Pharaoh and his Brothers

Stefan Jakob

Earlier than Egypt, Mesopotamian communities felt the necessity to grapple with the world beyond their own frontiers – not least due to different geographical conditions. In the course of time, a complex system of international relationships with firm rules of conduct evolved. When Egypt began to recognize Near Eastern states as quasi-equal, it consequently accepted their standard patterns of diplomatic contacts, the form of international correspondence or the messenger’s etiquette. Even though contacts with Babylonia are attested for the reigns of Amenophis II and Thutmose IV, detailed information about the way Egyptian kings organized their relations to the rulers of the Near East are provided only by the archive of Tell el-Amarna (382 clay tablets; cf. Moran 1992). A small circle of imperial powers (Egypt, Babylon, Hatti and Mittani) surrounded by subordinate vassals dominated nearly the entire Near Eastern world (Fig. 1). One of the characteristics for the rulers of the largest powers is their use of the title ‘Great King’ (sharru rabû). The acknowledgement of equal rank is also expressed by calling the other king ‘my brother’. The membership of that ‘Club of Royal Brothers’ is tied to real political power. When the Assyrian king Assur-uballit approaches Pharaoh with a petition for an establishment of diplomatic contacts, he signals the dissociation from his overlord Mittani, since a loyal vassal would shy away from a foreign policy of his own. Finally, Assur-uballit put special emphasis on the fact that he is equal to the king of Hanigalbat (= Mittani):¹

EA 16:22–31  [W]hen the king of Hanigalbat [wr]ote to your father in Egypt he sent 20 talents of gold to him. [Now] I am the [equal] of the king of Hanigalbat, but you sent me […] of gold, and it is not enough [f]or the pay of my messengers on the journey to and back’ (Moran 1992: 39)

In that second letter to the Pharaoh Assur-uballit consequently used the title sharru rabû and called the Egyptian king ‘my brother’. Mittani obviously no longer had the power to prevent Assyrian independence. What the Mittanian court probably thought about this newcomer, may be illustrated by the following lines of Shattiwaza whose father, Tushratta, is known from the Amarna archive as ‘brother’ and ‘father-in-law’ of Amenophis III (cf. EA 17:2; EA 19:3; Adler 1976: 123;129):

‘… King Tushratta, my father, built a palace and filled it with riches, but Shuttarna destroyed it, and it became impoverished … he threw himself down before the Assyrian, the subject of his father, who no longer pays tribute …’ (Treaty between Shattiwaza of Mittani and Suppiluliuma of Hatti; Beckman 1996: 44ff.)

Neither Babylonia nor Hatti might have been pleased with the Assyrian attempt (it should be kept in mind that Assur-uballit was able to menace the Hittite kingdom of Carchemish; cf Harrak 1987: 47, Faist 2001: 215).

Since several decades later the Hittites were reluctant to accept Assyria as a great power, it is probably


http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/bmsaes/issue6/jakob.html
not an accident that the same evaluation has been found in a royal treaty whose second party was the Hittite king (Suppiluliuma I). So Urhi-Teshub, nephew and predecessor of Hattusili III, wrote to Adad-nerari I after his accession to the throne:

KUB XXIII 102 ‘… Do those who are not on good terms customarily write to one another about brotherhood? On what account should I write to you about brotherhood? Were you and I born from one mother? As [my grandfather] and my father did not write to the king of Assyria [about brotherhood], you shall not keep writing to me [about brotherhood] and Great Kingship. [It is not my] wish…’ (Beckman 1996: 138)

The Egyptian king himself was expected to admit the Assyrians to the club. This new power seemed to be suitable as a political counterweight to the powerful Hittite Empire.

Nevertheless, this diplomatic strategy was probably not pursued for a long time. In the following decades, until the early phase of the 19th dynasty, Egypt tried again to force the hegemony in the Near East with the use of troops. As late as 1279 BC, the battle of Qadesh between Ramesses II and the Hittite Mursili I brought about a turn in Egyptian foreign policy.

Thus, the first bilateral peace treaty in history between Ramesses and Hattusili III was ratified, establishing the *pax aegypta-hethitica*, the ‘Hattusa-Pi-Ramesses Axis’. Thanks to a corpus of more than 100 more or less fragmentary letters, which was found in the Hittite capital Hattusa, we have a fairly clear impression of the dealings of these former enemies (Edel 1994). The new relationship is well documented by remarks of Ramesses II such as ‘both great lands have become one land’ (Edel 1994: Nr. 5:6’ and passim; cf. line 6’ in the famous letter of the widow of pharaoh Nibhururia to the hittite king Suppiluliuma; ibd. No. 1). Despite this euphemism, he cannot conceal the fact that the Egyptian position on the international stage is rather weak in comparison with the epoch of Amenophis III.

In addition to the dictated peace treaty after the battle of Qadesh, which he actually lost, Ramesses adapted the Hittite way of international contacts with the queen being involved in the royal correspondence (cf. the role of the Hittite queen Puduhepa as a self-confident negotiator; Roth 2003: 180f.; Roth 2002: 83f.). One should not forget that Hattusili obliges the Egyptian king in § 10 of the treaty to support his heir to the Hittite throne in case of a dispute (Edel 1997: 38).

The concern was justified when one considers that Hattusili had come to power in a quite illegal way by deposing his nephew Urhi-Teshub from the Hittite throne. But Tudhaliya IV obviously did not need help from Egypt when he acceded to the throne after the death of his father. From that time on, no correspondence with the Egyptian king is available that could provide us with information about the further development of the *pax aegypta-hethitica*. Therefore a tiny fragment of a clay tablet from Qantir/Pi-Ramesses unearthed in 2003 is the first evidence of correspondence between Egypt and the Hittites at the time of Tudhaliya (Fig. 2–3; Pusch/ Jakob 2003).

The general political climate had changed since the Amarna period. Mittani as a great power did not exist any more. First it had become a vassal of the Hittite king Suppiluliuma. Then it was split in various parts (Harrak 1987). The main beneficiary of these developments was the Assyrian Adad-nerari I. During his rule, Mittani definitively lost its autonomy, and from the reign of Adad-nerari’s son, Shalmaneser I on, the Habur region, heartland of the Mittanian state and otherwise known as ‘Hanigalbat’, was incorporated into the Assyrian realm. At the latest from the successor Tukulti-Ninurta, Assyria was a permanent member of ‘The Club of Royal Brothers,’ among the imperial powers Egypt and Hatti, and certainly Babylonia as well, even though Ramesses II seemed to be unconvinced of the rightful membership (Edel 1994: No. 105 Obv. 56 ‘…the
king of Babylonia is not a great king...'). In doing so, however, he suppressed the fact that Egypt likewise was hardly in a position to return to more glorious times (R. Morkot 1986: 3f. pointed out that this development has already begun during the early 18th dynasty).

Particularly with regard to the Egyptian idea of kingship, the phrase 'two lands become one land' is nothing but a sign of weakness. In the abstract, Egypt still laid claim to world domination (Roth 2003: 175).

So it is not surprising that meanwhile, as far as domestic policy is concerned, the adoration of the pharaoh reached its highest point. The relationship between the king and the world of the gods as the centre of attention is well documented by the Nubian rock temples of Ramesses II, the wide spread erection of statues of him with features of the sun-god, and the temple of Medinet Habu.

But a royal observer from abroad would not have necessarily felt this conflict between the way Ramesses saw himself and political reality. After all the Mesopotamian kings were not so different in their behaviour. In the treaties of the Hittite rulers, the king usually appears only as 'hero' (Beckman 1996: 3of. and passim), 'beloved of the Storm-god' (Beckman 1996: 38f.) or beloved of the Sun-goddess of (the city of) Arinna' (Beckman 1996: 99). In the rock sanctuary of Yazilikaya king Tudhaliya IV is portrayed in the arms of his personal god Sarruma (Seeher 2002: 116).

In Babylonia the dynasty of the Kassites had a special preference for traditional titles from the era of the Early Dynastic Sumerian city states (third millennium BC). But a Sumerian 'king of the four quarters of the world' would have had fewer problems to fulfil our expectations than his colleague in the second half of the second millennium BC, when the 'world' has grown much larger.

The most intriguing example is Assyria, where royal titles increased in correspondence to the political rise of the 'Land of Assur' and the growth of its military power. Assur-uballit, who was regarded by his successors as the actual founder of the Assyrian Empire, calls himself just 'the appointee of the god Enlil and vice-regent of Assur'. At the beginning of the 13th century, king Adad-narari I is much more self-confident:

A.O.76.1:1–17 'Adad-narari, holy prince, pride of the gods, founder of cult centres, defeater of the heroic - the army of the Kassites, Quatu, Lullumu, and ... Subaru - scatterer of all enemies above and below, trampler of their lands from Lubdu and the land Rapiqu to Eluhat, conqueror of the cities Taïdu, Shuru, Kahat, Amasakku, Hurra, Shuduhu, Nabula, Washshukanu, and Irridu, the entirety of Kashiieri to/with Eluhat, the fortress of the city Sudu, the fortress of Harranu to/with Carchemish which is on the bank of the Euphrates, capturer of all people, extender of borders and boundaries, the king at whose feet the gods Anu, Assur, Shamash, Adad, and Ishtar made all rulers and princes bow down, exalted priest of the god Enlil' (Grayson 1987: 131)

The inscriptions of his grandson Tukulti-Ninurta brought the art of collecting titles to a climax:

A.O.78.1:1–20 'Tukulti-Ninurta, king of the universe, strong king, king of Assyria, chosen of Assur, vice-regent of the god Assur, attentive shepherd, favorite of the gods Anu and Enlil, whose name the god Assur and the great gods faithfully called, the one to whom they entrusted their dominion, the attentive one, appointee of the gods, the one who gladdens the heart of the god Assur, the one whose conduct is pleasing to the gods of heaven and the underworld and who is endowed with excellence, the one constantly makes abundant the offerings for all the gods, the one who encircled enemy lands above
and below, strong king, capable in battle, the one who shepherds the four quarters at the
heels of the god Shamas...’ (Grayson 1987: 233)

In no case are these ideologies of kingship compatible with the idea of equal ‘brothers’ as suggested
by diplomatic etiquette. This inconsistency may have been unproblematic in practice. As far as we
know the ‘brothers’ never met face-to-face.

They had no reason to do so anyway. We should not forget that diplomacy was not an expression
of interest but rather the result of the realization that military forces alone were unable to ensure their
own power in the international sphere. A main hindrance surely was the rule of protocol insofar as the
reputation of a ruler was affected. They were very concerned about the impression their behaviour
made in foreign countries and among other rulers.

That is why the meeting of Ramesses and Hattusili did not take place even though it was desired by
both parties. The reputation of the Hittite ruler would have been harmed by visiting Ramesses in
Canaan, that is in the Egyptian sphere of influence.

The Assyrian king Shalmaneser, son of the aforementioned Adad-narari, made no secret of his con-
tempt for that plan by calling him a ‘substitute of a Great King’ who wanted to go to pharaoh like a
vassal. The journey to Canaan would have been inevitably resulted in a loss of face. That is why the
historic encounter was cancelled. Hittites and Egyptians furthermore restricted themselves to the
widely accepted ways of communication:

1) Permanent representatives resulted from diplomatic marriages. In the long term they helped to
confirm treaties and consolidated relations (Roth 2002). The first marriage of an Egyptian king with
the princess of a Near Eastern imperial power took place during the reign of Thutmose IV (beginning
of the 14th century BC), when Egypt began to recognize non-Egyptian states as quasi-equals. Ram-
esses the Great had five foreign wives, Amenophis III even had seven.

Even though the foreign princesses were officially ‘Egyptianised,’ (e.g., by giving them a new, Egyp-
tian name after they arrived at the pharaonic court), it must be emphasized that they surely did not
lose their own traditions.

Clearly, the foreign women did not come alone. Their entourage was with them in Egypt and
remained at their disposal thereafter. In this way the two Hittite wives of Ramesses II established a Hit-
tite ‘side court’ in Pi-Ramesses to serve in some way as an embassy. From here first-hand-information
come discreetly from the wives’ country of origin and vice versa. The Hittite queen Puduhepa raised
the problem of a free flow of information in a letter to Ramesses in this way:

‘I shall regularly send my messengers, and my messengers shall see the daughter and speak
to her. The daughter should be allowed to speak to them.’ (ÄHK 104:5’f.)

Therefore it might be that also the complaint of the Babylonian king Kadashman-Enlil towards
Amenophis III about the messengers’ hindered access to the Babylonian princess (EA 1 and 2; Moran

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2 In Egyptian sources the gap between real politics and royal ideology is exemplarily exposed by the ‘marriage stela’
of Ramesses II. We find there a very different interpretation of the events that led to the peace treaty: a graceful
pharaoh who shows mercy to the Hittites, the only people that had refused to submit so far; cf. Roth 2003:
185ff.).

3 Ramesses makes reference to that matter in a letter to Hattusili: ÄHK 5:10’; cf. ÄHK 4:19’ff.

4 A daughter of the Mittanian king Artatama I; cf. Roth 2002: 88).
1992: 1ff.) was not only due to the care for the welfare of his daughter in Egypt but also for the fear for a future lack of information.

2) The delegates of the royal courts charged with delivering letters were not yet specialists in ‘foreign affairs’ with a diplomatic service in a modern sense (Gundlach/Klug 2004: 14). Instead, they owed their position to their membership in the upper classes. Often they are officials of the king with special skills (e.g., foreign languages, diplomatic expertise). In any case they must have been trustworthy persons, who would represent their rulers with dignity. Since rulers never met in person, the messengers’ appearance was also very important. The choice of the diplomatic personnel and the equipment of the delegates was, therefore, a matter of special attention.

Within the correspondence these men were nearly always named as *mar shipri* (‘messenger’). An exception is the well-known passage in a letter of the Mittanian king Tusratta (EA 17:46; Moran 1992: 42), where he refers to his messenger as a sukkallu (vizier). From the Nuzi palace archive it is known that foreign visitors were designated there as ‘*ubaru*’, lit. ‘foreigner’ (Kendall 1975: 168ff.; cf. AHw. 1399 ‘Ortsfremder, Schutzbürger’). Assyrian sources now clearly demonstrate the meaning of *ubaru* (in Assyrian *ubru*) as ‘foreign delegate’ (Jakob 2003: 2888) for whom the host guaranteed protection and provisions. More detailed information about the treatment of these *ubru*-delegates while travelling in the host country may be found in the 13th century administrative archive from Harbe, a Middle Assyrian highway station situated on modern Tall Huwera (Fig. 4–9) along the ancient road through Northern Syria (halfway between Tall Abyad and Ra’s al-‘Ain). In particular, I draw attention to a group of letter-orders (TCH 92.G.208; 209; 211; 212; 222; 232, 233+; partly published by Kühne 1995: 216ff.; full edition in Jakob 2006b), sent by the Grand Vizier Salmanu-mushabshi who was responsible for the western part of the Assyrian realm (Hanigalbat) as well as diplomatic matters (cf. Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996: 19–33; Jakob 2006b). They are addressed to the district governors of three different cities and deal with the supply (*piqittu*) of several ‘*ubru*’ from Hatti, Amurru and Egypt (Fig. 10–11).

Over a period of two months in the eponym year of Ninu’aju⁵ they were on the way back from the Assyrian capital Assur. Their provisions for two days are as follows (cf. Fig. 12):⁶

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teli-Sarruma, Hatti</th>
<th>Jabnan, Amurru</th>
<th>Milku-ramu, Sidon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(TCH 92.G.209, 211, 222)</td>
<td>(TCH 92.G.212)</td>
<td>(TCH 92.G.208)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bread: 16 sutu</td>
<td>bread: 4 sutu</td>
<td>bread: 2 sutu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘temple beer’: 4 sutu</td>
<td>‘samar beer’: 4 sutu</td>
<td>‘samar beer’: 4 sutu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘samar beer’: 12 sutu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meal: 2 qa’u</td>
<td>4 sutu for 10 donkeys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spices: 2 qa’u</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 sutu 2 qa’u for 1 team of horses and 3 donkeys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oil: 2.5 qa’u</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2 sutu &gt; 2 horses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sheep: 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1 sutu 2 qa’u &gt; 3 donkeys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 sutu for 4 teams of horses (these teams unusually consist of 3 horses)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.55 sutu for 3 teams of mules and 6 donkeys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The administration bears the costs of the provisions, if the tablets are sent back to the grand viziers’

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⁵ That year has to be dated into the 2nd half of Tukulti-Ninurta I reign; cf. Freydank 1991: 156. That means the last years of Ramesses or beginning of the rule of his son Merenptah (cf. von Beckerath 1997).

⁶ 1 sutu = 10 qa’u = 0.8 liter (s. Powell 1987–1990: 501).
office within a month. Therefore, the letter-orders have the form of a legal document (the envelope of the letter is bearing the same text as the tablet itself; cf. Jakob 2006b: No. 22–28 with commentary).

If we take the usual daily rations (bread, beer and barley) for men and animals calculated by the Assyrian administration as a basis (cf. Jakob 2003: 49; 355f.), we receive detailed information about the size and organization of the delegations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>bread</th>
<th>beer</th>
<th>barley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>man</td>
<td>5 qa’u</td>
<td>5 qa’u</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horse</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5 qa’u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mule</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 qa’u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>donkey</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 qa’u</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the instructions in detail, we see significant differences among these ‘ubru’ as well as inside the delegations. They obviously refer to a certain social stratification.

**Social Status**

Jabnan of Amurru is accompanied by three other persons. They most probably travelled on foot since they only have donkeys and not a chariot. The same day, the arrival of a certain Milku-ramu was expected by the administration of Harbe. He came to Assyria as an Egyptian envoy travelling on a chariot and was accompanied by only one man on foot, who was responsible for three donkeys.

Accordingly, Jabnan (as a merchant?) was the leader of a trade caravan with a diplomatic assignment. In contrast, the use of a chariot by Milku-ramu clearly proves this Sidonian to be a member of the social-economic elite. In respect of the provision there is no significant distinction. He may receive a higher ration of beer, but as it is proved by another document from the same archive, that is not due to his social status. Moreover delegates from Canaan apparently always enjoyed this privilege (TCH 92.G.226; Jakob 2006b: No. 54).

The treatment of the Hittite Teli-Sarruma, however, was completely different. His delegation, consisting of 4 chariot drivers as well as 12 persons on foot and presumably on mule-drawn wagons, was supplied with two different kinds of beer. The chariot drivers were receiving ‘temple beer’, presumably of higher quality than the ordinary ‘Samar’ beer that is issued in all other cases (Jakob 2003: 290). The distribution of meat, spices and oil is also extraordinary (since these commodities were normally not given as rations, we unfortunately cannot define the amount per head with any certainty). This could be a sure sign that in fact Teli-Sarruma may be identified with a Hittite prince from Carchemish (Kühne 1995: 211). Otherwise in the diplomatic exchange between the Hittites and Assyria during that time, the Hittite diplomats were receiving nothing but bread and beer like the aforementioned envoys from Amurru and Sidon (Jakob 2006b).

Despite the evidence of good and regular relations between the Hittite Empire and Assyria, there must have been a very special occasion to send a high-ranking member of the royal court (cf. the occasions of sending princes in the Hittite-Egyptian traffic at the time of Ramesses II). In view of a possible chronological connection of these diplomatic activities with the second Assyrian campaign of Tukulti-Ninurta against Babylon (cf. Jakob 2006a), the comparatively small delegations from Amurru and Egypt may reveal the current condition of the relationship with Assyria.
Historical significance

Sidon must have been very important among the coastal cities of the Levant (Faist 2001: 205), but it seems rather surprising nevertheless that a Sidonian should be required to send the ‘tablets of the king of Egypt’ to the ‘Brother’ in the Assyrian capital. To some extent the mastery of the Akkadian language, the lingua franca of the Late Bronze Age, may be important, but we cannot exclude the possibility that Egypt did not maintain a permanent staff for diplomatic relations with Assyria (or the Near Eastern states in general?) at the time in question. The non-Egyptian origin of the messenger from Egypt seems at any rate important to the Assyrian administration.

Or should we assume that Ramesses II, if he was still alive at that time, possibly persisted in his low opinion of the Babylonian king (cf. Edel 1994: No. 105 Obv. 56), considering his fall as a rather small matter? If so, he perhaps did not take notice of the fact that, apart from the Egyptian mission of Milku-ramu, Sidon was apparently going its own way in foreign affairs. Perhaps a few days later, at least within the same year, a small Sidonian legation (TCH 92.G.233+; Jakob 2006b: Nr. 28), comparable in size with that of Jabnan of Amurru (4 persons, 10 donkeys), was on the way to Assur. The possibility cannot be excluded that both of them were in contact with Assyria without the permission of their overlords. They were probably seeking for new alliances (Jakob 2006a). It could well be that they were not the only ones among the vassals of Hitites and Egypt who were in contact with Assur. After all, the letter-orders of Salmanu-mushabshi were preserved in the archive of the provincial capital Harbe only because they had not been sent back to the vizier’s office within one month after it was requested (Kühne 1995: 211).

The journey through Assyria

Obviously, the foreign delegates of our letter-orders were not in haste. As expected, the light two-wheeled chariot is used, but more as a status symbol. The cruising speed is anyway determined by donkeys and travellers on foot (Kühne 1973: 118f. tried to determine the distances between the capitals as well as the time required.). Of the three relay stations, two can be identified: Harbe is identical with Tall Huwera itself, while Sahlala was situated on Tall Sahlan on the river Balih. The distance between both cities is about 50 km (Fig. 13). It can be proved that an Assyrian courier on chariot required only more than half a day to make the trip. But for a donkey caravan, a maximum speed of 25 km/day seems reasonable (cf. Faist 2001: 146). So we must assume the existence of another relay station not referred to in our sources.

A solution to the problem may be provided by the expression *alaku u tuaru* (lit. ‘to come and to return’), which is common in the letter-orders of the Grand Vizier. This term is otherwise used for the journey to and back home to the host country (Assur-uballit, EA 16; Moran 1992 s. v.). That can hardly be the case here. Instead the passage through the area of a district governor could be meant. It is therefore not necessary to infer from the allocation of a two-day ration that all the rations were consumed before the journey, but rather only during the travels through the administrative area of the city concerned. From receipts of the same archive we know that in comparable cases one share of the rations is intended for consumption on the spot and another ‘for the way’ (*ana hule*; Jakob 2006b: No. 58, lines 1–2).

In addition, the designation as *ubru* also comprises a rightful claim to shelter and protection. Either the administration maintained rest stations in villages or farmsteads (Assyrian *dunnu*) in the vicinity,
or the delegates were provided with an escort. The Assyrian term for escorts is *panushu ka’ulu* (lit. ‘to hold in front of him’), referring to a real person (Jakob 2006b: No. 54, lines 19f.).

**Itineraries**

The Hittites probably travelled through northern Syria on the way home, especially if their destination was Carchemish. But why do we find traces of delegations from the Levant in Northern Syria at all? Until recently scholars believed that messengers from Egypt, Amurru or Sidon travelled the desert route via Tadmor/Palmyra (Fig. 14; Kühne 1973: 80-406; Faist 2001: 197; cf. Faist 2001: 196). That is here presumably not the case. We must take into consideration that the security of the delegates could not be guaranteed on a Southern route along the Euphrates. Hattusili III referred to the danger of nomad-attacks in a letter to the Babylonian Kadashman-Enlil (G. Beckman 1996: 134). Yet the main reason may have been that only on the route through the Habur region were sufficient Assyrian road stations for an appropriate supply available. The northern route seemed to be common. A few years back there was another envoy from Canaan passing by (cf. Jakob 2006b: No. 54). We cannot be sure whether the Assyrians could even exercise control in the Southern desert.

If we assume that the Sidonian Milku-ramu himself received the tablets of the Egyptian king in Pi-Ramesses, he might have followed the *via maris* (Fig. 15; Mekadi Ouda 2003: 72), reaching northern Syria via the Middle Euphrates, e.g. the city state of Emar (Fig. 16).

**Conclusion**

The delegations from Hatti, Egypt, Amurru and Sidon have travelled to a land that - if the connection to the fall of Babylon is correct - reached a peak of its power. In general, the world of the Amarna period seemed not to have changed. We still see the imperial powers in contact with each other. They exchange messages and gifts, and we may rest assured that the rulers correspond as ‘brothers’.

But whilst the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta was the focus of attention on the international stage, the Hittites had to contend with difficulties within their sphere of influence. The list of ever more disloyal vassals (Klengel 1999: 299) would have to be supplemented with Amurru, which obviously took the opportunity to reconsider its political position. Egypt, the other major power, may still have retained control over Southern Canaan at the transition from 13th to 12th century BC, as proved by both textual and archaeological evidence (Morris 2005: 382ff.). But the ambiguous activities of Sidon seem to indicate a different situation in the northern part of that region. And it should not be forgotten that Amurru and Sidon were probably not the only ones among the client states to apply to the conqueror of Babylon.

Certainly some twenty years later, the crisis was obvious and included everyone. Assyria, weakened by internal struggles after the assassination of Tukulti-Ninurta I, finally lost its possessions in Southern Mesopotamia and felt impelled to withdraw from the river Balih to a line somewhere in the Habur triangle. The Hittite Empire together with many cities and cultures between the Levant and the Middle Euphrates lay in ruins. Egypt was in danger of being overthrown by the Sea Peoples. Although Ramesses III finally was successful in repulsing their attack, he could not prevent the loss of control over the Southern Levant during his reign (Hirsch 2003: 221ff.; Schipper 2003: 243). This meant not only the end of the Egyptian foreign policy in the narrow sense of the word, but also the disappearance of ‘Brotherhood’ in our sources from the Late Bronze Age.
Abbreviations

ÄHK Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz (Edel 1994).
A.O. refers to the numbering in Grayson 1987
KUB Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi (Berlin 1926ff.).
TCH Tall Huwera/Tell Chuera (Jakob 2006b).

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Fig. 1: 1) Map 1 (The Near East in the Late Bronze Age)
Fig. 2: 2) cuneiform tablet qantir 03/0260  
(Excavation Qantir/Pi-Ramesses; Axel Krause)

Fig. 3: 3) cuneiform tablet qantir 03/0260  
(drawing by S. Jakob)
Fig. 4: 4) Map 2 (Tall Huwera; drawing by S. Jakob)

Fig. 5: 5) Tall Huwera, view from South
(Photo: S. Jakob)
Fig. 6: 6) Tall Huwera, Excavation areas
(from: W. Orthmann et al., *Ausgrabungen in Tell Chuera*, Saarbrücken 1995)

Fig. 7: 7) Tall Huwera, Area G (Middle Assyrian official building)
(from: W. Orthmann et al., *Ausgrabungen in Tell Chuera*, Saarbrücken 1995)
Fig. 8: 8) Tall Huwera, Area G (Middle Assyrian official building, room 3 ‘tablet room’)

Fig. 9: 9) Tall Huwera, Area G; findspot of the ‘letter-orders’
(Photo: S. Jakob)
Fig. 10:10) TCH 92.G.211; tablet (Excavation Tall Huwera)

Fig. 11:11) TCH 92.G.222, envelope (Excavation Tall Huwera)
TCH 92.G.211, envelope

[\text{tu}]p\,\text{r}p\,\text{LiSILIM-ma-nu-mu-šabš}-ši
a-na \,\text{EN} \,\text{pa-šhe-te ša} \,\text{URU} \,\text{Saḫ-la-tiš}

\underline{1} \,\text{ANŠE NIGIDA NINDA }\text{n}+\text{na} \,\text{GILS} \,\text{BÁN TUR }\text{2 SÌLA ZI. GAL.GALLA}
\underline{4} \,\text{BÁN KÃŠ E.DINGIR }\text{1 ANŠE }\text{2 BÁN SA.MAR }\text{m-a-šu}
\underline{5} \,\text{1 ANŠE NIGIDA }\text{2 BÁN }\text{SE} \,\text{m}+\text{na} \,\text{GILS} \,\text{BÁN SUMUN}
\underline{10} \,\text{Šúkr} \,\text{4 si-mi-te ANŠE.KUR.RA} \,\text{MES}
ša \,\text{1 BÁN }\text{5 SÌLA }\,\text{SE} \,\text{m}+\text{e-ku-šu-[ni]}
ša \,\text{3 SÌLA }\,\text{SE} \,\text{m}+\text{e-ku-šu-ni}
\underline{15} \,\text{ša }\,\text{ra-[q]u-tu}
\underline{20} \,\text{[p]} \,\text{a-sit-tu}
\underline{25} \,\text{ša }\,\text{ra-aššu-ni}
\,\text{a-na }\text{UGU LUGAL a-na }\,\text{URU} \,\text{ša }\,\text{URU}
\,\text{ša }\,\text{aš-ak-nu-šu-ni}
\,\text{a-na }\,\text{KUR} \,\text{šu} \,\text{im-mu-šu-šu-ni}
\,\text{ša }\,\text{a} \,\,\text{ša-ki }\,\text{u }\,\text{tu-ša-ri di-in}
\,\text{ru }\,\text{pi }\,\text{tu-ba-la }\,\text{a-nu }\,\text{KISIB} \,\text{MES}
\,\text{ša }\,\text{a }\,\text{ša-ši }\,\text{ra-šu-te tu-ta-ar}
\,\text{šum-ma }\,\text{ra-ši }\,\text{DI }\,\text{1 ITU }\,\text{U} \,\text{MES} \,\text{la }\,\text{ta-ta-bal}
\,\text{la-aš }\,\text{tu-ta-ir }\,\text{la-aš }\,\text{i-ka-šu-šu-ni-[ku]}

\underline{25} \,\text{@[ã]UTU }\,\text{m} \,\text{SIGS} \,\text{ša }\,\text{p]i-sit-te}
\underline{30} \,\text{ITU }\,\text{Qar-ra-tu }\,\text{U} \,\text{XI.KÂM li-mu}
\,\text{NIT }\,\text{nu-a-ša-šu-šu-ni}

\text{http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/bmaes/issue6/jahob.html}

Fig. 12:12) TCH 92.G.211, transliteration
Tablet of Salmānu-mušabši
To the district governor of Sahlala speak!

1 emāru 6 sūtu bread in the small sūtu measure, 2 qa’u meal
4 sūtu “temple beer”, 1 emāru 2 sūtu sweet Šamar beer
1 emāru 8 sūtu barley in the old sūtu measure
provision for 4 teams of horses,
which eat 1 sūtu 5 qa’u barley each,
and 3 teams of mules,
which eat 3 qa’u each
and 6 donkeys, which eat 2 qa’u barley,
3 sheeps 2 qa’u oil,
2 qa’u spices:
The provision
of Teli-Šarruma,
the Hittite envoy,
who has carried tablets
and a present,
who has come to the king in Assur-City,
who has been supplied with instructions
(and) has set off to his country,
give for coming and returning!
You will send back my tablet (and)
change into the seals of the kisirtu documents!
If you do not send (it) back until the end of a full month,
you do not change, they won’t refund!

Šamaš-mudammeq, (inspector) of provisions

Month of Qarratu, 11th day, eponym year (of)
Ninu’āju

Fig. 12 (continued) TCH 92.G.211, translation
Fig. 13: Map 3 (The distance between Harbe and Sahlala)

Fig. 14: Map 4 (The desert route)
Fig. 15: Map 5 (from Qantir to Gaza and beyond)

Fig. 16: Map 6 (The northern route)

http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/bmsaes/issue6/jakob.html