, meaning “that which was brought,” is the passive participle of the verb *ini* “to bring”. It has been translated into English as either “gift” or “tribute” based on different contexts and scholarly interpretations;¹³ the former implies a degree of voluntarism and equal social status, whereas the latter suggests coercion and an overlord-vassal affiliation. In the context of the ceremony, it is most appropriate to use both terms because its participants included both the pharaoh’s equals and subjects. Extant evidence for this ceremony comprised almost exclusively of iconographical representations from the tombs of

¹² Edward Bleiberg, *The Official Gift in Ancient Egypt* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 103-6, 111.

¹³ For a representative listing of translations of *inw* in English, French, and German, see Edward Bleiberg, *The Official Gift in Ancient Egypt* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 127–29.

officials¹⁴ involved in the collection, delivery, and presentation of diplomatic gifts and tribute, as well as those who took pride in participating in the *ms inw* ceremony (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Elite tombs and royal monuments featuring the presentation of gifts and tribute ceremony.¹⁵ (QI: Qasr Ibrim, AT: Amarna tomb, MTH: Memphite tomb of Horemheb)

Development Stage	Reign	Monument
Early 18th Dynasty: Ahmose to Thutmose II		
Mid-18th Dynasty: Hatshepsut to Amenhotep III	Thutmose III	TT84, TT86, QI4, TT42, TT85
	Amenhotep II	TT256, QI1
	Thutmose IV	TT78, TT63, TT90, TT91

¹⁴ For the relationship between the relevant scenes and the owner of the tombs in which they were depicted, see Alaa El-Din M. Shaheen, “Historical Significance of Selected Scenes Involving Western Asiatics and Nubians in the Private Theban Tombs of the XVIIIth Dynasty” (Ph.D., Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 1988), 211-70.

¹⁵ Such scenes have been studied intensively by numerous scholars from a variety of perspectives. Wachsmann closely examined Egyptian representations of Aegean gift bearers in early 18th Dynasty Theban tombs and proposed three Egyptian artistic conventions that affected their historical accuracy: hybridism, transference, and pattern books. He also tackled the problem of the geographical identification of Keftiu and gives a useful summary of Egyptian-Aegean contacts during the 18th Dynasty. Shelley Wachsmann, *Aegeans in the Theban Tombs* (Leuven: Peeters, 1987), 6-17. Shaheen’s dissertation treated the scenes involving Asiatics and Nubians in the 18th Dynasty Theban tombs and attempted to reveal their historical significance by identifying their interrelation with royal textual sources, e.g., the Annals of Thutmose III and the Amarna Letters. Alaa El-Din M. Shaheen, “Historical Significance of Selected Scenes Involving Western Asiatics and Nubians in the Private Theban Tombs of the XVIIIth Dynasty” (Ph.D., Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 1988). Hallmann’s monograph presented a comprehensive survey of the so-called “tribute scenes” (i.e., scenes depicting the reception of *inw*) and their accompanying inscriptions found on the walls of New Kingdom elite tombs and royal monuments. After a critical analysis of both textual and pictorial evidence, he concluded that one should refrain from labeling such scenes as “tribute scenes,” since it oversimplifies and sometimes distorts the true relationship between Egypt and its exchange partners. Furthermore, the bringing of *inw* does not imply political dependence. Silke Hallmann, *Die Tributzeneen Des Neuen Reiches, Ägypten Und Altes Testament* 66 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006). Following the example of Wachsmann and Hallmann, most existing scholarship is dedicated to the analysis of the degree to which these scenes adhere to historical truth or the Egyptian artistic canon and the prevailing scholarly view questions their value as reliable historical sources. However, scholars like Shaheen and Panagiotopoulos recognized them as relatively objective testimonies to historical events and put forward a method of contextualized reading. Diamantis Panagiotopoulos, “Keftiu in Context: Theban Tomb-Paintings as a Historical Source,” *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 20, no. 3 (2001): 263–83. Diamantis Panagiotopoulos, “Foreigners in Egypt in the Time of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III,” in *Thutmose III: A New Biography*, ed. Eric H. Cline and Donald B. O’Connor (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 370–412. As Anthony pointed out, these scenes have a historical kernel, even if they have been to some extent distorted by Egyptian ideology and artistic canon. Flora B. Anthony, *Foreigners in Ancient Egypt: Theban Tomb Paintings from the Early Eighteenth Dynasty* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 85. This historical approach, if judiciously employed, can be used to reconstruct the development of the foreign gift- and tribute-giving system and its epitome, i.e., the presentation of gifts and tribute ceremony, thereby supplementing our knowledge of Egypt’s foreign relations and imperial administration during the 18th Dynasty.

	Amenhotep III	TT89
	Unknown	TT143, TT239
Late 18th Dynasty and the Ramesside Period	Akhenaten	AT1, AT2
	Tutankhamun	TT40, MTH
	Ramesses II	Beit el-Wali temple
	Ramesses III	KV11

Table 3.1 (cont'd). Elite tombs and royal monuments featuring the presentation of gifts and tribute ceremony. (QI: Qasr Ibrim, AT: Amarna tomb, MTH: Memphite tomb of Horemheb)

Based on the number and status of participants and the level of institutionalization, the development of this ceremony during the New Kingdom period could be divided into three periods: 1. Early 18th Dynasty, which witnessed the gradual ceremonialization of diplomatic gift exchange and tribute collection; 2. Mid-18th Dynasty, which represents the golden age of the *ms inw* ceremony due to the expansion of the Egyptian empire and its diplomatic network; 3. Late 18th Dynasty and the Ramesside Period, during which the historicity of the ceremony grew increasingly questionable while its ritual aspect became more and more pronounced.

A paucity of evidence renders it challenging to reconstruct the initial development of the ceremony during the early 18th Dynasty, the period between the reigns of Ahmose and Thutmose II. Only meager information can be gleaned from self-laudatory royal inscriptions on Egypt's frontiers. No relevant material could be attributed to the reign of Ahmose. As for his successor Amenhotep I, his year 8 stela found at Aniba commemorates the delivery of gold and other products to the king by the Nubian Bowmen and the Eastern Desert inhabitants.¹⁶ Thutmose I's year 2 inscription at Tombos celebrates the coming of tribute-bearing Southerners and Northerners as well as the Sand-dwellers to the king as a prelude to accounts of

¹⁶ Betsy Bryan, "The Eighteenth Dynasty before the Amarna Period," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 214.

his Nubian victory.¹⁷ The biography of Ineni (who served under Thutmose I as the Treasurer and Overseer of Grain of the Karnak temple), clearly modeled upon royal texts, records the transfer of foreign tribute to the treasury of Amun by the king each year.¹⁸ Thutmose II's Aswan inscription, which celebrates the king's coronation, also mentions the delivery of tribute by Nubians and Asiatics;¹⁹ this seems to imply that the contribution of gifts and tribute was congratulatory. Considering its apparent parallels with that of Thutmose I's Tombos inscription, this statement is probably a declaration of royal privilege rather than a historical record. Another source of more historical value, a much-corrupted inscription from Deir el-Bahari, preserves an account of the reception of foreign gifts by Thutmose II during his Syrian campaign.²⁰ Overall, these texts give the impression that the collection of foreign gifts and tribute was inextricably associated with the military exploits of the king. Whether a *ms inw* ceremony actually took place during this period remains elusive. This general picture accords with the political circumstances of the early 18th Dynasty, when the kings were occupied with consolidating their domestic power base and subjugating their immediate neighbors.²¹ Other Near Eastern great powers were understandably absent in these official records because official contacts with them were yet to be established.

The period between the reigns of Hatshepsut and Amenhotep III witnessed a proliferation of evidence, both textual and pictorial, on the subject. Hatshepsut may or may not be the first pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty to stage a ceremonial presentation of exotic goods to enhance her power and prestige; however, her mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahari set a precedent for commemorating the ceremonial

¹⁷ James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 29-31.

¹⁸ James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 42.

¹⁹ James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 49.

²⁰ James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 51.

²¹ Betsy Bryan, "The Eighteenth Dynasty before the Amarna Period," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 207-64.

presentation of foreign exotica on royal monuments.²² As for Thutmose III, his Annals provide concrete evidence for the institutionalization of the tribute system, listing the yearly impost of Nubia and the Levantine vassal states.²³ At Qasr Ibrim, his Viceroys of Kush established a tradition of commemorating their successful exaction and delivery of Nubian tribute to the king on his great throne in Thebes.²⁴ The Annals also document the establishment of official contacts with other Near Eastern polities, e.g., Babylonia, Ḫatti, Mittani, and Assyria, symbolized by the reception of diplomatic gifts.²⁵ This political economy of gift exchange and tribute collection formed the material base for the *ms inw* ceremony, which was placed in prominent positions in the tombs of Egyptian elites who had the privilege to participate in or witness it (see Table 1).²⁶

The ceremony seemed to be an annual event held at a palace in a royal residence city, e.g., Thebes, Memphis, and Amarna.²⁷ Inscriptions from the tomb of Amenedjeh (TT84) stated explicitly that its venue was the “Royal Audience Hall” in the “Palace of Heliopolis of Upper Egypt (i.e., Thebes).”²⁸ Davies

²² Édouard H. Naville, *Deir El Bahari, Part 3: End of Northern Half and Southern Half of the Middle Platform. Memoir for 1896-97. Plates LVI-LXXXVI*, Excavation Memoirs (Egypt Exploration Society) 16 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1897), pls. 69-81.

²³ James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 163-218.

²⁴ Torgny Säve-Söderbergh, *Agypten und Nubien. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Altägyptischer Aussenpolitik* (Lund: Håkan Ohlsson, 1941), 207; James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 38-39.

²⁵ James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 163-218. Donald Redford, *The Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 250-54.

²⁶ Anthony pointed out that these gifts and tribute presentation scenes are usually placed on the back walls of the transverse hall (also known as the focal walls as they capture the attention of visitors as soon as they enter the tomb), a prominent and symbolically charged location within the early 18th Dynasty Theban tombs. Flora B. Anthony, *Foreigners in Ancient Egypt: Theban Tomb Paintings from the Early Eighteenth Dynasty* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 17.

²⁷ Ricardo A. Caminos, *The Shrines and Rock-Inscriptions of Ibrim* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1968), 65.

²⁸ Nina M. Davies and Norman de Garis Davies, “Syrians in the Tomb of Amunedjeh,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 27 (1941): 96.

suggested that the ceremony held in the 12th regnal year of Akhenaten was held at the mounds that Petrie found at the head of the great avenue leading to the royal tombs at Amarna.²⁹

The annual rhythm presumably corresponded to the yearly exaction of Nubian and Levantine tribute.³⁰ In more than one instance, the ceremony was known to have been celebrated at the beginning of the year,³¹ and This might be due to the collective celebration of *inw* reception and other festivals (e.g., the New Year's Festival), as recorded in the tomb of Menkheperreseneb (TT86).³² Nevertheless, these inscriptions may have reflected an ideal scenario; in reality, the venue of this ceremony and the frequency with which it was celebrated likely varied from reign to reign. Anthony found it hard to imagine the logistics involved in organizing such a ceremony and the administrative efforts necessary to coordinate the arrival of foreign delegations;³³ however, the Egyptians could have guaranteed the presence of foreign envoys through proactive planning (i.e., sending out invitations or orders) and the deliberate detention of messengers.³⁴

The ceremony was characterized by an expanding profile of foreign participants during this period. The Hittites made their appearance in the Annals during the campaign of Thutmose III's 33rd year;³⁵ their

²⁹ Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), 6. See also Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part III: The Tombs of Huya and Ahmes* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), 12.

³⁰ Gebel Barkal Stela, B. G. Davies, *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty. Fascicle VI. Translated from W. Helck, Urkunden der 18. Dynastie, Heft 20* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1995), 1-6.

³¹ According to inscriptions from TT84: "they (the Kushites) enter into Thy Majesty with their tribute of the beginning of the year." Nina M. Davies, "Nubians in the Tomb of Amunedjeh," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 28 (1942): 52.

³² Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Menkheperreseneb, Amenmose, and Another (Nos. 86, 112, 42, 226)* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1933), 2-4.

³³ Flora B. Anthony, *Foreigners in Ancient Egypt: Theban Tomb Paintings from the Early Eighteenth Dynasty* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 89.

³⁴ The Egyptian kings were constantly accused by fellow great kings and Egyptian vassals of detaining their messengers for an extended period of time (EA 3: 13-22). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 7.

³⁵ Donald Redford, *The Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 75.

debut in the iconographical evidence (TT86) is dated to the same reign.³⁶ The same pattern applies to the Mittanians, who first emerged in textual sources under Thutmose III.³⁷ They reappeared simultaneously with the Hittites in a ceremony scene (TT91) during the reign of Thutmose IV.³⁸ Interestingly, no envoys from two other Near Eastern great powers, Babylonia, and Assyria, can be identified in the iconographical evidence. There are only two attestations of the Keftiu's participation in the ceremony (TT86, TT85), both dating to the reign of Thutmose III.³⁹ Unfortunately, extant evidence does not shed light on the involvement of Cyprus (Alašiya) in the ceremony.

The broadening participation indicates Egypt's deepening involvement in the international exchange system and a consolidation of its control over Nubia and the Levant.⁴⁰ The popularity of the ceremony as a political spectacle was evidenced by its frequent occurrences in the decorative program of elite tombs (figs. 3.1, 3.2). Usually, such scenes are organized into multiple parallel registers, showing lines of gift- and tribute-bearers heading abreast in one direction towards Egyptian officials/the king, with their leaders in front doing obeisance and a display of selected gifts/tribute goods.⁴¹ Unfortunately, as most

³⁶ Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings. I. The Theban Necropolis. Private Tombs* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1994), 175-78. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Menkheperasonb, Amenmose, and Another (Nos. 86, 112, 42, 226)* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1933), pl. 4.

³⁷ Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings. I. The Theban Necropolis. Private Tombs* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1994), 167-70.

³⁸ Walter Wreszinski, *Atlas zur Altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte. Vol. I* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1923), 290-93. Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings. I. The Theban Necropolis. Private Tombs* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1994), 185-87.

³⁹ Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings. I. The Theban Necropolis. Private Tombs* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1994), 170-175, 175-178.

⁴⁰ Ellen F. Morris, *Ancient Egyptian Imperialism* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018), 117-64.

⁴¹ The depictions of the administrative processing of foreign gifts and tribute by Egyptian officials and the *ms inw* ceremony are highly similar; nevertheless, there are several useful criteria for distinguishing the two types of scenes: 1. The administrative scenes typically feature a dominant figure of the official in charge, scribal activities, and the weighing of goods; 2. The ceremony scenes have the royal figure as their focal point and occasionally include various forms of entertainment. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Puyemre at Thebes* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1923), 33 – 34. Furthermore, the depiction of the *ms inw* ceremony closely parallels that of the presentation of New Year's gifts to the king. The latter is a yearly inspection of the administration of high officials and is commonly depicted in their tombs: e.g., TT76 (tomb of Tjenuna) and TT48 (tomb of Amenemhet called

accompanying inscriptions do not provide precise dates or the amounts of goods, it is not possible to cross-reference them with detailed accounts in the royal annals, perform any meaningful statistical analysis, or track the development of this ceremony over time.

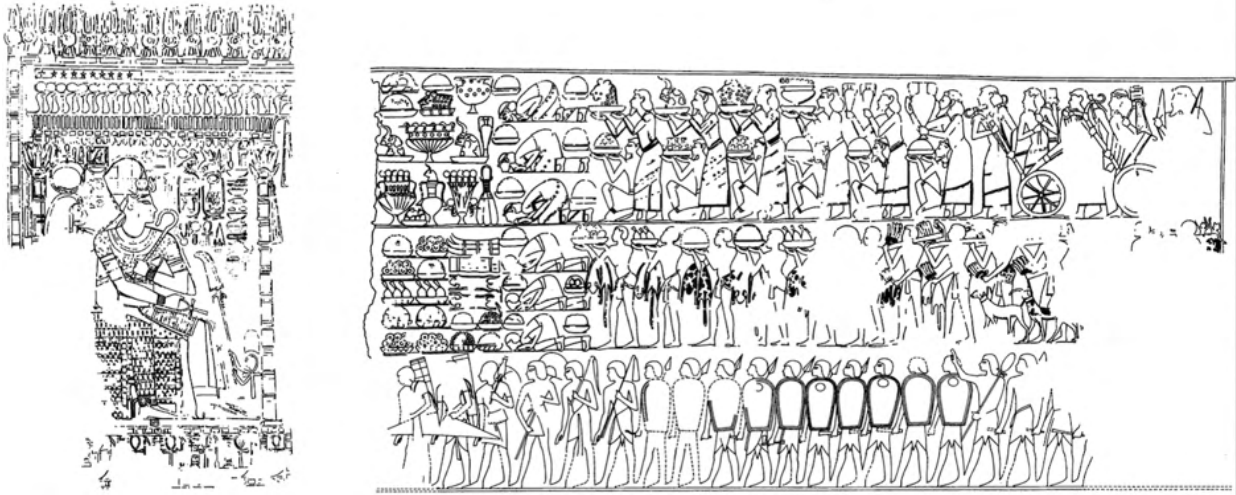


Figure 3.1. Thutmose IV presiding over the presentation of gifts and tribute ceremony, with Hathor holding menat and two fan-bearers before him (TT91). After Melinda K. Hartwig, *Tomb Painting and Identity in Ancient Thebes, 1419-1372 BCE* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), fig. 32.

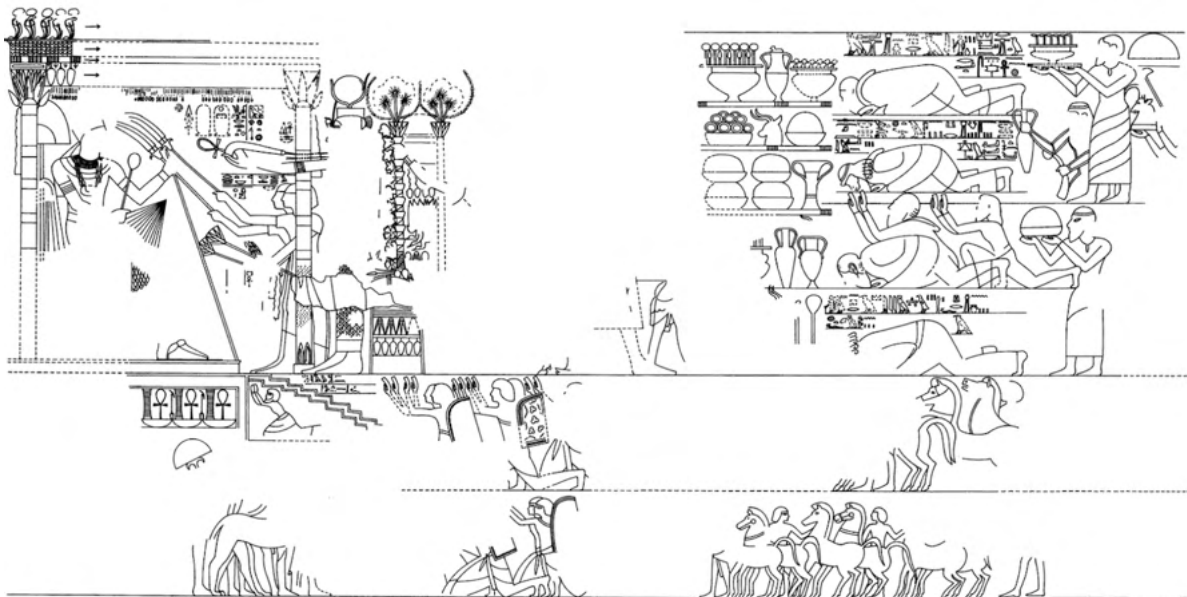


Figure 3.2. Amenhotep III and Hathor overseeing the presentation of gifts and tribute ceremony, tomb of Amenmose (TT89). After Melinda K. Hartwig, *Tomb Painting and Identity in Ancient Thebes, 1419-1372 BCE* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), fig. 28.

Surero). Melinda K. Hartwig, *Tomb Painting and Identity in Ancient Thebes, 1419-1372 BCE* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), fig. 21. Torgny Säve-Söderbergh, *Four Eighteenth Dynasty Tombs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), pls. 30–39.

Evidence dating to the late 18th Dynasty and the Ramesside period is less abundant, but historically valuable nonetheless. The *ms inw* ceremony was so integrated with Egypt's political culture during the 18th Dynasty that it continued to be celebrated during the reign of Akhenaten, even though this king has been criticized by many scholars for his negligence of foreign affairs due to his religious fanaticism.⁴² Two sets of unique scenes from the Amarna tombs of Huya (AT1) and Meryra II (AT2) commemorate a *ms inw* ceremony celebrated in the 12th regnal year of Akhenaten (fig. 3.3). It was also during the reign of Akhenaten that Egyptian pictorial evidence depicted foreigners as honored guests at state and religious ceremonies.⁴³

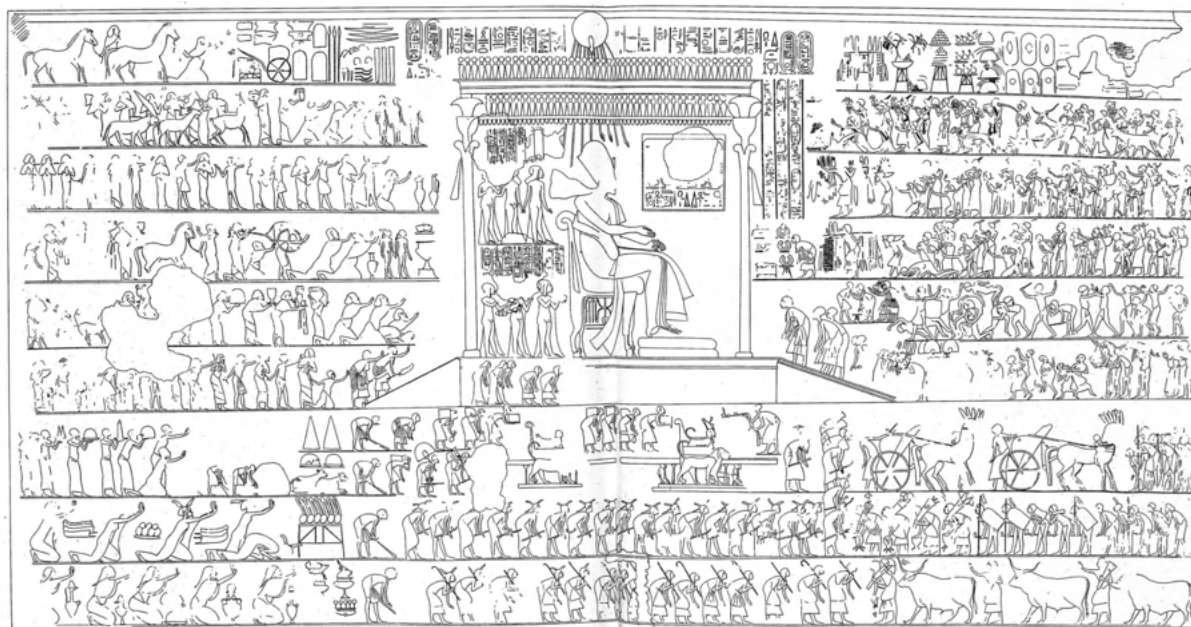


Figure 3.3. The presentation of gifts and tribute ceremony, celebrated in the 12th regnal year of Akhenaten. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pl. 37.

⁴² Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pl. 33. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part I: The Tomb of Meryra* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1903), pl. 25.

⁴³ Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pl. 37. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part III: The Tombs of Huya and Ahmes* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pls. 13, 14.

Tutankhamun also celebrated this ceremony following the illustrious example of his predecessors; one such event was depicted with remarkable details in the tomb of his Viceroy of Kush Amenhotep (called Huy, TT40) (fig. 3.4).⁴⁴ Another depiction of this ceremony (not necessarily the same event depicted in TT40) in the Memphite tomb of Horemheb suggests that in the aftermath of the Amarna period, the reception of foreign gifts and tribute was strongly associated with military campaigns and perhaps had to be guaranteed by the use of violence.⁴⁵ Furthermore, in the Memphite ceremony scenes, the royal couple stood behind the Window of Appearance,⁴⁶ instead of being enthroned in an open kiosk in the manner of earlier kings. This change might have been retained during the 19th Dynasty, for an administrative letter from Ramesses II's Viceroy of Kush Paser to a Nubian chief also mentioned participants of the ceremony passing by the "window".⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamun* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pls. 19-31.

⁴⁵ Accompanying inscriptions record Horemheb's military exploits in the Near East and the subsequent presentation of tribute to Tutankhamun: "He was sent as King's envoy as far as the limit of the rising of the sun disk, returning when he had triumphed, his attack having taken place. No land stood firm against him, and he overawed it in the twinkling of an eye. His name was renowned in the land of the Hittites when he traveled northwards. And lo, his Majesty rose upon the throne of the bringing of tribute, and there was brought to him the tribute of the north and south. And lo, the hereditary prince Horemheb, true of voice, stood beside the throne of..." Geoffrey T. Martin, *The Memphite Tomb of Horemheb, Commander-in-Chief of Tutankhamun* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1989), 80-81. The employment of coercive means indicated the necessity to consolidate Egyptian rule and hegemony.

⁴⁶ It was a venue traditionally associated with the Awarding of Gold ceremony. See Barry J. Kemp, "The Window of Appearance at El-Amarna, and the Basic Structure of This City," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 62 (1976): 81-99. A similar protocol also developed at the Ottoman court, according to which the Sultan would observe the procession of diplomatic gifts behind a window in the Topkapı Palace. Christopher Markiewicz and Tracey A. Sowerby, "Languages of Diplomatic Gift-Giving at the Ottoman Court," in *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500-1630*, ed. Tracey A. Sowerby and Christopher Markiewicz (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2021), 65.

⁴⁷ Ricardo A. Caminos, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 438-39.



Figure 3.4. Presentation of Nubian tribute to Tutankhamun, tomb of Amenhotep called Huy (TT40). “Charles K. Wilkinson | Nubian Tribute Presented to the King, Tomb of Huy | Twentieth Century; Original New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548571>.

Scenes of the pharaoh presenting gifts and tribute to the gods appeared on the walls of some temples in the late 18th Dynasty.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the walls of temple treasuries started to feature a wide array of foreign goods.⁴⁹ Hovestreydt has convincingly argued that scenes of the ceremony in the 18th Dynasty elite tombs provided inspiration for them; the strong similarity in their compositions and details of objects suggests that the former served as pattern books for the latter.⁵⁰ He also noticed the increasingly heavy emphasis placed on the presentation of *inw* by the pharaoh to the gods, and proposed that this development reflected the growing wealth and power of the Amun priesthood.⁵¹

⁴⁸ For instance, the presentation scenes of Tutankhamun at Karnak, one on the exterior east wall of the Cour de la Cachette and the other on the interior walls of the court between the 9th and 10th Pylons (usurped by Horemheb), depict the king presenting war prisoners, peaceful foreigners (Puntites), and goods to the Theban Triad (Amun, Mut, and Khonsu). Willem Hovestreydt, “Secret Doors and Hidden Treasure: Some Aspects of Egyptian Temple Treasuries from the New Kingdom,” in *Essays on Ancient Egypt: In Honour of Herman Te Velde*, ed. Jacobus Van Dijk (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 192–93.

⁴⁹ Willem Hovestreydt, “Secret Doors and Hidden Treasure: Some Aspects of Egyptian Temple Treasuries from the New Kingdom,” in *Essays on Ancient Egypt: In Honour of Herman Te Velde*, ed. Jacobus Van Dijk (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 187–206.

⁵⁰ Willem Hovestreydt, “Secret Doors and Hidden Treasure: Some Aspects of Egyptian Temple Treasuries from the New Kingdom,” in *Essays on Ancient Egypt: In Honour of Herman Te Velde*, ed. Jacobus Van Dijk (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 194–96.

⁵¹ In the words of Hovestreydt: “Towards the end of the 18th Dynasty we are faced with a remarkable change: from now on the king is seen rendering *inw* unto the gods in a manner which mirrors the way in which lesser mortals rendered *inw* unto the king. This is a new development, which, in its way, seems to foreshadow the theology of the later *Gottesstaat*.” Willem Hovestreydt, “Secret Doors and Hidden Treasure: Some Aspects of Egyptian Temple

The Ramesside period witnessed a dramatic decrease in the number of *ms inw* scenes on private funerary monuments. It is difficult to determine whether this was due to chances of preservation, changes in the tomb decoration program, a shift in the media of commemoration, or the lower frequency with which the ceremony was celebrated. Just as most evidence on Egypt's diplomatic exchange dates to the reign of Ramesses II, the majority of textual and pictorial records of the *ms inw* ceremony are preserved on his monuments. Ramesses II commemorated a *ms inw* ceremony in the forecourt of the Luxor Temple, which marks the debut of this ceremony on royal monuments.⁵² His Beit el-Wali temple in Nubia also featured a classic scene of the ceremony (figs. 3.5a-b), which offers a visual testimony to the participation of royal sons in diplomacy (discussed in Chapter 2), as the crown prince Amenhiwonemef was depicted as a leader of the ceremony. Parallel to the example in the Memphite tomb of Horemheb, the Beit el-Wali scene was placed in proximity to military scenes; as Hovestreydt observed, such juxtaposition suggests that "... the acquisition of *inw* is emphatically depicted as a result of the king's warlike activities."⁵³ The visual emphasis on the use of force was in line with the military ethos of the early 18th Dynasty and the Ramesside period.

Treasuries from the New Kingdom," in *Essays on Ancient Egypt: In Honour of Herman Te Velde*, ed. Jacobus Van Dijk (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 201.

⁵² The accompanying inscription reads: "The viziers, royal companions, treasurers of the palace, overseers of the two houses of silver and gold, military officers, army officers, troop commanders, controllers, overseers of southern and northern lands, fort officers, officers of river-mouths, stewards, controllers of controllers, rulers of domains, overseers of horn, overseers of hoof, overseers of feather and scale of Ta-mery (i.e., Egypt), controller of the two thrones of Upper and Lower Egypt, mayors, and overseers of priests have come bowing the head and bearing their tribute." Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 402-3. This inscription shows that the rendering of tribute was not just a binding obligation for subjugated foreign entities, but also domestic officials and institutions. As Higginbotham pointed out, it should not be interpreted as a record of a specific historical event, but rather a representation of the theoretical ideal. Carolyn R. Higginbotham, *Egyptianization and Elite Emulation in Ramesside Palestine: Governance and Accommodation on the Imperial Periphery* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 38-9.

⁵³ Willem Hovestreydt, "Secret Doors and Hidden Treasure: Some Aspects of Egyptian Temple Treasuries from the New Kingdom," in *Essays on Ancient Egypt: In Honour of Herman Te Velde*, ed. Jacobus Van Dijk (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 194.



Figure 3.5a. Ramesses II receiving Nubian tribute. Beit el-Wali temple in Nubia.⁵⁴ Herbert Ricke, George R. Hughes, and Edward F. Wente, *The Beit El-Wali Temple of Ramesses II: Joint Expedition 1960/61 with the Schweizerisches Institut für Ägyptische Bauforschung und Altertumskunde in Kairo*, University of Chicago Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pl. 7. Figure 3.5b. Ramesses II receiving Nubian tribute. Beit el-Wali temple in Nubia. Plaster reconstruction by the British Museum. [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/44/Wall_Painting_of_Temple_of_Beit_El-Wali %28Plaster Cast%29%2C_which_Ramses_II_Constructed_in_Nubia_-_British_Museum.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/44/Wall_Painting_of_Temple_of_Beit_El-Wali_%28Plaster_Cast%29%2C_which_Ramses_II_Constructed_in_Nubia_-_British_Museum.jpg)

⁵⁴ Ramesses II receives the Nubian booty/tribute in two registers. In the upper one, the crown prince Amenhiwonemef presents an elaborate table piled with Nubian products. The Viceroy of Kush Amenemope raised his hands in adoration while being decorated with gold collars by two royal butlers. The lower register depicts a procession of Nubians bringing live animals and ivory tusks, headed by the Viceroy Amenemope who carries on his shoulder an assortment of Nubian products arranged in a complicated manner. Herbert Ricke, George R. Hughes, and Edward F. Wente, *The Beit El-Wali Temple of Ramesses II: Joint Expedition 1960/61 with the Schweizerisches Institut für Ägyptische Bauforschung und Altertumskunde in Kairo*, University of Chicago Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 12.

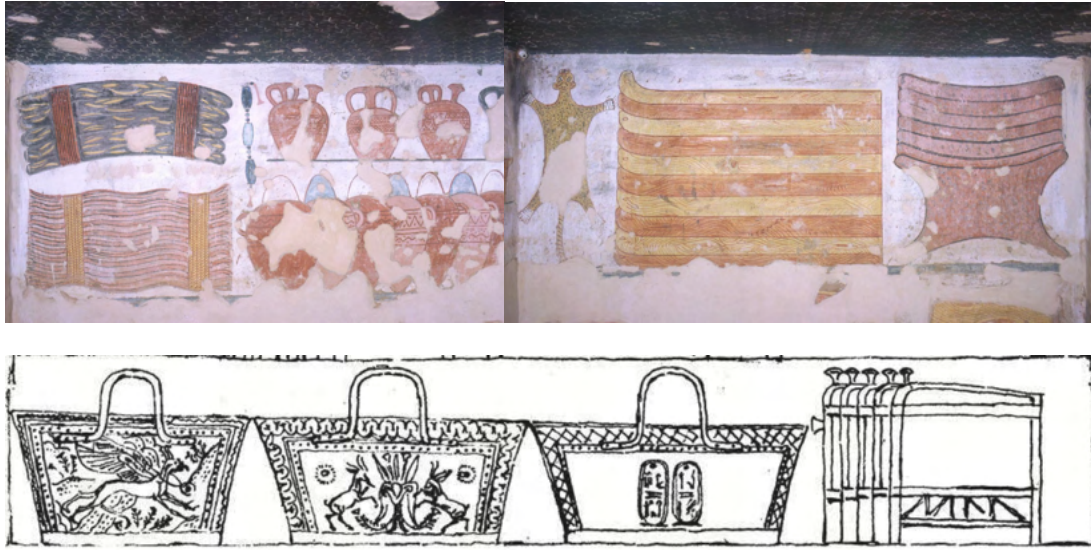


Figure 3.6. Foreign goods depicted in the “treasury” in the tomb of Ramesses III (KV 11, Room L). “Rameses III | Theban Mapping Project,” accessed May 15, 2022, <https://thebanmappingproject.com/tombs/kv-11-ramesses-iii>.

There is no direct evidence for the celebration of the *ms inw* ceremony during the 20th Dynasty. Nevertheless, a dazzling array of foreign luxury goods, some of which may be diplomatic gifts or tribute, were depicted on the walls of a “treasury” in the tomb of Ramesses III (KV11) (fig. 3.6).⁵⁵ This may not be a coincidence, since this king was the only pharaoh of the 20th Dynasty who conducted large-scale campaigns.⁵⁶ These depictions, however tantalizing they are, do not provide sufficient evidence that a ceremony took place during Ramesses III’s reign.

3.1.1.2. The Egyptian Interpretive Framework

The Egyptian pictorial and textual evidence tends to portray an oversimplified and sometimes distorted picture of Egypt’s role in the international exchange of gifts and tribute, projecting Egypt as the

⁵⁵ The decoration of this tomb treasury is clearly distinguished from those of other tomb treasuries, e.g., in the tomb of Seti I (KV17) and Ramesses IV (KV2). Willem Hovestreydt, “Sideshow or Not? On the Side-Rooms of the First Two Corridors in the Tomb of Ramesses III,” in *The Workman’s Progress: Studies in the Village of Deir El-Medina and Other Documents from Western Thebes in Honour of Rob Demarée*, ed. Ben J. J. Haring, Olaf E. Kaper, and René van Walsem, *Egyptologische Uitgaven* 28 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 113–32.

⁵⁶ Jacobus Van Dijk, “The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC),” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 265–307.

center of a concentric and hierarchical world system. In particular, the inscriptions that accompany the *ms inw* scenes proclaimed that all foreigners (regardless of the political status of their senders) came to Egypt bearing *inw* because of the might of the king, seeking nothing in return but the “breath of life” (Egyptian $\text{ḫw} (n) \text{ nḥ}$) from the pharaoh, who claimed universal dominion with the divine sanction (see diagram 1). The postulated gift/tribute – “breath of life” exchange was analogous to (and perhaps modeled upon) the reciprocal relationship between the pharaoh and the gods. In this relationship, the former offered material sustenance (in many cases consisting of foreign tribute and gifts) and constructed monuments for the gods, while the latter granted life, dominion, and stability in return.⁵⁷ To a large extent, these two exchange cycles strengthened the unique role of the king as the intermediary between the divine and the mundane spheres.



Diagram 1. The Egyptian interpretive framework for the gift/tribute presentation ceremony.

The collection, delivery, registration, and storage of gifts and tribute goods involved considerable administrative efforts, as inscriptions from the Qasr Ibrim shrine of Usersatet (QI4)⁵⁸ indicate. However, the *ms inw* scenes placed disproportionate emphasis on the role of the pharaoh by enacting a symbolic direct transfer from foreigners to the king.⁵⁹ Indeed, the ability to defend and expand Egyptian borders and procure

⁵⁷ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 44, 47, 54. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume III: The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 86, 89.

⁵⁸ Ricardo A. Caminos, *The Shrines and Rock-Inscriptions of Ibrim* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1968), 67.

⁵⁹ Some accompanying inscriptions bluntly claimed that everything came to Egypt through the agency of the king: “They (the courtiers) said: Your might is great, O good god... this tribute is larger than that of the lowlands; this has not been since (the time of) the ancestors... but our lord brought it about.” Ricardo A. Caminos, *The Shrines and Rock-Inscriptions of Ibrim* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1968), 67. The notion of the “Might of the King” could be dated to the Old Kingdom period; Harkhuf praised himself as one who “brings the produce of all foreign lands to his lord, ... who casts the dread of Horus into the foreign lands.” Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 25. The decisive role played by the king in those campaigns (and in other state affairs) was enshrined in royal literature: e.g., the Gebel Barkal stela portrayed Thutmose III as one who “fights alone without a multitude to

foreign exotica became an essential aspect of Egyptian kingship during the New Kingdom period. The frequency with which the ceremony was celebrated, the quantity and quality of gifts and tribute, and the number of foreign participants were all indicative of the pharaoh's power and connections. As noted above, the heyday of the ceremony overlapped with the reigns of those kings who were militarily active (e.g., Thutmose III) or politically adroit (e.g., Amenhotep III). Therefore, there was a grain of historical truth to the statement that "everything came through the might of the king."

The ceremony provided sufficient scope for the king to demonstrate his might: e.g., if a subject's performance fell short of his expectation, it was punishable by death.⁶⁰ In the above-mentioned letter (P. Koller), the Viceroy Paser warned a Nubian chieftain: "Remember the day of bringing the tribute, when you pass into the Presence beneath the Window, the nobles in two rows in the presence of His Majesty (l.p.h.), the chiefs and envoys of every foreign land standing dazzled at seeing the tribute. You are afraid and shrink back, your hand grows weak, and you know not whether it be death or life that lies before you."⁶¹ On the other hand, vassals who heeded orders and made satisfactory contributions could receive recognition and rewards from the king, as indicated by two Amarna letters (EA 99: 10-20, EA 369: 1-23).⁶²

The pharaoh could strengthen his legitimacy by celebrating the *ms inw* ceremony, for it advertised his enormous power and wealth. As Morris remarked, "control over the production, exchange, and consumption of exotica and luxury goods constituted one of the earliest and most important sources of

support him" and one "more useful than the hosts of many armies". B. G. Davies, *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty. Fascicle VI. Translated from W. Helck, Urkunden der 18. Dynastie, Heft 20* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1995), 1-6. The Might of the King was also exemplified by his ability to ensure the safe passage of foreign envoys and provide proper escort, which could be a source of acclamation or humiliation in diplomatic exchanges. Hattušili III dismissed Kadašman-Enlil II's excuse for cutting off messengers because of the Ahlamu as a weak argument, in a sarcastic tone: "... how can this be, that you, my brother, have cut off your messengers on account of the Ahlamu? Is the might of your kingdom small, my brother?" Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 134.

⁶⁰ Abdi-Aširta might have been put to death by the Mittanians because he delivered tribute goods of inferior quality (EA 101: 1-10). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 174.

⁶¹ Ricardo A. Caminos, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 438-39.

⁶² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 171, 366.

power in pharaonic Egypt.”⁶³ Despite the great kings’ boasts of self-sufficiency in the diplomatic letters (EA 7: 33-41),⁶⁴ they were mutually dependent for raw materials and manufactured goods; the production of quintessentially Egyptian artifacts like coffins depended upon the import of foreign raw materials like Lebanese timber,⁶⁵ myrrh (*ntyw*),⁶⁶ *sntr*-oil,⁶⁷ and lapis lazuli.⁶⁸ Even the New Kingdom repertoire of royal iconography incorporated images of imported goods, e.g., the motif of the pharaoh riding a chariot and shooting arrows through an ox-hide ingot (Luxor Museum J. 44), which serves to praise his physical fitness.⁶⁹ During the New Kingdom period, foreign luxury products became increasingly indispensable for the kings and elites to maintain a lavish lifestyle. They had acquired a taste for foreign goods like Babylonian and Hittite stallions, Hittite armor,⁷⁰ and foreign servants. An administrative letter laid out a

⁶³ Ellen F. Morris, *Ancient Egyptian Imperialism* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018), 126.

⁶⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 13.

⁶⁵ Amenhotep III’s ceremonial bark was fashioned with “of new pine wood, cut by my majesty in the countries of god’s land, and dragged from the mountains of Retjenu by the chiefs of all foreign lands”. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 45.

⁶⁶ This aromatic essence, which was indispensable in religious and medical practices, was primarily imported from Punt. D. M. Dixon, “The Transplantation of Punt Incense Trees in Egypt,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 55 (1969): 55–65.

⁶⁷ It could probably be identified as terebinth resin, which was found in large quantities in the Uluburun Shipwreck. According to the Annals, Thutmose III imported this commodity annually from the Near East, averaging over 9000 liters per year. Cemal Pulak, “The Uluburun Shipwreck and Late Bronze Age Trade,” in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 295.

⁶⁸ Joan C. Payne, “Lapis Lazuli in Early Egypt,” *Iraq* 30, no. 1 (1968): 58–61. In Egyptian literature, lapis lazuli is often associated with the divine and royalty. The sun god Re has flesh of gold and hair of genuine lapis lazuli; in a magical tale in P. Westcar, the first three 5th Dynasty kings were born with limbs of gold and headdress of real lapis lazuli. In the Story of Sinuhe, the protagonist was awarded an anthropoid sarcophagus overlaid with gold and its head with lapis lazuli. William K. Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 290, 22, 62.

⁶⁹ Alfred Lucas, *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*, 3rd ed. (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1948), 455-56. Joan C. Payne, “Lapis Lazuli in Early Egypt,” *Iraq* 30, no. 1 (1968): 58–61.

⁷⁰ Archaeological investigations at Pi-Ramesses recovered stone molds for the production of metal appliqués for Hittite style shield rims. Kathryn A. Bard and Steven Blake Shubert, *Encyclopedia of The Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 788.

dazzling list of goods to be made ready for the arrival of the pharaoh (P. Anastasi IV rt. 13,8 - 17,9).⁷¹ In a letter from Amenhotep II to his Viceroy of Kush Usersatet, the king praised the latter as the possessor of female servants and workers from Babylon, Byblos, Alalah, and Arrapha (P. Anastasi IV = P. BM EA 10249, rt. 13,9-17,9).⁷² Conspicuous consumption was closely associated with elite status, as well as the construction and maintenance of elite identity.⁷³ Thus, a failure to guarantee the inflow of foreign goods could seriously undermine the pharaoh's legitimacy. In wisdom texts, a shortage of supply of foreign goods was lamentable and typically associated with a lack of centralized government and weakened kingship.⁷⁴

⁷¹ The list reads: "Further, apply yourself to have things ready before (the arrival of) Pharaoh (l.p.h.), your good lord, with zeal, firmness and efficiency ... Likewise incense, sweet moringa-oil, *dft*-oil of Alasia, the finest *qdw*-oil of Kḫatti, *inb*-oil of Alasia, *nkfir*-oil of Sangar, *qnni*-oil of Amor, *gt*-oil of Takhsy, and moringa oil of Nahrin; namely the many oils of the Port to anoint his army and his chariotry. And to wit: Oxen, fine castrated short-horned cattle of the West, and fat kids of the Southern Province gutted *bulti*-fish of Djel, *bry*-fish of the *Nhryn*-waters of Nubian-town Bowls and dishes of silver and gold filled in beneath the window Canaanite slaves of Khor fine striplings, and fine *Nehsyu* of Cush fit to give shelter with the fan, they being shod with white sandals and clad in sfry, their bracelets (?) upon their hands. Fine *pg*³ of Amor, their poles of *mry*-wood inlaid with the work of *qedy*, their tops in red cloth. Fine chariots of *brry*-wood more resplendent than lapis lazuli Bows and many quivers, *sk-nhm*, *hrp*-swords, lances, swords, and fine weapons belonging to His Majesty (l.p.h.). Fine whips of *tjaga*-wood, their straps (?) of red cloth and their tips of inlaid work of *qedy* Kmh-loaves and assorted loaves of Asiatics which will be food of the army. They are in trays beneath the window of the western side. Many ingots of raw copper and bars of *dhw* are <on> the neck of the children of Alasia as gifts for His Majesty (l.p.h.). The horns which are <in> their hands are full of moringa-oil of Iren. Horse-teams and fine young steeds of Sangar, top stallions of Kḫatti and cows of Alasia are in the charge of their masters who bow down beneath the [window]." Ricardo A. Caminos, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 198-201.

⁷² Judging from the text, the value of foreign servants was connected to their place of origin, for "those of Takhsy are entirely worthless; what good are they at all?" John C. Darnell, "The Stela of the Viceroy Usersatet (Boston MFA 25.632), His Shrine at Qasr Ibrim, and the Festival of Nubian Tribute under Amenhotep II," *Égypte Nilotique et Méditerranéenne* 7 (2014): 250–51.

⁷³ John Baines, *High Culture and Experience in Ancient Egypt* (Bristol: Equinox, 2013), 187-264.

⁷⁴ In the Admonitions of Ipuwer, the author lamented the alleged calamities that will plague Egypt during the First Intermediate Period (a period of political fragmentation): "None indeed sail north to Byblos today. What shall we do for pine trees for our mummies?[#] Free men are buried with their produce, nobles are embalmed with their oil as far as Crete. They come no more. Gold is lacking; exhausted are [materials] for every kind of craft. What belongs to the palace has been stripped. What a great thing it is when the oasis-peasants come with their festival offerings, mats and [skins], fresh *rdmt*-plants, the [fat] of birds ... Happy is the heart of the king when gifts come to him. And when every foreign land [comes], that is our success, that is our fortune." See Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 152. When Kamose's army sacked the Hyksos capital, the Egyptians were obviously impressed by and envious of the wealth accumulated by the Hyksos rulers through participating in international trade. Harry S. Smith and Alexandrina Smith, "A Reconsideration of the Kamose Texts," *Zeitschrift Für Ägyptische Sprache Und Altertumskunde* 103, no. 1 (1976): 60.

Prior to the New Kingdom period, the pharaohs acquired foreign goods by launching trading expeditions and raids.⁷⁵ After they established diplomatic contacts with other Near Eastern kings, a new avenue of acquiring foreign products, i.e., through diplomatic exchange and tribute collection, availed itself. The pharaoh demonstrated his might through a public display of foreign rarities and implicit compliance of other political actors (in the eyes of the ceremony participants). The Egypt-centric political ideology was given concrete expressions through such extravagant displays, which were temporary phenomena that could be commemorated by artifacts and monuments and preserved for posterity.⁷⁶ For kings of shaky legitimacy or those who could not boost their legitimacy through leading troops in battle (e.g., Hatshepsut, Akhenaten,⁷⁷ and Tutankhamun), engaging in the diplomatic gift exchange represented an alternative means for shoring up their position through peer recognition.⁷⁸

The concept of “breath of life”, which figured prominently in inscriptions that accompany the *ms inw* scenes, can be traced back to the beginning of Egyptian history. Old Kingdom religious texts show that the ancient Egyptians were acutely aware of the correlation between the act of breathing and the state of

⁷⁵ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 23-27. Nigel Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 335-38.

⁷⁶ Julian Reade, “The Black Obelisk,” in *Assyria to Iberia: At the Dawn of the Classical Age*, ed. Joan Aruz, Sarah B. Graff, and Yelena Rakic (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Yale University Press, 2014), 62–68. Erich F. Schmidt, *Persepolis I: Structures, Reliefs, Inscriptions*, Oriental Institute Publications 68 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1953), 82-106.

⁷⁷ In his 12th regnal year, Akhenaten celebrated a *ms inw* ceremony, which may be connected with the crushing of a rebellion in Nubia; the ceremony was perhaps a staged performance to show off Egypt’s power and wealth, which would serve to instill awe and fear in the hearts of Egypt’s foreign vassals. Jacobus Van Dijk, “The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC),” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 270.

⁷⁸ Wang Mang, a usurper who founded the short-lived Chinese Xin Dynasty (lit. “New Dynasty”), was particularly eager to solicit tribute payment by foreigners in an effort to resurrect the idealized tributary system recorded in classical texts. According to Confucian tradition, strange beasts would appear when a sage king was on the throne; therefore, he prompted the governor of Yi Province in the southwest to get tribes beyond the border to dispatch one albino pheasant and two black ones to the court. Wang Mang even established contact with people in the land of Huangzhi (identified as Bengal in India) and acquired a live rhinoceros from them as tribute. Anthony J. Barbieri-Low, *Ancient Egypt and Early China: State, Society, and Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2021), 103.

living.⁷⁹ Starting from the First Intermediate Period, the god Osiris was entreated in funerary texts to grant breath (*tʿw*) to the deceased to ensure his/her survival in the afterlife.⁸⁰ In funerary texts, various deities were exhorted to grant the deceased “sweet *tʿw* of the north wind” (*tʿw ndm n mhy.t*), in which *tʿw* is best translated as breeze or wind.⁸¹ The “north wind” (*mhy.t*) might constitute an implicit reference to Isis, the goddess of the northern wind.⁸² The great hymn to Osiris, inscribed on the Stela of Amenmose (Louvre C 286), extols her as one who “created breath with her wings” and “raised the weary one’s inertness”.⁸³ A gold pectoral excavated from the tomb of the Napatan king Amaninatakelepte (538 – 519 BCE) attests to the longevity of this notion of “breath of life” and its strong association with Isis (fig. 3.8).

⁷⁹ The Pyramid Texts furnish us with abundant examples of such a connection. The royal deceased had to guard against deities seeking to take the breath out of his nose and deprive him of essential life force. Numerous spells express the deceased’s keen wish to receive the breath of his life (*tʿ(w)ʿf n nḥ*), breathe joy and partake in an abundance of the god’s sacrifices. Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 187-88.

⁸⁰ In the letter to the dead on the Louvre Bowl, the writer supplicated Osiris-the-foremost-of-the-Westerners to make for the deceased millions of years by giving breath to his nose, together with material sustenance like bread and beer. Alexander Piankoff and Jacques J. Clère, “A Letter to the Dead on a Bowl in the Louvre,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 20, no. 1 (1934): 157–69.

⁸¹ On the obelisk of Amenemhet (Durham no.1984), the deity was entreated to grant a sacrifice consisting of “bread, beer, cattle, poultry, alabaster, linen, incense, anointing oil and every beautiful and pure thing that heaven gives, the sweet breeze of the north wind” for the *ka* of the deceased. Janine Bourriau, *Pharaohs and Mortals: Egyptian Art in the Middle Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 66-67, no. 52.

⁸² Holger Kockelmann, *Praising the Goddess: A Comparative and Annotated Re-Edition of Six Demotic Hymns and Praises Addressed to Isis*, Archiv für Papyrusforschung und Verwandte Gebiete. Beiheft 15 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 61-62.

⁸³ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 83.



Figure 3.7. The son of Sennedjem offering the breath of life to his parents, tomb of Sennedjem (TT1). “Sennedjem - TT 1 p.2,” accessed November 18, 2022, https://www.osirisnet.net/tombes/artisans/sennedjem1/e_sennedjem1_02.htm. Figure 3.8. Winged Isis pectoral, Napatan period, 538 – 519 BCE, found at Nuri. “Winged Isis Pectoral,” accessed November 18, 2022, <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/142334/winged-isis-pectoral;jsessionid=93F590848E89B76F2BA8CDD3E336B0B3>.

Prior to the Middle Kingdom, the life-giving breath emanated only from the gods, e.g., Isis and Osiris. However, the Middle Kingdom period witnessed the occurrence of vitalizing breath outside religious and funerary contexts. In a loyalist hymn (Stela of Hor, Cairo JE71901) addressed to Senusret I, the author praised the king as one who “gives the breath of life to the one who praises him,” which presumably refers to his role as a provider of sustenance and a protector of his people.⁸⁴ With the advent of the New Kingdom, the “breath of life” retained its original meaning (fig. 3.7), but its semantic meaning expanded. In the imperial milieu, the attestation of $\text{t}^{\text{3}}w$ (n) $n\dot{h}$ “breath (of) life” (sometimes abbreviated as $\text{t}^{\text{3}}w$), increased exponentially in non-religious texts, especially those pertaining to Egypt’s interaction with other Near Eastern polities: e.g., royal annals, campaign records, and (auto-)biographical texts of military officers and imperial officials.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Stela of Hor, Cairo JE71901, line 6. José M. Galán, “The Stela of Hor in Context,” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 21 (1994): 65–79.

⁸⁵ David Lorton, *The Juridical Terminology of International Relations in Egyptian Texts through Dyn. XVIII* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 137–38.

In a military context, the defeated foreign enemies were often depicted as prostrating before the pharaoh and pleading for the “breath of life,” which could mean a royal pardon to spare their lives.⁸⁶ Lorton discussed this concept as a juridical term in the context of international relations; he proposed that the “breath” refers to an agreement to enter into a treaty relationship, and that the word *nh* “life” may be a pun for *nh* “oath.”⁸⁷ If one follows this interpretation, then the foreigners begging for the “breath of life” in Egyptian pictorial evidence must be requesting that an oath of loyalty be administered to them. Moreover, the Egyptians developed this ideology of life to homogenize various types of transactions between Egypt and its periphery in a continuum of situations.⁸⁸ This Egypt-centric interpretive framework was undoubtedly divorced from reality and betrayed a patronizing attitude.⁸⁹

Another ideological underpinning of the Egyptian interpretive framework is the Decree of the Gods, which refers to the pharaoh’s divinely sanctioned universal suzerainty. This notion was iterated by numerous New Kingdom royal and elite texts, in the form of the highly formulaic expression “everything

⁸⁶ Shlomit Israeli, “*ḥw n nh* (‘Breath of Life’) in the Medinet Habu War Texts,” in *Jerusalem Studies in Egyptology*, ed. Irene Shirun-Grumach, *Ägypten und Altes Testament* 40 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 271–83.

⁸⁷ David Lorton, *The Juridical Terminology of International Relations in Egyptian Texts through Dyn. XVIII* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 138–43.

⁸⁸ Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 160–65.

⁸⁹ There is hardly any Egyptian evidence for the pharaoh’s largess towards his foreign subjects or diplomatic partners, even though cuneiform evidence confirms that he engaged in the diplomatic gift exchange and occasionally compensated his vassals for their delivery of goods (EA 369: 1-23). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 366. When references to the delivery of goods to foreigners were unavoidable, they were tactically masked as acts of piety. Thus, Hatshepsut’s payment to the Puntites for their goods was represented as a donation made to the Puntite goddess, whom the Egyptians identified with Hathor. The fictionality of the Egyptian ideology was thrown into relief in the Story of Wenamun, in which the ruler of Byblos insisted on getting paid for the requested timber. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 226–27. Ellen Morris, “Exchange, Extraction, and the Politics of Ideological Money Laundering in Egypt’s New Kingdom Empire,” in *Policies of Exchange: Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2nd Millennium B.C.E: Proceedings of the International Symposium at the University of Freiburg, Institute for Archaeological Studies, 30th May - 2nd June 2012*, ed. Birgitta Eder and Regine Pruzsinszky, vol. 2, *Oriental and European Archaeology* (Wien: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2015), 167–69.

that the sun encircles.”⁹⁰ Although this idea of universal rule germinated already in the Middle Kingdom,⁹¹ it gained currency in the New Kingdom period and became inextricably associated with the political myth of divine birth. Hatshepsut’s Deir el-Bahri inscriptions recounted that Amun-Re bequeathed “all that the heavens cover, all that the sea encircles” to his daughter (i.e., Hatshepsut) while she was still in the womb.⁹² As the pharaoh ruled Egypt and the world beyond through the Decree of the Gods, he/she was also entitled to receive foreign gifts and tribute.

It was the duty of the king to prove the validity of the divinely sanctioned universal dominion, to make it a self-fulfilling religio-political prophecy. To reciprocate divine favor, a portion of the foreign gifts and tribute flowed into the treasury of the gods, which allowed the king to proudly claim that he had filled the coffers of the gods with foreign luxuries.⁹³ The Annals of Thutmose III were essentially “an embellished account of various streams of imperial revenue.”⁹⁴ Such textual records were supplemented by abundant pictorial evidence, e.g., reliefs from the tomb of Rekhmire and Thutmose III’s dedication scene in the Amun

⁹⁰ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 29, 39-40.

⁹¹ In the Story of Sinuhe, the protagonist sent a eulogistic letter to the king: “May the fear of you resound in lowlands and highlands, for you have subdued all that the sun encircles!” Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 230.

⁹² James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 89. The queen’s speech on her obelisk claimed: “...all foreign lands are my subjects. He placed my border at the limits of heaven. What Aten encircles labours for me. He gave it to me who came from him. Knowing I would rule it for him. I am his daughter in very truth. Who serves him, who knows what he ordains.” Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 29.

⁹³ B. G. Davies, *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty. Fascicle VI. Translated from W. Helck, Urkunden der 18. Dynastie, Heft 20* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1995), 11-18, see figure 29.3.

⁹⁴ Ellen F. Morris, *Ancient Egyptian Imperialism* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018), 121. The annals recorded that “His Majesty commanded to have the victories his father [Amun] had given him published upon a wall of stone in the temple which His Majesty had made anew [for his father Amun, in accordance with the council] of [His Majesty him]self [in order that] ‘every’ campaign [be published] specifically, together with the booty that His Majesty brought from it.” Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 30.

temple at Karnak (fig. 3.9), showing how the temple storerooms became the final destination of many foreign gifts and tribute.⁹⁵

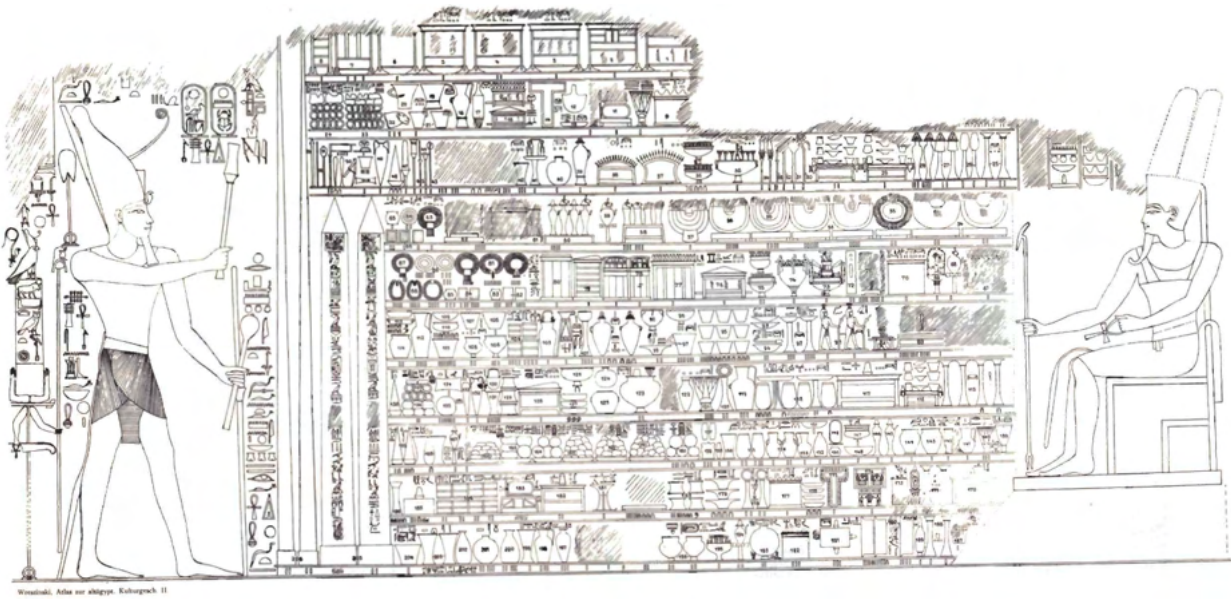


Figure 3.9. Thutmose III presenting gifts to Amun of Karnak. Shelley Wachsmann, *Aegeans in the Theban Tombs* (Leuven: Peeters, 1987), pl. 53.

3.1.1.3. The *ms inw* Ceremony as a Political Performance: Power, Politics, and Pageantry

In societies ancient and modern, regardless of their size and organization, ceremonies and rituals are significant social practices, especially those organized by the state and institutions; performances,⁹⁶ as dramatized forms of social interactions, constitute an important means of social organization, integration,

⁹⁵ Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Rekh-Mi-Rē at Thebes*, vol. 11, Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1943), pls. 17-23, 48-51. Shelley Wachsmann, *Aegeans in the Theban Tombs* (Leuven: Peeters, 1987), pl. 53.

⁹⁶ Performance, following Inomata and Coben, could be defined as something transcendent of the ordinary course of events, which could be interpreted, reported, and repeated within a domain of cultural intelligibility. The division of performative events into public and private is preferred over religious and secular, for religion and other aspects of life are often inextricably entangled in antiquity. The terms “public” and “private” are only used to highlight different sponsors of performance, i.e., state and institutions versus individuals, which do not have any implications concerning its scale or form. Takeshi Inomata and Lawrence S. Coben, “Overture: An Invitation to the Archaeological Theater,” in *Archaeology of Performance: Theaters of Power, Community, and Politics*, ed. Takeshi Inomata and Lawrence S. Coben (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2006), 14.

communication, and expression.⁹⁷ Public performances, in particular, occupy a central position in communal life and political processes. Since the dawn of Egyptian civilization, ceremonies and public performances, e.g., the *Sed*-Festival and the *Opet*-Festival, have been deeply embedded in the political and religious life and have left much evidence in the archaeological record. Among these spectacles, the *ms inw* ceremony derived its uniqueness from bearing the strong imprint of its historical background and could be appropriately referred to as a spectacle of imperial splendor.

In a study on Inka regional centers as replicas of Cuzco and theaters of Inka power, Coben pointed out that “Consideration of a theater includes its performance characteristics or properties – size, shape, entrances and exits, location of the “stage,” set, lighting, sound, costumes, orientation, changes in elevation, audience capacity, and viewing patterns of the spectators. Nor should analysis end at the theater door – its location within a settlement/city, the roads leading to it, and its relationship to other buildings and features are critical elements of the audience experience.”⁹⁸ This analytical framework could be fruitfully applied to the study of the theatrical aspect of the *ms inw* ceremony. As a staged political performance, the ceremony was intended to serve multiple purposes, e.g., to impress the pharaoh’s Egyptian⁹⁹ and foreign subjects, enhance his reputation in the international community,¹⁰⁰ and promote an Egypt-centric ideology, which

⁹⁷ Lawrence S. Coben and Takeshi Inomata, “Behind the Scenes: Producing the Performance,” in *Archaeology of Performance: Theaters of Power, Community, and Politics*, ed. Takeshi Inomata and Lawrence S. Coben (Lanham: Altamira Press, 2006), 3–7.

⁹⁸ Lawrence S. Coben, “Other Cuzcos: Replicated Theaters of Inka Power,” in *Archaeology of Performance: Theaters of Power, Community, and Politics*, ed. Takeshi Inomata and Lawrence S. Coben (Lanham: Altamira Press, 2006), 223.

⁹⁹ The ceremony was undoubtedly an exclusive event. Baines’ study of elite hunting demonstrates that the creation, experience, and transmission of high culture was significant for the formation and maintenance of the ancient Egyptian elite class. For the officials directly involved in this grand state ceremony, most of whom belonged to the highest echelons of the administration, e.g., viziers and overseers of the treasuries, it undoubtedly signified a zenith in their career; for the audience, the privilege to attend the ceremony conferred upon them much prestige. John Baines, *High Culture and Experience in Ancient Egypt* (Bristol: Equinox, 2013), 187-264.

¹⁰⁰ One can imagine how the foreign envoys marveled at the sight of the awe-inspiring image of the king, the monumental setting, the diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds of other foreign envoys, and the dazzling array of exotic gifts and tribute.

was often at odds with reality.¹⁰¹ These were achieved through the visual, auditory, and olfactory aspects of the ceremony, which would have triggered strong emotions like joy, pride, awe, fear, or discontent in the audience.

Various aspects of the ceremony betrayed an Egypt-centric worldview that has characterized the Egyptians' understanding of the external world and conditioned their dealings with foreigners since the dawn of Egyptian civilization.¹⁰² The foreigners at the *ms inw* ceremony were often associated with the four cardinal points so that the pharaoh could proudly claim universal dominion.¹⁰³ The grouping of foreigners according to the geographical location of their home countries instead of their political status was meant to enhance the pharaoh's own prestige and accentuate his elevated status above all foreign rulers. For example, in one scene from the tomb of Menkheperreseneb (TT86), the representatives from Hatti, Keftiu, and Tunip stood alongside each other, despite the different statuses of their home countries and their political affiliation with Egypt.¹⁰⁴ Through the geographical grouping of foreigners and deliberate choice of overarching terminology, the ceremony scenes sought to promulgate an Egypt-centric worldview and the pharaoh's self-proclaimed universal dominion. The fact that the Egyptians did juxtapose the delegations of

¹⁰¹ The rigid ritual structure of the ceremony probably deprived the participants of the opportunity to voice any objection on the spot. For instance, the humiliated Babylonian envoys presumably complained about their mistreatment to their sender instead of making a scene in the presence of Amenhotep III (EA 1: 88-98). In the eyes of other participants, however, such silence may signify acquiescence. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

¹⁰² Foreigners were viewed as agents of chaos who needed to be subjugated and kept at bay by the pharaoh. Flora B. Anthony, *Foreigners in Ancient Egypt: Theban Tomb Paintings from the Early Eighteenth Dynasty* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 57–58. The motifs of the pharaoh smiting or trampling foreign enemies appeared on the pharaoh's paraphernalia and monumental buildings throughout the pharaonic period. Emma S. Hall, *The Pharaoh Smites His Enemies: A Comparative Study* (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1986).

¹⁰³ Nubians were typically associated with the South, Levantine people with the North, Libyans or the Aegean people with the West, and Puntites with the East. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pl. 37. However, there was no strict one-to-one correlation between a people/nation and a cardinal point. Occasionally, this symbolic orientation of the ceremony scenes aligned with their placement on the funerary monuments. In the tomb of Tutankhamun's Viceroy of Kush (TT40), the Nubians tribute-bearers were depicted on the south wall and their Syrian counterparts on the north wall. Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pls. 19, 23.

¹⁰⁴ Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Menkheperreseneb, Amenmose, and Another (Nos. 86, 112, 42, 226)* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1933), pls. 3, 5, 7.

other great kings and their vassals was confirmed by a letter from Kadašman-Enlil I (EA 1: 88-98), in which the Babylonian king bitterly complained that Amenhotep III did not review his chariots separately from those of the mayors, which apparently constituted a serious insult (EA 1: 88-98).¹⁰⁵

Like the grouping of foreigners, the sequence of presentation also has the potential of indicating their varying importance; however, in almost all pictorial representations, the lines of foreigners proceeded abreast towards the pharaoh, with their leaders in front greeting him simultaneously (figs. 3.1-3.4). This arrangement could hardly be the case in reality, but such composition revealed the Egyptians' indifference to the sequence of presentation. In addition, iconographical evidence shows that all foreigners doing obeisance to the king similarly, with arms raised in adoration or prostrated before him.¹⁰⁶ The only possible way to differentiate the status of foreigners was perhaps through the way they addressed the king. Regrettably, such information left little trace in the archaeological record.

While the hierarchical difference between foreigners was purposefully blurred, that between foreigners and the pharaoh was constantly emphasized. The elevated status of the king was highlighted in front of both internal and international audiences through this meticulously choreographed ceremony. Akhenaten inaugurated the Year 12 *ms imw* ceremony by making a grand entrance on his elaborately designed gold palanquin, sitting in what Davies described as “the irksome stiffness of a statue” and carrying his insignia of office, i.e., the crook and flail.¹⁰⁷ Whether on the move or seated, he was protected from the scorching sun thanks to the assiduous work of the fan-bearers and the elaborately decorated royal canopy, while other participants were probably sweating from unbearable heat.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

¹⁰⁶ Discussion of varying degrees of deference. See Ellen F. Morris, “Bowling and Scraping in the Ancient Near East: An Investigation into Obsequiousness in the Amarna Letters,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 65, no. 3 (2006): 179–96.

¹⁰⁷ Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part III: The Tombs of Huy and Ahmes* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), 10, pl. 13.

¹⁰⁸ In a letter from Aššur-uballit I to the pharaoh, the Assyrian king made this sarcastic comment: “Why should messengers be made to stay constantly out in the sun and so die in the sun? If staying out in the sun means profit for the king, then let him (a messenger) stay out and let him die right there in the sun, (but) for the king himself there

As the focal point of the ceremony, the king was usually enthroned in a kiosk on a raised platform, which physically elevated him above the foreign envoys even though he was seated (fig. 3.12a).¹⁰⁹ The foreigners, being forced to look up to the king (in a literal sense), were constantly reminded of their inferior status. Furthermore, the contrast between motion and motionlessness/quiescence was manipulated to highlight the asymmetrical power relationship. Whereas the foreign envoys approached the pharaoh in an orderly fashion to perform the rituals of obeisance, the latter remained seated in a stiff position like a divine statue and remained motionless on his throne. The unilateral and centripetal movement of the foreigners symbolized subjugation and voluntariness, i.e., they took the initiative to pay homage to the pharaoh due to his renown and preeminent power.

In a similar vein, the venue of the ceremony was usually a palatial space with architectural elements and decorative motifs that served to impress and intimidate the envoy:¹¹⁰ e.g., the motifs of bound captives¹¹¹ (figs. 3.10a, 3.11a) and the Nine Bows.¹¹² Such motifs appeared ubiquitously in “lowly” positions, e.g., the base of royal kiosks and palatial pavements, allowing the pharaoh to dominate his enemies through sympathetic magic, whether he was static or in motion.¹¹³ In particular, the motif of bound

must be a profit.” (EA 16: 43-55). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 39.

¹⁰⁹ Ricardo A. Caminos, *The Shrines and Rock-Inscriptions of Ibrim* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1968), pl. 28. Eberhard Dziobek and Mahmud Abdel Raziq, *Das Grab des Sobekhotep: Theben Nr. 63* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1990), pl. 33.

¹¹⁰ In the *Story of Sinuhe*, the audience hall of the king of Byblos incorporated a view of the surrounding landscape to awe its visitors: “I (Sinuhe) found him seated in his upper chamber with his back against a window, and the waves of the great sea of Syria broke behind his head.” Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 226-28.

¹¹¹ The arms of these bound captives were often tied by the heraldic plants of Egypt, which signified the subjugation of foreign people. The lower part of the body of these bound captives were sometimes replaced by a crenelated oval with hieroglyphic inscriptions identifying their ethnicity or place of origin.

¹¹² The Nine Bows was a designation for Egypt’s foreign enemies (cf. the base of the statue of Djoser). The number nine was used metaphorically to convey a sense of totality. E. Uphill, “The Nine Bows,” *Jaarbericht van Het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap “Ex Orient Lux”* 19 (1965-66): 393–420. Andrew Bednarski, “Nine Bows,” in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History. Volume 9: Ne-Pl*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall et al. (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 4795.

¹¹³ A pavement decorated with bound captives was found in the Throne Room Complex of the Northern Harim in the north-eastern section of the Great Palace at Amarna. It allowed Akhenaten to ritually trample Egypt’s foes and to

captives was almost ubiquitous in Egyptian palaces; they appeared at feet level on the Window of Appearances, throne bases, and the side of stairways¹¹⁴ leading to the throne (figs. 3.10a-c) – befitting their subjugated status – to be physically and symbolically stepped upon or trampled by the king and visitors to the palaces. These motifs also characterized other royal paraphernalia on display during the ceremony: e.g., royal thrones and footstools (figs. 3.11a-b).¹¹⁵ These ideology-charged iconographies would probably have a great psychological impact on the participants of the ceremony, and they conveyed the message of Egyptian domination over foreign countries.¹¹⁶

repel the cosmic chaos they embodied with every step he took within the walled compound of the Great Palace, in a comfortable and safe setting. In addition, whoever approached the king to receive a royal audience unavoidably trod on the bound captives. Protecting Egypt's borders and keeping its enemies at bay has been an essential part of royal duty. Nevertheless, sometimes circumstances prevented a king from fulfilling this obligation in person. In such cases, a visual representation could function as a substitute for the act itself, as the ancient Egyptians were firm believers in the efficacy of written words and painted images. Frances J. Weatherhead, *Amarna Palace Paintings* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2007), fig. 12.

¹¹⁴ Peter Lacovara, *The New Kingdom Royal City* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1997), 35.

¹¹⁵ A chariot depicted in the tomb of Qenamun constituted part of the New Year's gifts presented by the tomb owner to the king. It is labeled "A chariot ... 'Amu (?) [for] traversing various countries, [harrying] the southerners, overthrowing the northerners, and bringing the chiefs of Nah[arīn] captive." Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Qenamun at Thebes*, 2 vols. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1930), vol. 1, 31.

¹¹⁶ Indeed, the ubiquitous motif of bound captives in the palatial setting and on pharaoh's regalia undoubtedly sent shivers down the spines of some Egyptian subjects of dubious loyalty. For the Nubian vassals, a failure to deliver tribute goods of satisfactory quantity and quality could have grave consequences. This was abundantly illustrated by the thinly veiled threats in a letter from a Viceroy of Kush named Paser: "Increase your contribution every year. Have a care for your head, having checked yourself in your slackness. You are old. Look to yourself carefully and beware! Remember the day of bringing the tribute, when you pass into the Presence beneath the Window, the nobles in two rows in the presence of His Majesty (l.p.h.), the chiefs and envoys of every foreign land standing dazzled at seeing the tribute. You are afraid and shrink back, your hand grows weak, and you know not whether it be death or life that lies before you. You are profuse in prayers to your gods: 'Rescue me, and keep me safe this one time!'" Ricardo A. Caminos, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 438-39.

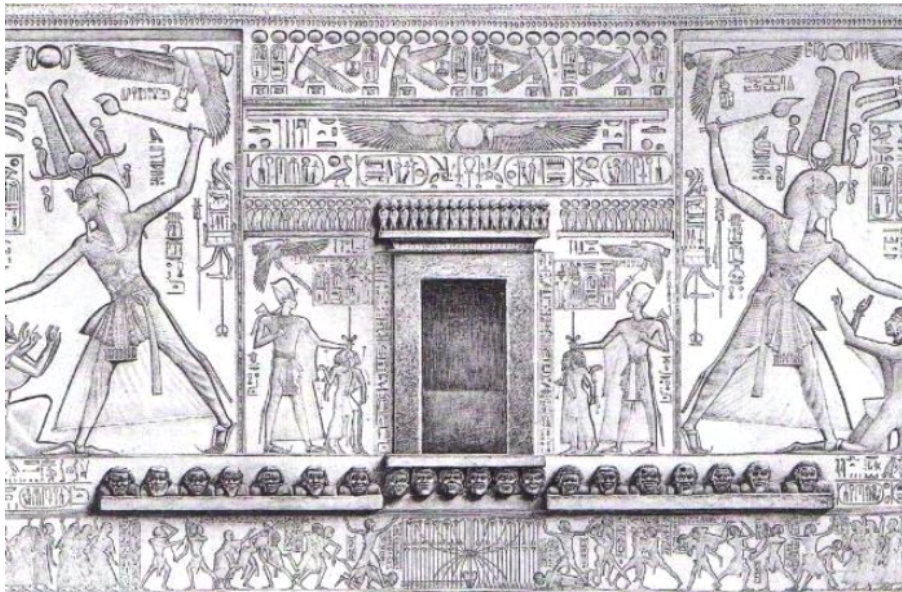
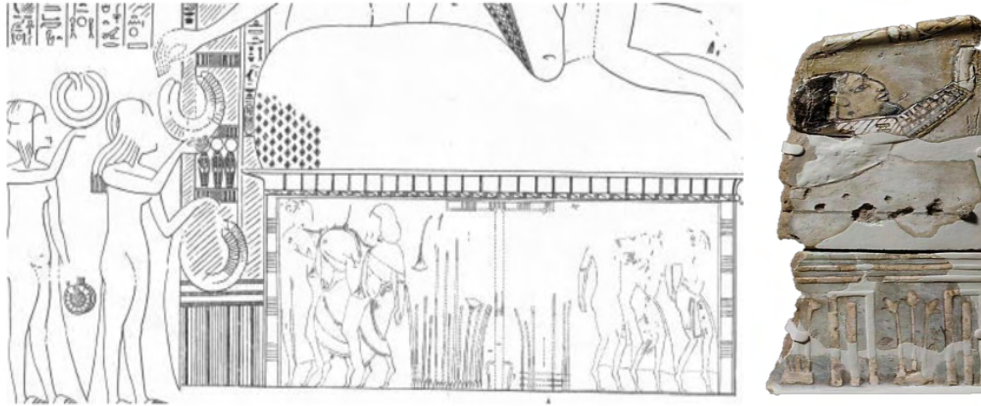


Figure 3.10a. Motif of bound captives decorating the Window of Appearance, AT2. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pl. 34. Figure 3.10b. Tile with prostrating foreigner, from dadoes of platforms or stairways to daises, reign of Ramesses II (MMA 35.1.19). Figure 3.10c. Smiting scene on the Window of Appearance at Medinet Habu. Wolfgang Decker, *Pharao und Sport* (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2006), fig. 81.



Figure 3.11a. Motif of bound foreigners decorating the base of Amenhotep III and Tiye’s royal kiosk, tomb of Anen (TT120).¹¹⁷ “Nina de Garis Davies | Amenhotep III and Queen Tiye Enthroned Beneath a Kiosk, Tomb of Anen | New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed February 11, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548566>. Figure 3.11b. Royal chair and footstool from the tomb of Tutankhamun. View Author Archive and Get author RSS feed, “These Are the Most Fascinating Objects from King Tut’s Tomb,” October 22, 2022, <https://nypost.com/2022/10/22/these-are-the-most-fascinating-objects-from-king-tuts-tomb/>.

The elevated status of the pharaoh was highlighted not only by the spatial organization and architectural setting, but also by the hierarchical structure of communication. For instance, communication between the Egyptian king and foreign envoys was mediated by Egyptian officials or envoys (figs. 3.12a-b).¹¹⁸ Limiting direct access to the pharaoh increased the social distance between him and the foreign

¹¹⁷ Names of the foreigners from left to right: Babylonia (*snḥʿr*), Kush (*kš*), Nahrin/Mittani (*nhryn*), Irem/Nubia (*irm*), Aegean (*kftyw*), Nubian (*iwntyw-sty*), Libyan (*thnw*), Nubian (*mntw-nw-stt?*), Bedouin (*šʿsw*). Lyla P. Brock, “Jewels in the Gebel: A Preliminary Report on the Tomb of Anen,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 36 (1999): 71. See discussion in Gay Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 136-38. For similar scenes in other Theban tombs, see Nigel Strudwick, “A Fragment of a Scene of Foreigners from the Theban Necropolis,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 38 (2001): 133-40.

¹¹⁸ For other examples, see *ms inw* scenes in TT78, TT63, Q11, TT42, and TT40. A. Brack and A. Brack, *Das Grab des Haremheb, Theban Nr. 78* (Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 1980), pl. 6d. Eberhard Dziobek and Mahmud Abdel Raziq, *Das Grab des Sobekhotep: Theben Nr. 63* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1990), pl. 33. Ricardo A. Caminos, *The Shrines and Rock-Inscriptions of Ibrim* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1968), pl. 10. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Menkheperasonb, Amenmose, and Another* (Nos. 86, 112, 42, 226) (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1933), pl. 33. Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tutʿankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. 19.

envoys, which further accentuated his unique status. To a certain extent, this communicative pattern is reminiscent of the interaction between the divine and Egypt's populace, which was mediated by the pharaoh.



Figure 3.12a. Nubian tribute presentation ceremony, Ibrim shrine of the Viceroy Usersatet. Ricardo A. Caminos, *The Shrines and Rock-Inscriptions of Ibrim* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1968), pl. 28. Figure 3.12b. Stela of the Viceroy of Kush Usersatet. John C. Darnell, "The Stela of the Viceroy Usersatet (Boston MFA 25.632), His Shrine at Qasr Ibrim, and the Festival of Nubian Tribute under Amenhotep II," *Égypte Nilotique et Méditerranéenne* 7 (2014): fig. 1.

The presence of deities in the *ms inw* scenes, who were presumably invisible spectators of the ceremony, indicates divine sanction (The Decree of the Gods) of the pharaoh's reception of foreign gifts and tribute and his universal dominion. It is unlikely a coincidence that Hathor, the goddess of foreign lands, was usually depicted overseeing the presentation of goods alongside the king or presenting them to the king. She was identified with local deities in foreign lands as far as Byblos in the north and Punt in the

south.¹¹⁹ Just as the Egyptians disguised their commercial transaction with the Puntites as a pious act,¹²⁰ they probably also intentionally portrayed the delivery of *inw* by foreigners to the pharaoh as ultimately an offering to the goddess Hathor. Other deities with foreign associations, e.g., Min the lord of Coptos¹²¹ and Satis the lady of Elephantine were also depicted as overseers of the ceremony. It is plausible that the gods' presence was mediated by their divine statues.¹²² Arguably, the Egyptians' consciousness of divine intervention in the foreign gifts and tribute-giving system led to the performance of proper rituals in connection with the ceremony to express their gratitude. The tomb inscriptions of Menkheperreseneb mentioned the performance of acceptable rites to Amun-Re;¹²³ a pictorial representation of Akhenaten's year 12 ceremony depicted sacrificial offerings and shrines before the royal kiosk (fig. 3.3).

The ceremony represented a spectacle of imperial splendor, which strived to advertise the awe-inspiring opulence of the empire and entice its foreign participants. As a festive occasion, it was accompanied by various forms of entertainment: e.g., wrestling, dancing, and music performance (fig. 3.3). Its participants simultaneously played the roles of actors and spectators. The king as well as the royal regalia (e.g., the ceremonial blue crown, the crook and flail) and paraphernalia (e.g., the royal palanquins and

¹¹⁹ Hathor was also a patron of Egyptian expeditions sent to far-flung mining regions such as Wadi Maghara and Serabit el-Khadim in the Sinai. Susan T. Hollis, *Five Egyptian Goddesses: Their Possible Beginnings, Actions, and Relationships in the Third Millennium BCE* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 51-53. Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 143.

¹²⁰ Ellen Morris, "Exchange, Extraction, and the Politics of Ideological Money Laundering in Egypt's New Kingdom Empire," in *Policies of Exchange: Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2nd Millennium B.C.E: Proceedings of the International Symposium at the University of Freiburg, Institute for Archaeological Studies, 30th May - 2nd June 2012*, ed. Birgitta Eder and Regine Pruzsinszky, vol. 2, *Oriental and European Archaeology* (Wien: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2015), 167-68.

¹²¹ In addition to his role as the supreme god of male sexual procreativity, Min served as a deity of the Eastern Desert, which was rich in mineral deposits. Along with the Syrian storm god Reshep, Min later became the consort of the Syrian goddess Qadesh. Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 115-17.

¹²² Schulman's study of smiting scenes on private stelae also noted the presence of divine figures; his suggestion that these figures represented cult statues brought out for the event proved rather convincing. Alan R. Schulman, *Ceremonial Execution and Public Rewards: Some Historical Scenes on New Kingdom Private Stelae* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1988), 8-62.

¹²³ Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Menkheperreseneb, Amenmose, and Another (Nos. 86, 112, 42, 226)* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1933), 2-3.

chariots) were constantly in the spotlight. The distinctive physical appearances, costumes (e.g., the tiered dress of the Syrians and the feathered headdress of the Nubians), and customs of the foreign participants all constituted ingredients of this multicultural visual festival. In addition, the multi-ethnic bodyguards of the pharaoh showcased the expansiveness of the Egyptian empire and the formidable military force at the pharaoh's command.¹²⁴

The gifts and tribute goods selected for display were carefully arranged for dramatic effect, e.g., being grouped into a composite piece (figs. 3.33a, 3.35a, 3.36a, 3.37a) or placed on exquisite stands decorated with royal iconographies for display (fig. 3.33a).¹²⁵ Even live animals participating in the parade were decorated: e.g., an *iw*-ox was depicted with a bowl-looking decoration (with fish swimming in it and plants growing out of it) between its horns in the tomb of Huy (fig. 3.13a). Another rare depiction of an ox with decoration between its horns was found in the tomb of Meryra I at Amarna (fig. 3.13b). These oxen were perhaps meant to be sacrificed; decoration of sacrificed animals was a well-attested practice in the Egyptian temples and Kerma tombs (fig. 3.13c).¹²⁶

¹²⁴ The Levantine vassals were particularly impressed by the Nubian troops, as several of them specifically requested Meluḥḥa (Nubian) soldiers from the pharaoh (EA 70: 17-23, EA 95: 34-43, EA 108: 59-69, EA 112: 16-24, EA 117: 71-94). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 139, 169, 182, 186, 194.

¹²⁵ Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pls. 19, 23.

¹²⁶ Peter Lacovara and Yvonne J. Markowitz, *Nubian Gold: Ancient Jewelry from Sudan and Egypt* (Cairo; New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2019), 80. Charles Bonnet, *Kerma: Royaume de Nubie* (Geneve: Mission archéologique de l'Université de Genève au Soudan, 1990), fig. 71, p.76.

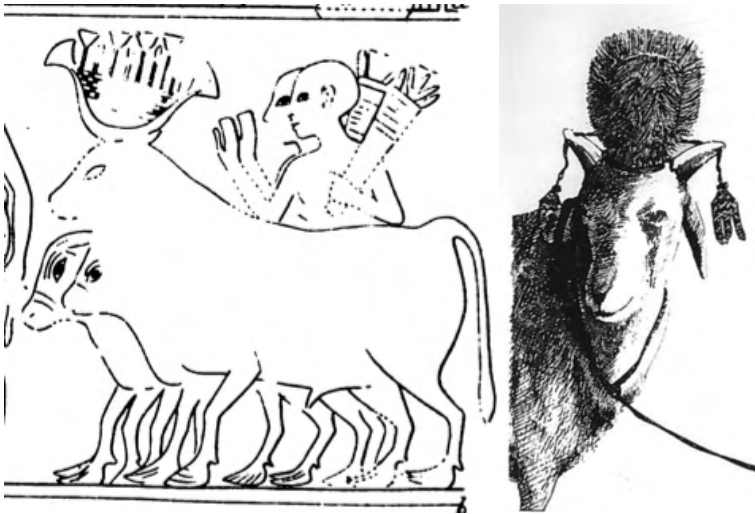


Figure 3.13a. *iw*-ox with a bowl-looking decoration between its horns. Nubian tribute presentation scene in the tomb of Amenhotep called Huy, TT40. “Charles K. Wilkinson | Nubian Tribute Presented to the King, Tomb of Huy | Twentieth Century; Original New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548571>. Figure 3.13b. Ox with lotiform decoration between its horns, tomb of Meryre (AT1). Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part I: The Tomb of Meryra* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1903), pl. 15. Figure 3.13c. Decoration on the forehead of a sacrificed sheep. Peter Lacovara and Yvonne J. Markowitz, *Nubian Gold: Ancient Jewelry from Sudan and Egypt* (Cairo; New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2019), fig. 55.

Unfortunately, beyond the highly formulaic inscriptions that accompanied the *ms inw* scenes, there exists no detailed account of how the Egyptians orchestrated the ceremony for maximum theatricality. Nonetheless, one may be able to get a good sense by reading an account of a similar ceremony during the Byzantine era in the *Book of Ceremonies*; the relevant chapter (Book II, Chapter 15)

records “What is necessary to observe when a reception is held in the great Hall of the magnaure, when the rulers sit on the throne of Solomon”:

“When they (the Byzantine officials) are in position, the *praipositos* (head of the eunuchs of the imperial court) signals to the *ostiarios* (doorkeeper) who holds the gold staff, and he leads in the foreigner, that is to say, conducted by the *katepano* (commander) of the emperor’s men or else by the *komes* (official) of the stable or else by the head groom, and with the interpreter present with them, that is to say, with the logothete (head of a secretariat or an administrative office) of the post going ahead of them. When he has gone in, the foreigner falls down on the ground making obeisance before the rulers, and immediately the organs sound. Then he goes in and stands at a distance from the imperial throne, and immediately the organs stop.

Note that when the ambassador moves away towards the emperor, his more select companions go in and, making obeisance, stand inside the two loose-hanging curtains. When the logothete puts the customary questions to him, the lions begin to roar, and the birds on the throne and likewise those in the trees begin to sing harmoniously, and the animals on the throne stand upright on their bases. While this is taking place in this way, the foreigner’s gift is brought in by the protonotary of the post and again, after a little while, the organs stop and the lions subside and the birds stop singing and the beasts sit down in their places. After the presentation of the gift the foreigner, directed by the logothete, makes obeisance and goes out, and while he is moving away to go out, the organs sound and the lions and the birds each make their sound and all the beasts sit down in their places. If there is another ambassador and the rulers order him to go in, again on his entry and departure the same order and ritual is observed, of the kind we have described, and, to put it simply, however many ambassadors they may wish [to receive], for each one it is conducted as previously described.” (Book II, Chapter 15, R568-69)¹²⁷

¹²⁷ (Book II, Chapter 15, R566-98). Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *Constantine Porphyrogenetos: The Book of Ceremonies*, trans. Ann Moffatt and Maxeme Tall (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017), 566-9.

What emotional responses such ideology-charged setting and ritual arrangements would trigger in the audience is a complicated question. The Egyptians undoubtedly responded positively, for the ceremony provided an immersive experience for its participants and probably made them feel a sense of pride. For the foreign participants, however, the same experience may kindle entirely different emotions like fear, antipathy, or anger. A careful analysis of the choreographed ceremony reveals its potential for intercultural communication as a public performance. In pre-modern societies with a large portion of the population being illiterate, public performances with great theatricality could have considerable social impact¹²⁸ and could be utilized as tools for propaganda and political unification. Recognition should also be given to the significance of theatrical performance in the establishment, maintenance, and negotiation of power relations between the pharaoh and his fellow kings as well as subjects (both Egyptian and foreign). Ideologies were given material expression through these ceremonies, e.g., the visualization of Egyptian subjugation of foreigners through prostration rituals and bound captives motifs on tribute items.¹²⁹

3.1.1.4. Practical Functions of the Ceremony

Inomata's study of the Mayan holpop officer who was in charge of ceremonial and administrative affairs reveals a convergence of theatrical performance and administration in the Mayan concept and practice.¹³⁰ Even though the performative aspect of the *ms inw* ceremony was very pronounced, it also

¹²⁸ Takeshi Inomata and Lawrence S. Coben, "Overture: An Invitation to the Archaeological Theater," in *Archaeology of Performance: Theaters of Power, Community, and Politics*, ed. Takeshi Inomata and Lawrence S. Coben (Lanham: Altamira Press, 2006), 25.

¹²⁹ In her article that examines pharaonic ideology during the inception stage of the Egyptian state, Morris demonstrated how repeated theatrical performance possesses the power to transform concocted ideology into accepted truth. Ellen F. Morris, "Propaganda and Performance at the Dawn of the State," in *Experiencing Power, Generating Authority: Cosmos, Politics, and the Ideology of Kingship in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia*, ed. Jane A. Hill, Philip Jones, and Antonio J. Morales, Penn Museum International Research Conferences 6 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2013), 33–64.

¹³⁰ Takeshi Inomata, "Politics and Theatricality in Mayan Society," in *Archaeology of Performance: Theaters of Power, Community, and Politics*, ed. Takeshi Inomata and Lawrence S. Coben (Lanham: Altamira Press, 2006), 195–96.

served a multitude of practical purposes, e.g., conducting diplomacy and promoting loyalty of foreign vassals to the pharaoh, increasing the accountability of the officials, and promoting social cohesion.

The pharaoh was able to simultaneously perform his responsibility of conducting foreign relations¹³¹ and imperial administration on the occasion of the *ms inw* ceremony. His role in the ceremony was two-dimensional: symbolic (as an emblem of Egyptian rule and hegemony abroad) and practical (as the central hub of Egypt's diplomatic network and head of the imperial administration). As discussed in the 2nd chapter, the payment of tribute represented a material expression of a tributary relationship, and periodic deliveries of tribute allowed the vassals to reaffirm their loyalty to the pharaoh.¹³² As an orchestrated performance, the ceremony reinforced the emblematic role of the pharaoh in imperial administration by providing a focal point for the allegiance of his foreign subjects. When the 18th Dynasty pharaohs ceased active campaigning and relied increasingly on diplomacy for managing foreign affairs, they essentially became absentee overlords of their foreign vassals. The audience with the pharaoh promoted the imperial ruler's cult, which functioned as an adhesive for various units of the culturally and linguistically diverse Egyptian empire.¹³³ Participation in the *ms inw* ceremony forcibly reminded the Egyptian subjects of their subjugation to the pharaoh and helped to instill fear as well as respect for the latter (cf. the letter from the Viceroy of Kush Paser). A public display of submission to a ruler, termed

¹³¹ No evidence suggested that a separate administrative department was ever established to take charge of diplomatic activities; nor was there a specialized position responsible for the official contact with a designated country. The reasons might be that firstly, their interaction was not frequent enough to necessitate such administrative efforts; more importantly; and secondly, the social nature of the ancient Near Eastern diplomatic exchanges decreed that the king be a necessary point of contact in diplomatic contacts, and no official could replace his role.

¹³² In one of his Plague Prayers (CTH 376.A), Muršili II bemoaned that many neighboring polities and peoples turned hostile against Ḫatti and severed their tributary relationships with it. Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 52–53.

¹³³ The promotion of a ruler's cult might be particularly relevant for maintaining control of far-flung regions and polities. During the New Kingdom period, the Egyptians (unlike the Hittites) granted much autonomy to local polities in Upper Nubia, as long as tribute was paid and Egyptian activities in Kawa and Napata were unfettered. Robert G. Morkot, "Nubia in the New Kingdom: The Limits of Egyptian Control," in *Egypt and Africa: Nubia from Prehistory to Islam*, ed. W. Vivian Davies (London: British Museum press, 1991), 294–301. A similar strategy was adopted in Egypt's northern empire. Ellen F. Morris, *Ancient Egyptian Imperialism* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018), 112–13.

“symbolic obeisance” by David Lake, both measures and cultivates loyalty because it “legitimizes and strengthens a ruler by reinforcing the beliefs of other subordinates that the performer also respects the authority of the ruler ... Symbolic obeisance deters challenges to authority by demonstrating to subordinates that other subordinates support the ruler.”¹³⁴

The life-cycle character of ancient politics meant that each new ruler had to reaffirm Egyptian sovereignty over his foreign subjects and friendly relationships with other countries.¹³⁵ There was also the need for confirmation on the side of foreign vassals and equal-ranking kings, for state policy was largely dictated by the personal disposition of each ruler and could undergo substantial changes from reign to reign. The *ms inw* ceremony could be fruitfully exploited for introducing the new ruler and the confirmation of overlord-vassal affiliation or alliances with peer polities.¹³⁶ Furthermore, the ceremony constituted a loyalty test for the pharaoh’s foreign subjects: their physical presence demonstrated their acquiescence to Egyptian rule (if not a warm embrace of it).¹³⁷

Morris’ study of ancient Egyptian imperialism has nicely demonstrated how coercion¹³⁸ and enticement represented two sides of the coin of Egyptian imperial policy to retain its Levantine empire.¹³⁹ Arguably, the “enticement” was not only monetary, but could also be immaterial and cultural. The *ms inw*

¹³⁴ David A. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 165.

¹³⁵ This was amply attested in diplomatic correspondence. In EA 34, the king of Alašiya wrote to the pharaoh: “I herewith send a *ḥabannatu*-jar [that] is full of “sweet oil” to be poured on your head, seeing that you have sat down on your royal throne.” William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 106.

¹³⁶ Cf. The dispute between Ḫattušili III and the Assyrian king about coronation gifts. Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 140.

¹³⁷ Aziru was summoned to Egypt to account for his unruly behavior, but he was able to exonerate himself despite the accusation of Rib-Hadda. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 248-58.

¹³⁸ Examples include staging spectacles of terror, e.g., displaying the bodies of dead enemy chiefs on the prow of royal ships or city walls (Thutmose I and Amenhotep II). See James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 34 and Barbara Cumming and Wolfgang Helck, eds., *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1982), 27.

¹³⁹ Ellen F. Morris, *Ancient Egyptian Imperialism* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018), 117-40.

ceremony constituted a fitting venue through which Egypt could expose its foreign subjects to Egyptian culture and exported its cultural traits to the imperial peripheries.¹⁴⁰ Such grand ceremonies were intended to encourage voluntary emulation and borrowing of Egyptian institutional and discursive practices by their foreign participants. In the words of Winter (on local/Hasanlu IVB emulation of Assyrian culture): “By adopting elements of the more sophisticated culture the status of the borrower can be increased with respect to conferring culture, bringing individuals closer to the level of equals in interaction by decreasing the differences and thus the (power) gap between them.”¹⁴¹

The importance of acculturation for creating a centrifugal force for pulling together the Egyptian empire should never be underestimated. As the examples of Heqanefer (whose name means “good ruler”) and Maiherperi demonstrate, through a process of acculturation, foreign vassals could be integrated into the Egyptian elite ruling class.¹⁴² Furthermore, model subjects could expect to be rewarded by the Egyptians for their deference and loyalty. Thus, Heqanefer was identified by name in the *ms inw* scene from the tomb

¹⁴⁰ Local elite emulation could also result from long-term Egyptian presence in imperial administrative centers. Carolyn R. Higginbotham, “Elite Emulation and Egyptian Governance in Ramesside Canaan,” *Tel Aviv* 23, no. 2 (1996): 154–69. Carolyn R. Higginbotham, *Egyptianization and Elite Emulation in Ramesside Palestine: Governance and Accommodation on the Imperial Periphery*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

¹⁴¹ Irene J. Winter, “Perspectives on the ‘Local Style’ of Hasanlu IVB: A Study in Receptivity,” in *Mountains and Lowlands: Essays in the Archaeology of Greater Mesopotamia*, ed. Louis D. Levine and T. Cuyler Young (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1977), 380–81. Flannery (1968), who studied the influence by the Olmec upon the culture of the Valley of Oaxaca, expressed a similar opinion that the procurement of foreign luxury goods represents “an attempt on the part of the elite of the less-sophisticated society to adopt behavior, status trappings, symbolism or even language of the more sophisticated group ... to absorb some of their charisma.” Kent V. Flannery, “The Olmec and the Valley of Oaxaca: A Model for Inter-Regional Interaction in Formative Times,” in *Dumbarton Oaks Conference on the Olmec*, ed. Elizabeth P. Benton (Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1968), 105.

¹⁴² William K. Simpson, “Tomb of Hekanefer, Child of the Nursery of Tutankhamun’s Court: An American Excavation in a Nubian Site Threatened by the High Dam,” *Illustrated London News* 238 (1961): 1066–67. William K. Simpson, *Heka-Nefer and the Dynastic Material from Toshka and Arminna* (New Haven and Philadelphia: Peabody Museum of Natural History of Yale University and University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, 1963). The wholesale adoption of Egyptian culture was more common among Egypt’s Nubian vassals.

of the Viceroy of Kush (TT40)¹⁴³ and Maiherperi received the exceptional honor of a lavish burial in the Valley of the Kings.¹⁴⁴

In the early 18th Dynasty, military elites like Ahmose son of Ibana and Ahmose Pennekhbet commemorated their military exploits and rewards on the walls of their funerary monuments.¹⁴⁵ As opportunities to partake in lucrative military campaigns and climb up the social ladder became less readily available in the mid-18th Dynasty because Egypt reconciled with Mittani and stabilized its rule in the northern empire, aspirational elites and officials sought to accrue fame and fortune through their administrative skills, by guaranteeing the steady flow of foreign goods into the Egyptian empire. Starting with the reign of Hatshepsut, Egyptian officials commemorated in their tombs their involvement in the escort of foreign envoys, the collection and registration of foreign gifts and tribute, and the ceremonial presentation of them to the pharaoh (chart 3.1).

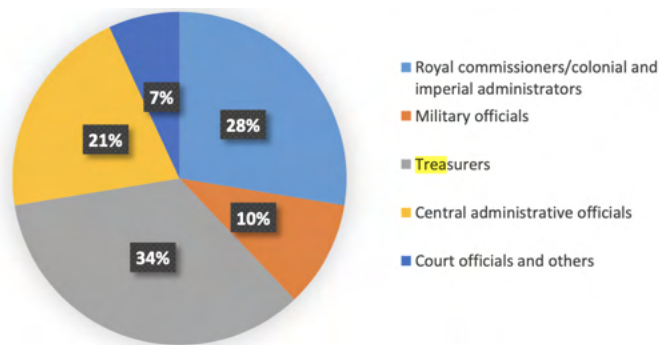


Chart 3.1. Categories of officials whose monuments feature the collection, escort, registration, and presentation of *inw*.

¹⁴³ Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. 27.

¹⁴⁴ Catharine H. Roehrig, "The Tomb of Maiherperi in the Valley of the Kings," in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 70–74.

¹⁴⁵ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 12-15. James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 18.

As the head of Nubian and Levantine administration, the pharaoh reviewed the presentation of tribute goods, debriefed responsible officials (with their staff of office in hand), and evaluated their performance (fig. 3.3). The fact that the colonial and imperial administrative officials had to report their duty before domestic and foreign audiences promoted their accountability. Such scenes were found in the tombs of general Horemheb and the Viceroy Huy, both of whom were generously rewarded with the *shebyu*-collars (fig. 3.14).¹⁴⁶ The accompanying inscription in the tomb of Huy reads: “Coming in peace from the royal palace by the prince, the divine father loved by the god, the king’s son of Cush, Huy, after he had received the favors of the Lord of the Two Lands, having been [rewarded (*fkʿ*)] with gold on his neck and arms time after time, exceedingly many (times).”¹⁴⁷ As the master of ceremony, Huy was depicted presenting both Nubian and Levantine tribute to Tutankhamun; at first glance, this seems surprising as Huy did not hold any position in the Levantine administration. Perhaps the Levantine tribute scene was fictional, and it was placed in opposition to the Nubian tribute scene because of the symmetrical layout of the transverse hall.¹⁴⁸ Alternatively, Huy may indeed have led the presentation of Levantine tribute, as there was no counterpart to the role of Viceroy of Kush in Egypt’s northern empire. An examination of the career paths of some imperial officials reveals that they had been transferred between Nubian and Levantine administration;¹⁴⁹ indeed, their participation in the *ms inw* ceremonies

¹⁴⁶ Geoffrey T. Martin, *The Memphite Tomb of Horemheb, Commander-in-Chief of Tutankhamun* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1989), pl. 107. Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut’ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. 29.

¹⁴⁷ Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut’ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), 26, pl. 29.

¹⁴⁸ Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings. I. The Theban Necropolis. Private Tombs* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1994), 64, 75-77.

¹⁴⁹ A Viceroy of Kush during the reign of Ramesses II, Huy, also held the title “Royal envoy in every foreign country” (presumably before his promotion to the viceregal position?). It was perhaps in this capacity that he escorted the Hittite princess Maathorneferure to Egypt. Mohamed R. Abbas, “A Survey of the Diplomatic Role of the Charioteers in the Ramesside Period,” in *Chasing Chariots. Proceedings of the First International Chariot Conference (Cairo 2012)*, ed. André J. Veldmeijer and Salima Ikram (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2013), 19-20.

enabled them to gain administrative experience and intercultural communication sensitivity, which would prepare them for more prominent roles in the imperial administration.



Figure 3.14. The Viceroy of Kush Amenhotep called Huy being rewarded with gold necklaces and armlets for his outstanding service and acclaimed by his colleagues and friends. “Charles K. Wilkinson | Nubian Tribute Presented to the King, Tomb of Huy | Twentieth Century; Original New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548571>.

As noted above, the pharaoh could garner support from the elites by bestowing upon them prestige items such as exotic goods, luxury textiles, and exquisite metallic vessels. The redistribution of diplomatic gifts and tribute among Egyptian elites was conducive to the production of a high culture, which Baines and Yoffee defined as “the production and consumption of aesthetic items under the control, and for the benefit, of the inner elite of a civilization, including the ruler and the gods.”¹⁵⁰ The letter of Amenhotep II to his Viceroy of Kush mentioned above and the funerary equipment of Maiherperi¹⁵¹ provide textual and artifactual evidence that Egyptian elites with the means to acquire foreign exotica indulged themselves in

¹⁵⁰ John Baines and Norman Yoffee, “Order, Legitimacy, and Wealth in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia,” in *Archaic States*, ed. Gary M. Feinman and Joyce Marcus (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1998), 235.

¹⁵¹ Catharine H. Roehrig, “The Tomb of Maiherperi in the Valley of the Kings,” in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 70–74.

a cosmopolitan lifestyle. The *ms inw* scenes were depicted in elite tombs because of their association with opulence and foreignness; furthermore, they attest to the tomb owner's personal connection with the king (and hence access to power) and involvement in the international network of exchange through the latter.¹⁵² Through extravagant displays and conspicuous consumption of foreign goods, the elites enhanced their prestige and strengthened the existing social hierarchy.

Those lower in the social hierarchy were not privileged enough to attend the *ms inw* ceremony could also get a glimpse of its opulence. They included: 1. Those who were conscripted for the collection and delivery of gifts and tribute;¹⁵³ 2. People who visited the elite tombs with magnificent *ms inw* scenes showing remarkable details;¹⁵⁴ 3. Family and colleagues of the officials involved in this process;¹⁵⁵ 4. Members of the general population who happened to cast a glance at the Nile when ships loaded with diplomatic gifts or tribute were sailing by. The Egyptians realized the potential of the Nile as an arena for political spectacles¹⁵⁶ and religious performances (e.g., Amun's riverine journey on his sacred bark between

¹⁵² Flora B. Anthony, *Foreigners in Ancient Egypt: Theban Tomb Paintings from the Early Eighteenth Dynasty* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 88.

¹⁵³ According to Inomata, individuals directly sensed and witnessed the presence and operation of the polity-wide community on two types of occasions: large-scale spectacles and grand construction projects. In a way, the *ms inw* ceremony represents an overlap of these two categories. Inscriptions from the Qasr Ibrim shrine of Usersatet (QI4) clearly demonstrate that the collection of Nubian tribute involved the mobilization of a large number of people (as many as 2,549 men). Takeshi Inomata, "Politics and Theatricality in Mayan Society," in *Archaeology of Performance: Theaters of Power, Community, and Politics*, ed. Takeshi Inomata and Lawrence S. Coben (Lanham: Altamira Press, 2006), 205. Ricardo A. Caminos, *The Shrines and Rock-Inscriptions of Ibrim* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1968), 67.

¹⁵⁴ These images allowed the influence of the ceremony to transcend time and space.

¹⁵⁵ Huy was greeted by his family and servants after he was rewarded for successfully leading the *ms inw* ceremony. Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamun* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. 23. The Ramesside biography of the High Steward Neferssekheru at Zawyet Sultan gives a first-person account of the warm reception he received after he was rewarded by the king: "I was reward very often for every task: the gold thereof at my throat, the myrrh upon my head, real iber-balm from the beginning of the land anointing my limbs. When I went forth from the gates of the palace, all my people were joyful to the height of the sky. Everyone who saw me (said): 'It is fitting for him, Neferssekheru, whose heart is true.'" Elizabeth Froid, *Biographical Texts from Ramesside Egypt*, ed. John Baines (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 145.

¹⁵⁶ Amenhotep II had utilized his royal barge as a mobile platform for a spectacle of terror, i.e., hanging of enemies corpses on the ship's prow. James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 313.

the Karnak Temple and the Luxor Temple) very early on. The viceregal ships depicted in the tomb of Huy, one decorated with apotropaic images of the royal sphinx trampling Nubians and another loaded with shackled Nubians, suggest that the transportation of tribute along the Nile could be turned into a moving pageant (figs. 3.15a-b). The local population who visited the tombs could also vicariously share in the prestige and glory. Similarly, the delivery of diplomatic gifts on land was never simply a matter of logistics. Hence, the Babylonian king insisted that the pharaoh send more chariots to escort his daughter to Egypt because he felt the need to “put on a show” for his neighbors (EA 11: 16-28).¹⁵⁷



Figure 3.15a. Viceregal barges transporting Nubian tribute in the tomb of Huy (TT40). “TT40 - Huy p.3,” accessed November 18, 2022, https://www.osirisnet.net/tombes/nobles/houy40/e_houy40_03.htm.

¹⁵⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 21.

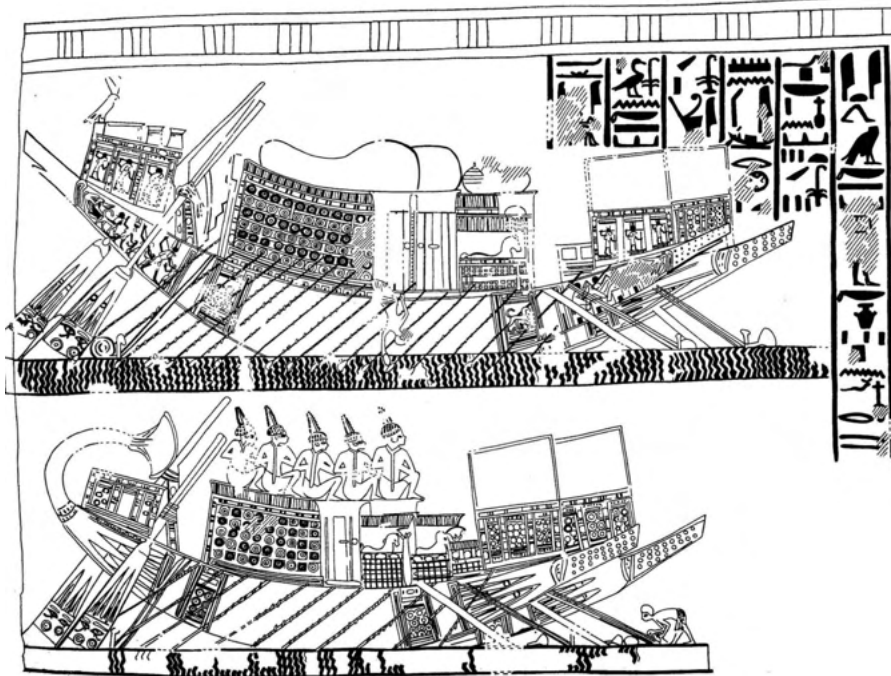


Figure 3.15b. Viceregal barges transporting Nubian tribute in the tomb of Huy (TT40), facsimile drawing. Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. 31.

In diplomatic interactions, verbal communication (both oral and written) required literacy¹⁵⁸ and did not lend itself to ceremonialization easily, which limited the number of participants and observers (the size of its audience). In comparison, the *ms inw* ceremony was able to reach a multitude of audiences through the administrative process (e.g., delivery on the viceregal barge) and its depiction in elite tombs (and later on royal monuments, e.g., the Beit el-Wali temple of Ramesses II). Pictorial records of this spectacle were not secluded from the curious eyes of ordinary Egyptians.

¹⁵⁸ Literacy in ancient Egyptian was limited, not to mention proficiency in the diplomatic *lingua franca*. Leonard H. Lesko, "Literature, Literacy, and Literati," in *Pharaoh's Workers: The Villagers of Deir El Medina*, ed. Leonard H. Lesko (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 131–44.

3.1.2. The Perspectives of Foreign Participants: Defiance, Compliance, and Obedience

The carefully choreographed *ms inw* ceremony was intended to make quite an impression upon the international audience and fire up their imagination about the power and wealth of Egypt. However, not all the participants reacted the way the Egyptians expected/wanted them to. The participants of the *ms inw* ceremony could be divided into three categories: envoys from the great kings, delegates from independent medium powers, and representatives of Egypt's vassals. Their motives for participating in the ceremony were heterogeneous. In addition to economic gain, they might have been inspired to conduct diplomatic exchanges with Egypt to gain prestige and recognition or curry favor from the pharaoh. They may have responded positively or negatively depending on their political status, motives, and various other factors. Their presence at the *ms inw* ceremony did not necessarily indicate their endorsement of or blind subscription to the Egypt-centric ideology. In fact, many may have been disinterested or reluctant to participate in the ceremony; instead, they considered it a political expediency. As a result, varying degrees of intercultural communication sensitivity and adaptation can be seen in the process of diplomatic gift exchange and tribute extraction.¹⁵⁹

It is also worth noting that the public nature of diplomatic gift exchange might influence the behaviors of the exchange partners. For instance, the Babylonian king might grudgingly accept the Egyptian king's rejection of his marriage proposals in the diplomatic letters because their communication was largely bilateral (point-to-point) and reached only a small circle of elite audience (EA 4: 4-22);¹⁶⁰ however, he

¹⁵⁹ Regarding the Chinese dynasties' reception of Xiongnu and Roman missions as examples, Zhang remarked: "The tributary system as such does not presuppose either the existence of common culture or shared understanding of the constitutional structure of the tributary system as a cultural construct. The Chinese, the Xiongnu and, later, the Mongols made no pretense of sharing the same culture and civilization, not least the cultural assumptions underpinning the Chinese conception of the tributary system. It is an expedient arrangement acceptable to both parties to facilitate strategic interaction and economic exchanges in search of security." Yong-jin Zhang and Barry Buzan, "The Tributary System as International Society in Theory and Practice," *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 5, no. 1 (2012): 20.

¹⁶⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 8-9.

firmly objected to his envoys being treated like Egyptian subjects when the chariot-viewing incident happened because representatives from other foreign kings might be present and his reputation as a great king was at stake (EA 1: 88-98).¹⁶¹ These diplomatic incidents further demonstrate that it could be enlightening to understand Egypt's relations with its foreign peer polities and subjects from the perspective of multilateral diplomacy. The *ms inw* ceremony provided an opportunity for the material expression and dramatization of these interlocking relations.

3.1.2.1. Envoys from the Great Powers: Shared Views and Dissensions

It must be emphasized that other great kings did not object to the public display of diplomatic gifts and the ceremonialization of their presentation to the pharaoh. Quite the contrary, official contacts among ancient Near Eastern countries had a strong social aspect. In addition to their intrinsic value, the diplomatic gifts possessed added value, deriving from the power and prestige of their senders.¹⁶² Their public exhibition before domestic audiences and foreign guests constituted a public demonstration of how well-connected and widely acclaimed the recipient was.¹⁶³ Therefore, Tušratta urged the pharaoh to send him abundant gifts so that he might be greatly glorified before his countrymen and the foreign guests (EA 20: 46-59).¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, Zaccagnini pointed out that the sender of diplomatic gifts would stand to benefit from a

¹⁶¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

¹⁶² Carlo Zaccagnini, "The Interdependence of the Great Powers," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 151–52.

¹⁶³ This practice was already known in the Old Babylonian period; an Amorite ruler Ušašum urged the king of Ešnunna to honor him in the eyes of the Amorites by sending him lavish gifts for the burial of his father and predecessor. Dominique Charpin, "*Tu es de mon sang*": *les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

¹⁶⁴ To the dismay of Tušratta, the quality of gifts he received from his Egyptian brother did not meet his expectations, and the public ceremony turned out to be a humiliating experience. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 48.

ceremonial display because of the reciprocal fame and prestige that redounded to him.¹⁶⁵ This may partly account for the enthusiasm with which Tušratta encouraged the pharaoh to assemble the entire land for a public display of the lavish dowry of his daughter (EA 24: 24-34).¹⁶⁶ Counterparts of the Egyptian *ms inw* ceremony, whether independent developments or inspired by foreign precedents, are attested in other Near Eastern cultures during the 1st millennium BCE.¹⁶⁷ Although evidence is paltry during the Late Bronze Age, its political, ideological, and ritual significance may have resonated with other Near Eastern kings.

¹⁶⁵ Carlo Zaccagnini, “The Interdependence of the Great Powers,” in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 152.

¹⁶⁶ Thus wrote Tušratta: “And the entire land may my brother assemble, and may all other lands and the nobles (and all envoys be present. And they may show his dowry to my brother, and they may spread out everything in the view of my brother ... And may my brother take all the nobles and all the envoys and all other lands and the war charioteers whom my brother desires, and may my brother go. And may he spread out the dowry and may it be pleasing.” William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 67.

¹⁶⁷ The Black Obelisk of Šalmaneser III commemorated the bringing of gifts and tribute by various foreign peoples, without clearly distinguishing their political status *vis-à-vis* that of Assyria. In particular, the Egyptians were depicted as one of the tributary peoples, which was quite divorced from reality at this junction in time. “Obelisk | British Museum,” The British Museum, accessed April 14, 2021, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1848-1104-1. See also: Holly Pittman, “The White Obelisk and the Problem of Historical Narrative in the Art of Assyria,” *The Art Bulletin* 78, no. 2 (1996): 334–55. Similarly, Neo-Assyrian royal annals claimed that the Cypriot kings presented building materials as “tribute” on the occasion of Esarhaddon’s construction of his new royal palace in Nineveh. In all likelihood, the “tribute” in this context should probably not be interpreted as a sign of formal dependency but rather ideologically charged hyperbole, a deliberate distortion of the meaning of diplomatic (high-level) gift-exchange in order to elevate the status of the Assyrian king. The Achaemenid emperors, who were imperial successors of the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian kings, carved their royal exploits in stones at their ceremonial capital of Persepolis. The magnificent relief that once graced the northern stairs of the Apadana at Persepolis commemorated the ceremonial presentation of foreign gifts and tribute by various foreign peoples, among them an Ethiopian delegation. By this time, Egypt has slipped into the league of second-rank powers; however, knowledge of its past glory may still have been alive in cultural memory since Egyptian royal motifs, e.g., the Horus-falcon, were appropriated in architecture for the glorification of the Achaemenid kings. Anna Cannavò, “In the Middle of the Sea of the Setting Sun: The Neo-Assyrian Empire and Cyprus - Economic and Political Perspectives,” in *Imperial Peripheries in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, ed. Craig W. Tyson and Virginia R. Herrmann (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2018), 240–64. Erle Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680-669 BC)* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 23-4. Reliefs of Apadana, Persepolis. K. Afhami and W. Gambke, “Apadana, North Portico,” Persepolis3D.com, accessed February 23, 2022, http://www.persepolis3d.com/data_apadana/apadana_09.htm. The Ethiopian delegation. Relief of Apadana. “The Apadana | The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago,” accessed February 23, 2022, https://oi.uchicago.edu/gallery/apadana#1D7_72dpi.png. Okapi (?) brought by the Ethiopian delegation. “The Apadana | The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago,” accessed February 23, 2022, https://oi.uchicago.edu/gallery/apadana#2C9_72dpi.png.

The political ideology of divine sanction of universal dominion was not culturally specific to Egypt.¹⁶⁸ It was detectable in Syro-Mesopotamian states during their formative stage. Political leaders like Gudea of Lagash bragged about procuring exotic goods for the construction of temples and state projects from distant lands like Meluḫḫa and Makkan with divine support.¹⁶⁹ Similarly, the Hittite kings claimed to have received divine sanction to collect foreign goods through both war and diplomacy. A Hittite prayer invoked the Sun-goddess of Arinna for the protection of the royal couple: “She (the Sun-goddess of Arinna) gave them a battle-ready, valiant spear saying: ‘May the hostile foreign lands perish by the hand of the labarna, and let them take goods, silver and gold to Ḫattusa and Arinna, the cities of the gods!’” (CTH 385.10, ii 4-11).¹⁷⁰

Just as the New Kingdom pharaohs claimed to exercise control over all four corners of the world, Mesopotamian kings assumed the royal epithet “king of the four quarters,” which came into use during the Akkadian period, to proclaim their universal dominion.¹⁷¹ This quartering of the world beyond a political and cultural core (and the categorization of foreign peoples based on their geographic orientation), which promulgated a self-centric worldview, was found in many ancient cultures.¹⁷² In the words of Poo in his

¹⁶⁸ The concept of “Decree of the Gods” had many parallels with the ideological framework of the Chinese tribute system, the Mandate of Heaven, which entitled the Chinese emperor to rule “Tianxia” (all-under-heaven) as the Son of Heaven. Both ideological concepts made claims to divine genealogy to legitimize the king’s universal suzerainty; both underlined the institution of international gifts/tribute giving; and both made self-serving assumptions of political, cultural and moral superiority over other political entities in the gifts/tribute giving system. Yongjin Zhang, “System, Empire and State in Chinese International Relations,” in *Empires, Systems and States: Great Transformations in International Politics*, ed. Michael Cox, Timothy Dunne, and Ken Booth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 53-57.

¹⁶⁹ Gudea derived much pride from being able to import precious materials for the construction of the temple of Ningirsu: “In order to build Ningirsu’s House The Elamites came to him from Elam, the Susians from Susa. Magan and Meluḫḫa, (coming down) from their mountain, loaded wood on their shoulders for him, and in order to build Ningirsu’s House they all joined Gudea (on their way) to his city Girsu . . . Things of all sorts came to the succour of the ruler who built the House.” (Gudea Cylinder A). Dietz O. Edzard, *Gudea and His Dynasty*, The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Early Periods, 3:1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 77-79.

¹⁷⁰ Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 25-26.

¹⁷¹ The Gutian king Erridu-pizir also subscribed to this Mesopotamian political ideology and claimed to be the “king of four quarters”. Muzhou Poo, *Enemies of Civilization: Attitudes toward Foreigners in Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 140, note 70.

¹⁷² Another cultural parallel could be drawn for comparison from the Eastern Zhou period of Chinese history, during which the derogatory terms Rong (north), Yi (east), Man (south), and Di (west) began to be employed for

Enemies of Civilization, “It was a subjective imagination as well as literary embellishment of the idea that the ‘self’ of the king, and, by extension, the kingdom, was the center of the entire world.”¹⁷³

Though firmly convinced that their own country (the “Black Land”) was favored by the gods and more habitable than any other place, the ancient Egyptians had a genuine interest in foreign landscapes, cultures, and goods, which was illustrated by abundant textual and pictorial records. Hatshepsut’s Punt reliefs featured a detailed depiction of the mythical God’s Land of Punt and various aquatic species of the Red Sea.¹⁷⁴ The queen may have tried to transplant myrrh trees in her mortuary complex at Deir el-Bahri in Egypt, as many trees were shown being transported in large pots in the reliefs.¹⁷⁵ Despite Thutmose III’s efforts to dissociate himself from Hatshepsut and her political legacies late in his reign, this warrior king took time during his Levantine campaign in year 25 to collect local flora and fauna and transport them back to Egypt for the amusement of Amun. He commissioned his craftsmen to carve these wonders on the walls of the Karnak temple so that Amun could indulge in their pleasantness for posterity.¹⁷⁶ This structure, known as the Botanical Garden of Thutmose III, is located at the back of the Amun Temple at

designating foreign tribes to the four cardinal points. Muzhou Poo, *Enemies of Civilization: Attitudes toward Foreigners in Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 46.

¹⁷³ Muzhou Poo, *Enemies of Civilization: Attitudes toward Foreigners in Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 42.

¹⁷⁴ Édouard H. Naville, *Deir El Bahari, Part 3: End of Northern Half and Southern Half of the Middle Platform. Memoir for 1896-97. Plates LVI-LXXXVI*, Excavation Memoirs (Egypt Exploration Society) 16 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1897). See also: “Cast of Punt Reliefs, Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir El Bahri (Primary Title) - (L.5.52.48),” Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, accessed November 23, 2020, <https://www.vmfamuseum/piction/6027262-62403428/>.

¹⁷⁵ Édouard H. Naville, *Deir El Bahari, Part 3: End of Northern Half and Southern Half of the Middle Platform. Memoir for 1896-97. Plates LVI-LXXXVI*, Excavation Memoirs (Egypt Exploration Society) 16 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1897), pls. 74, 78, 79. However, no remains of myrrh trees have been found in the tree pits in the courtyard of Hatshepsut’s mortuary temple. Linda Farrar, *Gardens and Gardeners of the Ancient World: History, Myth and Archaeology* (Oxford: Windgather Press, 2016), 32.

¹⁷⁶ The practice of bringing scribes on campaigns whose task is to find and record any strange animals and plants they might encounter reminds one of Alexander and Napoleon, for they both took historians, scientists, and secretaries with them on campaign to record the wondrous new things they found in the foreign countries. Indeed, one of Napoleon’s secretaries discovered the Rosetta Stone during Napoleon’s Egyptian campaign. Many have drawn such parallels. See Ellen F. Morris, *Ancient Egyptian Imperialism* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018), 144.

Karnak.¹⁷⁷ Exotic animals like bears, cheetahs, giraffes, and green monkeys were also brought from all corners of the world, though what happened to them after their ceremonial presentation to the pharaoh is little known. Stallions whose majestic appearances were often enhanced by elaborate trappings were also highly prized as prestigious gifts.¹⁷⁸ These animals incurred costs for not only their donors but also their recipients; the hidden costs associated with these exotic animals (expenses for keeping them alive during long-distance travel and accommodating their handlers/care-takers) further underscored the wealth and prestige of both exchange parties. Ownership of large, exotic beasts (e.g., lions) became largely the prerogative of the great kings who commanded considerable wealth and power. Compared to inanimate objects, these fantastic beasts could strike the fancy of their recipients more easily and even develop intimacy relations with them as pets. The New Kingdom Egyptian kings kept lions as royal companions. In the Beit el-Wali temple (fig. 3.5a) in Nubia, Ramesses II is depicted receiving a lion from the Nubians; in the Asiatic tribute scene in the same temple, a pet lion named “He who slays his enemies” crouched at

¹⁷⁷ One inscription on the wall reads: “All plants that grow, all flowers that are in God’s Land [which were found by] his majesty when his majesty proceeded to Upper Retenu, to subdue [all] the countrie[s], according to the command of his father, Amun, who put them beneath his sandals from [the year 1] to myriads of years ... His majesty said; ‘I swear, as Ra (loves me) as my father, Amun, favors me, all these things happened in truth - I have not written fiction as that which really happened to my majesty. [The spirits of my majesty have caused their birth and growth to glorify his foods]. My majesty has done this from the desire to put them before my father Amun, in this great temple of Amun [Akhmenu], (as) a memorial forever and ever’.” James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 193. Eric H. Cline and David B. O’Connor, *Thutmose III: A New Biography* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 404-5. In a sense, this Botanical Garden is the ancient Egyptian equivalent of cabinets of curiosities, which first emerged in the 16th century and were precursors to modern museums. Like the cabinet of curiosities which reflect the particular curiosities of their curators and function as social devices to establish and uphold rank in society, the Botanical Garden bears witness to Thutmose III’s inquisitive mind and his ability to acquire foreign exotica from far-flung regions. The Persians also set up gardens and decorated them with special and high-value imported plants to flaunt their power. Such a palatial garden, which is attached to an impressive residency, has been excavated at the site of Ramat Rahel in Israel. Dafna Langgut et al., “Fossil Pollen Reveals the Secrets of the Royal Persian Garden at Ramat Rahel, Jerusalem,” *Palynology* 37, no. 1 (2013): 115–29.

¹⁷⁸ Diplomatic gift-giving might be the only way for some kings to obtain good breeding stocks that were banned for export.

the foot of the throne.¹⁷⁹ Ramesses II's pet lion was even depicted in his Battle of Kadesh reliefs, though whether this beast really fought alongside him on the battlefield remains an open question.¹⁸⁰

Other Near Eastern kings shared such genuine curiosity in foreign goods, cultures, and landscapes; abundant textual and pictorial records documented their trading and military expeditions to the end of the known world.¹⁸¹ When Assyria first joined the international scene, Aššur-uballit I expressed his keen desire to “see” the distant and mysterious land of Egypt (from the Assyrian perspective) through his envoys' eyes: “Do [no]t delay the messenger whom I send to you for a visit. He should visit and then leave for here. He should see what you are like and what your country is like, and then leave for here” (EA 15: 16-22).¹⁸²

Palatial paintings from various sites of the Eastern Mediterranean feature depictions of foreign landscapes, e.g., the Minoan-style wall paintings at Avaris and representation of the Nilotic landscape at

¹⁷⁹ Herbert Ricke, George R. Hughes, and Edward F. Wente, *The Beit El-Wali Temple of Ramesses II: Joint Expedition 1960/61 with the Schweizerisches Institut für Ägyptische Bauforschung und Altertumskunde in Kairo*, University of Chicago Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pls. 9, 15.

¹⁸⁰ Brent A. Strawn, *What Is Stronger Than a Lion?: Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Fribourg; Göttingen: Academic Press; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 157-59.

¹⁸¹ Sargon of Akkad boasted about his military expeditions to far-flung regions: “I was wont to ascend high mountains, I was wont to cross over low mountains. The [la]nd of the sea I sieged three times, I conquered Dilmun. I went up to great Der” Benjamin R. Foster, “The Birth Legend of Sargon of Akkad (1.133),” in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), vol. 1, 461. A Middle Bronze Age example of a royal tour to the edge of the known world was Zimri-Lim of Mari's well-documented journey to Ugarit. While this trip served mundane purposes of strengthening political alliance (demonstrating support of the king of Yamḥad) and facilitating trade, it followed the Mesopotamian tradition of reaching the Great Sea and hence bore ideological significance. Dominique Charpin, “‘Année où Zimri-Lim est allé en renfort du Yamhad’: Une campagne des armées de Mari dans le royaume d'Alep,” in *Ougarit, un anniversaire: bilans et recherches en cours*, ed. Valérie Matoïan, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 28 (Leuven: Peeters, 2021), 535–72. Itamar Singer, “A Political History of Ugarit,” in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston: Brill, 1999), 603–733.

¹⁸² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 38. The Neo-Assyrian king Adad-nirari II kept herds of animals like lions, elephants, ibex, deer, and ostriches in the Inner City of Aššur. Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114-859 BC)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 154. Following his example, Aššurnasirpal II seemed to have established an imperial “amusement park” in Calah and filled it with all kinds of fantastic beasts he collected through diplomacy and hunting; he also embarked on a journey to the Mediterranean and received tribute from local rulers. Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114-859 BC)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 223-26.

Akrotiri on Thera.¹⁸³ Images of foreign landscapes were also painted or inscribed on smaller and more portable objects that were easier to circulate. For example, a snapshot of the Nilotic landscape was depicted on a faience bowl (fig. 3.16a) discovered at Enkomi in Cyprus.¹⁸⁴ This object would have satisfied the curiosity of a foreign ruler or elite who had never been to and was eager to learn more about the land of Egypt, its people, and their lifestyle.¹⁸⁵ Similarly, one of the Mycenaean daggers from the Tholos Graves featured a Nilotic theme, which illustrates its owner's interest in foreign landscapes and cosmopolitan taste (fig. 3.16b).¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Manfred Bietak and Nannó Marinatos, "The Minoan Wall Paintings from Avaris," *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 5 (1995): 60.

¹⁸⁴ J. Lesley Fitton, "Dish with Scene of the River Nile," in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 259.

¹⁸⁵ Thus wrote the Assyrian king: "Do [no]t delay the messenger whom I sent to you for a visit. He should visit and then leave for here. He should see what you are like and what your country is like, and then leave for here" (EA 15: 16-22). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 38.

¹⁸⁶ Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans, eds., *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 121-22, fig. 36.



Figure 3.16a. Dish with a scene of the river Nile, found at Enkomi on Cyprus, 14th - 13th century BCE. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans, eds., *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), Cat. No. 161. Figure 3.16b. Inlaid dagger with a Nilotic landscape. Rutsi, Tholos Tomb 2. Late Helladic IIA context. National Archaeological Museum, Athens 8340. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans, eds., *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), fig. 36.

Despite their shared interest in acquiring foreign exotica, other great kings would probably not have been pleased when the Egyptian kings distorted the nature of diplomatic gift exchange and disguised it as the reception of tribute through the *ms inw* ceremony. In fact, they frowned upon any maneuver that might undermine their honor and prestige. The above-mentioned chariot-viewing incident (EA 1: 88-98) demonstrates that while other great kings recognized Egypt's sovereignty over its subjects, they objected to the indiscriminate treatment of their envoys and Egyptian subjects for fear of.¹⁸⁷ Despite the Babylonian

¹⁸⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

messengers' disgruntlement about being humiliated, the formal occasion of a royal audience might have suppressed their expression of displeasure on the spot. If so, these emotions of resentment would have been temporarily masked by bodily enactment of ceremony procedures, which implied consent.

In any case, none of the extant letters from the great powers featured a request for the "breath of life"; instead, gold appeared to be the universally desired commodity. The great kings considered themselves pharaoh's equals and were unabashed to make specific demands in assertive manners. After all, the exchange of goods between Egypt and other great powers was by no means tributary, but rather conducted based on the principle of reciprocity.

3.1.2.2. Delegates from Independent Medium Powers

The second group of participants consisted of delegates from independent medium powers, e.g., Punt, Keftiu, Arzawa, and Alašiya, which were mainly engaged in economic intercourse with Egypt. These countries lay beyond the striking distance of the Egyptian army (or too distant to maintain permanent control)¹⁸⁸ and did not pose any immediate threat to Egypt; yet, they were not sufficiently far away to prevent intermittent commercial contacts. Delegates from these countries, some of whom might be merchant-envoys,¹⁸⁹ were probably strongly motivated to curry favor from the pharaoh to obtain permission

¹⁸⁸ Ezra S. Marcus, "Amenemhet II and the Sea: Maritime Aspects of the Mit Rahina (Memphis) Inscription," *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 17 (2007): 137–90. Joachim F. Quack, "Kft3w und I3šy," *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 6 (1996): 75–81.

¹⁸⁹ The King of Alašiya employed merchant-envoys to represent his financial and political interests in Egypt; in a letter to the pharaoh, he entreated the latter to guarantee the safe and speedy return of his agents and grant them tax exemption (EA 39: 10-20). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 354-55.

to trade¹⁹⁰ in Egypt through whatever means, including participation in the *ms inw* ceremony.¹⁹¹ Cultivating friendly relations with the Egyptian administration and getting direct access to the pharaoh may bring with it numerous advantages: e.g., exemption from customs duty (cf. EA 39: 10-20; EA 40: 24-28),¹⁹² free military escort (EA 30),¹⁹³ provisions by Egyptian officials and vassals and accommodations,¹⁹⁴ protection of private property,¹⁹⁵ etc. Furthermore, engaging in high-status trade with the royal house rather than peddling their goods at various towns along the Nile was definitely more cost-effective (faster turn-around

¹⁹⁰ Textual and pictorial evidence indicate that foreign traders entering Egypt were monitored and regulated by the Egyptian administration. The Asiatic traders depicted in the Middle Kingdom tomb of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan had to report to the tomb owner, who was the Overseer of the Eastern Desert; the caravan leader carried with him a letter of certification, which clearly stated the total number of visitors and their purpose of visit. The Semnah Dispatches and the Boundary Stela of Senusret III revealed that the Egyptian garrison soldiers stationed in Nubian fortresses along the Second Cataract closely monitored the activities of local Nubians and desert nomads. The latter groups were prohibited from crossing the established boundary and enter into Egyptian territories, though an exception was made for those coming to do business at the trading center of Qen. See Janice Kamrin, "The Aamu of Shu in the Tomb of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hassan," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 1, no. 3 (2009): 22–36. Paul C. Smither, "The Semnah Despatches," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 31, no. 1 (1945): 3–10. Such strict regulations were not lifted in the New Kingdom period. In the tomb of Qenamun (TT162), the Syrian merchants who had just docked their ships in the Theban harbor had to report to Egyptian officials. The journal of a border official (P. Anastasi III, vs. 5,1-6,1), a Ramesside administrative text, testified that this strict monitoring of the traffic of people and goods along the border persisted until the latter half of the New Kingdom period. Norman de Garis Davies and Raymond O. Faulkner, "A Syrian Trading Venture to Egypt," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 33 (1947): 40–46. Ricardo A. Caminos, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 108-9.

¹⁹¹ It would not be surprising that Aegean merchants presumably conducted business with both the Egyptian court and officials. The golden scarab seal of Nefertiti recovered from the Uluburun shipwreck probably belonged to a merchant with some connection with an official (or spouse) during the Amarna age. Cemal Pulak, "The Uluburun Shipwreck and Late Bronze Age Trade," in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 289–305.

¹⁹² Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 354-55, 356-57.

¹⁹³ With local protection, merchants would be able to travel much less molested. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 100.

¹⁹⁴ Papyrus Ermitage, dated to the reign of Amenhotep II, records lists of food (grain and beer, i.e., staple foods for the Egyptians) allocated by the Egyptian administration to messengers from Lakish, Djahy, Megiddo, Ashkelon, and Hazor, etc. Valloggia, *Recherche sur les messagers (wpwtyw) dans les sources égyptiennes profanes*, 100.

¹⁹⁵ The king of Alašiya urged the pharaoh to hand over the properties of a man of Alašiya who died in Egypt to his messenger so that they could be delivered to the deceased's family (EA 35: 30-34). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 107-8.

time).¹⁹⁶ If they encountered mistreatment, they could bring their grievances to the highest authority for justice and recompense.¹⁹⁷

To maintain the goodwill of the Egyptian king, the rulers of these independent medium powers may have to oblige to his requests, e.g., sending messengers to attend ceremonies and rituals. The king of Alašiya sought forgiveness from the pharaoh for not dispatching envoys on a festive occasion: “Look, yo<u> are ‘my’ brother. In as much as you have written to me, ‘Why have you not sent your envoy to me?’ moreover, then I had not heard that you were making a celebration. So don’t take it to heart. So as soon as I heard, then I have sent now my envoy to you” (EA 34: 7-15).¹⁹⁸ He was eager to be on the good side of the pharaoh,¹⁹⁹ and could even appear very apologetic in his letters.²⁰⁰ Meanwhile, as these medium powers were Egypt’s valued trading partners and politically independent, only deference (not obedience) was

¹⁹⁶ A relief from TT143 shows Puntites who traveled to Egypt through the maritime route trading directly with Egyptians (led by Min, Chief Treasurer for Thutmose III and Amenhotep II) on the Red Sea coast. Norman de Garis Davies, “The Work of the Graphic Branch of the Expedition: 1934 – 1935,” *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 1935, 46–57. Louise Bradbury, “Kpn-Boats, Punt Trade, and a Lost Emporium,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 33 (1996): 39–40, fig. 2.

¹⁹⁷ Hence, Wenamun, an Egyptian temple official on a trading mission to the Levant, carried with him a letter of introduction from (the priesthood of) Amun as a certification of his identity, which he gave to Smendes and Tentamun. In the absence of this letter, the Byblian king justifiably refused to do business with him. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 226-27.

¹⁹⁸ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 336-37. According to Yu, one of the main incentives for foreigners to participate in the Han tributary system was to gain permission to trade directly with the Chinese. Yingshi Yu, *Trade and Expansion in Han China: A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), 59.

¹⁹⁹ The king of Alašiya assured the pharaoh: “You have not been ranked with the king of Ḫatti or with the king of Shanhar. As for me, whatever greeting gift they send to me, then I send double the amount to you” (EA 35: 49-53). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 343.

²⁰⁰ He apologized for his failure to send messengers to attend a ceremony (EA 34), for failing to send the expected amount of copper (EA 35: 10-15), for the unexpected delay of Egyptian messenger in Alašiya (EA 35: 35-39), even for his own messengers being detained (EA 38: 23-30). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 340-43, 350-53.

expected of them in exchange for honorary treatment and trading privileges.²⁰¹ Despite the clever guise, the mercantile tone²⁰² of the Alašiyān king and the quantity of goods exchanged in the Alašiyā letters (EA 34: 16-25; EA 35: 10-15) leaves little doubt as to the true nature of the relationship between them.²⁰³ The terse greeting formula in his letters indicates his lack of interest in the exchange of pleasantries (EA 33: 1-8; EA 34: 1-6; EA 35: 1-5; EA 37: 1-7; EA 38: 1-6; EA 39: 1-9).²⁰⁴ In any case, their willingness to cooperate with the Egyptians must have paid off, for the number of Aegean imports increased exponentially during the New Kingdom period, especially in the Ramesside era.²⁰⁵

As for the Puntites, the Egyptian payments for their products were masked as a pious donation to the goddess of Punt.²⁰⁶ Re-establishing contact with Punt allowed the New Kingdom kings to proclaim that they have replicated the great deeds of previous kings, e.g., procuring exotic materials from faraway mysterious lands (God's Land).²⁰⁷ For the Egyptians, a nominal subordination expressed through the

²⁰¹ The pattern of interactions between them and the Egyptian kings is probably analogous to that between the local Anatolian rulers and Old Assyrian merchants; the former retained the right to purchase up to 10 percent of the imported textiles at a set price, in return, they guarantee the safe passage of the Assyrian caravans. Mogens T. Larsen, *Ancient Kanesh: A Merchant Colony in Bronze Age Anatolia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 180.

²⁰² The king of Alašiyā demanded payment in no vague terms: “Furthermore, my brother, the men of my country are talking about my lumber which they delivered to the king of the land of Eg[gypt], so, my brother, [pay] the sums that are due (ŠĀM.MEŠ šī-[mi i-din])” (EA 35: 27-29). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 342-43.

²⁰³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 105-6, 107.

²⁰⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 104-12.

²⁰⁵ Large numbers of Mycenaean pottery were recovered at Amarna, Pi-Ramesses, and Deir el-Medina. Jorrit M. Kelder, “Royal Gift Exchange between Mycenae and Egypt: Olives as ‘Greeting Gifts’ in the Late Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 113, no. 3 (2009): 339–52.

²⁰⁶ Ellen Morris, “Exchange, Extraction, and the Politics of Ideological Money Laundering in Egypt’s New Kingdom Empire,” in *Policies of Exchange: Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2nd Millennium B.C.E.: Proceedings of the International Symposium at the University of Freiburg, Institute for Archaeological Studies, 30th May - 2nd June 2012*, ed. Birgitta Eder and Regine Pruzsinszky, vol. 2, *Oriental and European Archaeology* (Wien: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2015), 167–90.

²⁰⁷ As early as the Old Kingdom Dynasty, Egyptian kings have dispatched expeditions to Punt. Donald B. Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals, and Day-Books: A Contribution to the Study of the Egyptian Sense of History* (Mississauga: Benben, 1986).

offering of *inw* (perceived as tribute) was definitely more feasible and cost-effective than actual political submission.

3.1.2.3. The Representatives of Egyptian Vassals

In contrast to other great kings and their envoys, the Egyptian vassals were obligated to present tribute and pay homage to the king in person whenever commanded by the Egyptian authority.²⁰⁸ For an envoy from Egypt's Levantine vassals, a royal audience with the pharaoh could be a bewildering and exhilarating experience, even though no blunt death threats (like the one made by Paser) were issued in the vassal letters.²⁰⁹ In the process, they might be expected to perform highly ritualistic acts, e.g., prostration before the pharaoh or even kissing the dirt beneath his feet, to demonstrate their loyalty to the pharaoh.²¹⁰ Some even received commands to present their daughters as especially prized tribute items (EA 99: 10-20) or their sons as political hostages (EA 59: 13-17).²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Evidence from the Amarna archive indicates that vassals could receive direct orders from the pharaoh to enter into his presence. Šuwardata of Gath received such an instruction to appear before the king: "The king, my lord, has written me, 'Enter and pay me homage.' Into the presence of the king, my lord! Would that it were possible to enter into the presence of the king, my lord, to receive the ... and the ... of the king, my lord" (EA 283: 7-13). Despite his reluctance to appear before the pharaoh, Aziru of Amurru succumbed to pressure from the Egyptian administration and traveled to Egypt to account for his treacherous deeds (EA 169). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 323, 256.

²⁰⁹ The Middle Kingdom Tale of Sinuhe preserved a detailed account of the protagonist's audience with the pharaoh, which provides some hints of what a vassal king might have experienced at the Egyptian court, since Sinuhe had essentially established a living abroad as a nomadic chief and was treated like one at the Egyptian court before he was purified and hence Egyptianized again: "When it dawned, very early, they came to summon me. Ten men came and ten men went to usher me into the palace. My forehead touched the ground between the sphinxes, and the royal children stood in the gateway to meet me. The courtiers who ushered me through the forecourt set me on the way to the audience-hall. I found his majesty on the great throne in a kiosk of gold. Stretched out on my belly, I did not know myself before him, while this god greeted me pleasantly. I was like a man seized by darkness." Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 231.

²¹⁰ According to the Stela of Piye, this manner of doing obeisance to the king survived into the Nubian period. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume III: The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 80.

²¹¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 171, 130.

Such obsequiousness was expressed in written form in the Amarna Letters with highly elaborate prostration formulas²¹² in which the pharaoh's vassals humbly referred to themselves as the dirt under the feet or sandal of the king or the footstool for his feet (e.g., EA 151: 4-11, EA 241: 1-8, EA 255: 1-7, EA 292: 1-7).²¹³ Numerous royal paraphernalia with the bound captives motif, including sandals, thrones, and footstools, were found in pristine condition in the tomb of Tutankhamun;²¹⁴ many of these items may have accompanied this king during the *ms inw* ceremony, as they did with other New Kingdom pharaohs. One wonders whether the royal paraphernalia and the obeisance rituals jointly inspired the prostration formula in vassal letters.

Compared to the great kings, Egypt's Levantine vassals were more susceptible to the influence of Egyptian ideology and propaganda.²¹⁵ Some of them embraced the Egypt-centric ideology on their own initiative and skillfully employed its associated terminology (particularly the "breath of life" discussed earlier in this chapter) in diplomatic correspondence to further their own interests. The flow of goods between Egypt and its vassals might be asymmetrical, but undoubtedly bilateral. Some vassals were certainly not shy to submit their requests for people, goods, and military assistance from their Egyptian overlord, the most vocal of them being Rib-Hadda of Byblos. Nevertheless, they cleverly phrased their

²¹² For a discussion of the varying levels of obsequiousness in the prostration formula, see Ellen F. Morris, "Bowling and Scraping in the Ancient Near East: An Investigation into Obsequiousness in the Amarna Letters," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 65, no. 3 (2006): 179–96. An intriguing question is how closely these verbally performed prostrations mimicked the rituals of obeisance carried out during an in-person audience. Pictorial evidence shows all foreigners doing obeisance to the pharaoh in a similar manner (which represented an idealized, Egypt-centric worldview); however, the messengers of great kings were probably exempt from performing the more demeaning ways of paying homage.

²¹³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 238, 296, 308, 335.

²¹⁴ See Zahi A. Hawass, *King Tutankhamun: The Treasures of the Tomb* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2008). Marianne Eaton-Krauss, *The Thrones, Chairs, Stools, and Footstools from the Tomb of Tutankhamun* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2008). A. J. Veldmeijer, *Tutankhamun's Footwear: Studies of Ancient Egyptian Footwear* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2011).

²¹⁵ Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 163-64.

requests for material provisions and military assistance as requests for the “breath of life” that issued from the pharaoh.

Participation in this ceremony may prove somewhat enticing for the Nubian and Syrian participants, even though the Egyptian state siphoned their wealth through the tribute system. Such an opportunity allowed them a glimpse of the glamour of the Egyptian empire. Personal visits enabled them to experience the high culture at the cosmopolitan Egyptian court, which might inspire imitation at a less grandiose level²¹⁶ and promote their subscription to Egyptian culture and rule.²¹⁷ They also benefited from their participation in this system by being incorporated into an extensive network of exchange, with Egypt as the hub of exchange. Through participation in this international exchange network, the Ugaritic kings gained access to resources that they could not obtain through normal trade: e.g., specialists like an Egyptian physician and Nubian palace attendants (EA 49: 17-26).²¹⁸ In a similar vein, loyal Nubian subjects like Maiherperi acquired and were interred with luxurious Asiatic goods.²¹⁹ In addition, another vassal acknowledged his receipt of Egyptian gifts in his letter (EA 265: 7-15).²²⁰

Ending this section on a cynical note, the *Story of Wenamun* best illustrates how the Egyptian vassals were willing to play by the rules of the Egyptians even if they did not subscribe to the Egyptian

²¹⁶ Perhaps also aspiring to be surrounded by a multi-ethnic entourage, Niqmaddu II of Ugaritic requested Nubian palace attendants from the pharaoh (EA 49: 17-26). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 120.

²¹⁷ The best example of the acculturating effect of the Egyptian elite culture was furnished by the case of the Nubian prince Heqanefer. In the tomb of Huy (TT40), he was shown participating in the ceremony clad in his ethnic costume; nevertheless, in his own tomb at Toshka, which is modeled upon that of Huy, he was portrayed as ethnically Egyptian. This divergence was telling of Heqanefer's sense of identity and high regard for Egyptian culture. Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), 23. Stuart T. Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire* (London: Routledge, 2003), xv. Barry J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* (London: Routledge, 2006), 37.

²¹⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 120.

²¹⁹ Catharine H. Roehrig, “The Tomb of Maiherperi in the Valley of the Kings,” in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 70–74.

²²⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 314.

ideology of life. The blunt statement of the ruler of Byblos to Wenamun strongly indicates that his ancestors were more than willing to adopt the Egypt-centric ideology and its associated political lexicon as long as they helped to promote their political and economic interests.²²¹ With the empire lost, the veneer of the ideology of life peeled off, revealing the true nature of some transactions between Egypt and its “vassals”.²²² Hence, when assessing the attitude of Egyptian vassals towards the *ms inw* ceremony, it is critical to take into account the nature of the evidence, imperial ideology, and actual policy. In any case, reducing the motives of the Egyptians down to ideological motives and that of the foreigners to economic interests may be over-simplistic and misleading.

3.2. Communication Through Gifts

As material objects, gifts could serve as vehicles of identity formation and expression as well as the embodiment of intangible social and political relations. Some diplomatic gifts and tribute could reveal much information about the sociopolitical operations that resulted in their production and transfer, and sometimes even the ethnicity, social and political identity, and psychological ethos of their sender and recipient. As Feldman suggested, in a way, diplomatic gifts and tribute goods functioned as the material equivalent of diplomatic letters; similar to the meticulously composed diplomatic correspondence,

²²¹ In reply to Wenamun’s demand for timber, the ruler of Byblos said: “They did it, truly. If you pay me for doing it, I will do it. My relations carried out this business after Pharaoh had sent six ships laden with the goods of Egypt, and they had been unloaded into their storehouses. You, what have you brought for me?” Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 226.

²²² The story continues: “He had the daybook of his forefathers brought and had it read before me. They found entered in his book a thousand deben of silver and all sorts of things. He said to me: ‘If the ruler of Egypt were the lord of what is mine and I were his servant, he would not have sent silver and gold to say; ‘Carry out the business of Amun.’ It was not a royal gift that they gave to my father! I too, I am not your servant, nor am I the servant of him who sent you!’” The ruler of Byblos even explicitly expressed doubt concerning the ideology of life: “... the former kings sent silver and gold: If they had owned life and health, they would not have sent these things.” Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 226-27.

diplomatic gifts could be deliberately designed to convey a message.²²³ While diplomatic letters communicated with their recipient linguistically, gifts and tribute goods did it visually through their materials, designs, and motifs. Like letters, gifts and tribute could be exchanged, read, and reciprocated. They could be put on display for a bigger audience, whereas letters were usually archived for future reference.

3.2.1. Types of Gifts and Their Meaning

The form of an object can give indications for its function. Diplomatic gifts can embody egalitarian or asymmetrical relationships between people, they were also indicative of the level of intimacy between their donor and recipient. In some cases, the gifts could reveal the original purpose for their creation and transfer.

3.2.1.1. Between Egypt and the Great Powers: Mutual Respect and Cordial Relationship

Gifts sent by the pharaoh to other great kings consisted of these categories: personal adornment, personal care, clothing and fabrics, vessels, furniture, sculpture-statuettes, military and hunting equipment (EA 14).²²⁴ The gifts from Tušratta to Amenhotep III included personal adornment, personal care, clothing and cloth, vessels, utensils, furniture, animal figurines, chariots and accouterments, military and hunting equipment, and other unidentified items (EA 22).²²⁵ These are the types of gifts that were expected to be

²²³ Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an "International Style" in the Ancient Near East, 1400 - 1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 73-88.

²²⁴ Zipora Cochavi-Rainey and Christine Lilyquist, *Royal Gifts in the Late Bronze Age, Fourteenth to Thirteenth Centuries B.C.E.: Selected Texts Recording Gifts to Royal Personages* (Beersheba: Ben-Guryon University of the Negev Press, 1999), 24-41.

²²⁵ Zipora Cochavi-Rainey and Christine Lilyquist, *Royal Gifts in the Late Bronze Age, Fourteenth to Thirteenth Centuries B.C.E.: Selected Texts Recording Gifts to Royal Personages* (Beersheba: Ben-Guryon University of the Negev Press, 1999), 80-91.

exchanged between social equals.²²⁶ People, including servants and experts, were also listed among the gifts exchanged (EA 49: 17-26).²²⁷ An ideal gift, then, should be able to embody the cordial relationship between its giver and recipient and communicate diplomatic messages (in the same manner as diplomatic letters). These functions could be achieved by the carefully designed physical properties of the gifts.

Mauss, who investigated the practice of gift-exchange in some pre-industrial societies (e.g., the Maori society), argued that gifts were never fully alienated from their sender but always retained a part of his/her spiritual essence, thus creating a bond between the giver and the recipient.²²⁸ In Late Bronze Age diplomacy, objects exchanged as gifts often featured designs or motifs that made implicit or explicit reference to the culture or identity of their sender.

Tušratta certainly entertained the hope that a *maninnu*-necklace he sent to Amenhotep III would be well-received by its recipient and serve as a reminder of their close friendship, for he expressed the wish that “may it rest on the neck of my brother for one hundred thousand years!” (EA 21: 33-41).²²⁹ This type of necklace (featuring a centerpiece and sometimes a counterweight) figured prominently among the gifts sent by the Mittanian king; it was typically made with genuine lapis lazuli, gold, *hulalu*-stones, and other semi-precious stones (EA 19, 21, 22, 25).²³⁰ The gift list in EA 19 provides a detailed description of the design of such a sumptuous necklace, which was made with gold pieces in the shape of the plant “Bed

²²⁶ Note the long list of weaponry: javelins, shields, arrows, maces, knives. Zipora Cochavi-Rainey and Christine Lilyquist, *Royal Gifts in the Late Bronze Age, Fourteenth to Thirteenth Centuries B.C.E.: Selected Texts Recording Gifts to Royal Personages* (Beersheba: Ben-Guryon University of the Negev Press, 1999), 71-73.

²²⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 120

²²⁸ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. Ian Cunnison (London: Cohen & West Ltd., 1966), 10.

²²⁹ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 158-59.

²³⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 43-45, 50, 51-57, 72-81.

of Ištar”.²³¹ Tušratta’s high expectation for this necklace was not totally unjustified, as the ancient Egyptians adorned themselves with a wide variety of necklaces made from all sorts of materials. In addition to being markers of status, distinctive types of necklaces could be charged with cultural, religious, and political meanings.²³² Therefore, they were commonly employed in gift-giving and other social contexts. The *wesekh*-collar (a broad layered collar) was presented to the pharaoh by Egyptian officials as New Year’s gift.²³³ Necklaces with a shrine-shaped pectoral²³⁴ were presented to the pharaoh during the *ms inw* ceremony (fig. 3.17a).²³⁵ The pharaoh awarded his subjects the golden fly necklace²³⁶ for their valor on the battlefield and the *shebyu*-collar (a necklace of bulbous gold rings)²³⁷ as a sign of royal favor. Therefore, the choice of luxurious jewelry as diplomatic gifts by Tušratta and other Near Eastern kings was highly appropriate. It could be worn by its recipient (and paraded around) as a symbol of friendship or put on display. It could accompany its recipient into the netherworld or be handed down as an heirloom for generations. The tradition of giving jewelry pieces as diplomatic gifts continued into

²³¹ Miguel Civil et al., eds., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago, M, Part 1* (Chicago and Gluckstadt: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago and J. J. Augustin, 1977), 211-12.

²³² Cyril Aldred, *Jewels of the Pharaohs: Egyptian Jewellery of the Dynastic Period* (New York: Praeger, 1971).

²³³ Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Ken-Amūn at Thebes*, 2 vols. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1930), vol. 1, pl. 15, 19.

²³⁴ This type of necklace was imitated with the addition of distinctive Nubian elements during the 25th Dynasty by the Nubian kings. Peter Lacovara and Yvonne J. Markowitz, *Nubian Gold: Ancient Jewelry from Sudan and Egypt* (Cairo; New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2019), 130, fig. 102.

²³⁵ Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut’ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. 19.

²³⁶ Graciela N. Gestoso Singer, “Queen Ahhotep and the ‘Golden Fly,’” *Cahiers Caribéens d’Égyptologie* 12 (2009): 75–88.

²³⁷ Peter J. Brand, “The *Shebyu*-Collar in the New Kingdom,” *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 33 (2006): 17–42. A gold *shebyu*-necklace was discovered in the grave of a woman, who may have been a Nubian princess married to a Middle Kingdom Egyptian king. Peter Lacovara and Yvonne J. Markowitz, *Nubian Gold: Ancient Jewelry from Sudan and Egypt* (Cairo; New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2019), 95, fig. 67b.

the modern era, e.g., President Anwar Sadat sent the Order of the Nile Necklace (fig. 3.17b) as a diplomatic gift to many heads of state, including President Carter²³⁸ and President Ford.²³⁹



Figure 3.17a. The Viceroy of Kush Huy presenting a necklace with shrine-shaped pectoral to Tutankhamun. Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamun* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. 19. Figure 3.17b. The Order of the Nile Necklace in Brasilia.

²³⁸ “Tokens and Treasures,” accessed April 4, 2022, https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/tokens_and_treasures/presidents/image_5_gifts_of_state.html.

²³⁹ <https://fordlibrarymuseum.tumblr.com/post/132082930784/president-ford-hosted-the-first-official-visit-of/embed>.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Grand_Cordon_of_the_Order_of_the_Nile_\(Egypt\)_-_Memorial_JK_-_Brasilia_-_DSC00434.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Grand_Cordon_of_the_Order_of_the_Nile_(Egypt)_-_Memorial_JK_-_Brasilia_-_DSC00434.JPG)

Some diplomatic gifts bore a strong imprint of their senders and functioned as visual reminders of their origin, while others were customized to emphasize the identity of or cater to the taste and needs of their recipient. The latter group includes gifts with textual or visual reference to their recipients, e.g., the solid gold statues of Tušratta and his daughter requested by the Mittanian king from Amenhotep III (EA 26: 30-57, EA 27: 41-51).²⁴⁰

The dispute over missing solid gold statues between Tušratta and Akhenaten has been discussed briefly in Chapter 2. It appears that Tušratta had requested and received a molten gold statue of his daughter Taduḥepa from Amenhotep III (during the marriage negotiation?) (EA 24: 71-107).²⁴¹ At some point after EA 24 was sent and before the death of Amenhotep III, Tušratta requested two more solid gold statues, one of himself and one of Taduḥepa, from Amenhotep III (EA 26: 30-48).²⁴² Not only did Amenhotep III generously grant his request and allow the Mittanian messengers to witness the production process of the solid gold statues, this pharaoh further promised to send him statues made of lapis lazuli (EA 27: 19-27).²⁴³ Taduḥepa probably did not arrive in Egypt before the death of Amenhotep III and was married to Akhenaten instead, for she was referred to as Tiye's daughter-in-law in EA 26 (EA 26:1-6).²⁴⁴ Akhenaten inherited the marriage alliance from his father, but did not honor the unfulfilled promise made by the latter; instead, he sent wooden statues plated with gold (EA 26: 30-48, EA 27: 32-34).²⁴⁵ Tušratta

²⁴⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 85, 88. Meindert Dijkstra, ““May the King Consent That a Sculptor Come Hither in Order to Set Out for Me to Make an Image ...”: Shipments of Stelae and Statues between Egypt and the Levant,” *Biblische Notizen* 170 (2016): 119–36.

²⁴¹ Tušratta also requested an “ivory image” (either of himself or of Taduḥepa) from Amenhotep III (EA 24: 92-107). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 220-23.

²⁴² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 85.

²⁴³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 87.

²⁴⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 84.

²⁴⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 85, 87.

was extremely upset when he received the plated statues and kept on constantly writing to Akhenaten and Tiye about his missing gold statues (EA 26, EA 27).²⁴⁶

Two intriguing questions must have perplexed anyone who had read those letters concerning the missing gold statues: 1. Why did the plated gold statues cause Tušratta so much frustration and distress? 2. Why did Akhenaten send plated wooden statues instead of solid gold ones? Before addressing these questions, one should first realize that the value of a diplomatic gift is multi-layered. It possesses inherent economic value from the materials (e.g., precious metals and minerals) it was produced from. The object may be endowed with artistic value if it featured unique motifs or if it is crafted with excellent workmanship. Furthermore, the elevated status of its sender could add prestige (social value) to the gift. An inferior gift of poor material and design, however, could seriously undermine the prestige of its recipient and incur his wrath.

The economic value of gifts was easily quantifiable; in fact, the gift lists in diplomatic letters mainly recorded the quantity and material of the gifts. Aesthetic standards were much more subjective and sometimes culturally specific; the design and motifs of gifts were rarely recorded in the letters. If Tušratta really wanted these statues as an embodiment of the good relationship between Mittani and Egypt, he should not have placed so much emphasis on the economic value of the statues. However, the inferior quality of the plated statues (from his perspective) offset/eroded their social value.

It is noteworthy that the economic value is relative and dependent upon the availability of materials. Gold was highly valued by the ancient Near Eastern kings because this mineral was not readily available locally, and they had to procure it from Egypt. Understandably, a solid gold statue would be considered more valuable compared to one made with any other material. From the Egyptian perspective, however, things might be very different. Since they practically monopolized the supply of gold but lacked good timber locally, a statue made with timber (e.g., ebony and cedar) and plated with gold may not be considered inferior in value. As a matter of fact, numerous wooden royal statues/statuettes with plated

²⁴⁶ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 84-89.

gold were known from ancient Egypt: e.g., the gilded statuette of Amenhotep III in the Brooklyn Museum collection,²⁴⁷ the wooden head of Tiye in the Egyptian Museum in Berlin,²⁴⁸ and the plated wooden statues of Tutankhamun from his tomb (KV62).²⁴⁹ A solid gold statuette of a crouching pharaoh (Egyptian Museum in Cairo, JE 60702) was found in the tomb of Tutankhamun; nonetheless, it was a pendant (just 5.4 cm high) of a necklace and not a royal statuette in any strict sense.²⁵⁰

The New Kingdom tomb of Qenamun features a scene of the presentation of New Year's gifts to the king, among which were several statues of the king and royal family members (figs. 3.18a-b).²⁵¹ The accompanying inscriptions provide information on their material and design: the first one (Amenhotep II) was in ivory on an ebony pedestal, the second one (the king or the crown prince) in blue or green glaze on an ebony pedestal, the third one in ebony (Thutmose I), the statue of the queen mother Hatshepsut Meryet-Re perhaps executed in ivory on an ebony pedestal, and other statues were made of red granite or limestone.²⁵²

²⁴⁷ <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/3496>.

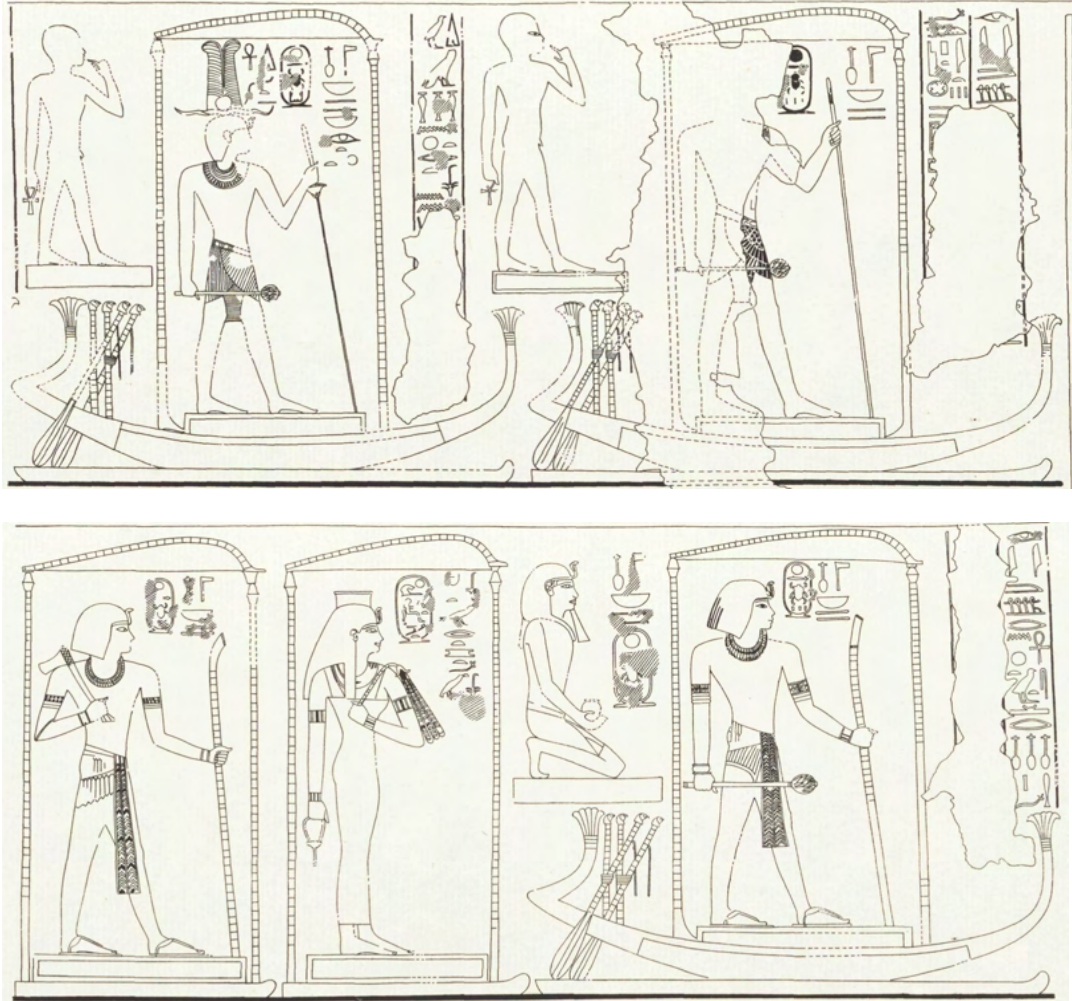
²⁴⁸ http://www.egyptian-museum-berlin.com/c52.php#o_teje_02.jpg.

²⁴⁹ <http://www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/detail.aspx?id=14821>.

²⁵⁰ Zahi A. Hawass, *The Illustrated Guide to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo*, ed. Alessandro Bongioanni and M. Sole Croce (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2001), 313.

²⁵¹ Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Ken-Amūn at Thebes*, 2 vols. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1930), vol. 1, 25-6.

²⁵² Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Ken-Amūn at Thebes*, 2 vols. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1930), vol. 1, 25-6.



Figures 3.18a-b. Royal statues (for Amenhotep II, his mother, and Thutmose I) produced as New Year's gifts to the king. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Ken-Amun at Thebes*, 2 vols. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1930), vol. 1, pl. 15, 16.

Egyptian divine statues were commonly fashioned with precious metals (e.g., bronze, gold, and silver²⁵³) and minerals (e.g., granite); surviving examples of solid gold ones are extremely rare, and none of them date to or before the New Kingdom period.²⁵⁴ Tutankhamun claimed in his Restoration

Inscription that he fashioned for Amun and Ptah their image “being of electrum, lapis lazuli, turquoise,

²⁵³ Zahi A. Hawass, *The Illustrated Guide to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo*, ed. Alessandro Bongioanni and M. Sole Croce (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2001).

²⁵⁴ A gold-plated silver statuette of Amun-Ra, dating to the 26th Dynasty, was discovered in the Temple of Amun at Karnak and must have filled its most divine sanctuaries. “Figure | British Museum,” The British Museum, accessed June 12, 2022, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA_60006.

and every precious stone.”²⁵⁵ The common use of gold, silver, and lapis lazuli for divine statues served to visualize textual descriptions of the sun god Re as having bones of silver, skin of gold, and hair of genuine lapis lazuli (Story of the Destruction of Mankind).²⁵⁶

Late Bronze Age royal and divine statues (or images) were usually of composite design: they were created in one material (usually stone, wood, or bronze) and fully or partially plated with gold.²⁵⁷ The reddish gold color was also associated with gods in ancient Mesopotamia.²⁵⁸ In the Levant, bronze royal and divine statuettes, which were partially or fully gilded, were known from both the Middle and Late Bronze Ages (figs. 3.19b, 3.19c).²⁵⁹ A Hittite prayer of Arnuwanda and Asmunikal to the Sun-goddess of Arinna (CTH 375, 1. A i 14’-18’) made it clear that divine statues (images) were made with metal alloy and hence needed periodic renewal due to oxidization.²⁶⁰ In a prayer to the gods, Puduḥepa vowed to make a life-size silver statue of Ḫattušili III (with its head, hands, and feet of gold) in return for

²⁵⁵ William J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, ed. Edmund S. Meltzer (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 213.

²⁵⁶ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 198. Emily Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 43. Texts from the Ramesside period document the donation of a large number of silver statues to temples; nonetheless, only one major cult statue, i.e., a 19th Dynasty gilded silver statue of a falcon-headed god, survived from this period. See Arielle P. Kozloff, “Luxury Arts,” in *A Companion to Ancient Egyptian Art*, ed. Melinda K. Hartwig, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Literature and Culture. (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 294.

²⁵⁷ Newly cast bronze objects appeared golden, so the gold leaf was not always necessary for contrast but might have been applied to prevent oxidization. Annie Caubet and Ella Dardaillon, “Smiling Deity,” in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 246.

²⁵⁸ Céline Debourse, *Of Priests and Kings: The Babylonian New Year Festival in the Last Age of Cuneiform Culture*, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 127 (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 252.

²⁵⁹ A royal or divine bronze figure dating to the Middle Bronze Age: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/327104>; a gilded bronze divine statuette: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/322889>; Tallay Ornan, “The Long Life of a Dead King: A Bronze Statue from Hazor in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 366 (2012): 1–24.

²⁶⁰ “Furthermore, your divine images of silver and gold, when anything had grown old on some god’s body, or when any objects of the gods had grown old, no one had ever renewed them as we have.” Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 41.

divine protection for her husband (CTH 384, §9).²⁶¹ As in ancient Egypt, only miniature divine images were sometimes produced in solid gold and worn as amulets or jewelry.²⁶²



Figure 3.19a. Bronze statuette of a woman with gold plating on her hands, feet, and head. Uluburun shipwreck. N. Fawcett and J. C. Zietsman, “Uluburun – the Discovery and Excavation of the World’s Oldest Known Shipwreck,” *Akroterion* 46 (2012): 15, fig. 25. Figure 3.19b. Gold-plated figurine of the weather god Baal found at Ugarit, 14th century BCE. Figure 3.19c. Gold-plated figurine of a god wearing an Osirian crown, found at Ugarit. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans, eds., *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), cat. nos. 150, 151. Figure 3.19d. Solid gold statuette of Amun. “Statuette of Amun | Third Intermediate Period,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed March 22, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544874>.²⁶³

If other precious timber, metals, and minerals were valued and employed for the production of royal statues for the Egyptian royalty and gods, why should Tušratta find fault with Akhenaten for

²⁶¹ Puduḥepa solemnly swore: “I shall come and make for Liliwani, my lady, a silver statue of Hattusili, as big as Hattusili himself, with its head, its hands and its feet of gold; that I will weigh out separately” (CTH 384, §9). Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 104.

²⁶² Cf. a solid gold statuette of the sun goddess of Arinna (MMA 1989.281.12) and a gold amulet of a male deity holding a mace (British Museum no.126389). “Seated Goddess with a Child | Hittite | Hittite Empire,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed June 12, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/327401>. “Amulet | British Museum,” The British Museum, accessed June 12, 2022, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1939-0610-1. Hugh Tait, *Jewellery Through 7000 Years* (London: British Museum Press, 1976), 208.

²⁶³ It dates to the 22nd Dynasty and could have been mounted on a ceremonial scepter/standard or served as a pendant of a necklace. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544874>.

sending him wooden statues plated with gold? Although repeatedly professing his brotherly love for the pharaoh when demanding statues of himself and his daughter from the latter (EA 26: 30-48), Tušratta apparently assigned more value to the economic value (rather than symbolic meaning) of the statues.²⁶⁴

In Late Bronze Age diplomacy, the sending of royal statues was a known practice. Šuppiluliuma I also requested statues of gold and silver from Egypt and experienced the same difficulties obtaining what had been promised by the previous king when a new ruler ascended to the throne; as he specified the posture and materials he wanted, the statues presumably represented himself and members of his family (EA 41: 23-28).²⁶⁵ In addition to textual evidence from diplomatic correspondence, archaeological evidence may be furnished by a bronze statuette of a woman found in the Uluburun shipwreck (fig. 3.19a). It probably represents a customized diplomatic gift cast in the likeness of a royal woman,²⁶⁶ like the one requested by Tušratta for his daughter Taduḥepa (EA 27: 19-27).²⁶⁷ It is noteworthy that the statuette was cast in bronze, with gold plating her hands, feet, and head.

To Burna-Buriaš II of Babylonia, Akhenaten sent “1 large statuette of the king that is overlaid with gold, and its pedestal is overlaid with silver. 1 female figurine, overlaid with gold, of the king’s wife. 1 female figurine, overlaid with gold, of the king’s daughter” (EA 14, col. II, 11-14).²⁶⁸ The text simply stated these statues were *ša šarri* “of the king”, *ša aššat šarri* “of the wife of the king” and *ša mārti šarri* “of the daughter of the king”; it did not specify whether they were made after the Babylonian royal family

²⁶⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 85.

²⁶⁵ After a brief review of Egyptian-Hittite relations, he urged the new ruler Ḫuriya to honor the promise of his father: “My brother, do not hold back anything that [I asked] of your father. [As to the 2 st]atues of gold, one [should be standing], one should be seated. And, my brother, [send me] the 2 [silve]r statues of women ...” The Hittite king threatened not to send his chariots or other gifts. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 114.

²⁶⁶ Alternatively, it may be a votive figure intended to guarantee a safe passage (cf. Amun-of-the-Road mentioned in the Story of Wenamun). N. Fawcett and J. C. Zietsman, “Uluburun – the Discovery and Excavation of the World’s Oldest Known Shipwreck,” *Akroterion* 46 (2012): 15.

²⁶⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 87.

²⁶⁸ Zipora Cochavi-Rainey and Christine Lilyquist, *Royal Gifts in the Late Bronze Age, Fourteenth to Thirteenth Centuries B.C.E.: Selected Texts Recording Gifts to Royal Personages* (Beersheba: Ben-Guryon University of the Negev Press, 1999), 13.

or the Egyptian royal family. As the letter itself lists the bride price from Akhenaten to the betrothed Babylonian princess, it is likely that the statues were commissioned for the Babylonian royal family (just as Tušratta requested golden statues of himself and his daughter from Amenhotep III) (EA 27: 19-27).²⁶⁹ Unfortunately, the texts did not preserve any information concerning the style or posture of these statues. One could justifiably speculate that they were produced in the Egyptian artistic style.²⁷⁰ If the statues represented the Babylonian royal family, they served as perfect diplomatic gifts, as their style and manufacture would constantly remind their recipients of their Egyptian origin.

However, one must not rule out the possibility that the statues represented the Egyptian royal family. Akhenaten's daughter Meritaten (named Mayati in the Amarna Letters) was involved in Egypt's diplomatic interactions with Babylonia and received gifts from Burna-Buriaš II; in EA 11, the latter even complained that she showed no concern for him when he was ill (EA 11: 24-34).²⁷¹ Nefertiti was not mentioned by name in the Amarna letters, but she may have been referred to rather fleetingly by her title "mistress of the house" in a letter from Burna-Buriaš II to Akhenaten (EA 11: rev. 25).²⁷² If the statues were statues of Akhenaten, his wife and daughter, they enabled the Egyptian royal family to achieve mediated presence (a sense of presence despite physical absence),²⁷³ which was a step up from epistolary presence. Royal statues that bear the likeness of their sender helped to create the virtual presence of intercultural interlocutors in a foreign court, which nicely supplemented the disembodied voice in

²⁶⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 87.

²⁷⁰ The statue of the king may bear some resemblance to the gilded wooden statue of Tutankhamun (in a striding pose, holding a weapon in one hand and a staff in the other). The statuettes of the royal women were probably shown standing with one foot forward, holding a flail in one hand and a sistrum in another (like the statue of the mother of Amenhotep II) (fig. 18). See also the statue of Tuya (mother of Ramesses II), which was usurped from queen Tiye: <https://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-gregoriano-egizio/sala-v--statuario/statua-della-regina-tuia.html> and the statuette of queen Ahmose-Nefertari: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Standing_figure_of_Ahmose-Nefertari,_19th_Dynasty,_c._1200_BCE._From_Egypt._Neues_Museum.jpg.

²⁷¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 22.

²⁷² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 22-23, n.22.

²⁷³ Jérôme Bourdon, "From Correspondence to Computers: A Theory of Mediated Presence in History," *Communication Theory* 30, no. 1 (2020): 64.

diplomatic letters. As the statues communicated to the audience visually, their recipients did not need to rely on the service of bilingual scribes or interpreters to understand the message they conveyed. Furthermore, the exchange of royal portraits, if they bear sufficient likeness to the persons they represented, could partly address Puduḥepa's complaint (discussed in chapter 2) that the great kings never saw each other in person (KUB 3.37 + KBo 1.17, obv. 15 – 6).²⁷⁴ By sending statues of other royal family members, Akhenaten highlighted the personal as well as dynastic alliance between the two royal houses.²⁷⁵ He probably expected Burna-Buriaš II to display these statues publicly to advertise the Egypto-Kassite alliance to the Babylonian subjects and international guests.

The gifting of royal statues can be traced back to the Middle Bronze Age. Samsi-Addu informed the king of the Gutians Indušše that he wanted to have a representation (*šalmum*) of the two of them made in gold such as brother kisses brother (lit. holds brother's neck); this token of friendship would presumably form part of the dowry of Samsi-Addu's daughter who was promised to Indušše.²⁷⁶ This group statue of Samsi-Addu and Indušše (if it was ever made) served mnemonic functions by visually evoking the cordial relations between the two rulers and by reminding them of the diplomatic event that led to the production of the statue. To a certain extent, this Late Bronze Age practice of gifting royal

²⁷⁴ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 140-42.

²⁷⁵ Before Henry VII of England married off his daughter Margaret Tutor to James IV of Scotland, he dispatched figures of himself, his queen and his heir (in addition to a portrait of Princess Margaret) to the Scottish king. Tracey A. Sowerby, "'A Memorial and a Pledge of Faith': Portraiture and Early Modern Diplomatic Culture," *The English Historical Review* 129, no. 537 (2014): 308-9.

²⁷⁶ Dominique Charpin, *"Tu es de mon sang": les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

statues is analogous to the European tradition of portrait exchange.²⁷⁷ Compared to the above-mentioned *maninnu*-necklaces, royal statues could mediate the presence of their sender more directly.²⁷⁸

In addition to the customized royal statues, an increasing number of objects have been found in archaeological context that could be identified as diplomatic gifts produced for a specific recipient. For instance, a cylinder seal bearing the image of a Mesopotamian ruler and an Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription identifying him as Kurigalzu, the ruler of Babylonia, was found in a grave at Metsamor (in modern Armenia) (figs. 3.20a-c).²⁷⁹ In all likelihood, this cylinder seal represents a customized diplomatic gift to Kurigalzu I from his Egyptian counterpart.²⁸⁰ A cylinder seal impression from Alalah offers an

²⁷⁷ The diplomatic utility of royal portraits was recognized by early European monarchs and diplomats. As symbolic substitutes of their depicted subjects, these portraits helped the rulers to create and maintain personal and political affinities. For instance, James I of England sent a letter bearing his portrait to the Russian Tsar Mikhail in 1623. The 16th century English diplomats would take a portrait of their royal patron to establish their link with him/her and present themselves as his/her loyal representatives. Tracey A. Sowerby, “Negotiating with the Material Text: Royal Correspondence between England and the Wider World,” in *Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World*, ed. Tracey A. Sowerby and Joanna Craigwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 217. Tracey A. Sowerby, “‘A Memorial and a Pledge of Faith’: Portraiture and Early Modern Diplomatic Culture,” *The English Historical Review* 129, no. 537 (2014): 296–331. In 1706, the traveler Niccolao Manucci informed the Venetian senate that he would send a volume of portraits of Indian rulers and nobles. Pompa Banerjee, “Postcards from the Harem: The Cultural Translation of Niccolao Manucci’s Book of Travels,” in *The ‘Book’ of Travels: Genre, Ethnology, and Pilgrimage, 1250-1700*, ed. Palmira Brummett (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009), 250–51.

²⁷⁸ As discussed in Chapter 2, in-person meetings between great kings were relatively rare. Puduḥepa expressed her frustration over this in a letter to Ramesses II and expressed her wish to stay informed about each other’s conditions through the intermediary of their messengers (KUB 3.24 + KUB 3.59, obv. 15 – 17). Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 138-40.

²⁷⁹ Emma V. Khanzadian and Boris B. Piotrovskii, “A Cylinder Seal with Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Inscription from the Metsamor Gravesite,” *Soviet Anthropology and Archeology* 30, no. 4 (1992): 67–74.

²⁸⁰ Egyptian-Babylonian relationship intensified during the reign of Kurigalzu I (17th king of the Kassite Dynasty), the eponymous founder of Dur-Kurigalzu. Tim Clayden, “Kurigalzu I and the Restoration of Babylonia,” *Iraq* 58 (1996): 109–21. Tim Clayden, “Dūr-Kurigalzu: New Perspectives,” in *Karduniaš: Babylonia under the Kassites*, ed. Alexa Bartelmus and Katja Sternitzke, vol. 2 (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 437–544. Two letters from Burna-Buriaš II to Akhenaten furnish evidence for demands for customized gifts. In EA 10, the Babylonian king wrote: “There are skilled carpenters where you are. Let them represent a wild animal, land or aquatic, lifelike, so that the hide is exactly like that of a live animal. Let your messenger bring it to me” (EA 10: 29-42). In EA 11, he also demanded some kind of carved objects to be brought with urgency: “[...] ... [...] let] them carve [...] let them bring me ...]let them carve [...] which look like] live [...] let them bring me. If old ones in the number required are a[vailab]le, have them carve new ones and have Salmu, the merchant, bring them to me. If Salmu, the merchant, has already departed for here, let your messenger that comes to me take them. Trees are to be carved from ivory and colored. Matching plants of the countryside are to be carved, colored, and taken to me.” (EA 11: rev. 1-12). It remains obscure what the requested objects were and their intended purpose of use. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 19, 21.

interesting parallel; it bears the image of a local ruler, Egyptian motifs, and an Egyptian Hieroglyphic inscription: *h'ty-'imy-r' htm ny-swt sth nb [...]* “Local prince of [?], overseer of the royal seal. Seth, lord of [...]” (fig. 3.20d).²⁸¹

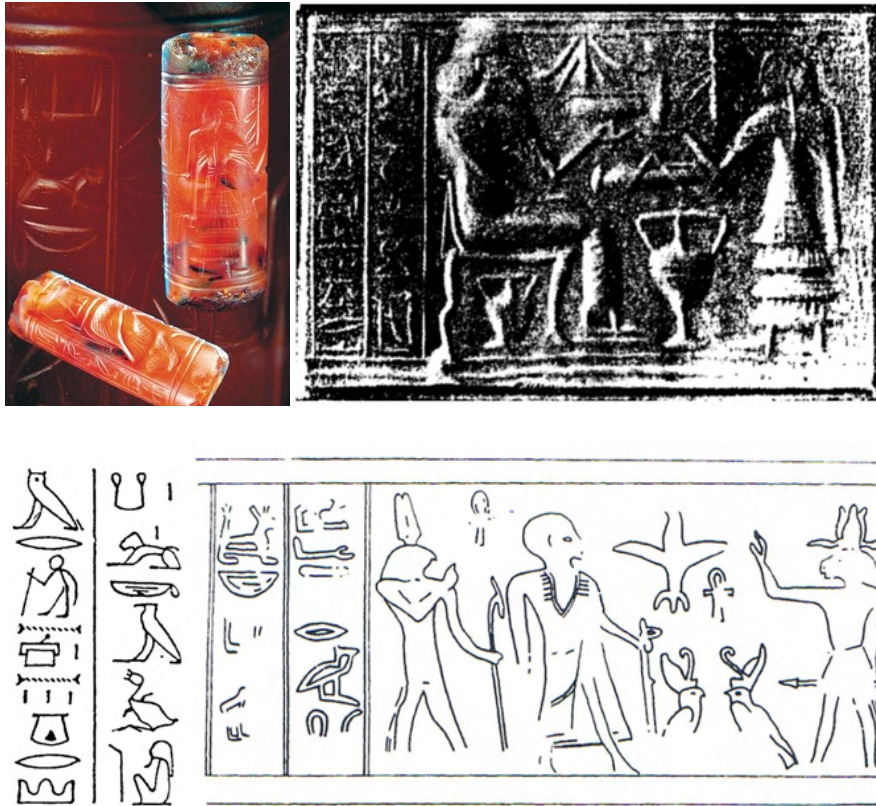


Figure 3.20a. Carnelian cylinder seal with the image of Kurigalzu I and hieroglyphic inscriptions. “Carnelian Seal,” accessed November 19, 2022, <http://www.armeniapast.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/FK-Cornelian-seal-004.jpg>. Figure 3.20b. Sealing of the cylinder seal with the image of Kurigalzu I. Figure 3.20c. Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription on the cylinder seal. Emma V. Khanzadian and Boris B. Piotrovskii, “A Cylinder Seal with Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Inscription from the Metsamor Gravesite,” *Soviet Anthropology and Archeology* 30, no. 4 (1992): figs.1, 3. Figure 3.20d. Alalah seal impression on a tablet, British Museum. Dominique Collon, “The Green Jasper Seal Workshop Revisited,” *Archaeology and History in the Lebanon* 13 (2001): 20-1, fig. 5:1.

²⁸¹ Different scholars have come up with rather divergent readings. See Dominique Collon, “The Green Jasper Seal Workshop Revisited,” *Archaeology and History in the Lebanon* 13 (2001): 21.

Diplomatic gifts exchanged between the great kings included goods, people (e.g., craftsmen,²⁸² magical²⁸³ and medical experts,²⁸⁴ and servants²⁸⁵), and objects that straddle both categories (e.g., divine statues). The ability to procure foreign artisans and materials advertised the great kings' overseas connections.²⁸⁶ However, they had to give thought to delivering their request in a dignified manner without appearing too condescending, pushy, or servile. Therefore, they sometimes supplemented their requests with the seemingly contradictory statement that nothing was lacking in their own country (EA 7: 33-41).²⁸⁷ The party receiving such requests was usually willing to oblige, partly because of “the pride of the king in the quality of the products of his country, in the techniques of the craftsmen of his palace or in the range of his personal international contacts.”²⁸⁸ However, such pride needed to be weighed against the potential risk of permanently losing the craftsmen and experts. With goods (most of which were

²⁸² The Aegean-style wall paintings discovered at Avaris in Egypt might have been the works of itinerant Minoan craftsmen. Hattušili III requested a sculptor from Kadašman-Enlil II in order to fashion images (?) and place them in the family quarters (CTH 172 = KBo 1.10 + KUB 3.72, rev. 58-61). Merneptah rejected an Ugaritic king's (Niqmaddu III or Ammurapi) request for an Egyptian sculptor to make an image of the pharaoh in the temple of Baal in Ugarit. Manfred Bietak and Nannó Marinatos, “The Minoan Wall Paintings from Avaris,” *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 5 (1995): 49–62. Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 137. Itamar Singer, “A Political History of Ugarit,” in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston: Brill, 1999), 708-12.

²⁸³ The king of Alašiya wrote to the pharaoh for experts in vulture augury (EA 35: 23-26). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 107.

²⁸⁴ It is known from the Amarna Letters (EA 49) and the Boghazkoi archives (KUB 3.66 + W.24) that Egyptian physicians were particularly renowned in the ancient Near Eastern world. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 120. Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 170-73.

²⁸⁵ It seemed fashionable to acquire foreign servants to increase the cosmopolitan outlook of one's court, and many great kings sent and requested foreign servants from their peers. This practice was emulated by small kings, e.g., Niqmaddu II of Ugarit who requested two Kushite palace attendants and a physician from Akhenaten (EA 49: 17-27). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 120.

²⁸⁶ “ANE TODAY - 201909 - What's in a Style? Minoanizing Paintings in the Eastern Mediterranean,” *American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR)* (blog), accessed June 14, 2022, <https://www.asor.org/onetoday/2019/09/Whats-in-a-Style-Minoanizing-Paintings/>.

²⁸⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 12-13.

²⁸⁸ A. Leo Oppenheim, “The Cuneiform Texts,” in *Glass and Glassmaking in Ancient Mesopotamia: An Edition of the Cuneiform Texts Which Contain Instructions for Glassmakers. With a Catalogue of Surviving Objects*, ed. A. Leo Oppenheim et al. (Gluckstadt: J. J. Augustin, 1970), 14.

inanimate objects), the completion of gift exchange led to a permanent change of ownership. However, with regard to highly trained craftsmen and experts who were scarce resources and in high demand at every royal court, the situation was completely different. When dispatched to another court, they were essentially on loan and were expected to return to their native country once the projects that demanded their contribution were completed; but sometimes, they sojourned in a foreign country for a long period of time, and some even met their final destiny there. Such an unfortunate incident caused much tension between Ḫattušili III and Kadašman-Enlil II and almost developed into a diplomatic crisis (CTH 172 = KBo 1.10+KUB 3.72). A Babylonian physician who was sent to the court of Ḫattušili III succumbed to an illness and died in Ḫatti; his delayed return led Kadašman-Enlil II to suspect that he might be detained by Ḫattušili III to enjoy exclusive access to his service.²⁸⁹ Ḫattušili III vehemently denied this accusation and tried to soothe the anger of the Babylonian king by enumerating his relentless efforts (e.g., personally performing many extispicies) to save the life of the poor physician. Despite Ḫattušili III's efforts, the physician passed away. But Ḫattušili III ensured the Babylonian king that he bestowed many favors upon the physician while he was residing at the Hittite court; the Hittite king sent the physician's servants (along with tablets recording the lists of gifts lavished upon the physician) as witnesses to Babylonia for Kadašman-Enlil II's questioning. To further prove his own innocence, Ḫattušili III did not hesitate to cast his own brother (i.e., Muwattalli II) in a negative light, accusing the latter of detaining an incantation priest and a physician while portraying himself as the one who fought for their release. As for why these experts did not return to their native land, Ḫattušili III offered explanations that exonerated himself from any blame: the incantation priest probably died, while the physician married a Hittite woman of high status (a relative of Ḫattušili III) and settled in Ḫatti of his own volition.²⁹⁰ Finally, having established a clean record for himself, Ḫattušili III felt entitled to request another Babylonian expert from Kadašman-Enlil II: "[Furthermore, my brother]: I want to make [images] and place them in the family quarters. My

²⁸⁹ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 136.

²⁹⁰ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 137.

brother, [send me] a sculptor. [When the sculptor] finishes the images, I will send him off, and he will go home. [Did I not send back the previous] sculptor, and did he not return to Kadašman-Turgu? [My brother], do not withhold [the sculptor].”²⁹¹

The divine participated in Late Bronze Age diplomacy as diplomatic ambassadors (EA 23) and divine healers;²⁹² their statues were dispatched to foreign courts to mediate their presence.²⁹³ To a certain extent, the transfer of divine statues was analogous to the exchange of skilled experts; both were expected to be treated with honor and returned to their home country once the purpose of their visit was fulfilled. For example, Tušratta of Mittani sent a divine statue of Šauška of Nineveh to Egypt, claiming that it was the goddess’ own wish to visit Egypt, a land she loves (EA 23: 13-17).²⁹⁴ He reminisced how the goddess visited another land (also Egypt?) during the time of his father and was honored by its people. He then urged Amenhotep III to honor the goddess ten times more than before and guarantee her future return to Mittani (EA 23: 18-25).²⁹⁵ Tušratta’s proactive request that the divine statue be promptly returned hinted at cases of detention of divine statues. A similar incident was recounted in a literary text inscribed on the Bentresh Stela.²⁹⁶

²⁹¹ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 137.

²⁹² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 61-62. Scott N. Morschauser, “Using History: Reflections on the Bentresh Stela,” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 15 (1988): 203–23.

²⁹³ Joachim F. Quack, “Importing and Exporting Gods? On the Flow of Deities Between Egypt and Its Neighboring Countries,” in *The Dynamics of Transculturality: Concepts and Institutions in Motion*, ed. Antje Flüchter and Jivanta Schöttli, Transcultural Research - Heidelberg Studies on Asia and Europe in a Global Context (Cham: Springer, 2015), 255–77.

²⁹⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 61.

²⁹⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 61.

²⁹⁶ A king named Ramesses who married a princess of Bakhtan dispatched a divine statue of Khonsu to Bakhtan in order to expel a demon who seized her younger sister Bentresh. After the god healed Bentresh, the ruler of Bakhtan failed to send back the divine statue. After a three-year sojourn, the god indicated his wish to return by turning into a golden falcon and flying back to Egypt in a dream of the ruler. The latter took the hint and promptly sent the statue back. Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 113-16. Scott N. Morschauser, “Using History: Reflections on the Bentresh Stela,” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 15 (1988): 203–23.

3.2.1.2. Between Egypt and the Medium Powers

The types of diplomatic gifts from the medium powers like Punt and Keftiu partially overlapped with those exchanged between the great kings; nevertheless, some pieces among them deserve more attention, as they give much insight into the dynamics of intercultural communication. These gifts flattered the recipient by paying homage to his culture (without the subjugation rhetoric that characterized the tribute from Nubia) through their designs and material properties.

Since the time of Hatshepsut, the Puntites have been depicted presenting incense molded into fancy shapes, e.g., pyramids, obelisks, and calves (figs. 3.21a-c) to the Egyptians. As an architectural form, the pyramidal shape had been employed by Egyptian kings for their funerary monuments since the Old Kingdom period, and this tradition persisted until the end of the Second Intermediate Period.²⁹⁷ It also captured the imagination of foreigners, e.g., the Nubian rulers of the 25th Dynasty, who abandoned their traditional tumulus tombs in favor of tomb structures incorporating pyramids.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ Mark Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids* (Thames and Hudson, 1997). Miroslav Verner, *The Pyramids: The Mystery, Culture, and Science of Egypt's Great Monuments* (New York: Grove Press, 2001), 105-442.

²⁹⁸ Peter Lacovara, "From Tumulus to Pyramid: The Development of the Kushite Royal Tomb," *The Journal of Ancient Egyptian Architecture* 3 (2018): 141-52.

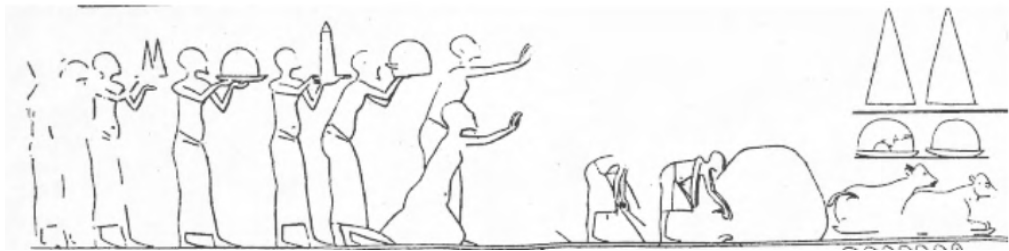
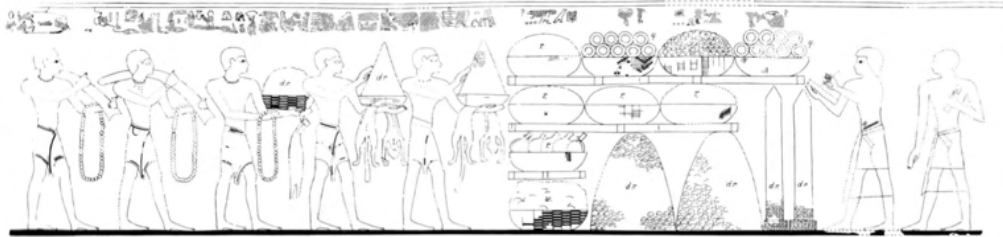
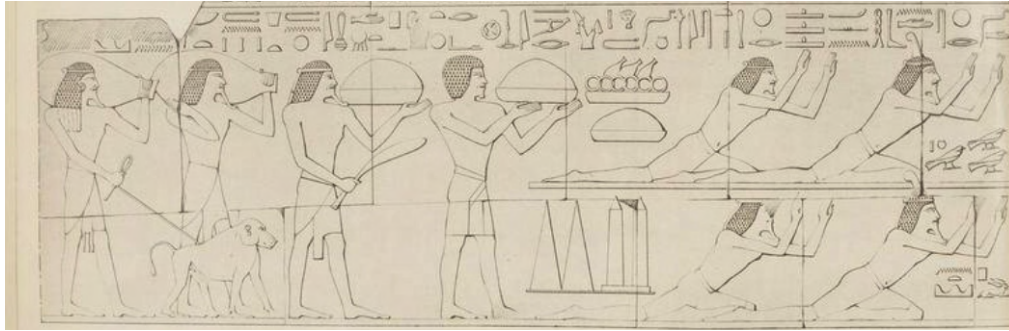


Figure 3.21a. Rulers of Punt presenting incense molded into the shape of obelisks and pyramids to Akhenaten. Édouard H. Naville, *Deir El Bahari, Part 3: End of Northern Half and Southern Half of the Middle Platform. Memoir for 1896-97. Plates LVI-LXXXVI*, Excavation Memoirs (Egypt Exploration Society) 16 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1897), 16, pl. 76. Figure 3.21b. Puntite tribute scene from the tomb of Rekhmire (TT100). Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Rekh-Mi-Rē at Thebes*, 2 vols., Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition 11 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1943), vol. 2, pl. 17. Figure 3.21c. Puntites bringing incense molded into fancy shapes, AT2. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pl. 40.

Like the pyramid, the obelisk is another immediately recognizable Egyptian architectural form associated with solar worship.²⁹⁹ New Kingdom rulers like Hatshepsut and Thutmose III competed with each other to present obelisks of monumental scale to the gods to demonstrate their piety (fig. 3.9).³⁰⁰ They may have issued commemorative scarabs to their foreign vassals for the erection of obelisks (fig.

²⁹⁹ Massimiliano Nuzzolo, “The Sun Temples of the Vth Dynasty: A Reassessment,” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 36 (2007): 217–47. See also Luc Gabolde, “An Atlas of the Obelisks of Karnak,” *Egyptian Archaeology: The Bulletin of the Egypt Exploration Society* 31 (2007): 33–35.

³⁰⁰ Walter Wreszinski, *Atlas zur Altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte. Vol. II* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1935).

3.22).³⁰¹ The Obelisk Temple in Byblos was dedicated to the worship of the Egyptian god Herishef-Re, who was an *interpretatio aegyptiaca* of the Canaanite god Reshef.³⁰² The inscriptional evidence, as well as the architectural design and history of the Obelisk Temple, suggest that the structure was dedicated to solar worship and that the solar symbolism of the obelisk was understood locally.³⁰³ The cultural significance of the pyramid and the obelisk was likely known to the Puntites, who employed them as visual vocabulary to facilitate intercultural communication with the Egyptians by demonstrating their high regard for Egyptian culture.³⁰⁴



Figure 3.22. 19th Dynasty scarab commemorating the erection of an obelisk for Amun (OIM 866).³⁰⁵

³⁰¹ P. L. O. Guy, *Megiddo Tombs* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1938), pl. 176:2.

³⁰² Manfred Bietak, “The Obelisk Temple in Byblos and Its Predecessors,” in *Stories Told around the Fountain. Papers Offered to Piotr Bieliński on His 70th Birthday*, ed. Agnieszka Pieńkowska, Dariusz Szeląg, and Iwona Zych (Warsaw: Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, 2019), 165.

³⁰³ Manfred Bietak, “The Obelisk Temple in Byblos and Its Predecessors,” in *Stories Told around the Fountain. Papers Offered to Piotr Bieliński on His 70th Birthday*, ed. Agnieszka Pieńkowska, Dariusz Szeląg, and Iwona Zych (Warsaw: Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, 2019), 165–86.

³⁰⁴ An interesting parallel (though geographically and chronologically distant from the Puntite gifts) is provided by an automaton clock presented to the Chinese Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799 CE) by the British clockmaker Timothy Williamson. This clock features a young foreign man dressed in a Georgian court dress holding a Chinese brush. When the clock is wound, the man writes eight characters in Chinese calligraphy that read: “八方向化、九土来王”, which means “countries from all eight directions are drawn to this highly civilized empire; people from all over the world (‘nine lands’) come to pay tribute to its emperor”. This gift essentially utilized foreign craftsmanship/technology to express the Sino-centric worldview. Xin Liu, *Anglo-Chinese Encounters Before the Opium War: A Tale of Two Empires Over Two Centuries* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2022), 50-51.

³⁰⁵ It bears the inscription: *ts thn imn* “erection of the obelisk of Amun”.

In addition to architectural forms, large incense lumps from Punt were molded into the shape of crouching bulls, as seen in the year 12 *ms inw* scene from the tomb of Meryra II (fig. 3.3).³⁰⁶ They recall the recumbent bull weights well attested in Egypt, Cyprus, and the Levant (figs. 3.23a-b).³⁰⁷ Many Mediterranean and ancient Near Eastern cultures that practiced animal worship showed special reverence for the bull, and Egypt was no exception. This majestic animal was worshiped as a symbol of power and potency and was often associated with the Sun god and the king.³⁰⁸ The worship of sacred bulls reached its zenith in the New Kingdom, during which the cult of the Apis bull at Memphis, the Mnevis bull at Heliopolis, and the Buchis bull at Armant in the Theban region flourished.³⁰⁹ The New Kingdom pharaohs actively participated in bull hunts and issued commemorative scarabs to show off their supernatural strength and prowess.³¹⁰ Royal inscriptions frequently compared the gallant pharaoh on a battlefield to a fierce bull.³¹¹ In view of the Egyptians' apparent admiration for bulls, it is hardly surprising that the Puntites molded their incense into bovine shapes before ceremoniously presenting them to the pharaoh.

³⁰⁶ Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pl. 37.

³⁰⁷ A selection of zoomorphic weights has been found in the Uluburun shipwreck, including one in the form of a recumbent calf and five in the form of a recumbent bull. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans, eds., *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 369-70.

³⁰⁸ Tallay Ornan, "The Bull and Its Two Masters: Moon and Storm Deities in Relation to the Bull in Ancient Near Eastern Art," *Israel Exploration Journal* 51, no. 1 (n.d.): 1-26.

³⁰⁹ Angelo Colonna, *Religious Practice and Cultural Construction of Animal Worship in Egypt from the Early Dynastic to the New Kingdom: Ritual Forms, Material Display, Historical Development*, Archaeopress Egyptology 36 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2021), 111-37, 147-50.

³¹⁰ C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 57-61.

³¹¹ The Kadesh inscriptions of Ramesses II exalted the king as someone who "was ready to fight like an eager bull". Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 70.

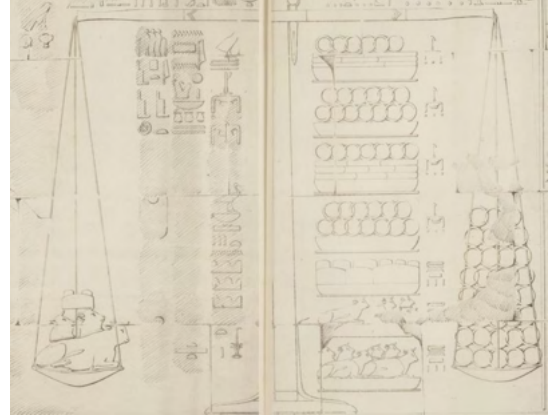


Figure 3.23a. Tin-bronze bull-weight, New Kingdom. The Cleveland Museum of Art, no.1914.711. Anonymous, “Weight in the Form of a Bull or Cow,” Text, Cleveland Museum of Art, October 30, 2018, <https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1914.711>. Figure 3.23b. Use of bull-calf weights to weigh precious metals from the southern lands, Deir el-Bahri temple of Hatshepsut. Édouard H. Naville, *Deir El Bahari, Part 3: End of Northern Half and Southern Half of the Middle Platform. Memoir for 1896-97. Plates LVI-LXXXVI*, Excavation Memoirs (Egypt Exploration Society) 16 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1897), pl. 81.

The Minoans shared the Egyptian’s fascination with bovines;³¹² this common interest greatly facilitated intercultural communication through the channel of visual art. The Palace of Knossos yielded the famed bull-leaping scenes, which were exported to Egypt and decorated the walls of royal palaces at Avaris.³¹³ Bull-shaped rhyta³¹⁴ and vessels decorated with bull-shaped attachments or the bull motif figured prominently among these Aegean imports and were depicted in the tombs of Useramun, Menkheperreseneb, Rekhmire,³¹⁵ and Senenmut (figs. 3.24b-c).³¹⁶ The ceiling paintings of Amenhotep III’s Malkata palace feature a repeating pattern of rosette-filled running spirals alternating with bucrania

³¹² Jeremy McNerney, *The Cattle of the Sun: Cows and Culture in the World of the Ancient Greeks* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

³¹³ Ann Brysbaert, “Common Craftsmanship in the Aegean and East Mediterranean Bronze Age: Preliminary Technological Evidence with Emphasis on the Painted Plaster from Tell El-Dab’a, Egypt,” *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 12 (2002): 95–107.

³¹⁴ Zoomorphic rhyta were prestigious objects employed in diplomatic gift exchange during the Late Bronze Age; Šuppiluliuma I sent a silver rhyton in the shape of a stag and another in the form of a young ram to the pharaoh (EA 41: 39-43). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 114. See also Uza Zevulun, “A Canaanite Ram-Headed Cup,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 37, no. 2/3 (1987): 88–104.

³¹⁵ “Nina de Garis Davies | Gifts from the Keftiu, Tomb of Rekhmire | New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed June 14, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544611>.

³¹⁶ Shelley Wachsmann, *Aegeans in the Theban Tombs* (Leuven: Peeters, 1987), 56.

(ox heads with rosettes between horns) (fig. 3.24d); similar patterns have been discovered at Aegean sites of slightly earlier date.³¹⁷

The borrowing of artistic motifs was by no means unilateral; Evans proposed that the cruciform star marks on the Hathor cow, which symbolize the starry firmament of Night, were adopted to substitute natural spots on bull images in Minoan art.³¹⁸ If this is indeed the case, then the bull's head rhyton depicted in the tomb of Menkheperreseneb represents an object of Minoan origin but was visibly influenced by Egyptian artistic style (fig. 3.24b). The image of the Hathoric cow could have reached the Aegean in a variety of ways, including diplomatic gift giving. A letter from the king of Alašiya reveals that Egypt was not only receiving but also giving bull-shaped objects or objects with the bull motif as diplomatic gifts (EA 35: 23-26);³¹⁹ since the object is simply written GU4 (“ox”) with no determinative, Moran was of the opinion that this “ox” must be referring to an ox-shaped object rather than a real animal.³²⁰ Compared to language, visual art was capable of engaging a much bigger audience as a medium of cross-cultural communication. While the Egyptians demonstrated some interest in the Aegean languages, it was only a flash in the pan.³²¹ It was visual art that circulated more widely and played a bigger role in sustaining intercultural communications between the Egyptians and the Aegeans.

³¹⁷ William C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt: A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Part II: The Hyksos Period and the New Kingdom (1675-1080)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), 245-45, fig. 148.

³¹⁸ Arthur Evans, *The Palace of Minos: A Comparative Account of the Successive Stages of the Early Cretan Civilization as Illustrated by the Discoveries at Knossos* (London: Macmillan and Co., limited, 1921), 513-14.

³¹⁹ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 342-43.

³²⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 109, note 5.

³²¹ Evangelos Kyriakidis, “Indications on the Nature of the Language of the Keftiw from Egyptian Sources,” *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 12 (2002): 211–19. Thomas E. Peet, “Egyptian Writing-Board B. M. 5647, Bearing Keftiu Names,” in *Essays in Aegean Archaeology, Presented to Sir Arthur Evans in Honour of His 75th Birthday* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 90–99.



Figure 3.24a. Bull's head rhyton from Knossos. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans, eds., *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), Cat. No. 169. Figure 3.24b. Bull's head rhyton from the tomb of Menkheperreseneb. "Nina de Garis Davies | Foreigners, Tomb of Menkheperreseneb | Twentieth Century; Original New Kingdom," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 6, 2021, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544600>. Figure 3.24c. Minoans bringing a large cup with the bull motif. "Nina de Garis Davies | Fragmentary Scene of Foreigners, Tomb of Senenmut | Twentieth Century; Original New Kingdom," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed June 14, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544562>. Figure 3.24d. Ceiling with bucranium motif from the palace of Amenhotep III at Malkata. "Ceiling Painting from the Palace of Amenhotep III | New Kingdom," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 12, 2021, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544502>.

A high percentage of gifts coming from the Aegean are various types of exquisite metal vessels; in addition to bull motifs, they also featured sophisticated designs like plant attachments on the rim (figs. 3.25a-b). Concerning this type of ornamented vase, Norman de Garis Davies commented: "The place of origin of the dishes with rim ornamentation is not certain. The idea might be Egyptian, but the exuberant

and fanciful development of it suggests that this type of vessel was rather a product of the Cretan export trade to Egypt.”³²²

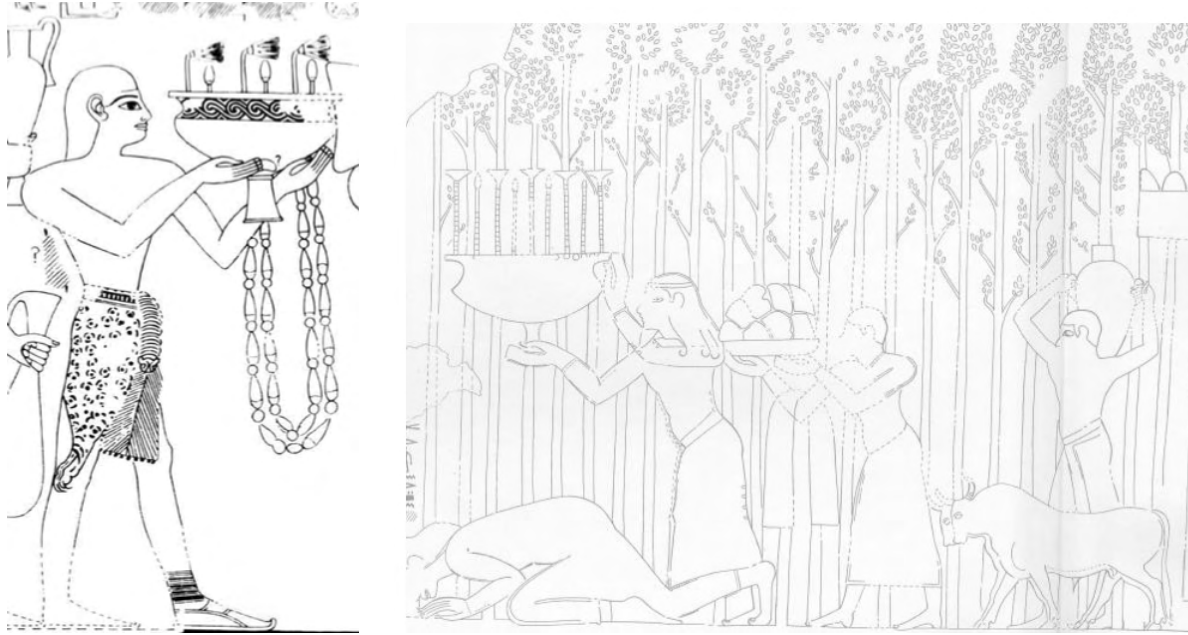


Figure 3.25a. Vessel with lotiform attachment on its rim, tomb of Rekhmire (TT100). Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Rekh-Mi-Rē at Thebes*, 2 vols., Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition 11 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1943), vol. 2, pl. 20. Figure 3.25b. Reception of vessel with lotiform decoration on its rim from the chiefs of Lebanon, TT42. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Menkheperasonb, Amenmose, and Another (Nos. 86, 112, 42, 226)* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1933), pl. 36.

3.2.1.3. Between Egypt and its Vassals

Obviously, the power dynamics between the pharaoh and his foreign vassals were drastically different; this was reflected in the types of gifts/tribute exchanged between them and the pattern of intercultural communication. The Egyptian pharaohs routinely dispatched luxurious gifts inscribed with their cartouches or hieroglyphic texts to their favored vassals. The large commemorative scarabs of Amenhotep III discussed below constituted perfect examples. Alabaster and diorite vessels with the

³²² Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Rekh-Mi-Rē at Thebes*, 2 vols., Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition 11 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1943), vol. 1, 28.

cartouche of Egyptian pharaohs (Khafre, Pepi I, Amenhotep III, Horemheb, Ramesses II) have been found at Ugarit.³²³

The practice of gifting custom-made gifts to foreign vassals and small kings in diplomatic contact with Egypt predates the New Kingdom period. The 13th Dynasty pharaoh Hetepibre Harnedjheriotef (who identified himself as “Son of the Asiatic”) sent a mace to Immeya, the king of Ebla (fig. 3.26a).³²⁴ The handle of the mace incorporated a cylinder with applications of baboons³²⁵ worshiping the name of the pharaoh, which was not encircled by a cartouche.³²⁶ The misplacement of the hieroglyphs prompted Matthiae to propose that it resulted from a repair job by someone who possessed no or little knowledge of hieroglyphic writing.³²⁷ The fact that no or few people in Ebla could read the Egyptian hieroglyphs did not diminish the significance of and the prestige assigned to these pharaonic gifts by their recipient.

³²³ Maria G. Biga, “The Marriage of an Eblaite Princess with the King of Dulu,” in *From Source to History: Studies on Ancient Near Eastern Worlds and beyond: Dedicated to Giovanni Battista Lanfranchi on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday on June 23, 2014*, ed. Salvatore Gaspa et al., *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 412 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014), 77. Itamar Singer, “A Political History of Ugarit,” in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston: Brill, 1999), 603–733. Biga (2014) and Roccati proposed to identify Dulu and Dugurasu (two kingdoms with which Ebla had economic and diplomatic exchanges in the 3rd millennium BCE) in the Eblaite texts with Byblos (or another coastal city along the Mediterranean coast) and a city in the Nile Delta. Alessandro Roccati, “DUGURASU = *Rw-H3wt*,” in *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 57th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Rome 4-8 July 2011*, ed. Alfonso Archi, *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* 57 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 155–59.

³²⁴ Paolo Matthiae, “Ebla,” in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 35.

³²⁵ The worship of baboon started in Egypt in Predynastic times; later they were kept in temples and embalmed. Baboon is the sacred animal of Thoth, the god of wisdom and writing, and it appears with this god in the weighing of the heart scene. Its natural behavior of being active and chattering at dawn and dusk was interpreted by the Egyptians as worshiping the sun; the image of baboons with upraised forepaws was depicted by numerous statues and reliefs, e.g., on the wall of Tutankhamun’s burial chamber. During the New Kingdom period, baboons were imported from Nubia and Punt. Dale J. Osborn and Jana Osbornova, *The Mammals of Ancient Egypt* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1998), 32-37. The motif of the worshiping baboon was appropriated by the craftsmen of Ebla, as an amulet with an adapted motif of two baboons worshiping a human-headed bull (almost certainly an incarnation of Immeya) was found in the same tomb. Paolo Matthiae, “Ebla,” in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 39.

³²⁶ Paolo Matthiae, “Ebla,” in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 38-39.

³²⁷ Paolo Matthiae, “Ebla,” in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 39.

Perhaps also belonging to the assemblage of pharaonic gifts is a gold ring featuring a paste scarab in the central oval and an openwork design of lilies (the heraldic plant of Upper Egypt) and blossoms on both sides (fig. 3.26b).³²⁸



Figure 3.26a. Egyptian mace of the 13th Dynasty pharaoh Hetepibre Harnedjheriotef, tomb of the Lord of the Goats at Ebla. Paolo Matthiae, “New Discoveries at Ebla: The Excavation of the Western Palace and the Royal Necropolis of the Amorite Period,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 47, no. 1 (1984): 28. Figure 3.26b. Gold ring with lotus motif found in the tomb of the Lord of the Goats at Ebla. Paolo Matthiae, “Ebla,” in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 41, cat. No. 16.

Egyptian royal iconography may have been transmitted through the intermediary of these royal gifts and inspired the Levantine kings to appropriate recognizably Egyptian motifs to project power and prestige.³²⁹ The Middle Bronze Age kings of Byblos adopted the trappings of Egyptian royalty for the purpose of self-aggrandization and perhaps to distinguish themselves from their fellow kings.³³⁰ An intriguing cylinder seal with bilingual inscriptions, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art collection, was discovered in Egypt; the Hieroglyphic inscription reads: *nīsw.t-bīty s-ḥtp-īb-r' [mry] ḥw.t-ḥr nb[.t*

³²⁸ Paolo Matthiae, “Ebla,” in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 41. A Ramesside gold ring with openwork floral design and three-dimensional attachment in the shape of two stallions, probably commissioned by Ramesses II after the Battle of Kadesh to celebrate the bravery of his two royal stallions “Victorious in Thebes (?)” and “Mut is Satisfied,” was given by the Egyptian Pasha Muhammed Ali to the French king Charles X. <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010011417>.

³²⁹ Paolo Matthiae, “Ebla,” in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 35.

³³⁰ Robert Schiestl, “The Coffin from Tomb I at Byblos,” *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 17 (2007): 265–71.

kbnj “King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Sehetepibre (II), [beloved of] Hathor, mistress [of Byblos]” and the Akkadian inscription names a Yakin-ilum (^lya-ki-in-DINGIR, x..., rest of the text lost), who was a Middle Bronze Age ruler of Byblos (fig. 3.27a).³³¹ He has been identified as the father of Yantin; the latter was depicted on a relief from Byblos (Beirut National Museum)³³² sitting in front of a cartouche of the pharaoh Khasemkhemre Neferhotep (I).³³³ A possible identification between the latter and a king of Byblos/Gubla named Yantin-ḥammu known from a cuneiform text in Mari suggests that he was a contemporary of Zimri-Lim and Hammurabi of Babylon.³³⁴ Evidence is equivocal whether the seal represented a diplomatic gift custom-made for Yakin-ilum by the order of Sehetepibre (II)³³⁵ or a personal object commissioned by Yakin-ilum to advertise his extensive diplomatic and trading network.³³⁶ Other Syro-Palestinian cylinder seals of the Middle Bronze Age featured Egyptian and Egyptianizing motifs

³³¹ Theophilus G. Pinches and Percy E. Newberry, “A Cylinder-Seal Inscribed in Hieroglyphic and Cuneiform in the Collection of the Earl of Carnarvon,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 7, no. 3/4 (1921): 196–99. William C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt: A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Part I: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Middle Kingdom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 342–43.

³³² Maurice Dunand, *Fouilles de Byblos, Tome 1, 1926-1932: Atlas* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1937), 197–98, pl. 30.

³³³ William F. Albright, “An Indirect Synchronism between Egypt and Mesopotamia, Cir. 1730 B. C.,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 99 (1945): 9–18. William C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt: A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Part I: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Middle Kingdom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 342–3. See also Kim S. B. Ryholt, *The Political Situation in Egypt During the Second Intermediate Period, c. 1800-1550 B.C.* (Copenhagen: K.S.B. Ryholt and Museum Tusculanum Press, 1997), 87–88, 342–43.

³³⁴ W. F. Albright, “An Indirect Synchronism between Egypt and Mesopotamia, Cir. 1730 B. C.,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 99 (1945): 9–18. Kitchen proposed a revised king list for Byblian rulers of the early 2nd millennium, expressing some doubt about the decisiveness of this triple synchronism. Kenneth A. Kitchen, “Byblos, Egypt, and Mari in the Early Second Millennium B.C.,” *Orientalia* 36, no. 1 (1967): 39–54.

³³⁵ Emma V. Khanzadian and Boris B. Piotrovskii, “A Cylinder Seal with Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Inscription from the Metsamor Gravesite,” *Soviet Anthropology and Archeology* 30, no. 4 (1992): 67–74.

³³⁶ Ryholt favors this hypothesis. Kim S. B. Ryholt, *The Political Situation in Egypt During the Second Intermediate Period, c. 1800-1550 B.C.* (Copenhagen: K.S.B. Ryholt and Museum Tusculanum Press, 1997), 87. If the first scenario is the case, the inclusion of the cuneiform inscription seems rather odd; if the second hypothesis is true, the discovery of the seal in Egypt demands an explanation. Perhaps the seal arrived in Egypt as booty or a gift; alternatively, it could have been acquired as raw material to be worked into other artifact, since it was carved in the highly valued lapis. Edith Porada, “The Cylinder Seals Found at Thebes in Boeotia,” *Archiv für Orientforschung* 28 (1981): 1–70.

with bilingual inscriptions (fig. 3.27b,³³⁷ 3.27c³³⁸). Their multilingualism and creative use of imageries borrowed from other cultures indicated their owners' wish to show off their cosmopolitan taste and extensive network of connections.

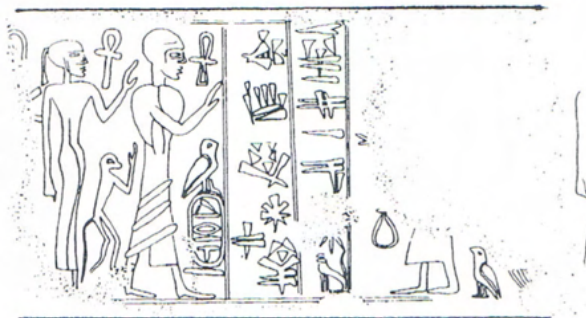
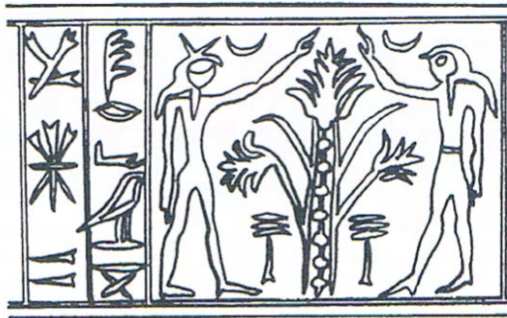


Figure 3.27a. Lapis lazuli cylinder seal with bilingual inscriptions. “Bilingual Cylinder Seal | Late Middle Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544371>. Figure 3.27b. Impression of a cylinder seal with bilingual inscriptions.³³⁹ Figure 3.27c. Impression of an Alalakh seal with bilingual inscriptions. Louvre A.906. Dominique Collon, “The Green Jasper Seal Workshop Revisited,” *Archaeology and History in the Lebanon* 13 (2001): fig. 4:1; 5:6.

Like the gold ring from Ebla, some diplomatic gifts granted by the pharaohs to their vassals were supposed to be worn and displayed by the latter as a sign of royal favor, e.g., the commemorative scarabs

³³⁷ This seal bears a cuneiform inscription *warad Min* (written 𒀱 𒀵MIN) “servant of the god Min”. Dominique Collon, “The Green Jasper Seal Workshop Revisited,” *Archaeology and History in the Lebanon* 13 (2001): 20. Collon tentatively rendered the Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription as “*ir.d.hr?*”, without giving a translation. It is perhaps a hieroglyphic transcription of *arad Horus* “servant of Horus” (with the Akkadian word written syllabically as *i-r-d*), so that the inscriptions correspond to the two gods inscribed on this seal.

³³⁸ An Alalakh seal impression on a tablet was inscribed with hieroglyphs inside a cartouche (probably *x-r-s* “Horus” and a falcon-on-standard sign as the divine determinative) and the cuneiform inscription “*???, servant of the weather god*”. Dominique Collon, “The Green Jasper Seal Workshop Revisited,” *Archaeology and History in the Lebanon* 13 (2001): 21.

³³⁹ Dominique Collon, “The Green Jasper Seal Workshop Revisited,” *Archaeology and History in the Lebanon* 13 (2001): 20.

issued by Amenhotep III. Most of them (even the large ones) were pierced with a longitudinal hole in order to be worn (as a ring or a pendant); in one case (C59, a lion hunt scarab found at Soleb in Sudan), the original bronze wire was still intact.³⁴⁰ In addition to royal names and titles, some of these scarabs were inscribed with historical narratives that provide insight into the reign of Amenhotep III.³⁴¹ The Giluḥepa scarab (figs. 3.28a-b), which celebrates the arrival of the Mittani princess it was named after, belongs to one of the five known series (Marriage Scarabs,³⁴² Wild Bull-hunt Scarabs,³⁴³ Lion-hunt Scarabs,³⁴⁴ Lake Scarabs³⁴⁵) issued by Amenhotep III. Their date of issue sparked much scholarly debate. While Berman, based on the resemblances among the scarabs, argued that they were commissioned and produced in a single planned process and produced in the same workshop,³⁴⁶ Baines agreed with the prevalent scholarly opinion that they were issued soon after the events they commemorated, pointing out that their consistency in style could be accounted for by the short period during which they were produced.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁰ C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 10, 97-98.

³⁴¹ C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969).

³⁴² Also known as the Tiye Scarabs, these date from the beginning of Amenhotep III's reign. The texts list the king's titulary and proclaim his marriage union with Tiye, whose parentage is also mentioned. C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 21-56.

³⁴³ These record a royal hunt which took place in the king's 2nd regnal year. The king and his hunting party reportedly slaughtered a staggering number of 96 wild bulls. C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 57-61.

³⁴⁴ According to texts on these scarabs, of which many examples have been found, the king killed over 100 lions during the first 10 years of his reign. C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 62-128.

³⁴⁵ This series of scarabs commemorate the digging of a large lake for Tiye (between Akhmim and Qau el-Kebir). C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 134-46.

³⁴⁶ Lawrence M. Berman, "Large Commemorative Scarabs," in *Egypt's Dazzling Sun: Amenhotep III and His World*, ed. Arielle P. Kozloff et al. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art in cooperation with Indiana University Press, 1992), 67-72.

³⁴⁷ The slight internal variations in size, design, and quality of execution may be explained by their production in different royal workshops and by different hands. John Baines, "On the Genre and Purpose of the 'Large Commemorative Scarabs' of Amenhotep III," in *Hommages à Fayza Haikal*, ed. Nicolas Grimal, Amr Kamel, and Cynthia M. Sheikholeslami (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2003), 31.



Figure 3.28a. Giluḥepa scarab of Amenhotep III (side view). Figure 3.28b. Inscription on the Giluḥepa scarab of Amenhotep III. EA 68507, British Museum, EA 68507.³⁴⁸ “Commemorative Scarab | British Museum,” The British Museum, accessed May 23, 2022, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA68507.

More than ninety percent of these scarabs are not provenanced; this lack of secure provenance makes it challenging (if not impossible) to theorize about the purpose of these scarabs and the identity of their recipients.³⁴⁹ However, the context of discovery of the provenanced scarabs indicates that they were intended for three main groups of recipients: the gods in Egyptian temples (e.g., the Horus temple of Buhen in Nubia and the temple of Hathor at Serabit el-Khadim), a select group of Egyptian elites, and Egyptian officials and vassals in Nubia and the Levant.³⁵⁰ Though they have not yet been discovered at any site within the territory of other great powers, this does not rule out the possibility that they were sent to other great kings by the diplomatically adroit Amenhotep III.

³⁴⁸ The inscription on the scarab reads: “(1) The living Horus ‘Strong-bull-appearing-in-truth’; (2) He of the Two Ladies ‘Establishing-laws, Pacifying-the-Two-Lands’; (3) Golden Horus ‘Great-of-valor, Smiting-the-Asiatics’; King of Upper and Lower Egypt (4) Nebmaatre; Son of Re ‘Amenhotep Ruler-of-Thebes,’ given life; (5) the Great Royal Wife Tiye, may she live. The name of her father is (6) Yuya, the name of her mother is Thuya. (7) She is the wife of a mighty king (8) whose southern boundary is (9) to Karoy, whose northern (10) to Naharina.” C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 16.

³⁴⁹ John Baines, “On the Genre and Purpose of the ‘Large Commemorative Scarabs’ of Amenhotep III,” in *Hommages à Fayza Haikal*, ed. Nicolas Grimal, Amr Kamel, and Cynthia M. Sheikholeslami (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2003), 32.

³⁵⁰ John Baines, “On the Genre and Purpose of the ‘Large Commemorative Scarabs’ of Amenhotep III,” in *Hommages à Fayza Haikal*, ed. Nicolas Grimal, Amr Kamel, and Cynthia M. Sheikholeslami (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2003), 32–33.



Map 3.1. Distribution of the large commemorative scarabs of Amenhotep III.

The choice of the scarab as a diplomatic tool and a vehicle of intercultural communication was ingenious. As one of the cultural symbols of Egyptian civilization, scarabs enjoyed great popularity in the Levant during the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period, being exported to and produced locally in the Levant in large numbers.³⁵¹ They constituted ideal diplomatic gifts because they were portable (many were even wearable) and prestigious, and their recipients were already familiar with (and fond of) this artistic form. Moreover, the flat base of the large commemorative scarabs was well-suited for the

³⁵¹ Daphna Ben-Tor, *Scarabs, Chronology, and Interconnections: Egypt and Palestine in the Second Intermediate Period*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, Series Archaeologica 27* (Freiburg/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2007).

purpose of disseminating information about the pharaoh's valiant deeds and festive events (see Map 3.1). In particular, the Giluḥepa scarabs could have evoked the memories of the local Levantine vassals and Egyptian imperial officials who had seen or escorted the marriage party of the Mittani princess. Even if their recipients possessed no knowledge of hieroglyphs, the pictographic signs and the scaraboid shape of the object would leave little doubt as to the origin of the scarab.

Although the scarabs were produced in batches, they were not indistinguishable. For instance, the scarab destined for the Buhen temple of Horus (no. E8 in Blankenberg-van Delden) was custom-made to honor this deity, for it bears a cartouche reading "The Perfect God Nebmaatre, beloved of Horus Lord of Buhen."³⁵² It is not unreasonable to assume that the scarabs created for other gods and prestigious recipients also customized designs and messages. Baines recognized the scarabs as a unique category of objects, representing "a largely unparalleled departure in the dissemination both of objects and of the information on them."³⁵³ According to his estimation, even if one assumes that the surviving copies constitute less than ten percent of what had been originally produced, the scarabs would have been bestowed upon a considerable number of elites within Egypt proper and in its imperial peripheries.

As Amenhotep III's reign was generally peaceful, this king directed his energy towards extensive royal building programs and extending his diplomatic connections.³⁵⁴ It is perhaps not surprising that, for lack of opportunity to demonstrate his military prowess on the battlefield, he would wish to promulgate his sportsmanship and diplomatic accomplishments throughout the empire by issuing commemorative scarabs. To a certain extent, this practice compensated for the lack of royal presence in the Levant, which was

³⁵² John Baines, "On the Genre and Purpose of the 'Large Commemorative Scarabs' of Amenhotep III," in *Hommages à Fayza Haikal*, ed. Nicolas Grimal, Amr Kamel, and Cynthia M. Sheikholeslami (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2003), 32.

³⁵³ John Baines, "On the Genre and Purpose of the 'Large Commemorative Scarabs' of Amenhotep III," in *Hommages à Fayza Haikal*, ed. Nicolas Grimal, Amr Kamel, and Cynthia M. Sheikholeslami (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2003), 34.

³⁵⁴ Betsy M. Bryan, "The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c.1550 - 1352 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 256-59, 260-61. Arielle P. Kozloff, *Amenhotep III: Egypt's Radiant Pharaoh* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 120-65, 197-212.

frequently bemoaned by loyal Egyptian vassals in the Amarna letters (e.g., EA 51: 7-17).³⁵⁵ Compared to the more official diplomatic letters, these commemorative scarabs revealed a more intimate side of Amenhotep III.

However, it should be pointed out that the practice of issuing commemorative scarabs was not invented by Amenhotep III. Keimer recognized some scarabs (and plaques) of the earlier 18th Dynasty kings (Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, Amenhotep II, and Thutmose IV) as commemorative, despite their reduced size (hence the name “minor historical scarabs”) and lack of a precise date (figs. 3.29a-d).³⁵⁶ These scarabs bear short architectural legends that commemorate the construction of monuments. Hatshepsut, who has demonstrated her creativity in other fields, seems to be the inventor of this type of scarab (fig. 29a-b); her inscriptional formula was later employed by Thutmose III (fig. 3.29c) and Amenhotep III (fig. 3.29d) on their scarabs with architectural legends.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 122. .

³⁵⁶ Ludwig Keimer, “Un scarabée commémoratif de Mineptah,” *Annales du service des antiquités de l’Égypte* 39 (1939): 112-17.

³⁵⁷ Robert Hari, “Un scarabée inédit d’Hatshepsout: scarabées à légende architecturale,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 60 (1974): 134–36.

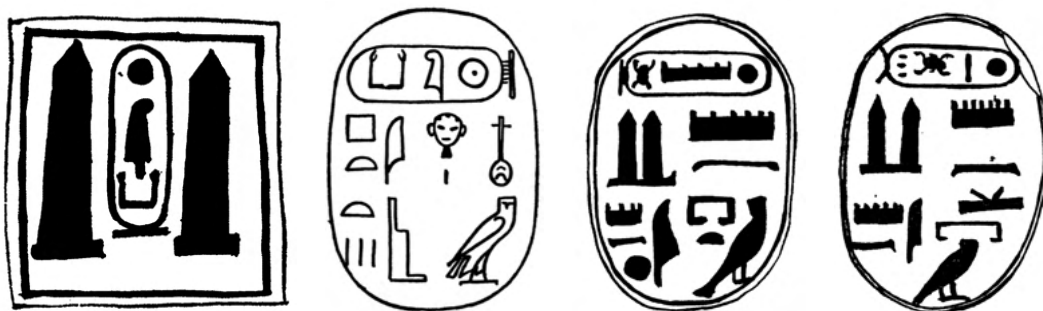


Figure 3.29a. Commemorative plaque of Hatshepsut with architectural legends.³⁵⁸ Figure 3.29b. Commemorative scarab of Hatshepsut with architectural legends.³⁵⁹ Figure 3.29c. Commemorative scarab of Thutmose III with architectural legends.³⁶⁰ Figure 3.29d. Commemorative scarab of Amenhotep II with architectural legends.³⁶¹ Robert Hari, “Un scarabée inédit d’Hatshepsout: scarabées à légende architecturale,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 60 (1974): figs. 11, 15, 12, 13.

Over time, longer narrative texts started to appear on these scarabs. A scarab (British Museum EA 65800)³⁶² issued by Thutmose IV was inscribed with eight rows of hieroglyphic texts commemorating the arrival of the princes of Naharin (fig. 3.30).³⁶³ If this scarab is an authentic piece, it represents a predecessor of Amenhotep III’s commemorative scarabs with historical narratives. However, its authenticity has been

³⁵⁸ This plaque commemorates the erection of a pair of obelisks between the fourth and fifth pylon in the Karnak temple.

³⁵⁹ It probably celebrates the donation of a royal statue with the attributes of Hathor in the temple of Amun. Robert Hari, “Un Scarabée inédit d’Hatshepsout: scarabées à légende architecturale,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 60 (1974): 138-39.

³⁶⁰ The base of the scarab bears the cartouche of Thutmose III (Menkheperre) and the inscription: *mn thn.wy m pr.t imn-r* “Enduring are the two obelisks in the House of Amun-Re!”

³⁶¹ The base of the scarab bears the cartouche of Amenhotep II (Aakheperure) and the inscription: *mn thn.wy m pr.t imn* “Enduring are the two obelisks in the House of Amun!”

³⁶² “Commemorative Scarab; Forgery (?) | British Museum,” The British Museum, accessed May 23, 2022, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA65800.

³⁶³ The inscription reads: (1) *Wr.w nhrn hr in*. (2) *wzsn gmhzn mn-hpr.w-r’ d’zf* (3) *m przf sdmzsn hrwzf mi s’ nwt iw psd.t* (4) *zf m dr.tzf mi st sw ir wwfsw r* (5) *h’ itn r-h’ tef sw sk dw.w hr* (6) *ptpt h’sw.t hbr nhrn r k-r* (7) *-y r rdi.t wnn.w n h’sw.t mi rhy.t* (8) *r hrp n itn n dt* “(1) The princes of Naharin bearing their gifts (2) they behold Menkheperu-re as he comes forth (3) from his palace, they hear his voice like (that of) the son of Nut, his bow (4) in his hand like the son of the successor of Shu. If he arouses himself to (5) fight, with Aten before him, he destroys the mountains, (6) trampling down the foreign lands, treading unto Naharin and unto Karoy, (7) in order to bring the inhabitants of foreign lands like subjects (8) to the rule of (?) Aten for ever.” Alan W. Shorter, “Historical Scarabs of Tuthmosis IV and Amenophis III,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 17, no. 1/2 (1931): 23–25.

debated by many scholars since its first publication.³⁶⁴ In any case, Amenhotep III should receive credit for the innovative idea of employing commemorative scarabs as diplomatic gifts on a large scale. Outside of Egypt, his large commemorative scarabs have been discovered at 3 sites in Nubia (Meroe, Soleb, Buhen), 7 sites in the Levant (Beth Shemesh, Gezer, Ugarit, Jaffa, Lachish, Qal'at el-Twal, Beth Shean), and 1 site in Cyprus (Palaepaphos-Skales) (Map 1).³⁶⁵



Figure 3.30. Commemorative scarab of Thutmose IV. Alan W. Shorter, “Historical Scarabs of Tuthmosis IV and Amenophis III,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 17, no. 1/2 (1931): fig. 1.

Keimer further identified two series of commemorative scarabs related to Amenhotep III and Queen Tiye and named them “medium-sized historical scarabs (MSCS)”³⁶⁶ (between 40 and 55 mm) and “minor

³⁶⁴ Shorter, Bannister and Plenderleith recognized the historical authenticity of the scarab. See: Alan W. Shorter, “Historical Scarabs of Tuthmosis IV and Amenophis III,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 17, no. 1/2 (1931): 23–25; F. A. Bannister and H. J. Plenderleith, “Physico-Chemical Examination of a Scarab of Tuthmosis IV Bearing the Name of the God Aten,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 22, no. 1 (1936): 3–6. However, Schäfer and Keimer considered it a forgery. Heinrich Schäfer, “Ein Angeblicher Skarabäus Thutmosis des IV mit Nennung des Gottes Aton,” *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 34 (1931): 788–91; Ludwig Keimer, “Un scarabée commémoratif de Mineptah,” *Annales du service des antiquités de l’Égypte* 39 (1939): 117. Blankenberg-van Delden did not list this object under the list of forgeries. C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 166.

³⁶⁵ Baruch Brandl, Shlomo Bunimovitz, and Zvi Lederman, “Beth-Shemesh and Sellopoulo: Two Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III and Their Contribution to Aegean Chronology,” *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 108 (2013): 79, table 1.

³⁶⁶ Type A of this category probably commemorated the erection of a small number of colossi of the king. This was followed by Ramesses II when he set up colossal statues of himself. Type B, bearing cartouche(s) of the king and the queen, may be connected with two palaces at Malkata which were built for the celebration of Amenhotep III’s jubilee. Type C of this group bear inscriptions that related them to the large number of divine statues set up in this king’s mortuary temple on the occasion of his first Sed festival. Though no specific event could be linked to the

historical scarabs” (less than 40 mm).³⁶⁷ The “medium-sized historical scarabs (MSCS)” could be divided into four sub-categories based on their material and inner design: 1. Type A (glazed steatite, royal colossi of Amenhotep III and Tiye); 2. Type B (glazed steatite, cartouches of Amenhotep III and Tiye); 3. Type C (glazed steatite, cartouche of Amenhotep III prenomen and an epithet); 4. Type D (‘faience group’ with Amenhotep III’s prenomen).³⁶⁸ The Type D scarabs were distributed widely and have been found at sites in Egypt, Nubia, Canaan, Crete, and Rhodes.³⁶⁹ Among them, 21 were discovered at 12 Levantine sites, some of which were known in the vassal letters in the Amarna archive.³⁷⁰ Only two were found at the Aegean sites of Kydonia/Khania (Crete) and Ialysos (Rhodes), both of which were named in the “Aegean List”.³⁷¹ Two additional scarabs, issued on the occasion of Amenhotep III’s first Sed (jubilee) festival, have been found at Beth Shemesh and Sellopoulo (on Crete),³⁷² offering further evidence for Amenhotep III’s employment of commemorative scarabs for diplomatic purposes.

issue of Type D of this series, they were most widely distributed in the eastern Mediterranean region. Baruch Brandl, Shlomo Bunimovitz, and Zvi Lederman, “Beth-Shemesh and Sellopoulo: Two Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III and Their Contribution to Aegean Chronology,” *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 108 (2013): 73–79.

³⁶⁷ Ludwig Keimer, “Un scarabée commémoratif de Mineptah,” *Annales du service des antiquités de l’Égypte* 39 (1939): 117.

³⁶⁸ Baruch Brandl, Shlomo Bunimovitz, and Zvi Lederman, “Beth-Shemesh and Sellopoulo: Two Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III and Their Contribution to Aegean Chronology,” *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 108 (2013): 72–9.

³⁶⁹ Baruch Brandl, Shlomo Bunimovitz, and Zvi Lederman, “Beth-Shemesh and Sellopoulo: Two Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III and Their Contribution to Aegean Chronology,” *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 108 (2013): 80, table 2.

³⁷⁰ These include Tell Abu Hawam, Aphek, Tell el-Ajjul, Ashkelon, Beth Shean, Gezer, Hazor, Jaffa, Lachish, Megiddo, Tell es-Safi, and Byblos. Baruch Brandl, Shlomo Bunimovitz, and Zvi Lederman, “Beth-Shemesh and Sellopoulo: Two Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III and Their Contribution to Aegean Chronology,” *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 108 (2013): 79.

³⁷¹ Eric H. Cline, “Amenhotep III and the Aegean: A Reassessment of Egypto-Aegean Relations in the 14th Century B.C.,” *Orientalia* 56, no. 1 (1987): 1–36. Eric H. Cline and Steven M. Stannish, “Sailing the Great Green Sea? Amenhotep III’s ‘Aegean List’ from Kom El- Hetan, Once More,” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 3, no. 2 (2011): 6–16.

³⁷² Baruch Brandl, Shlomo Bunimovitz, and Zvi Lederman, “Beth-Shemesh and Sellopoulo: Two Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III and Their Contribution to Aegean Chronology,” *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 108 (2013): 67–95. Mervyn R. Popham, E. A. Catling, and H. W. Catling, “Sellopoulo Tombs 3 and 4, Two Late Minoan Graves near Knossos,” *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 69 (1974): 195–257.

The distributive pattern of Amenhotep III's commemorative scarabs suggests that the main target audience of the royal message and visual propaganda transmitted by the commemorative scarabs was Egypt's domestic and imperial subjects. Singer observed that Ugarit is the only city outside Canaan where a commemorative scarab celebrating the marriage of Amenhotep III and Tiye was discovered.³⁷³ Despite Ugarit's political status and its peripheral location in relation to Egypt, its mode of interaction with Egypt paralleled that between Egypt and other great powers in many aspects. Hundreds of fragments of alabaster vessels, one of which was inscribed with the cartouches of Akhenaten and Nefertiti (RS 15.202 + 15.203; Ug. 3, 167, fig. 120), have been found throughout the city and its port of Minet el-Beida; these supplement textual evidence in the Amarna archive that the pharaoh showered the Ugaritic king with prestige objects to ensure his loyalty.³⁷⁴ It is equally telling that [Ḥa]ramassa, the Egyptian envoy to Ugarit, had also been sent on a mission to Mittani (EA 20: 33-38).³⁷⁵ As discussed in Chapter 2, this choice of higher-status messengers indicated a higher level of representation, which was telling of the elevated status of Ugarit as an Egyptian vassal. Therefore, the selective bestowal of pharaonic gifts may have constituted an Egyptian effort to ensure the loyalty of the king of Ugarit by including him in an inner circle of Canaanite vassals and Egyptian imperial administrators who were the primary beneficiaries of Amenhotep III's favor and largess. Later New Kingdom pharaohs like Akhenaten (BM EA 51084),³⁷⁶ Ramesses II (MMA 26.7.232),³⁷⁷

³⁷³ Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston: Brill, 1999), 603–733.

³⁷⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 120.

³⁷⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 47.

³⁷⁶ Inscription on this scarab names both Akhenaten and Nefertiti; however, unlike the marriage scarab of Amenhotep III which gives Tiye's parentage, this scarab simply lists her name and title. It was found at Sedeinga in Nubia, where a temple dedicated to Tiye was built by Amenhotep III. British Museum, EA 51084. "Commemorative Scarab | British Museum," accessed May 23, 2022, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA_51084.

³⁷⁷ Text on the Ramesses II scarab celebrates a temple "The Castle (i.e., temple)-of-Ramesses-beloved-of-Amun, Lord of the Two Lands Usermaatre-Setepenre, Lord of Appearances Ramesses-beloved-of-Amun, which is beloved like Atem on the Western Waters (i.e., the Canopic branch of the Nile)." Alan H. Gardiner, "The Delta Residence of the Ramessides," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 5, no. 4 (1918): 131, fig. 1.

and Merneptah³⁷⁸ continued the practice of issuing commemorative scarabs (figs. 3.31a-c); however, based on extant evidence, it is difficult to determine the extent to which they were employed for diplomatic purposes. The 25th Dynasty Nubian king Shabako also issued commemorative scarabs celebrating his victory over the rebellious local population and Egypt's traditional enemy, the Sand-dwellers (i.e., Bedouin) (fig. 3.31d).³⁷⁹

³⁷⁸ Judging from the head of a Nubian carved on the back of this scarab and the inscription (*ptpt xAs.t nb.t* "One-who-tramples-every-land") on its base, it probably celebrates a military victory in Nubia. Robert Hari, "Deux scarabées royaux inédits," *Aegyptus* 52, no. 1/4 (1972): 4-7, pl. 2, 3.

³⁷⁹ Jean Yoyotte, "Plaidoyer pour l'authenticité du scarabée historique de Shabako," *Biblica* 37, no. 4 (1956): 457-76, pl. 2.



Figure 3.31a. Commemorative scarab of Akhenaten and Nefertiti (front and back view). Found at Sedeinga, Nubia. British Museum, EA 51084. “Commemorative Scarab | British Museum,” accessed May 23, 2022, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA_51084. Figure 3.31b. Commemorative scarab of Ramesses II. Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 26.7.232. Alan H. Gardiner, “The Delta Residence of the Ramessides,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 5, no. 4 (1918): 131, fig. 1. Figure 3.31c. Scarab of Merneptah commemorating a victory in Nubia (front and back view).³⁸⁰ Robert Hari, “Deux scarabées royales inédites,” *Aegyptus* 52, no. 1/4 (1972): 4-7, pl. 2, 3. Figure 3.31d. Commemorative scarab of Shabako (front and back view), The Royal Ontario Museum, no. 910.28.1. Jean Yoyotte, “Plaidoyer pour l’authenticité du scarabée historique de Shabako,” *Biblica* 37, no. 4 (1956): 457–76, pl. 2.

Besides small (hence portable) but valuable objects like rings, seals, and scarabs, the pharaoh showed special favors towards his vassals by the gifting of a royal statue. Such a royal statue may have been established at Tunip.³⁸¹ This city was taken by Thutmose III in his 42nd year (EA 51: 4; EA 59: 5-

³⁸⁰ The design of this scarab is rather peculiar, for the back of the scarab was carved in the shape of a hedgehog with the face of a Nubian. Considering the hedgehog’s natural defensive qualities, this design was probably supposed to grant the object apotropaic power. Julia C. F. Hamilton, “Hedgehogs and Hedgehog-Head Boats in Ancient Egyptian Religion in the Late 3rd Millennium BCE,” *Arts* 11, no. 1 (2022): 31.

³⁸¹ This was hinted at in a letter from the citizens (“sons”) of the city of Tunip to the pharaoh: “His deity and his statue (?) of the king of the land of Egypt, our lord, have been located in the city of Tunip. So may our lord ask them, namely his ancients, when did we not belong to our lord, king of the land of Egypt?” (EA 59: 9-12). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based*

8); it probably received the royal statue as a reward for its ruler's loyalty and compliance, for he was depicted presenting his son as a political hostage in the tomb of Menkheperreseneb (TT86).³⁸² The gifting of a royal statue was also vaguely referred to in a letter from Akizzi of Qatna to Akhenaten (EA 55: 53-59).³⁸³

Understandably, the granting of a royal statue was an exceptional honor that was not bestowed upon every Egyptian vassal. This was demonstrated by a letter (RS 88.2158) from Merneptah to an Ugaritic king (Ammurapi or Niqmaddu III), discovered in the House of Urtenu at Ugarit.³⁸⁴ The Ugaritic king begged Merneptah to send a sculptor to fashion an image of the pharaoh, and he promised to place it before the image of Ba'al in the local temple, a divine statue that the pharaoh donated himself.³⁸⁵ To this unexpected request, Merneptah replied that the sculptors were currently occupied with works for the Egyptian gods, but he promised to send them as soon as they finished their assignments in Egypt.³⁸⁶ As

on Collations of All Extant Tablets, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 412-13.

³⁸² Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Menkheperreseneb, Amenmose, and Another (Nos. 86, 112, 42, 226)* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1933), pl. 20.

³⁸³ Thus wrote Akizzi: "My lord, a (statue of) the sun god, the god of my father, each of your ancestors made and the name (of each one) was placed before him. But now, as for the sun god<s>, the god<s> of my father, the king of the land of Ḫatti has taken them. And my lord knows them, viz. the manufacture of (those) gods, just as they are. And now, the sun god, the god of my father has returned to me. Take it under consideration, my lord, and may he furnish it, viz. the shekel(s) of gold as much as is needed for the sun god, the god of my father. As soon as he does thus for me, then the name of my lord will be (exalted) before the sun god, just as in the past" (EA 55: 53-59). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 402-5.

³⁸⁴ Sylvie Lackenbacher, "Une lettre d'Égypte," in *Études Ougaritiques I. Travaux 1985-1995*, ed. Marguerite Yon and Daniel Arnaud, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 14 (Paris: Éditions recherche sur les civilisations, 2001), 239-48. Fisher thinks that the letter was addressed to Ibiranu. Loren Fisher, "Double Attribution in a Letter from Egypt to Ugarit (RS 88.2158)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 130, no. 4 (2010): 619.

³⁸⁵ Sylvie Lackenbacher, "Une lettre d'Égypte," in *Études Ougaritiques I. Travaux 1985-1995*, ed. Marguerite Yon and Daniel Arnaud, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 14 (Paris: Éditions recherche sur les civilisations, 2001), 241. Ellen Morris, "Egypt, Ugarit, the God Ba'al, and the Puzzle of a Royal Rebuff," in *There and Back Again: The Crossroads II: Proceedings of An International Conference Held in Prague, September 15-18, 2014*, ed. Jana Mynářová, Pavel Onderka, and Peter Pavúk (Prague: Charles University in Prague, 2015), 316.

³⁸⁶ Sylvie Lackenbacher, "Une lettre d'Égypte," in *Études Ougaritiques I. Travaux 1985-1995*, ed. Marguerite Yon and Daniel Arnaud, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 14 (Paris: Éditions recherche sur les civilisations, 2001), 241.

Morris pointed out, this request for a royal statue seems puzzling given Ugarit's political status as a Hittite vassal; Merneptah's implicit rejection was equally baffling, since one or two craftsmen must have been available for an overseas assignment.³⁸⁷

Concerning the first question, the relationship between Ḫatti and Ugarit had been strained since the time of Niqmaddu III's father Ibiranu; it continued to deteriorate in the reigns of Niqmaddu III and Ammurapi.³⁸⁸ Whoever the recipient of RS 88.2158 was, he probably had no qualms about reaching out to the Egyptian court (just as Niqmaddu II switched from the Egyptian camp to the Hittite fold in the late Amarna age). In addition, the Egyptian practice of recording payments for foreign goods as pious donations to foreign deities (often syncretized with Egyptian deities) was well-known; thus, the Ugaritic king's request may represent a proposal to increase trade between Egypt and Ugarit.³⁸⁹

Multiple considerations may have prompted Merneptah to turn down the Ugaritic king: e.g., the cost of the statue itself and his unwillingness to disrupt the cordial relations between Egypt and Ḫatti established by the peace treaty.³⁹⁰ Most importantly, the gifting of a royal statue to a vassal (a former

³⁸⁷ Ellen Morris, "Egypt, Ugarit, the God Ba'al, and the Puzzle of a Royal Rebuff," in *There and Back Again: The Crossroads II: Proceedings of An International Conference Held in Prague, September 15-18, 2014*, ed. Jana Mynářová, Pavel Onderka, and Peter Pavúk (Prague: Charles University in Prague, 2015), 316-17.

³⁸⁸ From the Hittite perspective, these defiant Ugaritic kings have withheld messengers and proper tribute goods from the Hittite court without justifiable reason (RS 34.136; RS 18.038; RS 13.007). The Ugaritic kings, on the other hand, were upset about the rerouting of caravans between Egypt and Ḫatti (RS 17.435) as well as the Hittite king's refusal to send them grain to relieve a serious famine (RS 18.038). Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston: Brill, 1999), 603–733. Ellen Morris, "Egypt, Ugarit, the God Ba'al, and the Puzzle of a Royal Rebuff," in *There and Back Again: The Crossroads II: Proceedings of An International Conference Held in Prague, September 15-18, 2014*, ed. Jana Mynářová, Pavel Onderka, and Peter Pavúk (Prague: Charles University in Prague, 2015), 318-19.

³⁸⁹ Ellen Morris, "Egypt, Ugarit, the God Ba'al, and the Puzzle of a Royal Rebuff," in *There and Back Again: The Crossroads II: Proceedings of An International Conference Held in Prague, September 15-18, 2014*, ed. Jana Mynářová, Pavel Onderka, and Peter Pavúk (Prague: Charles University in Prague, 2015), 330.

³⁹⁰ It has been discussed in Chapter 2 that the Hittites frowned upon unnecessary interactions between their vassals and other great powers. A Hittite king admonished Ammurapi in a letter: "You belong to the Sun your master; a servant indeed, his possession are you" (RS 18.038). Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston: Brill, 1999), 707. Placing the statue of an Egyptian king in one of the most prominent temples of a valuable Hittite vassal would almost certainly invoke the wrath of the Hittite king and Merneptah had no incentive for doing that, for he had to deal with invasions of the Libyans and the Sea Peoples, as well as rebellions in Egypt's northern empire (cf. the Israel Stela). Jacobus Van

vassal in this case) was not simply an act of diplomatic gift-giving. In contrast to the exchange of statues between the great kings, the bestowal of a royal statue had significant economic implications because it entailed the establishment of land endowments to support the proper functioning of its cult.³⁹¹ When a statue of Ramesses VI was set up in the temple of Horus at Aniba in Nubia, land was allotted by the pharaoh for its upkeep, and a deputy was appointed to perform cult services (fig. 3.32a-b).³⁹² Furthermore, a bronze statue base of Ramesses VI (probably similar to the one found at Aniba) was discovered at Megiddo, furnishing evidence for the existence of a royal statue cult at the city (fig. 3.32b).³⁹³ In view of these, the Ugaritic king's request for a royal statue and Merneptah's polite rejection become more understandable: the two correspondents were not just negotiating over a piece of gift but a constant stream of revenue that was expected to accompany it.

Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 265–307.

³⁹¹ For more on economic ramifications for gifting such a royal statue, see Ellen Morris, "Egypt, Ugarit, the God Ba'al, and the Puzzle of a Royal Rebuff," in *There and Back Again: The Crossroads II: Proceedings of An International Conference Held in Prague, September 15-18, 2014*, ed. Jana Mynářová, Pavel Onderka, and Peter Pavúk (Prague: Charles University in Prague, 2015), 315–51.

³⁹² Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations. Ramesses IV to XI and Contemporaries*, vol. VI (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), 350-55.

³⁹³ James H. Breasted, "Bronze Base of a Statue of Ramses VI Discovered at Megiddo," in *Megiddo II, Seasons of 1935-39: Text*, Oriental Institute Publications, 62:1 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1948), 136, 137, fig. 373, 374.

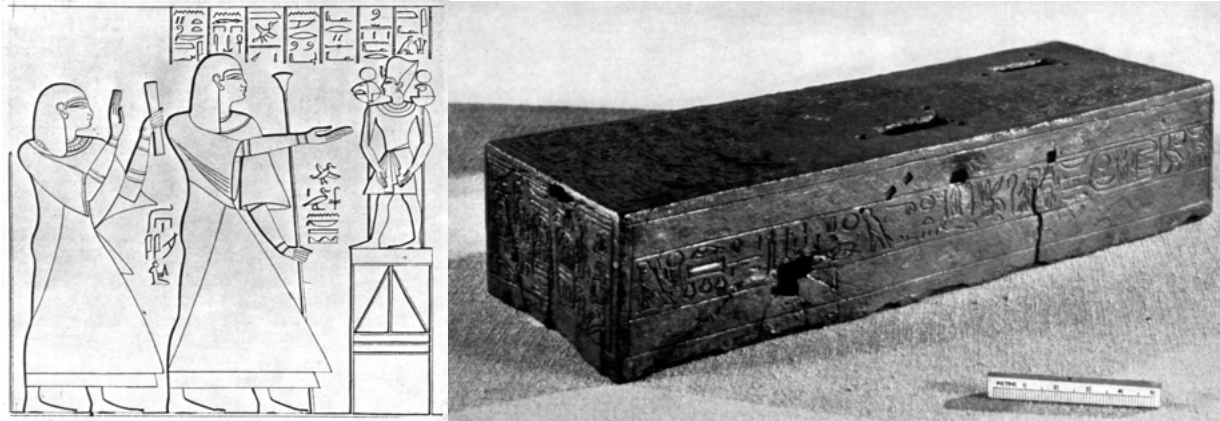


Figure 3.32a. Depiction of a statue of Ramesses VI in the tomb of Pennut the Deputy of Wawat, Nubia. “Tomb of Pennut-Amada p.2,” accessed May 17, 2022, https://www.osirisnet.net/tombes/amada/pennout/e_pennout_02.htm. Figure 3.32b. Bronze Base of a Statue of Ramses VI Discovered at Megiddo. James H. Breasted, “Bronze Base of a Statue of Ramses VI Discovered at Megiddo,” in *Megiddo II, Seasons of 1935-39: Text*, Oriental Institute Publications, 62:1 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1948), 136, 137, fig. 373, 374.

Just as pharaonic gifts to vassals conveyed propagandistic messages that were frequently found in pharaonic letters, gifts and tribute from Egyptian vassals could be embedded with messages that paralleled the protestations of loyalty in the vassal letters. The *ms inw* ceremony provided them with the perfect occasion to publicly express their loyalist sentiments, which accorded with the Egypt-centric ideology. A prime example is a gold set-piece presented by the Nubians, which was depicted in the tomb of Tutankhamun’s Viceroy of Kush Huy (figs. 3.33a-b). It features a central piece consisting of a pyramidion with miniature heads of Nubians surmounted by a feathered headdress at its base and a bowl-shaped object with a cowhide pattern. Surrounding the central piece are fruit-bearing date palms, miniature figures of prostrating or kneeling Nubians with upraised arms in adoration, and leashed giraffes.³⁹⁴ All these pieces are placed on a plate or a wide yoke,³⁹⁵ from both sides of which the figure of a prostrate and bound Nubian

³⁹⁴ Berthold Laufer, “The Giraffe in History and Art,” *Anthropology Leaflet*, no. 27 (1928): 1–100. A preference for the giraffe might have been associated with its ability to see things afar, which bestowed upon it cultural associations with foretelling the future and communicating with the supernatural world.

³⁹⁵ It is impossible to determine which one it is from the side view.

(with only the head and torso) protrudes.³⁹⁶ Panther skins, animal tails, and colorful cloth with ornaments that look like interlocking gold rings drape from the edge of the plate/yoke, which rests on an elaborate pylon-shaped stand. Unlike normal utilitarian stands with simple designs, this pylon-shaped stand features double royal cartouches of Tutankhamun, which surmount a *Sema-tawy* motif. This motif is composed of the windpipe sign 𓂏 (for the word *sm*’ “to unite”) tied around by the heraldic plants of Upper and Lower Egypt (i.e., sedge flower and papyrus plant), signifying the political unification of Egypt; sometimes, it was accompanied on both sides by the image of a Nubian and a Syrian bound by the heraldic plants, extending its meaning to the subjugation of Egypt’s traditional enemies from the South and the North.³⁹⁷ However, this traditional pairing was modified on the pylon-shaped stand, which feature two Nubians instead in accordance with the identity of the sender of this set-piece.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶ Four similar figures of foreigners protrude from the base of a cosmetic jar of Tutankhamun. A recumbent lion (undoubtedly to be identified with Tutankhamun) rests on the lid. The body of the jar features a vibrant hunting scene. The artistic program of this jar represents the pharaoh’s dominance over Egypt’s enemies, who are agents of chaos. Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an “International Style” in the Ancient Near East, 1400 - 1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), fig.3.

³⁹⁷ This extended Sema-tawy motif could appear as a hollow-carved design between royal chairs, or as a low relief on a Window of Appearance. Flora B. Anthony, *Foreigners in Ancient Egypt: Theban Tomb Paintings from the Early Eighteenth Dynasty* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 42-44. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pl. 34.

³⁹⁸ Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut’ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), 22-23.



Figure 3.33a. Gold set piece from Nubia, TT40. “Charles K. Wilkinson | Nubian Tribute Presented to the King, Tomb of Huy | Twentieth Century; Original New Kingdom.” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548571>. Figure 3.33b. Gold set piece from Nubia (facsimile drawing), TT40. Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut’ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. 26.






Figure 3.34a. Rekhyt-birds decorating the base of the dais of Tutankhamun, tomb of Huy (TT40). “Charles K. Wilkinson | Nubian Tribute Presented to the King, Tomb of Huy | Twentieth Century; Original New Kingdom.” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548571>. Figure 3.34b. Rekhyt-birds motif, lower register of southern door thickness, Karnak Temple, Ptolemy VIII (?). Paul Barguet, *Le temple d’Amon-Rê à Karnak: essai d’exégèse, recherches d’archéologie, de philologie et d’histoire* 21 (Cairo: Institut français archéologie orientale du Caire, 1962), pl. 31b.

The composition of the gold set piece is strongly reminiscent of the imagery of a *rekhyt*-bird 🐦

(lapwing, var. 🐦) which is a determinative and ideogram in 🐦||| *rhy.t* “commoner; humankind”.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁹ Kenneth Griffin, “A Reinterpretation of the Use and Function of the Rekhyt Rebus in New Kingdom Temples,” in *Current Research in Egyptology 2006: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Symposium Which Took Place at the*

It is usually depicted sitting on a basket (representing the hieroglyphic sign *nb* “all; very”) with upraised arms in a gesture of adoration (indicated by a star-symbol ★ for the verb *dwʿ* “to adore, worship” ★ ). Therefore, the *rekhyt*-bird motif symbolizes the commoners’ or humankind’s adoration of the pharaoh. It frequently appears on the base of royal daises (just like the bound captives motif) and lowly positions, e.g., column bases and lower register of walls, in Egyptian temples (figs. 3.34a-b).⁴⁰⁰ An understanding of the *rekhyt*-bird motif (which contains culturally specific meaning) allows one to better interpret the message conveyed by the visual elements of the gold set-piece. The combination of the standing and kneeling Nubian figures with upraised arms (which recall the determinatives in the words ★  *dwʿ* “to adore, worship” and ★  *dwʿ.w* “worshiper”) and the basket-shaped object (the *nb*-sign for “all; every”) delivers the message that all Nubians are in adoration. The object of adoration is most likely the enthroned Tutankhamun, to whom his Viceroy of Kush was presenting this gold piece. Through an amalgamation of highly symbolic motifs, this set-piece exalted Egyptian dominance over the land of Nubia along with its people and

University of Oxford April 2006, ed. Maria Cannata, *Current Research in Egyptology* 7 (Oxford: Oxbow, 2007), 66–84.

⁴⁰⁰ Kenneth Griffin, “A Reinterpretation of the Use and Function of the *Rekhyt* Rebus in New Kingdom Temples,” in *Current Research in Egyptology 2006: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Symposium Which Took Place at the University of Oxford April 2006*, ed. Maria Cannata, *Current Research in Egyptology* 7 (Oxford: Oxbow, 2007), 66–84.

produce.⁴⁰¹ Furthermore, it was appropriately executed in the malleable metal of gold, the most precious product of Nubia.⁴⁰²

By presenting this piece to the pharaoh, the Nubian chiefs symbolically exalted Egyptian rule over Nubia and confirmed their allegiance to him. Variations of this gold set-piece were depicted in the same tomb,⁴⁰³ the tomb of Qenamun (figs. 3.35a-b), the tomb of Meryra II (figs. 3.36a-c), and the Beit el-Wali temple of Ramesses II (figs. 3.37a-b). Nubian gold was usually imported in the form of gold sand or gold rings; turning roughly processed gold into a set-piece made it more aesthetically appealing for public display. This may not be groundless speculation; as Anthony pointed out, even modern scholars tend to pay more attention to Levantine goods than Nubian goods, “perhaps in part because the Nubians bring mostly unworked materials and natural resources in contrast to the more ornate vessels and worked objects brought by the Levantines and Aegeans.”⁴⁰⁴ As the gold set piece did not seem to serve any utilitarian purpose, it may have been commissioned specifically for the occasion of the ceremony.⁴⁰⁵ It is not farfetched to assume

⁴⁰¹ Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), 22-23. The above-mentioned letter from the Ramesside Viceroy Paser to a Nubian chief preserved a rather exhaustive list of Nubian tribute goods: “When my letter reaches you, you shall cause the tribute to be made ready in all its details, namely, oxen, younglings of long-horned cattle, short-horned cattle, gazelles, oryxes, ibexes and ostriches; their barges, their cattle-ferries and their *kr*-ships being ready to land (?); their skippers and their crews prepared and ready to set forth; much gold wrought into dishes, *Dam*-gold in bushels, good gold, *gmw* of the desert in bags of red cloth, ivory and ebony; ostrich feathers, Christ's-thorn in *h̄m̄h̄m*, bread of Christ's-thorn fruit, *škr̄k̄by*, *mynȳh̄s*, *h̄k̄k̄*, *šsy*, panther skins, gum, haematite, red jasper, amethyst, crystal, cats of *Miw*, a long-tailed monkey, baboons, *šnw*-vessels of red pigment, ps-packs of fan-shaped palm leaves; many *Irmi*-people in front of the tribute, their *ibrDi* wrought in gold, *krtbi* with *snrw* with *h̄p̄it* and with all precious stones. Tall *yrk*-people in *sd̄y*-garments, their fan(s) of gold, (wearing) high feathers, their trinkets with woven knots; numerous *Nehsyu* of all sorts.” (P. Koller, 3,3-5,4). Ricardo A. Caminos, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 437-39.

⁴⁰² Some Viceroys of Kush held a secondary title *imy-r' h̄'s.t nb.w (n imn)* “Overseer of the gold lands (of Amun)”; considering its tendency to vary in the titles of different individuals, Reisner reached the conclusion that it was only a romanticized version of “Overseer of the Southern Lands”. George A. Reisner, “The Viceroys of Ethiopia (Continued),” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 6, no. 2 (1920): 79–80.

⁴⁰³ Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. 26.

⁴⁰⁴ Flora B. Anthony, *Foreigners in Ancient Egypt: Theban Tomb Paintings from the Early Eighteenth Dynasty* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 11.

⁴⁰⁵ The gold set pieces have not left any trace in the archaeological record. As they were not items intended for personal use, they would not accompany their owners in the afterlife. The valuable materials used for producing them could hardly escape the fate of being repurposed by their later owners.

that some degree of Egyptian oversight went into the production of these exquisite gold set pieces; in most depictions, they were shown being carried or presented to the pharaoh by Egyptians (sometimes by the Viceroys of Kush like Huy and Paser) (figs. 3.37a-b).

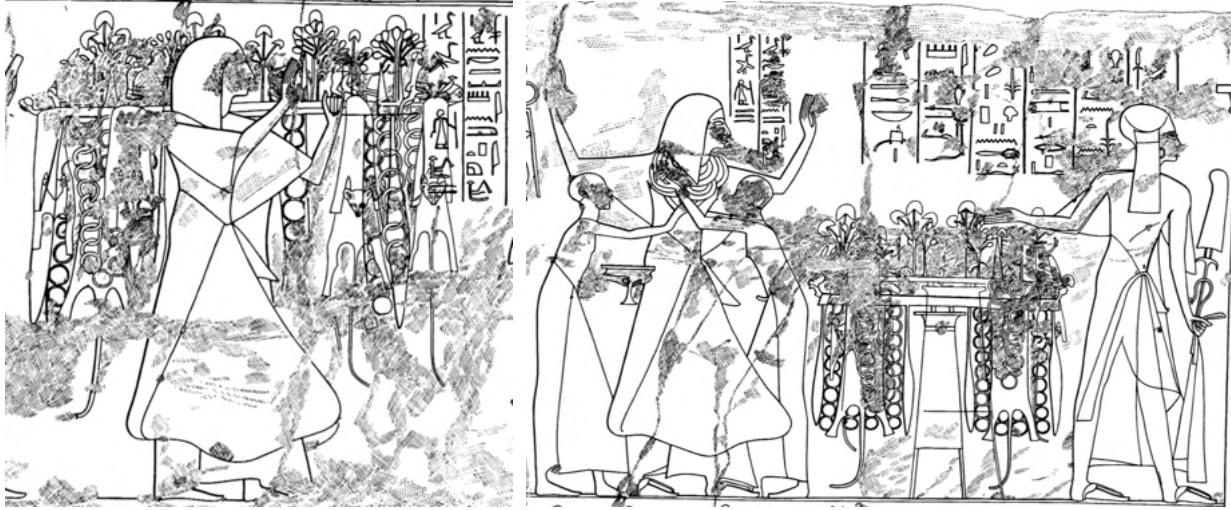


Figure 3.35a. Gold set-piece in the tomb of Qenamun.⁴⁰⁶ Figure 3.35b. Gold set-piece in the tomb of Qenamun (facsimile drawing). Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Qenamun at Thebes*, 2 vols. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1930), vol. 1, pls. 13, 14.



Figures 3.36a-c. Decorative pieces presented by the Nubians to Akhenaten during his Year 12 *ms inw* ceremony, tomb of Meryra II. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pl. 37.

⁴⁰⁶ A gold set piece made with gold and inset semi-precious stones and/or glass paste. The lower part of the depiction was destroyed, and it could not be determined whether it was set upon a flat tray or in a bowl (epergne-like). Davies suggests that it might be a cup with a solid centerpiece resting on the bottom and a pierced balustrade of ornaments decorating the rim. Two fruit-bearing dom-trees springing from the centerpiece, with monkeys (cast in the round) climbing the branches and reaching for fruits. The rim was decorated with a row of flowers, lotus buds, and trees. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Qenamun at Thebes*, 2 vols. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1930), vol. 1, pl. 13, 14.



Figures 3.37a-b. Ramesses II's viceroy of Kush Paser bringing a gold set piece to the king,⁴⁰⁷ Beit el-Wali temple in Nubia. Herbert Ricke, George R. Hughes, and Edward F. Wente, *The Beit El-Wali Temple of Ramesses II: Joint Expedition 1960/61 with the Schweizerisches Institut für Ägyptische Bauforschung und Altertumskunde in Kairo*, University of Chicago Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pl. 9.

The theme of subjugation was likewise manifest on two ceremonial shields depicted in the same scene among the Nubian tribute goods; one bears the image of Tutankhamun spearing a supplicating Nubian kneeling on top of a hill country, while the other features a ram-headed sphinx (an avatar of Tutankhamun) trampling fallen Nubians (Fig. 3.38).⁴⁰⁸ Remarkably, four open work ceremonial shields (made of wood, covered with plaster and gilded) bearing strikingly similar scenes have been found in the tomb of Tutankhamun, providing perfect archaeological comparanda for the pair depicted in the tomb of Huy (figs. 3.39a-d).⁴⁰⁹ Nibb proposed that these ceremonial shields were designed for use as standards; indeed, they sent a strong visual message to the Egyptian populace that the pharaoh was “shielding” them from

⁴⁰⁷ Wachsmann observed the clear analogy between the scene in Huy's tomb and Ramesses II's Beit el-Wali relief. Shelley Wachsmann, *Aegeans in the Theban Tombs* (Leuven: Peeters, 1987), 48. Ebony chairs decorated with the *Sema-tawy* symbol were shown as presented by the Nubians in the Beit el-Wali reliefs.

⁴⁰⁸ Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. 24, 25.

⁴⁰⁹ Alessandra Nibb, “The Four Ceremonial Shields from the Tomb of Tutankhamun,” *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 133, no. 1 (2006): 66–71.

aggressive foreign enemies.⁴¹⁰ While the shields depicted in the tomb of Huy bear no inscription or only the king's throne name Nebkheperura and birth name Tutankhamun,⁴¹¹ all four ceremonial shields from the tomb of this pharaoh bear a longer version of his titulary and inscriptions.

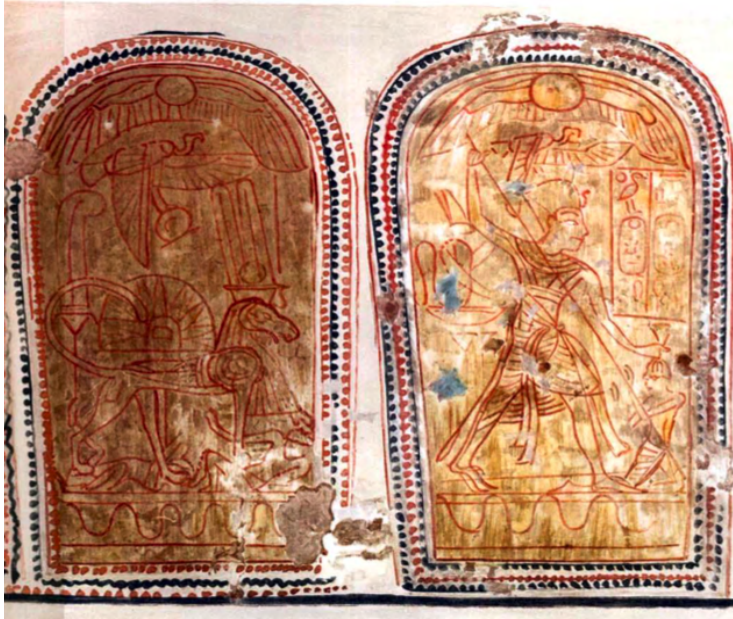





Figure 3.38. Nubian shields with scenes of king crushing the head of a kneeling enemy, and ram-headed sphinx trampling Nubians, TT40. Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamun* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. 25.

⁴¹⁰ Alessandra Nibb, "The Four Ceremonial Shields from the Tomb of Tutankhamun," *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 133, no. 1 (2006): 71.

⁴¹¹ Perhaps a long inscription could not fit in the space on the shields, which are of modest size.



Figure 3.39a. A ceremonial shield depicting Tutankhamun smiting a lion (KV62), Egyptian Museum in Cairo, JE 61576. “Eight Unmissable Objects from Tutankhamun: Treasures of the Golden Pharaoh at the Saatchi Gallery | The Arts Society,” accessed June 16, 2022, <https://theartsociety.org/arts-news-features/eight-unmissable-objects-tutankhamun-treasures-golden-pharaoh-saatchi-gallery>. Figure 3.39b. A ceremonial shield depicting Tutankhamun as a sphinx trampling Nubians (KV62), Egyptian Museum in Cairo, JE 61577. “Tutankhamun’s Treasures - Ceremonial Shield,” accessed June 16, 2022, <http://www.joannansberry.com/fotoart/tut/shield.html>. Figure 3.39c. A ceremonial shield depicting Tutankhamun in a Heb-Sed festival robe, enthroned under a solar disk, Egyptian Museum in Cairo, JE 61578. Figure 3.39d. A ceremonial shield depicting Tutankhamun enthroned under a winged sun-disk (KV62), Egyptian Museum in Cairo, JE 61579. © Syed Amran. <http://agarakutidaklupa.blogspot.com/2019/01/egypt-day-10-part-01-egyptian-museum.html>.

A shield (fig. 3.39c, JE 61578) depicts Tutankhamun enthroned under the winged sun-disk wearing a long, feathered garment (Heb-Sed festival robe) and the red crown of Lower Egypt and holding the crook and flail. His throne, with the *Sema-tawy* motif between its legs, sits on a large  *hb*-sign (alabaster basin, the determinative and ideogram in   *hb* “festival”). Under the *hb*-sign, two *rekhyt*-birds sitting on baskets raise their human hands in worship. The vertical texts on the right of the king might be making an oblique reference to a *ms inw* ceremony held in Thebes:

h' hmꜣf m-hnw wꜣst hr tꜣt n sr bꜣ.t nb hꜣš Nb-hꜣr.w-r' di 'nh

“His majesty appears within Thebes upon the dais of announcing (?) wonders, the lord of strength Nebkheperura, given life.”⁴¹²

The motif of the pharaoh smiting foreign enemies graced the walls of numerous Egyptian temples;⁴¹³ however, it has also been found on smaller objects, especially weapons, due to their close association with military activities (fig. 3.40).⁴¹⁴ Throughout the pharaonic period, the Egyptian rulers have commemorated their military victories on various weapons: e.g., the Narmer Macehead (fig. 3.40), Scorpion Macehead, Gebel el-Arak knife, Oxford knife, Metropolitan Museum knife, and the ceremonial axe of Ahmose found in the tomb of queen Aahotep.⁴¹⁵ Just like these Egyptian monuments and artifacts,

⁴¹² This inscription is reminiscent of an inscription from the Qasr Ibrim shrine of the Viceroy Usersatet, which commemorates the delivery of Nubian tribute to Amenhotep II: “Glorious arising of His Majesty in the interior of Thebes upon the great throne-platform in order to proclaim wonders for his army... The expedition...every (?) ...that stood in the presence of His Majesty and brought the tribute of the southern foreign lands in front of this good god, while the courtiers gave praise and this army revered His Majesty.” Ricardo A. Caminos, *The Shrines and Rock-Inscriptions of Ibrim* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1968), 67.

⁴¹³ José das Candeias Sales, “The Ritual Scenes of Smiting the Enemies in the Pylons of Egyptian Temples: Symbolism and Functions,” in *Thinking Symbols, Interdisciplinary Studies*, vol. 6 (Pultusk: Pultusk Academy of Humanities, 2017), 257–67. Emma S. Hall, *The Pharaoh Smites His Enemies: A Comparative Study* (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1986), figs. 22a-b, 23-25, 28-29, 36, 45-47, 49, 55-56, 57-62, 64-65, 67-72.

⁴¹⁴ Emma S. Hall, *The Pharaoh Smites His Enemies: A Comparative Study* (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1986), figs. 1-4, 6-8, 27, 42.

⁴¹⁵ The axe bears an image of the pharaoh (wearing a blue “battle” crown) smiting a defeated enemy and the inscription *mry mnꜥ* “Beloved of Montu”. Joan Aruz and Peter Lacovara, “Axe,” in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 119–22. Gianluca Miniaci and Peter Lacovara, eds., *The Treasure of the*

the Nubian ceremonial shields express a visual rhetoric of subjugation, albeit from the perspective of the subjugated. This is reminiscent of the Levantine vassals' employment of the Egyptian ideology of life to communicate with and curry favor from the pharaoh in the diplomatic letters (see discussion in Chapter 2). Instead of verbal communication, the Nubian ceremonial shields used visual vocabulary invented by the Egyptians to eulogize Egyptian domination over the land of Nubia and its people. Similar to the gold set-pieces, the ceremonial shields indexed the sociopolitical relations between their donor and recipient, as well as the exchange context. These objects perfectly illustrate how political messages can be conveyed through iconography to an audience of diverse cultural backgrounds.

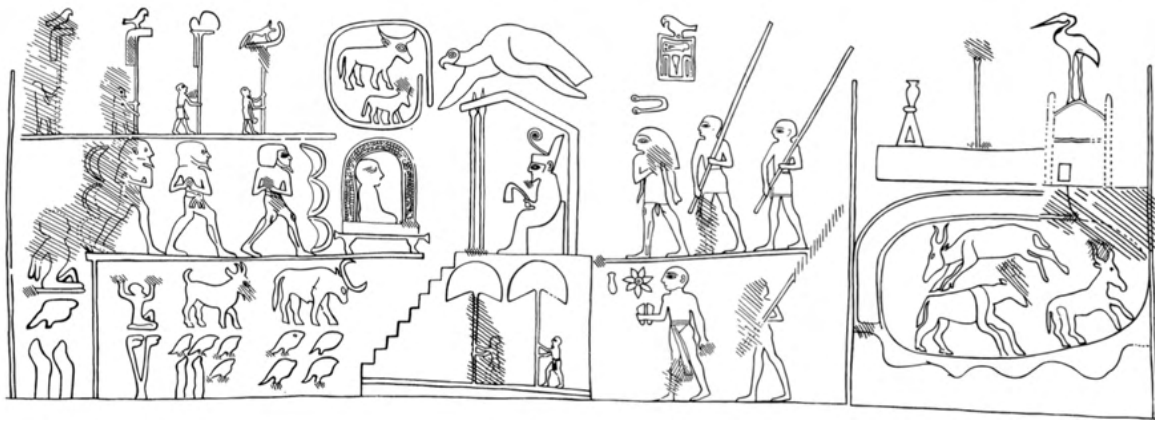






Figure 3.40. The Narmer Macehead, Ashmolean E.3631. N. B. Millet, "The Narmer Macehead and Related Objects," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 27 (1990): fig. 1.

Weapons (e.g., shields, bows, and chariots), which were associated with the notion of hostility in many cultures, also constituted a large part of the tribute goods from Egypt's Levantine subjects (fig. 3.3). In Egyptian art, the bow was a symbol of the hostility of foreigners, who were collectively referred to as the "Nine Bows".⁴¹⁶ In particular, the Nubians were referred to as  styw "Bowmen" and their

Egyptian Queen Ahhotep and International Relations at the Turn of the Middle Bronze Age (1600-1500 BCE) (London: Golden House Publications, 2022).

⁴¹⁶ See: E. Uphill, "The Nine Bows," *Jaarbericht van Het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap "Ex Orient Lux"* 19 (1965-65): 393-420. Andrew Bednarski, "Nine Bows," in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History. Volume 9: Ne-Pl*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall et al. (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 4795.

country  *iʿ-sty* “Land of the Bow”.⁴¹⁷ By presenting and relinquishing their weaponry, the foreigners symbolically gave up resistance to Egyptian hegemony.⁴¹⁸ Müller argued that this taking of arms represented an effort to sustain Egyptian dominance over its foreign subjects by weakening them militarily.⁴¹⁹ On the other hand, some types of weapons (e.g., chariots and armor) were intended for the pharaoh’s personal use and enabled him to show off his masculinity and fitness in a more glorified manner.

In addition to raw materials and craft goods, even long-horned cattle ( *iwʿ*)⁴²⁰ brought by the Nubians received a makeover in order to be ceremonially presented to the pharaoh (figs. 3.41 a-b). They were decorated with ornaments in the shape of heads of Nubians between their horns and hands on the tips of their horns,⁴²¹ evoking the hieroglyphic sign  (man with arms raised, Gardiner A28) that serves as

⁴¹⁷ Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: The Griffith Institute, 1991), 253.

⁴¹⁸ Wilkinson studied the symbolism of the “turned bow” in Egyptian representations of warfare and smiting scenes. He interpreted this motif as a symbol of dominance, as the dominant figure invariably holds the bow with the bowstring towards the subordinate individuals; but when a god is present, then the rank hierarchy dictates that the bow be turned towards the pharaoh and the subjugated enemy. Richard H. Wilkinson, “Turned Weapons in Egyptian Iconography – The Decorum of Dominance,” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 7, no. 3 (2015): 95–100. However, this hypothesis does not seem to be tenable: reliefs in the Beit el-Wali temple of Ramesses II offer many examples of the bow being held by the pharaoh in a normal position of use (with the bowstring towards the pharaoh) even when a god is not present. Herbert Ricke, George R. Hughes, and Edward F. Wente, *The Beit El-Wali Temple of Ramesses II: Joint Expedition 1960/61 with the Schweizerisches Institut für Ägyptische Bauforschung und Altertumskunde in Kairo*, University of Chicago Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pls. 11-14.

⁴¹⁹ Marcus Müller, “A View to a Kill: Egypt’s Grand Strategy in Her Northern Empire,” in *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature: Proceedings of a Conference at the University of Haifa, 3-7 May 2009*, ed. Shay Bar, Dan’el Kahn, and J. J. Shirley (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 241. According to the Chinese historian Sima Qian, after the unification of the empire, the First Emperor of Qin confiscated bronze weapons from all over the empire in order to cast twelve giant bronze figures (“收天下之兵铸十二金人”). This was probably intended to deprive the rebels of means of violent insurgence and declare his intention to wrap up his military conquests and maintain peace in his newly minted, centralized empire. Qian Sima, *Records of the Grand Historian: Qin Dynasty*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 45. Hung Wu, “Thinking through Scale: The First Emperor’s Sculptural Enterprise,” in *Figurines: Figuration and the Sense of Scale*, ed. Jaś Elsner, First edition (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 90-91.

⁴²⁰ Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, eds., *Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache: Volume 1: 1 3-’dd.t* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1925), 49.12.

⁴²¹ Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut’ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), 25. Analogies of oxen with decorated horns were found



determinative in the verb  *h'i* “to rejoice”.⁴²²  *iw'* is attested in a Ptolemaic-Roman hieroglyphic text in the Ptolemaic sanctuary in the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri,⁴²³ and the *Wörterbuch* tentatively translated it as “sich freuen (?)”.⁴²⁴ The verb *iw'* “to rejoice” was not attested in the New Kingdom period; hence, it remains unknown whether a pun between *iw'* “to rejoice” and *iw'* “long-horned cattle” is intended here.



Figure 3.41a. *iw'*-oxen with decoration on their heads and horns, TT40. Figure 3.41b. Nubian ox decorated with a bowl-like attachment between its horns, TT40. “Charles K. Wilkinson | Nubian Tribute Presented to the King, Tomb of Huy | Twentieth Century; Original New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548571>.

In many cases, it was not possible to distinguish diplomatic goods from tribute items based on their physical appearance. Further confusion may be caused by the Egyptian practice of juxtaposing these two categories of objects (EA 1: 88-98)⁴²⁵ during a royal audience and in pictorial records of their

in the tomb of Meryre at Amarna and in the *Opet*-Festival scene of Horemheb in the Luxor Temple. Also described in Shelley Wachsmann, *Aegeans in the Theban Tombs* (Leuven: Peeters, 1987), 47.

⁴²² Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, eds., *Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache: Volume 3: I H-H'j* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1929), 40.2-41.2.

⁴²³ Leuven Online Index of Ptolemaic and Roman Hieroglyphic Texts. The text reads: *sšm'z'i im'k m wd.t n tnn dw' imn sm' iw' s' n sn.wt* “My image is with you by order of Tjenen, ... worship of Amun, joy and rejoicing, protection of Egypt”. <https://aaew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/GetTextDetails?u=guest&f=0&l=0&tc=5925&db=0>.

⁴²⁴ Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, eds., *Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache: Volume 1: I 3- 'dd.t* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1925), 49.12.

⁴²⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

reception. Notably, one group of tribute goods was not subject to the influence of conflation, i.e., the sons and brothers of Egypt's foreign vassals brought to Egypt as political hostages, who would later replace their fathers or brothers as Egyptian vassals.⁴²⁶ Having scrutinized the depictions of children of foreign rulers (*ms.w wr.w*) from 15 tombs and 3 temples, Matic' established several iconographic patterns based on the bearer's ascribed ethnicity, gender, or status. Matic' observed the seldom noted yet significant differences between the representation of Syrian and Nubian children of foreign rulers (*ms.w wr.w*) and their bearers: 1. While the Syrian children were brought by both men (some of whom were their fathers) and women, the Nubian children were only depicted as being brought by women (fig. 3.42b); 2. The children brought by Syrians far outnumbered those brought by the Nubians; 3. The term *inw* "gift; tribute" was used to designate Syrian children in most depictions, while the Nubian children were generally referred to as *skr-nh* "captive" or *h'k.t* "booty". One of the patterns that emerged from his analysis is that the Syrian children brought by men and referred to as *inw* probably represent an iconographic parallel to the children brought to the Egyptian court to be educated as political hostages (fig. 3.42a).⁴²⁷

⁴²⁶ This practice was probably instituted by Thutmose III, since it was first mentioned in his Annals: "Now, the offspring of the chiefs and their brothers were brought to be as hostages in the Black Land. And if anyone dies amongst these chiefs, His Majesty causes that his [son] go to stand in his place." Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, *Urkunden des Ägyptischen Altertums*, IV (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1906), 690: 2-5. Paul J. Cowie, "Guaranteeing the Pax Aegyptiaca? Re-Assessing the Role of Elite Offspring as Wards and Hostages within the New Kingdom Egyptian Empire in the Levant," *The Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 19 (2008): 17-28.

⁴²⁷ Uroš Matic', "Children on the Move: *Ms.w Wr.w* in the New Kingdom Procession Scenes," in *There and Back Again – the Crossroads II Proceedings of an International Conference Held in Prague, September 15–18, 2014*, ed. Jana Mynarova, Pavel Onderka, and Peter Pavuk (Prague: Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Arts, 2015): 381-82.



Figure 3.42a. The ruler of Tunip presenting his son to the pharaoh as a political hostage. “Nina de Garis Davies | Foreigners, Tomb of Menkheperaseneb | Twentieth Century; Original New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 6, 2021, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544600>. Figure 3.42b. Nubian children being brought to Egypt in the care of a Nubian woman, TT40. “Charles K. Wilkinson | Nubian Tribute Presented to the King, Tomb of Huy | Twentieth Century; Original New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548571>.

Furthermore, he pointed out that the phenomenon of transference,⁴²⁸ which refers to the transferring of components of a familiar stock scene *en masse* to another normally unrelated stock scene, did not affect the depiction of the children of foreign rulers even though it is well-attested in the presentation scenes.⁴²⁹ For instance, the Aegean people were never shown bringing small children to the Egyptian court as political hostages. This indicates that Egyptian ideology and artistic conventions (e.g.,

⁴²⁸ See discussion in Shelley Wachsmann, *Aegeans in the Theban Tombs* (Leuven: Peeters, 1987), 11-12.

⁴²⁹ Uroš Matić, “Children on the Move: *Ms.w Wr.w* in the New Kingdom Procession Scenes,” in *There and Back Again – the Crossroads II Proceedings of an International Conference Held in Prague, September 15–18, 2014*, ed. Jana Mynarova, Pavel Onderka, and Peter Pavuk (Prague: Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Arts, 2015): 375.

transference and use of pattern books⁴³⁰) may have distorted how people and objects in the procession scenes were represented; however, such representations were not entirely divorced from reality. Their value as historical sources could be realized if one adopts a method of contextualized reading.⁴³¹

When the time was ripe, these political hostages would be sent back to their home country to take their father's throne. Having received an Egyptian education and been indoctrinated in Egyptian ideology, they were expected to serve the incumbent king and his successor (probably the crown prince they grew up with) as loyal subjects.⁴³² However, they sometimes shared the fate of those experts who were sent on a foreign mission and detained by their host king. The ruler of Tunip was the only named Egyptian vassal amongst his peers who were depicted presenting their sons to the pharaoh (fig. 3.42a); however, such loyalty was not rewarded accordingly in the Amarna period, during which the heir of the ruler of Tunip was withheld by the pharaoh (EA59: 13-20).⁴³³

In her seminal work on the Late Bronze Age international artistic koiné, Feldman emphasized how different spheres of interaction could have an impact on artistic expression: "It seems likely that military or imbalanced interactions would require and generate quite different visual forms than

⁴³⁰ See discussion in Shelley Wachsmann, *Aegeans in the Theban Tombs* (Leuven: Peeters, 1987), 12-17.

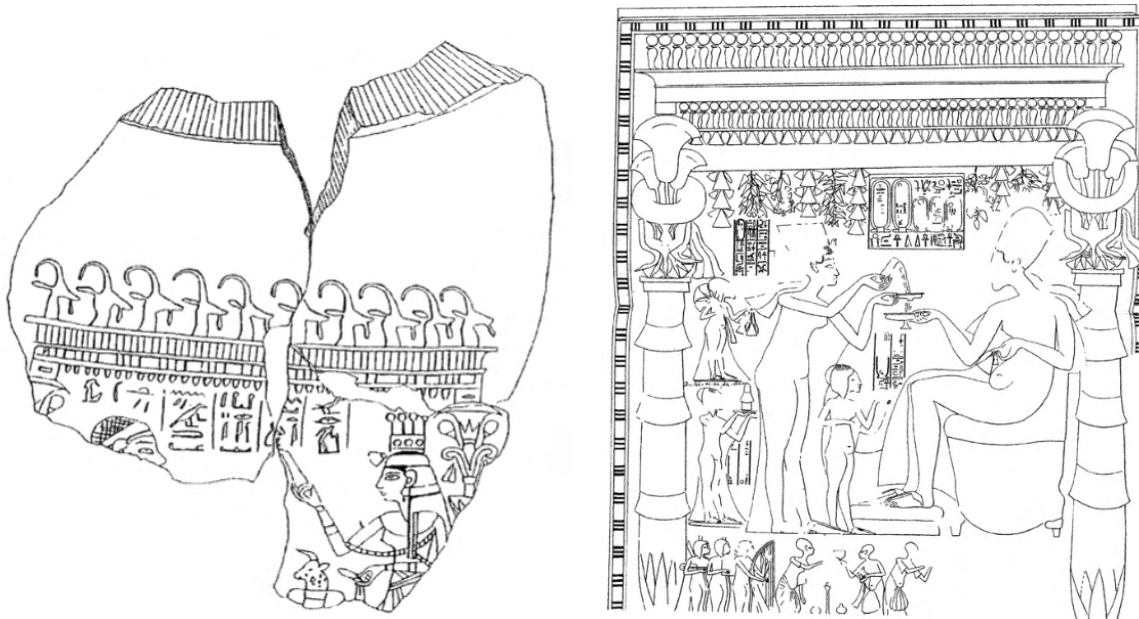
⁴³¹ See Diamantis Panagiotopoulos, "Keftiu in Context: Theban Tomb-Paintings as a Historical Source," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 20, no. 3 (2001): 263-83.

⁴³² A letter from Ya'tiri (probably an Egyptian vassal ruler in southern Canaan) to the king demonstrates that he fulfilled such expectation: "So may the king, my lord ask YanHamu, his commissioner. When I was young, then he brought me into the land of Egypt and I served the king, my lord, and I was posted at the gate of the king, my lord. So may the king, my lord, ask his commissioner whether I am guarding the gate of the city of Gaza and the gate of the city of Yapô (Joppa) and I am with the regular troops of the king, [my] lord wherever they go, I am wi[th them]. And now I have placed the yoke of the king, my lord, on my neck and I am carrying (it)" (EA 296: 22-29). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 1142-45; vol. 2, 1601.

⁴³³ The citizens ("sons") of the city of Tunip beseeched the pharaoh for the release of their prince: "And now, twenty years we have been writing to the king, our lord, and our envoys have been located with the king, our lord. But now, our lord, we have been requesting the son of Aki-Teššub of the king, our lord, so may our lord give him. And my lord gave the son of Aki-Teššub, so why is the king, our lord, holding him back from the way?" (EA 59: 13-20). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 412-13.

commerce or entrepreneurial connections, or diplomatic relations based on parity.”⁴³⁴ This phenomenon is also observed in intercultural communication through the exchange of diplomatic gifts and tribute, as the type, design, and symbolism of the goods may vary depending on the balance of power and the nature of the relationship between the exchange partners. The case studies in this section largely corroborate the tripartite division of exchange contexts and partners, but sometimes things are not so clear-cut.

Just as verbal and nonverbal diplomatic messages could be intentionally composed with ambiguity for constructive or deceptive purposes, the material properties of artifacts could be manipulated to communicate interculturally with a degree of flexibility. This is best illustrated by a 14th-century BCE alabaster vase found at Ugarit bearing the image of a lady in Egyptian costume and a man identified by the accompanying hieroglyphic inscription as *wr n h's.t ik'riyty nyk'dy* “the great one of the land of Ugarit Niqmaddu (II),” hence the name Niqmaddu Vase (fig. 3.43a).⁴³⁵



⁴³⁴ Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an “International Style” in the Ancient Near East, 1400 - 1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 30.

⁴³⁵ Marian H. Feldman, “Ambiguous Identities: The ‘Marriage’ Vase of Niqmaddu II and the Elusive Egyptian Princess,” *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 15, no. 1 (2002): 75–99. Erika Fischer, “Niqmaddu of Ugarit and His Consort: A Reassessment of The So-Called Marriage Vase,” in *SOMA 2012. Identity and Connectivity: Proceedings of the 16th Symposium on Mediterranean Archaeology, Florence, Italy, 1-3 March 2012*, ed. Luca Bombardieri et al. (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013), 165–73.

Figure 3.43a. Drawing of the Niqmaddu Vase from Ugarit. Marian H. Feldman, “Ambiguous Identities: The ‘Marriage’ Vase of Niqmaddu II and the Elusive Egyptian Princess,” *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 15, no. 1 (2002): fig. 3 (RS 15.239; Desroches-Noblecourt 1956: fig. 118). Figure 3.43b. Royal banquet scene in the tomb of Meryra II, Nefertiti pouring drinks for the seated Akhenaten. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), 34-5, pl. 32.

The identity of the mysterious lady, who was unfortunately not identified by the surviving inscriptions, has sparked much scholarly debate.⁴³⁶ Feldman, however, approached this artifact from the perspective of visual ambiguity (of identity and rank).⁴³⁷ Just like verbal messages were composed with intentionality and could be manipulated to distort reality, images and visual forms were commissioned and crafted to serve specific purposes and thus equally capable of conveying messages of their patrons and/or artists.⁴³⁸ Therefore, she argued that visual ambiguity played a constructive role in political negotiation and diplomatic marriage. As Feldman observed, the scene on the Niqmaddu Vase was clearly modeled after contemporary Egyptian royal banquet scenes, an excellent example of which is preserved in the tomb of Meryra II at Amarna (fig. 3.43b).⁴³⁹ In this scene, Akhenaten sits comfortably on a cushioned chair under a royal kiosk (perhaps a garden pavilion) with two bands of decorative friezes of uraei. He holds some flowers (brought by princess Ankhesenpaaten) in his left hand and extends his right hand, holding a patera, to receive wine. It is being poured by Nefertiti from a slender vessel through a

⁴³⁶ Wolfgang Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. chr.* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962), 319-20, n. 37. Horst Klengel, *Geschichte Syriens im 2. Jahrtausend v. u. Z.: Teil 2. Mittel- und Sudyrien* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1969), 344-45. Alan R. Schulman, “Diplomatic Marriage in the Egyptian New Kingdom,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 38, no. 3 (1979): 185, 188. Itamar Singer, “A Political History of Ugarit,” in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston: Brill, 1999), 625–26. Silke Roth, *Gebietlerin aller Länder: Die Rolle der Königlichen Frauen in der Fiktiven und Realen Aussenpolitik des Ägyptischen Neuen Reiches*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 185 (Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 2002), 97-98. Erika Fischer, “Niqmaddu of Ugarit and His Consort: A Reassessment of The So-Called Marriage Vase,” in *SOMA 2012. Identity and Connectivity: Proceedings of the 16th Symposium on Mediterranean Archaeology, Florence, Italy, 1-3 March 2012*, ed. Luca Bombardieri et al. (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013), 165–73.

⁴³⁷ Marian H. Feldman, “Ambiguous Identities: The ‘Marriage’ Vase of Niqmaddu II and the Elusive Egyptian Princess,” *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 15, no. 1 (2002): 75–99.

⁴³⁸ Marian H. Feldman, “Ambiguous Identities: The ‘Marriage’ Vase of Niqmaddu II and the Elusive Egyptian Princess,” *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 15, no. 1 (2002): 77-78.

⁴³⁹ Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), 34-36, pl. 32.

strainer. The royal couple's three daughters: Meritaten, Meketaten, and Ankhesenpaaten, are also in their company. The eldest one, Meritaten (known as Mayati in the Amarna Letters), offers her father some unidentified gratification (image damaged); Meketaten brings what appears to be a cap of ointment while Ankhesenpaaten carries some flowers. The royal family is attended by palace servants and musicians, who are assiduously at work to offer them comfort and entertainment.

In the post-Amarna period of the 18th Dynasty and the Ramesside era, royal banquet scenes of highly similar composition adorned the surface of royal furniture and jewelry (figs. 3.44a-b). Invariably, they captured a moment of intimate interaction between the royal couple, showing the queen serving drinks to her seated husband. Since there are so many immediately noticeable visual parallels between Egyptian banquet scenes and the scene on the Niqmaddu Vase,⁴⁴⁰ the former probably served as a source of inspiration for the latter. As these Egyptian scenes invariably depict a royal wife serving wine to her husband, it is justifiable to presume a marital relationship between Niqmaddu II and the mystery lady.

⁴⁴⁰ These include the overall composition and theme, the royal kiosk with elaborate papyrus columns and friezes, the male and female figures' relative position and the activity that the latter is engaged in, the position of the hieroglyphic inscriptions, etc.



Figure 3.44a. Royal banquet scene on the back support of a golden throne of Tutankhamun. Egyptian Museum in Cairo, JE 62028. Museum, Egypt. “The Golden Throne of Tutankhamun.” Egypt Museum, October 29, 2021. <https://egypt-museum.com/golden-throne-of-tutankhamun/>. Figure 3.44b. Royal banquet scenes on a pair of bracelets of Seti II, queen Tawosret pouring wine for her husband (KV 56). Egyptian Museum in Cairo, CG 52577, 52578. Christine Lilyquist, “Treasures from Tell Basta: Goddesses, Officials, and Artists in an International Age,” *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 47, no. 1 (2012): 39, fig. 55.

Unfortunately, the identity of the mystery lady could not be firmly established because the vase is in such a poor state of preservation that it is impossible to determine whether she was named on one of the missing fragments. Nevertheless, her recognizably Egyptian costume makes a strong case for identifying her as an Egyptian princess or court lady. Further corroboration is provided by a unique headdress worn by the lady, which consists of a flat circular crown with four projecting floral elements terminating in circles and a lotus flower protruding from the forehead.⁴⁴¹ A slightly different floral headdress, with lotus flowers and umbels projecting from the crown and a gazelle head on the forehead, was depicted on the back of a chair of Sitamun, the daughter of Amenhotep III (fig. 3.45a). Significantly, the mystery lady’s unique headdress, tripartite hairstyle, wide collar, and fine transparent gown find

⁴⁴¹ Emily Teeter, *Ancient Egypt: Treasures from the Collection of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago*. Oriental Institute Museum Publications 23 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2003): 66-67, no. 32.

strong parallels in a queenly figure on a Ramesside ostrakon found at Deir el-Medina (fig. 3.45b), which may represent a preliminary sketch for a scene in the tomb of Queen Isis (QV51), the mother of Ramesses VI.⁴⁴² Two further examples bearing a strong resemblance to the OI ostrakon have been discovered in the tombs of Nebettawy (QV60, reign of Ramesses II) and Tyti (QV52, reign of Ramesses IV).⁴⁴³ Despite its distinctive appearance, the symbolism and significance of this floral modius remain unknown.⁴⁴⁴ Nevertheless, as evidence shows, it was almost exclusively associated with princesses and queens (women of exceptionally high status) in Egyptian representations.⁴⁴⁵ It seems appropriate to interpret the lady's Egyptian costume and floral modius as ethnic/cultural and status markers. If this is the case, the inferred marital relationship between her and Niqmaddu becomes problematic because it obviously contradicts Amenhotep III's categorical statement that "From old a daughter of the king of Egypt has never been given to anyone" (EA 4: 4-9).⁴⁴⁶ Despite the meager information provided by the vase, ascertaining the identity of the Egyptian-looking lady on the Niqmaddu Vase proves crucial for assessing the validity of Amenhotep III's claim and determining the vase's purpose of production and historical/political value.

⁴⁴² Emily Teeter, *Ancient Egypt: Treasures from the Collection of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago*. Oriental Institute Museum Publications 23 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2003): 66-67, no. 32.

⁴⁴³ Emily Teeter, *Ancient Egypt: Treasures from the Collection of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago*. Oriental Institute Museum Publications 23 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2003): 66-67.

⁴⁴⁴ Emily Teeter, *Ancient Egypt: Treasures from the Collection of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago*. Oriental Institute Museum Publications 23 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2003): 66-67.

⁴⁴⁵ The only exception is a woman named Neferet, who was shown wearing a similar headdress (with projecting elements terminating in floral elements and balls) in the Medinet Habu temple of Ramesses III. Emily Teeter, *Ancient Egypt: Treasures from the Collection of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago*. Oriental Institute Museum Publications 23 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2003): 66-67.

⁴⁴⁶ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 72-73.



Figure 3.45a. Princess Sitamun wearing a crown with lotiform decoration, back of a chair of Sitamun. “Throne of Princess Sitamun.” Egypt Museum, August 11, 2022. <https://egypt-museum.com/throne-of-princess-sitamun/>.
 Figure 3.45b. Outline drawing of a queen wearing a crown with lotiform decoration (probably Queen Isis, QV51). Ostracon from Deir el-Medina, Dynasty 20, reign of Ramesses VI. Oriental Institute, OIM 17006.⁴⁴⁷

The interpretation of this vase also hinges upon the identity of its commissioner and its place of manufacture. If it was a diplomatic gift sent by the pharaoh to Niqmaddu II, it constitutes a piece of counter-evidence against the presumed Egyptian policy of unilateral diplomatic marriage (EA 4: 4-22).⁴⁴⁸ It seems inconceivable that after Amenhotep III categorically turned down the marriage proposal of a great king (i.e.k, Kadašman-Enlil I), one of his immediate successors (Akhenaten or Tutankhamun) would marry an Egyptian princess or court lady to a vassal.⁴⁴⁹ If such a diplomatic marriage never took place (which was likely the case), then the vase should undoubtedly be interpreted as a piece of visual propaganda commissioned by Niqmaddu II to elevate his status by expressing deference to his distant Egyptian overlord. Indeed, Desroches-Noblecourt, who first published the vase, considered it to be of

⁴⁴⁷ Charles C. van Siclen, “A Ramesside Ostracon of Queen Isis,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 33, no. 1 (1974): 150-153. Emily Teeter, *Ancient Egypt: Treasures from the Collection of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago*. Oriental Institute Museum Publications 23 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2003): 66-67, no. 32.

⁴⁴⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 8.

⁴⁴⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 8.

local manufacture, arguing that the minute details in the iconography and the Egyptian hieroglyphs revealed the artist's local identity.⁴⁵⁰

With regard to the identity of the Egyptian-looking lady, there is a whole range of possibilities. She may be a Syrian princess who was the daughter of one of Ugarit's allies (cf. the dynastic marriages between Ugarit and Amurru) or the daughter of an Ugaritic noble. Assuming that she was Niqmaddu's wife, then one has to grapple with the problem: what was her relationship with queen Pišidqi (who is usually identified as Niqmaddu's wife)?⁴⁵¹ Van Soldt proposed that Pišidqi was the Semitic name that the Egyptian bride took after she arrived at Ugarit.⁴⁵² Yet another suggestion that the lady was an Egyptian noblewoman disguised as a princess⁴⁵³ does not seem very plausible either. After his request for the hand of an Egyptian princess was rejected, the persistent Babylonian king wrote to Amenhotep III: "... I wrote [to my brother] thus, saying 'There are grown daughters [of someone], beautiful women. Send one as if she were [yo]ur daughter'. Who will say, 'She is not the king's daughter'? You, because of (the policy of) not sending, have not sent" (EA 4: 10-13).⁴⁵⁴ The giving of a princess for diplomatic marriage was demeaning from the Egyptian perspective; Amenhotep III refused to send any Egyptian woman as a

⁴⁵⁰ Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, "Interprétation et datation d'une scène gravée sur deux fragments de récipient en albâtre provenant des fouilles du palais d'Ugarit," in *Ugaritica III: Sceaux et cylindres hittites, épée gravée du cartouche de Mineptah, tablettes chypro-minoennes et autres découvertes nouvelles de Ras Shamra*, Mission de Ras Shamra 8 (Leiden: Brill, 1956), 218-19.

⁴⁵¹ Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston: Brill, 1999), 626ff.

⁴⁵² Wildred H. van Soldt, *Studies in the Akkadian of Ugarit: Dating and Grammar*, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament: Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments* 40 (Kevelaer; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 13, n. 115.

⁴⁵³ Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston: Brill, 1999), 625–26.

⁴⁵⁴ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 72-73.

substitute, perhaps because of the fear that she would be paraded around as an Egyptian princess.⁴⁵⁵ If she had been dressed and presented as an Egyptian princess at the Babylonian court, few people in the audience would have known her true identity. The Babylonian messengers' difficulty with identifying their own princess at the Egyptian court amply demonstrated that this ruse would have worked.

The dispute between Amenhotep III and Kadašman-Enlil I concerning the identity of the allegedly Babylonian princess perfectly illustrates how visual ambiguity could create much room for identity construction/negotiation and political maneuvering in diplomacy. Kadašman-Enlil I suspected that the woman presented to his messengers was an imposter because she did not open her mouth: "Perhaps it was the daughter of some lowly person, either one of the Kaskeans or a daughter of the land of Ḫanigalbat, or perhaps of the land of Ugarit which my envoys saw" (EA 1: 36-46).⁴⁵⁶ Amenhotep III was quick to refute his suspicion and placed the blame on Kadašman-Enlil I, who did not send a dignitary who knew her and who could converse with her and identify her; instead, he claimed that the Babylonian messengers sent were not of high enough rank to be able to recognize her (EA 1: 10-17).⁴⁵⁷

Just as Amenhotep III expected the Babylonian messengers to be convinced by his claim that the foreign bride he presented to them was indeed the Babylonian princess, Niqmaddu II probably wanted the viewers of the vase to believe that it celebrated a diplomatic marriage between him and an Egyptian princess. If the Egyptian-looking lady was not identified on the once intact vase, it leaves room for political maneuvering by Niqmaddu II and for inference by the audience. Even if she were specifically identified, viewers without sufficient knowledge of Egyptian hieroglyphs would have to make conjectures

⁴⁵⁵ Samuel A. Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 171.

⁴⁵⁶ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 60-61.

⁴⁵⁷ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 58-59.

about her identity based on her physical appearance and costume. A less informed domestic audience, most of whom were not involved in diplomatic activities and did not possess any knowledge of Egyptian hieroglyphs, would hardly be able to differentiate this alabaster vase from others sent by the Egyptian court to Ugarit as diplomatic gifts.⁴⁵⁸ This clever ruse of playing with visual ambiguity achieved remarkable success; Niqmaddu II successfully confused modern scholars and perhaps also the ancient audience.

To sum up, this visually ambiguous alabaster either reflected Niqmadu's privileged status⁴⁵⁹ or (more likely) his ambition to attain it. If one assumes an Egyptian origin/patronage for this vase, then the scene it bears would signify official Egyptian recognition and celebration of a diplomatic marriage between the Egyptian and Ugaritic courts. Although extant evidence does not entirely exclude the possibility that Niqmaddu II married an Egyptian princess, this scenario is highly unlikely. Kadašman-Enlil I's incidental mention of a woman from Ugarit (EA 1: 37ff) prompted Singer to suggest that if an exchange of royal brides did take place, Ugarit would have been the supplier of the bride.⁴⁶⁰ Therefore, the Niqmaddu Vase was most likely commissioned by its namesake, who strived to elevate his own status through the ingenious use of visual ambiguity.

⁴⁵⁸ One of them bears the cartouches of Akhenaten and Nefertiti (RS 15.202 + 15.203). Claude F. A. Schaeffer, "Matériaux pour l'étude des relations entre Ugarit et l'Égypte," in *Ugaritica III: Sceaux et cylindres hittites, épée gravée du cartouche de Mineptah, tablettes chypro-minoennes et autres découvertes nouvelles de Ras Shamra*, Mission de Ras Shamra 8 (Leiden: Brill, 1956), 167, fig. 120. See also: Annie Caubet, "Répertoire de la vaisselle de pierre (Ougarit 1929-1988)," in *Arts et Industries de La Pierre*, ed. Marguerite Yon, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 6 (Paris: Éditions recherche sur les Civilisations, 1991), 209-14, nos. RS 15.201-203, 15.258, and 16.340.

⁴⁵⁹ The hybrid greeting formula and unusual requests in the letters from Ugarit (EA 49) in the Amarna archive suggest the status of Ugarit was more elevated than the majority of Egypt's Levantine vassals. Discovery of several alabaster vases bearing the cartouche of Amenhotep III, and a marriage scarab of Amenhotep III and queen Tiye bear witness to the friendly relations between the Egyptian and Ugaritic courts before the reign of Niqmaddu II. Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston: Brill, 1999), 624-27.

⁴⁶⁰ Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston: Brill, 1999), 625.

3.2.1.4. Intercultural Communication Sensitivity

As the case studies show, participants in the Late Bronze Age diplomatic exchange of goods demonstrated varying degrees of intercultural communication sensitivity. This sensitivity was shown by their attention to the choice of appropriate goods, the material properties of these goods, and the context of exchange. In addition, these behaviors showed their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and willingness to make accommodations (proactively or reactively) to enhance intercultural communication efficiency.

The Egyptian kings' diplomatic use of commemorative scarabs serves as a perfect example. Scarabs have facilitated the spread of Egyptian cultural influence to Nubia and the Levant (and Egypt's administrative control of these two regions) long before the New Kingdom period;⁴⁶¹ their popularity did not wane during the Ramesside period.⁴⁶² They served as a medium for the hybridization of cultures, as scarabs bearing Levantine designs have been found at the site of Mirgissa and in funerary contexts in the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period.⁴⁶³ The foreign elites treated these scarabs as prized collections because of their distinctive appearance, ornamental value, portability, and practicality (use as personal seals).⁴⁶⁴ They were commonly handed down for generations as heirlooms and buried in much

⁴⁶¹ Daphna Ben-Tor, *Scarabs, Chronology, and Interconnections: Egypt and Palestine in the Second Intermediate Period*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, Series Archaeologica 27 (Freiburg/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2007). Daphna Ben-Tor, "Egyptian-Canaanite Relations in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages as Reflected by Scarabs," in *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature: Proceedings of a Conference at the University of Haifa, 3-7 May 2009*, ed. Shay Bar, Dan'el Kahn, and J. J. Shirley (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 23–43. Stuart T. Smith, "Sealing Practice at Askut and the Nubian Fortresses: Implications for Middle Kingdom Scarab Chronology and Historical Synchronisms," in *Scarabs of the Second Millennium BC from Egypt, Nubia, Crete and the Levant: Chronological and Historical Implications: Papers of a Symposium, Vienna, 10th - 13th of January 2002*, ed. Manfred Bietak and Ernst Czerny (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004), 203–19.

⁴⁶² Daphna Ben-Tor, "Ramesside Scarabs Simulating Middle Bronze Age Canaanite Prototypes: Canaanite or Egyptian?," *Ägypten und Levante / Egypt and the Levant* 27 (2017): 195–218.

⁴⁶³ Anna-Latifa Mourad, "Asiatics and Levantine(-Influenced) Products in Nubia: Evidence from the Middle Kingdom to the Early Second Intermediate Period," *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 27 (2017): 388-94.

⁴⁶⁴ Daphna Ben-Tor, "Scarabs of Middle Bronze Age Rulers of Byblos," in *Bilder als Quellen. Images as Sources. Studies on Ancient Near Eastern Artefacts and the Bible Inspired by the Work of Othmar Keel*, ed. Susanne Bickel et al. (Freiburg: Academic Press, 2007), 177–88.

later contexts as cherished personal belongings.⁴⁶⁵ At Byblos, six scarabs bearing the names and titles of several Middle Bronze Age rulers have been found; one of them bears an inscription that evokes Hathor, the Lady of Byblos.⁴⁶⁶ Judging from the hieroglyphic texts on them that attest to an accurate knowledge of the Egyptian language, these scarabs were likely produced in the late Middle Kingdom royal workshop for rulers of Egypt's main trading partner in the Levant.⁴⁶⁷ They were probably bestowed by Egyptian kings upon the rulers of Byblos,⁴⁶⁸ four of whom bear the title *ḥꜣty*- “governor”. Their adoption of Egyptian titles undoubtedly reflected their admiration for and emulation of Egyptian culture, which was also evidenced by their commissioning of Egyptian-style objects.⁴⁶⁹ The Levantine people's appreciation for scarabs provides useful hints for the Egyptian kings' choice of scarabs as diplomatic gifts and a medium for intercultural communication. The issuing of commemorative scarabs suggests that the Egyptian elites were very much aware of the Egyptian influence on Levantine visual forms and material culture.

To a certain extent, tablets bearing diplomatic letters and treaties could be viewed as a special category of gifts that could not be re-transferred. Those of particular significance were supposed to be archived for future reference.⁴⁷⁰ As material objects, these letter and treaty tablets were fully capable of

⁴⁶⁵ Daphna Ben-Tor, “A Middle Bronze Age Scarab from Tāmra (Ez-Zu’abiyya),” *’Atiqot/עתיקות* 90 (2018): 159–62.

⁴⁶⁶ Daphna Ben-Tor, “Scarabs of Middle Bronze Age Rulers of Byblos,” in *Bilder als Quellen. Images as Sources. Studies on Ancient Near Eastern Artefacts and the Bible Inspired by the Work of Othmar Keel*, ed. Susanne Bickel et al. (Freiburg: Academic Press, 2007), 177–88.

⁴⁶⁷ Daphna Ben-Tor, “Scarabs of Middle Bronze Age Rulers of Byblos,” in *Bilder als Quellen. Images as Sources. Studies on Ancient Near Eastern Artefacts and the Bible Inspired by the Work of Othmar Keel*, ed. Susanne Bickel et al. (Freiburg: Academic Press, 2007), 177–88.

⁴⁶⁸ A royal-name scarab of Ibiaw Wahibre, the successor of Sobekhotep IV, was found at Byblos (as a royal gift?). Daphna Ben-Tor, “Scarabs of Middle Bronze Age Rulers of Byblos,” in *Bilder als Quellen. Images as Sources. Studies on Ancient Near Eastern Artefacts and the Bible Inspired by the Work of Othmar Keel*, ed. Susanne Bickel et al. (Freiburg: Academic Press, 2007), 182. Kim S. B. Ryholt, *The Political Situation in Egypt During the Second Intermediate Period, c. 1800-1550 B.C.* (Copenhagen: K.S.B. Ryholt and Museum Tusulanum Press, 1997), 89-90.

⁴⁶⁹ Daphna Ben-Tor, “Scarabs of Middle Bronze Age Rulers of Byblos,” in *Bilder als Quellen. Images as Sources. Studies on Ancient Near Eastern Artefacts and the Bible Inspired by the Work of Othmar Keel*, ed. Susanne Bickel et al. (Freiburg: Academic Press, 2007), 179.

⁴⁷⁰ Tušratta invited Amenhotep III to compare the tablet of the dowry of an earlier Mittanian princess and that of his own daughter in order to better appreciate how extensive the latter's dowry was (EA 24: iii, 35-48). Rib-Hadda urged the pharaoh to “examine the tablets of his father's palace (*tuppī ša bīt abīšu*) whether the man who is in Byblos has not been a loyal servant” (EA 74: 10-12). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New*

indexing the sociopolitical relations between their donor and recipient, as well as their wealth and power. The dimension and production quality (e.g., fineness of the clay) of the letter tablets exchanged between the great kings generally exceed those created at the courts of the vassals (figs. 3.46a-b).⁴⁷¹ Some fine examples include EA 14 (Egypt, list of gifts from Akhenaten to Burna-Burias), EA 22 (Mittani, inventory of gifts from Tušratta, fig. 46a), EA 24 (Mittani), EA 25 (Mittani, tablet of the dowry that Tušratta proudly referred to in EA 24), and EA 29 (Mittani, review of Mittanian-Egyptian relations).⁴⁷² The texts on these tablets were composed by well-trained scribes and inscribed with elegant handwriting, attesting to the resources at the disposal of the great kings. Arguably, these tablets would be visually impressive (even from a distance) to whomever was present when they were presented to the pharaoh. In addition, the large and sometimes extravagant size of the letter tablets indicated their senders' confidence that they could travel with minimum obstruction to their final destination.⁴⁷³ On the other hand, the vassal letter letters betray the

Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 214-17, 454-55. Ironically, in the Story of Wenamun, the ruler of Byblos retrieved records from his archive to show Wenamun that the loyalty of the Byblos kings to the pharaohs was not uncompensated. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 226.

⁴⁷¹ See also: Yuval Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay: Provenance Study of the Amarna Tablets and Other Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004).

⁴⁷² Yuval Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay: Provenance Study of the Amarna Tablets and Other Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004), 41-43. UCLA, "Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI)-Found Texts," accessed October 22, 2022, https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/search_results.php?SearchMode=Text&PrimaryPublication=&MuseumNumber=&Provenance=amarna&Period=&TextSearch=&ObjectID=&requestFrom=Submit.

⁴⁷³ In his Gebel Barkal stela, Thutmose III proudly claimed, "I have imposed royal fear on the far reaches of Asia, so that my messengers are not detained"; and the Giza stela of Amenhotep II acclaims his dominance over foreign lands thus, "his messengers are not pushed back throughout the land of *f(n)hw*". Valloggia, *Recherche sur les messagers (wpwtyw) dans les sources égyptiennes profanes*, 102, 93 – 94. Other great kings also subscribe to this belief in a correlation between the sphere of unobstructed passage of royal messengers and the sphere of influence of their royal patron. Hattušili III dismissed Kadašman-Enlil II's excuse for cutting off messengers because of the Ahlamu as a weak argument, in a sarcastic tone: "... how can this be, that you, my brother, have cut off your messengers on account of the Ahlamu? Is the might of your kingdom small, my brother?" (CTH 172 = KBo 1.10 + KUB 3.72, obv. 36 – 54). Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 134.

relatively limited wealth and the inferior status of their senders (who may not have their own scribes) through their moderate size, coarser clay texture, and less polished texts.⁴⁷⁴



Figure 3.46a. Tablet EA 22, inventory of gifts from Tušratta. The University of California, The University of Oxford, and The Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, “EA 022,” CDLI: Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative, accessed May 21, 2022, https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/search_results.php?SearchMode=Text&PrimaryPublication=&MuseumNumber=&Provenience=amarna&Period=&TextSearch=&ObjectID=&requestFrom=Submit. Figure 3.46b. Cylinder seal inscribed with a letter from Tagi of Ginti-Kirmil to Lab’aya of Shechem. Wayne Horowitz, “An Inscribed Clay Cylinder from Amarna Age Beth Shean,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 46, no. 3/4 (1996): fig. 1.

Just as the letters of the great kings feature elaborate greeting formulas, the tablets on which they were inscribed were occasionally embellished with seal impressions that imbued them with an aura of royalty. The impression of a scarab seal was found on the recto of an unsent/archival copy (?) of a letter from Amenhotep III to Kadašman-Enlil I (EA 5) (fig. 3.47a). The seal was inscribed with a Horus falcon wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt and a winged cobra (fig. 3.47b).⁴⁷⁵ The latter

⁴⁷⁴ Yuval Goren et al., *Inscribed in Clay: Provenance Study of the Amarna Tablets and Other Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004), 88-315. UCLA, “Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI)-Found Texts,” accessed October 22, 2022, https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/search_results.php?SearchMode=Text&PrimaryPublication=&MuseumNumber=&Provenience=amarna&Period=&TextSearch=&ObjectID=&requestFrom=Submit.

⁴⁷⁵ “Tablet | British Museum,” The British Museum, accessed April 19, 2022, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1888-1013-21.

probably represents a fusion of the iconographies of the vulture goddess Nekhbet and the cobra goddess Wadjet, titulary deities of Upper and Lower Egypt.⁴⁷⁶ This goddess stretches her wings to offer protection to the Horus falcon, which undoubtedly symbolizes the king. The circular object between them may be a *shen*-ring.⁴⁷⁷



Figure 3.47a. Back of tablet EA 5, a letter from Amenhotep III to Kadašman-Enlil I. Figure 3.47b. Impression of a scarab seal on the back of tablet EA 5. “Tablet | British Museum,” The British Museum, accessed April 19, 2022, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1888-1013-21.

Another rare letter tablet that bears a seal impression is EA 30 (fig. 3.48a), a “diplomatic passport” issued by Tušratta and addressed to the pharaoh’s Canaanite subjects.⁴⁷⁸ Judging from the impression on its recto (fig. 3.48b), the seal that produced the image bears a 4-line inscription flanked by fields of depiction on either side. The main scene, rolled twice on the tablet, shows a frontal figure with drooping wings who is probably a goddess. Drawing comparisons with depictions of winged goddesses

⁴⁷⁶ These two deities were placed in juxtaposition in the Two-Ladies name of the pharaoh and as royal uraeus on the forehead of the king. Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 226-28.

⁴⁷⁷ An iconographic parallel is found on the roof of the 4th gilded shrine of Tutankhamun. Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 226-28.

⁴⁷⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 100.

on other cylinder seals, Porada proposed to identify this goddess with Ištar of Nineveh, whose statue Tušratta sent to Egypt (EA 23: 13-32).⁴⁷⁹ She tentatively suggested that this seal might have been a pictorial representation of this event, and the goddess' image would have turned the cylinder seal into an effective amulet. The goddess stands between two figures; the right one (with short hair or shaved bald) was in adoration with upraised arms, and the left one (with long hair hanging to the nape of the neck) may be engaging in the same activity. However, this figure was rolled lightly on the tablet, so his/her gesture is not clearly visible. By analogy with Syrian seals from the 18th to 17th century BCE, the figure on the right can be positively identified as a king. However, the identity of the other figure cannot be determined with certainty.⁴⁸⁰ The field below the main scene did not leave any trace on the tablet except a star-like structure. The field next to the main scene (on its right side) is further divided into three fields, just like the corresponding field on the other side of the inscription; as with the main scene, only the figure in the uppermost field is relatively preserved (albeit only to the neck). Depicted in a frontal view, this figure with drooping wings has intertwined legs (probably representing a serpent's body) ending in human feet. Similar figures on other cylinder seals have been interpreted as underworld deities or demons that were called upon to protect the holder of the seal; this was probably also the function of the figure on the Amarna tablet.⁴⁸¹ Traces of an attacking lion can be seen in the field below; further below, some volute designs can be made out, and Porada tentatively reconstructed the crown of a palmette tree.⁴⁸² The motifs of this cylinder and its more than 3-line inscription, which has only been found on royal cylinder seals of

⁴⁷⁹ Edith Porada, "Die Siegelzylinder-Abrollung auf der Amarna-Tafel BM 29841 im Britischen Museum," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 25 (1974-75): 135-39. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 61-62.

⁴⁸⁰ Edith Porada, "Die Siegelzylinder-Abrollung auf der Amarna-Tafel BM 29841 im Britischen Museum," *Archiv für Orientforschung*: 25 (1974-75): 133-40.

⁴⁸¹ Edith Porada, "Die Siegelzylinder-Abrollung auf der Amarna-Tafel BM 29841 im Britischen Museum," *Archiv für Orientforschung*: 25 (1974-75): 141-42.

⁴⁸² Edith Porada, "Die Siegelzylinder-Abrollung auf der Amarna-Tafel BM 29841 im Britischen Museum," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 25 (1974-75): 133-34.

the Mittanian style, highly suggest that the impression was made with a Mittanian royal seal.⁴⁸³ The Mittanian kings sealed their letters to other kings as well; a letter bearing the seal of Sauštatar and addressed to a king of Arrapha was found in the Nuzi archives.⁴⁸⁴

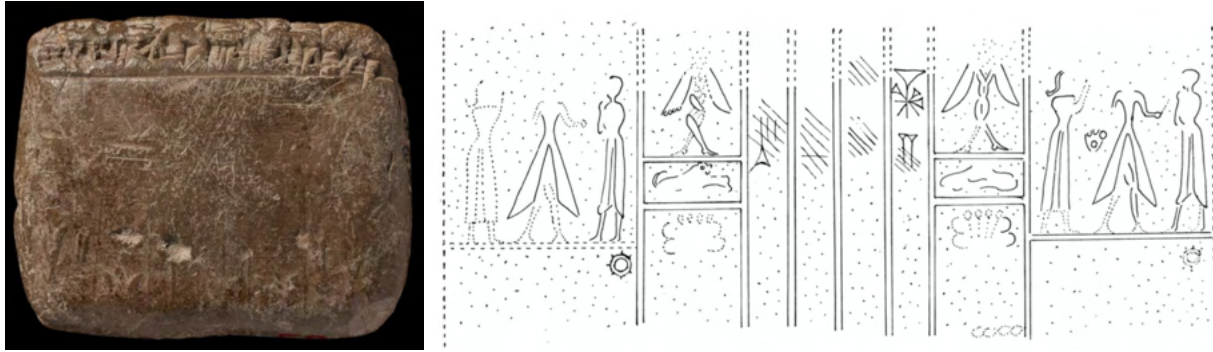


Figure 3.48a. Impression of cylinder seal on the recto of EA 30 (photo). “Tablet | British Museum,” The British Museum, accessed June 19, 2022, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1888-1013-64. Figure 3.48b. Impression of a cylinder seal on the recto of EA 30 (detail, facsimile drawing). Edith Porada, “Die Siegelzylinder-Abrollung auf der Amarna-Tafel BM 29841 im Britischen Museum,” *Archiv für Orientforschung* 25 (1974-75): fig. 1b.

The material features of treaty tablets were equally capable of marking the status and wealth of the party who issued or received them. The Hittites engraved the treaty texts on tablets of gold (the treaty with Šarri-Kušuh of Carchemiš),⁴⁸⁵ silver (the treaty between Ḫattušili III and Ramesses II), bronze (the treaty between Tudḫaliya IV and Kurunta of Tarḫuntašša,⁴⁸⁶ fig. 3.49), or iron (the treaty between Ḫattušili III and Ulmi-Teššub of Tarḫuntašša), perhaps depending on the status of their treaty partner.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸³ Edith Porada, “Die Siegelzylinder-Abrollung auf der Amarna-Tafel BM 29841 im Britischen Museum,” *Archiv für Orientforschung* 25 (1974-75): 142.

⁴⁸⁴ Eva von Dassow, “Mittani and Its Empire,” in *The Oxford History of the Ancient Near East: Volume III: From the Hyksos to the Late Second Millennium BC*, ed. Karen Radner, Nadine Moeller, and Daniel T. Potts (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 474.

⁴⁸⁵ Willemijn J. I. Waal, *Hittite Diplomats: Studies in Ancient Document Format and Record Management*, Studien Zu Den Bogazköy-Texten 57 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015), 137.

⁴⁸⁶ This tablet, being the only Hittite metal tablet preserved, was unearthed in 1986 under a street just outside the city wall at Ḫattuša. Thomas Zimmermann et al., “The Metal Tablet from Boğazköy-Hattuša: First Archaeometric Impressions,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 69, no. 2 (2010): 225–29.

⁴⁸⁷ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 2, 107. The Hittites also inscribed other important documents, e.g., annals, on metal tablets for their presumed durability. Ironically, clay tablets survived far better than their metal counterparts. Willemijn J. I. Waal, *Hittite Diplomats: Studies in Ancient Document Format and Record Management*, Studien Zu Den Bogazköy-Texten 57 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz,

The choice of silver as the manufacturing material of the Egyptian-Hittite treaty tablet was likely intentional; this precious metal was especially valued by the Egyptians because there were no silver mines in Egypt, even though it abounded in gold supplies.⁴⁸⁸ However, this metal with a brilliant luster was mined in Ḫatti; in fact, the very name of the Hittite capital was written with KÙ.BABBAR, the logograms for silver, making explicit the relationship between silver production and the country of the Hittites.⁴⁸⁹ Silver was deemed valuable cross-culturally,⁴⁹⁰ and this holds true in the context of international diplomacy; the bronze tablet bearing the treaty between Tudḫaliya IV and Kurunta contained an unusually high percentage of tin, probably to give the object a light, whitish sheen reminiscent of silver (fig. 3.49).⁴⁹¹

2015), 136-37. At first glance, it seems puzzling that the treaty with the viceroy of Carchemiš was inscribed on a gold tablet and the treaty with Ramesses II was inscribed on a silver tablet. However, the use of silver for the Egypto-Hittite treaty probably served both parties' interests: 1. For the Hittites, this metal was readily available in Ḫatti but valuable enough to indicate the importance they attached to this alliance; 2. From the Egyptian perspective, silver was more valuable than gold and thus more prestigious than the latter.

⁴⁸⁸ Alfred Lucas, *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*, 3rd ed. (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1948), 257-61, 278-83. Gale challenged the well-established scholarly consensus that Egypt did not have indigenous silver ores and argued that the earliest Egyptian silver was a natural alloy of silver and gold with sufficient silver content to appear white. N. H. Gale and Z. A. Stos-Gale, "Ancient Egyptian Silver," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 67 (1981): 103-15.

⁴⁸⁹ Robert J. Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 9 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1964), vol. 3, 198-99.

⁴⁹⁰ Being considered a metal of special purity, it was employed to produce a vessel for collecting the bones from a royal cremation in Hittite royal funerary customs and a Hurrian myth (preserved in a Hittite version) featured as its protagonist a god Silver. See Charles Burney, *Historical Dictionary of the Hittites*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 260. In ancient Egypt, silver was associated with ritual purity and the god Re has bones of silver. Inscriptions on the Stela of Amenhotep III from his mortuary temple claim that the temple pavements were made pure with silver. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 44, 198.

⁴⁹¹ Thomas Zimmermann et al., "The Metal Tablet from Boğazköy-Hattuša: First Archaeometric Impressions," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 69, no. 2 (2010): 227-28.

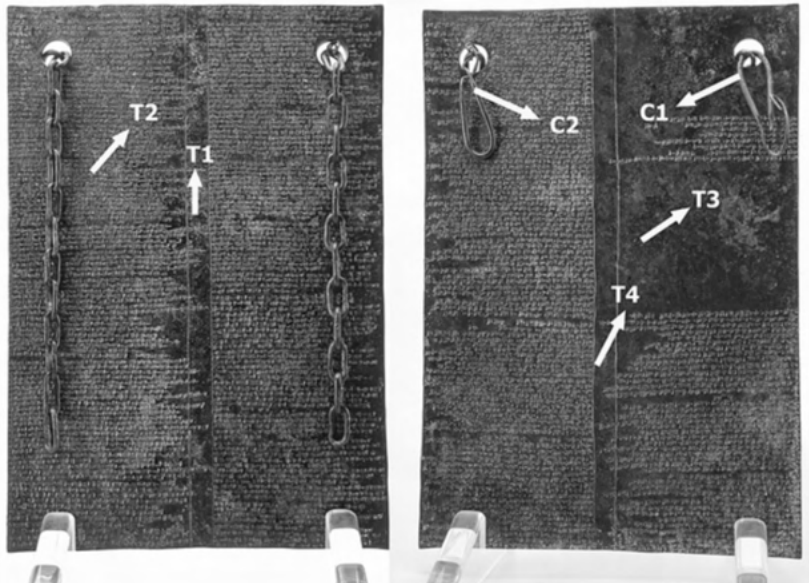


Figure 3.49. The bronze tablet bearing the treaty between Kurunta of Tarḫuntašša and Tudḫaliya IV. 35 x 24 cm. Thomas Zimmermann et al., “The Metal Tablet from Boğazköy-Hattuša: First Archaeometric Impressions,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 69, no. 2 (2010): 225–29.

Unlike letter tablets that could be discarded or recycled for clay when information on them became obsolete, treaty tablets were supposed to be kept for future reference; furthermore, they were not transferable like other diplomatic gifts or tribute goods. Clauses in the Hittite vassal treaties stipulated that copies of the treaty tablet were to be made and deposited in primary temples in the land of Ḫatti and the vassal’s territory.⁴⁹² Parity treaty tablets were also expected to be placed before the gods who were divine witnesses of the treaty, as a letter from Ramesses II to Kupanta-Kurunta of Mira-Kuwaliya indicated.⁴⁹³

⁴⁹² The treaty between Šuppiluliuma I and Šattiwaza of Mittani specified that: “A duplicate of this tablet is deposited before the Sun-goddess of Arinna, since the Sun-goddess of Arinna governs kingship and queenship. And in the land of Mittani a duplicate is deposited before the Storm-god, Lord of the *kurinnu* of Kaḫat. It shall be read repeatedly, for ever and ever, before the king of the land of Mittani and before the Hurrians” (CTH 51). The treaty between Tudḫaliya IV of Ḫatti and Kurunta of Tarḫuntašša (KBo. 86/299) stipulated that as many as 7 sealed copies were to be made of the document, and they should be placed in the presence of multiple deities at various sites. Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 42-3, 117.

⁴⁹³ Ramesses II informed this Hittite vassal: “The written version of the oath which [I made] for the Great King, the King of Ḫatti, my brother, has been set at the feet of [the Storm-god] and before the Great Gods. They are the witnesses [to the words of the oath]. And the written version of the oath which the Great King, [the King of Ḫatti, my brother], made for me [has been set] at the feet of the Sun-god of [Heliopolis] and before the Great Gods. They are the witnesses to the words [of the oath].” Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 125.

The silver tablet on which the Egyptian-Hittite treaty was originally inscribed has been lost, but some reasonable suggestions can be made about the original layout of the texts based on the misplacement of the list of oath gods in between treaty stipulations. This mistake was made by the Egyptian scribe, who was not familiar with the arrangement of multi-column cuneiform tablets. It could be accounted for by positing the existence of two columns of text on both the obverse and the reverse, with column 3 immediately behind column 2 and column 4 behind column 1, as is normal for 4-column cuneiform tablets. The Egyptian scribe read column 4, which was located on the left of the tablet, and then continued to read column 3, resulting in the strange placement of the list of oath gods, which usually occurred at the end of the treaty.⁴⁹⁴ The Egyptian word for “tablet” has a determinative, which depicts a rectangular object with a loop at the top; admittedly, it may or may not represent the actual shape of the silver tablet.⁴⁹⁵ The entire surface of the tablet would have been covered by text except for the middle part, which was the designated space for the royal seal. The Egyptian scribe did not note down the shape of the seal, nor did he indicate whether the inscriptions were in the cuneiform script or whether it also employed Luwian hieroglyphs.⁴⁹⁶

The material features of the no longer extant silver tablet apparently intrigued the Egyptian scribe, for he spilled much ink on the design of the royal seals of the Hittite royal couple that sanctified the treaty:

“What is in the middle of the silver tablet, on its obverse: an inlaid figure of the Storm-god (“Sutekh”), embracing a figure of the Great Ruler of Ḫatti, enclosed by the following border-inscription: ‘Seal of the Storm-god, Ruler of Heaven; Seal of the treaty made by Ḫattušili (III), Great Ruler of Ḫatti, hero, son of Muršili (II), Great Ruler of Ḫatti, hero’.

⁴⁹⁴ Anthony Spalinger, “Considerations on the Hittite Treaty Between Egypt and Ḫatti,” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 9 (1981): 348–49.

⁴⁹⁵ S. Langdon and Alan H. Gardiner, “The Treaty of Alliance between Ḫattušili, King of the Hittites, and the Pharaoh Ramesses II of Egypt,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 6, no. 3 (1920): 198.

⁴⁹⁶ S. Langdon and Alan H. Gardiner, “The Treaty of Alliance between Ḫattušili, King of the Hittites, and the Pharaoh Ramesses II of Egypt,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 6, no. 3 (1920): 198.

What is inside the surround of the outline-figure: ‘Seal of the Storm-god, Ruler of Heaven’.

What is in the middle of its reverse: an inlaid figure of the Goddess of Ḫatti, embracing a figure of the Great Lady of Ḫatti, enclosed by the following border inscription: ‘The Seal of the Sun-god (‘Pre’) of the town of Arinna, the Lord of the land; Seal of Puduḫepa, the Great Lady of the Ḫatti-land, the daughter of the land of Kizzuwatna, the [priestess (?)] of the town of A]rinna, the Mistress of the land, the servant of the Goddess’

What is inside the surround of the outline-figure: ‘The Seal of the Sun-god (*sic*) of Arinna, the Lord (*sic*) of every land’.”⁴⁹⁷

The Egyptian scribe both translated the inscriptions and described the figures on it with his own analysis.⁴⁹⁸ Apparently, the tablet bears the impression of a royal seal of Ḫattušili III on one side and a seal of Puduḫepa on another. Following the religious rule *similia similibus*, the former is carved with a figure of the king and his protective deity, the Hittite Storm god Tarhun, while the latter bears an image of the queen and her protective goddess, the Sun goddess of Arinna. The design of the seals could be inferred by an analogy with the seal impression on a decree tablet found at Ugarit (figs. 50a-b). Royal images on the treaty tablet turned it into a mnemonic device that served as a lasting reminder of the amity between Ramesses II and the Hittite royal couple.⁴⁹⁹

Reading the image and translating the inscription on Ḫattušili III’s seal proved easy; his equation of the Hittite Tarhun with Seth seems natural because both were male gods of the Storm. Nevertheless, the Egyptian scribe ran into trouble finding an Egyptian counterpart for the Hittite Sun goddess of Arinna

⁴⁹⁷ Kenneth A. Kitchen and Paul Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 592-93.

⁴⁹⁸ Anthony Spalinger, “Considerations on the Hittite Treaty Between Egypt and Ḫatti,” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 9 (1981): 348.

⁴⁹⁹ European monarchs also exchanged treaty documents illuminated with their own images; e.g., Francis I’s ratification of the Treaty of Amiens (1527 CE) contained a portrait of his. Tracey A. Sowerby, “‘A Memorial and a Pledge of Faith’: Portraiture and Early Modern Diplomatic Culture,” *The English Historical Review* 129, no. 537 (2014): 322, fig. 5.

because all Egyptian solar deities were male. For lack of a word for Sun goddess, he had to resort to the masculine noun *p³-r* “Pre” and matched it with the same-gender title *p³ nb n p³ t³* “the Lord of the Land,” even though he was fully aware of her gender (since she was referred to as [*t³*] *ntr.t n ht* “the Goddess of Hatti” earlier in the text).⁵⁰⁰



Figure 3.50a. Impression of a Hittite royal seal on a tablet found in Ugarit, a decree of Tudḫaliya IV. Figure 3.50b. Impression of a Hittite royal seal on a tablet found in Ugarit (detail). Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans, eds., *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 174-75, Cat. No. 99.

3.2.2. Messages Communicated by Exchange Contexts

While objects themselves could communicate rich information through their material properties, their exchange context could bestow upon them another layer of meaning. In Late Bronze Age diplomacy, various occasions necessitated the exchange of gifts and collection of tribute: royal audience, military campaigns, coronation/investiture, sealing of an alliance, funeral, festival, etc. A diplomatic player could decide to participate in or opt out of diplomatic gift exchanges on such occasions to make a political statement or communicate a message.

⁵⁰⁰ S. Langdon and Alan H. Gardiner, “The Treaty of Alliance between Ḫattušili, King of the Hittites, and the Pharaoh Ramesses II of Egypt,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 6, no. 3 (1920): 199.

3.2.2.1. In the Aftermath of Military Campaigns

In the aftermath of Thutmose III's successful military campaigns (or inspection tours), great powers like Ḫatti, Babylonia, and Assyria dispatched congratulatory gifts,⁵⁰¹ presumably signaling their approval of Egypt's territorial expansion and the shifted balance of power resulting from the campaigns. After Tukulti-Ninurta I's conquest of Babylon, the pharaoh sent a Sidonian named Milku-rāmu as his envoy to the victorious Assyrian king, probably with the joint purpose of offering his congratulations and ascertaining Assyria's future plans for expansion.⁵⁰² On the other hand, the victorious king could send a share of the booty to his allies to reciprocate their good intentions or on his own initiative; thus, in the aftermath of a minor victory against the Hittites, Tušratta of Mittani dispatched a portion of the booty to the pharaoh: "I herewith send you 1 chariot, 2 horses, 1 male attendant, 1 female attendant, from the booty from the land of Ḫatti" (EA 17: 36-38).⁵⁰³

Perhaps in emulation of the great kings, an Egyptian vassal (whose name was not preserved) wrote to inform the pharaoh that he warded off an enemy who attacked the land of Amqu and sent 10 prisoners as part of the booty to his overlord (EA 173: 1-16).⁵⁰⁴ This anonymous Egyptian vassal was not the only

⁵⁰¹ Donald Redford, *The Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 73-76. Zimri-Lim of Mari sent gifts to Šeplarpak (the Vizier of Elam) at the occasion of his conquest of Ešnuna (M.8806). Wolfgang Heimpel, *Letters to the King of Mari: A New Translation, with Historical Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 513.

⁵⁰² This diplomatic mission is known from a letter from the Assyrian Grand Vizier, in which he ordered the governor of Harbe (Tell Chuēra) to arrange food supplies for the journey of Milku-rāmu. Jaume Llop-Raduà, "Foreign Kings in the Middle Assyrian Archival Documentation," in *Understanding Hegemonic Practices of the Early Assyrian Empire. Essays Dedicated to Frans Wiggermann*, ed. Bleda S. Düring (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2015), 255-56.

⁵⁰³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 42. In the treaty between Šattiwaza of Mittani and Šuppiluliuma I, one gets a rare glimpse of the practice of repatriation of things taken as booty: "The door of silver and gold which King Saushtatar, my (great-)great-grandfather, took by force from the land of Assyria as a token of his glory and set up in his palace in the city of Washshukkanni - to his shame Shuttarna has now returned it to the land of Assyria" (CTH 52 = KBo 1.3 (+) KUB 3.17). Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 45.

⁵⁰⁴ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 842-43.

one who followed this practice; Aziru of Amurru allegedly seized the property of the Egyptian vassals he killed and may have sent a portion of it to the pharaoh as a bribe to get away with his heinous crimes. This brazen act outraged Ili-rapiḫ of Byblos, who felt threatened by Aziru's aggressive expansions and wrote a strongly-worded letter to the pharaoh: "May the king <not> pay attention to the property which Aziru is sending to him. The property that he is sending is things of Šumur and the property of the city ruler of the king whom he slew. Behold, Aziru is a trai[tor] to the king my lord" (EA 139: 33-40).⁵⁰⁵ Accepting the booty from Aziru is tantamount to acknowledging the outcome of Aziru's campaigns and his right to expand at the expense of his neighbors who were also Egyptian vassals; it is quite understandable why Aziru's action was met with vehement protest from Ili-rapiḫ.

3.2.2.2. Coronation and Investiture Gifts

When a Near Eastern king assumed royal power, he would receive congratulatory gifts from his fellow kings, vassals, and domestic subjects; according to Ḫattušili III: "It is the custom that when kings assume kingship, the kings, his equals in rank, send him appropriate [gifts of greeting], clothing befitting kingship, and fine [oil] for his anointing."⁵⁰⁶ The king of Alašiya alluded to the sending of coronation gifts in a letter to the pharaoh: "I herewith send a *ḫabannatu*-jar [that] is full of "sweet oil" to be poured on your head, seeing that you have sat down on your royal throne" (EA 34: 50-52).⁵⁰⁷ In EA 41, Šuppiluliuma I referred to the recent accession of the Egyptian king and made a bid for a renewal of cordial relations (EA 41: 16-22).⁵⁰⁸ In view of Šuppiluliuma I's self-proclaimed cordial relationship with his addressee's predecessors, he must have dispatched coronation gifts to his new Egyptian diplomatic partner. But as

⁵⁰⁵ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 714-15.

⁵⁰⁶ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 140.

⁵⁰⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 106.

⁵⁰⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 114.

discussed in chapter 2 (section 2.1.3.), great kings (e.g., Šalmaneser I of Assyria) could also purposefully withhold coronation gifts from each other to express dissension.⁵⁰⁹

The coronation ceremony created a perfect occasion for both domestic subjects and foreign vassals to pledge their loyalty to their new lord by paying homage in person or rendering gifts and tribute. Thutmose II's Aswan inscription, which celebrated the king's coronation, mentioned the delivery of tribute by Nubians and Asiatics.⁵¹⁰ When a ruler who was politically subjugated to a great king took the throne, he may have had to seek formal approval from his overlord in the form of investiture gifts. In such a case, the investiture gifts endowed authority upon its recipient. A broken passage in EA 51 (from the ruler of Nuḥašše Addu-nirari to an Egyptian king) preserved an intriguing account of an anointment ritual that Thutmose III performed for a king in Nuḥašše, presumably for confirming his ascension (EA 51: 4-11).⁵¹¹ As is known from vassal treaties (CTH 41 and 131) and diplomatic letters (CTH 110 = RS 17.247), some Hittite vassals were obligated to visit the Hittite capital upon their accession to the throne and be confirmed by the great king.⁵¹² This practice has precedent in the Middle Bronze Age, e.g., the king of Allahad Atamrum received gifts (among which was a chair) from Hammurabi of Babylon, probably on

⁵⁰⁹ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 140. Clelia Mora and Mauro Giorgieri, *Le lettere tra i re ittiti e i re assiri ritrovate a Hattuša* (Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N., 2004), 57-58.

⁵¹⁰ James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 49.

⁵¹¹ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 384-85.

⁵¹² Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 38-44, 121

the occasion of his assumption of the kingship of Andarig.⁵¹³ Similarly, the new king of Kurda received a throne and other congratulatory gifts from his overlord, Zimri-Lim of Mari.⁵¹⁴

3.2.2.3. Manipulation and Reinvention of Exchange Contexts

Feldman viewed the relationship between context and object as reciprocal and symbiotic, claiming that “Context clarifies the class of an object, whether to value it negatively or positively, and provides shades of nuance to the ascription of meaning. It does this by supplying information concerning the human participants, their statuses, and their relations to one another, in effect framing the material object in an infinitely expanding set of interconnections.”⁵¹⁵ On the other hand, the physicality of the objects allows them to become an index of previous exchange contexts and even their history/pattern of uses; in the words of Feldman, “The object, as a physically permanent touchstone, can accumulate layers of signification that can be acquired or shed.”⁵¹⁶

The Egyptians were fully aware that the objects could be multivalent depending on the exchange context and audiences, and they employed different representational strategies for the reception of goods. This created room for misinterpretation, since the physical properties of an object did not always reveal its status as either a gift or a tribute.⁵¹⁷ It is in this context that one can fully appreciate the significance of

⁵¹³ This was recorded in a letter from Yarim-Addu, Zimri-Lim’s ambassador to Babylon, to his lord: “Zimri-Šamaš, servant of Atamrum, joined a squadron from Ekallatum and arrived at Babylon. This is what Atamrum wrote to Hammurabi: ‘Šu-Ištar and Marduk-mušallim, servants of my father (Hammurabi), have reached me, bringing news of my father. I paid intense attention to the news that my father sent me and I was delighted when I saw the gifts that my father sent me via the men, such as clothes, a ceremonial garment, a wig, and a throne. I have worn the clothes and the ceremonial garment; I have sat on the throne my father sent me and shall keep offering prayers for my father.’” Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 96.

⁵¹⁴ Dominique Charpin, “*Tu es de mon sang*”: *les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

⁵¹⁵ Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an “International Style” in the Ancient Near East, 1400 - 1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 169-70.

⁵¹⁶ Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an “International Style” in the Ancient Near East, 1400 - 1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 170.

⁵¹⁷ As Feldman pointed out, “The multivalency of objects with respect to changing contexts and audiences is exemplified in the Egyptians’ different representational strategies for acknowledging received goods ... since the

the Babylonian envoys' protest over the chariot-viewing incident (EA 1: 88-98).⁵¹⁸ As the survey of the *ms inw* ceremony indicates, through rigorous orchestration, diplomatic gift-exchange could be manipulated to enhance the prestige of both the donor and the recipient of gifts or to highlight the hierarchical difference between them.

Even after an exchange has occurred, its context could be reinvented with images and other visual forms. For instance, the Marriage Stela depicted Ḫattušili III arriving in Egypt with Maathorneferure (fig. 3.51), even though it was Puduḫepa who handled much of the marriage negotiations and escorted her daughter.⁵¹⁹ Additionally, many pictorial details made deliberate efforts to give the impression (illusion) that Ramesses II was receiving the daughter of a political inferior rather than celebrating a marriage with a distinguished princess from a great power. In terms of composition of the scene, Ramesses II's enthronement under the kiosk and the procession of the two Hittite figures towards him (with upraised arms in adoration) clearly recall the familiar *ms inw* scenes, which was perhaps exactly what the artist intended to allude to. Scale was also used to indicate rank, for Ramesses II and the two gods were depicted on a slightly larger scale than both Ḫattušili III and the Hittite princess. Instead of celebrating a marriage alliance between two peer polities, this scene represents a visual parallel to textual records documenting the presentation of a vassal's daughter to the pharaoh. This is confirmed by a reading of the surviving inscription, which recounted the arrival of the Hittite princess thus: "I have divested myself of all my goods, with my eldest daughter at the head of them, to present them to your countenance. Good is

object given as a gift may exhibit similar properties to one received as a tribute, only the mediation of interpretation can distinguish between the two classifications, thereby inviting potential for misinterpretation." Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an "International Style" in the Ancient Near East, 1400 - 1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 173-74.

⁵¹⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

⁵¹⁹ Richard Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien: nach den Zeichnungen der von Seiner Majestät dem Könige von Preussen Friedrich Wilhelm IV nach diesen Ländern gesendeten und in den Jahren 1842-1845 ausgeführten wissenschaftlichen Expedition*, 12 vols. (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970), vol. 8, pl. 169a.

all that you decree for us, (even as) I am under your feet eternally and forever, along with the entire Hatti-land.”⁵²⁰

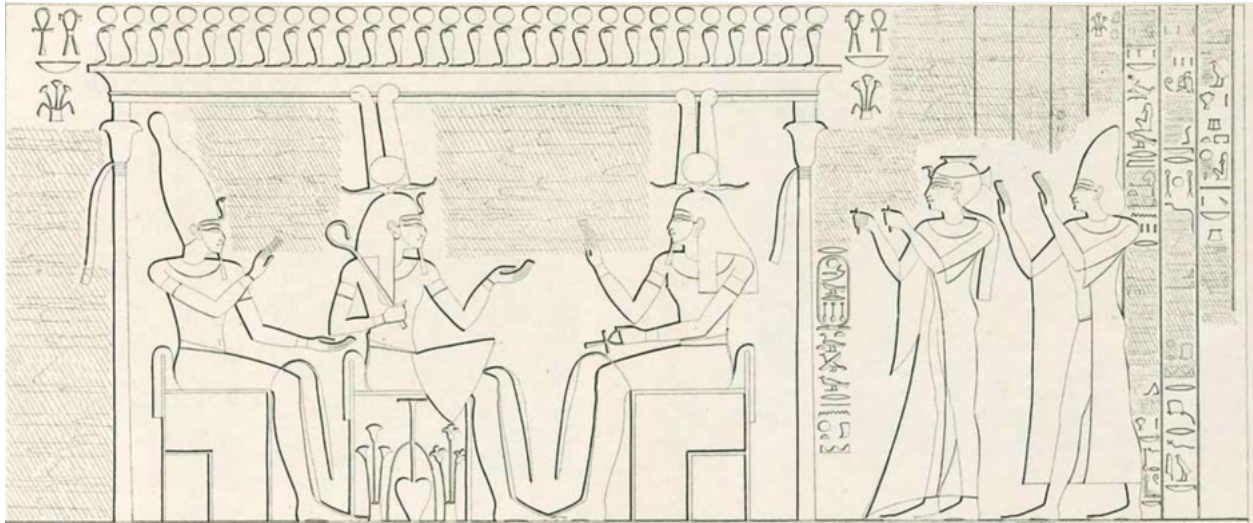


Figure 3.51. The Marriage Stela of Ramesses II, facsimile drawing of the lunette. Richard Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien: nach den Zeichnungen der von Seiner Majestät dem Könige von Preussen Friedrich Wilhelm IV nach diesen Ländern gesendeten und in den Jahren 1842-1845 ausgeführten wissenschaftlichen Expedition*, 12 vols. (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970), vol. 8, pl. 169a.

When the context changed, the significance of the object might have changed accordingly. For example, due to Egypt’s unique stance on diplomatic marriage, most foreign brides who entered the Egyptian harem were treated like trophy wives (e.g., the Syrian wives of Thutmose III); they may enjoy a sumptuous lifestyle in the Egyptian harem but were denied access to any political power.⁵²¹ This means that their political “value” culminated at the celebration of the marital alliance, after which they were relegated to obscurity, and their contact with their native country was presumably limited and monitored (EA 1: 10-17; KUB 26.89: 9-14).⁵²² Therefore, most foreign princesses became less visible after they

⁵²⁰ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 87.

⁵²¹ Christine Lilyquist, James E. Hoch, and Alexander J. Peden, *The Tomb of Three Foreign Wives of Tuthmosis III* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003).

⁵²² The Babylonian messengers had perennial problems gaining access to their princess. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1. Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 214-15.

entered the Egyptian court, the Hittite princess Maathorneferure being no exception.⁵²³ In stark contrast, princesses who married Syro-Mesopotamian rulers served as channels of communication between their native country and new homeland, and they shouldered the responsibility of forging real blood relationships between two royal houses by giving birth to an heir to the throne.

3.2.3. Messages Communicated by Reception

Diplomatic gifts, especially manufactured goods, were expected to enjoy a long social life because of their intrinsic, artistic, and ideological value.⁵²⁴ This social longevity is also associated with the capability of gifts to index sociopolitical relationships and Mauss' notion of the inalienability of gifts, i.e., they always retain the essence of their sender.

Reception refers to the treatment, reuse, and conversion (or lack thereof) of gifts when the act of exchange is completed. Understandably, the senders of gifts expected what they sent be treated with respect and esteem, this was especially true for royal statues that essentially represent a part of themselves. However, by sending diplomatic gifts, the sender always risked humiliation, rejection, and not being reciprocated; this was best illustrated by Tušratta's dissatisfaction with the plated gold statues he received from Akhenaten. From the Mittanian king's perspective, the material worth of the statues transcended their symbolic value. The possible unintended, negative, or hostile reception of diplomatic gifts might have prompted some rulers to control their dissemination.

Many gifts were modified or used by the recipient for things other than their intended purpose. For instance, a stag-shaped vessel from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae was transformed by drilling a hole

⁵²³ Though her iconography on Egyptian monuments suggests that she played some role in the Hathoric cult, she obviously did not wield any significant political power. Marjorie Fisher, "A Diplomatic Marriage in the Ramesside Period: Maathorneferure, Daughter of the Great Ruler of Ḫatti," in *Beyond Ḫatti: A Tribute to Gary Beckman*, ed. Billie J. Collins and Piotr Michalowski (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 75–119. Administrative papyri from Gurob suggest that she was residing in the royal residence near Fayum rather than in the capital Pi-Ramesses.

⁵²⁴ Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an "International Style" in the Ancient Near East, 1400 - 1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 172.

through the nostril of the stag, perhaps in an attempt to transform the vessel into an Aegean-type rhyton.⁵²⁵ Moreover, the meaning attached to the gifts by their donor may have been different from the meaning imbued by their recipient, who received and utilized the objects in certain ways to advance his own agenda. Ramesses II ordered the Egypto-Hittite treaty inscribed on the silver tablet translated and inscribed on the walls of prominent temples to advertise his accomplishments; while the temple was the intended depository of diplomatic treaty tablets in the Late Bronze Age, Ramesses II transformed the document from a testimony to Egypt-Hittite alliance established through diplomatic negotiations to an attestation of Egyptian dominance over Hatti with divine sanction. This was done through the addition of a frame text embellished with Egypt-centric rhetoric and a lunette depicting the king in the presence of Egyptian gods (fig. 3.52).⁵²⁶ On the other hand, the impressions of Hittite royal seals present on the silver tablet were described by the Egyptian scribes but not reproduced for display on temple walls. The image of a foreign ruler as an equal diplomatic partner of the pharaoh was perhaps deemed incompatible with the temple decorative program, which tended to utilize stylized and stereotypical motifs of vanquished foreign enemies. These practices of reinterpreting diplomatic gifts and tribute further muddy the water for scholars researching the origin, intended purpose, place of manufacture, and social life of gifts.

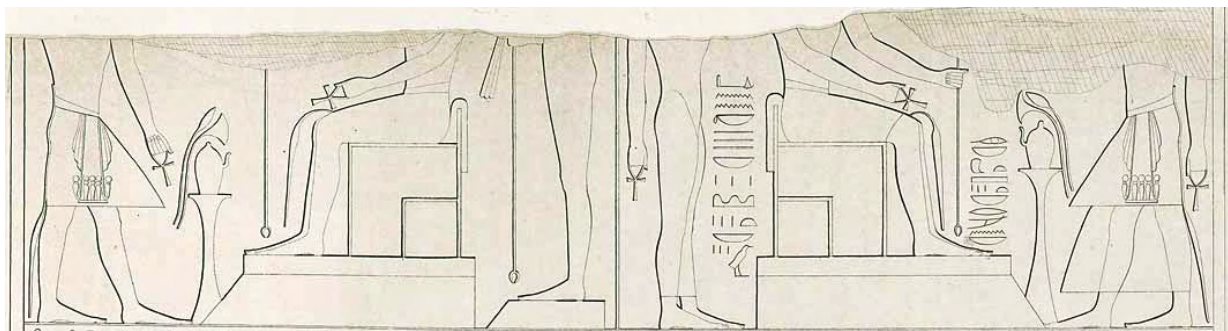


Figure 3.52. Lunette of the Karnak version of the Egyptian-Hittite treaty. Richard Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien: nach den Zeichnungen der von Seiner Majestät dem Könige von Preussen Friedrich Wilhelm IV*

⁵²⁵ Nicholas G. Blackwell, “Ahhiyawa, Hatti, and Diplomacy Implications of Hittite Misperceptions of the Mycenaean World,” *Hesperia* 90, no. 2 (2021): 198-99.

⁵²⁶ The version in the Karnak Temple depicts Ramesses II before the Theban triad (Amun, Mut, and Khonsu); the scene in the Ramesseum version was totally lost. Kenneth A. Kitchen and Paul Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 585. Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesseid Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 79.

nach diesen Ländern gesendeten und in den Jahren 1842-1845 ausgeführten wissenschaftlichen Expedition. Tafelwerke. Abtheilung III, 12 vols. (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970), vol. 6, pl. 146.

3.3. Summary

The ways in which different polities managed their diplomatic gift and tribute exchange largely depended on the balance of power between them and their partner(s) of exchange. From an Egypt-centric perspective, one can observe three patterns of exchange: 1. Between Egypt and other great powers; 2. Between Egypt and the medium powers; 3. Between Egypt and its foreign vassals.

The characteristics of great power letters are extremely noticeable; they usually overflow with the rhetoric of love and brotherhood that cast gift-giving as an expression of brotherly love (altruistic act). The concept of gift exchange combines elements of mutuality and morality and is distinguished from the paid surrender (barter, purchase) and unpaid surrender (“pure” gifting) as a third category.⁵²⁷ Any study of diplomatic gift-giving in the Late Bronze Age should not reduce it to the economic dimension. Instead, special attention should be paid to the moral and social implications of gift-giving. For the Late Bronze Age great kings, diplomatic gift exchange was never devoid of moral elements.

The two principles of reciprocity and prestige remain pertinent for any study on Late Bronze Age diplomatic gift exchange.⁵²⁸ Regarding the principle of reciprocity, a great king should give generously, befitting his status and wealth and those of the recipient. Upon receiving a gift, one was expected to reciprocate with a lavish counter-gift to avoid accusations of stinginess or cupidity (EA 3: 13-22).⁵²⁹ Deciding what amount to give could be tricky because one’s assessment of equivalency is necessarily

⁵²⁷ Beate Wagner-Hasel, “Gift Exchange: Modern Theories and Ancient Attitudes,” in *Ancient Greece: From the Mycenaean Palaces to the Age of Homer*, ed. Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy and Irene S. Lemos (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 261.

⁵²⁸ Kevin Avruch, “Reciprocity, Equality, and Status-Anxiety in the Amarna Letters,” in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 165–73.

⁵²⁹ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 68-69.

subjective and may not correspond to another party's expectations. On this subject of gift-exchange in the Mari Age, Sasson remarked: "in this period the exchange of gifts was obligatory, with equivalence in value being the major control. To give too much risked bankrupting a poorer recipient; to receive too little was a gross insult."⁵³⁰ A case in point is how a king (Ibal-Addu of Ašlakka) begged Zimri-Lim to stop offering him presents because shame (and likely dethronement) awaited his inability to respond in kind: "I am famished these days and do not live in a home. This past year I fortified (the town); but due to bad luck, whatever I fortified the torrent carried off. In the future, whenever I meet my lord, there will be no gifts with which to approach my lord" (ARM 28 49:14–32).⁵³¹

Inextricably associated with the principle of reciprocity, the notion of prestige is no less crucial for one's understanding of the Late Bronze Age diplomatic gift exchange. This concept is multifaceted (amount, quality, self-sufficiency, etc.). While practical needs for exchange existed as no country was fully self-sufficient, some great kings seemed reluctant to acknowledge this and repeatedly emphasized their self-sufficiency in their letters requesting goods. In addition, the great kings were in a competition to show off the copious amount of gifts they received to impress their domestic and international audiences. Peer pressure was prevalent, and no one felt it more keenly than Tušratta, who was always concerned about what others would think. In the same vein, the most conspicuous purpose of the Egyptian *ms inw* ceremony, which has been thoroughly discussed above, was to display Egypt's wealth and advertise its self-sufficiency as an imperial power. And when they were on the giving side, the great kings were eager to brag about their willingness to give with largesse (EA 3: 18-22).⁵³² When such self-proclaimed

⁵³⁰ Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 346.

⁵³¹ Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 25.

⁵³² Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 68-69.

generosity could not be backed up by satisfactory gifts, they resorted to various excuses to soothe the anger of their partner of exchange.⁵³³

Regarding the interstate exchange of goods between a great power and its vassal, the pattern of exchange differed depending on the direction of flow. When a great king demanded gifts or tribute from a vassal king, his orders were straight to the point and not embellished with rhetoric of kinship. Imperative verbal forms were liberally employed, leaving little or no room for negotiation (EA 99: 5-20).⁵³⁴ There was no time-consuming negotiation over the appropriate reciprocal gift, and the vassal ruler was expected to obey the order unconditionally.⁵³⁵ It is known from the Amarna Letters that a great king occasionally rendered payments for goods requested from a vassal ruler (EA 369: 1-14) or granted requested goods to privileged subjects, e.g., the ruler of Ugarit (EA 49: 18-26).⁵³⁶ Nevertheless, these types of transactions were sometimes cast as an act of piety towards a local deity and ritually charged.⁵³⁷

⁵³³ King of Babylonia blamed it on weather and difficult road conditions (EA 7: 53-58). Puduḥepa blamed the dethroned Muṣili III for the empty Hittite treasury (KUB 21.38, vs. 7-14). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 84-85. Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 216-17.

⁵³⁴ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 546-47.

⁵³⁵ The reply by Abi-Milku of Tyre to a royal order to prepare supplies for the arriving Egyptian army best exemplified the attitude of a cooperative vassal: “When the king, my lord said: “Be ready (*ku-na*) before the arrival of the large army,” then the servant said: ‘Yea, yea, yea!’ On my stomach and on my back I carry the word of the king, my lord” (EA 147: 35-40). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 744-45.

⁵³⁶ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 380-81.

⁵³⁷ Ellen Morris, “Exchange, Extraction, and the Politics of Ideological Money Laundering in Egypt’s New Kingdom Empire,” in *Policies of Exchange: Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2nd Millennium B.C.E: Proceedings of the International Symposium at the University of Freiburg, Institute for Archaeological Studies, 30th May - 2nd June 2012*, ed. Birgitta Eder and Regine Pruzsinszky, vol. 2, *Oriental and European Archaeology* (Wien: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2015), 167–90.

CHAPTER 4. DIPLOMATIC MARRIAGE: IDEOLOGY, REALPOLITIK, AND MATRIMONIAL POLICY

“[I]f the incest prohibition and exogamy have an essentially positive function, if the reason for their existence is to establish a tie between men which the latter cannot do without if they are to raise themselves from a biological to a social organization, it must be recognized that linguists and sociologists do not merely apply the same methods but are studying the same thing. Indeed, from this point of view, ‘exogamy and language (...) have fundamentally the same function - communication and integration with others’.”

(Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structure of Kinship*)

In Schulman’s seminal paper on diplomatic marriage in the New Kingdom period, he defined diplomatic marriage as “the arranged marriage between the ruler of one state and the offspring of the royal house of another.”¹ Indeed, this practice is well-attested cross-culturally. A diplomatic marriage could be concluded to establish new alliances and reinforce existing relations between the two contracting parties.² The ancient Near Eastern great kings were bound to each other by an imagined bond of brotherhood; as a corollary, the relationship between the members of two royal houses was commonly expressed through kinship terminology.³ Such artificial kinship ties were not only strengthened by a constant and adequate flow of letters and greeting gifts, but also by diplomatic marriages that established blood ties between the two royal houses. Since the ancient Near East was a geographically broad and culturally diverse region,

¹ Alan R. Schulman, “Diplomatic Marriage in the Egyptian New Kingdom,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 38, no. 3 (1979): 177–93.

² Alan R. Schulman, “Diplomatic Marriage in the Egyptian New Kingdom,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 38, no. 3 (1979): 177–93.

³ Mario Liverani, “The Great Powers’ Club,” in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 15–27.

there was much diversity in marriage laws and customs, the position of women, laws of inheritance, determination of royal succession, and roles of women in the palace.⁴ Indeed, few reliable generalizations are possible for all periods and locales. Although the great powers frequently concluded diplomatic marriages with each other, their policies of diplomatic marriage varied. As a special form of intercultural communication, diplomatic marriage is distinct from diplomatic correspondence and gift exchange in terms of communication duration and intensity/depth because: 1. Completing the procedures of a diplomatic marriage (from proposal to marriage) could take up to years; 2. In addition to political and economic/financial considerations, other factors may come into play and exert an impact on the outcome of a diplomatic marriage.

This chapter consists of three main sections. The first section establishes a typology for Late Bronze Age diplomatic marriages, which serves as a useful analytical framework for discussing various cultural attitudes towards different types of diplomatic marriages. The following section assesses the various phases of a diplomatic marriage (e.g., marriage negotiation, betrothal, and marriage celebration) in an attempt to identify any communication problems that could have arisen due to cultural differences. The first subsection will analyze the different stages of marriage negotiations and how the contracting parties hammered out the details of a marriage arrangement. The next two subsections discuss the ritual and ceremonial aspects of diplomatic marriages as well as what would happen after the completion of the marriage, delving into matters like acculturation and the status and power of the foreign brides in their new home country. The last section evaluates the allegedly unwavering Egyptian policy of one-directional diplomatic marriage and contrast it with the strategies of other great powers, in particular Hatti.

⁴ Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016).

4.1. Types of Diplomatic Marriages

Diplomatic marriage was employed as a political tool by the ancient Near Eastern kings throughout millennia,⁵ but this phenomenon was especially well-documented in the 2nd millennium BCE. Late Bronze Age diplomatic marriages could be divided into four categories, based on the political statuses of the wife-giver and wife-taker (see Table 4.1): 1. Equal/symmetrical diplomatic marriage between two great powers; 2. Unequal/asymmetrical diplomatic marriage between a great power (wife-giver) and a small power (wife-taker); 3. Tribute-type unequal/asymmetrical diplomatic marriage between a small power (wife-giver) and a great power (wife-taker); 4. Equal/symmetrical diplomatic marriage between two small powers. Diplomatic marriages concluded between two great powers or two small powers more or less observed the principle of equality. In terms of marital alliances between a great power and a small power, the terms of marriage could vary drastically. If a great power was the wife-giver, the marriage pact would usually include favorable terms for the bride, establishing her position as the chief queen of her future husband and the mother of the future heir(s) to the throne. When a small power supplied the bride, the latter was not guaranteed access to political power in her new country and was often relegated to obscurity soon after marriage. Admittedly, a simple dichotomy between equal and non-equal marriages is far from satisfactory for conducting a meaningful analysis of the source materials;⁶ therefore, it is paramount to introduce another perspective, i.e., whether the marriage union was meant to unite two royal houses through creating cross-generational blood ties and thus have a significant impact on dynastic successions.

This classification receives partial support from contemporary textual sources. The letter of Kadašman-Enlil I to Amenhotep III (EA 1: 36-42) and the letter from Puduḥepa to Ramesses II (KUB 3.37

⁵ Dominique Charpin, *“Tu es de mon sang” : les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

⁶ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientalis antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l’Oriente, 1978), 15.

+ KBo 1.17) attest to a massive presence of Near Eastern women in the pharaoh’s harem,⁷ supplied by three types of unions: 1. Women provided by independent dynasties like Babylonia, Assyria, and Mittani; 2. Women provided by Egyptian vassals like Ugarit; 3. Women of non-royal rank, such as the daughter of a *muškēnu* (“commoner”).⁸ Only marital unions with the first two groups of women qualify as diplomatic marriages.

Table 4.1. Types of diplomatic marriage in the Late Bronze Age.

Receiver of bride \ Provider of bride	Great power	Vassal state
Great power	Symmetrical diplomatic marriage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of equality 	Asymmetrical diplomatic marriage with favorable terms for the giver of the bride <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bride established as the queen and mother of the future king of her new home country
Vassal state	Asymmetrical diplomatic marriage akin to tribute presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bride relegated to obscurity and wielded little political influence 	Symmetrical diplomatic marriage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of equality

Diplomatic marriages between high-profile individuals, as significant political events, could be commemorated by year names. This practice dates to the Ur III period: year 30 of Šulgi was named “the year when the ‘governor’ (i.e., king) of Anšan married a daughter of the king”, and the year 5 of Ibbi-Sin was “the year when the ‘governor’ (i.e., king) of Zabšali married Tukin-Ḫatti-migriša, the daughter of the king”; later, the king of Isin Iddin-Dagan (1976-1956 BCE) celebrated the marriage of his daughter Matum-niatum with the king of Anšan with a year name.⁹

⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1. Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 140-41, 216-17, 224-25.

⁸ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientalis antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l’Oriente, 1978), 12-13. A. Leo Oppenheim, Erica Reiner, and Robert D. Biggs, eds., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago, M, Part 2* (Chicago and Gluckstadt: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago and J. J. Augustin, 1978), 272.

⁹ Dominique Charpin, “*Tu es de mon sang*”: *les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, *Collection Docet omnia* 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

4.1.1. Between Two Great Powers

4.1.1.1. Between Other Great Powers

As mentioned before, diplomatic marriages between the great powers were more or less egalitarian, if not fully reciprocal (i.e., each party received and gave brides). Examples of such types of marital alliances were concluded between Ḫatti and Babylonia (Šuppiluliuma I and his Babylonian wife Tawananna¹⁰), Babylonia and Assyria (Burna-Buriaš II and Muballīṭat-Šērū'a, the daughter of Aššur-uballit I¹¹), Elam and Babylonia,¹² and Egypt and other great powers (Mittani, Babylonia, Ḫatti, Assyria) (see diagram 4.1). In the international exchange of princesses, Babylonia seemed to be a major supplier of brides, while Egypt was only at the receiving end.

As high-profile political events, these diplomatic marriages typically followed shifting alliances among the great powers. The first Egypto-Mittanian diplomatic marriage (between Thutmose IV and a daughter of Artamana), which was alluded to in EA 29, took place shortly after the two countries reconciled with each other in the reign of Amenhotep II.¹³ The first Egypto-Hittite marriage was concluded 13 years after the signing of the peace treaty. In some cases, diplomatic marriages were used as leverage for political or economic gain. For instance, Aššur-uballit I might have given his daughter in marriage to change the mind of Burna-Buriaš II, who was irritated by the appearance of Assyria on the international stage and

¹⁰ Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 159-160, 207-210.

¹¹ Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin, 1975), 159, 171. Another marriage was concluded between Aššur-bēl-kala and a daughter of Adad-apla-iddina of Babylonia. Jean-Jacques Glassner and Benjamin R. Foster, *Mesopotamian Chronicles* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 178, 278.

¹² Jan van Dijk, "Die dynastischen Heiraten zwischen Kassiten und Elamern: eine verhängnisvolle Politik," *Orientalia* 55, no. 2 (1986): 159–70.

¹³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 93.

exerted pressure on the pharaoh (Tutankhamun or Akhenaten) to cut diplomatic ties with the Assyrians (EA 9: 19-38).¹⁴

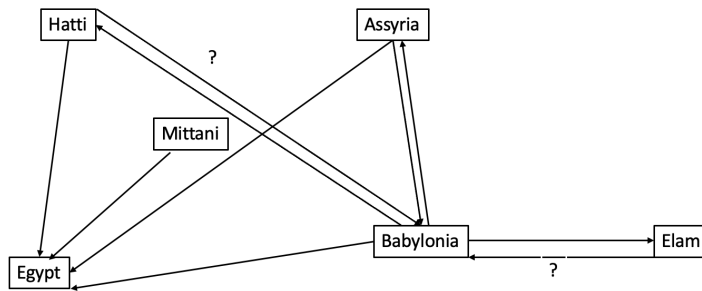


Diagram 4.1. Diplomatic marriages between the great powers during the Late Bronze Age.

Diplomatic marriages between great powers were usually preceded by long and complex negotiations; in addition, they involved the exchange of large sums of bride price/wealth and dowry and tended to be accompanied by festive celebrations. The pomp and circumstance that characterized these marriages did not guarantee the foreign princesses a rosy life with their new husbands; the polygamous nature of royal marriages means that the princesses had to compete with each other for affection and status if their husband took wives from multiple great powers.

4.1.1.2. Between Egypt and Other Great Powers

While diplomatic marriages between other great powers were more or less equal (if not reciprocal) and qualified as true diplomatic marriages, the marital unions between Egypt and other great powers were much less equal and strictly non-reciprocal.¹⁵ One could propose many reasons for such a condescending Egyptian attitude and their insistence on being the recipient of foreign princesses. The most obvious reason

¹⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 18.

¹⁵ The Byzantine emperor Constantine VII advised against gifting of imperial insignia, secret warfare technology and brides (*De administrando imperio*). Cecily J. Hilsdale, "Diplomacy by Design: Rhetorical Strategies of the Byzantine Gift" (Chicago, The University of Chicago, Department of Art History, 2003), 34. Pintore proposed that Burna-buriaš II's attention towards Meritaten stemmed from his aspiration to obtain an Egyptian royal bride, despite his predecessor's failed attempt to do so. If this had been his intention, then he obviously received the same negative response from Akhenaten. Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinstico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Oriens antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1978), 29.

is the Egyptian ambition to project itself as the dominant great power. The pharaoh never failed to celebrate these one-way diplomatic marriages for royal propaganda; in both textual and pictographic evidence, foreign princesses were presented as imported tributes or exotica from submissive foreign counties, even though such unions were the results of bilateral negotiations based on the principle of parity.

From an emic, “Egyptian” perspective, there was no or little essential difference between diplomatic marriages with an ally or a vassal. Instead, the difference was more qualitative; i.e., diplomatic marriage with the daughter of a great king conferred more prestige upon the pharaoh and was worthier of celebration and commemoration.¹⁶ Nevertheless, even the textual documentation of the most equal Egyptian-Near Eastern marriage (i.e., the Bentresh Stela) related the event in terms similar to the epistolary formula used to request daughters of Egyptian vassals.¹⁷ This attitude was pervasive in Egyptian sources, and it was best exemplified by the scarabs issued by Amenhotep III to announce the arrival of Giluḥepa of Mittani; not only was there no mention or allusion to marriage, but the only wife mentioned in the text was queen Tiye.¹⁸ The celebration of this diplomatic marriage, much like the significant events commemorated by other series of scarabs, served to publicize Amenhotep III’s excellence and prowess as king. This was made explicit by the problematic use of the word *inw*, meaning “what which was brought back” in the inscription. This word is derived from the verb *ini*, which frequently has the nuances “lead away as booty,” “plunder,” and “conquer”.¹⁹ It regularly appeared in the royal annals of the 18th Dynasty with the meaning “tribute”, and it was also used in this sense in Egyptian royal texts that recorded diplomatic marriages. This usage made inflated claims that masked equal symmetrical marriages as payments of tribute but fit well with the character of these inscriptions, which were primarily intended for domestic consumption.

¹⁶ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientis antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l’Oriente, 1978), 15.

¹⁷ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientis antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l’Oriente, 1978), 15.

¹⁸ C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 129-33.

¹⁹ Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: The Griffith Institute, 1991), 22.

The pharaohs preferred such a one-way marriage arrangement for ideological reasons; the foreign rulers, on the other hand, acquiesced to such asymmetrical exchanges due to many pragmatic considerations. The two main contributors of foreign brides, namely Mittani and Babylonia, were apparently seeking to form military alliances and neutralize potential threats. Furthermore, Egypt's monopoly on the supply of gold gave the pharaohs much leverage in marriage negotiations. Kadašman-Enlil's concern for his sister did not prevent him from giving Amenhotep III his daughter's hand. Though his plea to marry an Egyptian princess (even just a beautiful woman disguised as an Egyptian princess) was rejected by Amenhotep III (who also scorned him for selling his daughter for gold), any wounded feeling would have been healed by the lavish gifts he received from Egypt.²⁰

Meier claims that another significant reason for their compliance is that the exchange of princesses did not mean the same thing to all the great kings.²¹ The most commonly attested diplomatic marriages outside Egypt happened when a lord/suzerain gave his daughter in marriage to a vassal; some were even arranged with throneless political refugees as a sort of long-term political investment.²² For instance, Ḫattušili III married his daughter Gaššuliyawiya to the dethroned Bentešina (who was held as a hostage in Ḫatti) and restored him to the throne of Amurru.²³ Such marriages were perceived as a manifestation of an overlord-vassal relationship. The same pattern applies to earlier diplomatic marriages of the Old Babylonian period; Zimri-Lim, the king of Mari, was advised to send his daughter so that she might exercise kingship in Karana (LAPO 16 359).²⁴ From the Egyptian perspective, however, the bestowal of princesses upon non-

²⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 8-9.

²¹ Samuel A. Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 165-73.

²² Samuel A. Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 170-73.

²³ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 95-96.

²⁴ Wolfgang Heimpel, *Letters to the King of Mari: A New Translation, with Historical Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 464.

Egyptians was demeaning (EA 4: 6-7),²⁵ while incorporating foreign princesses into the pharaoh's harem was quite acceptable. Therefore, this Egyptian peculiarity can be integrated into the diplomatic game with little fuss.²⁶ Meier's claim that diverse cultural attitudes towards diplomatic marriages facilitated the one-directional traffic of princesses between the Egyptian and foreign courts is appealing, but it does not hold true for Egypt's marital alliances with other great powers. Although the Babylonian king was disconcerted and irritated by the mistreatment of his sister and daughter (EA 1, EA 11),²⁷ he never accused the pharaoh of denying the Babylonian princesses the position of the chief queen. Tušratta repeatedly expressed his wish for his daughter to exercise queenship in Egypt (EA 20: 8-17),²⁸ but Amenhotep III was unlikely to have made such a promise, as Tiye held the queenly office throughout his reign. In any case, the other great kings were probably not under the illusion that they were expressing sovereignty over Egypt by giving their daughters to the pharaoh. Similarly, when Kadašman-Enlil asked for the hand of an Egyptian princess, he did not offer her the queenship of Babylon; the fact that he was ready to settle for lower ranking Egyptian women suggests that his true motive was to acquire a trophy wife for enhancing his own status (EA 4: 4-22).²⁹ The polygamous great kings usually reserved queenship for the daughter of their most valuable ally, e.g., the pharaohs reserved this privilege for princesses from Ḫatti and Burna-buriaš II made his Assyrian wife queen.

Besides the direction of the marriage, other aspects of diplomatic marriages between Egypt and other great powers indicated Egypt's dominance in such negotiations. For instance, Egypt was always the

²⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 8. Samuel A. Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 171–73.

²⁶ Samuel A. Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 171.

²⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1-2, 21.

²⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 47.

²⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 8-9.

party that initiated diplomatic marriages, and other great powers always complied (although multiple rejections might have preceded a final consent). This was best exemplified by the actions of Kadašman-Enlil I, who accused Amenhotep III of possibly doing away with his sister but promptly sent his own daughter to Egypt, presumably after receiving sufficient gold from the pharaoh (EA 1: 26-42; EA 11: 16-22).³⁰ His successor Burna-buriaš II complained to Akhenaten that Egypt sent only 5 chariots to escort his daughter, which constituted a grave insult; instead of turning down this marriage proposal to defend his honor, he wrote to request a bigger escort.³¹

4.1.2. Between a Great Power and a Small Power

4.1.2.1. Hegemonic Marriage between a Great Power and a Small Power

Unequal diplomatic marriages in which a great power was the wife-giver followed the model of Old Babylonian diplomatic marriages, the norm of which is that the daughter of a ruler with high prestige married the ruler (or the crown prince) of another kingdom with less prestige. In this way, the princess exercised fuller authority in her husband's palace, and her son had a better claim on his father's throne. Zimri-Lim of Mari actively concluded this type of hegemonic marriage and married off many daughters born by his various wives; in one case, the elders of an unidentified vassal city begged Zimri-Lim to marry one of his daughters to their new king to renew the covenant between the two polities.³² The ruler of Ilanšura was able to marry two daughters of Zimri-Lim, which was deemed to be an exceptional honor by the

³⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1-2, 21-22.

³¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 21.

³² Zimri-Lim himself was a major beneficiary of diplomatic marriages. At the beginning of his reign, he married Šiptu, the daughter of his patron, Yarim-Lim of Yamḥad, to secure his claim to the throne even though he already had wives then. Some argued that Zimri-Lim married Dam-ḥuraši, a princess of Qatna and the widow of his predecessor Yasmaḥ-Addu. Sasson argued that she either returned to her native country or became a priestess after the takeover of Mari by Zimri-Lim. Dominique Charpin, "*Tu es de mon sang*": les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34. Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 106-7.

contemporaries.³³ After the Mariote princesses assumed queenship in their new country, they maintained regular contact with their father and kept him informed about important affairs.³⁴ However, in the volatile political climate of the Mari Age, the fate of princesses bartered by their fathers for political support was not always rosy.³⁵

The Hittites great kings achieved a high degree of success employing this type of diplomatic marriage to extend their political network and strengthen their control over newly conquered territories. Successive kings married their daughters/sisters to vassal rulers of strategically important kingdoms like Amurru and Ugarit; offsprings born from these unions could participate in another cycle of diplomatic marriages with Hittite vassals or royal family members who were their cousins. The Middle Assyrian kings also employed diplomatic marriage as a political tool, but to a lesser extent. Textual sources from Tell Taban and Tell Sabi Abyad supply evidence for diplomatic/dynastic marriages between the Assyrian royal house and a local dynasty of the Land of Mari (a successor state to Zimri-Lim's dynasty) as well as the house of the Grand Viziers.³⁶ While Babylonia regularly supplied brides to other great kings, it was less clear whether the Kassite princesses were bestowed upon Babylonian vassals. Evidence is also lacking for the Mittanian empire. The New Kingdom literary tale *The Doomed Prince* recounts how a self-exiled Egyptian prince married a Mittanian princess; if the story contains a kernel of historical truth (as is the case

³³ A commander of the local guard wrote in a letter: "Depuis que Samsi-Addu est mort, il y a quatre rois puissants. Mais ils n'ont pas épousé deux filles de (la lignée de) Yahdun-Lim. Présentement, des filles de mon seigneur, tu en as épousé deux." (ARM 26/2 303: 16'-33') Dominique Charpin, "*Tu es de mon sang*": les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

³⁴ Dominique Charpin, "*Tu es de mon sang*": les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

³⁵ Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 103, 116. Princesses from a defeated royal family could be given by the reigning king to sons of powerful officials, who were reluctant to establish an affinal relationship with the fallen royal dynasty. Nele Ziegler, "A Questionable Daughter-in-Law," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 51 (1999): 55-59.

³⁶ Daisuke Shibata, "Dynastic Marriages in Assyria during the Late Second Millennium BC," in *Understanding Hegemonic Practices of the Early Assyrian Empire: Essays Dedicated to Frans Wiggermann*, ed. Bleda S. Düring, Publications de l'institut historique-archéologique néerlandaise de Stamboul 125 (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2015), 235-42.

with the Story of Bentresh), then the Mittanian kings probably also employed diplomatic marriage to strengthen ties with their vassals.³⁷

The Egyptian kings' deliberate avoidance of marrying off their princesses is largely borne out by both textual and archaeological evidence. Amenhotep III's blunt rejection of Kadašman-Enlil's proposal to marry an Egyptian princess (or even a woman in the guise of an Egyptian princess) represents a powerful testimony to this policy of unilateral diplomatic marriage, which is not contradicted by any archaeological evidence. The intriguing case of the Niqmaddu Vase, which depicts the Ugaritic ruler with an Egyptian-looking lady in a scene that is very suggestive of a spousal relationship between them, could be accounted for by regarding it as a product of Niqmaddu's political maneuvering.³⁸ This prestigious vessel deployed the indeterminate identity of the woman within an explicitly identified scene of royal representation, which enabled Niqmaddu to use constructive ambiguity in artistic expression for status negotiation (fig. 4.1).³⁹

³⁷ The heirless Prince of Nahrin locked up his only daughter in a high tower and summoned all the princes of Khor (Syria) for a jumping competition; whoever could reach the window (70-cubit above the ground) shall marry the princess. Many familiar tropes are present in this story: e.g., the Rapunzel-ish princess of Nahrin, the appearance of divine at birth, tragic fate foretold at birth, and the evil stepmother. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 200-201.

³⁸ Erika Fishcer, "Niqmaddu of Ugarit and His Consort: A Reassessment of The So-Called Marriage Vase," in *SOMA 2012. Identity and Connectivity: Proceedings of the 16th Symposium on Mediterranean Archaeology, Florence, Italy, 1-3 March 2012*, ed. Luca Bombardieri et al. (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013), 165-73.

³⁹ Marian H. Feldman, "Ambiguous Identities: The 'Marriage' Vase of Niqmaddu II and the Elusive Egyptian Princess," *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 15, no. 1 (2002): 75-99.

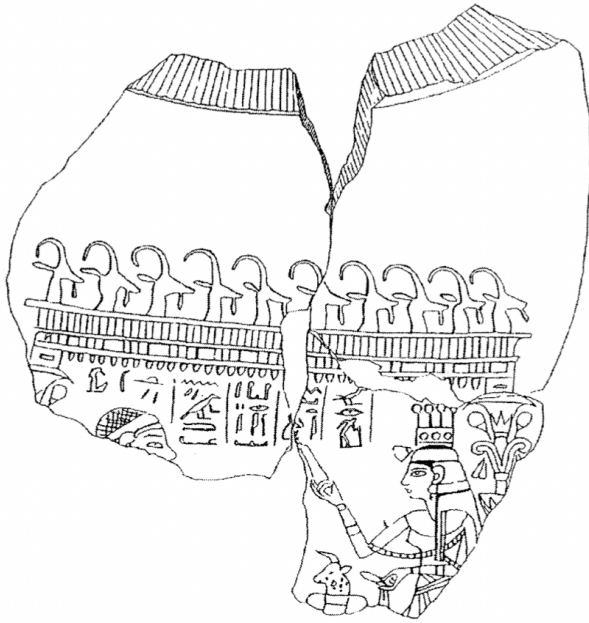


Figure 4.1. The Niqmaddu Vase (facsimile drawing). Marian H. Feldman, “Ambiguous Identities: The ‘Marriage’ Vase of Niqmaddu II and the Elusive Egyptian Princess,” *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 15, no. 1 (2002): fig. 3.

The Neo-Assyrian kings employed diplomatic marriage as a tool in empire-building as well. Sargon II (c. 721-7-5 BCE) married his daughter (Aḫāt-abīša) to Ambaris, king of Tabal in Anatolia; nevertheless, this did not discourage Ambaris from rebelling against Sargon in 713 BCE.⁴⁰ Esarhaddon also contemplated sealing an alliance with a king of the Scythians with a diplomatic marriage; he sought the sun-god’s guidance through an oracle before making his decision (SAA 4 20).⁴¹ Another possible marriage alliance was contracted between the Assyrian royal house and a Libyan dynasty during or before the reign of Sennacherib. An Egyptian man named Sheshonq, who was referred to as the king’s in-law, headed the list

⁴⁰ S. Aro-Valjus and M. Nissinen, “Aḫāt-Abīša,” in *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Volume 1, Part I*, ed. Karen Radner, The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, 1:1 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998), 59.

⁴¹ Ivan Starr, ed., *Queries to the Sungod: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria*, State Archives of Assyria 4 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1990), 24-26.

of witnesses in a house sale document.⁴² His long-term presence in Nineveh could be best explained by the well-attested Assyrian practice of taking high-born hostages from subjugated kingdoms (rulers).⁴³ The New Kingdom Egyptian kings systematically employed this policy to ensure the loyalty of the heirs of their vassals; however, when this document was written on the eve of Esarhaddon's conquest of Egypt, it was prince Sheshonq, probably a member of the Libyan royal houses based in the Delta, who had to endure the humiliation of being a hostage at a foreign court.⁴⁴ Another Egyptian prince, Psamtek (son of Nekau/Necho I of Sais), may have married an Assyrian princess during his sojourn in Assyria.⁴⁵ It seems that the Neo-Assyrian kings imitated the Hittite practice of marrying princesses to political hostages/protégés as a long-term investment. In Psamtek's case, the Assyrians' investment initially paid off because both Nekau/Necho I and Psamtek I sided with the Assyrians during their military clashes with the Kushite rulers; nevertheless, Psamtek I threw off the Assyrian yoke after he had gained the ability to reunite Egypt and free it from Assyrian rule.⁴⁶

⁴² Karen Radner, "After Eltekeh: Royal Hostages from Egypt at the Assyrian Court," in *Stories of Long Ago: Festschrift für Michael D. Roaf*, ed. Heather D. Baker, Kai B. Kaniuth, and Adelheid Otto, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 397 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012), 471–79.

⁴³ Sennacherib boasted that Bel-ibni (later appointed as king of Babylon): "had grown up like a puppy in my palace"; Tabua, who was later appointed the queen of the Arabs, was also raised in his palace. Karen Radner, "After Eltekeh: Royal Hostages from Egypt at the Assyrian Court," in *Stories of Long Ago: Festschrift für Michael D. Roaf*, ed. Heather D. Baker, Kai B. Kaniuth, and Adelheid Otto, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 397 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012), 473–74.

⁴⁴ Sheshonq's presence in Assyria could be associated with a delegation sent to Sargon II in 716 BCE by Osorkon IV (a Libyan ruler who controlled regions in the north-eastern Delta) out of fear of an impending attack of the Kushite rulers. Osorkon IV was referred to as "Šilkanni, king of the remote country of Egypt" in Assyrian inscriptions; he allegedly sent 12 large Egyptian horses out of fear of the splendour of the god Aššur. Andreas Fuchs, *Die Annalen des Jahres 711 v. Chr.: Nach Prismenfragmenten aus Ninive und Assur*, *State Archives of Assyria Studies* 8 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998), 28, 57. Radner suggested an alternative scenario, claiming that the taking of political hostages at the signing of the treaty was unusual in the absence of a previous betrayal; a more likely explanation would be that Sheshonq was captured and taken to Assyria after the Battle of Eltekeh. Karen Radner, "After Eltekeh: Royal Hostages from Egypt at the Assyrian Court," in *Stories of Long Ago: Festschrift für Michael D. Roaf*, ed. Heather D. Baker, Kai B. Kaniuth, and Adelheid Otto, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 397 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012), 471–79.

⁴⁵ Karen Radner, "After Eltekeh: Royal Hostages from Egypt at the Assyrian Court," in *Stories of Long Ago: Festschrift für Michael D. Roaf*, ed. Heather D. Baker, Kai B. Kaniuth, and Adelheid Otto, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 397 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012), 477.

⁴⁶ John Taylor, "The Third Intermediate Period (1069–664 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 353–54.

4.1.2.2. Tribute-type Marriage

A tribute-type marriage refers to a marital union between a ruler of higher status and a daughter of a small ruler. This type of marriage does not conform to the modern notion of marriage, in which the two parties involved are more or less willing and equal partners; however, the term “marriage” is still employed here for lack of a better substitute. Compared to equal marriages between great powers, tribute-type marriages occurred with more frequency but less pomp and circumstance.

Though all great kings could and probably did incorporate the daughters of their vassals into their harems, the uneven distribution of extant evidence does not allow any diachronic or comparative study. As might be expected, the majority of evidence was found in Egypt. The earliest evidence for tribute-type diplomatic marriages during the New Kingdom dates, unsurprisingly, to the reign of Thutmose III, who campaigned almost every year in the Levant and laid the foundation for Egypt’s empire.⁴⁷ The so-called three Syrian/foreign wives of Thutmose III (figs. 4.2a-c) were thus designated in Egyptological literature because their names (Manuwai, Manhata, and Maruta) are of west Semitic origin and written in group writing, an orthography developed by Egyptian scribes to transcribe foreign words.⁴⁸ Their existence was unknown until the discovery of their joint burial in western Thebes (fig. 4.2a); burial goods bearing the intact cartouche of Hatshepsut led to the assumption that they were buried during the co-regency of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III or not long after her death (fig. 4.2e).⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Betsy M. Bryan, “The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c.1550 - 1352 BC),” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 237–41.

⁴⁸ Christine Lilyquist, James E. Hoch, and Alexander J. Peden, *The Tomb of Three Foreign Wives of Tuthmosis III* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 329-32.

⁴⁹ Christine Lilyquist, James E. Hoch, and Alexander J. Peden, *The Tomb of Three Foreign Wives of Tuthmosis III* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 333. “Scarab Finger Ring with the Names of Thutmose III and Hatshepsut | New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 17, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/547602>.



Figures 4.2a-c. Canopic jar stoppers of the three foreign wives of Thutmose III: Manuwai, Manhata, and Maruta. Figure 4.2d. Head of the Wadi in which the tomb of the three foreign wives of Thutmose III is located. Figure Christine Lilyquist, James E. Hoch, and Alexander J. Peden, *The Tomb of Three Foreign Wives of Tuthmosis III* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), figs. 95b, 96b, 98b, 25a. Figure 4.2e. Scarab ring with the names of Thutmose III and Hatshepsut, tomb of the three Syrian wives of Thutmose III. “Scarab Finger Ring with the Names of Thutmose III and Hatshepsut | New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 17, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/547602>.

These three women were no more than wives of the second or third rank (*hm.t ny-sw.t*); none ever held the title of principal wife.⁵⁰ They were treated as a group with regard to their personal possessions and funerary equipment, as many objects in the tomb had been made in multiples of three.⁵¹ Despite their lavish burial goods (figs. 4.6a-e), little can be said about these three ladies or the circumstances through which they entered Thutmose III’s harem. However, an entry in the Annals of Thutmose III suggests a possible scenario; it recorded a list of tribute goods presented to the pharaoh by a Levantine ruler, with the latter’s

⁵⁰ Christine Lilyquist, James E. Hoch, and Alexander J. Peden, *The Tomb of Three Foreign Wives of Tuthmosis III* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 329.

⁵¹ Christine Lilyquist, James E. Hoch, and Alexander J. Peden, *The Tomb of Three Foreign Wives of Tuthmosis III* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 333.

daughter as the first and most prestigious item.⁵² This Egyptian record is supplemented by cuneiform evidence from the Amarna period, which attests to two more examples of tribute-type diplomatic marriage. The first is known from a letter from the pharaoh to the ruler of Ammiya (EA 99),⁵³ while the other is mentioned in a letter to the pharaoh from a vassal named Šatiya.⁵⁴ Epistolary evidence shows that the pharaoh was more straightforward and undiplomatic when soliciting daughters from his vassals.⁵⁵ As Pintore pointed out, the epistolary model for requesting daughters of foreign vassals was remarkably similar to that used for requesting material goods and military services.⁵⁶ In the Egyptian system of diplomatic marriage, the daughters of vassal kings were given to the pharaoh as tokens of their father's loyalty and as a type of pledge that they would not align with another anti-Egyptian coalition. In addition, just as the collection of taxes and tributes weakened a vassal kingdom economically, the requisitioning of daughters deprived Egypt's Levantine vassals of at least one accepted means of forging mutually beneficial relationships among themselves. The three Syrian wives could have been married to other Levantine rulers to extend their father's political network had they not been claimed by Thutmose III.

Egypt's Nubian vassals were not exempt from contributing their princesses to the Egyptian harem at the pharaoh's request. The presentation of a Nubian princess to Tutankhamun was memorialized in the tomb of the viceroy of Kush Huy (fig. 4.3a). The princess wore an elaborate headdress and Egyptian-style

⁵² She was presented to the pharaoh together with her ornaments of gold and lapis lazuli of her land, and the retainers belonging to her, male and female slaves, thirty of them. Donald Redford, *The Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 52.

⁵³ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 546-47.

⁵⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 268-69.

⁵⁵ One Amarna pharaoh wrote to the king of Ammiya: "Prepare your daughter for the king, your lord and prep<are> contributions: [Twe]nty able-bodied slaves, silver, chariots, healthy horses. So may the king, your lord, say to you, 'This is g[oo]d that you have given it, viz. a contribution to the king to accompany your daughter.'" (EA 99: 5-20). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 546-47.

⁵⁶ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Oriens antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1978), 14.

linen dress, standing in a chariot pulled by a team of oxen (fig. 4.3a).⁵⁷ Circumstantial evidence suggests that this practice of taking trophy wives from Nubia dates as far back as the reign of Mentuhotep II (2055 - 2004 BCE); one of his secondary wives Aashyt was depicted with dark complexion on her sarcophagus, creating a stark contrast with the light skin color of her maidservants as well as the ruddy brown skin of male attendants (fig. 4.3b). This distinction very likely indicates her Nubian origin, as dark skin is traditionally employed as an ethnic marker for Nubians in Egyptian art. Aashyt might have been the daughter of a Nubian ruler taken by Mentuhotep II during one of his Nubian campaigns,⁵⁸ since marrying royal women from recently conquered territories was a popular practice cross-culturally.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), 24, pl. 28.

⁵⁸ Ellen F. Morris, *Ancient Egyptian Imperialism* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018), 71-72.

⁵⁹ Jennifer Holmgren, "Imperial Marriage in the Native Chinese and Non-Han State, Han to Ming," in *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, ed. Rubie S. Watson and Patricia B. Ebrey (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 85-86.



Figure 4.3a. A Nubian princess on an oxen-drawn chariot, tomb of Huy (TT40). Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. 28. Figure 4.3b. Facsimile of a painting on the sarcophagus of Mentuhotep II's wife Aashyt. "Charles K. Wilkinson | Facsimile of the Painting on the Inner Back Side of the Sarcophagus of Aashyt | First Intermediate Period–Middle Kingdom," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 17, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544536>.

The Hittite great king occasionally arranged diplomatic marriages between the daughters of his vassals and members of the Hittite royal family. For instance, Ḫattušili III's son Nerikkaili married a daughter of Bentešina as part of a double diplomatic marriage between the royal houses of Ḫatti and Amurru, which was recorded in the Bentešina treaty.⁶⁰ The details of the first marriage arrangement were not documented, but it was unlikely that the Amurrite princess could aspire to become the chief wife of Nerikkaili, whom Ḫattušili III already appointed as his successor.⁶¹ In the first millennium BCE, the Neo-

⁶⁰ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 96.

⁶¹ Despite the prestige enjoyed by Ugarit as a valued Hittite vassal, this vassal state did not engage in diplomatic marriage with the Hittites until late in its history (end of the thirteenth century BCE). Indeed, Singer argued that the

Assyrian kings also pursued an active matrimonial policy and consolidated alliances with diplomatic marriages. With Assyrian armies at his gate, the ruler of the Levantine kingdom of Patinu offered his nieces to Aššurnaširpal II to beg his mercy.⁶² According to the annals of Aššurbanipal, the king of Tabal presented his daughter (along with a large dowry) to the Assyrian king to pledge his allegiance to the latter.⁶³

4.1.3. Between Small Powers

Similar to the great powers, Levantine rulers extended their political network and formed regional alliances through diplomatic marriages, albeit on a less grandiose scale. Both Egyptian and Hittite vassals did it with the implicit or explicit consent of their overlords. However, it is impossible to ascertain how widespread and effective this practice was due to a lack of evidence. One such marital alliance, concluded between a sister of Rib-Hadda of Byblos and a king of Tyre, was known from the Amarna period and cemented links between two Egyptian vassals (EA 89: 15-29).⁶⁴ The union produced male offsprings who would expect to inherit the throne of their father had they not been killed by the local rebels along with their parents (EA 89: 15-29).⁶⁵ The daughters survived, presumably because they were “valuable property” and

limited impact of the Hittite rule on Ugaritic culture could partly be accounted for by the late incorporation of the Ugaritic royal house into Hittite royalty through diplomatic marriage. Itamar Singer, “A Political History of Ugarit,” in *The Calm before the Storm: Selected Writings of Itamar Singer on the Late Bronze Age in Anatolia and the Levant* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2011), 58.

⁶² Stefan Zawadzki, “Hostages in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions,” in *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East*, ed. Karel van Lerberghe and Antoon Schoors, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 65 (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 453.

⁶³ Dominique Charpin, “*Tu es de mon sang*”: *les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

⁶⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 162. William F. Albright and William L. Moran, “Rib-Adda of Byblos and the Affairs of Tyre (EA 89),” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 4, no. 3 (1950): 163–68.

⁶⁵ Rib-Hadda wrote to the pharaoh: “I made connubium with Tyre; they were on good terms with me. (But now) they have, I assure you, killed their mayor, together with my sister and her sons. My sis<te>r’s daughters I had sent to Ty[re], away from Abdi-A[širta. They killed] him al[ong with my sister ...]” William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 162.

could be married off by the next king;⁶⁶ they were sent to Tyre by their maternal uncle Rib-Hadda in order to protect them from threats posed by Abdi-Aširta.⁶⁷

The best documented multi-generational diplomatic marriages between two small powers involved two Hittite vassals, Amurru and Ugarit.⁶⁸ Niqmaddu II's son Niqmepa married the Amurrite princess Aḥat-milku, and the couple's son Ammittamru II continued this tradition by marrying another Amurrite princess of noble descent, who was a daughter of Bentešina and a Hittite princess named Gaššuliyawiya (daughter of Ḫattušili III). In these marital unions, the economically more affluent Ugarit was the wife-taker, and Amurru was the wife-giver. However, this unilateral flow of princesses does not mean that Ugarit was the main beneficiary in these marriages; as Singer suggested, "Ugarit shared the custom of Ḫatti where the reigning queen (*Tawananna*) retained her position until her death and participated in various state functions."⁶⁹ Aḥat-milku probably intervened in a struggle for the throne that embroiled three of her sons, and she had to witness the banishment of two of them to Alašiya.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ William F. Albright and William L. Moran, "Rib-Adda of Byblos and the Affairs of Tyre (EA 89)," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 4, no. 3 (1950): 163.

⁶⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 162.

⁶⁸ See Singer's detailed analysis in Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *The Calm before the Storm: Selected Writings of Itamar Singer on the Late Bronze Age in Anatolia and the Levant* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2011), 51ff.

⁶⁹ Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *The Calm before the Storm: Selected Writings of Itamar Singer on the Late Bronze Age in Anatolia and the Levant* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2011), 82.

⁷⁰ Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *The Calm before the Storm: Selected Writings of Itamar Singer on the Late Bronze Age in Anatolia and the Levant* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2011), 100ff.

4.2. Marriage Procedures

4.2.1. Marriage Negotiations: Power, Prestige, and Profit

In ancient Egypt, marriage between ordinary people could be as simple as the cohabitation of the couple.⁷¹ However, a diplomatic marriage, given its potential political and economic implications, usually necessitated lengthy negotiations. Additionally, it usually involved complex marriage procedures commensurate with the contracting parties' status and wealth. The Amarna Letters and diplomatic correspondence in the Boğazköy archive preserve plenty of evidence for these necessary steps: e.g., proposal, negotiation, betrothal, travel, and marriage (often accompanied by festivity).⁷² For example, EA 29 (21-39), a long letter from Tušratta to Akhenaten, provided information that enables the reconstruction of the many phases of a diplomatic marriage.⁷³ In view of the long-distance nature of Late Bronze Age diplomatic interactions, these marriage negotiations and arrangements were mostly carried out by ambassadors, messengers, and couriers on behalf of their kings, who were usually the royal grooms. During the Late Bronze Age, diplomatic marriages were usually negotiated by a king (the groom) and the royal father of the prospective bride; during the Middle Bronze Age, many diplomatic marriages were arranged by the royal father of the groom and a male guardian (father or brother) of the bride.⁷⁴ In either case, women had little or no capacity to act, and her male relatives played the dominant role; this is in keeping with what

⁷¹ Jaana Toivari-Viitala, *Women at Deir El-Medina: A Study of the Status and Roles of the Female Inhabitants in the Workmen's Community during the Ramesside Period*, Egyptologische Uitgaven 15 (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2001), 49.

⁷² There is plentiful documentation on the steps taken to bring Syrian princesses to the kings of Mari, but not as much on those that took Mari princesses to vassals. Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 103.

⁷³ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientis antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1978), 22-23.

⁷⁴ A typical marriage negotiation between the fathers of the bride and the groom was documented by a letter from the archives of Shemshara. Dominique Charpin, "Tu es de mon sang": *les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, *Collection Docet omnia* 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

happened in most ancient societies.⁷⁵ Puduḥepa's active role in international match-making was unusual and unparalleled.⁷⁶

4.2.1.1. The Diplomatic Tango for Establishing Trust

Marriage negotiation was only necessary when dealing with one's equals. When a great king desired the daughter of a vassal, he would simply issue a command and expect full compliance.⁷⁷ In contrast, marriage negotiations between two peer polities (especially two great powers) usually involved several rounds of communication and could take up to several months and even years. Moreover, unexpected turns of events could speed up or slow down the process. For instance, the substantial chronological gap between the Egypto-Hittite treaty (21st regnal year) and the first Hittite marriage of Ramesses II (34th regnal year) could be partly explained by the dethroned Muršili III/Urḫi-Tešub's sojourn in Egypt.⁷⁸ In the Mari Age, Yarim-Lim expedited the marriage procedure so that his daughter could be married to Zimri-Lim before her terminally ill grandmother passed away (ARM 26.10).⁷⁹ Presumably, one was supposed to observe filial duty and abstain from festive activities like marriage after the death of a senior member of the family.

⁷⁵ Josué J. Justel, "Women, Gender and Law at the Dawn of History. The Evidence of the Cuneiform Sources," in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 79.

⁷⁶ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 128.

⁷⁷ The use of imperative mood makes it abundantly clear that there is no room for negotiation: "Prepare your daughter for the king, your lord and prep<are> contributions ..." (EA 99: 10-12). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 546-47.

⁷⁸ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientalis antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1978), 45.

⁷⁹ Wolfgang Heimpel, *Letters to the King of Mari: A New Translation, with Historical Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 559-560. The Mariote messengers to the king of Mari (Zimri-Lim): "Yarim-Lim discussed matters with us: "You did bring the gift; yet, because my mother is ill and I fear something awful is about to happen in my palace, you have very little time." Because of this circumstance, we made haste to have the gift, which our lord conveyed through us, entered (into the palace grounds). Moreover, we draped veils over the daughter" (ARM 26 10). Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 108.

In a long letter reviewing Egyptian-Mittanian relations, Tušratta informed Akhenaten how previous pharaohs and Mittanian kings performed a diplomatic tango before the latter consented to marriage proposals by the former: “When [...], the father of Nimmureya, wrote to Artatama, my grandfather, he asked for the daughter of [my grandfather, the sister] of my father. He wrote 5, 6 times, but he did not give her. When he wrote my grandfather 7 times, then only under such pressure did he give her. When Nimmureya, your father, [wro]te to Šutt[arna], m[y] father, and asked for my father’s daughter, my own sister, he wr[ote] 3, 4 times, but [he did not giv]e her. When he wrote 5, 6 times, only under such pressure did he g[iv]e [her]. W[hen] Nimmureya, [yo]ur [fa]ther, wrote to me and asked for my daughter, I did [not] say n[o]. The [very] first ti[me] I said [to] his messenger, ‘Of course I will give her.’” (EA 29: 16-27).⁸⁰ The numbers given by Tušratta may be imprecise and even exaggerated, but such back-and-forth communications were necessary to establish trust between two former rivals who had just reconciled with each other. The pharaoh demonstrated his genuine intention to marry a Mittanian princess by repeating his requests (presumably accompanied by handsome gifts), while the Mittanian king enhanced the prestige of his daughter by rejecting the marriage proposal of a great king and exhibiting an aloof attitude in the negotiation. With the conclusion of the first diplomatic marriage and the establishment of an affinal relationship between the two royal houses, the need for such elaborate and time-consuming formalities decreased. Moreover, when the first diplomatic marriage took place, Mittani was still at the peak of its power and the pharaoh would be more motivated to marry a Mittanian princess; but when Amenhotep III made the marriage proposal, the sun was setting on the once mighty Mittanian empire, which had been weakened by civil strife and was facing increasing threats from the Hittites and the Assyrians.⁸¹ In addition, building projects were draining

⁸⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 93.

⁸¹ Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 155-59. Hervé Reculeau, “Assyria in the Late Bronze Age,” in *The Oxford History of the Ancient Near East: Volume III: From the Hyksos to the Late Second Millennium BC*, ed. Karen Radner, Nadine Moeller, and Daniel T. Potts (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 719-30.

the coffers of Tušratta, which he hoped to refill with Egyptian gold (EA 19: 43-48).⁸² Tušratta obviously expected Amenhotep III to reciprocate his quick consent with large amounts of gold.

Such phenomenon of multiple requests and rejections, appropriately termed *antagonismo ceremoniale* by Pintore, is also attested in the Arzawan matrimonial dossier (EA 31 and EA 32). Confronted with Amenhotep III's oral marriage proposal, the Arzawan king expressed doubts concerning the credibility of the Egyptian messenger and insisted on obtaining a formal, written marriage proposal.⁸³ *Antagonismo ceremoniale* may have played a part in marriage negotiations between the Egyptian and Babylonian royal houses, as Pintore reconstructed at least 9 phases of exchanges based on the Babylonian dossier of letters (regarding them as evidence for procedures concerning a single marriage).⁸⁴ These lengthy negotiation processes amply illustrate the Egyptian kings' willingness to accommodate international diplomatic protocol and foreign marriage customs (at least at the early stage of the marriage procedure). However, the pharaohs were reluctant to appear as the pleading party in royal inscriptions intended for Egyptian gods and elites. The Marriage Stela inscriptions portrayed Ḫattušili III as the supplicant who was eager to come into the Egyptian orbit, even though Ramesses II did not pay any heed to his pleas; disheartened but not ready to give up, Ḫattušili III decided to present his eldest daughter to the pharaoh so that the latter would grant peace to him.⁸⁵ Obviously, this political fiction is only a face-saving device that served the same purpose as the Battle of Kadesh reliefs and inscriptions.

⁸² William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 44.

⁸³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 103.

⁸⁴ Based on this reconstruction, Pintore suggested that Tušratta's claim of multiple exchanges before his predecessors gave consent was not exaggerated. Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Oriens antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1978), 31-32.

⁸⁵ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 93.

4.2.1.2. Negotiating the Terms of Marriage

After initial consent was given, both parties could proceed to discuss other details of the marriage arrangement: e.g., choice of the bride, the amount of bride price and dowry, size of escort, and the future status of the princess in her new country. Some marriage negotiations were conducted orally as both parties had to hammer out the details of the marriage arrangements; some were committed to writing because written words were more reliable than the memory of messengers (not all of whom were trusted by the correspondents).⁸⁶ The other great kings were not shy to give advice to the pharaoh on how to treat the princess as befitting her royalty (EA 11: 16-22).⁸⁷ They frequently delayed or threatened to delay the delivery of the princess to exert pressure on the pharaoh.⁸⁸ Royal messengers had to travel back and forth between the Egyptian and foreign courts until all the terms were agreed upon, and both parties were satisfied with the marriage arrangements. Sometimes, the negotiations dragged on for so long that the parties involved lost patience and became irritated.⁸⁹

Whether they were of equal or unequal nature, diplomatic marriages represented political alliances between two polities, negotiated by their male rulers and for their benefits. The princess played a relatively passive role during marriage negotiations; she usually became relevant when her identity and physical appearance became the topics of negotiation. The prospective bride was ideally a marriageable, physically

⁸⁶ In his letter to Amenhotep III, the Arzawan king assured Amenhotep III that he would send him a princess, “If you really desire my daughter, (how) should I not give her to you? I give her to you!” (EA 32: 7-9). However, he did not trust messages communicated orally by the Egyptian envoy, a certain Kalbaya; he urged the pharaoh to put the matter in writing. And he asked Amenhotep III not to detain his messenger, “See to it that Kalbaya returns quickly with my messenger, and write back to me on a tablet concerning this matter” (EA 32: 4-6). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 103. De Roos attributed the distrust of the messenger to the poor language skills of Kalbaya, assuming a Syrian origin for him based on Semitic etymology (Kalbaya < *kalbu* “dog”). Johan de Roos, “Die Hethiter und das Ausland,” in *Motivation und Mechanismen des Kulturkontaktes in der Späten Bronzezeit*, ed. Doris Prechel (Firenze: LoGisma, 2005), 44.

⁸⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 21.

⁸⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 21.

⁸⁹ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 216-23.

attractive daughter of the reigning king, but how she was chosen is little known.⁹⁰ In EA 3, Kadašman-Enlil gave consent to Amenhotep III's marriage proposal;⁹¹ in the interim between EA 2 and EA 3, a decision was made, but it was unclear if he made a choice in consultation with Amenhotep III.⁹² Judging from Kadašman-Enlil's suggestion to Amenhotep III, if marriageable daughters were not available, an elite woman may be chosen as a substitute (EA 4: 4-22).⁹³ Physical attractiveness of the bride was deemed important for winning the affection of her future husband, which in turn could affect her status and influence in her new home country. The significance of physical beauty was emphasized in the letters of both wife-

⁹⁰ In early modern Europe, portraits of prospective royal brides and bridegrooms were employed during the marriage negotiations to ensure that they appear attractive to their future spouses. Henry VIII of England commissioned Hans Holbein the Younger to paint portraits of prospective brides, including Christina of Milan and Anne of Cleves. However, the accuracy and reliability of these portraits depended on the artist's skills and instructions he received from the commissioner of the painting (who may not be the same person as the recipient); therefore, recipients of the portraits had to rely on their own diplomats/representatives at foreign courts to assess the faithfulness of the paintings. Tracey A. Sowerby, "'A Memorial and a Pledge of Faith': Portraiture and Early Modern Diplomatic Culture," *The English Historical Review* 129, no. 537 (2014): 303-5. The case of Anne of Cleves demonstrates that to a certain extent, the accuracy of the commissioned painting could make or break a political marriage. When Henry VIII finally cast his eyes on Anne, his was frustrated to find out that Holbein's painting vastly improved upon her beauty, and the marriage did not last. Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000), 169. In most cases, physical attractiveness of the bride was not the decisive factor when the European monarchs chose their future spouse; e.g., Henry IV of France married Marie de' Medici to produce a legitimate heir and prop up the faltering finances of the French Crown. However, after his death, the widowed Marie commissioned a cycle of paintings from Rubens that wildly romanticize episodes in her life, including one that depicts Henry IV gazing into a portrait of Marie held up by Cupid and Hymen, the god of marriage. Ann S. Harris, *Seventeenth-Century Art and Architecture* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2005), 166-67.

⁹¹ Thus wrote Kadašman-Enlil: "Inasmuch as my brother has written to me a[bout marriage], saying '[I desi]re [your daughter,'] why should you not marry (her)? [...] My daughters are available, [but their husbands must be a king o]r of royal descent. [These are the only ones whom I take for my daughters. No king] gives them [to one who is not of royal descent].'" (EA 2: 6-11). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 67.

⁹² "Concerning the young woman, my daughter, about whom you wrote concerning a marriage relationship, the girl is grown up, she is nubile. Send and let them take (her) away" (EA 3: 7-12). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 70.

⁹³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 8-9.

givers (EA 20: 23-32)⁹⁴ and wife-takers (EA 4: 4-22).⁹⁵ Admittedly, different cultures may have different standards of physical beauty, other countries' definition of feminine beauty may not conform to the Egyptian ideal of a tall, slim woman with fair skin.⁹⁶

The prospective bride and bridegroom did not have the chance to meet in person before the marriage, but the bridegroom could send a representative to obtain visual affirmation of her physical attributes (and probably health) during the anointment ceremony (EA 11: 16-22; EA 29: 16-27; EA 31: 11-16).⁹⁷ In one exceptional case, a Babylonian princess corresponded with her future husband and dispatched gifts to him (EA 12: 12-22).⁹⁸ The last portion of the letter is obscure and presents difficulties for interpretation: "Your servant, Kidin-Adad, is located with me (?), as the substitute of my lord, I would verily go" (EA 12: 23-26).⁹⁹ The last sentence "I would go" (*lu-ul-lik*) presumably referred to her imminent journey to Egypt.

⁹⁴ Tušratta wrote: "I will deli[ver] my brother's wife and they will bring her to my brother. May Šauška, my mistress, the mi[stress of all lands and m]y [brother], and Aman, the god of my brother, make her the ima[ge] of [my brother's desire]. They will bring [hi]s [wife] to my brother, and whe[n they show her to] my brother, [he will no]te this: she has become very mature, and ...[... She] has been fashioned according to my brother's desire" (EA 20: 23-32). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 47.

⁹⁵ Kadašman-Enlil expressed his desire for a beautiful Egyptian woman, if marrying a princess was out of the question: "... I wrote as follows t[o my brother], saying, '[Someone's] grown daughters, beautiful women, must be available. Send me a beautiful woman as if she were [you]r daughter ...'" William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 8-9.

⁹⁶ Barbara Watterson, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 8-9, 101-2.

⁹⁷ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 21, 93, 101. In Medieval Europe, this was also done through the exchange of portraits. However, unfaithful or over-flattery portraits could hamper judgments and result in unhappy marriages. Henry VIII was impressed by Hans Holbein's portrait of Anne of Cleves and married her; having seen her in person, the disillusioned Henry annulled the marriage soon after. Christa Grössinger, *Picturing Women in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 61.

⁹⁸ Thus said the princess: "In the pre[sence of my lord], thu[s,] I [prostrate myself], saying, 'Since G[...] my envoy has brought colored cloth, to your cities and your house, may it be <w>ell. Do not murmur in your heart and impose darkness on me.'" Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 107.

⁹⁹ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 106-7.

The exchange of marital gifts, including bride-price (*terhatu*, from groom to bride's family),¹⁰⁰ dowry (*nidittu*, from father to daughter, the bride), and assorted gifts (*biblu*), constituted a core concern of the two royal families; indeed, a majority of the letters in the "matrimonial dossiers" (Babylonian, Mittanian, and Arzawan) were concerned with these subject matters and generated by related negotiations. Much information can be gleaned from the Babylonian matrimonial dossier, as it contains documents of a more varied nature compared to the Mittanian dossier (including letters of both Egyptian and Babylonian origin), e.g., a letter presumably sent by the prospective bride (EA 12) and inventory-lists prepared by both royal houses (EA 13 and EA 14).¹⁰¹ The inventory of the dowry of a Babylonian princess (EA 13) listed jewelry, precious metal vessels, and furniture.¹⁰² The list of Egyptian gifts (EA 14, Akhenaten to Burna-Buriaš) consists of a similar range of precious and portable items (statues and figurines as well).¹⁰³ The dowry items were comparable to those supplied to princesses during the Middle Bronze Age in terms of their categories,¹⁰⁴ though those of the high profile princesses were of a much larger quantity and higher value.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Dowry, bride gift. A. Leo Oppenheim, Erica Reiner, and Robert D. Biggs, eds., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago, M, Part 2* (Chicago and Gluckstadt: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago and J. J. Augustin, 1978), 350.

¹⁰¹ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientalis antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1978), 25.

¹⁰² Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 108-11.

¹⁰³ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 112-27.

¹⁰⁴ The partially preserved bride-wealth inventory for Zimri-Lim's future bride (ARM 25 616) lists jewelry, precious vessels, clothing, and leather goods. The dowries of Mari princesses (e.g., ARM 22 322) might include furniture, kitchen tools, and servants (including female scribes). Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 103.

¹⁰⁵ The dowries of the daughters of Zimri-Lim were relatively modest compared to that of the Qatna princess who married Yasmaḥ-Addu, Zimri-Lim's predecessor. This is because the daughters of Zimri-Lim were married to his vassals, whereas the marital alliance between Qatna and Yasmaḥ-Addu (the son of Samsi-Addu) involved two of the larger powers of West Asia at that time. The quantity and quality of marital gifts involved in these two types of marriages would not be comparable. Bertrand Lafont, "Les filles du roi de Mari," in *La femme dans le Proche-*

The Mittanian matrimonial dossier supplies additional information, but also raises some interesting questions. EA 22 lists wedding gifts given to Amenhotep III on the occasion of his marriage with Taduḥepa, and EA 25 is a list of her *mulūgu*,¹⁰⁶ another set of gifts from her father, Tušratta.¹⁰⁷ The occurrence of two lists of Mittanian inventories in the matrimonial dossier could be explained by hypothesizing that EA 22 listed the gifts/dowry sent for Taduḥepa's intended marriage with Amenhotep III, whereas EA 25 recorded another batch of gifts sent for the marriage of Taduḥepa and Akhenaten; conveniently, the name of the groom did not appear in EA 25 (which is full of lacunae).¹⁰⁸ However, this explanation was rejected by Pintore, claiming that not only were the technical denominations of the two lists different, but there was also a substantial gap between the types and quantity of goods listed in them.¹⁰⁹ As Charpin pointed out, the presents listed in EA 22 (e.g. weaponry, loincloth, and cuirass) have a marked masculine character; furthermore, it was clearly stated at the end that the gifts were given to Amenhotep III as wedding gifts.¹¹⁰ Another possible explanation is that the dowry, which included gifts for Amenhotep III, was paid in installments; evidence for such arrangements was found in the Neo-Babylonian period.¹¹¹ Old Babylonian texts indicate that the bride-price could also be delivered in installments.¹¹²

Orient antique: XXXIIIe rencontre assyriologique internationale (Paris, 7-10 juillet 1986), ed. Jean-Marie Durand (Paris: Éditions recherche sur les civilisations, 1987), 119–20, n. 20.

¹⁰⁶ A transfer of paternal assets to a daughter on the occasion of her marriage. A. Leo Oppenheim, Erica Reiner, and Robert D. Biggs, eds., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago, M, Part 2* (Chicago and Gluckstadt: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago and J. J. Augustin, 1978), 193-94.

¹⁰⁷ A transfer of paternal assets to a daughter on the occasion of her marriage. A. Leo Oppenheim, Erica Reiner, and Robert D. Biggs, eds., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago, M, Part 2* (Chicago and Gluckstadt: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago and J. J. Augustin, 1978), 193.

¹⁰⁸ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientis antiqui collectio 14* (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1978), 20.

¹⁰⁹ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientis antiqui collectio 14* (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1978), 20.

¹¹⁰ Dominique Charpin, “*Tu es de mon sang*”: *les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, *Collection Docet omnia 4* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

¹¹¹ Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016), 135.

¹¹² Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016), 121.

In addition to objects, a princess' dowry could also include personnel. EA 25 mentioned 2 principal ladies-in-waiting (MUNUS.EME.DA), 130 dowry-women (MUNUS.[MEŠ *mu-lu-ú-gi₅*]), and 30 men who accompanied the Mittanian princess to Egypt (EA 25: III.59-67).¹¹³ These people, who were also outfitted with jewelry, were probably comparable to the group of people in the entourage of Giluḫepa mentioned in the Giluḫepa Scarab.¹¹⁴ Another group of dowry-personnel, consisting of 270 women and 30 men, was added at the end of the inventory list (EA 25: IV.64).¹¹⁵ This would increase the number of Taduḫepa's dowry-personnel to at least 462 people (assuming no additional people were mentioned in the lacunae), which far exceeded Giluḫepa's retinue of 317 people. Arguably, the men included in the dowry would be in charge of administering the princess's property, while the women served as attendants of the princess.¹¹⁶ Some of them might have served as substitute wives and surrogate mothers if the princess was unable to produce children.¹¹⁷

It was not until the Ramesside period that the dowry lists appeared in both cuneiform and Egyptian sources, allowing for a comparative study. The lists of the dowry of the Hittite princess Maathorneferure in

¹¹³ Zipora Cochavi-Rainey and Christine Lilyquist, *Royal Gifts in the Late Bronze Age, Fourteenth to Thirteenth Centuries B.C.E.: Selected Texts Recording Gifts to Royal Personages* (Beersheba: Ben-Guryon University of the Negev Press, 1999), 264-67.

¹¹⁴ The inscription reads: "... Marvel brought to His Majesty, the daughter of the Prince of Naharina, Shutarna, (the princess) Gilukhepa (and) women of her harim, three hundred seventeen women." C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 18.

¹¹⁵ Zipora Cochavi-Rainey and Christine Lilyquist, *Royal Gifts in the Late Bronze Age, Fourteenth to Thirteenth Centuries B.C.E.: Selected Texts Recording Gifts to Royal Personages* (Beersheba: Ben-Guryon University of the Negev Press, 1999), 137.

¹¹⁶ Remarkably, the dowry of princess Šimatum, a daughter of Zimri-Lim, included a female scribe. Dominique Charpin, "*Tu es de mon sang*": *les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

¹¹⁷ The husband of an Old Babylonian *nadītu*-priestess, who was allowed to marry but not to conceive, could take a secondary wife to bear children for him. Josué J. Justel, "Women, Gender and Law at the Dawn of History. The Evidence of the Cuneiform Sources," in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 81. In the Spring and Autumn Period, Chinese ruling elites would ensure that a diplomatic marriage could produce a line of heirs by sending a niece or a younger sister of the principal bride as secondary wives and child-bearers. Melvin P. Thatcher, "Marriages of the Ruling Elite in the Spring and Autumn Period," in *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, ed. Rubie S. Watson and Patricia B. Ebrey (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 44. Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016), 185.

the cuneiform documents (matrimonial dossier) and the Marriage Stela largely overlap; in addition to the usual categories of items (e.g., metal goods, wooden objects, and fabrics), they both included a significant number of servants and livestock.¹¹⁸ Ramesses II reciprocated her lavish dowry by granting her ample villas and servants from all over Egypt.¹¹⁹

Though the princess may receive property or even land endowments from her husband as bridal gifts, the giving of land as dowry was not well attested during the Late Bronze Age. An Ahhiyawan king wrote to a Hittite ruler (most likely Muwattalli II) concerning their dispute over the ownership of a group of islands (presumably lying off the west coast of Anatolia) (CTH 183 = KUB 26.91). The letter is extremely fragmentary; according to modern scholarly interpretation, the writer laid claims over the islands because they formed part of the dowry of an Assuwan princess who married his great-grandfather.¹²⁰ The giving of land as dowry is sporadically attested in other periods of the ancient Near East. Samsi-Addu of Assyria promised to marry his daughter to the king of the Gutians and give the land of Šušarra as her dowry, though it is unknown whether his promise was realized.¹²¹ It was recorded in the Bible that an Egyptian king married his daughter to Solomon, and the city of Gezer was given as part of the princess' dowry. It is hotly debated whether this represented a real historical event or a mere figment of a historiographer's imagination. The Egyptian evidence is completely silent concerning this event. And if one believes that the

¹¹⁸ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientis antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1978), 45.

¹¹⁹ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesseid Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 96.

¹²⁰ Harry A. Hoffner, *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 290-92. Gary M. Beckman, Trevor Bryce, and Eric H. Cline, *The Ahhiyawa Texts* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 134-39. Rutherford argued that the letter could only confirm the betrothal of the Assuwan princess but not her marriage (the word *hamakta* means "betrothed", not "married"). Nevertheless, he proposed several scenarios that would account for the passing of the islands as dowry to the Ahhiyawans. Ian Rutherford, "Diplomatic Marriage as an Engine for Religious Change: The Case of Assuwa and Ahhiyawa," in *Linguistic and Cultural Interactions between Greece and Anatolia: In Search of the Golden Fleece*, ed. Michele Bianconi (In search of the golden fleece (Conference), Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2021), 173-75.

¹²¹ Dominique Charpin, "*Tu es de mon sang*": *les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, *Collection Docet omnia* 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

biblical account is credible, the pharaoh who gave his daughter to Solomon is very likely Siamun, the second last king of the 21st Dynasty.¹²² The Neo-Assyrian king Sargon II married his daughter Aḫat-abiša to the king of Tabal and gave the land of Hilakku as her dowry.¹²³

Just as oral/verbal communications between diplomatic partners were not free from third-party interference, negotiations and procedures of diplomatic marriages were sometimes complicated by peer competition and status anxiety. In particular, the great kings (and sometimes queens) strived to negotiate for superior status for their daughters in their husbands' harem (KBo 7.11, 11'-15'a),¹²⁴ and some supplemented such requests with promises of a larger dowry (KUB 3.37 + KBo 1.17, obv. 6'-17').¹²⁵ For instance, in his letter to Ramesses II, Ḫattušili III promised a dowry greater than that of a Babylonian princess.¹²⁶ Comparisons were not only lateral (among peers) but also diachronic (across generations); of particular interest is Tušratta's invitation to Amenhotep III to compare his tablets of dowry with those of his fathers so that the pharaoh could better appreciate the excellence of what Taduḫepa brought to Egypt.¹²⁷

¹²² Tal Davidovich, "Emphasizing the Daughter of Pharaoh," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 24, no. 1 (2010): 71–84. Alberto R. Green, "Solomon and Siamun: A Synchronism between Early Dynastic Israel and the Twenty-First Dynasty of Egypt," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 97, no. 3 (1978): 353–67. Victor Sasson, "King Solomon and the Dark Lady in the Song of Songs," *Vetus Testamentum* 39, no. 4 (1989): 407–14.

¹²³ Sarah C. Melville, *The Campaigns of Sargon II, King of Assyria, 721-705 B.C.* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 88.

¹²⁴ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 94-95.

¹²⁵ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 140-43.

¹²⁶ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 140. Išḫi-Addu of Qatna wrote an emotional letter to Yasmah-Addu about the impending wedding between his daughter and the latter: "I am placing in your lap my flesh and my future. The handmaid (i.e., my daughter) that I give you, may God make her attractive to you. I am placing in your lap my flesh and future, for this House has now become yours and the House of Mari has now become mine. Whatever you desire, just write me and I will give it to you. All over my land, whatever the king (Samsi-Addu) has requested, I myself have never held it back. Why is it that whatever I desire from the king, he does not give it?" (A.3158). This letter reveals Išḫi-Addu's genuine concerns for his daughter and hints that he was willing to provide her with a handsome dowry to sweeten the deal. Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 104.

¹²⁷ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientis antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1978), 17.

Marriages are compared to economic transactions in many cultures, and they entail financial redistribution in many cases. The ancient Near Eastern kings tolerated the pharaohs' policy of unilateral diplomatic marriage and mistreatment of their princesses in exchange for Egyptian gold. However, the Egyptian kings, particularly Amenhotep III, were dismissive of such a mercantile attitude towards diplomatic marriages. Amenhotep III did not veil his contemptuous attitude towards Kadašman-Enlil, mocking the latter for marrying off his daughters for gold (EA 1: 52-62).¹²⁸ Therefore, the economic aspect of dowry and bride-price was consciously downplayed in marriage negotiations and cleverly disguised as a matter of prestige (EA 20: 71-79; EA 29: 80-90).¹²⁹ In a similar vein, Egyptian records enhanced the prestige of the pharaoh by portraying diplomatic marriages as royal accomplishments brought about by divine favor.¹³⁰

What sets a diplomatic marriage apart from a marriage between two commoners is that the former entails not only a redistribution of wealth, but also potentially a reallocation of political power. Depending on the balance of power between the wife-giver and the wife-taker, and their political affiliation, the prospective bride could expect drastically different fates of becoming a political hostage, a trophy wife, or a chief wife and mother of future heirs to the throne. Some letters in the Mittanian and Hittite matrimonial dossiers reveal efforts by the wife-givers to establish the status of their princesses in their new home country.

¹²⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2. Ironically, in a letter from Puduḥepa to Ramesses II, the queen insinuated that the pharaoh urged her to dispatch Maathorneferure to Egypt so that he could enrich himself by acquiring the dowry (KUB 21.38 = CTH 176). Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 216-23.

¹²⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 48, 95.

¹³⁰ The Egyptian record of the second Hittite marriage best illustrates this: "The Great Ruler of Ḫatti sent the rich and massive spoils of Ḫatti ... before his other Daughter, whom he sent to the King of Southern and Northern Egypt, Usimare Setepenre, Son of Re, Ramesses II, given life, to Egypt, on what was the second (such) occasion. It was not the troops who brought them, it was not the [chariotry] who brought them, - (but) the might of the Gods of the land of Egypt, and (of) the Gods of every foreign country ..." Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 111.

Quoting from a previous letter from Amenhotep III, Tušratta claimed that the pharaoh promised his daughter the queenship of Egypt: “When my brother sent Mane, his messenger, saying, ‘Send your daughter here to be my wife and the mistress of Egypt,’ I caused my brother no distress and immediately I said, ‘Of course!’” (EA 19: 17-24).¹³¹ In EA 20, he again recounted the promise made by Amenhotep III and his passionate response to it (EA 20: 8-17).¹³² Clearly, Tušratta had designs for his daughter to become the chief wife of Amenhotep III;¹³³ however, the outcome of the marriage did not meet his expectations.

The Hittites routinely gave their princesses to their vassals to strengthen control of their imperial holdings. In such cases, the Hittites dictated the terms of marriage, which were stipulated in vassal treaties issued to the vassal. Such stipulations guaranteed that the Hittite princess shall exercise queenship in her new home country, and her offspring shall inherit her husband's throne. The treaty between Ḫattušili III and Bentešina of Amurru documented a double diplomatic marriage between the royal houses of Ḫatti and Amurru: the son of Ḫattušili III (crown prince Nerikkaili) married the daughter of Bentešina, while the daughter of Ḫattušili III (Gaššuliyawiya) married Bentešina himself. The power imbalance between the two parties (affines) was highlighted by additional provisions that guaranteed queenship for Gaššuliyawiya and succession rights for her future offspring; in stark contrast, these terms were not imposed upon Nerikkaili.¹³⁴

¹³¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 43-44.

¹³² Thus wrote Tušratta: “In view of friendly relations, Mane, my brother’s messenger, came to take my brother’s wife to become the mistress of Egypt. I read and reread the tablet that he brought to me, and I listened to its words. Very pleasing indeed were the words of my brother ... I will now, t[hi]s year, del[iver] my brother’s wife, the mistress of Egypt, and they will bring her to my brother. On t[hat] day shall Ḫanigalbat and Egypt be [one]” (EA 20: 8-17). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 47.

¹³³ In his letter to Amenhotep III, Tušratta consistently omitted Tiye in the greeting formula but seized every chance to employ kinship terminologies (son-in-law, father-in-law) to remind the pharaoh of the affinal relationship between the two royal houses. He greeted his sister and daughter as if they were Amenhotep III’s chief queens. It was only after the ascension of Akhenaten that he tried to recognize Tiye’s prominent position and repair the relationship with her, because he needed her to mediate between him and her son. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 41-99.

¹³⁴ Ḫattušili III declared in the treaty: “I released Benteshina for a second time to(!) [the land of Amurru]. I assigned to him the household of his father and the throne of kingship. [We established] friendly relations between us [...] My son Nerikkaili will(!) take the daughter of Benteshina of the land of Amurru [as] his wife, [while I have given] Princess Gaššuliyawiya to the land of Amurru, to the royal house, to Benteshina, [as] his wife. She now possesses queenship [in the land] of Amurru. In the future the son and grandson of my daughter shall [exercise] kingship in the land of Amurru.” (obv. 16-21). Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 96-97.

The treaty between Šuppiluliuma I and Šattiwaza of Mittani contained similar stipulations regulating the diplomatic marriage between Šattiwaza and a daughter of Šuppiluliuma I. The terms of marriage were less restraining/stringent compared to those imposed on Bentešina, which reflected the different power dynamics between Ḫatti and Mittani.¹³⁵

While the Hittite kings institutionalized their effort to guarantee queenship for their princesses married to Hittite vassals by including a “succession clause” in the vassal treaties, they obviously could not impose it upon fellow great kings. Understandably, Ḫattušili III was anxious about the relative status of Maathorneferure in comparison with the daughters of other great kings, just like Tušratta. Her treatment by the Egyptians undoubtedly reflected his own power and prestige, and the position of the Hittite state in the international political hierarchy. However, privileged status and treatment could be obtained through negotiations. Through lengthy negotiations, Ḫattušili III and Puduḫepa managed to secure the queenship of Egypt for their daughter, whom they thought should be held in higher esteem than princesses from Assyria, Babylonia, and Zulabi.¹³⁶

As diplomatic marriages were concluded to extend one’s political and social network, a fair percentage were expectedly exogamous. In such cases, two distinct cultures coming into contact could assimilate with each other. But when they were too incompatible, the conflict was usually solved in favor of the party with a higher political/social status (in a hypergamous marriage). When negotiating cross-

¹³⁵ The treaty between Šuppiluliuma I and Šattiwaza of Mittani granted elevated status to future offsprings of this diplomatic marriage: “Prince Shattiwaza shall be king in the land of Mittanni, and the daughter of the King of Ḫatti shall be queen in the land of Mittanni. Concubines will be allowed for you, Shattiwaza, but no other woman shall be greater than my daughter. You shall allow no other woman to be her equal, and none shall sit as an equal beside her. You shall not degrade my daughter to a second rank. In the land of Mittanni she shall exercise queenship. The sons of Shattiwaza and the sons of my daughter - their sons and grandsons - [shall] in the future be equals in the land of Mittanni. In the future the Mittannians shall indeed not plan rebellion against Prince SḪattuḫwaza, against my daughter, the queen, [against his sons], or against his grandsons. In the future Prince Shattiwaza shall be a brother and equal [to my sons], and the sons of Prince Shattiwaza - his (!) and grandsons [...] - shall be brothers and equals to my grandsons” (A obv. 59-67). Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 40-41.

¹³⁶ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 140-43, 216-17, 224-25. Bányai proposed to identify the king of Zulabi/Zulapa with the dethroned and banished Muršili III/Urḫi-Tešub. Michael Bányai, “Ist Urḫi-Tešup der König von Zulapa?,” *Anatolica: Annuaire internationale pour les civilisations de l’asie anterieure* 36 (2010): 1–16.

cultural diplomatic marriages, some Late Bronze Age rulers noted varying cultural practices and acted preemptively to prevent potential problems.

The best example of this is Šuppiluliuma I's insertion of a special clause in the vassal treaty he signed with Ḫuqqana of Ḫayaša, a polity in northeastern Anatolia. Following typical Hittite political behavior, he married a daughter to this vassal ruler, but having noted the peculiar sexual conduct (from the Hittite perspective) of the Ḫayaša people, Šuppiluliuma I included several injunctions (with a cautionary tale/admonitory anecdote) in the treaty with Ḫuqqana to make sure that the latter's sexual conduct adhered to Hittite customs.¹³⁷ The clause admonished Ḫuqqana not to have sexual intercourse with his sisters-in-law, as Hittite customs prohibited incestuous relationships with one's sisters and female cousins. The insertion of this clause did not simply attest to a difference in custom; it was also reflective of the imbalance of power between the two contracting parties. The topic of "appropriate" sexual behaviors was not brought up in the Egypto-Hittite matrimonial dossier (or in the year 21 peace treaty if the idea of a diplomatic marriage was conceived then), even though the Egyptian royal house had a long tradition of brother-sister and father-daughter incestuous marriages.¹³⁸

4.2.2. Ritual and Ceremonial Aspects of Diplomatic Marriages

In most cultures, diplomatic marriages were characterized by rituals and ceremonies, and the ancient Near East is no exception. Early sources like the Ebla Royal Rituals recorded the whole set of rituals

¹³⁷ The treaty stipulates: "Furthermore, this sister whom I, My Majesty, have given to you as your wife has many sisters from her own family as well as from her extended family. They belong to your extended family because you have taken their sister. But for Ḫatti it is an important custom that a brother does not take his sister or female cousin (sexually). It is not permitted. In Ḫatti whoever commits such an act does not remain alive but is put to death here. Because your land is barbaric, it is in conflict (?). (There) one quite regularly takes his sister or female cousin. But in Ḫatti it is not permitted. And if on occasion a sister of your wife, or the wife of a brother, or a female cousin comes to you, give her something to eat and drink. Both of you eat, drink, and make merry! But you shall not desire to take her (sexually). It is not permitted, and people are put to death as a result of that act" (CTH 42). Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 27-28.

¹³⁸ Paul J. Frandsen, *Incestuous and Close-Kin Marriage in Ancient Egypt and Persia: An Examination of the Evidence* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2009). Russell Middleton, "Brother-Sister and Father-Daughter Marriage in Ancient Egypt," *American Sociological Review* 27, no. 5 (1962): 603-11.

for the weddings of the Eblaite kings.¹³⁹ For a marriage to take effect, the following rituals were performed:

1. The giving of the bride-price; 2. Delivering of gifts from the groom's family for the main members of the bride's family; 3. Pouring of oil on the bride's head; 4. Delivery of the veil to the bride from the groom; 5. Delivery of the dowry to the bride; 6. Covering of the bride's head with the veil.¹⁴⁰

On the first day of the wedding, the mundane affairs of the wedding were taken care of in the bride's ancestral house: 1. Deliver of the bride-price and gifts to the bride's family; 2. Giving of a first "offering" (one golden bracelet) to the bride by the groom; 3. Sacrifice to the Sun deity and the god of the bride's father; 4. Pouring of olive oil on the bride's head; 5. Traveling of the bride to *Bí-na-áš(ki)* for her honeymoon and carrying of travel provisions and animal sacrifice to the gods of the bride's ancestral house by the groom; 6. A second "offering" (one golden plaque and two dresses) for the bride by the groom.¹⁴¹ The offering ritual was likely accompanied by divination, as a favorable omen was reported in a text concerning a royal wedding at Ebla: "the traveling agent of Ib-rí-um, (who) brought the news (to) the king's mother (i.e. to *Du-si-gú*) of the favorable omen, which is that of the god of the father of Tabūr-damu, queen of Ebla." Bonechi proposed that the two sheep were sacrificed to inquire the gods whether the queen would bear a child soon.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Chinese ruling elites of the Spring and Autumn period followed a similar set of complex betrothal and wedding rites: e.g., divination by tortoise shell and/or milfoil to determine the auspiciousness of initiating the betrothal and marriage process, initial inquiry concerning the possibility of marriage, finalization of marriage agreement, informing the ancestors before fetching the bride, escort of the bride, joint visit to the ancestral temple by the couple before the marriage, and visit to the bride's parents/natal family. Many of these rites survived until today and are observed in marriages of lesser social status. Melvin P. Thatcher, "Marriages of the Ruling Elite in the Spring and Autumn Period," in *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, ed. Rubie S. Watson and Patricia B. Ebrey (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 35–36.

¹⁴⁰ Marco Bonechi, "A Passive, and Therefore Prized, Bride. New Proposals for the Queen's Wedding in the Ebla Royal Rituals," *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 110, no. 1 (2016): 53.

¹⁴¹ Marco Bonechi, "A Passive, and Therefore Prized, Bride. New Proposals for the Queen's Wedding in the Ebla Royal Rituals," *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 110, no. 1 (2016): 53–78.

¹⁴² Marco Bonechi, "A Passive, and Therefore Prized, Bride. New Proposals for the Queen's Wedding in the Ebla Royal Rituals," *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 110, no. 1 (2016): 53–78.

Subsequent rituals to be performed after the queen's arrival at Ebla include changing into special nuptial garments and jewelry, offerings to the local deities, and veiling of her head (indicating her new, married status).¹⁴³ These rituals had a more religious and ceremonial aspect, which highlighted the political nature of the marital union; therefore, they were performed in a more public setting, i.e., the Cultivated-Land between the city gate and the temple, and were probably attended by cheering crowds.¹⁴⁴ Although a similar document of marriage rituals does not exist for the Late Bronze Age, many of these rituals were sporadically attested in the diplomatic letters, e.g., anointing the prospective bride, public display of dowry and bride-price, marriage celebration/banquet, and informing the gods.

4.2.2.1. Meeting and Anointing the Prospective Brides

After the royal father of the bride gave his formal consent, the bridegroom (in most cases, the Egyptian king) would dispatch his envoys as proxies to view the princess and pour oil on her head.¹⁴⁵ This anointment ritual was a rite of passage that marked the new status of the chosen princess as betrothed.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Marco Bonechi, "A Passive, and Therefore Prized, Bride. New Proposals for the Queen's Wedding in the Ebla Royal Rituals," *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 110, no. 1 (2016): 53–78.

¹⁴⁴ Marco Bonechi, "A Passive, and Therefore Prized, Bride. New Proposals for the Queen's Wedding in the Ebla Royal Rituals," *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 110, no. 1 (2016): 53–78.

¹⁴⁵ The use of proxy to perform rituals in long-stance diplomatic marriages is attested in early modern Europe. The Valois princess Christine of Lorraine was married to Grand duke Ferdinando I de' Medici by a proxy wedding. Giulia Galastro, "Wondrous Welcome: Materiality and the Senses in Diplomatic Hospitality in Sixteenth-Century Genoa," in *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World c.1410-1800*, ed. Tracey A. Sowerby and Jan Hennings, Routledge Research in Early Modern History (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 98.

¹⁴⁶ The anointment ritual was also performed on (vassal) kings on the occasion of their enthronement/investiture. Thutmose III made Taku a king in Nuḥašše and poured oil on his head to sanctify this appointment (EA 51). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 122.

The Mittanian,¹⁴⁷ Babylonian,¹⁴⁸ Hittite,¹⁴⁹ and Arzawan¹⁵⁰ matrimonial dossiers all mentioned anointing the bride with oil, which seems to be an ancient Near Eastern betrothal ritual.¹⁵¹ A letter from Ugarit mentioned ointment for a princess kept in “her horn” in Amurru; though the context of its usage is not clear, it could be used for an anointment ritual, in view of the tradition of diplomatic marriages between the two kingdoms.¹⁵² As the anointment ritual was not part of Egyptian marriage procedures, this shows that the Egyptian kings were willing to accommodate the marriage rites of non-Egyptians (while retaining his status

¹⁴⁷ Tušratta wrote to Amenhotep III: “[...] Mane, your envoy, [...] and you have sent a gift of in the form of fine oil for her head [...] and you have anointed her head with oil; my brother’s [wife] is? the Lady of the land of Egypt, and ... all [...] has he taken [...]” (EA 24: 59-64). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 193.

¹⁴⁸ Like his father, Akhenaten also negotiated for the hand of a Babylonian princess, this time the daughter of Burna-Buriaš II. The Egyptian messenger and interpreter poured oil on the head of the daughter of Burna-Buriaš II (EA 11: 16-22). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 100-1. The ritual was not observed in Babylonia itself. Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016), 79.

¹⁴⁹ In a letter which queen Puduḥepa received from Ramesses II, he wrote about pouring “good oil on the head”. There is no evidence of this being an Egyptian tradition. If this was the case, then by complying with this custom, Egypt was compromising its image on an international level. Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 224.

¹⁵⁰ Judging from EA 29, the anointment ritual took place after the bride’s father gave consent and before the exchange of bride price and dowry (EA 29: 16-27). Assuming this was the normal procedure, it seems necessary to reverse the chronological order of the two Arzawan letters (EA 31 and EA 32). It is generally assumed that EA 31 and EA 32 belong to the same matrimonial dossier and that they were exchanged between the same correspondents. However, as Pintore observed, in addition to their shared subject (diplomatic marriage), the only connection between them is the language; in addition, the names of messengers in EA 31 (Iršappa) and EA 32 (Kalbaya) are different. Assuming that EA 31 and EA 32 did belong to the same matrimonial dossier, the latter probably predated the former for two reasons: 1. The scribe of EA 32 entreated his Egyptian colleague to compose future letters in Hittite, if EA 31 predates EA 32, then such a request would seem redundant; 2. EA 31 seems to document matrimonial procedures at a pretty advanced stage, as Amenhotep III was sending his messenger to see the designated princess and perform the anointment ritual. If EA 31 represents a marriage proposal, then Amenhotep III’s action indicated that he automatically assumed Tarḫundaradu’s acceptance of his proposal. This does not seem likely, as Arzawa was not politically subjugated by Egypt. Therefore, it makes more sense to place EA 32 before EA 31. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 93. Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientalis antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l’Oriente, 1978), 33.

¹⁵¹ Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016), 72-82. This betrothal ritual is also known in the Middle Assyrian Laws (MAL A42, 43). Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 169.

¹⁵² Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016), 79-80.

as a *primus inter pares*) when dealing with an equal and even a king of inferior political status at the prenuptial stage. Meier commented on the Egyptian kings' willingness to follow the foreign custom of anointing the prospective bride: "If this submission is voluntary, it represents a remarkable reversal of centuries of momentum in aversion to all things foreign."¹⁵³

4.2.2.2. Public Display of Dowry and Bride-Price

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the exchange of diplomatic gifts had a strong ceremonial aspect, highlighted by a public display of the gifts (epitomized by the Egyptian *ms inw* ceremony). The ceremonial aspect of diplomatic marriages, especially those concluded between two great powers, was probably more pronounced than that of diplomatic gift exchanges because they occurred less frequently. Understandably, nubile and beautiful princesses were always in shorter supply than prestigious goods suitable for diplomatic gift exchanges. Therefore, when diplomatic marriages did take place, the ancient Near Eastern kings would not miss the chance to display and reaffirm their status and wealth through a public display of the lavish dowry and bride-price. Hence, Tušratta encouraged the pharaoh to assemble the entire land for a public display of the lavish dowry of his daughter (EA 24: 24-34).¹⁵⁴ Maathorneferure's dowry, consisting of various valuables and large herds of cattle and horses, was in a way "put on display" as it traveled from Ḫatti to Egypt, and it would have been viewed with awe and envy by the Levantine rulers.¹⁵⁵ A public display of marital gifts was also known in the Mari Age; e.g., Yarim-Lim I of Yamḥad

¹⁵³ Samuel A. Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 169.

¹⁵⁴ Thus wrote Tušratta: "And the entire land may my brother assemble, and may all other lands and the nobles (and all envoys be present. And they may show his dowry to my brother, and they may spread out everything in the view of my brother ... And may my brother take all the nobles and all the envoys and all other lands and the war charioteers whom my brother desires, and may my brother go. And may he spread out the dowry and may it be pleasing." William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 67.

¹⁵⁵ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 95.

assembled the kings of his land to exhibit the luxurious gifts he and his family received from his prospective son-in-law, Zimri-Lim of Mari.¹⁵⁶

4.2.2.3. Travel of the Bridal Party

Likewise, the escort of the princess to her destination was not simply a matter of logistics.¹⁵⁷ A sizeable military escort was necessary to ensure that the princess could travel unmolested to her new country; it would also allow her to travel in style, befitting her status as the daughter of a great king and the future wife of another. The two Mittanian princesses very likely received a large military escort, judging from the value of their dowry and the size of their retinue. Burna-Buriaš II obviously felt insulted by the 5 chariots dispatched by Akhenaten: “With Haya there are only five chariots. With five chariots will they take her to you? But now, should I send her to you [from m]y [house], the neighboring kings [will say, sa]ying ‘The daughter of the great king have they borne to Egypt with (only) five chariots!’” (EA 11: 16-22).¹⁵⁸ And he reminded the pharaoh that when his father sent his daughter to Egypt, three thousand Egyptian troops were sent for escort duty (EA 11: 23-28).¹⁵⁹ In fact, Burna-Buriaš II’s bitter complaint

¹⁵⁶ Messengers of Zimri-Lim reported to their lord: “This later presentation, much as the previous one, was (deemed) sufficient. As to Yarim-Lim, beaming he told me, ‘Your previous presentation, what should I do (with it)? There has never been (such a display) from any of the kings, (even) now that the kings of the entire country are assembled.’” (ARM 26.11). Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 108-9.

¹⁵⁷ During the Middle Assyrian period, foreign delegations to Assyria received provisions from local Assyrian authorities. In the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I, a Hittite delegation, an Egyptian delegation, and an Amorite one received rations through such a service; the Hittite mission, being the most prominent one, received additional supplies. Betina Faist, “Itineraries and Travellers in the Middle Assyrian Period,” *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 15 (2006): 147–60.

¹⁵⁸ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 100-1.

¹⁵⁹ Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 102-3.

paints a vivid picture that reminds one of the Nubian tribute scene in the tomb of Huy (TT40), which depicts the arrival of a Nubian princess in a single chariot drawn by oxen.¹⁶⁰

The practical need for and symbolic significance of proper escort was also on the mind of Puduḥepa, who made arrangements with Ramesses II so that Maathorneferure could travel to Egypt safely and with dignity. In addition, Hittite troops were assigned to protect the bridal party from harm; more significantly, the Crown Prince Nerikkaili was put in charge of the escort duty (KUB 3.40, obv. 1-5).¹⁶¹ In response to Puduḥepa's request for escort (and provisions), Ramesses II promptly ordered two Egyptian governors of two Levantine cities, one in Upi and the other in Canaan, to escort the bridal party to Egypt (KUB 3.57, obv. -2-16).¹⁶² The Egyptian escort would probably have received the bridal party in Upi and guided them southwards through Canaan to Egypt; the joint delegation could also have expected to receive supplies from Egyptian vassals and imperial officials along the way. The Egyptian record inscribed on the Marriage Stela provided a more emotionally-charged account of the journey of Maathorneferure,¹⁶³ the text even mentioned that Ramesses II prayed to Sutekh/Seth for favorable weather conditions lest the bridal

¹⁶⁰ Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. 28. Oxen-drawn chariots/wagons were generally used for transporting heavy objects like coffins or shrines, and were less frequently attested in ancient Egyptian pictorial records. Heidi Köpp-Junk, "Wagons and Carts and Their Significance in Ancient Egypt," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 9, no. 0 (2016): 14–58. Traveling by horse-drawn chariots was more prestigious than riding oxen-drawn chariots or riding donkeys. After the Battle of Megiddo, Thutmose III spared the lives of the rebellious Levantine rulers, but subjugated them to public humiliation by confiscating their horses and forcing them to ride on donkeys. James K. Hoffmeier, "The Gebel Barkal Stela of Thutmose III (2.2B)," in *The Context of Scripture. Volume II: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), vol. 2, 16.

¹⁶¹ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 146-47.

¹⁶² Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 144-45.

¹⁶³ The inscription presents a vivid account of the bridal journey and Ramesses II's anxious feeling to see his bride: "Then one came to inform His Majesty, saying: 'See, the Great Ruler of Ḫatti has sent his eldest daughter, with tribute of every kind; they (fairly) cover the roads with their [going] - the Princess of Ḫatti, together with all the grantees of the Ḫatti-land. They have traversed many and remote mountains and difficult passes, and they have reached His Majesty's (Syrian) frontier. Let the army and the officials go out to welcome them ...' Then His Majesty was thrilled with joy, entering the palace happily when he heard of this marvelous event ... he dispatched the army and officials quickly to welcome them ..." Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 94.

party be delayed.¹⁶⁴ On their way to Egypt, the Hittite and Egyptian officials and troops established fraternal bonds with each other through communal eating and drinking.¹⁶⁵ Amusingly, the inscription also included the (probably fictional) sycophantic response of the Levantine rulers through whose country the bridal party passed.¹⁶⁶ It is not known if any of Maathorneferure's predecessors or successors was escorted by such a large party consisting of royal princes and high-profile imperial officials. Such high levels of representation signaled to the entire international community that both great powers attached great importance to this marital alliance.

Extant evidence was silent on the foreign princesses' journey to the Egyptian royal residence once they entered the Egyptian border. The Nitocris Adoption Stela may help to shed some light on the matter, even if it was a 26th Dynasty (664-625 BCE) royal inscription pertaining to a sacred marriage instead of a diplomatic marriage. The inscription recorded the riverine journey of princess Nitocris, who was dispatched by her father Psamtik I (664-610 BCE) to Thebes to be adopted by the incumbent God's Wife of Amun as her heiress apparent:

“Regnal year 9, first month of Akhet, day 28: Departure from the king's private apartments by his eldest daughter clad in fine linen and adorned with new turquoise. Her attendants about her were many in number, while marshals cleared her way. They set forth happily to the quay in order to head southwards for the Theban nome. The ships about her were in great numbers, the crews consisted of mighty men, all (the ships) being laden up to their gunwales with every good thing of the palace. The commander thereof was the sole friend, the nomarch of Na'r-khant, generalissimo and chief of the harbour Samtowetefnakhte, messengers having sailed up-river to the South to

¹⁶⁴ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 94.

¹⁶⁵ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 94.

¹⁶⁶ According to the Egyptian record, these rulers were overwhelmed by jealousy and fear at the sight of the bridal party along with their Egyptian and Hittite escort. Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 95.

arrange for provisions ahead of her. The sail of the mast was hoisted and the rising wind pricked his nostrils. Her supplies were obtained from each nomarch who was in charge of his (own share of) provisions and was furnished with every good thing, namely bread, beer, oxen, fowl, vegetables, dates, herbs, and every good thing; and one would give (way) to the other until she reached Thebes.

Regnal year 9, second month of Akhet, day 14: Putting to land at the quay of the city of the gods, Thebes. Her front hawser was taken, and she found Thebes with throngs of men and crowds of women standing and jubilating to meet her, surrounded by oxen, fowl, and abundant provisions, many in number. Then they said: ‘Let Nitocris, daughter of the King of Upper Egypt, come to the House of Amūn, that he may receive her and be pleased with her. Let Shepenwepe, daughter of the King of Lower Egypt, come to Ipet-sut, that the gods who are in it may praise her.’¹⁶⁷

As Nitocris’ fleet called at the quays of various cities along the Nile for provisions, news of her southward journey and the purpose of her mission must have reached the provincial officials and even the local population. It would not be farfetched to suggest a similar scenario for the arrival of the New Kingdom pharaohs’ high-status foreign brides.

4.2.2.4. Marriage Celebration

Many ancient and modern societies developed complicated marriage rituals and ceremonies, for people viewed the wedding ceremony as a great occasion for displaying and enhancing their status; therefore, they spent lavishly on ephemeral rituals and the wedding, sometimes even more than they did on dowry and bride price.¹⁶⁸ For the ancient Egyptian commoners, the cohabitation of the couple concluded a marriage, of which a wedding ceremony was not an indispensable procedure.¹⁶⁹ This was not the case with

¹⁶⁷ Ricardo A. Caminos, “The Nitocris Adoption Stela,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 50 (1964): 74.

¹⁶⁸ Patricia B. Ebrey, “Introduction,” in *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, ed. Rubie S. Watson and Patricia B. Ebrey (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 2.

¹⁶⁹ In fact, wedding ceremonies are not attested in textual sources or archaeological contexts. Jaana Toivari-Viitala, *Women at Deir El-Medina: A Study of the Status and Roles of the Female Inhabitants in the Workmen’s Community*

diplomatic marriages. The Marriage Stela (fig. 4.4) presents a detailed account of the ceremonial reception of the Hittite princess at the Egyptian court and the series of celebratory activities held in her honor:

“Now when [the cavalcade] arrived at Pi-Ramesses, he [made] a celebration for them, (of) the great marvel of valour and victory, in Year 34, 3rd month of Peret [Winter], of the King of Southern and Northern Egypt, Usimare Setepenre, Son of Re, Ramesses II, given life.

Then the daughter of the Great Ruler of Ḫatti - who had (now) arrived from travelling to Egypt - was ushered in before His Majesty, with great and rich tribute in her train, limitless, all (manner of) [things]. Then His Majesty beheld her as one fair of features, first among women - the grandees [?honoured her as] a (very) goddess!

Her (Egyptian) [name was proclaimed] (as): ‘The Royal Wife, [Maat-H]or-Neferu-[Re], may she live, - Daughter of the Great Ruler of Ḫatti, - Daughter of [the Great Queen of Hat]ti.’

She was installed in the (Royal) Palace, (in) the king’s Domain, accompanying the Sovereign daily, her name being proclaimed in the [entire?] land.

[.....] ample villas [in her] name, [.....] her [servan]ts from the South and the North.

Then the troops, chariotry, officials of the court, serfs (??), [.....], and ordinary citizens, - they drank together in j[o]y, [.....], (for) King of S & N Egypt, Usimare Setepenre, Son of Re, Ramesses II, given life.”¹⁷⁰

These celebratory activities included: 1. A celebration (of unknown nature); 2. Formal presentation of the Hittite princess to Ramesses II (along with her rich dowry) and the Egyptian nobles in the palace; 3. Name change and bestowal of queenly title; 4. Installation in the palace; 5. Endowment of property (and land?) and servants; 6. Celebratory banquet. The spirit of equality and comradeship that characterized the

during the Ramesside Period, Egyptologische Uitgaven 15 (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2001), 49. Little is known about ancient Egyptian royal marriages. Amenhotep III’s issuing of large commemorative scarabs to celebrate his union with Tiye is exceptional. C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 21-56.

¹⁷⁰ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 95-96.

inscription suggests that the scribe consulted the diplomatic letters (e.g., KUB 3.24 + KUB 3.59, KUB 3.83) and used their language of friendship when composing the text.¹⁷¹ In view of Ramesses II's admiration of Amenhotep III and his numerous attempts to imitate the latter's accomplishments, it is surprising that he did not issue commemorative scarabs in celebration of his "acquisition" of the daughter of a great king. Instead, commemorative stelae were installed in his temples in Egypt and Nubia, presumably to inform the gods (Sutekh/Seth and Ptah) of his diplomatic success and to thank them for their patronage (fig. 4.4).¹⁷²

The Egyptian envisioning of a divine audience¹⁷³ for the wedding was strongly hinted at by the scene in the lunette of the Marriage Stela, which depicts Maathorneferure and Ḫattušili III paying homage to the enthroned Ramesses II, who was flanked by two seated gods (Sutekh/Seth and Ptah) under a kiosk (fig. 4.4).¹⁷⁴ Admittedly, Egyptian sources like the Marriage Stela must be used with caution because they were of a different nature than the cuneiform documents; the latter were generated by the process of marriage negotiation and were less distorted by ideological biases. In contrast, the Egyptian sources were propagandistic texts commissioned by the king for his own glorification; their content, format, and place of deposition reveal their intended audience: i.e., the divine and a select group of literate elites and priests who had access to the temple precincts. For this group of special audience, the Marriage Stela reinvented the exchange context of this equal diplomatic marriage, portraying it as a presentation of a tribute-type wife by a defeated enemy to the pharaoh (fig. 4.4).¹⁷⁵ This contradicted the principle of parity embodied in a letter

¹⁷¹ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 138-39, 164-65.

¹⁷² Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 86-110.

¹⁷³ Divine presence and influence were ubiquitous in Late Bronze Age diplomacy. They sanctified and secured treaties as witnesses and oversaw the exchange of diplomatic gifts. Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).

¹⁷⁴ Marjorie Fisher, "A Diplomatic Marriage in the Ramesside Period: Maathorneferure, Daughter of the Great Ruler of Ḫatti," in *Beyond Ḫatti: A Tribute to Gary Beckman*, ed. Billie Jean Collins and Piotr Michalowski (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 78-79.

¹⁷⁵ The accompanying inscription deviated from historical reality, depicting the Hittite princess as a superior form of tribute offered by a vassal to his lord. Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 93.

from Ramesses II to Puduhepa, in which he enthusiastically declared that the Hittite princess was intended for rulership in Egypt.¹⁷⁶ This statement expressed the wish that the physical union effected by the royal couple would produce an intermingling of their respective peoples at a political and ideological level.

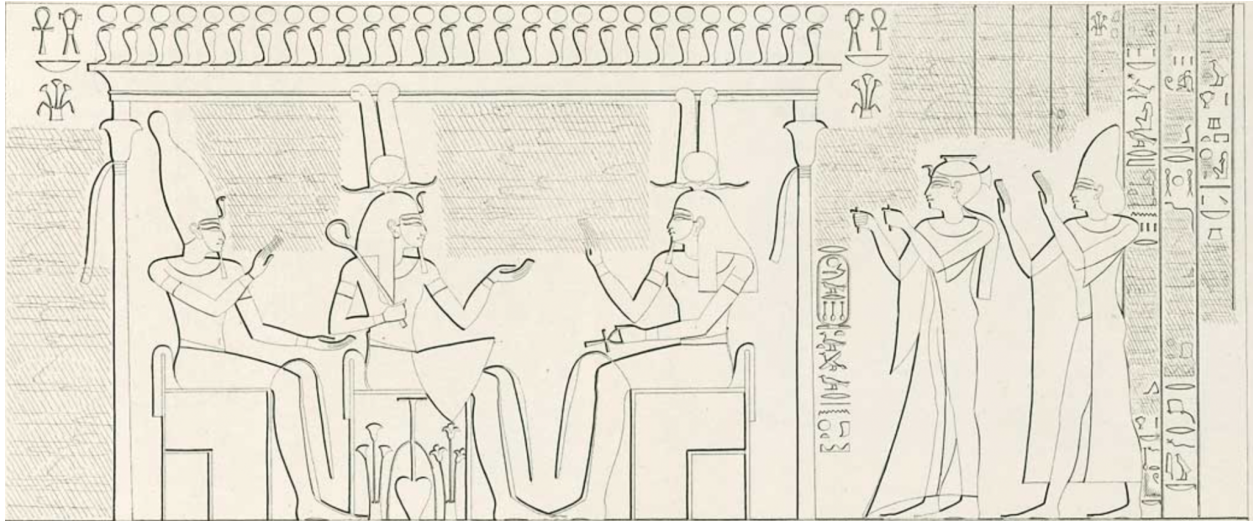


Figure 4.4. The Marriage Stela of Ramesses II. Richard Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien: nach den Zeichnungen der von Seiner Majestät dem Könige von Preussen Friedrich Wilhelm IV nach diesen Ländern gesendeten und in den Jahren 1842-1845 ausgeführten wissenschaftlichen Expedition*, 12 vols. (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970), vol. 8, pl. 169a.

Liverani keenly observed that the Egyptian procedure for diplomatic marriage followed a two-act pattern: 1. Negotiation predicated on acceptance of the conventional parity; 2. Propaganda presentation directed at the inner public according to the orthodox ideology.¹⁷⁷ This pattern is especially applicable to the second Hittite marriage, about which very little is known. This event was recorded on a stela from Coptos and another from Abydos.¹⁷⁸ The former text assumed the form of a royal edit but had a religious

¹⁷⁶ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 106-9.

¹⁷⁷ Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 193-94. He probably derived his insight from a comparative study of the cuneiform matrimonial dossiers and the Egyptian celebratory texts, which focus on marriage negotiations and propagandistic celebration of the marital union, respectively.

¹⁷⁸ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 110-12.

character, ascribing Ramesses II's diplomatic success and glory to the favor of the god Ptah.¹⁷⁹ The better-preserved text on the Coptos Stela bore a strong resemblance to accounts of the first marriage and was probably modeled after them.¹⁸⁰

Some scenes on Hittite relief vases, e.g., the İnandık Vase (figs. 4.5a-b) and the Bitik Vase (fig. 4.5c-d), from the Old Kingdom period (1650-1400 BCE) depict royal/sacred wedding ceremonies.¹⁸¹ The İnandık Vase bears four registers of scenes of processions and many celebratory activities associated with the wedding. The protagonist (assumed to be the king) appears in the second register (from the bottom), sacrificing a bull to a bull deity (probably the Stormgod). The third register depicts a temple scene, in which the groom, sitting on a red and white bed with the bride, lifts the veil from her head. The marriage rites culminate in the fourth and topmost register, at the far end of which the new couple engage in sexual intercourse.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 110-12.

¹⁸⁰ The relevant section on the Coptos Stela reads: "The Great Ruler of Ḫatti sent the rich and massive spoils of Ḫatti, the rich and massive spoils of Gasga, the rich and massive spoils of Arzawa, the rich and massive spoils of Qode - which could not (even) be known in writing - to the King of S & N Egypt, Usimare Setepenre, Son of Ra, Ramesses II, and likewise, many droves of horses, many herds of cattle, many flocks of goats, many droves of game, before his other Daughter, whom he sent to the King of S & N Egypt, Usimare Setepenre, Son of Re, Ramesses II, given life, to Egypt, on what was the second (such) occasion. It was not the troops who brought them, it was not the [chariotry] who brought them, - (but) the might of the Gods of the land of Egypt, and (of) the Gods of every foreign country" Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 111-12. Admittedly, some features of a symmetrical view of the marriage were accepted in the celebratory texts: 1. The Submission of the Hittites was spontaneous and not the consequence of a military defeat; 2. The gods of both countries worked together to facilitate such an event.

¹⁸¹ Marie-Henriette Gates, "Gods, Temples, and Cult at the Service of the Early Hittite State," in *At the Dawn of History: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of J. N. Postgate*, ed. Yağmur Heffron, Adam Stone, and Martin Worthington (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 189-210.

¹⁸² Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016), 106-7.

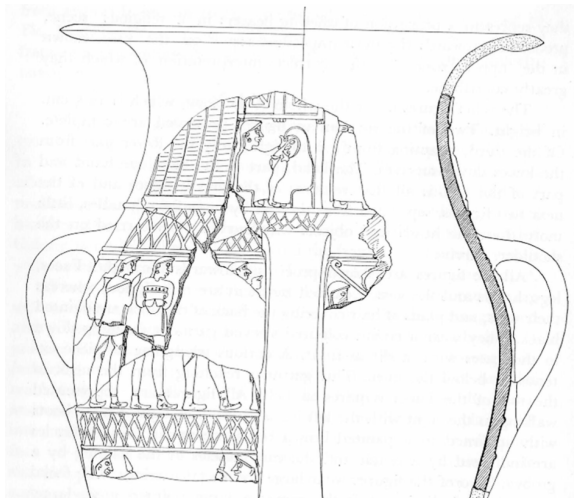
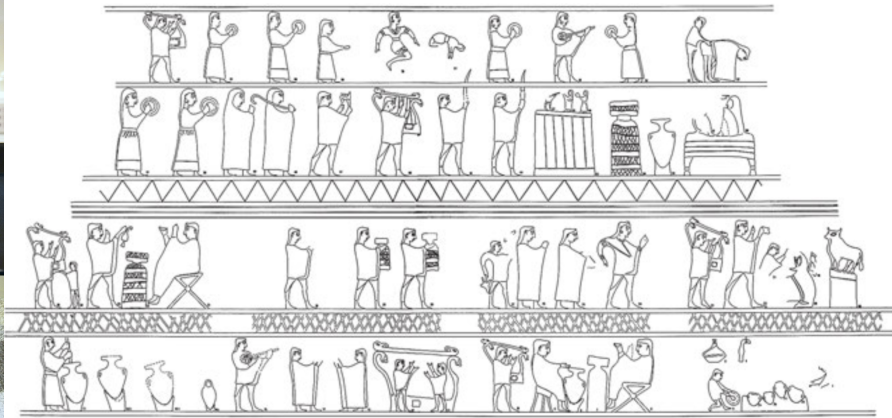


Figure 4.5a. Photo of the Inandık Vase. “Inandık Vase,” accessed February 19, 2023, <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q6085567>. Figure 4.5b. Images on the Inandık Vase representing a marriage celebration. Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016), fig. 12. Figure 4.5c. Drawing of a marriage scene on the Bitik Vase. Tahsin Özgüç, “The Bitik Vase,” *Anatolia: Journal of the Archaeology Department of the Faculty of Letters 2* (1957): fig. 1. Figure 4.5d. Bitik Vase, detail of the top register. Source: D. Osseman.

The Bitik Vase (ca. 1550 BCE) preserves three horizontal registers of heavily damaged relief scenes, of which the lower register is almost completely lost.¹⁸³ The middle register portrays a procession of six figures carrying vases, a jug, and an object that resembles a littus. The climax scene in the top register

¹⁸³ Tahsin Özgüç, “The Bitik Vase,” *Anatolia: Journal of the Archaeology Department of the Faculty of Letters 2* (1957): 57–78.

depicts a man and a woman sitting face-to-face in a portico in a large mud brick building. The man was lifting the veil of the woman with his right hand and handing her a drink with his left hand.¹⁸⁴ Covering the bride with a veil, which will be lifted by the groom on the wedding night,¹⁸⁵ represents another ancient Near Eastern betrothal ritual that could be traced to the Eblaite era and the Mari age.¹⁸⁶ Middle Assyrian Laws (MAL A 40) stipulated that married women should go out with their heads veiled while unmarried women could leave their head bare; prostitutes and slave women, on the other hand, were forbidden to have their heads covered and would be punished if they did so.¹⁸⁷ However, it was not clear if veiling was part of royal marriages or diplomatic marriages in the Late Bronze Age, as none of the matrimonial dossiers mentioned the veiling/unveiling ritual for Late Bronze Age diplomatic marriages.

Other rituals depicted on these Hittite relief vases, e.g., banqueting, music, entertainment, unveiling, and offering to the divine, may also have been present in diplomatic marriages. Babylonian texts on the sacred marriage ritual may also inform studies of royal and diplomatic marriages.¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless, drawing analogies between cross-cultural diplomatic marriages and marriages between couples belonging

¹⁸⁴ Tahsin Özgüç, “The Bitik Vase,” *Anatolia: Journal of the Archaeology Department of the Faculty of Letters 2* (1957): 62–63. This is extremely reminiscent of the Chinese marriage rituals of unveiling the bride on the wedding night and the couple drinking wine cross-armed to signify mutual devotion.

¹⁸⁵ It has been suggested that the use of the word “to know” in the Bible to refer to sexual relations derived from the groom’s knowing of the bride’s face by lifting her veil on the wedding night. Theodor H. Gaster, *The Holy and the Profane: Evolution of Jewish Folkways* (New York: W. Sloane Associates, 1955), 104.

¹⁸⁶ The messengers of Zimri-Lim of Mari dropped veils on Šiptu, a daughter of Yarim-Lim, in order to finalize her marriage to Zimri-Lim (ARM 26.10). Wolfgang Heimpel, *Letters to the King of Mari: A New Translation, with Historical Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 559-60.

¹⁸⁷ A man could elevate his concubine to the status of *aššutu*-wife by publicly veiling her in the presence of his comrades (MAL A 41). Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 167-69.

¹⁸⁸ E. Douglas Van Buren, “The Sacred Marriage in Early Times in Mesopotamia,” *Orientalia* 13 (1944): 1–72. Samuel Noah Kramer, “The Dumuzi-Inanna Sacred Marriage Rite,” in *Actes de La XVII. rencontre assyriologique internationale*, ed. André Finet, Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale 17 (Bruxelles: Comité belge de recherches historiques, épigraphiques et archéologiques en Mésopotamie, 1970), 135–41. R. F. G. Sweet, “A New Look at the ‘Sacred Marriage’ in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in *Corolla Torontoniensis: Studies in Honour of Ronald Morton Smith*, ed. Emmet Robbins and Stella Sandahl (Toronto: TSAR, 1994), 85–104. Thorkild Jacobsen, “The Sacred Marriage of Iddin-Dagan and Inanna (1.173),” in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 554–59.

to a culturally homogenous group could be problematic and misleading. Furthermore, the extent to which diplomatic marriages (exogamous, hypergamous, and polygamous) conformed to marriage customs that applied to lower levels of society remains to be established.

4.2.2.5. Informing the Gods

The ubiquitous influence of the divine in Late Bronze Age diplomacy is also manifest in the realm of diplomatic marriage. As the gods were often given credit for helping to forge diplomatic alliances, it is appropriate and necessary to inform them of the successful conclusion of diplomatic marriages. Amenhotep III shared the news of his marriage with Giluḥepa with the gods by sending them large commemorative scarabs, one of which was dispatched to the Buhen temple of Horus (no. E8 in Blankenberg-van Delden).¹⁸⁹ Ramesses II set up commemorative stelae in various temples in Egypt and Nubia to celebrate his two Hittite marriages.¹⁹⁰

Divine involvement in royal and diplomatic marriages was attested in the ancient Near East throughout the millennia. The Ebla Royal Rituals record the offering of animal sacrifice to the god of the bride's father and the Sun deity, presumably to request their blessings for the marriage.¹⁹¹ Upon her arrival in Ebla, the new queen would visit the temple of Kura (the god of Ebla) and make offerings to the various deities there.¹⁹² On the other end of the chronological spectrum, the Neo-Assyrian kings probably also informed and thanked the gods after the successful conclusion of diplomatic marriages, since they consulted

¹⁸⁹ John Baines, "On the Genre and Purpose of the 'Large Commemorative Scarabs' of Amenhotep III," in *Hommages a Fayza Haikal*, ed. Nicolas Grimal, Amr Kamel, and Cynthia M. Sheikholeslami (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2003), 32.

¹⁹⁰ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 86-112.

¹⁹¹ Marco Bonechi, "A passive, and therefore prized, Bride. New Proposals for the Queen's Wedding in the Ebla Royal Rituals," *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 110, no. 1 (2016): 53-78.

¹⁹² Alfonso Archi, "Ritualization at Ebla," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 13, no. 2 (2013): 228-29.

divine oracles before marrying their daughters off to foreign kings.¹⁹³ The blessings of the gods were also sought for non-royal weddings in Mesopotamia. An Old Babylonian text (UET 5 636) that recorded wedding and related expenses kept for the father of a bride mentioned the bringing of offerings to temples in Ur (where the bride's family lived) and Larsa (where the groom's family lived); it is reasonable to suggest that the offerings served to propitiate the gods so that they would bless the new couple.¹⁹⁴

4.2.3. After the Conclusion of Marriage: Conflict of Identities and Loyalties?

The social life of diplomatic letters practically ended once they were read and archived by their recipients; as the information they contained became outdated, they would be discarded or recycled to make new tablets.¹⁹⁵ In contrast, some diplomatic gifts continued to serve as reminders of cordial relations between the exchange partners and index the exchange contexts. Diplomatic marriage was distinct from these two forms of intercultural communications because the physical being of a foreign princess “served as a long-term presence and living embodiment of reciprocated friendly feelings established between two kingdoms”;¹⁹⁶ its impact was more profound and long-lasting because it created affinal kinship and sometimes real blood ties. Rather than being mere pawns in the game of diplomacy dominated by male participants, some princesses exercised agency and played significant roles.

¹⁹³ Ivan Starr, ed., *Queries to the Sungod: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria*, State Archives of Assyria 4 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1990), 24-25.

¹⁹⁴ Samuel Greengus, “Old Babylonian Marriage Ceremonies and Rites,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 20, no. 2 (1966): 55–58.

¹⁹⁵ Harry A. Hoffner, *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 47.

¹⁹⁶ Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an “International Style” in the Ancient Near East, 1400 - 1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 68.

4.2.3.1. Acculturation or Adherence to Native Culture

To survive and thrive in their new home country, the foreign princesses had to cope with issues like language barriers and cultural differences. Some might be given leeway to adhere to their native culture, while others might have no choice but to assimilate to the local culture. A princess from a great power, with a large retinue that accompanied her, might be able to re-establish a familiar environment in an unfamiliar cultural environment. However, the daughter of a vassal ruler, e.g., the three Syrian wives of Thutmose III, probably felt more pressure to conform to the mainstream culture, to dress and conduct themselves like Egyptian women, and to embrace Egyptian religious beliefs.

While the three Syrian wives of Thutmose III and the two Mittanian princesses kept their original names,¹⁹⁷ the first Hittite princess was given an Egyptian name Maathorneferure (*mꜣ.t-ḥr-nfr.w-rꜥ*, meaning “One who sees Horus, the splendors of Re”), which indexed her relationship with Ramesses II (i.e., Horus).¹⁹⁸ This should be interpreted as a sign of royal favor and a testimony to the political significance assigned to this marital union. Native Egyptian queens and female pharaohs would adopt throne names, birth names, and epithets that associated them with their royal husbands. The enigmatic female pharaoh Neferneferuaten (most likely Nefertiti) who occupied the throne briefly after the Amarna period bore the throne name *nh(t)-ḥpr.w-rꜥ mri-wꜥ-n-rꜥ* Ankh(et)kheperura Mery-Waenra “The (very) life of the manifestation of Ra, beloved of Waenra (Akhenaten)” and the birth name *nfr-nfr.w-itn ḥ.t-n-h(i)-s* Neferneferuaten “Perfect is the perfection of Aten, effective for her husband”.¹⁹⁹ Precedents can be found

¹⁹⁷ Conclusive evidence for an identification of Kiya with Taduḥepa, first suggested by Manniche and followed by Reeves, is lacking. Lisa Manniche, “The Wife of Bata,” *Göttingen Miszellen* 18 (1975): 33–38. C. Nicholas Reeves, “New Light on Kiya from Texts in the British Museum,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 74 (1988): 91–101.

¹⁹⁸ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 95-96.

¹⁹⁹ James P. Allen, “The Amarna Succession,” in *Causing His Name to Live: Studies in Egyptian Epigraphy and History in Memory of William J. Murnane*, ed. Peter J. Brand and Louise Cooper, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 37 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 9–20. According to Josephus, Manetho mentions Achenchersês, the daughter of a king that ruled for 12 years toward the end of the dynasty. Considering Nefertiti’s non-royal background, he probably conflated her with an Amarna princess or Smenkhkare. Manetho and W. G. Waddell, *History of Egypt and Other Works*, Loeb Classical Library 350 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 115.

in the Old Kingdom period: the two daughters of the powerful nomarch Khui of Abydos who married Pepi I (2321-2287 BCE) both bear the name *nh-s-n-ppy* Ankhesenpepi (meaning “She-lives-for-king-Pepi”), which they presumably took at the time of their marriage.²⁰⁰

In many cultures, including ancient Egypt, the name is considered an integral part of a person.²⁰¹ The legend of *Isis and the Name of Re* illustrates the ritual significance of the personal name and its defining nature.²⁰² The prominent role of names in execration texts against foreign enemies similarly demonstrates the belief that the name is an intrinsic element of a person/object/place.²⁰³ The preservation of a person’s name was essential to his/her existence in the afterlife.²⁰⁴ In the realms of politics and diplomacy, names and name changes also carried significance. In the late 18th Dynasty, a Nubian prince (ruler of Miam), being a model Egyptian subject, was awarded an Egyptian name Heqanefer (*hk³-nfr*, meaning “The good ruler”).²⁰⁵ Chancellor Bay, a prominent official during the reign of Siptah, took the name Rameesekhaemnetjeru (“Ramses-risen-together-with-the-gods”) in an inscription at Aswan.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁰ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 59.

²⁰¹ Jan Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005), 89, 112.

²⁰² Robert K. Ritner, “The Legend of Isis and the Name of Re (1.22),” in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), vol. 1, 33–34.

²⁰³ Robert K. Ritner, “Execration Texts (1.32),” in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), vol. 1, 50–52.

²⁰⁴ Hence, the names of disgraced rulers like Hatshepsut were erased from textual records and monuments. Peter F. Dorman, “The Proscription of Hatshepsut,” in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 267–69.

²⁰⁵ William K. Simpson, “Tomb of Hekanefer, Child of the Nursery of Tutankhamun’s Court: An American Excavation in a Nubian Site Threatened by the High Dam,” *Illustrated London News* 238 (1961): 1066–67.

²⁰⁶ Gae Callender, “The Cripple, the Queen and the Man from the North,” *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 17, no. 1 (2006): 52.

While it is certain that the early Levantine princesses (reign of Thutmose III) kept their original names and the first Hittite princess (reign of Ramesses II) adopted an Egyptian name after marriage,²⁰⁷ what happened to other foreign princesses who entered the Egyptian harem within this chronological spectrum could not be established with certainty. Taduḥepa, who married both Amenhotep III and Akhenaten, has been identified with Kiya, a secondary wife of Akhenaten. A royal lady described as *tʿ šps.t <n> nhrn* “the noble (lady) of Nahrin (Mittani)” was mentioned on a funerary cone (no. 527) of the steward of her estate Bengay.²⁰⁸ Based on the rarity of the title *tʿ šps.t*, which was borne by Kiya,²⁰⁹ Manniche proposed an identification of Kiya with the noble lady of Nahrin, who is most probably Taduḥepa.²¹⁰ According to Manniche, Kiya may be a shortened form of Taduḥepa or a pet name meaning “the monkey”.²¹¹ However, judging from the birth name of Hatshepsut (*hʿ.t-šps.wt*), meaning “foremost of the noble ladies”, the title *tʿ šps.t* “the noble one/lady” should not be a rare occurrence at the Egyptian court.²¹² Van Dijk also rejected this equation, partly on the grounds that if Taduḥepa received an Egyptian name, it would have been a more formal court name in the manner of Maathorneferure.²¹³

²⁰⁷ The second Hittite princess also received a name that indexed her relationship with her new husband: Neferura-who-beholds-Horus (i.e., the King). Jacobus Van Dijk, “The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC),” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 290–91.

²⁰⁸ Norman de Garis Davies and M. F. Laming Macadam, *A Corpus of Inscribed Funerary Cones* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), no. 527.

²⁰⁹ W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Tell El-Amarna* (Warminster and Encino: Aris & Phillips Ltd. and Joel L. Malter & Co., 1894), pl. 25.

²¹⁰ Lisa Manniche, “The Wife of Bata,” *Göttingen Miszellen* 18 (1975): 33–38.

²¹¹ Lisa Manniche, “The Wife of Bata,” *Göttingen Miszellen* 18 (1975): 37, n. 20.

²¹² Jürgen von Beckerath, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, Müncher Ägyptologische Studien 49 (Mainz: Phillipp von Zabern, 1999), 134-135, 5:E2.

²¹³ Jacobus van Dijk, “The Noble Lady of Mitanni and Other Royal Favourites of the Eighteenth Dynasty,” in *Essays on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Herman Te Velde*, ed. Jacobus van Dijk (Groningen: Styx Publications, 1997), 35–36.

The rare name Bengay appeared as *imy-r' pr n hn.wt-m-pt* “overseer of the estate of Henutempet”) on funerary cone no. 260²¹⁴ and as a *wab*-priest of Amun on funerary cone no. 528; if all three individuals are identical, then Henutempet is very likely the Egyptian name of the Mittanian noble lady mentioned on cone no. 527.²¹⁵ Indeed, the name Henutempet (*hn.wt-m-pt*), meaning “Mistress-in-the-Sky”, would be more appropriate than Kiya as a court name for a foreign princess.²¹⁶ The coffin of a Henutempet was found in the royal mummy cache at Deir el-Bahri (TT 320); in view of the rarity of this name, the owner of this coffin could have been the Henutempet named on the funerary cone no. 260.²¹⁷ Based on chronological data from two stelae, Van Dijk dated Bengay to the reigns of Amenhotep II and Thutmose IV and proposed to identify the noble lady of Nahrin with the Mittanian princess who married Thutmose IV rather than Taduḥepa/Kiya.²¹⁸ Another possible piece of evidence against identifying Taduḥepa with Kiya is that Giluḥepa’s name was simply transliterated into Egyptian and written with group writing in inscriptions on the Giluḥepa Scarabs.²¹⁹ In any case, available evidence suggests that Egyptian names were only selectively bestowed upon princesses from the great powers; arguably, the public name-changing of a princess from a

²¹⁴ “The World of Funerary Cones - 260,” accessed March 18, 2023, <https://sites.google.com/view/funerarycones/catalogue/260>.

²¹⁵ Jacobus van Dijk, “The Noble Lady of Mitanni and Other Royal Favourites of the Eighteenth Dynasty,” in *Essays on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Herman Te Velde*, ed. Jacobus van Dijk (Groningen: Styx Publications, 1997), 33–34.

²¹⁶ Forbes argued in favor of identifying Kiya as Taduḥepa, claiming that the name fitted the pattern of the two-syllable names of other women (e.g., Tiaa, Thuyu, and Tiye) associated with the Thutmoside family. Dennis Forbes, “Lady in the Large Earrings,” *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 17, no. 3 (2006): 33. However, this argument does not seem convincing as all the examples he cited were probably birth names of non-royal women who later entered the royal family; it is not justifiable to extrapolate a pattern from these names.

²¹⁷ Jacobus van Dijk, “The Noble Lady of Mitanni and Other Royal Favourites of the Eighteenth Dynasty,” in *Essays on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Herman Te Velde*, ed. Jacobus van Dijk (Groningen: Styx Publications, 1997), 33–35.

²¹⁸ Jacobus van Dijk, “The Noble Lady of Mitanni and Other Royal Favourites of the Eighteenth Dynasty,” in *Essays on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Herman Te Velde*, ed. Jacobus van Dijk (Groningen: Styx Publications, 1997), 33–34.

²¹⁹ C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 129-33.

great power, which marked a transformation of her identity and probably a shift of her primary allegiance, would be more politically significant than that of a Levantine princess.

Princesses who married other Near Eastern kings have gone through the same name-changing process. The Babylonian princess who married Šuppiluliuma I adopted the Hittite queenly title *Tawananna* as her new Hittite name.²²⁰ Such post-nuptial changing of names were attested in Mesopotamia: a king renamed his new wife “Šulgi is my ornament”, and ordinary wives adopted names like “my husband is my happiness”.²²¹ When a Mariote princess (daughter of Apil-kīn) married a son of Ur-Nammu, founder of the Ur III Dynasty, she received the name Taram-Uram, meaning “She loves Ur”.²²² The adoption of a Russian name by Catherine the Great represents a modern parallel of such a practice. Relinquishing her German name signified an embracement of her new identity as a Russian queen and her conversion to the Orthodox religion.²²³

For most foreign princesses who entered the Egyptian harem, the most conspicuous indications of their shifted identity were probably their new Egyptian hairstyle, jewelry, and clothing. Lilyquist’s study of the burial assemblages of the three Syrian wives of Thutmose III reveals that these women fully embraced Egyptian culture. In life, they owned Egyptian toiletry implements, jewelry, and vessels acquired from their husband (figs. 4.6a-b); in death, they were mummified and buried in Egyptian rock-cut tombs supplied with Egyptian funerary items like canopic jars, heart scarabs, ritual vessels, and mummy fittings (figs. 4.7a-c).²²⁴

²²⁰ Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 207.

²²¹ Karen Radner, *Die Macht des Namens: Altorientalische Strategien zur Selbsterhaltung* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), p. 29. Also: Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016), 109.

²²² Dominique Charpin, “*Tu es de mon sang*”: *les alliances dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Collection Docet omnia 4 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019), 203-34.

²²³ Isabel de Madariaga, *Catherine the Great: A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 1.

²²⁴ The three foreign wives of Thutmose III were buried together in a tomb south of the Valley of the Kings, as is customary for royal wives; even Hatshepsut had a tomb in this area before she became king. Despite their secondary status, they were provided with lavish burial goods, which were identical for each wife. Christine Lilyquist, James E. Hoch, and Alexander J. Peden, *The Tomb of Three Foreign Wives of Tuthmosis III* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 333-36.

In the words of Patch: “they were accorded burials which demonstrate that their identity had become Egyptian as a result of their time at court.”²²⁵ Nevertheless, acculturation does not mean complete assimilation; these foreign women were probably allowed to keep certain less significant cultural traits and objects they brought as dowry items. For instance, a glassy faience vessel with a button-shaped base (fig. 4.6c) from the tomb of the three foreign wives was probably brought by one of them to Egypt; this vessel form has a long history in Mesopotamia.²²⁶



Figure 4.6a. Necklace from the tomb of the three foreign wives of Thutmose III. “Broad Collar | New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed February 18, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/547636>. Figure 4.6b. Cosmetic jar with an inscription naming Thutmose III, tomb of the three Syrian wives. “Wide-Necked Jar and Lid Naming Thutmose III | New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 17, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544858>. Figure 4.6c. Glassy faience vessel with variegated pattern, tomb of the three Syrian wives. “Drinking Cup | New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 17, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544860>.

²²⁵ Diana C. Patch, “The Foreign Wives and International Exchange,” in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan. Aruz, Kim. Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 257–58.

²²⁶ “Drinking Cup | New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 17, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544860>.



Figure 4.7a. Canopic jar of Manuwai. “Canopic Jar of Manuwai | New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 17, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/547565>. Figure 4.7b. Canopic jar of Manhata. “Canopic Jar of Manhata | New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 17, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548644>. Figure 4.7c. Canopic Jar of Maruta. “Canopic Jar of Maruta | New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 17, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548638>.

Even foreign princesses who were daughters of the great kings were not exempt from cultural assimilation. On the Marriage Stela, Maathorneferure was dressed in the fashion of an Egyptian queen, wearing a queenly vulture headdress, a Nubian wig, and a long linen dress (fig. 4.4).²²⁷ She probably held sistrums²²⁸ in her upraised arms, as Egyptian queens who held priestly positions in the cult of Hathor would do. Her statues found at other sites depict a fully Egyptianized queen who would have been totally indistinguishable from other native Egyptian queens if her title did not specify her parentage and prestigious pedigree.²²⁹ The depiction of a Nubian princess in the tomb of Huy (TT40), presumably being presented to Tutankhamun as a tribute-type wife, offers an interesting parallel (fig. 4.3a). She was outfitted with an

²²⁷ On the vulture headdress, see: Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 49; Mary Abram, “The Power Behind the Crown: Messages Worn by Three New Kingdom Egyptian Queens,” *Studia Antiqua* 5, no. 1 (2007): 3–16. In contrast, Ḫattušili III wore a long garment open in the front and a pointed hat (cf. the Firaktin relief).

²²⁸ A hand-held rattle, one of the sacred emblems of Hathor, the goddess of music and dance. Robyn A. Gillam, “Priestesses of Hathor: Their Function, Decline and Disappearance,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 32 (1995): 211–37.

²²⁹ Marjorie Fisher, “A Diplomatic Marriage in the Ramesside Period: Maathorneferure, Daughter of the Great Ruler of Ḫatti,” in *Beyond Ḫatti: A Tribute to Gary Beckman*, ed. Billie Jean Collins and Piotr Michalowski (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 78–81.

Egyptian-style transparent linen dress and decked in Egyptian jewelry (the beaded streamers on her elbows the only hint of her Nubian origin), while other Nubian rulers in the same tribute scene wore their ethnic dress (i.e., feathered headdress and animal skin).²³⁰ The foreign princesses' voluntary or involuntary adoption of Egyptian culture and costumes sometimes had unexpected side effects, e.g., the Babylonian messengers' difficulty with identifying their own princess (EA 1: 36-42).²³¹

The suppression, retention, or promotion of the foreign princesses' native cultural markers was intricately associated with power and prestige. The pharaohs' foreign brides adopted Egyptian cultures and customs to signify their loyalty to their husbands and their new home country. On the other hand, had an Egyptian princess been married to a foreign king, she might have been paraded around in Egyptian costume to enhance the prestige of her husband. As Liverani observed: "The Babylonian king, unable to obtain a true Egyptian princess, contemplates the possibility of disguising a commoner as one, while the Egyptian king, who finds no difficulty in obtaining a Babylonian princess, disguises her as a commoner."²³²

Adopting Egyptian-style clothes and jewelry required less effort; however, acquiring knowledge or fluency in the Egyptian language was not an easy task. Though the Egyptians adopted Akkadian, the Late Bronze Age *lingua franca*, for conducting diplomacy as an expediency, they harbored immense pride in their own language and culture. This was illustrated by the *Instructions of Any*, a New Kingdom wisdom text which compared the foreigners' adoption of the Egyptian language to the beasts' abandonment of their savage nature.²³³ Scribes and interpreters who were competent in writing and speaking other Near Eastern

²³⁰ Norman de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamūn* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), 24, fig. 28.

²³¹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1-2.

²³² Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 190.

²³³ "The scribe Any answered his son, the scribe Khonshotep: ... The fighting bull who kills in the stable, he forgets and abandons the arena; he conquers his nature, remembers what he's learned, and becomes the like of a fattened ox. The savage lion abandons his wrath, and comes to resemble the timid donkey ... One teaches the Nubian to speak Egyptian, the Syrian and other strangers too. Say: 'I shall do like all the beasts,' listen and learn what they do." Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 144.

languages were employed at the Egyptian court, but the extent to which the foreign princesses could rely on their service to communicate with their husbands is unknown.

While foreign princesses who entered the Egyptian harem tended to undergo a process of acculturation and enjoyed limited freedom to express their foreign identity at the court through material culture, those who married Hittite kings were not forced to sever ties with their native culture. In fact, some of them might have introduced their native culture (e.g., language and religion) into the Hittite royal family and elite circles. The use of both Hittite and Hurrian names by the early New Kingdom Hittite kings has long been observed by early Hittitologists like Güterbock, who sought to explain this phenomenon by arguing that the New Kingdom was founded by a new Hurrian dynasty.²³⁴ This hypothesis gained much popularity among the Hittitologists but was refuted by Beal, who convincingly demonstrated that there was much continuity between the Hittite Old Kingdom and New Kingdom period.²³⁵ Beal argued that the use of Hurrian names by the royal family members should be attributed to Hurrian influence introduced by the marriage of Tudḫaliya I/II and Nikkalmati (a Hurrian woman, probably a princess of Kizzuwatna) and Arnuwanda I's annexation of Kizzuwatna and its Hurrian cult.²³⁶ Campbell elaborated on Beal's hypothesis and further proposed that the appearance of Hurrian religious materials at Ḫattuša in the early Hittite New Kingdom period resulted from a series of diplomatic marriages between the Hittite kings and Hurrian princesses from Kizzuwatna. Arnuwanda I and Ašmunikal would represent the first generation of this mixed Hurro-Hittite dynasty; their son Tudḫaliya III married two wives with Hurrian names (Šatanduḫepa and

²³⁴ Hans G. Güterbock, "The Hurrian Element in the Hittite Empire," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale. Journal of World History. Cuadernos de Historia Mundial* 2, no. 2 (1954): 383–94. Stefano de Martino, "Hurrian Personal Names in the Kingdom of Ḫatti," in *Time and History in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Lluís Feliu et al. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 481–86.

²³⁵ Richard H. Beal, "The Hurrian Dynasty and the Double Names of Hittite Kings," in *Anatolia antica: studi in memoria di Fiorella Imparati* (Firenze: LoGisma, 2002), 55–70.

²³⁶ Richard H. Beal, "The Hurrian Dynasty and the Double Names of Hittite Kings," in *Anatolia antica: studi in memoria di Fiorella Imparati* (Firenze: LoGisma, 2002), 55–70.

Taduḫepa), who were probably native speakers of Hurrian.²³⁷ If they also came from Kizzuwatna, then their unions with the Hittite kings would represent a policy of continuous dynastic marriages between the royal houses of Hatti and Kizzuwatna. Given the personal nature of diplomatic alliances (between individuals and not countries) in the Late Bronze Age, it is not surprising that a new diplomatic marriage was deemed necessary to renew the alliance periodically.

This policy does not appear to be consistently pursued by subsequent Hittite kings after the reign of Tudḫaliya III, the father of Šuppiluliuma I (1350-1322 BCE). The complete subjugation of Kizzuwatna perhaps obviated the need to continue this policy, and Šuppiluliuma I married a Babylonian princess to mint a new and more valuable alliance with the Babylonians.²³⁸ This change in marriage policy was concurrent with the decreasing popularity of Hurrian material from the reign of Šuppiluliuma I to that of Muršili III (1272-1267 BCE);²³⁹ with the marriage of Ḫattušili III and Puduḫepa, the daughter of a priest from Kizzuwatna, more Hurrian influence was brought to Ḫatti.²⁴⁰ Campbell convincingly argued that “the importation of Hurrian cultural material accompanied the dynastic marriage between the Hittite king and the king of Kizzuwatna. The reception of the material and its lasting effects within the ruling family are to be attributed to the education of the princes within a royal household headed by Hurrian queens.”²⁴¹ Compared to the Egyptian culture, the Hittite culture was more open to borrowings from other cultures.

²³⁷ Dennis R. M. Campbell, “The Introduction of Hurrian Religion into the Hittite Empire,” *Religion Compass* 10, no. 12 (2016): 298.

²³⁸ He even banished his first wife, who bore him several sons, to “make space” for the Babylonian princess. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 159-60.

²³⁹ Little is known about Gaššuliyawiya, the first wife of Muršili II, whose life was cut short by a mysterious illness that her husband believed to be inflicted upon her by the Babylonian *Tawananna*. Muršili II married a second wife named Danuḫepa shortly before his death; she survived into the reigns of both of his successors, but her political career ended in disgrace (like that of the Babylonian *Tawananna*) in the reign of Muwattalli II. Nevertheless, she was restored to royal favor in the reign of Muršili III. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 208, 210-11, 242-44.

²⁴⁰ The queen introduced the (*h*)*išuw*a-festival (CTH 628) and probably played a role in the initial syncretisms between Hittite and Hurrian deities. Dennis R. M. Campbell, “The Introduction of Hurrian Religion into the Hittite Empire,” *Religion Compass* 10, no. 12 (2016): 298.

²⁴¹ Dennis R. M. Campbell, “The Introduction of Hurrian Religion into the Hittite Empire,” *Religion Compass* 10, no. 12 (2016): 295–306.

The introduction of Hurrian religious ideas into Ḫatti through diplomatic marriages was not an isolated example of marriage as an engine for cultural change. Durand has remarked on how the foreign queens played a similar intermediary role at Mari.²⁴² Moreover, it has been argued that Taram-Uram, the wife of Šulgi, introduced the cult of Dagan at Ur.²⁴³ Rutherford suggested that the elusive marriage between an Assuwan princess and an Aḫḫiyawan prince/ruler mentioned in the diplomatic letter discussed above (CTH 183 = KUB 26.91) could have had the same effect; the cult of the goddess Potnia Aswiya and the worship of Apollo were probably inspired by the Assuwan religion. The goddess' epithet probably derived from Assuwa, a western Anatolian political entity attested in Hittite records between the late 15th and early 14th century until its conquest by Tudḫaliya I/II. The name Apollo bears remarkable resemblance to Apaliuna, a deity of Wiluša (probably to be identified with Troy) who was mentioned in the treaty between the Hittites and a king of Wiluša named Alakšandu.²⁴⁴ Though definitive proof is lacking, Rutherford's hypothesis is worth contemplating.²⁴⁵ In the case of Maathorneferure, however, the situation was reversed; rather than introducing Hittite cultural influence or religious ideas to the Egyptian court, she seemed to have taken up roles in Egyptian cults.²⁴⁶

²⁴² Jean-Marie Durand, "La religion amorrite en Syrie à l'époque des archives de Mari," in *Mythologie et religion des sémites occidentaux. Volume 1. Ébla, Mari*, ed. Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 162:1 (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 373–74.

²⁴³ Johannes Boese and Walther Sallaberger, "Apil-Kīn von Mari und die Könige der III. Dynastie von Ur," *Altorientalische Forschungen* 23:1 (1995): 24–39.

²⁴⁴ Ian Rutherford, "Diplomatic Marriage as an Engine for Religious Change: The Case of Assuwa and Ahhiyawa," in *Linguistic and Cultural Interactions between Greece and Anatolia: In Search of the Golden Fleece*, ed. Michele Bianconi (In search of the golden fleece (Conference), Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2021), 167–81.

²⁴⁵ Diplomatic marriages were known in western Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age; Piyama-radu, a local ruler in western Anatolia who was always stirring up trouble for the Hittite kings, married his daughter to Atpā, the Aḫḫiyawan ruler of Millawanda. Piyama-radu appointed his son-in-law as the supervisor of Manapa-Tarḫunta, king of the Šeḫa River Land and a Hittite vassal. Atpā provided refuge to Piyama-radu when he was pursued by the Hittites, and probably helped him to flee to Aḫḫiyawan territory. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 224–27, 289–92.

²⁴⁶ Marjorie Fisher, "A Diplomatic Marriage in the Ramesside Period: Maathorneferure, Daughter of the Great Ruler of Ḫatti," in *Beyond Ḫatti: A Tribute to Gary Beckman*, ed. Billie Jean Collins and Piotr Michalowski (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 75–119. Ian Rutherford, "Diplomatic Marriage as an Engine for Religious Change: The Case of Assuwa and Ahhiyawa," in *Linguistic and Cultural Interactions between Greece and Anatolia: In Search of*

4.2.3.2. Power of the Princess in Her New Home Country

Depending on the political status of her father and her own standing with the king, a foreign princess could be granted different privileges and rights by her new husband. Several criteria could be useful for evaluating her status and power in her new home country: 1. The amount of maintenance and gifts (including both moveable property and land endowment) she received from her husband and her right to dispose of these goods;²⁴⁷ 2. If she enjoyed visitation rights and received permission to maintain contact with her home country; 3. If she was allowed to participate in politics and cultic affairs and wield influence on her husband; 4. If the children she bore had equal or even superior rights to inherit their father's throne.

For a foreign princess, it was easier to win the heart of her husband and wield influence on him if they resided in proximity. In the Amarna period, foreign princesses (at least those from the great powers) resided in their own quarters in the palace (EA 1: 32-36, EA 29: 28-54).²⁴⁸ According to the Marriage Stela, Maathorneferure first lived at the royal palace at Pi-Ramesses; she was installed in the royal palace and accompanied the king daily.²⁴⁹ Ramesses II claimed to have built a beautiful house for her in one of his letters to Hattušili III (KUB 3.37 + KBo 1.17, obv. 15'-16'),²⁵⁰ though this structure has not been identified archaeologically. At a later date, Maathorneferure visited or moved to the royal harem at Gurob (Egyptian

the Golden Fleece, ed. Michele Bianconi (In search of the golden fleece (Conference), Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2021), 175.

²⁴⁷ The rich burial assemblages of the three Syrian wives demonstrated that even the daughters of the Levantine rulers could enjoy a luxurious lifestyle in the Egyptian harem. Undoubtedly, the sisters and daughters of the great kings could reasonably expect to live more extravagantly with their large dowry and bridal gifts, e.g., property and perhaps even land endowment, from the pharaoh. Christine Lilyquist, James E. Hoch, and Alexander J. Peden, *The Tomb of Three Foreign Wives of Tuthmosis III* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003).

²⁴⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1, 93.

²⁴⁹ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 96.

²⁵⁰ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 140-43.

mr-wr) near Fayum; a faience plaque and some fragments of administrative papyri²⁵¹ bearing her name have been found at the site (figs. 4.8a-b).²⁵²

Maathorneferure's relocation, if it was permanent, may have signaled that she fell out of favor;²⁵³ alternatively, it may represent a temporary retreat from court life and politics in Pi-Ramesses. A broken passage in the Marriage Stela inscription indicates that she was bestowed with many villas and servants from all over the country by Ramesses II.²⁵⁴ Perhaps she visited one of her villas in Gurob to spend some leisure time there. Furthermore, she could have been accompanying Ramesses II on a tour, as the pharaohs would travel for official duties, festival celebrations, and leisure.

The New Kingdom form of Gurob was founded by Thutmose III, who was especially venerated at the site; it was occupied during two distinct periods of the 18th Dynasty and the early Ramesside Period.²⁵⁵ The presence of a functioning harbor, imported goods from Mycenaean and Cypriot goods, and various establishments at the site indicate that this town was not a backwater in the New Kingdom period, but a center for redistribution of imported goods and production center of royal linen.²⁵⁶ Excavated materials

²⁵¹ The papyri fragments probably constituted parts of an administrative document, for her name is followed by mention of all kinds of garments and their number. Alan H. Gardiner, *Ramesside Administrative Documents* (London: The Griffith Institute, 1948), 22-23.

²⁵² <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/gurob/papyri/queenmaathor.html>.
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/gurob/papyri/maathorneferu.html>.

²⁵³ This is very unlikely, as Maathorneferure was the daughter of the Hittite great king and queen; her elder brother Nerikkaili was then the Crown Prince and her younger brother Tudḫaliya would later become king.

²⁵⁴ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 96. A steward (*aa n pr*) might have been appointed to manage Maathorneferure's estates and servants. Tiye and Nefertiti, two of the most prominent Amarna queens, both had a male official administering their estate and harem. Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings. IV. Lower and Middle Egypt* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1968), 211-14.

²⁵⁵ Barry J. Kemp, "The Harim-Palace at Medinet El-Ghurab," *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 105 (1978): 122-33. Peter Lacovara, "Gurob and the New Kingdom 'Harim' Palace," in *Ancient Egypt, the Aegean and the Near East: Studies in Honor of Martha Rhoads Bell*, ed. Jacke Phillips et al. (San Antonio: Van Siclen Books, 1998), 300.

²⁵⁶ Jan Picton, "Living and Working in a New Kingdom 'Harem Town,'" in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 229-42.

from Gurob include objects naming or depicting the Amarna royal family (e.g., the famous dark-wood head of Tiye) and a letter to Akhenaten from his estate manager at Memphis, which provide evidence for royal presence at Gurob in the late 18th Dynasty.²⁵⁷ Kemp conjured up a picture of how the Gurob palace would have served as a long-term residence for some royal women and children: “One should obviously envisage the Medinet el-Ghurab buildings as a palace where lived the queen and other senior royal ladies at the head of the household containing a large complement of female royal attendants and perhaps women carrying on industries such as weaving, and nurses in charge of the upbringing of some of the royal children.”²⁵⁸

Maathorneferure may have been supervising linen production at Gurob as part of her queenly administrative duty. The women in her entourage would have settled at the site and left their traces in the archaeological record. Petrie found a hole in the floor of many rooms; personal property would be thrown in, burnt, and covered over (fig. 4.8c). He named these assemblages “Burnt Groups” and theorized that they belonged to the fair-haired²⁵⁹ foreign residents (Akhaians) of the site and were disposed of when their owners passed away and buried in an Egyptian fashion.²⁶⁰ Petrie connected the “Burnt Groups” with the Akhaians because of the Aegean pottery discovered in some of these deposits; however, Politi has proposed instead to identify their owners as Hittites, for a Hittite presence is known at the site during the reign of Ramesses II. In support of her hypothesis, she drew attention to a custom recorded in the Hittite Laws: “If a man takes his wife and leads [her] away to his house, he shall carry her dowry in (to his house). If the woman [dies] th[ere] (in his house), they shall burn the personal possessions of the man, and the man shall

²⁵⁷ Jan Picton, “Living and Working in a New Kingdom ‘Harem Town,’” in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 233.

²⁵⁸ Ramessu-nebweben, a Ramesside prince who died young in his twenties, was buried in an elaborate tomb there. Barry J. Kemp, “The Harim-Palace at Medinet El-Ghurab,” *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 105 (1978): 132.

²⁵⁹ University College London, “Human Remains, Hair,” UCL Culture Collections Online | Details, accessed March 18, 2023, <https://collections.ucl.ac.uk/Details/collect/42136>.

²⁶⁰ Petrie was very intrigued by the “Burnt Group”, which he elaborated on in his excavation records. W. M. Flinders Petrie and A. H. Sayce, *Illahun, Kahun and Gurob*, University of Chicago Digital Preservation Collection (London: David Nutt, 1891), 16-19, pls. 17-18. Janet Politi, “Gurob - The Papyri and the Burnt Groups,” *Göttinger Miszellen: Beiträge zur ägyptologische Diskussion*, no. 182 (2001): 110.

take her dowry. If she dies in her father's house, and she [has] children, the man shall not [take] her dowry."²⁶¹ Hittitologists who translated or commented on the second clause generally believed that the burnt possessions belonged to the deceased wife; the husband only assumed ownership of them temporarily after her death.²⁶² In Politi's opinion, this Hittite custom could provide a reasonable explanation for the presence of the "Burnt Groups" at Gurob.²⁶³ These materials could have been deposited after the death of their Hittite owners, who probably came to Egypt as part of the entourage of Maathorneferure and married Egyptian husbands. If this is the case, then it means the Hittite ladies who married non-royal Egyptian husbands enjoyed more freedom than their princess to express their foreign identity and retain some of their funerary traditions.

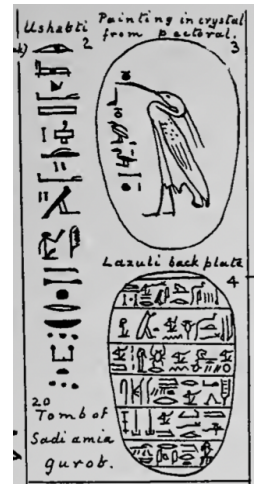
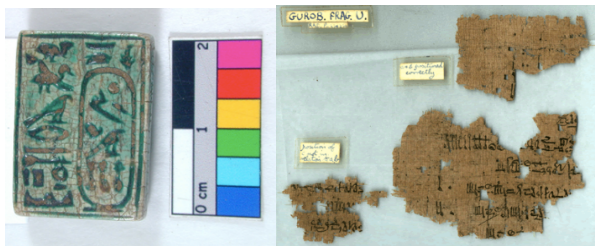


Figure 4.8a. Faience plaque bearing the name of Maathorneferure. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/gurob/papyri/queenmaathor.html>. Figure 4.8b. Papyri from Gurob with the name of

²⁶¹ Harry A. Hoffner, *The Laws of the Hittites: A Critical Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 36-37, § 27.

²⁶² Harry A. Hoffner, *The Laws of the Hittites: A Critical Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 181-83.

²⁶³ Janet Politi, "Gurob - The Papyri and the Burnt Groups," *Göttinger Miszellen: Beiträge zur ägyptologische Diskussion*, no. 182 (2001): 111.

Maathorneferure and linen²⁶⁴ distribution. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/gurob/papyri/maathorneferu.html>. Figure 4.8c. One of the Gurob “Burnt Groups” published by Petrie. W. M. Flinders Petrie and A. H. Sayce, *Illahun, Kahun and Gurob*, University of Chicago Digital Preservation Collection (London: David Nutt, 1891), pl. 17. Figure 4.8d. Figure of a singer with a pigtail hairstyle from Gurob. W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob and Hawara* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1890), pl.18.38. Figure 4.8e. Inscription on a shabti of Sadiamu from Gurob. W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob and Hawara* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1890), pl.24.2-4.

Petrie’s excavation at the site discovered other evidence of what he thought was a Hittite presence in the late 18th Dynasty and early 19th Dynasty: a figurine of a female singer/musician with a pigtail hairstyle (fig. 4.8d) and the name of the owner of Tomb 20 Sadiamu (or Sadi-amia) (fig. 4.8e). While the former is very suggestive, as no other groups of foreigners were associated with this hairstyle in Egyptian art, the latter seems a little dubious. Petrie identified the name Sadiamu as “Hittite” based on attestations of the word Sadi in “Hittite” names in the Assyrian annals (Sadi-anteru who was defeated by Tiglath-Pilaser, and Sadi-halis defeated by Menuas).²⁶⁵ However, Petrie’s interpretation is questionable for at least two reasons: 1. He was writing before the Hittite language was deciphered and the real Hittites (not the Biblical Hittites) were identified; 2. The name Sadiamu is not listed in Laroche’s *Les noms des Hittites*,²⁶⁶ and it does not have close parallels in Hittite personal names. Rather, this name could be Hurrian (cf. Šattiwaza of Mittani) since there is a Hurrian verb *šad*.²⁶⁷ Nevertheless, Petrie might still be right – if Sadiamu was a Hittite with a Hurrian name.

The housing of foreign brides was a sensitive matter in earlier periods in the ancient Near East, and it was openly discussed in diplomatic letters. Samsi-Addu arranged a diplomatic marriage between his son

²⁶⁴ A Ramesside letter (P. Gurob III.1, rt.) referred to the delivery of foreigners to Gurob in order to be trained in weaving skills: “Excellent it is that my Lord has caused people to be brought to me for their teaching and their instruction how to do this great work ... they being foreigners like those who used to be brought to us in the time of Usimaatre-setepenre [Ramesses II] ...” (dated to year 2 of Seti II). Edward F. Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, ed. Edmund S. Meltzer (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 36.

²⁶⁵ W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob and Hawara* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1890), 38. Jan Picton, “Living and Working in a New Kingdom ‘Harem Town,’” in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 236.

²⁶⁶ Emmanuel Laroche, *Les noms des Hittites*, Études Linguistiques 4 (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1966).

²⁶⁷ Richard Beal, personal communication, July 4, 2023.

Yasmaḥ-Addu, the king of Mari, and Dam-huraši, the daughter of Išḫi-Addu of Qatna. Having heard about Yasmaḥ-Addu's plan to relocate Dam-huraši, Samsi-Addu wrote to his son and admonished him not to house his foreign bride outside the palace lest her father be provoked.²⁶⁸ Yarim-Lim I of Yamḥad, who married his daughter to Zimri-Lim of Mari, explicitly told the Mariote messenger that his daughter should reside with her husband even if she had her own residence.²⁶⁹

As diplomatic marriages were supposed to establish long-term cordial relations between two royal houses, the foreign brides should enjoy the freedom to maintain regular contact with her family through diplomatic correspondence and gift exchange, and receive messengers from her native country. This was at least the expectation of the great kings who dispatched their daughters to Egypt. To their dismay, however, what they considered to be given rights had to be negotiated for, and there was no guarantee that they would be granted. The Babylonian and Mittanian dossiers shed some light on the situation in the Amarna Age, but they paint completely different pictures. Initially, the messengers of Kadašman-Enlil sent to inquire about their princess were not admitted into her quarters; Amenhotep III probably received them in an audience hall in the outer part of the palace and summoned his wives there (EA 1).²⁷⁰ In response to Kadašman-Enlil's complaint that his sister was not present among the wives being shown to the Babylonian messengers,²⁷¹ Amenhotep III conceded and promised to allow a Babylonian dignitary to enter into the

²⁶⁸ Thus wrote Samsi-Addu: "You wrote to me about the removal of the lady, the daughter of Išḫi-Addu. Presently, would it not be said, 'Where did previous kings house their wives? Did they not house them in this very palace? Yaḥdullim favored his concubines, so he sequestered his wives, settling them beyond (the citadel). I fear that likewise you yourself plan to house the daughter of Išḫi-Addu beyond (the citadel). Upon hearing this, her father will be very irritated. This is simply not done. There are many chambers in the Palm Palace. A chamber should be prepared for her and house her there. Do not house her externally.'" (A.2548/LAPO 18.1010). Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 105.

²⁶⁹ Zimri-Lim's ambassador Asqudum wrote to him: "Yarim-Lim took me aside and said, 'I keep on hearing that the gods are powerful in the [Mari] palace. Where will my daughter's belonging enter (into it)?' When I told him, 'Your daughter's residence is indeed excellent,' he answered, 'My daughter's belongings may be stored in her residence, but my daughter should reside with her husband. She may leave for about five to six days to care for her residence.'" (ARM 26.13). Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 109.

²⁷⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

²⁷¹ "Unlike in ancient Egypt or Rome, images of third-millennium Mesopotamian elite women were not on public display." Claudia E. Suter, "Images of Queens, High Priestesses, and Other Elite Women in Third-Millennium

quarters of the Babylonian princess to check on her well-being and her relationship with her husband (EA 1: 32-36).²⁷² In an attempt to justify his demand, Kadašman-Enlil informed the pharaoh how his daughters who married his neighbors enjoyed such privileges and sent gifts home, implying that this was the norm; nevertheless, Amenhotep III sent a sarcastic response that questioned his motive and scorned him for making a profit by marrying off his daughters.²⁷³ This diplomatic episode means that some restrictions were imposed upon the pharaoh's Babylonian bride that limited her ability to maintain frequent contact with Babylonia, as well as to acquire, own, and dispose of property in her own right.

In contrast, the Mittanian princess Taduḥepa and Tušratta's messengers were treated by Amenhotep III with much more respect. Though Moran²⁷⁴ and Rainey's²⁷⁵ translations of the relevant passage in EA 29 (a letter from Tušratta to Akhenaten) varied slightly, they agreed on two significant facts: 1. The Mittanian messengers not only visited Taduḥepa's quarters, but also resided there; 2. Taduḥepa handed the gold gifted

Mesopotamia," in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 37.

²⁷² Amenhotep III wrote to Kadašman-Enlil: "Why don't you send me a dignitary of yours who can tell you the truth, the well-being of your sister who is here, and then you can believe the one who enters to see her quarters and her relationship with the king?" William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1.

²⁷³ Amenhotep III wrote to Kadašman-Enlil: "And as for your writing me, 'My daughters who are married to neigh[bor]ing kings, if my messengers [go] there, they speak with th[em], and they bri[ng] me a greeting-gift. The one with you [...]' Th[ese] are your words. Undoubtedly [your neigh]boring kings are [ri]ch (and) mighty. Your daughters can acquire something from them and send (it) to you. But what does she have, your sister who is with me? But should she make some acquisition, I will send (it) to you! It is a fine thing that you give your daughters in order to acquire a nugget of gold from your neighbors!" (EA 1: 52-62). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2.

²⁷⁴ Moran's translation reads: "[... J]ust as when one sees [his] pee[r], he shows him respect, so Nimmureya showed respect to [my messengers as] peers and as [f]rie[nds]. He sent back all my messengers that were in residence in (to?) the quarters that [were established] for Tadu-Ḥeba, and there was not [a single one] among them who went in and [to whom he did not g]ive [something]. He gave Keliya's [in]got of gold weighing 1000 shekels, and Nimmureya gave [... sacks fu]ll of [gold] to Tadu-Ḥeba. Tadu-Ḥeba lai[d] them [all] out [before] my [messengers]" (EA 29: 28-54). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 93.

²⁷⁵ Rainey rendered the passage thus: "[And your father, just] as one views his peers, so he honored him and thus within the palace for Tadu-Heba, my [envoys dwelled]. All of them who were there, he sent back and among my envoys that had entered in (to Egypt), there was not [one to whom he did not giv]e. He gave an ingot of gold to Keliya that was one thousand shekels in weight. Nimmureya gave [X bags fu]ll [of gold] to [Tadu-He]ba and Tadu-Heba handed over [to] my [ambassadors]" (EA 29: 31-39). Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets*, ed. William M. Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 305.

to her by Amenhotep III to the Mittanian messengers (in order to be brought back to Tušratta). This discriminatory treatment may be accounted for by the more elevated status accorded to Mittanian princesses compared to their Babylonian counterparts. An alternative explanation is that it reflected a diachronic change in policy, i.e., visitation rights were first granted to the Babylonian princess and then extended to other foreign wives of the pharaoh. Taduḫepa, who married Amenhotep III late in his reign, simply benefited from this new policy. In comparison, the former hypothesis seems more likely, as Babylonian messengers continued to have trouble accessing their princess in the Egyptian harem during the reign of Ramesses II.²⁷⁶ Puduḫepa, who was conducting marriage negotiations with Ramesses II, heard complaints from the Babylonian messengers and feared the same fate for her daughter; she addressed her concerns to Ramesses II and extracted a promise from the latter not to hinder any communication between the Hittite princess and her family.²⁷⁷

Though Amenhotep III reduced Kadašman-Enlil's motive for concluding diplomatic marriages to financial gain, the exchange of gifts between a foreign bride and her natal family could be motivated by their genuine concern for each other and help shore up the former's position in a foreign court. Puduḫepa even expressed her wish to dispatch two of her sons to Egypt to inquire about the well-being of her daughter, which, according to Roos, was motivated by "strong motherly feelings and the strong ties within the family of Ḫattušili and Puduḫepa."²⁷⁸ A Mariote princess Liqum, the sister of Zimri-Lim who married Adal-šenni of Burundum, was mocked by two women in her service (daughter of Išme-Dagan and the daughter of Bin-

²⁷⁶ Ramesses II vehemently denied such mistreatment of the Babylonian messengers and accused the latter of lying. Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 214.

²⁷⁷ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 216-19.

²⁷⁸ Johan de Roos, "Materials for a Biography: The Correspondence of Puduḫepa with Egypt and Ugarit," in *The Life and Times of Hattušili and Tuthaliya IV: Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Honour of J. de Roos, 12-13 December 2003, Leiden*, ed. Theo P. J. van den Hout and Carolien H. van Zoest (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2005), 21-22.

Addu of the Ya' ilanum tribe) that her brother did not think of her; feeling humiliated, she wrote to request a gift from her brother as a proof of his concern for her.²⁷⁹

Due to the primarily long-distance nature of Late Bronze Age diplomacy, most princesses who embarked on a journey to marry a foreign king did not expect to visit their home country again. They remained in her new country after their husband passed away, most likely with diminished status. After the death of Amenhotep III, the widowed Taduḫepa married his successor in order to maintain the affinal ties established by the diplomatic marriage (EA 22: 43-49; EA 27).²⁸⁰ The daughter of Bentešina of Amurru only returned to her home country after her nasty divorce.²⁸¹ However, in the Middle Bronze Age, during which the diplomatic network encompassed a less expansive region, princesses who married foreign kings could visit their home country if proper arrangements were made. This is evidenced by a letter from Išḫi-Addu of Qatna to his son-in-law Yasmaḫ-Addu of Mari, which aimed to arrange a return visit for his daughter Beltum less than two years after her marriage: “You must therefore come up with the troops and bring my daughter along with you so that she could conciliate the gods of her city and so that I could give her many gifts. She should meet with me so that I could honor her.” (ARM 2.51/LAPO 17.453).²⁸²

Whether a foreign princess was allowed to participate in political affairs in her new home country depended on a wide array of factors: e.g., the balance of power between her native country and her new country, the political tradition of her new country and its cultural attitude towards female participation in politics, her personal relationship with her husband, the age and health condition of her husband, the pre-

²⁷⁹ Thus wrote Liqtum: “I am well; my lord Adal-šenni is well. He has entrusted his large palace to my control, thus giving me full satisfaction Another matter: The daughter of Išme-Dagan and the daughter of Bin-Addu of the Ya' ilanum tribe are staying by me. Yet they irritate me by saying, “Your brother, your flesh and blood (heart) is well, but does not think of you.” They keep coming back to this matter; but I told them, “You will, one by one, know how much my brother is entrusting me!” Now then, because of their insult, do entrust me with a gift that pleases me. Humiliate [these women].” Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 69-70.

²⁸⁰ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 57, 86-89.

²⁸¹ R. Yaron, “A Royal Divorce at Ugarit,” *Orientalia* 32, no. 1 (1963): 21–31.

²⁸² Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 106-7.

existence of other queens and adult heirs, her political acumen and personality, etc. The following section will focus on the cultural factors that influenced different countries' policies on foreign princesses' participation in politics. Intercultural miscommunications could and did happen when the wife-givers and wife-takers had different expectations for the foreign princess and antithetical policies concerning her roles in politics and dynastic succession.

Despite the enormous amount of money and effort invested in securing foreign princesses, the Egyptian kings allowed their foreign wives limited power and influence in political life. Most of them were only of second or third rank during the 18th Dynasty. Even the daughter of a great king could easily disappear into the crowd of women of mixed origins in the royal harem (EA 1).²⁸³ The letters exchanged between Amenhotep III and Kadašman-Enlil I were very revealing of the fate of such foreign wives.²⁸⁴ The Babylonian princess was relegated to such obscurity that when Kadašman-Enlil I sent messengers to inquire about his sister, Amenhotep III summoned a group of his wives into his presence, probably because he was not sure which one of them came from Babylonia.²⁸⁵ Even though Kadašman-Enlil I accused him of concealing the news of her death, there is little reason for him to do so. In all likelihood, he had real difficulty distinguishing the Babylonian princess from her peers from other great powers and other tribute-type foreign wives from the Levant.²⁸⁶ The Babylonian princesses played no role in Egyptian politics or diplomacy after the conclusion of the marriage; their arrivals were not publicized for royal propaganda; their offspring (if they gave birth to any) was probably not eligible to succeed to the throne.

The Mittanian princesses fared slightly better than their Babylonian counterparts. The arrival of Giluḥepa supplied source material for Amenhotep III's program of royal propaganda utilizing large

²⁸³ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1.

²⁸⁴ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1-3.

²⁸⁵ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1.

²⁸⁶ One cannot ignore the irony behind the Babylonian king's complaint of the difficulty experienced by his messengers in recognizing the princess, for he himself begged the pharaoh to send him a beautiful woman as if she were an Egyptian princess (EA 4: 4-22). William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 8-9.

commemorative scarabs.²⁸⁷ Taduḥepa was able to communicate with and accommodate Mittanian messengers and even hand them gifts she acquired from Amenhotep III; nevertheless, she did not become the mistress of Egypt, and her role in international diplomacy was nearly negligible. Tušratta frequently addressed Giluḥepa and Taduḥepa by name and purposefully left out Tiye in his letters to Amenhotep III, arguably with the aim to elevate their status and prestige at the expense of the powerful and favored chief consort of this pharaoh (EA 17: 1-10; EA 23: 1-12).²⁸⁸ To his dismay, neither of the Mittanian princesses seemed to have played an active role in facilitating the bilateral communication between Egypt and Mittani. In diplomacy as well as in almost every other aspect, they were overshadowed by the influential queen Tiye, who employed her own messengers for communications with the Mittanian royal house and was entreated by Tušratta to intervene when he and Akhenaten got involved in a dispute over some missing gold statues (EA 26: 58-63).²⁸⁹

The Hittite princess Maathorneferure was promised and obtained the prestigious title “Great Royal Wife”, which was denied her Mittanian predecessor Taduḥepa. Ramesses II wrote to Ḫattušili III, claiming that both the Babylonian king and the king of the rump state of Mittani (Ḫanigalbat) demanded queenship for their daughters, but he would decline their requests and reserve it for his prospective Hittite bride.²⁹⁰ Whether the Babylonian king and the Mittanian king indeed entreated the pharaoh to promote their daughters to queenship was irrelevant; by quoting these exchanges, Ramesses II sought to convince Ḫattušili III that he valued his relationship with Ḫatti more than that with Babylonia or Mittani. This diplomatic marriage became the subject of Ramesses II’s national propagandistic campaign, and he erected commemorative stelae in temples in Egypt and Nubia to celebrate this remarkable diplomatic success.²⁹¹

²⁸⁷ C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 129-33.

²⁸⁸ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 41-42, 61.

²⁸⁹ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 85.

²⁹⁰ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 94-95.

²⁹¹ To a certain extent, the parity of the two royal houses and two countries reflected in Egyptian celebratory texts, which mentioned that the Egyptian officials and troops who escorted the Hittite princess mingled and bonded with

Soon after Maathorneferure arrived in Egypt, she started to appear on royal monuments as a fully-fledged Egyptian queen (fig. 4.9),²⁹² although it is not known whether she played any tangible role in politics or cultic activities.²⁹³ The power and political influence of Maathorneferure and her anonymous successor were much more circumscribed compared to most native Egyptian queens of the New Kingdom period and Hittite princesses who married Hittite vassals, not to mention Puduḥepa who co-ruled with her husband and appeared on the same scale as him in monumental art (fig. 4.10). The three daughters of Ramesses II: Bintanath (QV71), Meritamun (QV68), and Nebettawy (QV60), continued to fill the role of great royal wife for their father.²⁹⁴

The case of Maathorneferure shows that in an equal marriage between two peer polities, the princess was not necessarily guaranteed full privileges and rights as a reigning queen. The unhappy marriage of Inib-šarri, a daughter of Zimri-Lim, further demonstrates that marriage life could be grim for a princess even in a hegemonic, hypogamous marriage. This Mariote princess was first married by her father to a tribal leader; after being widowed, she was wed to the ruler of Ašlakka Ibal-Addu against her will. When she arrived at Ašlakka, she discovered a nasty surprise: her husband already had a chief queen who

their Hittite counterparts: “They ate and drank together, of one mind like brothers; none spurned his fellow, having peace and friendship (“fraternity”) between them ...”. Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. II (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 95. Interestingly, the Synchronistic History also described how the “peoples of Assyria (and) Karduniash were join[ed] together” as a result of the marriage between Aššur-bel-kala of Assyria and a daughter of Adad-apla-iddina of Babylonia, even though Babylonia was politically subjugated to Assyria at that time. Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin, 1975), 165.

²⁹² Nevertheless, she was not honored with a temple like Tiye or Nefertari. Marjorie Fisher, “A Diplomatic Marriage in the Ramesside Period: Maathorneferure, Daughter of the Great Ruler of Hatti,” in *Beyond Hatti: A Tribute to Gary Beckman*, ed. Billie Jean Collins and Piotr Michalowski (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 75–119.

²⁹³ Marjorie Fisher, “A Diplomatic Marriage in the Ramesside Period: Maathorneferure, Daughter of the Great Ruler of Hatti,” in *Beyond Hatti: A Tribute to Gary Beckman*, ed. Billie Jean Collins and Piotr Michalowski (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013), 75–119.

²⁹⁴ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 155–57. Richard C. Steiner, “Bittē-Yâ, Daughter of Pharaoh (1 Chr 4,18), and Bint(i)-‘Anat, Daughter of Ramesses II,” *Biblica* 79, no. 3 (1998): 394–408.

was in charge. Inib-šarri was treated with contempt and suspicion by her second husband, who was secretly plotting against Zimri-Lim.²⁹⁵



Figure 4.9. Statue of Maathorneferure at Tanis. “Maathorneferure,” in *Wikipedia tiếng Việt*, August 20, 2021, <https://vi.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Maathorneferure&oldid=65610920>. Figure 4.10. Hattušili III and Puduhepa in rock relief at Fraktin. Savas O. Savaş, “Yumruk Bicimli Gumus Hitit Kabi Ile Fraktin Kaya Aniti Uzerinde Gorulen Bazi Kult Nesnelerinin Identifikasyonu,” in *Akten Des IV. Internationalen Kongresses Fur Hethitologie: Wurzburg, 4.-8. Oktober 1999*, ed. Gernot Wilhelm, Studien Zu Den Boğazköy-Texten 45 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), 611, fig. 2.

In stark contrast to the Egyptian policy of limiting foreign princesses’ access to political power, the Hittite kings allowed their foreign brides (especially those whose home country ranked among the great powers) to wield enormous power in Hittite politics. One of them is the Babylonian wife of Šuppiluliuma I, who was probably the daughter of Burna-Buriaš II.²⁹⁶ She was granted the title *Tawananna*, a highly influential position in the Hittite kingdom that was accorded to the reigning queen, and she assumed it as her personal name.²⁹⁷ Most royal women acquired this title by virtue of being the king’s wife, but it may

²⁹⁵ Inib-šarri’s letter to Zimri-Lim gave a vivid account of her misery as a scorned wife: “Ibal-Addu’s wife is now the reigning queen; it is this woman who continually receives the donations of Ašlakka and of other towns. As for me, she/he has set me in a corner and has had me grasp my cheeks in hand as if a fool. He regularly takes his meals and drinks in the presence of the woman, his wife. My eyes (are full of tears) and my mouth hungered. He has reinforced the guard over me.” Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 116.

²⁹⁶ Šuppiluliuma I may have concluded this marriage alliance in order to secure military assistance or at least benevolent neutrality of the Babylonian king while campaigning against Mittani. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 159-60.

²⁹⁷ The title very likely originated from a personal name, like its masculine counterpart Labarna and the title Caesar born by Roman emperors. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 92. Shoshana R. Bin-Nun, *The Tawananna in the Hittite Kingdom* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1975). This title was appropriately referred to as “First Lady of the Hittite world” by Bryce. Trevor R. Bryce, “The Role and Status of Women in Hittite Society,” in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin

have been conferred upon other female members of the royal family.²⁹⁸ Once a woman obtained the title, she retained it and its associated power and prestige until her death, even if she outlived her husband.²⁹⁹ The title may have had religious associations at its origins; however, resources and power associated with it may have constituted the basis of power for the *Tawananna* to exercise influence in political, diplomatic, commercial, and judicial activities.³⁰⁰ Just like the early 18th Dynasty Egyptian queens, the *Tawananna* wielded enormous power due to her male partner's frequent absence from the Hittite capital on campaigns and religious pilgrimages.³⁰¹

The Babylonian *Tawananna* is associated with her husband on a number of seal impressions on documents involving diplomatic negotiations (with the king of Ugarit Niqmaddu II); she continued to play important roles in the political affairs into the reign of Šuppiluliuma I's successors Arnuwanda II and Muršili II.³⁰² Her name was juxtaposed with Muršili II's on royal seals (fig. 4.11).³⁰³ A testimony to her power and influence at the Hittite court was how she was able to make the life of Muršili II miserable.³⁰⁴

and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 303–18. Similarly, Dam-ḫuraši assumed the title Beltum (meaning “the Lady”) as her name after she married Yasmaḫ-Addu.

²⁹⁸ The first *Tawananna* was the aunt of Ḫattušili I. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 92.

²⁹⁹ Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 92.

³⁰⁰ In this religious role, the *Tawananna* functioned as Chief Priestess of the Hittite kingdom, supplementing the king's role as the Chief Priest. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 93. Trevor R. Bryce, “The Role and Status of Women in Hittite Society,” in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 304.

³⁰¹ Trevor R. Bryce, “The Role and Status of Women in Hittite Society,” in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 304.

³⁰² Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 207.

³⁰³ Suzanne Herboldt, Daliah Bawanypeck, and J. David Hawkins, *Die Siegel der Grosskönige und Grossköniginnen auf Tonbulln aus dem Nişantepe-Archiv in Hattusa*, Boğazköy-Ḫattuša 23 (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2011), 121-24, cat. nos. 29-34.

³⁰⁴ Muršili II prayed to the Ḫattian deity of the underworld Lelwani (CTH 380) and the Sun-goddess of Arinna (CTH 376.F) for the recovery of his wife Gaššuliyawiya; and composed texts to justify his accusations against (CTH 70) and deposition of *Tawananna* (CTH 71). Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 73-79.

According to Muršili II, her crimes included introducing undesirable foreign customs, advancing her own favorites, and cursing Muršili's beloved wife, Gaššuliyawiya.³⁰⁵ She depleted the estate of Šuppiluliuma I, embezzled the silver of Aštata, and probably used her dowry to enhance her popularity in Ḫatti: "This she let come from Šanḫara (Babylon), and that she handed over in Ḫatti to the entire population, and she left nothing."³⁰⁶ And yet, both Arnuwanda II and Muršili II showed remarkable forbearance toward her.³⁰⁷ When Muršili II was campaigning in the land of Azzi/Ḫayaša, a sun omen (interpreted as a solar eclipse by modern scholars) happened; the *Tawananna* may have been encouraged by this divine omen, which signified the imminent death of the king in Babylonian belief,³⁰⁸ and plotted to put her own son on the Hittite throne.³⁰⁹ Even though the *Tawananna*'s egregious conducts deserved capital punishment, Muršili

³⁰⁵ Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 70-79. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 207-9.

³⁰⁶ Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 75. A plague was ravaging the Hittite kingdom at that time, and the Babylonian *Tawananna* was probably giving her dowry to help the poor and weak.

³⁰⁷ In Muršili II's own words, "[When my father] died (lit. became god), Arnuwanda, [my brother, and I] did not harm *Tawannanna* at all, nor did we curtail her power [in any way]. As [she had governed the palace] and the land of Ḫatti during the reign of my father, in that same way she governed them [during the reign of my brother.] And when my brother [died (lit. became god), I also did not harm] *Tawannanna* at all, nor did I [curtail] her [power] in any way. As she governed the palace and the land of Ḫatti [during the reign of my father and during the reign of] my brother, [likewise] she governed them then. The privilege [and rights(?)] that she had [at the time] of her husband, and that which was forbidden to her [at the time of her husband, I did not change at all(?)]. And the privileges and rights(?) she carried on. As with her man [she had ruled Ḫatti, so in the same way as a widow] she ruled Hat[ti] in the same way. [. . .]" (KBo 14. 4 = CTH 70, I, 5-17). Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 75.

³⁰⁸ The impending death of the king indicated by such an ominous sign could only be avoided by the "Substitute King Ritual", during which a surrogate was placed on the throne. Daliah Bawanypeck, "Normative Structures in Mesopotamian Rituals: A Comparison of Hand-Lifting Rituals in the Second and First Millennium BC," in *Traditions of Written Knowledge in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia: Proceedings of Two Workshops Held at Goethe-University, Frankfurt/Main in December 2011 and May 2012*, ed. Daliah Bawanypeck and Annette Imhausen, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 403 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014), 73-74.

³⁰⁹ According to Muršili II, "[When] I marched to the land of Azzi, the Sun-god gave an omen. The queen [in Ḫatti(?)] kept saying: 'This omen which the Sun-god gave, [what did it] predict? Did it not predict the king's death? And if [it predicted that, will the people(?)] of Ḫatti [seek someone] else for lordship? Will they [join(?)] lady Amminnaya and [the son(?)] of Amminnaya?'" (CTH 70, iv. 24-37). Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 74-77.

II treated her with leniency; he stripped her of her priestly office and banished her from the palace but provided her with an estate.³¹⁰



Figure 4.11. Royal seal of Muṣili II and the Babylonian *Tawananna*. Suzanne Herboldt, Daliah Bawanypeck, and J. David Hawkins, *Die Siegel der Grosskönige und Grossköniginnen auf Tonbullentafeln aus dem Nişantepe-Archiv in Hattusa*, Boğazköy-Hattuša 23 (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2011), 121-24, cat. nos. 29-34.

The numerous foreign princesses must have born both male and female children for their husbands. However, their foreign lineage/descent would have been concealed by their Egyptian names, education, and clothing in both textual and iconographic records. Identifying royal children born by pharaohs' foreign brides has proven to be a challenging endeavor. Even less is known about their right to succeed to the throne. While the Hittites established regulations for royal succession (not always followed) and designated chosen heirs to the throne by the title Crown Prince, the Egyptian kings' selection of heirs to the throne remained largely an opaque process during the New Kingdom period, except for the early 19th Dynasty. But judging from evidence such as the Turin Judicial Papyrus, it was never free from intrigue, internecine struggles, or even attempted regicide.

³¹⁰ Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 77-78. Muṣili II may have refrained from meting out a death penalty because it will almost certainly invoke the wrath of the Babylonian king.

As mentioned above, Taduḥepa has been identified with a secondary royal wife Kiya, the proposed mother of Tutankhamun (fig. 4.12a-b).³¹¹ If these two hypotheses are true, then Tutankhamun could have been half Hurrian. Nevertheless, hypothesizing a Hurrian descent for Tutankhamun based on such circumstantial evidence is problematic. Furthermore, no objects in Tutankhamun’s tomb refer to a mother-son relationship between Kiya and this young king. In contrast, Tutankhamun’s kinship relationship with Tiye was indicated by a lock of hair found in his tomb (KV62) labeled as Tiye’s; furthermore, this hair sample matches the hair of a mummy known as the Elder Lady found in KV 35 (KV 35EL), which has long been suspected to be Tiye.³¹²



Figure 4.12a. Lid of a canopic jar of Kiya. “Canopic Jar (07.226.1) with a Lid Depicting a Queen (30.8.54) | New Kingdom, Amarna Period,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 17, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544689>. Figure 4.12b. Relief of Kiya/Meritaten.³¹³ “Relief Depicting the Purification of Queen Kiya (?) | New Kingdom, Amarna Period,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 17, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544678>.

³¹¹ In her analysis of the *Story of the Two Brothers*, Manniche pointed out the numerous striking parallels between the wife of one of the protagonists Bata and the historical figure of Kiya and proposed that an allegorizing of real historical events may have happened. The description of court life in the last section of the story was so reminiscent of the narrative reliefs in the elite tombs at Amarna that it is very tempting to postulate an Amarna background for the original incident involving “the wife of Bata”. For Manniche, the story’s lack of precise historical links was in keeping with the evasive attitude of 19th Dynasty texts, which only made oblique references to the Amarna period. Lisa Manniche, “The Wife of Bata,” *Göttingen Miszellen* 18 (1975): 34-7.

³¹² “Queen Tiye Found,” *Oriental Institute News and Notes* 30 (October 1976): 1–2.

³¹³ Many of Kiya’s images, which are characterized by large hemispheric earrings and the Nubian wig, have been re-carved as those of Meritaten.

Puduḫepa considered raising royal children and making marriage arrangements for them part of her responsibility as the queen, and took immense pride in successfully discharging these duties (CTH 176 = KUB 21.38).³¹⁴ She clearly expected her daughter to follow her example: “... And may [the gods likewise] endow the daughter whom I will give to my brother with the Queen’s experience (?) and capacity for nurture (!)”³¹⁵ Though Egyptian evidence is completely silent, a fragmentary letter found at Ḫattuša indicates that Maathorneferure bore Ramesses II a daughter:

“Copy of the writing which Teshub made between Egypt and between Ḫatti. What was not upon the writing which you sent: A daughter was born to the king of Egypt. The writing speaks thus, and the great gods of Egypt spoke to him; and to speak the truth is on their lips; and as men act, so may he; they spoke to him, saying: “This daughter who has been born to you, bring her to us and we will make her queen (lit. to queenship) of another land.” And the land in which we will make her queen shall be made, together with Egypt, ... Their ... And that one said (?) ... They keep her ...

Written according to the wording (mouth) of the original tablet: nothing has been changed.”

(KBo. 1.23)³¹⁶

Judging from the letter, Ramesses II wrote to Ḫattušili III to share this great news; he further informed his father-in-law that the gods of Egypt wished to raise her and make her queen in a foreign land, which would be allied with Egypt through this diplomatic marriage. Ramesses II promptly did what the

³¹⁴ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 128. Puduḫepa not only nurtured the royal children, but also cared for and prayed on behalf of her sickly husband as a “woman of the birth-stool (i.e., midwife)”. Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 103. Gary M. Beckman, “Females as Sources of Authority in Hittite Government and Religion,” in *Structures of Power: Law and Gender across the Ancient Near East and Beyond: Papers from the Oriental Institute Seminar Structures of Power: Law and Gender across the Ancient Near East and Beyond Held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago March 6–7, 2015*, ed. Ilan Peled, Oriental Institute Seminars 12 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2017), 148.

³¹⁵ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 128.

³¹⁶ Translation based on Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 166-67; Daniel D. Luckenbill, “Hittite Treaties and Letters,” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 37, no. 3 (1921): 195–96

gods commanded and made arrangements for his daughter's upbringing. The interpretation of the second half of the letter poses many difficulties because of its fragmentary state; moreover, its content raises many intriguing and unanswerable questions. Did the gods relate their wishes to Ramesses II in a dream or via an oracle through the priests?³¹⁷ Did Ramesses II's consent/submission to divine instruction signal a reversal of the Egyptian policy of not marrying their princesses to other ancient Near Eastern kings? Was Ramesses II using divine sanction to justify this change? The gods' plan for this half-Egyptian and half-Hittite princess was strikingly similar to the fate decreed for many New Kingdom Hittite princesses; was Ramesses II's change of policy due to Hittite influence? Concerning the upbringing of the princess, the gods obviously needed to delegate the task to their earthly agents: the priests. Was Ramesses II entrusting the upbringing and education of his daughter to the temple priesthood? To a certain extent, this letter recalls the opening section of the *Apology of Hattušili III*, which claims that as a sickly child, prince Hattušili was handed over by his father Muršili II to perform cultic service for the goddess Ištar in order to prolong his lifespan.³¹⁸ Given all these peculiarities of this letter, one might ask: is it really an exact copy of an original letter sent by Ramesses II, as was claimed by the colophon? Or is it a political fiction composed by later Hittite scribes? Assuming that the letter is authentic, it did not provide any other information about this princess, who can not be identified among Ramesses II's numerous daughters. Therefore, whether she grew up to fulfill her destiny remains a mystery.

³¹⁷ Thutmose IV's Dream Stela shows that Egyptian gods could relate their wish to the royals in a dream. Betsy M. Bryan, *The Reign of Thutmose IV* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 38-39. The literary story Dream of Nektanebos (II), preserved on a Greek papyrus, documents an ominous dream this last native pharaoh of Egypt had during his incubation at a temple in Memphis. Koenen argued that the Greek version was based on an Egyptian original. Ludwig Koenen, "The Dream of Nektanebos," *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 22, no. 1/4 (1985): 171-85.

³¹⁸ The Apology of Hattušili III relates how Ištar gave her instructions to Muršili II in a dream: "My father Muršili begot us four children: Ḫalpašulupi, Muwatalli, Hattušili and Maššanauzzi, a daughter. Of all these I was the youngest child. As long as I was still a boy, I was a 'one-of-the-reins.' (Now,) Ištar, My Lady, sent Muwatalli, my brother to Muršili, my father, through a dream (saying): 'For Hattušili the years (are) short, he is not to live (long). Hand him over to me, and let him be my priest, so he (will) live.' My father took me up, (while still) a boy, and handed me (over) to the service of the goddess, and as a priest I brought offerings to the goddess. At the hand of Ištar, My Lady, I experienced prosperity, and Ištar, My Lady, took my by the hand and provided for me." Theo P. J. van den Hout, "Apology of Hattušili III (1.77)," in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), vol. 1, 199.

In any case, none of the pharaohs' foreign brides (even the most prestigious ones) could claim the honor of being a "King's Mother" until the late 19th Dynasty, when Siptah (1194-1188 BCE) came to the throne. As the last male king of the 19th Dynasty, Siptah was probably a son of Amenmesse (more likely)³¹⁹ or Seti II³²⁰ and Sutorialja (Shoteraja), whose name suggests a Canaanite origin.³²¹ The names of Siptah and Sutorialja were paired on a relief in the Louvre (E 26901).³²² As a crippled youth and possibly the son of a usurper, Siptah's claim to the throne was slender, but he received support from the widow of Seti II Tausret and Chancellor Bay. The former acted as regent for Siptah (fig. 4.13b), and the latter³²³ claimed to have "established him on the throne of his father".³²⁴ Sutorialja did not play any political role in the reign of her son, either because she was deceased or because she was Canaanite. Nevertheless, Callendar suggested that Sutorialja and Chancellor Bay were closely related; this hypothesis would account for Bay's rise to such a

³¹⁹ In the 20th Dynasty, Siptah was dismissed as a usurper, while Seti II's legitimacy was recognized; this led Aldred to refute Gardiner's suggestion that Siptah was a son of Seti II. Furthermore, Aldred claimed that Siptah very likely married Tausret (just as Ay married Ankhesenamun), the widow of his predecessor, to secure his precarious position. Cyril Aldred, "The Parentage of King Siptah," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 49 (1963): 43-44.

³²⁰ Gardiner and Van Dijk held this view. Alan H. Gardiner, "Only One King Siptah and Twosre Not His Wife," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 44 (1958): 18. Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 296.

³²¹ Alternatively, Aldred argued that he was born to Ti'a, who was buried with him in his tomb. Cyril Aldred, "The Parentage of King Siptah," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 49 (1963): 41-48.

³²² Thomas Schneider, "Siptah und Beja. Neubeurteilung einer historischen Konstellation," *Zeitschrift für Ägyptischer Sprach und Altertumskunde* 130 (2003): 140.

³²³ Helck identified Bay with Irsu, a man of Syrian origin mentioned in Egyptian historical records. Wolfgang Helck, "Zur Geschichte der 19. und 20. Dynastie," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 105 (n.F. 30), no. 1 (1955): 44ff. Gardiner suggests that the name "Irsu" is a fictitious name with derogatory meaning given to Bay, meaning something like "the self-made foreigner" or "the Syrian Upstart" (Černý's rendering) (in P. Harris I, 75,4 and the Setnakht Stela). Alan H. Gardiner, "Only One King Siptah and Twosre Not His Wife," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 44 (1958): 21, n. 2.

³²⁴ Alan H. Gardiner, "Only One King Siptah and Twosre Not His Wife," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 44 (1958): 17.

powerful position in Egyptian court as a foreigner³²⁵ and his support for the young and crippled Siptah³²⁶ (cf. Ay and Horemheb's rise to power). The depiction of Bay on a similar scale as Siptah and Tausret on Egyptian monuments (figs. 4.13a-b) speaks volumes about the prominence of this ancient Egyptian king-maker, which may be partially accounted for by his shared Near Eastern connection with Sutailja. Bay may be identified with the "Chief of the Troops of the King of Egypt" Beya, who was mentioned in a fragmentary letter (addressed to Ammurapi) found in the Urtenu archive (RS 86.2230) at Ugarit.³²⁷ Siptah, Tausret, and Bay formed a sort of triumvirate; this power-sharing arrangement between the king, the queen(-regent), and a powerful official was reminiscent of the political situation in the late 18th Dynasty, which was depicted by the gold foil from KV58 (fig. 4.30a), depicting Tutankhamun, Ankhesenamun, and Ay.³²⁸



Figure 4.13a. Line drawing of relief depicting king Siptah and Chancellor Bay. (Lepsius, *Denkamäler* III, 202c). Gae Callender, "The Cripple, the Queen and the Man from the North," *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 17, no. 1 (2006): 52. Figure 4.13b. Relief depicting Tausret and Bay at Abu Simbel. Cathie Spieser, *Les noms du pharaon comme êtres autonomes au nouvel empire*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 174 (Fribourg: University Press, 2000), 289 (illustration no. 7).

³²⁵ Bay was permitted to build a grandiose tomb in the Valley of the Kings (KV 13) and was included in the cult of Siptah's mortuary temple; he probably received these exceptional honors as rewards for his role in Siptah's ascension to the throne. Gae Callender, "The Cripple, the Queen and the Man from the North," *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 17, no. 1 (2006): 53.

³²⁶ Gae Callender, "The Cripple, the Queen and the Man from the North," *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 17, no. 1 (2006): 52.

³²⁷ Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston: Brill, 1999), 713–14.

³²⁸ Theodore M. Davis, *The Tombs of Harmhabi and Touatankhamanou* (London: Duckworth, 1912), fig. 4.

It is worth noting that none of the princesses from the great powers gave birth to a future pharaoh. This could be a pure coincidence, since they were fewer than the Levantine princesses; another possibility is that this phenomenon reflects a policy restriction intended to prevent other great kings from interfering with Egyptian royal succession. Furthermore, considering the role of a mother in the upbringing, education, and socialization of her children,³²⁹ such a restriction was probably necessary to ensure a future pharaoh's complete devotion to native Egyptian culture. Generally, Late Bronze Age diplomatic marriages that produced a king/crown prince with foreign blood did not end well. One way to avoid handing the throne to a half-foreign prince without explicitly denying them the right to succeed would be marrying foreign wives when one already had adult sons. Amenhotep III probably already had sons by Tiye when he married the first Mittanian princess; Ramesses II was certainly the father of many adult sons when he concluded the first Hittite marriage in year 34. When Šuppiluliuma I married the Babylonian princess, his previous wife Henti had already borne him five sons, two of whom became king after their father.³³⁰

4.3. Egyptian vs. Other Ancient Near Eastern Policies on Diplomatic Marriage and Royal Succession

The Egyptian policy of diplomatic marriage contrasted most sharply with that of the Hittites with regard to: 1. Their attitudes towards wife-giving vs. wife-taking in the context of diplomacy; 2. Their stances on foreign princesses' participation in politics after the completion of marriage; 3. Succession rights

³²⁹ The Demotic wisdom text, the Instructions of Onkhsheshonqy, admonished its readers: "Do not marry an impious woman, lest she give your children an impious upbringing." Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume III: The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 179. Inscriptions on the Amarna boundary stelae explicitly indicate that the royal daughters (Meritaten and Meketaten) were under the authority of their mother Nefertiti. William J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, ed. Edmund S. Meltzer (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 83.

³³⁰ Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 159-60.

of the children produced by diplomatic marriages. The diplomatic marriage policies of other ancient Near Eastern polities fell between these two extremes. If one wants to gain a contextualized understanding of the unique Egyptian stance on diplomatic marriage, it is necessary to investigate the critical roles played by Egyptian royal women in high-level politics, dynastic succession, and religion.

4.3.1. Royal Succession during the Egyptian New Kingdom Period

4.3.1.1. Early and Mid-18th Dynasty: Prominence of Princesses Who Became Royal Wives and King's Mothers

Throughout the 18th Dynasty, numerous royal princesses married their brother (full and half) or father and became Great Royal Wives. Such incestuous marriages were actually consummated since some of them gave birth to the next king and accumulated the titles “King’s daughter”, “King’s sister”, and “King’s mother”.³³¹ If the next heir to the throne was not born to the great royal wife of royal blood, he often ended up marrying his half-sister born to the chief queen to strengthen his claim to the throne.³³² These princesses-turned-queens were active in the reigns of their husbands and sons (even grandsons); this phenomenon could be observed till the early Ramesside period.

The 18th Dynasty kings’ practice of incestuous marriage could be traced back to the late 17th Dynasty,³³³ when the native Egyptian kings from southern Egypt were fighting against the Hyksos rulers in

³³¹ While the royal princesses were limited in their choice of husbands, kings were allowed to marry non-royals, and indeed, they were often born by non-royal secondary queens.

³³² Joyce A. Tyldesley, “The Role of Egypt’s Dynastic Queens,” in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 271–79.

³³³ The phenomenon of kings marrying princesses (their sisters or daughters) dates back to the Old Kingdom period. For instance, Hetepheres II, a daughter of Khufu, married her brother Kawab and had a daughter Meresankh III with him; after Kawab died before ascending to the throne, she remarried another brother Djedefre and became a King’s Wife. Little is known about those princesses who married down the social hierarchy because they did not mention husbands of lower rank in their tombs. Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 45-46. Erika Feucht, “Motherhood in

the north in order to unify the kingdom. As kings were away fighting on the battlefield, the affairs of the state were entrusted to their sister-wives,³³⁴ arguably because there was little doubt as to where their loyalty resided. The first such prominent great royal wife was the late 17th Dynasty queen Ahhotep I, who married her full brother Seqenenre Tao II and mothered the next two kings, Kamose and Ahmose I.³³⁵ Since both her husband and her son Kamose died fighting the Hyksos,³³⁶ she stepped in during a time of crisis and acted as regent for the young Ahmose.³³⁷ Ahmose's Karnak Stela credited her with pacifying Upper Egypt and expelling rebels; she commanded the respect of local troops and grandees.³³⁸ A ceremonial axe and a Gold of Honor necklace (figs. 4.14a-b) in her tomb highlighted her role in political and military affairs.³³⁹ A building inscription of Ahmose best exemplified the great influence of powerful queens on their sons and

Pharaonic Egypt," in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 206.

³³⁴ In the same manner, the mistresses of the house at Deir el-Medina took charge of household affairs while their husbands were away working on royal construction projects in the Valley of the Kings. Deborah Sweeney, "Women at Deir El-Medina," in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 243–54.

³³⁵ Janine Bourriau, "The Second Intermediate Period (c.1650-1550 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 192–206. Betsy M. Bryan, "The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c.1550 - 1352 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 207–19.

³³⁶ Garry J. Shaw, "The Death of King Seqenenre Tao," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 45 (2009): 159–76.

³³⁷ Queen mothers were especially revered during the embryonic stage of the Egyptian state. The Palermo Stone, a fragmentary stela that contains the royal annals of the Old Kingdom period, records the names of some prominent king's mothers, e.g., Merneith (mother of Den), Khenuthap (mother of Djer). Toby A. H. Wilkinson, *Royal Annals of Ancient Egypt: The Palermo Stone and Its Associated Fragments* (London: Kegan Paul International, 2000), 104–228.

³³⁸ Betsy M. Bryan, "The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c.1550 - 1352 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 218. Roth assumed a father-son relationship between Kamose and Ahmose, thus identifying the king's mother in Ahmose's Karnak Stela inscription as Ahhotep II. Ann M. Roth, "Models of Authority. Hatshepsut's Predecessors in Power," in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 11.

³³⁹ Graciela N. Gestoso Singer, "Queen Ahhotep and the 'Golden Fly,'" *Cahiers Caribéens d'Égyptologie* 12 (2009): 75–88. Jorrit M. Kelder, Sara E. Cole, and Eric H. Cline, "Memphis, Minos, and Mycenae: Bronze Age Contact between Egypt and the Aegean," in *Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World*, ed. Jeffrey Spier, Timothy F. Potts, and Sara E. Cole (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2018), 9–17.

even grandsons in the early 18th Dynasty.³⁴⁰ Ahhotep I even outlived her son and functioned as king's mother into the reign of her grandson Amenhotep I.³⁴¹



Figure 4.14a. The ceremonial axe from the tomb of Ahhotep I, Luxor Museum. Photo taken by the author. Figure 4.14b. The Gold of Honor necklace from the tomb of Ahhotep I, Luxor Museum. Photo taken by the author.

³⁴⁰ Ahmose was sitting in the audience hall and conversing with his wife Ahmose-Nefertari about making offerings for the deceased, the king informed his sister-wife that he decided to build a pyramid tomb for their paternal and maternal grandmother Tetisheri: "I, it is, who have remembered the mother of my mother, and the mother of my father, great king's wife and king's mother, Tetisheri, triumphant. (Although) she already has a tomb and a mortuary chapel on the soil of Thebes and Abydos, I have said this to thee, in that my majesty has desired to have made for her (also) a pyramid and a house in Taeser, as a monumental donation of my majesty ... His majesty did this because he so greatly loved her, beyond everything. Never did former kings the like of it for their mothers." James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 15-16.

³⁴¹ Betsy M. Bryan, "The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c.1550 - 1352 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 218-19.



Figure 4.15. Stela depicting Ahmose-Nefertari and her son Amenhotep I worshiped by royal workmen of Deir el-Medina. “Stela of the Sculptor Qen Worshipping Amenhotep I and Ahmose-Nefertari | New Kingdom, Ramesside,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 17, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/549536>.

Ahhotep I’s daughter Ahmose-Nefertari (fig. 4.15) followed the illustrious example of her mother by marrying her brother Ahmose and giving birth to the next king Amenhotep I.³⁴² It is known from the Donation Stela that her husband purchased the Second Prophet of Amun for her; her power and influence partly derived from the independent economic and religious power associated with this religious office.³⁴³ In addition, she was the first queen to hold the prestigious office of God’s Wife of Amun, which developed into a highly influential religious institution in the later part of the New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period.³⁴⁴ The Donation Stela granted her the right to control the property of the Second Prophet and the

³⁴² Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 88-90.

³⁴³ In addition to God’s Wife, she also held the title Divine Adoratrice. Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 88-89.

³⁴⁴ Mariam F. Ayad, *God’s Wife, God’s Servant: The God’s Wife of Amun (c. 740-525 BC)* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 3-8.

God's Wife, which was independent "of any kings who should arise in future generations".³⁴⁵ Like her mother, Ahmose-Nefertari outlived her husband and her son; after her death, she was deified and worshiped together with her son Amenhotep I by the royal workmen of Deir el-Medina.³⁴⁶

For Amenhotep I, no certain wife is known; although he reigned for some twenty years, he did not seem to have a male heir.³⁴⁷ A princess named Ahmose-Merytamun (fig. 4.16) was assumed to be his sister and consort, but the link between them is weak.³⁴⁸ The next prominent queen is Ahmose (fig. 4.17), the great royal wife of Thutmose I. This king was generally assumed to be of non-royal background because his mother's (Seniseneb) only title was that of king's mother.³⁴⁹ Scholars suggest that queen Ahmose may have been a member of the Ahmoside royal family,³⁵⁰ and her royal lineage facilitated Thutmose's accession to the throne.³⁵¹ As a queen, Ahmose is little known; but she gave birth to princess Hatshepsut, whose coronation marked the peak of female royal power during the 18th Dynasty.

³⁴⁵ Betsy M. Bryan, "Property and the God's Wives of Amun," in *Women and Property*, ed. Deborah Lyons and Raymond Westbrook (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Center for Hellenic Studies, 2005), 1–15.

³⁴⁶ Her cult lasted throughout the New Kingdom, testifying to the extraordinary status of this queen. Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 90.

³⁴⁷ Amenhotep I's daughter Satamun held the titles king's sister and god's wife; she never became queen but was still honored as a member of the royal family during the Ramesside period. Betsy M. Bryan, "The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c.1550 - 1352 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 220.

³⁴⁸ Betsy M. Bryan, "The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c.1550 - 1352 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 219–20.

³⁴⁹ Seniseneb was venerated by her son and appeared behind Thutmose I and in front of Ahmose-Nefertari on the Wadi Halfa coronation stela. Betsy M. Bryan, "The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c.1550 - 1352 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 221.

³⁵⁰ She was probably a daughter of prince Ahmose-ankh, which would explain why she did not hold the title King's Daughter. As she was named King's Sister, it has also been proposed that she was Thutmose I's sister. Betsy M. Bryan, "The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c.1550 - 1352 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 221.

³⁵¹ Other cases of handing down power through the female line are attested in the Middle Kingdom period. A nomarch of the Oryx nome, Khnumhotep II, inherited the rights of a monarch from the father of his mother and his autobiography relates how he received this office with the approval of the king. Percy E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan. Part I* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1893), 58-62. William K. Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 418-22. The mother of Khety II, a nomarch of Assyut, governed for him when he inherited the office

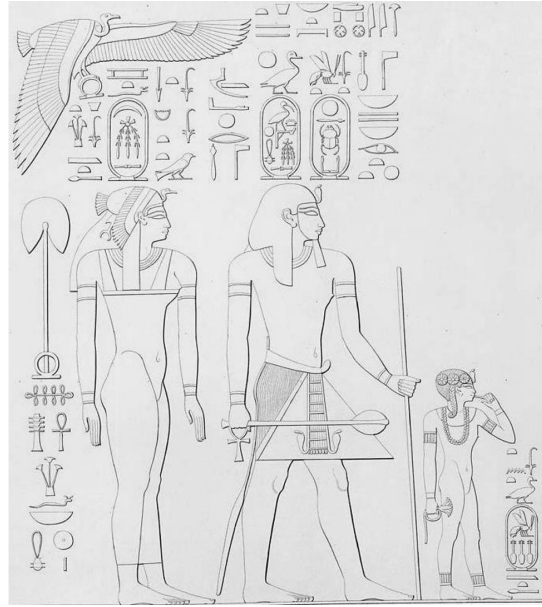
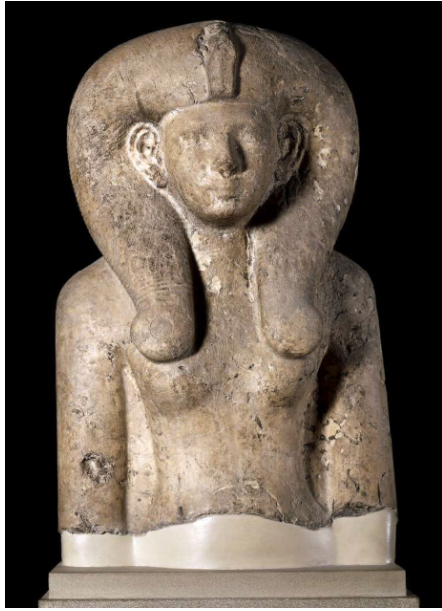


Figure 4.16. Statue of Ahmose-Merytamun wearing a Hathor wig, British Museum, EA 93. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA93. Figure 4.17. Relief depicting Queen Ahmose, Thutmose I and their eldest daughter. Richard Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien: nach den Zeichnungen der von Seiner Majestät dem Könige von Preussen Friedrich Wilhelm IV nach diesen Ländern gesendeten und in den Jahren 1842-1845 ausgeführten wissenschaftlichen Expedition. Tafelwerke*, 12 vols. (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970), vol. 5, pl. 8b.

Hatshepsut, whose name means “the-foremost-of-the-noble-ladies”, was indeed worthy of such elevated status because she was related by blood to three successive kings: Thutmose I, Thutmose II, and Thutmose III. She became God’s Wife of Amun³⁵² in the reign of her father Thutmose I, ruled as the great royal wife of her short-lived brother Thutmose II, and acted as regent for her step-son/nephew Thutmose III; after she had a taste of power as the queen-regent, she took the mantle of kingship herself.³⁵³ Inscriptions

as a child. Hellmut Brunner, *Texte aus den Gräbern der Herakleopolitenzeit von Siut*, *Ägyptologische Forschungen* 5 (Gluckstadt: J. J. Augustin, 1937), 15.

³⁵² Mariam F. Ayad, *God’s Wife, God’s Servant: The God’s Wife of Amun (c. 740-525 BC)* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 3-8.

³⁵³ According to the autobiography of Ineni, Hatshepsut managed the affairs of the land with stable hands during the co-regency period: “His (Thutmose II’s) son stood in his place as king of the Two Lands, having become ruler upon the throne of the one who begat him. His sister the Divine Consort, Hatshepsut, settled the affairs of the Two Lands by reason of her plans. Egypt was made to labor with bowed head for her, the excellent seed of the god, which came forth from him. The bow-rope of the South, the mooring-stake of the Southerners; the excellent stern-rope of the Northland is she; the mistress of command, whose plans are excellent, who satisfies the Two Regions, when she speaks.” James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Volume II. The Eighteenth Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 142-43. Ann M. Roth, “Models of Authority. Hatshepsut’s Predecessors in Power,” in

and reliefs in her Deir el-Bahri temple celebrated her divine birth, claiming that she was born from a union between her mother and the god Amun-Re in the guise of Thutmose I.³⁵⁴ It is very likely that she used the power of her role as God's Wife of Amun to garner support for her claim to the throne, as she was often portrayed wearing the double-plumed crown and grasping the distinctive insignia of this office during the early co-regency period.³⁵⁵ As part of Hatshepsut's legitimization efforts, she contrived the political myth that she was destined to rule through the oracular decree of Amun, and Thutmose I proclaimed her as heir before his death.³⁵⁶ In the later years of her rule, Hatshepsut adopted a male persona because the kingly office was traditionally held by a male;³⁵⁷ she even changed some of her early representations from female to male to conform to the traditional representation of the king as a youthful male.³⁵⁸ Nonetheless, she attached feminine endings to traditional male royal names, titles, and epithets in her inscriptions to indicate that her femininity was still an essential part of her identity.³⁵⁹

Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 9–14.

³⁵⁴ James P. Allen, "The Role of Amun," in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 83.

³⁵⁵ Peter F. Dorman, "Hatshepsut: Princess to Queen to Co-Ruler," in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 87–90.

³⁵⁶ Betsy M. Bryan, "The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c.1550 - 1352 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 229. Furthermore, Hatshepsut tried to emphasize her blood ties with her father by planning a joint burial with him. Her tomb in the Valley of the Kings (KV20) was prepared for her burial and that of Thutmose I. Catharine H. Roehrig, "The Two Tombs of Hatshepsut," in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 185.

³⁵⁷ In some Mesopotamian and Syrian wills, the heirless testator would grant his wife/daughter full legal capacity to manage his inheritance by making her "father and mother" of his property or establishing them as "female and male" (i.e., granting them a male legal status). Josué J. Justel, "Women, Gender and Law at the Dawn of History. The Evidence of the Cuneiform Sources," in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 92-93.

³⁵⁸ Ann M. Roth, "Models of Authority. Hatshepsut's Predecessors in Power," in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 9–10, fig. 2.

³⁵⁹ Ann M. Roth, "Models of Authority. Hatshepsut's Predecessors in Power," in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 9.

Hatshepsut did not have a male heir; her only known offspring was princess Neferure (fig. 4.18b). A trusted official, Senenmut was appointed as her tutor and steward of her estate;³⁶⁰ perhaps Hatshepsut had plans for her to become the next great royal wife and to rule Egypt jointly with her half-brother Thutmose III. Neferure held the titles King's Daughter, God's Wife, Mistress of the Two Lands, and Lady of Upper and Lower Egypt, but whether she ever married Thutmose III remains a subject of scholarly debate.³⁶¹ In any case, she vanished from the political stage shortly after Thutmose III commenced his sole rule.³⁶²

³⁶⁰ Peter F. Dorman, "The Career of Senenmut," in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 107–11. Many joint statues of Senenmut and Neferure depict the latter sitting on the lap of the former, showing the intimate relationship between the princess and her tutor. Catharine H. Roehrig, "Senenmut, Royal Tutor to Princess Neferure," in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 112–16, figs. 47–49.

³⁶¹ Betsy M. Bryan, "The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c.1550 - 1352 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 229.

³⁶² She appeared as god's wife as late as the 22nd or 23rd year of the joint reign. Betsy M. Bryan, "The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c.1550 - 1352 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 229–40.

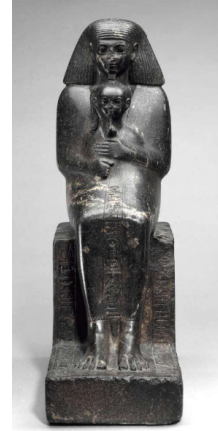


Figure 4.18a. Hatshepsut as a male king offering to the bark of Amun. Ann M. Roth, “Models of Authority. Hatshepsut’s Predecessors in Power,” in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), fig. 3. Figure 4.18b. Statue of Nefereure and her tutor Senenmut. “Statue | British Museum,” The British Museum, accessed January 18, 2023, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA174. Figure 4.18c. The proscription of Hatshepsut. Karnak Temple. Peter F. Dorman, “The Proscription of Hatshepsut,” in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 268, fig. 87.

Hatshepsut definitely set an illustrious example for princesses of the 18th Dynasty, but not so much for the male rulers that succeeded her. Her monuments were systematically re-carved or damaged to remove any evidence of her rule (fig. 4.18c).³⁶³ However, compelling evidence suggests that this proscription was not fueled by personal hatred but was motivated by political needs, i.e., to pave the way for the accession

³⁶³ Peter F. Dorman, “The Proscription of Hatshepsut,” in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 267–69.

of the next king Amenhotep II.³⁶⁴ Indeed, the reign of Hatshepsut marked a watershed in 18th Dynasty political history; successive kings took measures to curtail the power and influence of royal princesses by marrying great royal wives of non-royal backgrounds. In the mid-18th Dynasty, starting with the reigns of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II, one notices a scarcity of princesses and great royal wives in royal records; Amenhotep II had no publicly acknowledged wife other than his mother Merytra, who served as “great royal wife”.³⁶⁵ And it was not known which women were the mothers of Amenhotep II’s numerous offspring, apart from Tiaa, the mother of his successor Thutmose IV.³⁶⁶ The only women who enjoyed prominence during the reign of Thutmose IV were his mother Tiaa and two other great royal wives, Nefertari and a sister-wife Iaret.³⁶⁷ Ironically, his successor, Amenhotep III’s mother Mutemwiya was not acknowledged by Thutmose IV during his reign.³⁶⁸ The suppression of the power and prestige of the great

³⁶⁴ Dorman argued convincingly that her proscription should not be simply understood as a *damnatio memoriae*; Hatshepsut’s representations as queen were left intact; only the images and monuments that portrayed her in a kingly role were targeted and re-carved/destroyed. Peter F. Dorman, “The Proscription of Hatshepsut,” in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 267–69. Dieter Arnold, “The Destruction of the Statues of Hatshepsut from Deir El-Bahri,” in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 270–76. Ann M. Roth, “Erasing a Reign,” in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 277–84.

³⁶⁵ Betsy M. Bryan, “The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c.1550 - 1352 BC),” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 246.

³⁶⁶ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 112-13.

³⁶⁷ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 113-14.

³⁶⁸ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 113-14. David B. O’Connor and Eric H. Cline, eds., *Amenhotep III: Perspectives on His Reign* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 114. She enjoyed more prominence during her son’s reign and was the protagonist in Amenhotep III’s divine birth story. Uroš Matić, “The Sap of Life: Materiality and Sex in the Divine Birth Legend of Hatshepsut and Amenhotep III,” in *Perspectives on Materiality in Ancient Egypt: Agency, Cultural Reproduction and Change*, ed. Érika Maynard, Carolina Vellozo, and Rennan Lemos (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2018), 35–54.

royal wife was concurrent with the disappearance of the title God's Wife of Amun from records;³⁶⁹ this office was revived in the early 19th Dynasty and was held by the chief queens of the first three rulers.³⁷⁰

In religious terms, the brother-sister marriage follows a divine model, the divine marriage between Osiris and Isis (fig. 4.19).³⁷¹ The image of an ideal queen was preserved in this myth, recounted by the classical author Plutarch; just like Isis, she should be a sister-wife capable of supporting her husband and son and deputizing for them when circumstances necessitate her intervention.³⁷² In political and economic terms, the strategy of marrying royal princesses and fathering male heirs by them kept power and wealth within the royal family. In addition, this system minimized conflict between the dowager queen and the incoming consort queen and ensured the smooth transition of power as the two were mother and daughter. The queen did not have to divide her loyalty between her husband/children and her birth family (i.e., the consort family). Arguably, the success of the dynastic line in the early 18th Dynasty was attributable to the closely-knit royal family. However, the political situation changed in the mid-18th Dynasty, as the unification of Egypt and the establishment of secure Egyptian control over southern Levant and Nubia obviated the need for pharaohs to frequently go away on campaign; as a result, the need for a strong-willed queen of royal descent to exercise power on behalf of her husband/son in times of crisis decreased. Furthermore, great royal wives with royal blood, equipped with ambition and resources, could usurp power

³⁶⁹ Thutmose III and his successors apparently transgressed the stipulations in the Donation Stela and interfered with the transmission of the office. Amenhotep III even used the Donation Stela as fill for the Third Pylon he built at the Karnak Temple. Betsy M. Bryan, "Property and the God's Wives of Amun," in *Women and Property*, ed. Deborah Lyons and Raymond Westbrook (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Center for Hellenic Studies, 2005), 6–7.

³⁷⁰ Mariam F. Ayad, *God's Wife, God's Servant: The God's Wife of Amun (c. 740-525 BC)* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 6-7.

³⁷¹ The close royal family reached back into the Middle Kingdom and Old Kingdom period. Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 36-85. Consanguineous marriage among the sacerdotal representatives of the divinities on earth distinguished them from other ordinary mortals. In ancient Egypt, consanguineous marriage was rare among the non-royals and was mostly employed as an economic strategy. Joanne-Marie Robinson, "*Blood Is Thicker than Water*" - *Non-Royal Consanguineous Marriage in Ancient Egypt. An Exploration of Economic and Biological Outcomes* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2020).

³⁷² Joyce A. Tyldesley, "The Role of Egypt's Dynastic Queens," in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 272-73.

from legitimate male heirs (as was demonstrated by Hatshepsut).³⁷³ Thutmose III and his successors' suppression of the power of royal princesses represents a conscious rejection of the dynastic role played by princesses in 18th Dynasty royal succession.



Figure 4.19. Pendant depicting the divine triad (Osiris, Isis, and Horus) in the name of Osorkon II. “A Royal Setting for Egyptian Antiquities,” Le Louvre, accessed January 18, 2023, <https://www.louvre.fr/en/explore/the-palace/a-royal-setting-for-egyptian-antiquities>.

4.3.1.2. Late 18th Dynasty: Rise of Non-royal Queens and the Consort Families

Women of non-royal backgrounds, on the other hand, could hardly pose any threat to their husbands. It is against this historical background that one should understand the prominence of Amenhotep III's queen Tiye (fig. 4.20a), who was undoubtedly the most influential woman of her husband's reign. Inscriptions on the commemorative scarabs (i.e., the Marriage Scarabs) that Amenhotep III issued to celebrate the exalted status of Tiye mentioned her non-royal parentage (fig. 4.20b).³⁷⁴ Tiye played a significant role in both

³⁷³ Indeed, because of her blood ties to both the Ahmoside and Thutmocide families, Hatshepsut had more claim to the throne than her father, brother-husband, and stepson. The only factor that weakened her claim to the throne was her gender, which she tried to overcome by adopting a male persona. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller, eds., *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 7-11.

³⁷⁴ The text starts with a long list of titles: “The living Horus, Strong bull appearing in truth. He of the Two Goddesses establishing laws, pacifying the Two Lands. The Golden Horus, Great of Valour, smiting the Asiatics.

domestic affairs and international diplomacy. Tiye appeared with Amenhotep III on temple walls at Soleb in Nubia and was even deified in her own temple at Sedeinga nearby.³⁷⁵ She was fully informed of the diplomatic exchanges between the Egyptian and Mittanian royal houses during her husband's reign, and she was entreated to intercede between Tušratta and Akhenaten when the two disputed over some missing gold statues (EA 26).³⁷⁶ On public and private monuments, Tiye appeared in iconography traditionally reserved for the kings, e.g., the smiting scene and the trampling of foreign foes (as a female sphinx) (fig. 4.20c).³⁷⁷ In addition to bearing a male heir (Akhenaten), she gave birth to many daughters: Sitamun, Henuttaneb, Nebetiah, and Isis, all of whom appeared on statues and smaller objects associated with the

King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands, Nebmaatre, Son of Re, Amenhotep ruler of Thebes, given life. And then it introduces the queen Tiye and her parentage. The Great Royal Wife Tiye, may she live. The name of her father is Yuya, the name of her mother is Tuya. She is the wife of the mighty king whose southern boundary is as far as Karoy, whose northern is as far as Naharin." Though referred to in Egyptological literature as the Marriage Scarab, its inscription makes no mention of marriage or a ceremony associated with it. On the other hand, the text highlighted the great expanse of the Egyptian empire at its political apogee under Amenhotep III. The stress on Tiye's non-royal provincial background was unusual, for it is not obvious how it might have enhanced her status. Tiye's father, Yuya was from the Upper Egyptian town of Akhmim, where he served as a priest and superintendent of oxen or commander of the chariotry; Tiye's mother, Tuya, was involved in many religious cults, as her different titles indicate. Yuya and Tuya were granted a burial in the valley of the kings (KV46), which was an incredible privilege. Tyldesley tentatively suggested that Tuya and Yuya were related to the birth family of Mutemwiya, which would explain how Amenhotep III met his non-royal bride from a provincial town. Tiye was depicted with Amenhotep III in the tomb of her brother Anen, who was the Second Prophet of Amun. C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 21-56. Cyril Aldred, "The End of the El-Amarna Period: I. The Family of Yuya," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 43, no. 1 (1957): 30-41. Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 115. Norman de Garis Davies, "The Graphic Work of the Expedition," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 24, no. 11 (1929): 35-49.

³⁷⁵ Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts. VII. Nubia, the Deserts and Outside Egypt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 166-67, 169-72. Lawrence M. Berman, "Overview of Amenhotep III and His Reign," in *Amenhotep III: Perspectives on His Reign*, ed. David B. O'Connor and Eric H. Cline (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 6-7.

³⁷⁶ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 84-85.

³⁷⁷ Katharina Zinn, "Women in Amarna: Legendary Royals, Forgotten Elite, Unknown Populace?," in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 257.

royal couple.³⁷⁸ It was perhaps not a coincidence that she did not play the role of God’s Wife of Amun, which explained the scarcity of her monuments from Karnak and Luxor, the main cult places of Amun.³⁷⁹



Figure 4.20a. Head of Tiye wearing the double-feathered crown with the sun-disc and Hathor thrones from Gurob. Neues Museum, Berlin. “Amarna Period: (Society for the Promotion of the Egyptian Museum Berlin),” accessed January 18, 2023, <http://www.egyptian-museum-berlin.com/c52.php>. Figure 4.20b. The Marriage Scarab of Tiye. “Brooklyn Museum | Marriage Scarab of Amenhotep III and Queen Tiye,” accessed October 27, 2022, <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/4041>. Figure 4.20c. Queen Tiye trampling female enemies on the side panel of her throne, modified motif of bound enemies in wood openwork between the legs of her throne. Tomb of Kheruef (TT192). The Epigraphic Survey, *The Tomb of Kheruef. Theban Tomb 192*, Oriental Institute Publications 102 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1980), pl.49.



³⁷⁸ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 115.

³⁷⁹ Katharina Zinn, “Women in Amarna: Legendary Royals, Forgotten Elite, Unknown Populace?,” in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 256.

Figure 4.21. Nefertiti smiting a female enemy on her royal barge. “River Scene with Royal Barges and Tow Boats,” accessed January 18, 2023, <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/45954/river-scene-with-royal-barges-and-tow-boats>.

Tiye’s daughter-in-law Nefertiti represents another non-royal great royal wife who enjoyed unprecedented prominence during the reign of her husband.³⁸⁰ Nefertiti’s exalted status became obvious in the four temples Akhenaten constructed at Karnak; she figured more prominently than her husband on the walls of these structures.³⁸¹ Just like Tiye, she was depicted performing many rituals reserved for the king, e.g., presenting Maat and smiting the enemy (fig. 4.21).³⁸² She accompanied Akhenaten on various occasions (e.g., state ceremonies, diplomatic events, and religious offerings) and adopted kingly privileges and paraphernalia.³⁸³ Nefertiti enjoyed increasing influence in the later part of Akhenaten’s reign, perhaps because of her wholehearted support of his religious reforms; remarkably, she became King Neferneferuaten after the brief reign of Smenkhkare and (confusingly) shared the same throne name Ankhkheperura with the latter.³⁸⁴ It is possible that her daughter Meritaten, who was the widow of Smenkhkare (fig. 4.22-23), performed the ceremonial role of Great Royal Wife for her.³⁸⁵

³⁸⁰ The royal decree on the Amarna boundary stela (X and M) testifies to her political influence, and her opinions were valued more than those of other officials by Akhenaten. William J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, ed. Edmund S. Meltzer (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 73-77.

³⁸¹ Katharina Zinn, “Women in Amarna: Legendary Royals, Forgotten Elite, Unknown Populace?,” in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 259.

³⁸² Uroš Matić, “‘Her Striking but Cold Beauty’: Gender and Violence in Depictions of Queen Nefertiti Smiting the Enemies,” in *Archaeologies of Gender and Violence*, ed. Uroš Matić and Bo Jensen (Oxford; Havertown: Oxbow Books, 2017), 103–21. Robert G. Morkot, “Violent Images of Queenship and the Royal Cult,” *Wepwawet: Research Papers in Egyptology* 2 (1986): 1–9.

³⁸³ Julia Samson, “Nefertiti’s Regality,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 63 (1977): 88–97.

³⁸⁴ Aidan Dodson, *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb, and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2009), 38. Until recently, it was assumed that Nefertiti disappeared after Akhenaten’s 14th regnal year; but the discovery of a hieratic text in the quarry of Dayr Abu Hinnis proves that she was still alive in the 16th regnal year. Athena van der Perre, “The Year 16 Graffito of Akhenaten in Dayr Abū Hinnis. A Contribution to the Study of the Later Years of Nefertiti,” *Journal of Egyptian History* 7, no. 1 (2014): 70-75.

³⁸⁵ Aidan Dodson, *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb, and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2009), 38.



Figure 4.22. Relief depicting princess Meritaten/Meritamun. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen. © Richard Mortel.

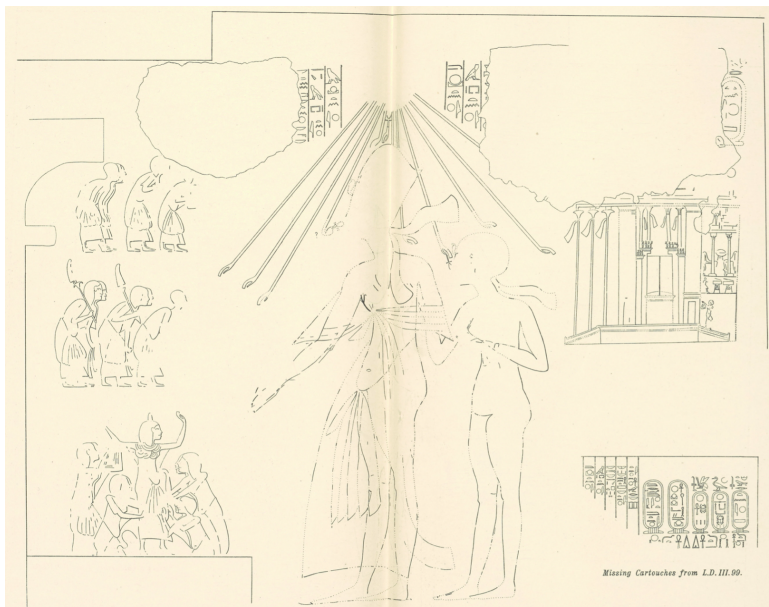


Figure 4.23. Smenkhkare and Meritaten in the Amarna tomb of Meryra II. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna: Part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pl. 41.

In the late 18th Dynasty, royal succession was impacted and complicated by two new developments:

1. The taking of royal daughters as wives; 2. The rise of consort families. Amenhotep III revived the tradition of marrying royal princesses with modification; instead of marrying a sister, he chose to marry his own daughter Sitamun (born by Tiye), presumably because their age made them more malleable than even-aged sisters.³⁸⁶ When Tutankhamun ascended to the throne, he was merely a boy of 8 or 9 years old and

³⁸⁶ Tyldesley expressed doubt concerning whether such father-daughter marriages were ever consummated, and proposed that the “great royal wife” functioned as a ceremonial title in these cases. Joyce A. Tyldesley, “The Role of

obviously did not have a marriageable daughter. Instead, he married his sister Ankhesenamun, born to Akhenaten and Nefertiti. This brother-sister incestuous marriage was also necessitated by the fact that Tutankhamun was not a son of Nefertiti, so he followed the example of some earlier 18th kings (e.g., Thutmose II and Thutmose III) who married a half-sister born to the great royal wife to bolster their claims to the throne.³⁸⁷ This politically expedient marriage served to shore up Tutankhamun's kingship in the absence of a queen regent, whose role was played by the God's Father Ay and general Horemheb.

Unfortunately, Tutankhamun passed away before he could produce a male heir. With his death, the 18th Dynasty male royal line died out, and Egypt faced a succession crisis. Ay (1327-1323 BCE) beat Horemheb in the game of thrones, and his rise to power may be closely linked to another phenomenon in late 18th Dynasty politics: the rise of the consort family. With the rise of Tiye, her family members obtained prominent positions at the court and in temple cults. Her brother Anen, called "he whose favors endure in the palace", held priestly titles such as the Second Prophet of Amun.³⁸⁸ Though definitive proof is lacking, many considered Ay to be a brother of Tiye, born to the same parents Yuya and Tuya.³⁸⁹ Ay's title "God's Father" has been interpreted as evidence that he was the father of Nefertiti because it designates a man whose daughter married the king.³⁹⁰ What is known for certain is that Ay's wife Tey (name spelled similarly to Tiye in Egyptian but translated differently by Egyptologists) was the wet-nurse (*menat* in Egyptian) of

Egypt's Dynastic Queens," in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 276.

³⁸⁷ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 137-38.

³⁸⁸ Cyril Aldred, "The End of the El-'Amarna Period: I. The Family of Yuya," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 43, no. 1 (1957): 32. Earl Ertman and Lyla P. Brock, "A Crown of Queen Tiye in the Theban Tomb of Anen," *Egyptian Archaeology*, no. 33 (2008): 16-17.

³⁸⁹ Cyril Aldred, "The End of the El-'Amarna Period: I. The Family of Yuya," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 43, no. 1 (1957): 32-33. Otto J. Schaden, *The God's Father Ay* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1978), 1-55.

³⁹⁰ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 125-26.

Nefertiti.³⁹¹ She must be a lady of elevated status and substantial influence at the court, as she was awarded the Gold of Honor, which was usually bestowed upon male high officials.³⁹² To strengthen his claim to the throne, Ay prepared a burial for his predecessor and performed the Opening of the Mouth ceremony for him (performing a kind of filial duty).³⁹³ Moreover, he likely forced the widowed Ankhnesenamun, the last member of the Ahmoside-Thutmoside royal family, to marry him, which led to the Daḥamunzu Affair (see discussion below).

Horemheb (1323-1295 BCE) succeeded Ay on the throne, probably after his elimination of Ay's designated heir Nakhtmin.³⁹⁴ Perhaps to reward the army for their support, he appointed soldiers to priestly positions so that they could be provided for after their retirement.³⁹⁵ In addition, he may have derived his

³⁹¹ The wet-nurse of royal children were usually selected among wives of high officials. She could continue to raise the children after weaning and thus be considered a member of the family. The wet-nurse and her family could become quite intimate with the royal children she nursed and develop quasi-kinship ties with them. Amenhotep II was depicted in intimate scenes with his nurse Baki in the tomb of the latter's husband Mahu (TT85) and in the tomb of Qenamun (TT93), the son of his other nurse. Hatshepsut granted her wet-nurse Sitra the honor of being buried in the Valley of the Kings (KV60). Tutankhamun's wet-nurse Maia has her own tomb at Saqqara, while most women were buried with their husbands or family tombs. The nurse's own children became the royal children's foster brothers/sisters; the royal foster brothers could be appointed to elevated positions, while the foster sisters could marry princes whom they grew up with. Thutmose III married Satiah, who was a daughter of his nurse Ipu. See Sameh Elhabashy and Elshaimaa M. Abdelgawad, "The History of Nursing Profession in Ancient Egyptian Society," *International Journal of Africa Nursing Sciences* 11 (2019): 1–7. Alain Zivie, *La tombe de Maïa. Mère nourricière du roi Toutânkhamon et Grande du harem* (Toulouse: Caracara Edition, 2009). Erika Feucht, "Motherhood in Pharaonic Egypt," in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 207. Catharine H. Roehrig, "The Eighteenth Dynasty Titles Royal Nurse (*Mnat Nswt*), Royal Tutor (*Mna Nswt*), and Foster Brother/Sister of the Lord of the Two Lands (*Sn/Snt Mna n Nb T3wy*)" (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 1990).

³⁹² Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings. IV: Lower and Middle Egypt (Delta and Cairo to Asyut)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 229; Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna. Part VI: Tombs of Parennefer, Tutu, and Ay* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1908), pl. 29.

³⁹³ "Tutankhamen | Theban Mapping Project," accessed January 17, 2023, <https://thebanmappingproject.com/tombs/kv-62-tutankhamen>.

³⁹⁴ Nozomu Kawai, "Ay versus Horemheb: The Political Situation in the Late Eighteenth Dynasty Revisited," *Journal of Egyptian History* 3, no. 2 (2010): 261–92. Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 284.

³⁹⁵ William J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, ed. Edmund S. Meltzer (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 233.

power partly from an indirect link with the royal family, as his wife Mutnedjemet was presumed to be a younger sister of Nefertiti.³⁹⁶ If this is the case, then Horemheb was married into the consort family and would have been a son-in-law of Ay. When Horemheb again died childless, he appointed his vizier and a comrade in the army, Paramesse (Ramesses I, 1295-1294 BCE), as his successor.³⁹⁷ In addition to his administrative capability or military prowess, Paramesse was probably chosen because he already had two generations of male heirs; the succession crisis caused by the lack of male heirs that plagued the late 18th Dynasty would be solved by his appointment to the throne.

4.3.1.3. The 19th and 20th Dynasties: Increasing Visibility of Royal Sons

Ramesses I's queen Tia(-Sitre) was of non-royal background,³⁹⁸ so was Tuya, the wife of his successor Seti I (1294-1279 BCE).³⁹⁹ Tuya gave birth to Ramesses II (1279-1213 BCE) and two daughters, Tia and Henutmire (QV75).⁴⁰⁰ During the reign of her son, she enjoyed a privileged status and was allowed to participate in diplomatic correspondence with the Hittite court (following the precedent set by Tiye).⁴⁰¹ The issue of producing male heirs weighed heavily on the minds of the early Ramesside kings. Seti I endowed

³⁹⁶ Aidan Dodson, *Amarna Sunrise: Egypt from Golden Age to Age of Heresy* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2014), 88.

³⁹⁷ Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 285–86. Paramesse was the son of a troop commander named Seti. His uncle Khaemwast, a "Fan-bearer on the Right of the King", married Taemwadjesy, the "Matron of the Harim of Amun" and the sister of Tutankhamun's Viceroy of Kush Huy (TT40). Eugene Cruz-Urbe, "The Father of Ramses I: OI 11456," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 37, no. 3 (1978): 237–44.

³⁹⁸ In Seti's temple at Abydos and tomb, Sitre is mentioned as the Great Royal Wife and King's Mother. Sitre's tomb (KV38) inscriptions refer to her as a King's Mother. She is probably to be identified with the lady Tia, who was mentioned on the Year 400 Stela of Ramesses as the mother of Seti I. Like many of her predecessors, she changed her name when she became queen. Aidan Dodson & Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt*, Thames & Hudson (2004), 175.

³⁹⁹ Tuya was the daughter of Raia, a Lieutenant of Chariotry. Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 143.

⁴⁰⁰ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 143-44.

⁴⁰¹ Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 232-33.

the young Ramesses II with a harem of beautiful women, presumably to ensure the continuation of the dynastic line.⁴⁰² Not yet satisfied with these beautiful women and confident in his hold on power, Ramesses II revived the tradition of incestuous marriage and took his sister Henutmire and three of his daughters: Bintanath, Meritamen, and Nebettawy, as his Great Royal Wives.⁴⁰³ Nevertheless, his most prominent wife during the first half of his reign (Nefertari) and the mother of his successor (Isetnorfert I) were both of non-royal births.⁴⁰⁴ Furthermore, Ramesses II incorporated many foreign princesses into his harem, perhaps inspired by his predecessor Amenhotep III, whose numerous statues he shamelessly usurped.⁴⁰⁵ Ramesses II's large harem of women bore him a staggering number of sons, many of whom he chose to depict on the walls of his monuments.⁴⁰⁶ The visibility of royal sons before their ascension was abnormal and marked a break from Egyptian tradition because: 1. Egyptian kings usually associated themselves with female members of the royal family (e.g., his mother, wives, and daughters) on their monuments; 2. Ramesses II displayed the children of lesser wives alongside children born to consorts, which was unprecedented.⁴⁰⁷ Ramesses II outlived many of his Crown Princes; in stark contrast, earlier pharaohs rarely named their heirs during their lifetime.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰² Anthony J. Spalinger, *The Great Dedicatory Inscription of Ramesses II: A Solar-Osirian Tractate at Abydos* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 35-36.

⁴⁰³ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 143-57.

⁴⁰⁴ The discovery of a knob with the cartouche of Ay in the tomb of Nefertari has led to the speculation that she was related to him (probably a great-granddaughter of him). Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 145-55.

⁴⁰⁵ Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 291.

⁴⁰⁶ Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings. II. Theban Temples* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 431-443. Marjorie M. Fisher, *The Sons of Ramesses II. Volume 1: Text and Plates*, 2 vols., Ägypten und Altes Testament, 53:1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz in Kommission, 2001), vol. 1, 33-42.

⁴⁰⁷ Despite Nefertari's superior status compared to Isetnofret I, their sons enjoy equal rights to succession, as the title of Crown Prince passed between them in order of birth. Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 145-55.

⁴⁰⁸ Almost every Ramesside crown prince held the title of commander-in-chief of the army, and this tradition started with Horemheb. Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The*

By promoting royal sons in politics, the early 19th Dynasty kings effectively curtailed the power of royal women as well as power-hungry individuals from the consort families to ensure the continuation of their dynastic line. However, the late 19th Dynasty was troubled by another type of succession crisis (i.e., breaking of the patrilineal succession pattern), caused by the exceptionally long reign of Ramesses II, an abundance of adult male heirs, and the appointment of princes to elevated positions in temple cults and the army (fig. 4.24).⁴⁰⁹ The exclusion of male royal family members from imperial administration and diplomacy by the pharaohs deserves more scholarly attention. In contrast to female members of the royal family, Egyptian princes are difficult to track in historical records before the reign of Seti I in the early 19th Dynasty. Lorenz examined the role of male royal offspring in the 18th Dynasty and found that few princes held titles outside the realm of the military and the priesthood or temple administration;⁴¹⁰ they played only a negligible role in imperial administration and diplomatic activities, in stark contrast to their Hittite counterparts. For the Hittites, empire-building was truly a family enterprise. Royal sons and other members of the royal family were groomed to become military leaders and were even appointed as kings of appanage states by the Hittite great king. They fought side by side with their king in battle, shared the burden of administration, and partook in reaping the fruits of imperial expansion in exchange. Ramesses II's promotion of princesses probably represents a reaction to the succession crisis of the late 18th Dynasty, which was caused by the lack of male heirs.

Oxford History of Ancient Egypt, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 289. Marjorie M. Fisher, *The Sons of Ramesses II. Volume 1: Text and Plates*, 2 vols., Ägypten und Altes Testament, 53:1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz in Kommission, 2001), vol. 1. Megaera C. Lorenz, *The Role of Male Royal Offspring in 18th Dynasty Egypt* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2017).

⁴⁰⁹ Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 293–94. Marjorie M. Fisher, *The Sons of Ramesses II. Volume 1: Text and Plates*, 2 vols., Ägypten und Altes Testament, 53:1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz in Kommission, 2001), vol. 1, 33-120.

⁴¹⁰ Megaera C. Lorenz, *The Role of Male Royal Offspring in 18th Dynasty Egypt* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2017).

Ramesses II's 13th son Merneptah (1213-1203 BCE), already advanced in age when he became king, ruled Egypt for only ten years and was succeeded by his son Seti II (1200-1194 BCE), born to him by Queen Isetnofret II.⁴¹¹ But he, like his father, had more than one capable adult son eligible for the kingly office; unsurprisingly, Seti II's claim to the throne was challenged by a rival named Amenmesse (1203-1200? BCE, KV10),⁴¹² who was probably another son of Merneptah by Takhat⁴¹³ or (less likely) a son of Ramesses II. Amenmesse may have served as Viceroy of Kush (then known as Messuy) before establishing himself as king in Upper Egypt.⁴¹⁴

Seti II defeated Amenmesse and took control of the whole of Egypt; he was succeeded by a crippled youth named Siptah (1194-1188 BCE), who was probably a son of Amenmesse and a minor wife of Canaanite origin.⁴¹⁵ Probably due to his weak claim to the throne, tender age, and half-Canaanite origin, Siptah needed the support of Chancellor Bay and Seti II's widow Tausret.⁴¹⁶ Bay's fall from power in the 5th regnal year of Siptah was as meteoric as his rise; the news of his execution was announced to the Deir

⁴¹¹ Isetnofret II may have been the daughter of Ramesses II and Queen Isetnofret I or the daughter of Prince Khaemwaset (son of Ramesses II); the latter suggestion would better explain her lack of the title King's Daughter. Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 160.

⁴¹² "Amenmeses | Theban Mapping Project," accessed March 5, 2023, <https://thebanmappingproject.com/tombs/kv-10-amenmeses>.

⁴¹³ Takhat bore the title King's Daughter, and it suggests an identification with a daughter of Ramesses II with the same name who was mentioned on an ostrakon in the Louvre. She was also mentioned as a King's Wife, and her royal husband was either Merneptah (her brother) or Seti II (her nephew). Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 179, 183.

⁴¹⁴ Rolf Krauss, "Untersuchungen zu Konig Amenmesse," 1. teil, *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 4 (1976), 161-99; idem, "Untersuchungen zu Konig Amenmesse," 2. teil, *SAKb* (1977), 131-74. Frank J. Yurco, "Was Amenmesse the Viceroy of Kush, Messuwy?," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 34 (1997): 49-56. See also: Aidan Dodson, "Messuy, Amada, and Amenmesse," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 34 (1997): 41-48.

⁴¹⁵ Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 296. Gae Callender, "The Cripple, the Queen and the Man from the North," *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 17, no. 1 (2006): 49-64.

⁴¹⁶ Gae Callender, "The Cripple, the Queen and the Man from the North," *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 17, no. 1 (2006): 49-55.

el-Medina workmen so that they could quit working on his tomb in the Valley of the Kings (KV13).⁴¹⁷ After the untimely death of Siptah, Tausret (1188-1186 BCE) proclaimed herself king and ruled Egypt independently for a few years; she also constructed a tomb for herself in the Valley of the Kings (KV14).⁴¹⁸ The Elephantine Stela of Setnakhte (1186-1184 BCE, founder of the 20th Dynasty) and Papyrus Harris I⁴¹⁹ document the turbulent years before the founding of the new dynasty.⁴²⁰ It is not known if Tausret was overthrown by Setnakhte or if the transition of power was peaceful, though Setnakhte's usurpation of her tomb (KV14) and replacement of her images with that of his own suggest that Setnakhte took power via

⁴¹⁷ "Bay | Theban Mapping Project," accessed April 10, 2021, <https://thebanmappingproject.com/tombs/kv-13-bay>. The announcement was recorded on an ostrakon: "Year 5, 3rd month of Shemu, day 27: This day, the Scribe of the Tomb, Paser, has come to announce: 'Pharaoh, l.p.h., has killed the great enemy, Bay.'" (IFAO Ostrakon 1864). Pierre Grandet, "L'exécution Du Chancelier Bay. O. IFAO 1864," *Bulletin de l'institut français d'archéologie orientale* 100 (2000): 341. The workmen should be informed of this news so that they could cease working on this tomb in the Valley of the Kings. Gae Callender, "The Cripple, the Queen and the Man from the North," *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 17, no. 1 (2006): 54.

⁴¹⁸ Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 296–97. "Tausert and Setnakht | Theban Mapping Project," accessed January 17, 2023, <https://thebanmappingproject.com/tombs/kv-14-tausert-and-setnakht>.

⁴¹⁹ The papyrus contains a historical retrospect on the reign and achievements of Ramesses III: "The land of Egypt was abandoned, every man was a law unto himself. They had no leader (for) many years previously, until other times, when the land of Egypt had officials and city rulers, one (man) slew his fellow, great and humble. Then another time came after it consisting of empty years when Irsu, a Syrian, was with them as Chief. He made the entire land tributary under him. One would gather his companions and steal their property. They treated the gods just like men. No one proffered offerings within the temples. But when the gods inclined to(wards) peace, to set the land to rights according to its natural state, (then) they established their son who came forth from their bodies to be Ruler, l.p.h., of every land, upon their great seat, (namely) (King) Usikhaure Setepenre Meriamun, l.p.h., the Son of Re, Setnakhte Mererre Meriamun, l.p.h., who was as Khepri, and Seth when he rages. He (re)established order (in) the entire land, which had languished; he slew the rebels who had been in Egypt; he cleansed the Great Throne of Egypt (when) he acted as Ruler, l.p.h., of the Two Lands in the Seat of Atum ... He elevated me (i.e., Ramesses III) to be Hereditary Prince in the Seat of Geb, I being principle chief for the lands of Egypt, as commander for (the) entire land, united as one place." Alexander J. Peden, *Egyptian Historical Inscriptions of the Twentieth Dynasty* (Jonsered: Paul Åströms förlag, 1994), 212-13.

⁴²⁰ Alexander J. Peden, *Egyptian Historical Inscriptions of the Twentieth Dynasty* (Jonsered: Paul Åströms förlag, 1994), 2-5. Kahn identified the Asiatic enemies mentioned in the Elephantine Stela and the Papyrus Harris I as foreign troops from Amurru and other Hittite cities; he argued that Ramesses III launched a punitive campaign in his 5th regnal year for their intervention in Egypt's internal affairs. Dan'el Kahn, "Who is Meddling in Egypt's Affairs? The Identity of the Asiatics in the Elephantine Stele of Setnakhte and the Historicity of the Medinet Habu Asiatic War Reliefs," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 2, no. 1 (2010): 14–23.

violent means.⁴²¹ Ramesses III's omission of her and Siptah from the Medinet Habu king list indicates that her legitimacy was not recognized by later Ramesside kings.⁴²²

Setnakhte died soon after the founding of the new dynasty and passed the throne to his son Ramesses III (1184-1153 BCE).⁴²³ Like Ramesses II, Ramesses III enjoyed a long reign of almost three decades and probably had many adult sons who aspired to be king in the latter part of his reign; this was demonstrated by a harem plot led by a minor wife Tiy, who colluded with other harem women, harem administrators, and army officials, to put her son Pentaweret on the throne.⁴²⁴ The plotters managed to assassinate Ramesses III, but he was succeeded and avenged by his designated heir Ramesses IV (1153-1147 BCE), probably born to him by his wife-sister Tyti (QV52).⁴²⁵ Nevertheless, other sons of Ramesses III managed to seize royal power after Ramesses IV, breaking the patrilineal pattern of succession.

⁴²¹ Hartwig Altenmüller, "The Tomb of Tausert and Setnakht," in *The Treasures of the Valley of the Kings*, ed. Kent R. Weeks (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2001), 222–31.

⁴²² Donald B. Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals, and Day-Books: A Contribution to the Study of the Egyptian Sense of History* (Mississauga: Benben, 1986), 37.

⁴²³ Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 297.

⁴²⁴ Alexander J. Peden, *Egyptian Historical Inscriptions of the Twentieth Dynasty* (Jonsered: Paul Åströms förlag, 1994), 198-99. Robert K. Ritner, "The Turin Judicial Papyrus (3.8): Turin Conspiracy against Ramses III," in *The Context of Scripture. Volume III: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), vol. 3, 27–30. Tiy's coup was one of the three harem plots documented by Egyptian sources; the first one dates to the reign of Pepi I and was recorded in the autobiography of the courtier Weni and the second, involving the murder of Amenemhat I, was known from the *Teachings of Amenemhat* and obliquely referred to in the *Story of Sinuhe*. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 19, 135-39, 222-24.

⁴²⁵ Jehon Grist, "The Identity of the Ramesside Queen Tyti," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 71 (1985): 71–81. Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 187. Mark Collier, Aidan Dodson, and Gottfried Hamernik, "P. BM EA 10052, Anthony Harris, and Queen Tyti," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 96 (2010): 242–47.

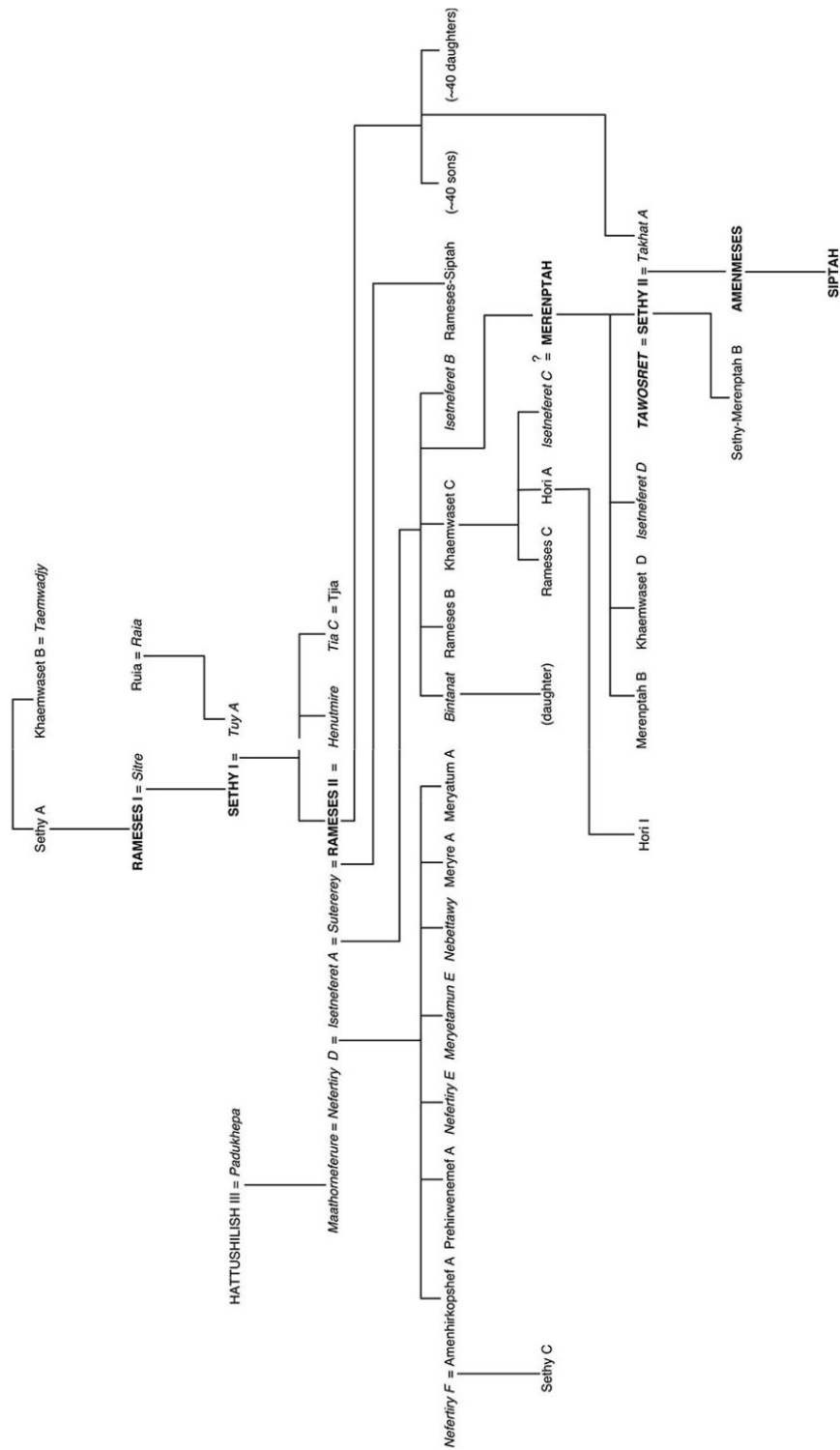


Figure 4.24. Genealogy of the late Nineteenth Dynasty royal family. Aidan Dodson, *Poisoned Legacy: The Decline and Fall of the Nineteenth Egyptian Dynasty* (Cairo; New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2010), appendix 4.

Rameses III's Great Royal Wife Iset-Ta-Hemdjert/Hebnerdjert (meaning "Iset-she-of-Hemdjert") (fig. 4.25) may be of foreign origin; this would make Rameses IV (1153-1147 BCE) the second New Kingdom king with foreign blood in his veins.⁴²⁶ Rameses IV died after a short reign of five (or seven) years, and his son and successor, Rameses V (1147-1143 BCE), suffered a similar fate. Rameses V's mother Duatentopet (QV74) was likely a daughter of Rameses III (fig. 4.26);⁴²⁷ this would point to another brother-sister marriage in the royal family during the 20th Dynasty. Rameses V had two known wives (Henutwati and Tawerettenru) but no known offspring; the throne passed to his uncle Rameses VI (1143-1136 BCE), who was another son of Rameses III and Iset-Ta-Hemdjert/Hebnerdjert.⁴²⁸ Rameses VI married Nubkhesbed, who bore him his successor Rameses VII (1136-1129 BCE, KV1), of whose reign little is known.⁴²⁹

After the death of Rameses VII, power passed to yet another branch of the royal family, as Rameses VIII (1129-1126 BCE), another son of Rameses III, briefly took power.⁴³⁰ After Rameses VIII's ephemeral rule, Rameses IX (1126-1108 BCE, KV6) occupied the throne for a fairly long period,⁴³¹ but

⁴²⁶ Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 299. Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 167-68. Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 189-92.

⁴²⁷ It depends on if she could be identified with an Adoratrice named Tentopet who was associated with Rameses III in the Temple of Khonsu. Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 171. Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 190.

⁴²⁸ Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 187-90.

⁴²⁹ Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 190.

⁴³⁰ Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 301.

⁴³¹ Amin A. M. A. Amer, "Notes on Rameses IX in Memphis and Karnak," *Göttinger Miszellen: Beiträge zur ägyptologische Diskussion* 57 (1982): 11-16.

his exact family background is unknown.⁴³² Neither of Ramesses IX's two sons, Nebmaatre and Montuherkhepshef C, succeeded their father; instead, the kingly office passed to Ramesses X (1108-1099 BCE, KV18), whose exact relationship to his predecessor was not clear.⁴³³ Ramesses X's reign⁴³⁴ was poorly documented, while that of his successor, Ramesses XI (1099-1069 BCE), the last ruler of the 20th Dynasty, is better known. Though Ramesses XI reigned for a long period of about three decades, pharaonic authority faced increasing threats from the Amun priesthood.⁴³⁵ The 20th Dynasty ended as Ramesses XI died without a male heir; nevertheless, some believe that his bloodline continued, arguing that a daughter of his named Tentamun married Smendes (1069-1043 BCE), founder of the 21st Dynasty.⁴³⁶ He may have also fathered Duathathor-Henuttawy, the wife of Pinedjem I, son and successor of the High Priest of Amun Piankh.⁴³⁷ In the time-hallowed fashion, power passed through the female line when the male heirs died out.

⁴³² Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 301. Dodson proposed that he was the son of Mentuherkhepshef B (son of Ramesses III) and Takhat B, which makes him the nephew of his predecessor. Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 186-87.

⁴³³ Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 301. Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 186-87, 191.

⁴³⁴ Richard A. Parker, "The Length of Reign of Ramses X," *Revue d'Égyptologie: Publiée par la société française d'Égyptologie* 11 (1957): 163-64.

⁴³⁵ The High Priest of Amun Piankh wrote a letter that expressed a rather contemptuous attitude towards the pharaoh: "As for pharaoh, l.p.h., how shall he reach this land? And of whom is pharaoh, l.p.h., superior still?" (P. Berlin 10487). Edward F. Wente, *Late Ramesside Letters* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 53.

⁴³⁶ John Taylor, "The Third Intermediate Period (1069-664 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 326-27. Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 179.

⁴³⁷ Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 192-94.



Figure 4.25. Depiction of queen Isis-Ta-Hemdjert in QV 51. Martha Demas and Neville Agnew, eds., *Valley of the Queens Assessment Report: A Collaborative Project of the Getty Conservation Institute and the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Egypt. Vol. 1, Conservation and Management Planning* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2012), 241.

Interestingly, a copy of *Horus and Seth*, a literary tale about the dispute between the two gods over who shall inherit the office of Osiris (i.e., the kingship of Egypt), survives from the reign of Ramesses V.⁴³⁸ Their dispute divided the gods and goddesses into two camps. The supporters of Horus (e.g., Isis, Thoth, Neith, Onuris, the Ennead) argued that the office of Osiris should not be given to Seth as his son Horus is still alive; those who championed Seth (e.g., Pre) doubted Horus' capability to take up such a big responsibility because of his tender age, calling him "feeble in body".⁴³⁹ When the matter was put before the Ennead and other gods, Horus's mother Isis fought fiercely for her son; she used her wisdom, magic, and feminine charm to trick Seth into admitting that depriving a son of his father's inheritance and giving it to someone else was not just. Even after the gods ruled in Horus' favor, Seth did not give up his claim and challenged Horus to a duel with magic; Isis tried to help Horus with magic, but Seth appealed to her on the ground that they were born to the same mother (Nut).⁴⁴⁰ With a conflicted heart, Isis withdrew her help for Horus; her "betrayal" enraged Horus, who retaliated by cutting her head off. Despite this atrocious offense, Isis did not forsake her son; she continued to intercede before the gods on his behalf. With her help, Horus emerged triumphant from the divine trial and inherited the kingly office.⁴⁴¹ Though Wente suggested that the story was a tale for the amusement of its owner (instead of a piece of didactic literature),⁴⁴² it may, to a certain extent, reflect the contemporary elite attitudes towards the power struggles

⁴³⁸ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 214-23.

⁴³⁹ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 214-23.

⁴⁴⁰ Isis and Seth are both born to Geb and Nut and are hence full brother and sister. It is noteworthy that Seth referred to himself as the maternal brother of Isis. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 214-23.

⁴⁴¹ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 214-23.

⁴⁴² William K. Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 91-92.

within the royal family and the breaking of patrilineal succession. In that case, the unorthodox order of succession in the late 20th Dynasty may have caused some confusion for the Egyptian subjects.⁴⁴³

In the turbulent years of the late Ramesside era, the pharaohs who resided in their Delta residence installed their daughters as the God's Wife of Amun in Thebes to consolidate their control of Upper Egypt. Ramesses VI inaugurated the practice of appointing a royal daughter (princess Isis) instead of the king's chief wife as the God's Wife of Amun; henceforth, this position was held exclusively by princesses instead of great royal wives.⁴⁴⁴ These celibate princesses were ideal custodians of wealth and power because they were unlikely to establish a rival dynasty to challenge the authority of their royal fathers.

4.3.2. Hittite Policy on Royal Succession and Diplomatic Marriage

4.3.2.1. Old Kingdom Period: Role of Princesses in Dynastic Succession

Like their Egyptian counterparts, Hittite royal women (especially princesses) played important roles in the royal succession, especially during the Old Kingdom period (ca. 1650-1400 BCE). Contrary to the Egyptians, the Hittite royal family did not practice incestuous marriage.⁴⁴⁵ Marriage alliances with other elite families opened up the royal family and gave ambitious in-laws access to power and even the throne.⁴⁴⁶ A king who did not have legitimate heirs to the throne could adopt a relative as his son; alternatively, they could provide for the succession by getting an *antiyant*-husband (*antiyant*- meaning "one who enters into")

⁴⁴³ The conflict between Horus and Seth embodied the clashes between the patrilineal system of succession and the lateral/fraternal succession system. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 215.

⁴⁴⁴ Mariam F. Ayad, *God's Wife, God's Servant: The God's Wife of Amun (c. 740-525 BC)* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 7-9.

⁴⁴⁵ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 27-28.

⁴⁴⁶ Theo P. J. van den Hout, "The Proclamation of Telipinu (1.76)," in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), vol. 1, 194-98. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 96-120.

for his daughter-heiress.⁴⁴⁷ The *antiyant-* is a man who, rather than taking his wife into his family, is married into his wife's family.⁴⁴⁸ This type of matrilocal marriage was sporadically attested in the ancient Near East and mentioned in the legal codes.⁴⁴⁹ Although the Hittite system of royal succession was essentially patrilineal, men who were related to the royal family by marriage (e.g., royal son-in-law or brother-in-law) frequently seized the throne as legitimate heirs by acquiring the *antiyant-* (adopted son) status and taking precedence over sons of the incumbent king (fig. 4.27). A few ambitious royal in-laws even assassinated the king or his designated heir in order to seize the throne.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁷ Gary M. Beckman, "Inheritance and Royal Succession Among the Hittites," in *Kanissuwar: A Tribute to Hans G. Guterbock on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday, May 27, 1983* and Gary M. Beckman, *Assyriological Studies 23* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1986), 13–33. Richard H. Beal, "Studies in Hittite History," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 35, no. 1–2 (1983): 115–26.

⁴⁴⁸ The Old Hittite Inandik Text provides another example for this practice. Tuttulla adopted Ziti as his son and married his own daughter Zizzatta to Ziti. Richard H. Beal, "Studies in Hittite History," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 35, no. 1–2 (1983): 117–18.

⁴⁴⁹ A clause in the Middle Assyrian Law stipulates: "If a woman is residing in her own father's house and her husband visits her regularly, he himself shall take back any marriage settlement which he, her husband, gave to her; he shall have no claim to anything belonging to her father's house." (MAL A 27). See Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 163. This phenomenon of matrilocal marriage was known in Late Bronze Age documents from northern Syria and Mesopotamia: a bride's father or mother would adopt a man and give him one of his/her daughters in marriage. This practice was also called "adoption with marriage", through which the groom joined the bride's family and the dowry remained in the bride's family. In this case, however, the parents of the bride had passed away, and she was arranging the marriage for herself as a widow. Josué J. Justel, "Women, Gender and Law at the Dawn of History. The Evidence of the Cuneiform Sources," in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 81. In Hittite society, matrilocal marriages occurred at lower levels because the country suffered from a chronic shortage of manpower as a result of constant warfare. According to Clause 36 of the Laws, even a slave could acquire a free young man as an *antiyant*-husband for his daughter. Harry A. Hoffner, *The Laws of the Hittites: A Critical Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 43.

⁴⁵⁰ Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 96–120. Theo P. J. van den Hout, "The Proclamation of Telipinu (1.76)," in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), vol. 1, 194–98.

Table 4.2. List of Old Kingdom Hittite kings and their relationship with their predecessor. Modified from Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), xv; with corrections from Richard H. Beal, *The Organization of the Hittite Military*, *Texte Der Hethiter* 20 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1992), 330; Richard H. Beal, “Hittite Anatolia: A Political History,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Anatolia, 10,000-323 B.C.E.*, ed. Sharon R. Steadman and John G. McMahon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 579–603.

Old Kingdom Hittite king	Reign	Relationship to predecessor
Huzziya I [...]		
Labarna	– 1650	son -in-law?
Ḫattušili I	1650 – 1620	Nephew of Labarna’s wife
Muršili I	1620 – 1590	Grandson, adopted son
Hantili I	1590 – 1560	Usurping brother-in-law
Zidanta I	1560 – 1525	Usurping son-in-law
Ammuna		Son
Huzziya II		Usurping son by a concubine
Telipinu	1525 – 1500	Usurping brother-in-law
Alluwamna	1500 – 1400	Son-in-law
Taḫurwaili		Usurping son of Ammuna’s brother?
Hantili II		Son of Alluwamna
Zidanta II		Brother’s son
Huzziya III		Filiation unclear
Muwattalli I		Usurping brother?

Such examples of royal succession were so prevalent during the Hittite Old Kingdom (figs. 4.27a-b) that scholars like Bin-Nun even argued in favor of a matrilineal principle, according to which the king derived his kingship from the position of *Tawananna*, who was his sister or wife.⁴⁵¹ Sürenhagen proposed an avuncular system according to which: 1. The royal household consisted of two major lines; 2. The eldest sister of each incumbent king would marry her cousin, and their son would become the next king; 3. Their daughter, meanwhile, would marry the son of the former king (also her cousin), and their eldest son would become the next king.⁴⁵² However, both the matrilineal and the avuncular models relied heavily on idiosyncratic and not always reliable reconstruction of the family tree. A Hittite princess' innate right to the throne was not in any way equal or superior to that of her brothers; in cases that a princess did become queen, it was usually because all legitimate heirs to the throne died or got eliminated by *coup d'état*.⁴⁵³ In such cases, the Hittite throne was passed through them to their husbands.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵¹ Shoshana R. Bin-Nun, *The Tawananna in the Hittite Kingdom* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1975).

⁴⁵² Sürenhagen, Dieterich. 1998. "Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen und Erbrecht im Althethitischen Königshaus vor Telipinu – Ein Erneuter Erklärungsversuch." *Altorientalische Forschungen* 25 (1): 75–94.

⁴⁵³ Richard H. Beal, "Studies in Hittite History," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 35, no. 1–2 (1983): 126.

⁴⁵⁴ Theo P. J. van den Hout, "The Proclamation of Telipinu (1.76)," in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), vol. 1, 194–98.

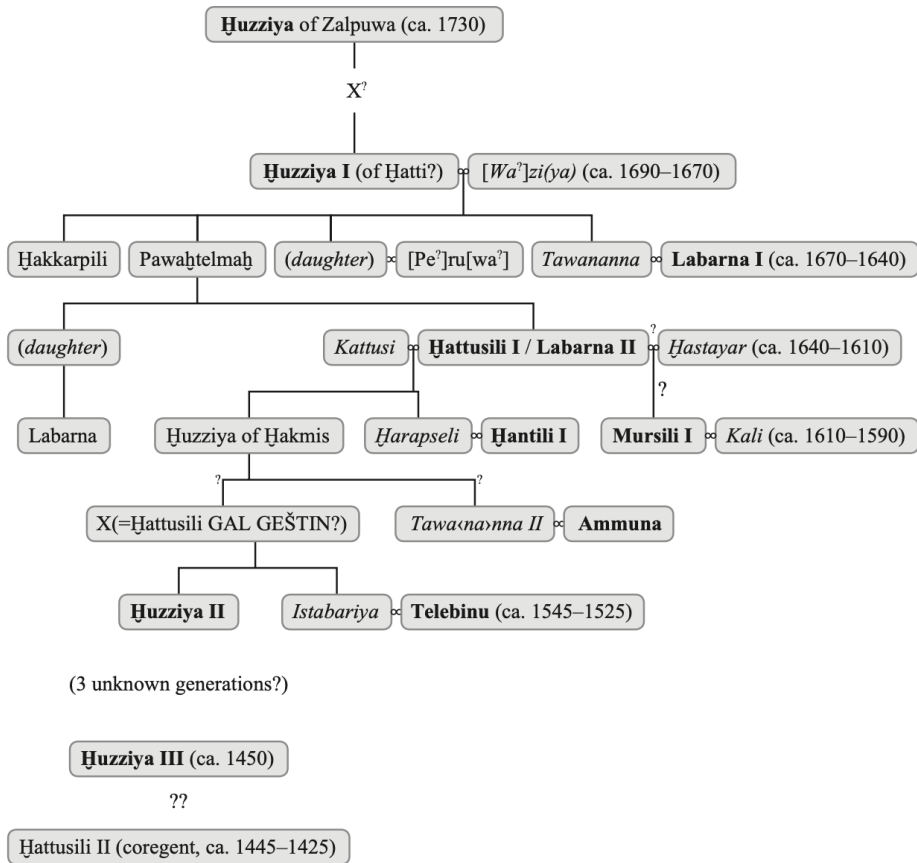


Figure 4.27a. Reconstruction of the genealogical tree of the ‘northern’ branch of the Old Kingdom Hittite royal family. Massimo Forlanini, “An Attempt at Reconstructing the Branches of the Hittite Royal Family of the Early Kingdom Period,” in *Pax Hethitica: Studies on the Hittites and Their Neighbours in Honour of Itamar Singer*, ed. Yoram Cohen, Amir Gilan, and Jared L. Miller (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), fig. 1.

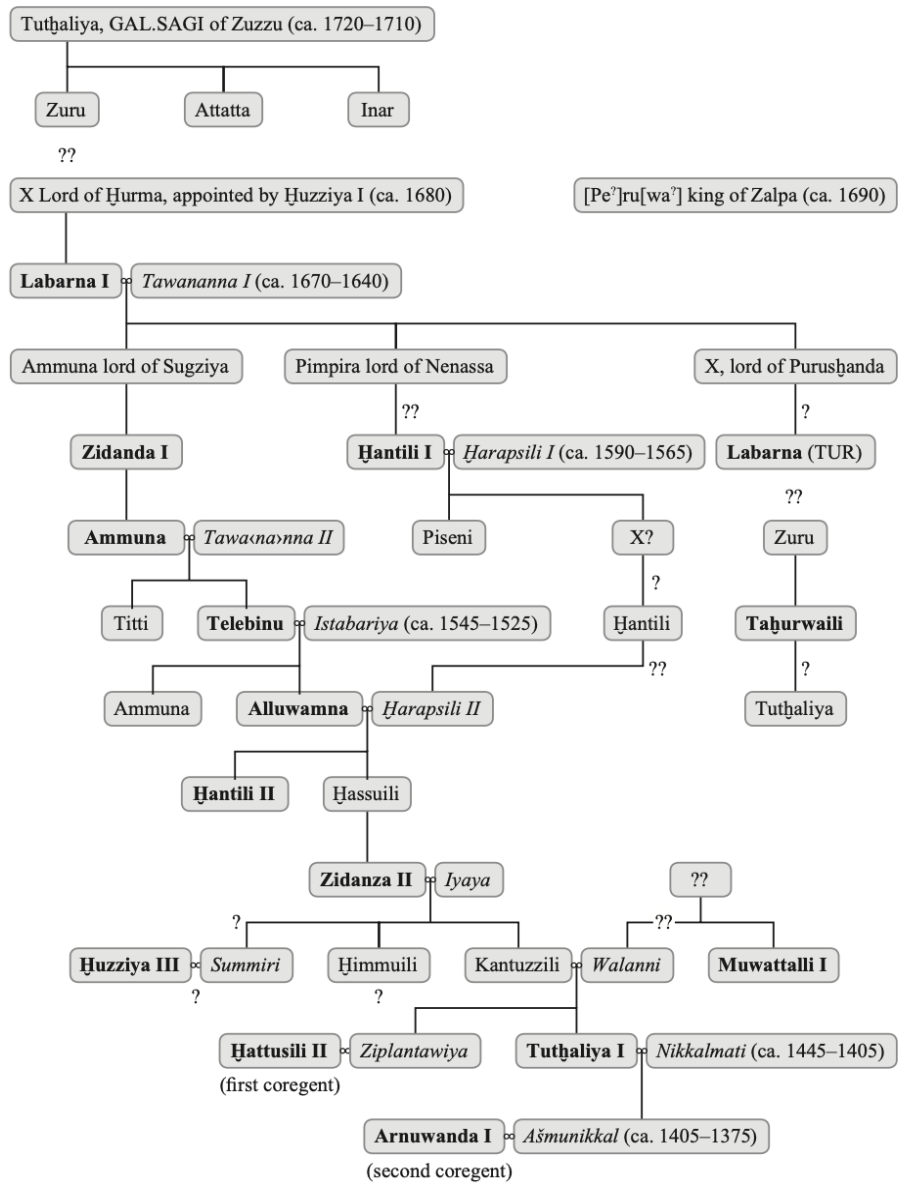


Figure 4.27b. Reconstruction of the genealogical tree of the ‘southern’ branch of the Old Kingdom Hittite royal family. Massimo Forlanini, “An Attempt at Reconstructing the Branches of the Hittite Royal Family of the Early Kingdom Period,” in *Pax Hethitica: Studies on the Hittites and Their Neighbours in Honour of Itamar Singer*, ed. Yoram Cohen, Amir Gilan, and Jared L. Miller (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), fig. 2.

Unsurprisingly, the Hittite system of royal succession led to internecine struggles and much bloodshed within the royal family; regicides and the wiping out of entire families became common

practice.⁴⁵⁵ To remedy the situation, king Telipinu (1525-1500 BCE) promulgated a standard protocol to regulate royal succession. Known as the *Proclamation of Telipinu* (ca. 1500 BCE), this royal edict aims to end inner-dynastic strife and establish a patrilineal system for royal succession:

“King shall become a son (who is a) prince of first rank only. If there is no first rank prince, he who is a son of second rank shall become King. If there is no prince, (no) male, she who is a first rank princess, for her they shall take an in-marrying (son-in-law) and he shall become King. Who will become king after me in the future, let his brothers, his sons, his in-laws, his (further) family members and his troops be united! ... If anyone does evil amongst both (his) brothers and sisters and lays eyes on the king’s head, summon the assembly and, if h[i]s testimony is dismissed, he shall pay with his head.”⁴⁵⁶

Nevertheless, this royal edict also codified the practice of adopting an *antiyant*-husband as heir. A more recent example is found in the Hittite New Kingdom period (in the mid-14th c. BCE). Arnuwanda I was likely the adopted son of his predecessor Tudḫaliya I/II, and this hypothesized relationship would account for the puzzling brother-sister marriage between Arnuwanda I and Ašmunikal, who was the daughter of Tudḫaliya I/II (incestuous marriage was a taboo in Ḫatti).⁴⁵⁷ Arnuwanda I’s status as an adopted son also explains the need for a co-regency between him and Tudḫaliya I/II, which is not a normal practice for the Hittites (table 4.3).⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁵ Theo P. J. van den Hout, “The Proclamation of Telipinu (1.76),” in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), vol. 1, 194–98.

⁴⁵⁶ Theo P. J. van den Hout, “The Proclamation of Telipinu (1.76),” in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), vol. 1, 196-97.

⁴⁵⁷ This was indicated by the treaty between Šuppiluliuma I and a vassal king (Ḫuqqana of Ḫayaša). Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 27-28.

⁴⁵⁸ Richard H. Beal, “Studies in Hittite History,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 35, no. 1–2 (1983): 119.

Table 4.3. List of New Kingdom Hittite kings and their relationship with their predecessor. After Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), xv.

New Kingdom Hittite king	Reign	Relationship to predecessor
Tudḫaliya I/II	1400 – 1350	Grandson of Huzziya III?
Arnuwanda I		Son-in-law, adopted son
Ḫattušili II?		Son?
Tudḫaliya III		Son of Arnuwanda I
Šuppiluliuma I	1350 – 1322	Son
Arnuwanda II	1322 – 1321	Son
Muršili II	1321 – 1295	Brother
Muwattalli II	1295 – 1272	Son
Muršili III	1272 – 1267	Son
Ḫattušili III	1267 – 1237	Uncle
Tudḫaliya IV	1237 – 1228	Son
Kurunta	1228 – 1227	Cousin
Tudḫaliya IV	1227 – 1209	Cousin
Arnuwanda III	1209 – 1207	Son
Šuppiluliuma II	1207 – 1177 (?)	Brother

4.3.2.2. New Kingdom Period: Role of Princesses in Diplomatic Marriage and Empire-Building

The role of Hittite princesses in politics also underwent change in the New Kingdom period. As the Old Kingdom Hittite kings expanded their kingdom beyond the Hittite hinterland, they assigned their

sons as rulers of newly conquered territories;⁴⁵⁹ the New Kingdom Hittite kings continued this practice, as they delegated authority to their brothers and sons to rule over appanage kingdoms in the northern Levant and southern Anatolia. The royal princesses made their own contributions to this empire-building enterprise, as their marriages to newly subjugated Hittite vassals established blood ties between the two royal houses.⁴⁶⁰ From the Hittite perspective, the conclusion of a diplomatic marriage kick-started a virtuous cycle because the female offspring produced by such political unions would ensure a sustainable supply of royal princesses for renewing diplomatic alliances. The daughters and granddaughters of the Hittite princesses could be married to great and small kings who were their cousins and were themselves the descendants of two or more royal houses.⁴⁶¹ As Thomas pointed out, they simultaneously functioned on two axes: 1. As points of contact between royal houses; 2. As mediators of dynastic successions by birthing heirs to the throne.⁴⁶² Their multivalent political status (as royal daughters, wives, sisters, and mothers) in the regional and imperial systems and their legitimizing roles were comparable to the roles played by Egyptian princesses in internal politics. Through this practice, the Hittites succeeded in establishing and maintaining an extensive diplomatic network. As effective as the system may be, it was by no means perfect.

⁴⁵⁹ According to the Proclamation of Telipinu: “[Fo]rmerly, Labarna was Great King and his [son]s, [brother]s, as well as his in-laws, his (further) family members and his troops were united He destroyed the lands, one after another, stripped (?) the lands of their power and made them the borders of the sea. When he came back from campaign, however, each (of) his sons went somewhere to a country Afterwards Ḫattušili was King . . . when he came back from campaign, however, each (of) his sons went somewhere to a country, and in his hand the great cities made progress.” Theo P. J. van den Hout, “The Proclamation of Telipinu (1.76),” in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), vol. 1, 194.

⁴⁶⁰ Philo H. J. Houwinkten Cate, “The Hittite Dynastic Marriages of the Period between ca. 1258 and 1244 B.C.,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 23, no. 1 (1996): 40–75. Marrying princesses to foreign vassals has the additional benefit of reducing the threat posed by royal sons-in-law to rightful heirs to the throne.

⁴⁶¹ Christine N. Thomas, “Gender and Politics at Ugarit: The Undoing of the Daughter of the Great Lady,” *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, no. 2 (2019): 287–305.

⁴⁶² Christine N. Thomas, “Gender and Politics at Ugarit: The Undoing of the Daughter of the Great Lady,” *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, no. 2 (2019): 287.

The dissolution of a diplomatic marriage could have serious consequences for the parties involved and even destabilize the regional and imperial system.⁴⁶³

The success of the Hittite strategy of diplomatic marriage depended largely on the ability of the Hittite princesses to produce a male heir. Against this backdrop, Ḫattušili III's request for an Egyptian physician to help his sister Matanazi conceive becomes more understandable. Ramesses II complied to his request, although he indicated that only a miracle from the gods would allow a woman of Matanazi's age to conceive.⁴⁶⁴ The Hittite king must have exhausted all other measures to no avail,⁴⁶⁵ and he was probably also aware that it was almost impossible for a woman of his sister's age to give birth. Nevertheless, what was at stake was not just the personal welfare of his sister, but also a vassal throne. Egyptian medical experts were renowned in the ancient Near Eastern world;⁴⁶⁶ Ḫattušili III was probably hoping that they could perform magic and help Matanazi produce a much-awaited heir with Hittite blood to inherit the throne of a strategically important Anatolian vassal state, Šeḫa River Land.⁴⁶⁷ Puduḫepa was equally dedicated to making sure that her daughters who married Hittite vassals could bear healthy male heirs; two vow texts

⁴⁶³ Christine N. Thomas, "Gender and Politics at Ugarit: The Undoing of the Daughter of the Great Lady," *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, no. 2 (2019): 287–305.

⁴⁶⁴ Thus wrote Ramesses II: "Say to my brother: 'Now, I, the king, your brother, know about Matanazi, my brother's sister. She is said to be fifty or sixty years old. It is not possible to prepare medicines for a woman who has completed fifty or sixty years so that she might still be caused to give birth.'" Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 132. The condescending attitude of Ramesses II was thinly veiled, but as the father of over 100 children, he was definitely right on the matter.

⁴⁶⁵ The Hittites addressed their prayers for progeny to the fertility god Telipinu: "Give to the king, queen, princes, and to (all) the land of Ḫatti life, health, strength, long years, and joy (in) the future!" (KUB 24.2, iv 12'-16' = CTH 377). Other gods were besought to bestow children to the royal couple with physical strength and noble character: "And provide the king and queen with life, health, long years and children - make children and female children, to the first and second generations - and for the male (offspring) (provide) manliness and valor, and for the female (offspring) womanliness and motherhood!" (KUB 14.32, ii 17-19 = CTH 483). Gary M. Beckman, "Birth and Motherhood among the Hittites," in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 320.

⁴⁶⁶ William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 120.

⁴⁶⁷ Trevor R. Bryce, "The Role and Status of Women in Hittite Society," in *Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World*, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 308.

preserved her prayers for the health of the son of the king of Išuwa and his wife Kilušhepa, who was almost certainly her daughter.⁴⁶⁸

In order not to have a succession crisis caused by the lack of a male heir with Hittite blood, the Hittites made provisions for such special circumstances in vassal treaties. For instance, the treaty between Ḫattušili III and Bentešina of Amurru (CTH 92) stipulates that as long as the marriage between Bentešina and the Hittite princess has not produced any offspring, Bentešina may elevate any Amurrite prince or citizen to the position of Crown Prince.⁴⁶⁹ Once male heirs were born from such a marital union, the Hittite king would do everything in his power to guarantee their succession rights.⁴⁷⁰

The Hittite policy of diplomatic marriage could also backfire if the marriage did not work out, which could lead to a nasty divorce and destroy the cordial relations between the two royal houses. This is well illustrated by two royal divorce cases at Ugarit; one is the divorce between Ammittamru II of Ugarit and a daughter of Bentešina of Amurru, while the other involves the Ugaritic king Ammurapi III and the Hittite princess Eḫli-Nikkalu.⁴⁷¹ Both divorce cases caused social tension between the parties involved and necessitated Hittite intervention.

⁴⁶⁸ Hans G. Güterbock, "Hittite Hieroglyphic Seal Impressions from Korucutepe," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 32, no. 1/2 (1973): 139–40. It has been suggested that Išuwa was an appanage kingdom created for Kilušhepa and her husband. Richard H. Beal, *The Organization of the Hittite Military*, *Texte der Hethiter* 20 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1992), 320.

⁴⁶⁹ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 97.

⁴⁷⁰ The treaty between Ḫattušili III and Bentešina of Amurru proclaimed: "No one shall take the kingship of the land of Amurru from Benteshina, or from the hand of his son or his grandson, the progeny of Benteshina and the progeny of my daughter. The son of Beteshina and his grandson, the progeny of Benteshina and the son of my daughter, shall hold the kingship of the land of Amurru. If someone seeks to harm Beteshina or his son or grandson, he will be the enemy of the King of Ḫatti and of the Hittites" (obv. 28-33). Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 96-97.

⁴⁷¹ Issam Halayqa, "The Demise of Ugarit in the Light of Its Connections with Ḫatti," *Ugarit Forschungen* 42 (2010): 316-17. While many scholars interpreted it as a divorce between Eḫli-Nikkalu and the Ugaritic king Ammurapi, Singer proposed that the documents attest to the dissolution of the Hittite princess' marriage with her deceased husband Niqmaddu III so that she could remarry elsewhere. According to Singer, "this is at least as logical a scenario as the one that envisages a troublesome divorce between the last king of Ugarit and the daughter of the Great King of Ḫatti." Singer further suggested that, if one accepts the assumption that Eḫli-Nikkalu was indeed Niqmaddu III's wife, her royal parents may well have been Tudḫaliya IV and his Babylonian queen. Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *The Calm before the Storm: Selected Writings of Itamar Singer on the Late Bronze Age in Anatolia and the Levant* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2011), 100-3.

4.3.3. Comparison between the Egyptian and Hittite Strategies

The drastic differences between Egyptian and Hittite strategies of diplomatic marriage derived partly from the roles played by their princesses in dynastic succession and divergent cultural attitudes towards royal women's participation in politics. Undeniably, both Egyptian and Hittite princesses were deeply involved in high-level politics and dynastic succession. The New Kingdom pharaohs married their (half-)sisters (especially those born to the Great Royal Wives of royal blood) and daughters to strengthen their claim to the throne and fathered male heirs by them. These sister-/daughter-wives, who held the prestigious titles King's Daughter, King's Wife, and King's Mother, could wield enormous power in the reigns of their husbands, sons, and even grandsons. For the majority of the New Kingdom Period, this practice served its purpose of providing support for the king, minimizing power struggles between different generations of queens, and concentrating power and wealth within the royal family (preventing the rise of the consort family). Therefore, even though un-curtailed female royal power occasionally posed threats to the male heirs, the later New Kingdom pharaohs did not completely abandon incestuous brother-sister marriages but chose to marry their daughters instead.

In the Hittite Old Kingdom period, the princesses served as conduits for elites outside the royal family to gain access to royal power, as heirless kings could pass their throne to a brother-in-law or son-in-law. Ambitious royal in-laws could also stage coups to seize royal power, which caused a lot of inner-dynastic strife and bloodshed within the royal family. After the Edict/Proclamation of Telipinu established a patrilineal rule for royal succession, the role of the Hittite princesses in dynastic succession was somewhat suppressed. With the advent of the Hittite New Kingdom period, the Hittite princesses were married off to foreign kings and vassals in order to extend the rule and diplomatic network of their fathers and brothers.

Whereas the Egyptian princesses, operating within a domestic political network, wielded their power and influence to guarantee the smooth transition of power between generations of male rulers who were their fathers, brothers, and sons, the Hittite princesses helped to extend the political network and influence of their male kin both across generations and laterally. Furthermore, neither group of women were

mere pawns in the political game; there were countless examples of royal women wielding their power or scheming to assist their sons in the race for the throne. For instance, Ḫattušili I (1650-1620 BCE) disinherited his adopted son and nephew because the latter was under heavy influence of his mother (Ḫattušili III's sister).⁴⁷²

In their empire-building process, the Egyptian and Hittite kings employed different strategies to extend their political control and diplomatic network. The Hittite kings assigned their sons, cousins, and nephews to rule over appanage states⁴⁷³ and married their sisters and daughters to vassal kings, thus creating blood ties between the Hittite royal house and the vassal rulers that transcended generations. They engaged in both symmetrical and asymmetrical diplomatic marriages with their diplomatic partners (Babylonia, Egypt) and vassals. The Hittite princesses were expected to receive the position of the chief queen and exercise some degree of power in her new country; in reciprocity, foreign princesses who married into the Hittite royal family (e.g., the Babylonian Tawananna) were entitled to the power and privileges enjoyed by native Hittite queens.⁴⁷⁴ Therefore, for the Hittites, the processes of dynastic succession and diplomatic marriages were deeply intertwined.

In contrast, the Egyptian kings made conscious efforts to keep the two processes separate. For instance, the Egyptian version of the Year 21 peace treaty between Ramesses II and Ḫattušili III conspicuously omitted the clause that would permit foreign intervention in Egyptian royal succession.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² Ḫattušili I accused his sister as “the snake”: “I, the king, apprehended him and had him brought to my couch: ‘What (is this)? No one will ever again raise his sister’s child (as his own foster son)!’ But he didn’t accept the word of the king. He always took the advice of his mother, that snake” (*Bilingual Edict of Ḫattušili I*). Gary M. Beckman, “Bilingual Edict of Ḫattušili I (2.15),” in *The Context of Scripture. Volume II: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), vol. 2, 79.

⁴⁷³ This policy occasionally backfired, as some ambitious princes built up their own power base and usurped the Hittite throne from the rightful heir. Muršili III was dethroned by his more experienced uncle Ḫattušili III king of Ḫakpiš; Kurunta king of Tarḫuntašša contested the Hittite throne with his cousin Tudḫaliya IV. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 246-94, 319-21.

⁴⁷⁴ Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 92-94, 207-10.

⁴⁷⁵ Kenneth A. Kitchen and Paul Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 573-93.

The pharaohs married their sisters and daughters as a legitimization strategy or to ensure the smooth transition of power between generations. In the absence of a male heir, a non-royal claimant to the throne could strengthen his claim by marrying a princess, who may be a daughter or widow (e.g., Ankhesenamun) of the former king. Regarding their strategy of diplomatic marriage, although the pharaohs did take foreign princesses as wives, most of them were secondary wives and excluded from politics.

In contrast to the politically active Hittite princes, the Egyptian princes who did not become the future king were almost invisible in politics or diplomacy before the Ramesside period. Instead of involving their sons in imperial administration and diplomacy, the pharaohs imported male heirs of their vassals to be educated in Egypt in order to cultivate their loyalty to the incumbent and future pharaohs and an affinity with the Egyptian culture.⁴⁷⁶ These contrasting strategies reflected divergent cultural attitudes: from the Hittite perspective, a vassal was expected to be loyal if they were linked by blood ties to the sovereign; from the Egyptian point of view, loyalty could be cultivated if a vassal was acculturated and indoctrinated with Egyptian ideology.⁴⁷⁷ In the words of Kemp, “Egyptianness was not a matter of birth but of outward appearance.”⁴⁷⁸

As mentioned above, many New Kingdom pharaohs born to a secondary wife married a half-sister born to the principal royal wife (usually a royal princess herself) to reinforce their legitimacy. In view of this, if a pharaoh gives one of his daughters for a diplomatic marriage, he may have to contemplate the possibility that it might give a foreign king some claim to the Egyptian throne. The legitimizing capability of Egyptian princesses might have lent some credibility to the anonymous Egyptian queen’s promise to

⁴⁷⁶ Paul J. Cowie, “Guaranteeing the Pax Aegyptiaca? Re-Assessing the Role of Elite Offspring as Wards and Hostages within the New Kingdom Egyptian Empire in the Levant,” *The Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 19 (2008): 17–28.

⁴⁷⁷ Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 192.

⁴⁷⁸ Barry J. Kemp, “Why Empires Rise,” *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 7 (1997): 128.

Šuppiluliuma I to put a Hittite prince on the Egyptian throne⁴⁷⁹ if she is to be identified with Tutankhamen's widow Ankhnesenamun. The following section will analyze the much-discussed Daḥamunzu Affair (also known as the Zannanza Affair) as a case of intercultural miscommunication, as this diplomatic incident epitomized the clashes between Egyptian and Hittite systems of dynastic succession and strategies of diplomatic marriage.

4.3.3.1. The Daḥamunzu Affair: An Overview

The Daḥamunzu Affair⁴⁸⁰ took place at the end of the 18th Dynasty (late 14th century BCE) when Egypt and Mittani had long passed their honeymoon period, and the Hittite empire was expanding into the Levant under the capable leadership of Šuppiluliuma I.⁴⁸¹ With the exception of a fragmentary letter from the queen,⁴⁸² the incident is only known from Hittite documents, including the Deeds of Šuppiluliuma (fig. 4.28)⁴⁸³ and the Plague Prayer of Muṣšili II, both of which were later sources composed in the reign of Muṣšili II.⁴⁸⁴ According to Hittite sources, Šuppiluliuma I received a letter from a widowed Egyptian queen

⁴⁷⁹ Hans G. Güterbock, "The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II (Continued)," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 10, no. 3 (1956): 75–98.

⁴⁸⁰ Daḥamunzu derived from a title of the Egyptian queen *tA--Hmt ny-sw.t* "the royal wife". Francis Breyer, "Egyptological Remarks Concerning Daḥamunzu," *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 20 (2010): 445–51.

⁴⁸¹ Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 154–245.

⁴⁸² Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 14–15.

⁴⁸³ Hans G. Güterbock, "The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II (Continued)," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 10, no. 3 (1956): 75–98. Hans G. Güterbock, "The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 10, no. 4 (1956): 107–30.

⁴⁸⁴ Gary M. Beckman, "Plague Prayers of Muṣšili II (1.60)," in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), vol. 1, 156–60. Muṣšili II also recounted this event in his Fifth Plague Prayers (CTH 379) to the assembly of gods: "The king of Egypt died in those very [days]. I was still a child, so I did not know whether the king of Egypt lodged [a protest (?)] to my father about those lands, or whether he [did] nothing. And since the wife of the king of Egypt was a widow, she wrote to my father [...] to talk with women [...]. I, in those [...] I was not seen (?) [...]" Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 67–8. Gary M. Beckman, "Plague Prayers of Muṣšili II (1.60)," in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), vol. 1, 156–60.

(most likely Ankhesenamun) (fig. 4.29) while he was campaigning in Syria; left childless by her late husband, she wrote to the Hittite king and asked for the hand of one of his sons in marriage:

“And since, in addition, their lord Nipkhururiya (Nebkheperure = Tutankhamun) had (recently) died, therefore the queen of Egypt, who was Dahamanzu, sent a messenger to my father and wrote to him: ‘My husband died. A son I have not. But to thee, they say, the sons are many. If thou wouldst give me one son of thine, he would become my husband. Never shall I pick out a servant of mine and make him my husband! I am afraid!’”⁴⁸⁵

Šuppiluliuma I’s reaction would be best described as “a mixture of surprise, suspicion, and disbelief”⁴⁸⁶ because the Egypto-Hittite relationship had been deteriorating for more than a decade after a Hittite army under general Lupakki invaded Amka around Akhenaten’s 12th regnal year; shortly before the request, Lupakki invaded Amka a second time, in reprisal for an Egyptian attack on Kadesh, probably ordered by Tutankhamun.⁴⁸⁷ Moreover, this marriage proposal challenged the traditionally assigned gender roles in diplomatic marriages. Essentially, the Egyptian queen proposed a matrilocal marriage (as the heiress of the 18th Dynasty royal family), with which Šuppiluliuma I might have been familiar, given the practice of adopting *antiyant*-husbands as heirs in Hittite royal succession. Abundant examples of non-royal men ascending the throne through their wives may have boosted the confidence of Šuppiluliuma I and encouraged him to accede to the request of the Egyptian queen.⁴⁸⁸ Furthermore, the *Proclamation of*

⁴⁸⁵ Hans G. Güterbock, “The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II (Continued),” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 10, no. 3 (1956): 94.

⁴⁸⁶ The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma presented a vivid account: “When my father heard this, he called forth the Great Ones for council (saying): ‘Such a thing has never happened to me in my whole life!’ So it happened that my father sent forth to Egypt Hattuša-ziti, the chamberlain, (with this order): ‘Go and bring thou the true word back to me! Maybe they deceive me! Maybe (in fact) they do have a son of their lord! Bring thou the true word back to me!’” Hans G. Güterbock, “The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II (Continued),” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 10, no. 3 (1956): 94–95. Alan R. Schulman, “Diplomatic Marriage in the Egyptian New Kingdom,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 38, no. 3 (1979): 177.

⁴⁸⁷ Hatti was to become Egypt’s main competitor and archenemy in the Levant until their conflicts culminated during the Battle of Kadesh, fought between Ramesses II and Muwattalli II in the early 19th Dynasty. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 172, 177–78.

⁴⁸⁸ His own grandfather Arnuwanda I presumably legitimized his claim to the throne by marrying the daughter of his predecessor Tudḫaliya I/II Asmunikal. Trevor R. Bryce, “The Role and Status of Women in Hittite Society,” in

Telipinu stipulated that the *antiyant*-husband should be married to a princess of the first rank, i.e., a daughter of the chief queen;⁴⁸⁹ as the daughter of Nefertiti, Ankhesenamun clearly met this criterion. In any case, the queen's offer was impossible to reject, as she promised to make her future husband a co-ruler of Egypt. Tempted but justifiably suspicious, Šuppiluliuma I dispatched a trusted official (Ḫattuša-ziti) to Egypt to investigate the matter. Convinced by the report of this official and a second letter⁴⁹⁰ from the Egyptian queen, he dispatched his son Zannanza to take the Egyptian throne.⁴⁹¹ The marriage alliance was foiled because Zannanza died under mysterious circumstances on his way to Egypt.⁴⁹²

Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World, ed. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 308.

⁴⁸⁹ Theo P. J. van den Hout, "The Proclamation of Telipinu (1.76)," in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 196–97.

⁴⁹⁰ In her second letter to Šuppiluliuma, the queen wrote: "They say you have many sons. So give me one of your sons. To me he will be a husband, but in Egypt he will be king." Fragments of this letter were found at the Hittite capital Hattuša; they show that the letter was originally composed in Akkadian. Therefore, quotations in the Deeds of Šuppiluliuma must have been translated from Akkadian into Hittite, and one can assume that they are only free representations of the meaning of her letter. Elmar Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), vol. 2, 23.

⁴⁹¹ Šuppiluliuma I had at least five sons: Arnuwanda, Telipinu, Piyassili (later Šarri-Kušuh), Zannanza, and Muršili. All of them have reached adulthood during the reign of Šuppiluliuma I, with the possible exception of Muršili. The three adult sons had received political assignments before the Daḫamunzu Affair. Arnuwanda, probably the eldest son, was designated crown prince early in his father's reign; Telipinu was appointed as the *de facto* ruler of the vassal kingdom of Kizzuwatna and later king of Aleppo (before the Daḫamunzu Affair); Piyassili became the viceregal king of Carchemish after Šuppiluliuma I wrested it from Mittani. This left Zannanza the only viable candidate. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 160.

⁴⁹² Zannanza was killed on the road: "[When] they brought this tablet, they spoke thus; [the people of Egypt (?)] killed [Zannanza and brought word; "Zannanza [died (?)]! And when] my father he[ard] of the slaying of Zannanza, he began to lament for [Zanna]nza [and] to the god[s ...] he spoke [th]us: 'Oh god! I did [no e]vil, [yet] the people of Egy[pt] did [this to me], and they (also) [attacked] the frontier of my country!'" Hans G. Güterbock, "The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 10, no. 4 (1956): 107–8.



Figure 4.28. The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma. Museum of Archaeology, Istanbul, Turkey. © Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin. Figure 4.29. Tutankhamun and Ankhesenamun, throne of Tutankhamun. Egypt Museum, “The Golden Throne of Tutankhamun,” Egypt Museum, October 29, 2021, <https://egypt-museum.com/golden-throne-of-tutankhamun/>.

The God’s Father Ay (1327 – 1323 BCE) (fig. 4.30a) emerged victorious in the game of thrones (perhaps because of his seniority and his close ties with the royal family).⁴⁹³ Despite her clearly-stated wish against it, Ankhesenamun may have been forced to marry him, a non-royal subject believed by some scholars to be her biological grandfather.⁴⁹⁴ A signet ring bearing the prenomen of Ay (*xpr-xprw-ra*, Kheperkheperure “Everlasting-are-the-manifestations-of-Re”) and Ankhesenamun (*anx-s-n-imn*, Ankhesenamun “Her-life-is-of-Amun”) has been interpreted as evidence that Ay legitimized his claim to the throne by marrying the widow of his immediate predecessor (fig. 4.30b-c).⁴⁹⁵ This interpretation seems

⁴⁹³ Jacobus Van Dijk, “The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom (c.1352-1069 BC),” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 283-84.

⁴⁹⁴ Considering the time-honored tradition of marrying princesses to the kings, marrying a commoner may be considered demeaning for Ankhesenamun. If the aging Ay is the biological grandfather of Ankhesenamun, her reluctance to marry him becomes even more understandable. Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 125, 138. Aidan Dodson, *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb, and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2009), 97.

⁴⁹⁵ Percy E. Newberry, “King Ay, the Successor of Tut’ankhamūn,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 18, no. 1/2 (1932): 50.

reasonable in view of the pattern of royal succession during the 18th Dynasty and the likely precedent of a similar marriage between Thutmose I and princess Ahmose. No offspring was born from this hypothesized marriage between Ay and Ankhesenamun, and it remains doubtful whether it was ever consummated or just a symbolic union.⁴⁹⁶ Even if the ring does not provide definitive proof for a marriage union, the juxtaposition of their names on it strongly indicates the existence of an alliance between the two.⁴⁹⁷ Ay may have engineered the death of Zannanza since he was the one who benefited the most from this tragic event. Whatever the cause of Zannanza's death may be, Šuppiluliuma I clearly suspected foul play and held the Egyptians responsible for the death of his son.⁴⁹⁸ A conciliatory letter from Ay failed to soothe the anger of Šuppiluliuma I,⁴⁹⁹ who invaded Egyptian territory in the Levant in retaliation.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁶ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 137-39.

⁴⁹⁷ Percy E. Newberry, "King Ay, the Successor of Tut'ankhamūn," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 18, no. 1/2 (1932): 50.

⁴⁹⁸ Hans G. Güterbock, "The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 10, no. 4 (1956): 108. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 183.

⁴⁹⁹ Trevor R. Bryce, "The Death of Niphururiya and Its Aftermath," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 76, no. 1 (1990): 97–100. Ay's letter is known from Šuppiluliuma I's reply (KUB 19.20), which is in a fragmentary condition. Theo P. J. van den Hout, "Der Falke und das Kücken: der neue Pharao und der hethitische Prinz?," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 84, no. 1 (1994): 60–88.

⁵⁰⁰ Gary M. Beckman, "Plague Prayers of Muršili II (1.60)," in *The Context of Scripture. Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. L. Younger (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 156–60.



Figure 4.30a. Fragment of gold foil showing Tutankhamun smiting an enemy while Ay and Ankhnesenamun raise their hands in praise. From KV 58. Cairo JE57438. Theodore M. Davis, *The Tombs of Harmhabi and Touatankhamanou* (London: Duckworth, 1912), fig. 4. Figure 4.30b. The Newberry Ring bearing the cartouches of Ay and Ankhnesenamun. Figure 4.30c. The cartouches of Ay and Ankhnesenamun on the Newberry Ring. Percy E. Newberry, "King Ay, the Successor of Tut'ankhamūn," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 18, no. 1/2 (1932): 50–52.

In every aspect, the Daḥamunzu Affair represented a remarkable event. Late Bronze Age diplomatic marriages were usually concluded between a ruler/prince of one country and a princess of another. A widowed queen requesting a husband from another royal house to continue the dynastic line was unprecedented. Additionally, as mentioned above, Egypt and Ḫatti were not on good terms at that time; there was hardly sufficient trust in each other to conclude such a marital and political alliance. Šuppiluliuma I was definitely justified to suspect that the queen's generous offer was a trap. Moreover, Šuppiluliuma I was very likely aware of the existence of other contenders to the Egyptian throne. The Hittite messenger Ḫattuša-ziti remained in Egypt for the winter, and it is inconceivable that this piece of intelligence would have escaped his attention. Then, another question arises: had Šuppiluliuma I been cognizant of this, why

did he send Zannanza into such a precarious situation? Arguably, during Ḫattuša-ziti's stay in Egypt, tension was brewing, but open conflict did not break out between the faction that supported Ankhesenamun and the supporters of Ay. Being urged on by a second letter from Ankhesenamun and the eloquent Egyptian messenger Ḫani, Šuppiluliuma I decided to take a gamble. Indeed, considering the potential gain, Šuppiluliuma I might have been quite eager to risk the life of a son.

The most contentious point about this story is the identity of the pharaoh Nibḫururiya, who has been identified variously as Akhenaten, Smenkhkare, and Tutankhamun, all of whom were contemporaries of Šuppiluliuma I.⁵⁰¹ The prevailing scholarly opinion postulates an identification with Tutankhamun. The strongest piece of evidence supporting this identification is the name of the pharaoh in the *Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, in which he was called Nibḫururiya (Niphururiya), a precise transcription of Tutankhamun's prenomen Nebkheperure (*nb-hpr.w-r*).⁵⁰² As a corollary, the Egyptian queen who made this unusual request must have been the widow of Tutankhamun, his half-sister Ankhesenamun.⁵⁰³ Aside from epigraphic and chronological evidence, the identity and status of Ankhesenamun best fit the profile of the queen in the *Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*:

1. The queen mentioned in her letter that she was childless. Epigraphic evidence⁵⁰⁴ indicates a father-son relationship between Akhenaten and Tutankhamun;⁵⁰⁵ therefore, the queen could not be the

⁵⁰¹ Miller offers an analytical overview of the evidence with bearings on the identity of Nibḫururiya; his identification of Nibḫururiya with Akhenaten is not accepted here. Jared L. Miller, "Amarna Age Chronology and the Identity of Nibḫururiya in the Light of a Newly Reconstructed Hittite Text," *Altorientalische Forschungen* 34, no. 2 (2007): 252–93.

⁵⁰² Egyptian kings were generally referred to by their prenomen in diplomatic letters.

⁵⁰³ Recently, Gabolde put forth a hypothesis that Tutankhamun is the seventh child and only son of Akhenaten Nefertiti. Marc Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton à Toutankhamon* (Lyon: CIAHA 3, 1998). Marc Gabolde, "La parenté de Toutankhamon," *Bulletin de la société française d'Égyptologie* 155 (2002): 32–47.

⁵⁰⁴ Tutankhamun is referred to as the bodily son of a king (most likely Akhenaten) on a block found at Ashmunein. Aidan Dodson, *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb, and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2009), 15–16.

⁵⁰⁵ The father-son relationship between Akhenaten and Tutankhamun is yet to be proven by genetic evidence. Hawass *et al.* performed a genetic analysis of the royal mummies and proposed a father-son relationship between the KV55 male mummy (identified as Akhenaten) and Tutankhamun. This hypothesis necessitated assigning a much older age for the KV55 male mummy, while earlier examinations of the mummy purported an age of 18–26 years. Lorenzen and Willerslev questioned the validity of Hawass *et al.*'s conclusions, claiming that contamination of

widow of Akhenaten. On the other hand, it is known that there were no male heirs born to Tutankhamun and Ankhesenamun.⁵⁰⁶

2. Furthermore, the queen stated that she was reluctant to marry one of her subjects and make him the future pharaoh. Neither Nefertiti nor Meritaten is known to have married twice. On the other hand, the Newberry Ring provides circumstantial evidence for a marital union between Ay and Ankhesenamun, so the latter was probably forced to marry the former after the death of Zannanza.

3. The widowed queen promised the Hittite king that she could make a foreign prince the pharaoh of Egypt; this confident statement strongly hints that she was a princess born to a Chief Royal Wife. While the royal origin of Ankhesenamun is beyond doubt, Nefertiti could not claim to be of royal descent.⁵⁰⁷

Ankhesenamun was not the only Egyptian queen of royal blood who was left childless by her husband. Queen Sobeknefru of the 12th Dynasty faced a similar dilemma, but she managed to rule Egypt as an independent ruler for a few years before the kings of the 13th Dynasty took the throne.⁵⁰⁸ Sobeknefru did not remarry; she legitimized her claim to the throne by advertising her ties to her father Amenemhat III on royal monuments. This legitimizing strategy was also employed by Hatshepsut. Unfortunately for Ankhesenamun, this was not an option. Her father Akhenaten was publicly denounced by his successors for his heretic religious beliefs. His name was omitted from later king lists, and his monuments were

ancient DNA and the lack of reported quality control measures in the genotyping of microsatellites could have rendered the genetic data less reliable. Zahi Hawass et al., "Ancestry and Pathology in King Tutankhamun's Family," *The Journal of the American Medical Association* 303, no. 7 (2010): 638–47, figure 2. Eline D. Lorenzen and Eske Willerslev, "King Tutankhamun's Family and Demise," *The Journal of the American Medical Association* 303, no. 24 (2010): 2471.

⁵⁰⁶ R. G. Harrison et al., "A Mummified Foetus from the Tomb of Tutankhamun," *Antiquity* 53, no. 207 (1979): 19–21. Zahi Hawass and Sahar N. Saleem, "Mummified Daughters of King Tutankhamun: Archeologic and CT Studies," *American Journal of Roentgenology* 197, no. 5 (2011): 829–36.

⁵⁰⁷ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 125–26, 137–39.

⁵⁰⁸ Gae Callender, "The Middle Kingdom Renaissance (c.2055–1650 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 157–59.

dismantled. Rather than bequeathing his daughter any political legacy, Akhenaten became a liability to Ankhesenamun.⁵⁰⁹

4.3.3.2. Why the Marriage was Doomed from the Beginning

The death of Zannanza, as Šuppiluliuma suspected, was unlikely an unfortunate accident. Arguably, this marriage union was doomed from the beginning because it violated well-established rules for Egyptian royal succession and diplomatic marriage. The above comparison of Egyptian and Hittite policy on diplomatic marriages makes it abundantly clear how radical and even heretical Ankhesenamun's marriage proposal to Šuppiluliuma I was. The New Kingdom Egyptian kings zealously guarded princesses as valuable political assets⁵¹⁰ for legitimizing their claims to the throne, centralizing political power and economic resources. Egyptian princesses were not even married to other great kings for establishing and strengthening alliances because it was viewed as demeaning and undermining Egypt's self-proclaimed dominion over foreign countries.⁵¹¹

To a certain extent, Šuppiluliuma I's consent to such a proposal reflected a lack of understanding of Egyptian political culture and diplomatic policy. This is hardly surprising since Egypt and Ḫatti had only

⁵⁰⁹ The existence of a series of inscriptions proclaiming a father-son relationship between Amenhotep III and Tutankhamun may represent the latter's effort to connect himself with the king considered to be the last legitimate pharaoh. See Marianne Eaton-Krauss, "Akhenaten versus Akhenaten," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 47, no. 5–6 (1990): 541–59; Marc Gabolde, "La parenté de Toutânkhamon," *Bulletin de la société française d'Égyptologie* 155 (2002): 32–47. In a similar vein, Ankhesenamun may not want to be associated with the poisonous legacy of Akhenaten.

⁵¹⁰ All Egyptian queens (Merneith, Sobeknefru, Hatshepsut, Nefertiti, Tawosret, Cleopatra VII) who ruled an independent ruler have invariably married their royal brother. Furthermore, many of them derived their power and legitimacy as regent for a young king, who may or may not have been their biological son. Their reigns were usually brief and considered as a temporary solution to ensure the continuation of a dynastic line. Ann M. Roth, "Models of Authority. Hatshepsut's Predecessors in Power," in *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 10–11. Cleopatra VII tried to secure her grip on the throne and continue her dynastic line by marrying a foreign ruler. She achieved greater success than Ankhesenamun, but her plan was eventually thwarted.

⁵¹¹ Samuel A. Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 171.

been in contact intermittently until the late Amarna period.⁵¹² The Hittites' lack of understanding of Egyptian political culture is reflected in their confusion with the throne name of the pharaoh Ḫuriya (recipient of EA 41)⁵¹³ and with the queenly title *t³-ḫm.t ny-sw.t* "Great Royal Wife", which they misunderstood as Ankhesenamun's personal name.⁵¹⁴ A lack of mutual understanding could lead to intercultural miscommunications and sometimes tragic consequences. Šuppiluliuma I did send a high official to Egypt to verify Ankhesenamun's claim; however, the Hittite envoy probably acquired little or no knowledge of the role of Egyptian princesses in royal succession and diplomatic marriages, or the Egyptian kings' deliberate efforts to keep dynastic succession separate from diplomatic marriages. In addition, the early 18th Dynasty kings (even Hatshepsut) and military elites took immense pride in their successful expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt; handing the throne to a foreign prince through a diplomatic marriage may very well seem an abominable idea to the majority of Egyptian elites like Horemheb. In fact, Horemheb may have led military campaigns in the Levant against the Hittites during the reign of Tutankhamun (fig. 4.31),⁵¹⁵ understandably, he would not have been thrilled about the prospect of a Hittite prince on the Egyptian throne. The early 19th Dynasty Egyptian kings, who were Horemheb's hand-picked successors, inherited his anti-Hittite stance; both Seti I and Ramesses II personally led campaigns against the Hittites, seeking to retake Egyptian territories lost in the late 18th Dynasty and restore Egyptian

⁵¹² EA 41 may have been addressed to either Akhenaten, Smenkhkare, or Tutankhamun. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 114-15, note 2.

⁵¹³ See arguments of Wilhelm and Boese in favor of identifying him as Smenkhkare. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 114-15, note 2.

⁵¹⁴ Francis Breyer, "Egyptological Remarks Concerning Daḫamunzu," *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 20 (2010): 445.

⁵¹⁵ The tomb he commissioned before he ascended to the throne features military scenes and the delivery of booty and prisoners of war to Egypt. Some of the foreign enemies depicted have typical Hittite features, and the accompanying inscription praised Horemheb as someone whose name was renowned in the land of Ḫatti. Geoffrey T. Martin, *The Memphite Tomb of Horemheb, Commander-in-Chief of Tutankhamun* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1989), 80-81.

influence in the Levant. Just like the case in the early 18th Dynasty, a military ethos and nationalistic sentiments characterized the beginning of the 19th Dynasty.⁵¹⁶



Figure 4.31. Horemheb receiving awards from Tutankhamun for his military victory, South wall, Second courtyard, tomb of Horemheb at Saqqara. “Horemheb at Saqqara,” accessed January 18, 2023, https://www.osirisnet.net/tombes/saqqara_nouvel_empire/horemheb_saqqara/e_horemheb_saqqara_01.htm.

A recent diplomatic marriage with disastrous consequence may have discouraged the Egyptians from concluding a marital alliance with another great power and permitting foreign intervention in dynastic succession. It was concluded between Burna-Buriaš II of Babylonia and Muballīṭat-Šērū’a, a daughter of Aššur-uballīṭ I of Assyria. This marital union reconciled the two former rivals⁵¹⁷ and produced a male heir, Kara-Indaš (the 20th Kassite king). However, this king was murdered by disgruntled Babylonians, who were probably averse to the idea of a half-Assyrian on the throne.⁵¹⁸ Anti-Assyrian factions placed Nazi-Bugaš (the 21st Kassite king) on the throne.⁵¹⁹ Aššur-uballīṭ I promptly invaded Babylonia to avenge his grandson

⁵¹⁶ It is perhaps no coincidence that a literary tale which vilified the Hyksos rulers, i.e., *The Quarrel between Sequenenre Tao and Apophis*, was composed during the early 19th Dynasty. William K. Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 69-71.

⁵¹⁷ Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin, 1975), 171.

⁵¹⁸ Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin, 1975), 159.

⁵¹⁹ Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin, 1975), 159.

and placed a prince of his choice, Kurigalzu II (the 22nd Kassite king), on the throne.⁵²⁰ Kurigalzu II, who named Burna-buriaš II as his father in his own inscriptions,⁵²¹ enjoyed a relatively long reign of over two decades and occupied the Babylonian throne during the last phase of Egypt's 18th Dynasty when Egypt was beset with troubles at home and abroad. Although he owed his throne to the Assyrian king, Kurigalzu II quickly renounced his loyalty to the Assyrians,⁵²² presumably because it would alienate his Babylonian subjects. News of the regicide and the ensuing war must have reached the Egyptians; it may have been interpreted as a cautionary tale that confirmed the merit of their policy on dynastic succession and diplomatic marriage.

Šuppiluliuma I, as the son-in-law of Burna-Buriaš II and brother-in-law of Kara-Indaš, was not deterred by the tragedy but remained confident in the effectiveness of diplomatic marriage as a tool for extending political control. Nevertheless, he grossly underestimated the difficulty of obtaining the Egyptian throne through a diplomatic marriage; standing in its way were other powerful contenders to the throne, as well as Egyptian policies on dynastic succession and diplomatic marriage. In retrospect, the Daḥamunzu Affair was a tragedy for most parties involved: the Hittite prince Zannanza who lost his life, the widowed queen Ankhesenamun who failed to maintain power and witnessed the end of her dynastic line, and Šuppiluliuma I who lost his son, his prestige, and eventually his own life and the life of his chosen heir. These devastating losses were the results of a hastily concluded diplomatic marriage that was doomed from

⁵²⁰ Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin, 1975), 159. Since then, it became common for Babylonia and Assyria to try to intervene in each other's royal succession. Intriguingly, the Hittites did not seize this opportunity to interfere with Babylonian dynastic succession, even though Šuppiluliuma I married a Babylonian princess who was a daughter of Burna-Buriaš II. Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 159.

⁵²¹ Kurigalzu II is a younger son of Burna-Buriaš II according to the Synchronistic History, a son of Kara-Indaš according to Chronicle P. See Jared L. Miller, "Political Interactions between Kassite Babylonia and Assyria, Egypt and Ḫatti during the Amarna Age," in *Karduniaš: Babylonia under the Kassites*, ed. Alexa Bartelmus and Katja Sternitzke, 2 vols. (Boston: de Gruyter, 2017), vol. 1, 101.

⁵²² Jared L. Miller, "Political Interactions between Kassite Babylonia and Assyria, Egypt and Ḫatti during the Amarna Age," in *Karduniaš: Babylonia under the Kassites*, ed. Alexa Bartelmus and Katja Sternitzke, 2 vols. (Boston: de Gruyter, 2017), vol. 1, 101.

the very beginning.⁵²³ This could be partly blamed on a lack of sufficient understanding of each other's system of succession and policy on diplomatic marriage, since both contracting parties had their eyes fixated on huge potential gains.

4.3.4. Other Great Powers' Policy on Dynastic Succession and Diplomatic Marriage

The Daḥamunzu Affair is not an isolated example of how intercultural miscommunication could derail diplomatic marriages and lead to unexpected and disastrous consequences. During the Late Bronze Age, the Babylonians and Elamites concluded a series of diplomatic marriages, which were attested in a Neo-Babylonian copy of a 12th-century Elamite royal letter to a Babylonian king (VAT 17020 = BE 13384, also known as the Berlin Letter) published by van Dijk (fig. 4.32).⁵²⁴ In this letter, the Elamite ruler (whom van Dijk identified as Kutir-Nahhunte) claimed the Babylonian throne as a descendant of a daughter of Kurigalzu I and the husband of a daughter of Meli-Šipak, basing his claim on the Elamite matriarchal or fraternal inheritance law.⁵²⁵ The writer had asserted his right to succession in a previous letter but was harshly rejected by the Babylonians on the grounds that such a custom did not exist in Babylonia (lines 21-24).⁵²⁶ In response, the writer questioned the Babylonians' choice of unworthy men as kings and reasserted

⁵²³ In the words of Trevor Bryce: "Ankhesenamun's bid for a Hittite prince as husband was a last desperate ploy by the last survivor of a dynasty already in its death throes. The proposed marriage alliance was doomed from the outset." Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 183.

⁵²⁴ Jan van Dijk, "Die dynastischen Heiraten zwischen Kassiten und Elamern: eine verhängnisvolle Politik," *Orientalia* 55, no. 2 (1986): 159–70. Nevertheless, there exists little evidence on the presence of those Kassite princesses in Elam; virtually nothing is known about their life and status in the Elamite court.

⁵²⁵ On the Elamite avunculate succession system, see: Daniel T. Potts, "The Epithet 'Sister's Son' in Ancient Elam: Aspects of the Avunculate in Cross-Cultural Perspective," in *Grenzüberschreitungen: Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des Alten Orients: Festschrift für Hans Neumann Zum 65. Geburtstag am 9. mai 2018*, ed. Kristin Kleber, Georg Neumann, and Susanne Paulus (Münster: Zaphon, 2018), 523–55. Jan van Dijk, "Die dynastischen Heiraten zwischen Kassiten und Elamern: eine verhängnisvolle Politik," *Orientalia* 55, no. 2 (1986): 161.

⁵²⁶ Jan van Dijk, "Die dynastischen Heiraten zwischen Kassiten und Elamern: eine verhängnisvolle Politik," *Orientalia* 55, no. 2 (1986): 161–62.

his claim by emphasizing his prestigious pedigree as a descendant of the eldest daughter of the mighty Kurigalzu I (lines 37-40).⁵²⁷ To further justify his claim, he related to the Babylonian addressee his family's genealogy, revealing a system of royal succession through the female/spindle line and a series of diplomatic marriages between the Middle Elamite rulers and the Babylonian princesses; in particular, he stressed that he himself married the eldest daughter of Meli-Šipak (lines 9-18).⁵²⁸ Based on the writer's account, Van Dijk produced a genealogy that illustrates these diplomatic marriages (fig. 4.32).

Among the list of unworthy kings chosen by the Babylonians was a man named Nabu-apla-iddina, born to a Hittite woman and regarded as a Hittite in the Elamite opinion (lines 30-35): "Nabu-apla-iddina, the son of a Hittite woman, an abomination to Babylon, a Hittite whom you chose to neglect Babylon (35) and put on the throne of Babylonia: His sin, his transgression, his iniquity, and his ... did you find out ...".⁵²⁹ This Nabu-apla-iddina, placed between Adad-šuma-ušur and Meli-Šipak by van Dijk, was also not recognized in the Babylonian king list.⁵³⁰ Furthermore, the writer condemned Adad-šuma-ušur as another unworthy king chosen by the Babylonians and accused him of destroying "the son of the daughter," who, judging by the context, must be the offspring of a Babylonian-Elamite diplomatic marriage (lines 30-32).⁵³¹

⁵²⁷ Jan van Dijk, "Die dynastischen Heiraten zwischen Kassiten und Elamern: eine verhängnisvolle Politik," *Orientalia* 55, no. 2 (1986): 162-63.

⁵²⁸ Jan van Dijk, "Die dynastischen Heiraten zwischen Kassiten und Elamern: eine verhängnisvolle Politik," *Orientalia* 55, no. 2 (1986): 163-66.

⁵²⁹ Jan van Dijk, "Die dynastischen Heiraten zwischen Kassiten und Elamern: eine verhängnisvolle Politik," *Orientalia* 55, no. 2 (1986): 166-68. One of the kings of Tukulti-Ninurta's reign must have married a Hittite woman.

⁵³⁰ Jan van Dijk, "Die dynastischen Heiraten zwischen Kassiten und Elamern: eine verhängnisvolle Politik," *Orientalia* 55, no. 2 (1986): 168.

⁵³¹ The demise of this half-blood prince very likely led to the destruction of his mother. Singer found strong parallels between the fate of this surmised Elamite princess and that of a brutally murdered Elamite woman mentioned in a Kassite epic. Itamar Singer, "KBo 28.61-64 and the Struggle over the Throne of Babylon at the Turn of the Thirteenth Century B.C.E.," in *The Calm before the Storm: Selected Writings of Itamar Singer on the Late Bronze Age in Anatolia and the Levant* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2011), 393. Albert Kirk Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, Toronto Semitic Texts and Studies 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 47-55.

In the last portion of the letter, the writer threatened to invade Babylonia if the addressee had the audacity to reject his proposal.⁵³²

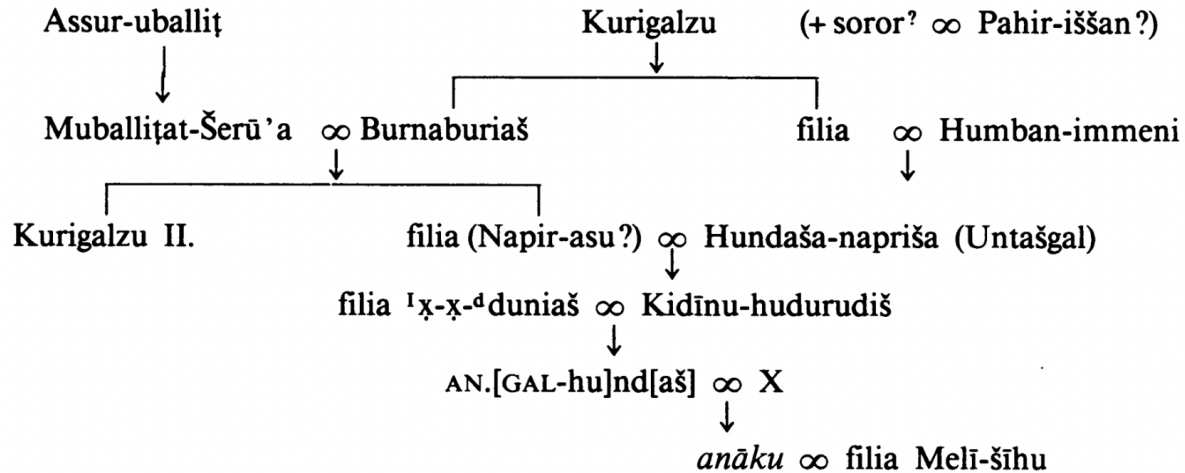


Figure 4.32. Diplomatic marriages between the Kassite and Elamite royal houses reconstructed by van Dijk. Jan van Dijk, “Die dynastischen Heiraten zwischen Kassiten und Elamern: eine verhängnisvolle Politik,” *Orientalia* 55, no. 2 (1986): 164.

Recently, Goldberg re-analyzed the letter and proposed a re-dating of the diplomatic marriages in an attempt to account for some chronological difficulties caused by van Dijk’s proposed reconstruction (fig. 4.33); he traced the beginning of these diplomatic marriages to the reign of Kurigalzu II and identified the writer of the letter as Šutruk-Nahḫunte I.⁵³³ As the founder of the Šutrukid Dynasty, he campaigned against Zababa-šuma-iddina (1158 BCE) and conquered Babylonia, bringing as booty the Naram-Sin stela and the

⁵³² Jan van Dijk, “Die dynastischen Heiraten zwischen Kassiten und Elamern: eine verhängnisvolle Politik,” *Orientalia* 55, no. 2 (1986): 168-69.

⁵³³ Jeremy Goldberg, “The Berlin Letter, Middle Elamite Chronology and Sutruk-Nahhunte I’s Genealogy,” *Iranica Antiqua* 39 (2004): 33-42. Also see: Behzad Mofidi-Nasrabadi, “Elam in the Middle Elamite Period,” in *The Elamite World*, ed. Javier Álvarez-Mon, Gian Pietro Basello, and Yasmina Wicks (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018), 236. Daniel T. Potts, *The Archaeology of Elam: Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 233-34. Paulus proposes to assign this letter to Kidin-Hutran II. Susanne Paulus, “Beziehungen zweier Großmächte,” in *Susa and Elam. Archaeological, Philological, Historical and Geographical Perspectives: Proceedings of the International Congress Held at Ghent University, December 14-17, 2009*, ed. Katrien De Graef and Jan Tavernier, *Mémoires de La Délégation En Perse* 58 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 429–49. Roaf reviews the proposals of van Dijk, Goldberg, and Paulus in a recent article, in which he also questions the historical value of the Berlin Letter and the Kedor-Laomer Texts. Michael Roaf, “Kassite and Elamite Kings,” in *Karduniaš: Babylonia under the Kassites*, ed. Alexa Bartelmus and Katja Sternitzke, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Boston: de Gruyter, 2017), 180–90.

stela of Hammurabi to Susa.⁵³⁴ Whether one follows van Dijk or Goldberg’s interpretation, it does not change the essential fact that the sender of the letter based his claim to the Babylonian throne on his prestigious female line of descent, which could be traced to the eldest daughter of Kurigalzu I/II. Ironically, despite the political significance of these Kassite princesses, little is known about their role in Elamite politics or diplomatic interactions between Elam and Babylonia.

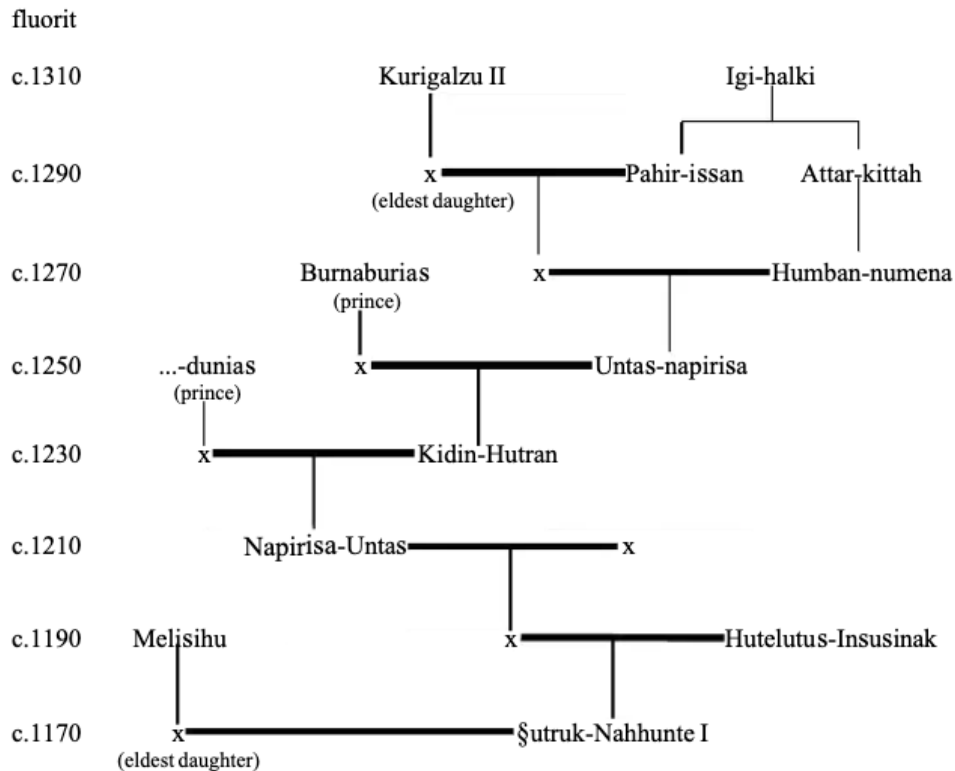


fig.1 Proposed genealogy of Šutruk-Nahhunte I

Figure 4.33. Proposed genealogy of Šutruk-Nahhunte I. Jeremy Goldberg, “The Berlin Letter, Middle Elamite Chronology and Sutrak-Nahhunte I’s Genealogy,” *Iranica Antiqua* 39 (2004): fig. 1.

The murder of Kara-Indaš and the Babylonian response to the Elamite king’s claim made it clear that the Babylonians were appalled by the notion of a foreign king on the Babylonian throne; the so-called

⁵³⁴ Behzad Mofidi-Nasrabadi, “Elam in the Middle Elamite Period,” in *The Elamite World*, ed. Javier Álvarez-Mon, Gian Pietro Basello, and Yasmina Wicks (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018), 236.

Kedor-Laomer Texts⁵³⁵ contained a poetic passage that refers to the divine judgment that the Elamite ruler Kutir-Nahhunte should never reign over Babylonia, despite his victory over the Kassites:

“Can cattle and rapacious wolf come to terms with one another? Can the stationary plant (?) and the flitting crow love one another? Can the crow come to terms with the poisonous serpent? Can the bone-gnawing dog come to terms with the mon[goose]? Can the dragon come to terms with the brigand who sheds [blood]? What king of Elam is there who has endowed Esagil ...? [or has cared for] the Babylonians, or [] their works?”⁵³⁶

4.4. Summary

Compared to verbal/nonverbal communication and diplomatic gift exchange, diplomatic marriage represented a more complex form of intercultural communication. Such marriages occurred with much less frequency, but could have a much greater impact on domestic politics and diplomatic relations between the two countries involved. Based on the balance of power between the wife-giver and the wife-taker, diplomatic marriage could essentially be divided into four categories:

1. Equal, but not necessarily reciprocal, diplomatic marriages between two great powers;
2. (Unequal) Hegemonic diplomatic marriages between a wife-giving great power and a wife-taking small power;
3. (Unequal) Tribute-type diplomatic marriages between a wife-giving small power and a wife-taking great power.
4. Equal, but not necessarily reciprocal, diplomatic marriages between two small powers.

⁵³⁵ For a recent analysis of the text, see: Michael Roaf, “Kassite and Elamite Kings,” in *Karduniaš: Babylonia under the Kassites*, ed. Alexa Bartelmus and Katja Sternitzke, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Boston: de Gruyter, 2017), 182–93.

⁵³⁶ John A. Brinkman, *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia, 1158-722 B.C.*, *Analecta Orientalia: Commentationes Scientifcae de Rebus Orientis Antiqui* 43 (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1968), 80-81.

The first type of diplomatic marriage was negotiated based on the principle of parity. They usually involved lengthy marriage negotiations and other necessary marriage procedures (e.g., betrothal, marriage ceremony) and bore strong parallels to (lower-level, non-royal) marriages concluded between two families of similar social standing or wealth. In the prenuptial stage, the wife-giving kings negotiating the terms of marriage would expect their daughters and sisters to be treated in a way that befitted their royal status. Nevertheless, they had less control over how these women were treated by their new husbands. The diplomatic marriages between Egypt and other great powers demonstrate how such equal marriages were equal in principle but not in practice.

The second type of marriage represented the continuation of an Old Babylonian political tradition, e.g., an overlord marrying off his daughters/sisters to his vassals to extend his political control and network. The discrepancy of power between the affines means that the wife-giver largely dictated the terms of marriage, which were decided and imposed upon the wife-taker before the marriage in the form of stipulations in vassal treaties. The terms had binding power after the conclusion of the marriage alliance and could be enforced by military intervention if the wife-taker failed to honor his promise. In normal circumstances, a princess who joined another royal house through this type of marital alliance assumed the role of the chief queen; the male children she bore would become heirs to the throne and take precedence over her husband's other male offspring. Therefore, this type of marriage created real blood ties (in addition to nominal kinship bonds) between two royal houses that were both lateral and lineal. The New Kingdom Hittite kings employed this strategy for empire-building, achieving a high degree of success.

The third type, i.e., tribute-type diplomatic marriage, was presumably the most common but least studied type of diplomatic marriage. To a certain extent, it constituted a form of imperial control because an overlord deprived his vassals of a means of forming political alliances among themselves by incorporating their daughters into his own harem. While the high-profile equal and hegemonic diplomatic marriages were usually characterized by pomp and circumstance, the majority of tribute-type foreign wives who entered the royal household of their husband received little attention; they remained faceless and nameless in contemporary and later records. With the exception of the three Syrian wives of Thutmose III,

little is known about their life in their new home country and if they played any role in politics and diplomacy. Without the chance discovery of their joint tomb, they would have shared the fate of their peers.

In most cases, the two countries that concluded diplomatic marriages with each other did not fall within a cultural continuum; therefore, a newly married princess had to cope with cultural differences and language barriers after marriage. In addition, she might have to deal with conflicts between her natal family and her new family and even be forced to decide where her loyalty would reside. Whether she had a choice between acculturation and maintenance of her cultural identity largely depended on the balance of power between her home country and her new country. Some of these foreign brides did change their names and adopted other local customs to signify their devotion to their husband and their loyalty to their new home country.

The most useful criteria for assessing if a diplomatic marriage served to strengthen the political alliance between two countries would be: 1. If a princess was allowed to maintain contact with her home country/natal family after marriage; 2. Whether she wielded any power in political life; 3. Whether the male offspring of this marriage had the right to inherit their father's throne. In these respects, the power of the foreign princesses who married the pharaohs was very restricted, regardless of their status. Princesses from both small and great powers underwent a process of acculturation to appear Egyptian in life and in death; their freedom to express their cultural identity at the Egyptian court was limited. Some princesses from the great powers (e.g., Maathorneferure) adopted Egyptian names, presumably because this act carried much political significance. These practices blurred the difference between foreign brides who came to Egypt through equal diplomatic marriages and tribute-type marriages, and frequently caused tension between the pharaoh and his foreign in-laws. Significantly, while a few Ramesside pharaohs might have been born by foreign princesses from small powers (e.g., Siptah) or inherited foreign blood from half-Egyptian half-foreign mothers, none of them was born by a princess from a great power. This may be pure coincidence, i.e., none of the few princesses from great powers produced a male heir who managed to make a successful

bid for the Egyptian throne. Alternatively, there might have existed an implicit rule that disqualified the high-born half-foreign princes as potential heirs for fear of foreign intervention in dynastic succession.⁵³⁷

The Hittite policy on diplomatic marriage was antithetical to the Egyptian stance. They were fully committed to exploring the benefits of diplomatic marriages to extend their political network and build cohesion in the expanding empire by creating blood ties between the Hittite royal house and local ruling elites. The stark contrast between the Egyptian and Hittite policies reveal the two cultures' divergent attitudes towards giving a princess in a diplomatic marriage: the former deemed it as demeaning, while the latter viewed it as an expression of sovereignty. A more profound reason for this policy of unilateral marriage is to be sought in the significant roles that the Egyptian princesses played in royal succession during the New Kingdom period. Following the divine model of marriage between Osiris and Isis, late 17th Dynasty and early 18th Dynasty pharaohs married their full and half-sisters and fathered children by them. These princess-turned-queens acted as custodians of power for their husbands and sons, ensuring the smooth transition of power from one generation to another by grooming their daughters for the same roles. This tradition culminated as Hatshepsut became no longer satisfied with acting as a regent for her stepson/nephew and took the kingly office. Successive kings took measures to suppress the power of princesses, e.g., by marrying their daughters instead of sisters and by elevating non-royal women to the position of Great Royal Wives. The latter measure, however, inadvertently led to the rise of consort families in the late 18th Dynasty. When the last male heir of the 18th Dynasty died heirless, and his wife's desperate attempt to hold on to power by sending an unconventional diplomatic marriage proposal to a foreign king failed, a member of the consort family Ay seized the throne. The 19th Dynasty kings might have sought to curtail the power of the princesses and the consort families by giving their sons more access to political power; many of them received appointments in the army, temple priesthood, and imperial administration.

⁵³⁷ The Mongol rulers selected wives from relatively powerless royal lines of subject or allied kingdoms to prevent foreign in-laws from interfering with the affairs of the Mongol ruling house. Jennifer Holmgren, "Imperial Marriage in the Native Chinese and Non-Han State, Han to Ming," in *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, ed. Rubie S. Watson and Patricia B. Ebrey (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 85–86.

However, this could create a large pool of potential contenders for the throne, and the problem was compounded by the long reigns of some kings, e.g., Ramesses II and Ramesses III. The conflict between Seti II and Amenmesse in the late 19th Dynasty, as well as the transfer of power between different branches of the royal family in the 20th Dynasty, amply demonstrate this problem.

The 18th Dynasty kings' reservation about marrying off princesses to foreign rulers is perfectly understandable, considering the significant roles played by Egyptian princesses in the royal succession. But even in the 19th Dynasty, when their power and influence were much more diminished, they were not married off to foreign kings by their fathers or brothers. Though definitive proof is lacking, the 19th Dynasty kings might have been discouraged by the disastrous outcome of the marriage between Burna-Buriaš II and Muballīṭat-Šērū'a. These events unfolded during the late 18th Dynasty and would have warned the early 19th Dynasty kings to proceed with caution when negotiating diplomatic marriages. In addition, news of the nasty divorce of Ammittamru II of Ugarit and the daughter of Bentešina would have reached the Ramesside court, perhaps reinforcing their conviction that they should adhere to the policy of unilateral diplomatic marriage. The letter from the Elamite ruler who married a daughter of Meli-Šipak exposed many potential dangers of concluding fully equal and reciprocal diplomatic marriages:

1. Marrying an Egyptian princess to a foreign king could risk giving him some claim to the Egyptian throne, as the Egyptian kings themselves married their own sisters for legitimization. The risk is even greater in a cross-cultural diplomatic marriage if the wife-taker follows an avuncular or matrilineal system of succession. The Elamite king's claim to the Babylonian throne through the female line demonstrates that the risk was real.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁸ Whether this king was Kutir-Nahhunte (van Dijk 1986), Šutruk-Nahhunte I (Goldberg 2004 and Potts 1999), or Kidin-Hutran II (Paulus 2013), he would have been a contemporary of Ramesses II or one of his successors. Jan van Dijk, "Die dynastischen Heiraten zwischen Kassiten und Elamern: Eine verhängnisvolle Politik," *Orientalia* 55, no. 2 (1986): 159–70. Jeremy Goldberg, "The Berlin Letter, Middle Elamite Chronology and Sutruk-Nahhunte I's Genealogy," *Iranica Antiqua* 39 (2004): 33–42. Daniel T. Potts, *The Archaeology of Elam: Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 233–34. Susanne Paulus, "Beziehungen zweier Großmächte," in *Susa and Elam. Archaeological, Philological, Historical and Geographical Perspectives: Proceedings of the International Congress Held at Ghent University, December 14–17, 2009*, ed. Katrien de Graef and Jan Tavernier, *Mémoires de la délégation en Perse* 58 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 429–49.

2. Handing the kingly office to an heir born to a foreign mother, especially a princess from a great power, was equally problematic. As the murder of Kara-indaš and the subsequent Assyrian invasion of Babylonia show, a king of foreign descent could face fierce opposition; an escalation of the internal conflict could lead to foreign military intervention and bring about devastating consequences. The Berlin Letter hints at the fact that a king born to a Hittite mother occupied the Babylonian throne before Meli-Šipak; as he was not recognized by the Elamite ruler and later king lists, his legitimacy was probably challenged by contemporary Babylonians as well. The divorce of Ammittamru II and the daughter of Bentešina served as another cautionary tale, as their son, the Crown Prince, was torn by divided loyalties. He was forced to choose between staying in Ugarit and keeping his position, or returning to Amurru with his mother and renouncing his right to succession.

Many great kings might have chosen to avoid such risks by marrying foreign princesses when they already had adult sons. Amenhotep III probably had sons by Tiye when he married Giluḥepa, and his marriage with Taduḥepa took place even later in his reign. Šuppiluliuma I already had several adult sons when he married the Babylonian *Tawananna*; Ramesses II did the same thing in year 34.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION: POWER, PRESTIGE, AND PROFIT

This study sets out to explore New Kingdom Egypt's diplomatic interactions with other Ancient Near Eastern polities from the perspective of intercultural communication. It was inspired by the observation that despite the adoption of a *lingua franca* and general acceptance of established norms and protocols, miscommunications and misunderstandings still occurred between diplomatic players of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

5.1. Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 examines how the Ancient Near Eastern kings and other players in the diplomatic game maintained contact through verbal (written and oral) and nonverbal communication (diplomatic signaling). Verbal communication through diplomatic correspondence is the primary and best-studied means of intercultural communication in Late Bronze Diplomacy. It was conducted in Akkadian, the *lingua franca* of the Late Bronze Age, and followed a stylized format. Most diplomatic players were familiar with this method of communication or were able to learn the established conventions that facilitated it. Nevertheless, these widely accepted epistolary formats and rules that guided diplomatic correspondence could create an illusion of intercultural intelligibility. Intercultural miscommunications over formality and substantive matters still occasionally occurred, e.g., Šuppiluliuma I disputed with an anonymous Egyptian king over the appropriate form of address, which was caused by a discrepancy between the international and Hittite epistolary conventions. Such intercultural misunderstandings could be easily resolved by a mutual compromise or innovations that better accommodate the needs and preserve the prestige of both parties. Indeed, one witnessed a gradual cross-pollination of Egyptian and Hittite epistolary traditions and diplomatic procedures between the late Amarna period and the early Ramesside era (parallel letters and parallel diplomacy). Such changes demonstrate that the established diplomatic conventions and procedures

did not remain static during the Late Bronze Age; rather, they were susceptible to influence and changes that helped to maintain and improve their efficacy. However, intercultural miscommunications over substantive matters, e.g., foreign intervention in internal dynastic succession, often arose from disagreements between deeply rooted cultural attitudes and values. In such cases, it was usually the balance of power between the two interlocutors that determined the outcome of their misunderstandings and disputes.

To cope with the challenges presented by illusional and ambiguous intercultural intelligibility, some interlocutors experimented with ways to develop and increase their intercultural communication competence. A common practice was to invoke the divine to establish trust, for divine worship was ubiquitous in the Late Bronze Age world. Furthermore, some diplomatic players discovered intercultural adaptation and mirroring as alternative means of facilitating communication. The Egyptian vassals' ingenious adoption of the "Breath of Life" terminology best illustrates the affordances of this communicative strategy. A comparative analysis of how this term was employed in Egyptian and non-Egyptian sources reveals how a term that was originally coined by the Egyptians and charged with Egypt-centric ideology could be reinterpreted by Egypt's Levantine vassals in the context of diplomatic correspondence to further their own interests.

In addition to diplomatic letters, a large volume of diplomatic communication was conducted through various intermediates: messengers, vassal rulers, great kings, political patrons, and royal family members. These live agents were involved in different phases of the communication process; as their personal interests did not necessarily align with those of the main interlocutors, they could and sometimes did wield their power to influence the outcome of the communication. Their impact was most deeply felt in oral communication, as written letters, to a large extent, reflected the true intention of the correspondents.

Conducting diplomatic communication through nonverbal means, which is also known as diplomatic signaling, has received much less scholarly attention. Diplomatic interlocutors could send out positive and negative signals through a wide array of means, and these signals were generally well-understood cross-culturally. A king could indicate how much he valued his friendship and alliance with his

diplomatic partner by his choice of representatives. The diplomatic messengers' political/social status would send a clear message concerning the level of presentation to the host king. Correspondingly, the host king had at his disposal his own ways of sending diplomatic signals. He could extend a warm welcome to the messengers of his diplomatic partner by giving them a royal audience and bestowing gifts or express his displeasure by detaining them for an extended period of time. His hospitable treatment (or lack thereof) of the messengers would send a strong signal to his diplomatic partner. The frequency of diplomatic communication and its associated costs were also indicative of the strength of the bonds between the two interlocutors.

As verbal and nonverbal means of communication have their respective advantages and limitations, the diplomatic players would ideally carefully assess their options based on their communicative needs. Comparatively speaking, verbal communication tended to be less ambiguous because the message was composed and sent with intentionality. As the message was committed into writing, it was less flexible and less deniable than a nonverbal message. Additionally, verbal messages could prove less convincing than nonverbal messages conveyed through actions. Despite all its limitations, verbal communication was still heavily relied upon by kings and political elites because of its confidentiality, as the message would be guarded by the messengers in charge of the letter tablet, the small circle of elites who would have access to the letter, and the *lingua franca* in which it was composed (as only highly trained scribes would be able to read and write it). However, if confidentiality was not a major concern and the interlocutors wanted their message to reach a wider audience, nonverbal communication would be the most sensible choice.

Just as diplomatic protocols and standardized epistolary formulas existed to facilitate intercultural diplomatic interactions through verbal and nonverbal communication, there were established rules that governed diplomatic gift exchange, i.e., the principles of equality and reciprocity. This form of intercultural communication enabled the diplomatic players to encode and send messages through the choice and physical features of gifts. It also allowed more room for creative expression; for instance, diplomatic partners could send and receive personalized/customized gifts that indexed their cordial relations and the specific exchange context. Certain groups, e.g., the Puntites, chose tailor-made gifts to pay tribute to the

culture of the recipient, demonstrating a high level of intercultural communicative awareness and competency. Compared to diplomatic letters that were usually archived or discarded after usage, gifts were expected to enjoy a longer social life and could be put on display.¹ However, diplomatic gifts could be repurposed or transferred shortly after being received because they were not appealing/useful to their recipient, or because it was administratively convenient to do so.

Nevertheless, one can also observe some parallels between diplomatic communication through verbal/nonverbal means and gift exchange. Just as the balance of power between the interlocutors could be reflected in the greeting formulas they employed and the size/clay quality of the letter tablets, the inequality of status and wealth between the giver and recipient of gifts determined what types of gifts would be considered appropriate and their exchange context. However, some exploited the freedom for creative expression in the diplomatic gift exchange and intentionally encoded equivocal messages. The utility of this practice is best exemplified by the Niqmaddu Vase, which employed visual ambiguity for identity construction and status negotiation.

Participants in the diplomatic gift exchange demonstrated varying degrees of intercultural communication sensitivity. The Egyptians employed familiar visual vocabulary, e.g., the scarab, in the diplomatic gift exchange to ensure that the recipients were more receptive to their messages. Amenhotep III's large commemorative scarabs were truly innovative, as they combined verbal communication and gift exchange.

Messages could also be communicated through the exchange context. However, it should be noted that the exchange context could be manipulated and reinvented by the exchange partners. In the case of New Kingdom Egypt, the process of diplomatic gift exchange was, to a certain extent, entangled with another form of interstate exchange of goods, i.e., the collection of tributes. It was a deliberate choice by the Egyptians to reinvent the context of diplomatic gift exchange and conflate it with tribute collection by

¹ These two reasons explain why the metal vases received as diplomatic gifts by Zimri-Lim of Mari were forwarded to other foreign kings or transformed into other artifacts in local workshops. Michaël Guichard, *La vaisselle de luxe des rois de Mari*, Archives Royales de Mari 31 (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les civilisations, 2005), 85-87.

celebrating the *ms inw* ceremony. This highly orchestrated ceremony promoted an Egypt-centric interpretive framework of diplomatic exchange, which maintained that: 1. Subservient foreigners voluntarily came to Egypt because of the might of the king; 2. They presented the king with lavish gifts in exchange for the “Breath of Life”; 3. This was decreed by the gods and represented the normal world order. The pharaoh played a key role in this process, being the head of the imperial administration and the nexus of Egypt’s diplomatic network. Many Egyptian elites who had the honor to participate in the *ms inw* ceremony commemorated it in their tombs; the artistic reconstruction of the exchange contexts gave the tomb owners and artists even more freedom to promote the Egypt-centric ideology through various artistic devices, e.g., relative scale, homogenous treatment of foreigners regardless of their actual relationship with Egypt. Of course, the Egyptians’ political maneuvers could hardly escape the attention of their diplomatic partners, whose reactions could range from defiance to compliance, and even obedience depending on the balance of power between them and the Egyptian kings.

Based on the balance of power between the wife-giver and the wife-taker, Late Bronze Age diplomatic marriages can be divided into four categories: 1. Equal diplomatic marriage between two great powers; 2. Unequal diplomatic marriage between a great power (wife-giver) and a small power (wife-taker); 3. Unequal tribute-type diplomatic marriage between a small power (wife-giver) and a great power (wife-taker); 4. Equal diplomatic marriages between two small powers. The negotiation process, marriage procedure, and treatment of the princess could differ significantly due to a wide range of factors: relationship and balance of power between the two countries, personal relationship between the two royal houses/rulers, marriage custom of each country/culture, the personal relationship between the bride and her new husband.

The Egyptians engaged in two types of diplomatic marriages, i.e., equal diplomatic marriage between two great powers and unequal tribute-type diplomatic marriage between a small power (wife-giver) and a great power (wife-taker). A review of the prenuptial marriage procedures reveals that the pharaohs were willing to follow established diplomatic conventions and other ancient Near Eastern marriage customs in order to acquire foreign brides. This was especially the case in equal diplomatic

marriages with other great powers, except that Egypt never reciprocated by marrying off their own princesses to foreign kings. After the celebration of the marriage, however, foreign princesses who entered the Egyptian harem were expected to undergo a process of acculturation. Freedom to express their own cultural identities at the Egyptian court may be limited. They became Egyptian in appearance in life and in death. Some, like Maathorneferure, adopted Egyptian names. This acculturation makes it difficult for messengers from their native country to recognize them and for modern scholars to identify them in textual and archaeological records.

Two distinctive features distinguished Egyptian-Near Eastern diplomatic marriages from those concluded between the other Near Eastern polities: 1. The famous Egyptian policy of unilateral marriage; 2. Their restriction on the foreign princesses' access to political power. The incongruity between the Egyptian policy and Ancient Near Eastern norms means that the pharaoh and his peers had divergent expectations for their marital alliances, which often resulted in intercultural miscommunications. Nevertheless, the Egyptian policy of unilateral diplomatic marriage should not simply be attributed to ethnocentrism. Arguably, it also stemmed from the need to preclude foreign intervention in internal dynastic succession. Given the significant roles played by Egyptian princesses in dynastic succession, marrying off an Egyptian princess to a foreign king risked giving him some claim to the Egyptian throne. Furthermore, the divergent policies on diplomatic marriage reflect different cultural attitudes and imperial strategies. The Egyptians believed in the power of acculturation; they instituted a policy of taking political hostages and indoctrinating them with Egyptian ideology. In contrast, the Hittites relied on the establishment of real blood ties with other royal houses to strengthen control over their vassals. The foreign wives of the pharaoh enjoyed limited access to political power compared to native Egyptian queens, and with one possible exception (Siptah), none of their children managed to succeed to the Egyptian throne. This probably accounts for the need to conclude new diplomatic marriages with the ascension of a new king.

The chronological gaps in extant evidence on Late Bronze Age diplomatic marriage and their uneven geographical distribution force modern scholars to rely heavily (and sometimes exclusively) on textual and archaeological evidence found in Egypt (e.g., the Amarna Letters) or produced by the Egyptians.

Inevitably, a lot of studies on Late Bronze Age diplomatic marriage approach the subject from an Egyptian perspective (some even inadvertently inherited the Egypt-centric biases present in the ancient sources). While there exists relatively rich information for the reconstruction of the political and economic aspects of diplomatic marriages involving Egypt in the Late Bronze Age, nothing comparable is available for diplomatic marriages among the ancient Near Eastern kings. In other words, the situation of the Egyptian hypergamy is known and certain, while the rules of exchange for the Near Eastern diplomatic marriages are postulated by contrast and less certain.² In addition, the sporadic nature of evidence prohibits any attempt at quantitative analysis. While the Egyptian policy of diplomatic marriage contrasts sharply with the policy of some Ancient Near Eastern polities, it should not be automatically assumed that the Egyptian practice represented an abnormality.³ One has to proceed with caution and examine other textual sources, e.g., laws and legal documents, to see if they could provide information that supplements the diplomatic archives.

Scholars like Schulman viewed the unidirectional movement of foreign princesses between the Egyptian court and other Near Eastern courts as an indication of Egypt's privileged status (Schulman 1979). Meier challenged this argument, stating that Egypt was already dealing with other great powers on an equal basis through their adoption of kingship and kinship terminologies.⁴ Furthermore, their divergent conceptions of diplomatic marriage facilitate this unilateral flow of royal brides: i.e., while an Egypt-centric ideology deemed it unacceptable for pharaohs to give out princesses, other foreign powers (e.g., the Hittites) were not averse to the giving of princesses since they, contrary to the Egyptians, viewed it as an expression

² Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientalis antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1978), 12.

³ Franco Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XIII*, *Orientalis antiqui collectio* 14 (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1978), 12.

⁴ Samuel A. Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 165-73.

of sovereignty.⁵ However, Meier's claim that the giving of a princess represents an expression of sovereignty was based on the model of Old Babylonian unequal diplomatic marriages. In such marriages, an overlord gave a daughter/sister to his vassal in marriage on the premise that she would become the chief queen and that the offspring produced by this marriage would become heirs to the throne. Such political arrangements were not part and parcel of a marriage pact between two great powers. From the Egyptian perspective, there was no essential difference between foreign princesses from vassal states and other great powers. Royal brides from brotherly countries were more difficult to obtain and must have been held in higher esteem; nonetheless, they were likewise excluded from political life once the fanfare of the inter-dynastic weddings was over. Most great kings were well aware that their daughters/sisters would probably not obtain the position of the chief queen when they gave consent to the pharaoh's marriage proposals.

5.2. Comparison of Findings

This dissertation challenges the conventional notion that there was one international system (named the "Amarna System") that encompassed the whole Ancient Near East during the Late Bronze Age. Instead, it is more appropriate to envision the co-existence of several interlocking systems (each with its own conventions), with the Amarna System being the dominant one. Notably, the Hittites corresponded with their Syrian vassals in Akkadian and western Anatolian vassals/independent states (probably also *Aḫḫiyawa?*) in Hittite;⁶ when the Arzawan king was courted by Amenhotep III with a marriage proposal, the Arzawan scribe urged his Egyptian counterpart to compose the response letter in Hittite instead of Akkadian. On the eastern side of the ancient Near East, several generations of Babylonian kings concluded diplomatic marriages with the Elamite kings, whose power warranted their inclusion in the league of the

⁵ Samuel A. Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 169-73.

⁶ Harry A. Hoffner, *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom*, ed. Gary M. Beckman (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009).

great kings but were ostensibly omitted.⁷ The interaction of the Ancient Near Eastern countries with those not bound by the Amarna System could also exert a significant influence on the former's behavior and role in the Late Bronze Age international arena.

Diplomacy is a multi-player, multi-level game. However, many scholars of international relations and diplomacy restricted themselves to the analysis of the bilateral relationship between Egypt and its neighbors or only acknowledged a two-tier political hierarchy that structured the Late Bronze Age political landscape based on the distinction between *šarru* “king” and *šarru rabû* “great king” in the Amarna letters. In reality, the international system that linked together the Ancient Near Eastern polities was multi-nodal and multi-tiered.

5.2.1. Power, Prestige, and Profit

The pattern of intercultural communication between the Ancient Near Eastern polities could not be fully understood without a consideration of regional geopolitics. Most other great powers shared borders/buffer zone with at least two great powers and were sometimes engaged in hostilities on both fronts; therefore, their interactions with any diplomatic partner were influenced by their relations with other countries. In fact, many of them conducted bilateral diplomatic relations with an imagined international audience in mind. Status anxiety and peer competition were ubiquitous; e.g., the great kings who concluded marital alliances with the pharaoh vied with each other to secure the queenly office for their own daughters. Egypt benefited greatly from its geographical isolation because the great kings followed the strategy of “befriending the distant countries and attacking the nearby ones”. All-out wars between the great powers were few, and only took place between countries with shared frontiers. Thanks to its geographical location, the New Kingdom Egyptian state (with its imperial holdings in the Levant) only bordered one great power

⁷ Alternatively, it is possible that the Elamite kings were simply uninterested in being part of the Late Bronze Age international system. Aside from peaceful and hostile interactions with the Kassites, they exhibited little interests in Late Bronze Age politics and diplomacy. Michael Roaf, “Kassite and Elamite Kings,” in *Karduniaš: Babylonia under the Kassites*, ed. Alexa Bartelmus and Katja Sternitzke, 2 vols. (Boston: Walter de Gruyter Inc., 2017), vol. 1, 166–95.

at any given time during the Late Bronze Age – i.e., Mittani from the beginning of the 18th Dynasty until the Amarna period, and Hatti for the greater part of the Ramesside period until the collapse of the Hittite New Kingdom. However, both enemies quickly turned into allies as they needed Egyptian support against another formidable enemy. Both Babylonia and Assyria were geographically distant, so cordial relations with them were less politically significant. Babylonian kings valued their friendship with the pharaohs because Babylonia's relations with its neighbors to the north and east, i.e., Assyria and Elam, were complicated and often contentious. As late-comers to the diplomatic game, the Assyrian kings needed the pharaoh's recognition as their entry ticket into the great powers' club. Even though Assyria's military prowess warranted its recognition as a great power, it could not expect to be acknowledged by any of its immediate neighbors. Understandably, when there was no direct conflict of interests, other great kings were highly motivated to maintain cordial relations with the pharaoh to ensure his benevolent neutrality. Therefore, the Egyptian king's privileged status in the international diplomatic system was not only attributable to Egypt's monopoly on gold supply and other African exotica, but also its geographical isolation.

By accepting kinship terminology and adopting the diplomatic *lingua franca*, the pharaohs were compromising their image and prestige; however, the linguistic barrier also meant that only a small circle of political elites and trained scribes participated in these communications conducted on the basis of equality. When engaging in gift exchange and diplomatic marriage with peer polities, the Egyptian kings took a two-step approach: 1. They conducted negotiations and completed the exchange based on the principle of equality and reciprocity; 2. They reinvented the exchange context and redefined the nature of exchange for their domestic audience. This was done by the joint effort of kings and high officials who participated in these exchanges (through nonverbal communication, inscriptions, and monumental art). Linguistic barriers worked in favor of such political maneuvers, as the foreign kings and envoys could only rely on nonverbal hints to understand them.

The matter of prestige was also constantly on the minds of other great kings. Despite their willingness to make concessions to the pharaohs in diplomatic negotiations, they were also anxious to stress

their fraternal bonds with the pharaohs. They would hide their motive for profit by reframing their request for more Egyptian gold and gifts as a matter of prestige. On the other hand, though the pharaohs did sweeten their marriage proposals with large sums of gold, they seemed reluctant to compare their unilateral marriage arrangements to “bride-for-gold” transactions with their diplomatic partners. Egyptian royal inscriptions had no qualms about redefining these equal diplomatic marriages and portraying them like tribute-type marriages; they invariably placed great emphasis on the “fact” that the foreign king presented his daughter to the pharaoh of his own volition.

5.2.2. Formality vs. Substantive Matters

An ancient Near Eastern polity (e.g., Assyria) could quickly learn the diplomatic protocols and be incorporated into the Late Bronze Age diplomatic system once it gained recognition from other peer polities; however, the game of diplomatic marriage had a much higher entry barrier. When it comes to diplomatic communication, the New Kingdom pharaohs largely accepted the established rules and employed Akkadian for communication with their peers as well as their Levantine vassals. Unsurprisingly, the pharaohs were much more accommodating when communicating with other great kings. One could even observe a cross-pollination of Egyptian and Hittite epistolary traditions and diplomatic procedures during the Ramesside era (cultural convergence). The intercultural correspondents made conscious efforts to seek common ground and establish trust, e.g., by invoking gods in diplomatic letters. Invocation of the divine was rarely attested in the Amarna Letters, but it became a common feature of the Ramesside correspondence exchanged between the Egyptian and Hittite courts. The diachronic change in Egypt’s diplomatic communication with its Levantine vassals, however, would be best described as intercultural adaptation or mirroring. This is best illustrated by the verbalization of various Egyptian royal iconography with derogatory meanings (e.g., trampling of foreign enemies) in the prostration formula of the vassal letters. Furthermore, the vassals’ adoption of the term “Breath of Life”, a term of Egyptian origin and loaded with Egypt-centric ideology, demonstrates a development of intercultural communication competence.

As two diplomatic partners proceeded from diplomatic communication to gift exchange and marriage, they engaged in increasingly intensive forms of intercultural communication that required increasing levels of trust and investment. Some diplomatic partners, e.g., Hatti and Assyria, only engaged in diplomatic communication and gift-exchange. Admittedly, diplomatic marriages, despite their huge potential returns, also involved much higher risks. Assyria only consistently conducted diplomatic marriages with Egypt and its subjects; its only marital alliance with Babylonia led to catastrophic results. Hittite kings occasionally concluded equal and reciprocal diplomatic marriages with the Babylonians, but none of the children born of such marital unions managed to succeed to the throne. Moreover, the Egyptian kings might have chosen to contain such uncertainties by separating diplomacy from internal politics and succession. They made consistent efforts to prevent foreign affairs from exerting real impacts on Egypt's internal affairs. This was manifest in the peculiar Egyptian approach towards diplomatic marriage, turning down marriage proposals made by foreign kings and denying incoming foreign princesses any access to political power. The Egyptian kings were extremely cautious not to grant a foreign power (even an ally) the right to meddle with their dynastic succession. Conspicuously absent from the Egyptian version of the Egyptian-Hittite treaty is the clause that grants the Hittites the right to intervene in order to guarantee the succession of the designated heir. Overall, the great kings demonstrated more willingness to make compromises or accommodations when intercultural miscommunications arose because of matters of formality; when it comes to substantive issues, e.g., when their policies and traditions were at odds with established protocols, they were less likely to make concessions.

5.2.3. Gender Roles in Diplomacy

In Late Bronze Age diplomacy (just like in most professions), the participants were predominantly male. This is especially true for New Kingdom Egypt. Due to the Egyptian policy of unilateral diplomatic marriage, Egyptian princesses did not play any role in Egypt's diplomatic interactions with other Ancient Near Eastern kings. Some queens, e.g., Tiye and Puduḥepa (maybe also Meritaten), were more deeply

involved in diplomatic activities because they had the confidence of their husbands and because of their strong personalities. Other royal women, e.g., Ramesses II's mother and wife, were probably involved out of the need for parallel diplomacy as their letters to the Hittite court were highly formulaic and refrained from discussing any substantive matters. The bold queen Daḥamunzu tried to break with tradition, but she failed spectacularly, partly because she was challenging so many established norms at the same time.

As is the case with Egypt, Hittite queens could wield much power in internal politics but generally did not play a significant role in diplomacy. Puduḥepa stands out as an exception, partly because of her political acumen and partly because she had to step in to ease the burden of her husband, who was suffering from deteriorating health. It is interesting to observe that though she was fully acknowledged by Ramesses II as an equal diplomatic partner in his letters and conducted marriage negotiations with the pharaoh, she was conspicuously missing in the Egyptian records of the first Hittite marriage. The inscriptions on the Marriage Stela made no mention of her role in the marriage negotiations and the preparation of dowry. Puduḥepa was not featured in the lunette of the stela, even though it was probably she who escorted her daughter to Syria. Instead, it was Ḫattušili III who was represented as Ramesses II's diplomatic partner, the one who escorted Maathorneferure to Egypt. Though definitive proof is lacking, it is possible that the change of audience led to this artistic reinvention of history; i.e., Ramesses II was less willing to recognize Puduḥepa as an equal diplomatic partner in front of a divine audience (since all copies of the Marriage Stela were deposited in Egyptian temples).

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