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To my lord say: Thus Mashum, thy servant. (5) Sintiri wrote to me for help, and I reached him with troops at Shubat-Shamash. The next day word of the enemy (10) came as follows: "Yapah-Adad has made ready the settlement Zallul on this side on the bank of the Euphrates River, and with two thousand troops of the Hapiru of the land (15),⁹ is dwelling in that city." This word came to me, and from Shubat-Shamash, with troops of my command and with troops of the command of (20) Sintiri, I hurried, and made ready the town of Himush over against the town of Zallul. Between the two (25) cities (there is a distance of) thirty "fields." When I had made ready the city of Himush over against him, and he saw that the land was hastening to (my) aid, (30) he raised a fire signal, and all the cities of the land of Ursum on the other side acknowledged it. The *security* forces which are stationed within the brick-enclosure are numerous, and, lest they (35) wipe out the troops, I did not draw near the city. This tablet of mine I send to my lord from the bank of the Euphrates River. The troops and *cattle* are well.

The Amarna Letters

In 1887 an Egyptian peasant woman discovered a collection of cuneiform tablets at Tell el-Amarna in Middle Egypt, the site of Akh-en-Aton's capital in the early fourteenth century B.C. These tablets were sold to European museums and private dealers; some of them escaped attention for nearly thirty years. Subsequently excavation disclosed enough additional tablets to bring the total collection up to about 377 numbers. Almost all of them are letters belonging to the royal archives of Amen-hotep III and his son Akh-en-Aton. Nearly 300 letters were written by Canaanite (or rarely Egyptian) scribes in Palestine, Phoenicia, and southern Syria, about half of them in Palestine proper. These letters are written in a conventional vulgar Akkadian, full of canaanitisms in grammar and vocabulary. Occasionally we find a letter written mostly in Canaanite with scattered Akkadian formulas and ideograms. They date from the last years of Amen-hotep III and the reign of his successor; a very few may date from the ephemeral reign of Akh-en-Aton's son-in-law and successor, Smenkhkhere.

The original publications, though antiquated, are important for the cuneiform texts: note especially H. Winckler and L. Abel, *Der Thontafelfund von El-Amarna*, Berlin, 1889-90; C. Bezold and E. A. W. Budge, *The Tell El-Amarna Tablets in the British Museum*, London, 1892. All the older material was reexamined and collated with the greatest care by the Norwegian Assyriologist, J. A. Knudtzon, in his invaluable transcription and translation, to which O. Weber added a detailed commentary and E. Ebeling a valuable glossary: *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln* (VAB, Vol. II), Leipzig, 1907-15. Since then the Berlin tablets were reedited admirably by O. Schroeder, *Die Tontafeln von El-Amarna* (Leipzig, 1915). S. A. B. Mercer's two-volume work, *The Tell el-Amarna Tablets* (Toronto, 1939), has no independent value and is full of errors not found in Knudtzon's edition.

⁹ On the Hapiru (Habiru) or 'Apiru in the Mari texts see especially E. Dhorme, *RHR*, cxviii, pp. 170-187.

Among minor publications the following will be found of particular significance: F. Thureau-Dangin, *Nouvelles lettres d'el-Amarna*, *RA*, xix, pp. 91-108; C. H. Gordon, *The New Amarna Tablets*, *Orientalia*, xvi, pp. 1-21; W. F. Albright, *The Egyptian Correspondence of Abimilki, Prince of Tyre*, *JEA*, xxiii, pp. 190-203; Albright, *Cuneiform Material for Egyptian Prosopography, 1500-1200 B.C.*, *JNES*, v, pp. 7-25; Albright, various papers, mainly in *BASOR*, No. 86 ff. J. De Koning's monograph, *Studiën over de El-Amarnabrieven en het Oude-Testament, inzonderheid uit historisch oogpunt* (Delft, 1940), contains much material, but must be used with the greatest caution.

The translations offered below represent the combined work of W. F. Albright and George E. Mendenhall, with a few corrections by W. L. Moran, S. J.—Ed.

EA, No. 137¹

Rib-Ad[di spoke] to the king, [his] lor[d, the Sun-god of the lands.] Beneath the feet [of the king, my lord,] seven times, and seven times [I fall.] (5) I have written repeatedly for [garrison troops], but they were not given, [and] the king did [not] listen to the word[s of his servant.] And I sent my courier to the palace, but [he returned] (10) empty-handed—he had no garrison troops. And when the peop[le of] my [house] saw that silver was not given, they ridiculed me like the governors, my brethren, and they despised me.

Further, I (15) went to Hamuniri, and my younger brother is estranging Byblos in order to give the city to the sons of 'Abdu-Ashirta. (20) When my brother saw that my courier came out (from Egypt) empty-handed, (that) there were no garrison troops with him, he despised me, and so he committed a crime and drove me (25) from the city. Let the king not restrain (himself) at the deed of this dog!

Behold, I cannot enter the land of Egypt. I am an old man, there is grievous illness (30) in my body, and the king, my lord, knows that the gods of Byblos are holy, and the illness is severe; and my sin I have redeemed (by a vow) from the gods, so I have not entered (35) the presence of the king, my lord.

But behold, my son, the servant of the king, my lord, I have sent before the king, my lord. Let the king hear the words of his servant, and let the king, my lord, give (40) archers, and let them take Byblos, lest rebellious troops and the sons of 'Abdu-Ashirta enter it, and the archers of the king, my lord, (then) need (46) to capture it (*by force*). Behold, many are the people who love me in the city; few are the rebels in it. When an army of archers goes out and they hear (50) about the day of its arrival, then the city will return to the king, my lord. Let my lord know that I would die for him. When I am in the city, I will protect it for my lord, and my heart is fixed (55) on the king, my lord; I will not give the city to the sons of 'Abdu-Ashirta. So my brother has estranged the city in order

¹ This letter was dictated by Rib-Addi, prince of Byblos, to Akh-en-Aton (Amen-hotep IV) about 1370 B.C. or a little later. The old enemy of Rib-Addi, 'Abdu-Ashirta of Amurru (land of the Amorites), was now dead, but his son, 'Aziru, and the latter's brothers continued to menace the territory of Byblos. At this time Rib-Addi had actually been forced to retire from his own city to the comparative safety of Berytus (Beirut), whose prince 'Ammuniri was related to him by marriage.

to give it to the sons of 'Abdu-Ashirta. Let the king, my lord, not hold back from (60) the city. Verily, there is very much silver and gold within it; in its temple there is much wealth. If they take it (the city), let the king my lord do as he please with his servant, but let him give the city Buruzilim (65) for my dwelling place,—behold, I am now with Hamuniri—since *there is left but one city*, namely, Buruzilim. The sons of 'Abdu-Ashirta were hostile, and I was afraid. When I went to Hamuniri (70) because of the sons of 'Abdu-Ashirta when they were powerful against me and there was no breath of the mouth of the king to me, then I said to my lord: "Behold our city Byblos! There is much wealth of the king in it, the property (75) of our forefathers. If the king does not intervene for the city, all the cities of the land of Canaan will (no longer) be his. Let the king not ignore this deed!"

Now I have sent thy servant, my son, to the king, my lord; let the king quickly send him back (80) with troops to take the city. If the king, my lord, be gracious to me and return me to the city, then I will guard it *as before* for the king, my lord. If the king, my lord, does not bring me back into it, then [...] (85) the city from 'Buruzilim' [...] may he do] as he please [to his servant(?). . .] Forsa[ke . . .] Hamu[niri . . .] until when [shall I remain with him(?)].

(90) May [the king, my lord,] hear [the words of] his servant q[quickly(?)] [and send] troops quickly to take the city. Let the king not ignore (95) this grievous deed which was done to the lands of the king, my lord; but let the king rush archers to take the city immediately. (100) If it is said to the king concerning the city: "The city is strong," it is not strong against the warriors of the king, my lord.

EA, No. 147²

To the king, my lord, my pantheon, my Sun-god say: Thus Abimilki, thy servant. Seven and seven times I fall at the feet of the king, my lord. I am the dirt under (5) the feet of the king, my lord. My lord is the Sun-god who rises over the lands day by day, as ordained by the Sun-god, his gracious father; who gives life by his sweet breath, (10) and who lessens when he is hidden; who sets the whole land at peace by his might, who utters his battle-cry in heaven like Baal, so that the whole land quakes at his cry.

Behold, the servant has written to his lord because he has heard the gracious messenger of the king who comes to his servant, and the sweet breath which went forth (20) from the mouth of the king, my lord, to his servant (he has received); and his breath was feeble before the arrival of the messenger of the king, my

² This letter was dictated by Abimilki (Abimelech) of Tyre to Akh-en-Aton about the same time as the previous letter, or perhaps a little later. We know from the peculiar spelling and grammar, as well as from a great many Egyptian words and expressions translated literally from Egyptian, that the scribe who wrote the Abimilki letters was himself a native Egyptian, a fact which is not surprising, since the Amarna letters from the Egyptian court to Asiatic kings and chieftains were all written by Egyptian scribes who had learned cuneiform in the palace schools.

lord, (but now his) breath is not feeble. I remember the words of my father: "Behold, now (25) that the breath of the king has come forth to me, I rejoice greatly, and I am happy day by day. Because I rejoice, the earth does not . . . (30) that I have heard the gracious messenger who (came) from my lord, and all the earth is reverent before the face of my lord, for I have heard the sweet breath, and the gracious messenger (35) who came to me. When the king, my lord, says: "*Be valiant!*" before the great army, then the servant says, "*Aye, Aye!*" to his lord. On my belly, on my back (40) I bear the word of the king, my lord. As for him who hearkens to the king, his lord, and serves him in his place, the Sun-god shall rise over him, and the sweet breath from the mouth of his lord *shall give him life!* (45) but as for him who hearkens not to the word of the king, his lord, his city shall perish, his dynasty shall perish, his name shall not exist in the whole land forever. Behold, the servant who hearkens to his lord—(50) it shall be well with his city, it shall be well with his house; his name shall exist forever. Thou art the Sun-god who rises over me, and a brazen wall which is reared for me, and because of the mighty power of the king my lord (56), I am tranquil.

Behold, I have said to the Sun-god, the father of the king, my lord, "When shall I see (60) the face of the king, my lord?" But behold, I am guarding Tyre, the great city, for the king, my lord, until the mighty power of the king come out unto me, (65) to give water for me to drink, and wood to warm me.

Further: Zimreda, the king of Sidon, has written day by day to the criminal 'Aziru, the son of 'Abdu-Ashirta, concerning everything that he heard from Egypt. (70) Behold, I have written to my lord, (for) it is good that you should know.

RA, xix, p. 100³

To Indaruta, prince of Achshaph say: Thus the king. Behold, this tablet I have sent to you, saying to you: Be on guard! Verily thou shalt guard (5) the place of the king which is with you. Behold, the king is sending you Hanni, son of Mairea, the commissioner of the king for the land of Canaan, and what he says to you, hear thou (10) very attentively, lest the king find thee at fault. Every word which he speaks to thee, hear thou very willingly, and do it very willingly. And watch, watch, do not be negligent, (15) and thou shalt prepare for the archers of the king much food, much wine of every sort. Behold, he will come to thee quickly, quickly, (20) and will cut off the head of the enemies of the king!

EA, No. 234⁴

To the king, my lord, the Sun-god from heaven: Thus Zatatna, prince of Accho, thy servant, the servant

³ This is a characteristic letter from pharaoh to a Palestinian chieftain. Indaruta (who bears the same Indo-Aryan name as his contemporary Indrota or Indrauta of the Rig Veda) was prince of Achshaph, probably Tell Kisan in the Plain of Acre in southwestern Galilee.

⁴ This letter comes from the time of Akh-en-Aton. Shuta (pronounce Suta) was an Egyptian officer, probably the great-grandfather of Ramses II;

of the king, and (5) the dirt (under) his two feet, the ground which he treads. At the two feet of the king, my lord, the Sun-god from heaven, seven times, seven times I fall, both prone and supine. (10) Let the king, my lord, hear the word of his servant! [Zir]damyashda has withdrawn from Biryawaza. [He was] with Shuta, the s[ervant] of the (15) king in the city of [. . .] He did not say anything to him. The army of the king, my lord, has departed. He was with it in Megiddo. (20) I said nothing to him, but he deserted to me, and now Shuta has written to me: "Give (25) Zirdamyashda to Biryawaza!" But I did not consent to give him up. Behold, Accho is (as Egyptian) as Magdal (30) in Egypt, but the king, my lord, has not heard that [Shut]a has turned against me. Now let the king, my lord, send (35) his commissioner and fetch him.

EA, No. 244⁵

To the king, my lord, and my Sun-god, say: Thus Biridiya, the faithful servant of the (5) king. At the two feet of the king, my lord, and my Sun-god, seven and seven times I fall. Let the king know that (10) ever since the archers returned (to Egypt?), Lab'ayu has carried on hostilities against me, and we are not able to pluck the wool, and we are not able to go outside the gate in the presence of Lab'ayu, since he learned that thou hast not given (20) archers; and now his face is set to take Megiddo, (25) but let the king protect his city, lest Lab'ayu seize it. (30) Verily, the city is destroyed by death from pestilence and *disease*. Let the king give (35) one hundred garrison troops to guard the city lest Lab'ayu seize it. Verily, there is no other purpose in (41) Lab'ayu. He seeks to destroy Megiddo.

EA, No. 245⁶

Further, I said to my brethren, "If the gods of the king, our lord, grant (5) that we capture Lab'ayu, then we will bring him alive to the king, our lord"; but my mare was felled by an arrow, and I alighted (10) afterwards and rode with Yashdata, but before my arrival, they had slain him. (15) Verily, Yashdata is thy servant, and he entered the battle with me. And verily, [. . .] (20) the life of the king, m[y lord] [and] [. . .] all in [. . .] of the king, [my] lord, [. . .], and Zurata (25) removed Lab'ayu from Megiddo, saying to me: "I will send him by ship (30) to the king," and Zurata took him and sent him home from Han-nathon, for Zurata had received his ransom money (35) in his hand.

Biryawaza (whose name was formerly read erroneously *Namyawaza*) was prince of Damascus under Egyptian suzerainty. All personal names (except Shuta) are Indo-Aryan. Magdal is the Migdol of Exod. 14:2, etc.

⁵ Biridiya was prince of Megiddo at the end of the reign of Amen-hotep III and the beginning of the reign of Akh-en-Aton; his name is Indo-Aryan like most other princely names of northern Palestine at that time. Lab'ayu (whose name meant approximately "lion-like" in Canaanite) was prince of Shechem in the central hill-country and was constantly raiding the territory and caravans of his neighbors on all sides.

⁶ This is the latter part (all that is preserved) of a continued letter from Biridiya of Megiddo. Zurata, whom Biridiya accuses of treachery, was prince of Acre (biblical Accho).

Further, what have I done to the king, my lord, that he should despise me and honor (40) my younger brothers? Zurata has sent Lab'ayu, and Zurata has sent Ba'lu-mihir to their homes, and let the king, my lord, be informed!

RA, XIX, p. 97⁷

To the king, my lord, and my Sun-god say: Thus Biridiya, the true servant of the king. (5) At the feet of the king, my lord, and my Sun-god, seven times and seven times I fall. Let the king be informed concerning his servant and concerning his city. (10) Behold, I am working in the town of Shunama, and I bring men of the corvée, (15) but behold, the governors who are with me do not as I (do): they do not (20) work in the town of Shunama, and they do not bring men for the corvée, but I alone (25) bring men for the corvée from the town of Yapu. They come from Shu[nama], and likewise from the town of Nuribda. (30) So let the king be informed concerning his city!

EA, No. 250⁸

'To' the king, my lord, say: Thus Ba'lu-UR.SAG, thy servant. At the feet of the king, my lord, seven times, seven times, I fall. Let the king, my lord, know that (5) the two sons of a rebel against the king my lord, the two sons of Lab'ayu, have determined to destroy the land of the king, my lord, after their father's death. And let the king, my lord, know that (10) many days the two sons of Lab'ayu have *accused* me (saying): "Why hast thou given the town of Giti-padalla into the hand of the king, thy lord—the city which Lab'ayu, our father, captured?" (15) So thus the two sons of Lab'ayu spoke to me: "Declare war against the people of the land of Qena, because they slew our father; and if you do not declare war, then we are hostile to you."

But I answered them: (20) "May the god of the king, my lord, preserve me from making war against the people of the land of Qena, the servants of the king, my lord!" Now may it be agreeable to the king, my lord, to send one of his officers to Biryawaza (25) and let him say to him: "Wilt thou march against the two sons of Lab'ayu, or art thou a rebel against the king?" And after him, let the king, my lord, send to me [. . .] the deed (30) 'of the king, thy 'lord', against the two sons of Lab'ayu [. . .] Milkilu *has gone in to them*[? . . .] (35) . . . 'land of the king, my lord, with them after Milkilu and Lab'ayu died.' (40) And thus the two sons of Lab'ayu spoke: "Be hostile to the king, thy lord, like our father, when he attacked Shunama and Burquna and Harabu, and (45) destroyed them/

⁷ This letter from the prince of Megiddo is very instructive because of the light it throws on forced labor for the king in the Plain of Esdraelon, several of whose towns and villages are mentioned. The word for "corvée" is the Hebrew *mas*, which is employed a little later of the tribe of Issachar in this very region (Gen. 49:15).

⁸ The prince from whom this letter comes was in control of a district in the northern coastal plain of Palestine, south of Carmel. The death of Lab'ayu is described in EA, No. 245 (cf. n.6). Here his sons are described as continuing their father's activities. Biryawaza, whose help is wanted to subdue the recalcitrants, was prince of Damascus (cf. n.4). Milkilu was prince of Gezer, whose territory adjoined the territory of Ba'lu-UR.SAG ("Baal is a warrior") on the south.

smote them. And he took Giti-rimuni, and he betrayed the helpers of the king, thy lord."

But I answered them: "The god of the king, my lord, preserve me from making (50) war against the king, my lord. The king, my lord, I serve, and my brothers who hearken to me." But the courier of Milkilu does not move from the two sons of Lab'ayu (55) a (*single*) day. Behold, Milkilu seeks to destroy the land of the king, my lord. But there is no other intention with me—I serve the king, my lord, and the word which the king, my lord, speaks do I hear.

EA, No. 252⁹

To the king, my lord, say: Thus Lab'ayu, thy servant. At the feet of my lord I fall. (5) As for what thou hast written, "Are the people strong who have captured the town? How can the men be arrested?" (I reply) "By fighting was the town captured, (10) in spite of the fact that I had taken an oath of conciliation and that, when I took the oath, an (Egyptian) officer took the oath with me! The city as well as my god are captured. I am slandered/blamed (15) before the king, my lord."

Further, when (even) ants are smitten, they do not accept it (passively), but they bite the hand of the man who smites them. (20) How could I hesitate this day when two of my towns are taken?

Further, even if thou shouldst say: "(25) Fall beneath them, and let them smite thee," I should still repel my foe, the men who seized the town and (30) my god, the despoilers of my father, (yea) I would repel them.

EA, No. 254¹⁰

To the king, my lord and my Sun-god: Thus Lab'ayu, thy servant, and the dirt on which thou dost tread. At the feet of the king, my lord, (5) and my Sun-god, seven times and seven times I fall.

I have heard the words which the king wrote to me, and who am I that the king should lose his land (10) because of me? Behold, I am a faithful servant of the king, and I have not rebelled and I have not sinned, and I do not withhold my tribute, and I do not refuse (15) the requests of my commissioner. Now they wickedly slander me, but let the king, my lord, not impute rebellion to me!

Further, (20) my crime is namely that I entered Gezer and said publicly: (25) "Shall the king take my property, and not likewise the property of Milkilu?" I know the deeds which Milkilu has done against me.

(30) Further, the king wrote concerning my son. I did not know that my son associates with the 'Apiru (36), and I have verily delivered him into the hand of Addaya.

⁹ This letter is written in almost pure Canaanite and was not understood until very recently; for a detailed commentary on it see *BASOR*, No. 89, pp. 29-32. Lab'ayu virtuously protests that he was only repelling aggressors who had attacked his native town (not Shechem, which was his capital) in spite of a previous treaty sworn in the presence of an Egyptian official.

¹⁰ In this letter Lab'ayu protests his innocence of all charges against him and assures the king (Amen-hotep III) that he is more loyal than the neighbors who complain against him.

Further, if the king should write for my wife, (40) how could I withhold her? If the king should write to me, "Plunge a bronze dagger into thy heart and (45) die!", how could I refuse to carry out the command of the king?

EA, No. 256¹¹

To Yanhamu, my lord say: Thus Mut-ba'lu, thy servant. At the two feet of my lord I fall. How is it said (5) before thee, "Mut-ba'lu has fled, Ayab has hidden himself?" How can the prince of Pella flee from the face of the commissioner (10) of the king, his lord? As the king my lord lives, as the king my lord lives, Ayab is not in Pella. Behold, he has not been (here) for two months(?). (15) Indeed, ask Ben-ilima, ask Taduwa, ask Yashuya. Again, *at the instance of* (20) the house of Shulum-Marduk, the city of Ashtartu came to (my) help, when all the cities of the land of Garu were hostile, (namely) Udumu, Aduru, (25) Araru, Meshqu, Magdalu, Eni-anabu and Zarqu, and when Hayanu and Yabilima were captured.

Further, behold—after (30) thy writing a tablet to me, I wrote to him. Before thou dost arrive with thy caravan, behold, he will have reached Pella, and he will hear (thy) words.

EA, No. 270¹²

To the king, my lord, my pantheon, my Sun-god, say: Thus Milkilu, thy servant, (5) the dirt (under) thy feet. At the feet of the king, my lord, my pantheon, my Sun-god, seven times, seven times I fall. Let the king, my lord, know (10) the deed which Yanhamu did to me after I left the presence of the king, my lord. Now he seeks (15) two thousand (shekels) of silver from my hand, saying to me: "Give me thy wife and (20) thy children, or I will smite!" Let the king know this deed, and let my lord send to me (26) chariots, and let him take me to himself lest I perish!

EA, No. 271¹³

To the king, my lord, my pantheon, my Sun-god, say: Thus Milkilu, thy servant, (5) the dirt (under) thy feet. At the feet of the king, my lord, my pantheon, my Sun-god, seven times, seven times, I fall. Let the king know (10) that powerful is the hostility against me and against Shuwardata. Let the king, my lord, protect his land (15) from the hand of the 'Apiru. If

¹¹ For a detailed interpretation of this letter see *BASOR*, No. 89, pp. 7-15. Mut-ba'lu (literally "Man of Baal") was prince of Pella in the northern Jordan Valley, opposite Beth-Shan; Ayab (Ayyab, Hebrew Job) was prince of Ashtartu (biblical Ashtaroth) in Bashan. The land of Garu lay in southern Golan between Pella and Ashtartu. Yanhamu, to whom the letter is addressed, was a high Egyptian official of Canaanite (possibly of Hebrew) origin, who seems to have been the Egyptian governor of Palestine at the beginning of the reign of Akh-en-Aton.

¹² Milkilu (Heb. Malchiel) was prince of Gezer. For Yanhamu see the previous letter.

¹³ For Milkilu see the previous letter. Shuwardata (with an Indo-Aryan name) was prince of the Hebron region in the southern hill-country, and frequently appears in association with Milkilu. The 'Apiru (formerly called Habiru) were a strong semi-nomadic people, or rather class of population in Syria and Palestine. While there is much reason to identify them with the Hebrews of the Patriarchal Age, the combination still remains uncertain and cannot be made the basis for any historical inferences.

not, (then) let the king, my lord, send chariots (20) to fetch us, lest our servants smite us.

Further, let the king, my lord, ask (25) Yanhamu, his servant, concerning that which is done in his land.

RA, xxxi, pp. 125-136¹⁴

To Milkilu, prince of Gezer. Thus the king. Now I have sent thee this tablet to say to thee: Behold, (5) I am sending to thee Hanya, the commissioner of the archers, together with goods, in order to procure fine concubines (i.e.) *weaving women*: silver, gold, (linen) garments, (10) *turquoise*, all (sorts of) precious stones, chairs of *ebony*, as well as every good thing, totalling 160 deben. Total: 40 concubines: the price of each concubine is 40 (shekels) of silver. (15) So send very fine concubines in whom there is no blemish. (19) And let the king, thy lord, say to thee, "This is good. To thee life has been *decreed*." And mayest thou know that (25) the king is well, like the Sun-god. His troops, his chariots, his horses are very well. Behold, the god Amon has placed the upper land, (30) the lower land, the rising of the sun, and the setting of the sun under the two feet of the king.

EA, No. 280¹⁵

To the king, my lord, my pantheon, my Sun-god, say: Thus Shuwardata, (5) thy servant, the dirt (under) thy feet! At the feet of the king, my lord, my pantheon, my Sun-god, seven times, seven times, I fall! (9) The king, my lord, sent me to make war against Keilah. I have made war (and) I was successful; my town has been restored (15) to me. Why did 'Abdu-Heba write to the people of Keilah (saying): "Take (my) silver and (20) follow me!" And let the king, my lord, know that 'Abdu-Heba had taken the town from my hand.

Further, (25) let the king, my lord, investigate; if I have taken a man or a single ox or an ass from him, then he is in the right! (30)

Further, Lab'ayu is dead, who seized our towns; but behold, 'Abdu-Heba is another Lab'ayu, and (35) he (also) seizes our towns! So let the king take thought for his servant because of this deed! And I will not do anything until the king sends back a message to his servant.

RA, xix, p. 106¹⁶

To the king, my lord, my Sun-god, my pantheon, say: Thus Shuwardata, thy servant, servant of the king

¹⁴ This letter from pharaoh to Milkilu of Gezer throws an interesting light on the rôle of the Canaanite princes in organizing royal commerce in Asia; Egyptian products and manufactured articles are to be exchanged for the best quality of slave-girls.

¹⁵ Shuwardata, prince of the Hebron district (cf. n.13) here protests to pharaoh (Akh-en-Aton) that 'Abdu-Heba, prince of Jerusalem, is just as aggressive as the unlamented Lab'ayu (see the previous letters).

¹⁶ This letter, from the beginning of Akh-en-Aton's reign, is an extraordinarily illuminating illustration of the situation in Palestine at that time. Just who this redoubtable 'Apiru chieftain was we do not learn, since the proud feudal princes disdained even to mention names of the semi-nomadic 'Apiru. However, he was sufficiently dangerous to unite the arch-foes, 'Abdu-Heba and Shuwardata, and to induce them to offer fifty chariots (a very considerable offer for Palestinian chieftains) to the princes of Accho

(5) and the dirt (under) his two feet, the ground (on) which thou dost tread! At the feet of the king, my lord, the Sun-god from heaven, seven times, seven times I fall, both (10) prone and supine.

Let the king, my lord, learn that the chief of the 'Apiru has risen (in arms) against the lands which the god of the king, my lord, gave me; (16) but I have smitten him. Also let the king, my lord, know that all my brethren have abandoned me, and (20) it is I and 'Abdu-Heba (who) fight against the chief of the 'Apiru. And Zurata, prince of Accho, and Indaruta, prince of Achshaph, it was they (who) hastened (25) with fifty chariots—for I had been robbed (by the 'Apiru)—to my help; but behold, they are fighting against me, so let it be agreeable to the king, my lord, and (30) let him send Yanhamu, and let us make war in earnest, and let the lands of the king, my lord, be restored to their (former) limits!

EA, No. 286¹⁷

To the king, my lord, say: Thus 'Abdu-Heba, thy servant. At the two feet of my lord, the king, seven times and seven times I fall. (5) What have I done to the king, my lord? They blame me before the king, my lord (saying): "'Abdu-Heba has rebelled against the king, his lord." Behold, as for me, (it was) not my father (10) and not my mother (who) set me in this place; the arm of the mighty king brought me into the house of my father! Why should I commit (15) transgression against the king, my lord? As long as the king, my lord, lives, I will say to the commissioner of the king, my lord, "Why do ye favor the 'Apiru and oppose the governors?"—And thus (21) I am blamed in the presence of the king, my lord. Because it is said, "Lost are the lands of the king, my lord," thus am I blamed to the king, my lord! (25) But let the king, my lord, know that (when) the king had established a garrison, Yanhamu took [it all] away, [and . . .] [the troops] (30) [of archers(?) . . .] the land of Egypt [. . .] O king, my lord, there are no garrison troops (here)! [So] let the king take care of his land! (35) Let the king take care of his land! [The land]s of the king have all rebelled; Ilmilku is causing the loss of all the king's land. So let the king take care of his land! I keep saying, "Let me enter (40) into the presence of the king, my lord, and let me see the two eyes of the king, my lord." But the hostility against me is strong, so I cannot enter into the presence of the king, my lord. So may it please the king (45) to send me garrison troops in order that I may enter and see the

and Achshaph (for whom see notes 3 and 6) in the Plain of Acre, far to the north. One suspects that Milkilu of Gezer and Lab'ayu of Shechem, who are not mentioned at all, were—either or both—involved with the 'Apiru.

¹⁷ This letter is characteristic of the continuous requests of 'Abdu-Heba, prince of Jerusalem, for Egyptian assistance in his chronic struggle with the 'Apiru. However, it seems certain from other letters that he was inclined to lump his enemies among the "governors" (i.e. the native princes) with the 'Apiru. It is uncertain whether the Ilmilku (Elimelech) of lines 35 ff. was an 'Apiru chieftain, was one of the sons of Lab'ayu, or was even Milkilu of Gezer (whose name might have been transposed accidentally by the scribe).

two eyes of the king, my lord. As truly as the king, my lord, lives, when the commis[sioners] go forth I will say, "Lost are the lands of the king! (50) Do you not hearken unto me? All the governors are lost; the king, my lord, does not have a (single) governor (left)!" Let the king turn his attention to the archers, and let the king, my lord, send out (55) troops of archers, (for) the king has no lands (left)! The 'Apiru plunder all the lands of the king. If there are archers (here) in this year, the lands of the king, my lord, will remain (intact); but if there are no archers (here) (60) the lands of the king, my lord, will be lost!

To the scribe of the king, my lord: Thus 'Abdu-Heba, thy servant. Present eloquent words to the king, my lord.—All the lands of the king, my lord, are lost!

EA, No. 287¹⁸

[To the kin]g, my lord, [say:] [Thus] 'Abdu-Heba, thy servant. [At the feet] of my lord seven t[imes and seven times I fall.] [Let my king] [know (?) this] matter! [Milkili and Tagu (?)] (5) have caused [their troops (?)] to enter [the town of Rubutu (?)] [Behold] the deed which [Milkilu (?)] has done; [bows] (and) copper arrows [. . . he has given (?) . . .] word [. . . (10) . . .] into the town of [Rubutu (?)] they brought in. Let my king know that all the lands are at peace (but that) there is war against me. So let my king take care of his land!

Behold the land of Gezer, the land of Ashkelon, (15) and 'Lachish,¹ they have given them grain, oil, and all their requirements; and let the king (thus) take care of his archers! Let him send archers against the men who transgress against the king, my lord. (20) If there are archers (here) in this year, then the lands and the governor(s) will (still) belong to the king, my lord; [but] if there are no archers, the lands and the governors will (no longer) belong to the king! (25) Behold this land of Jerusalem: (It was) not my father (and) not my mother (who) gave (it) to me, (but) the arm of the mighty king (which) gave (it) to me.

Behold, this deed is the deed of Milkilu (30) and the deed of the sons of Lab'ayu who have given the land of the king to the 'Apiru. Behold, O king, my lord, I am right!

With reference to the Nubians, let my king ask the commissioners whether my house is (not) very strong! (35) Yet they attempted a very great crime; they took their implements and breached . . . of the roof. [If]

¹⁸ In this letter the prince of Jerusalem complains about a number of events which recur in other letters. In the first place he excoriates Milkilu of Gezer and Tagu of the northern Coastal Plain of Palestine for their aggression against Rubutu, which lay somewhere in the region southwest of Megiddo and Taanach. In the second place he urges the king to instruct his officers to supply the Egyptian archers from the towns of the Philistine Plain and Sharon (in order to avert heavy drain on the scanty supplies of Jerusalem). He goes on to complain that the Nubian (biblical Cushite) slave-troops (or mercenaries) of Egypt, stationed as garrison in Jerusalem, had burglarized the residence of 'Abdu-Heba himself, nearly killing the prince in his own house. He finally complains that his last caravan containing tribute and captives for the king was attacked and robbed near Ajalon, presumably by the men of Milkilu of Gezer and the sons of Lab'ayu.

they send into the land [of Jerusalem] 'troops', let them come up with [an (Egyptian) officer (40) for] (regular) service. Let [my king] take heed for them—for [all] the lands are impoverished by them—[and] let my king requisition for them much grain, much oil, (and) much clothing, (45) until Pawure, the royal commissioner, comes up to the land of Jerusalem.

Addaya has left, together with the garrison (and) the (Egyptian) officer which my king had given (me). Let the king know! Addaya spoke to me, (saying,) (50) [Loo]k, let me go, (but) do not thou leave it (the city)! So send me a garrison this [year], and send me a commissioner likewise, O my king. I have sent [gifts (?)] to the king, my lord: [. . .] captives, five thousand [silver (shekels)] (55) and eight porters for the caravans of the king, my lord; (but) they were captured in the plain of Ajalon. Let the king, my lord, know that I cannot send a caravan to the king, my lord. For thy information!

(60) Behold, the king has set his name in the land of Jerusalem for ever; so he cannot abandon the lands of Jerusalem!

To the scribe of the king, my lord, (65) say: Thus 'Abdu-Heba, thy servant. At thy two feet I fall—thy servant am I! Present eloquent words to the king, my lord. I am (only) a petty officer of the king; (70) I am more insignificant (?) than thou!

But the men of the land of Nubia have committed an evil deed against (me); I was almost killed by the men of the land of Nubia (75) in my own house. Let the king [call] them to (account). Seven times and seven times let the [king,] my lord, [avenge (?)] me!

EA, No. 288¹⁹

To the king, my lord, my Sun-god, say: Thus 'Abdu-Heba, thy servant. At the two feet of the king, my lord, seven times and seven times I fall. (5) Behold the king my lord, has set his name at the rising of the sun, and at the setting of the sun! (It is) vile what they have done against me. Behold, I am not a governor (10) (nor even a) petty officer of the king, my lord; behold, I am a shepherd of the king, and a bearer of the royal tribute am I. It was not my father (and) not my mother, (but) the arm of the mighty king (15) (which) placed me in the house of my father. [. . .] came to me [. . .] I delivered ten slaves [into his] hand. Shuta, the royal commissioner, came (20) to me. Twenty-one maidens (and) eighty captives I delivered into the hand of Shuta as a gift for the king, my lord. Let my king take thought for his land! The land of the king is lost; in its entirety (25) it is taken from me; there is war against me, as far as the lands of Seir (and) as far as Gath-carmel! All the governors are at peace, but there is war against me. I have become like an

¹⁹ This letter continues the complaints of the previous letter, and incidentally paints a vivid picture of the anarchic condition of the country early in the reign of Akh-en-Aton. The references to "the very gate of Sile (Zilu)" mean that the outrages against the *pax Aegyptiaca* extend to the frontiers of Egypt itself, near modern Qantarah.

'Apiru (30) and do not see the two eyes of the king, my lord, for there is war against me. I have become like a ship in the midst of the sea! The arm of the mighty king (35) conquers the land of Naharaim and the land of Cush, but now the 'Apiru capture the cities of the king. There is not a single governor (remaining) (40) to the king, my lord—all have perished! Behold, *Turbazu* has been slain in the (very) gate of Sile, (yet) the king holds his peace. Behold Zimreda, the townsmen of Lachish have smitten him, slaves who had become 'Apiru. (45) Yaptih-Hadad has been slain [in] the (very) gate of Sile, (yet) the king holds his peace. [Wherefore] does not [the king] call them to account? [So] let the king take care of his land; [and] let the king decide, and let the king send (50) archers to his land! [But] if there are no archers (here) this year, all the lands of the king, my lord, will be lost. They shall not say to the king, my lord, (55) that the land of the king, my lord, has been lost, and (that) all of the governors have perished! If there are no archers (here) this year, let the king send a commissioner, and let him take me (60) to himself (!) together with (my) brothers, and we shall die near the king, our lord!

[To] the scribe of the king, my lord: [Thus] 'Abdu-Heba, (thy) servant. At [thy (?)] two feet I fall. Present eloquent words (65) [. . .] to the king, [my lord! Thy] servant [and] thy son am I.

EA, No. 289²⁰

To the king, my lord, [say]: Thus 'Abdu-Heba, thy servant. At the two feet of my lord, the king, seven times and seven times I [fall.] (5) Behold, Milkilu does not break (his alliance) with the sons of Lab'ayu and with the sons of Arzayu in order to covet the land of the king for themselves. As for a governor who does (such a) deed (as) this, (10) why does not my king call him to account? Behold Milkilu and Tagu! The deed which they have done is this, that they(!) have taken it, the town of Rubutu. And now as for Jerusalem—(15) Behold this land belongs to the king, or why like the town of Gaza is it loyal to the king? Behold the land of the town of Gath-carmel, it belongs to Tagu, and the men of Gath (20) have a garrison in Beth-Shan. Or shall we do like Lab'ayu, who gave the land of Shechem to the 'Apiru? (25) Milkilu has written to Tagu and the sons of (Lab'ayu), (saying) "Ye are (members of) my house. Yield all of their demands to the men of Keilah, and let us break our alliance (with) Jerusalem!" (30) The garrison which thou didst send through Haya, son of Miyare, Addaya has taken (and) has put into his residence in Gaza, [and] twenty men to Egypt (35) he has sent. Let my king know (that) there is no royal garrison with me. So now, as my king lives, truly the commissioner, Puwure, has taken leave of me (40) and is in Gaza; and let my king look out for him! And let the king send fifty men as a garrison to guard the land! The

²⁰ Addaya was the Egyptian resident governor of Palestine, with his seat at Gaza.

entire land of the king has revolted. (45) Send me Yanhamu and let him take care of the land of the king!

To the scribe of the king, [my lord]: Thus 'Abdu-Heba, [thy] servant. Present eloquent words (50) to the king. I am much more insignificant than thou; I am thy servant.

EA, No. 290²¹

[To] the king, my lord, say: Thus ['Abdu]-Heba, thy servant. At the two feet of the [king,] my lord, seven times and seven times I fall. (5) Behold the deed which Milkilu and Shuwardata did to the land of the king, my lord! They rushed troops of Gezer, troops of Gath (10) and troops of Keilah; they took the land of Rubutu; the land of the king went over to the 'Apiru people. But now even (15) a town of the land of Jerusalem, *Bit-Lahmi* by name, a town belonging to the king, has gone over to the side of the people of Keilah. Let my king hearken to 'Abdu-Heba, thy servant, (20) and let him send archers to recover the royal land for the king! But if there are no archers, the land of the king will pass over to the 'Apiru people. (25) This was done at the command of Milkilu [and at] the command of Shuwardata (?) . . . So let my king (30) take care of [his] land!

EA, No. 292²²

To the king, my lord, my pantheon, my Sun-god say: Thus Ba'lu-shipti, thy servant, the dirt (under) thy two feet. (5) At the feet of the king, my lord, my pantheon, my Sun-god, seven times, seven times I fall. I have looked this way, and I have looked that way, (10) but it was not bright. I looked toward the king, my lord, and it was bright. A brick may move from beneath its companions, (15) but I will not move from beneath the two feet of the king, my lord. I have heard the words, which the king, my lord, wrote to his servant: (20) "Guard thy commissioner, and guard the cities of the king, thy lord." Behold, I guard, and behold, I hearken day (25) and night to the words of the king, my lord. But let the king, my lord, *learn* concerning his servant, (that) there is hostility against me from the mountains, so I have built (30) a house—Manhatu is its name—in order to make ready before the archers of the king, my lord; but Maya took it from my hands, and installed (35) his commissioner within it. So command Reanap, my commissioner, to restore the city to my hands, that I may make ready for (40) the archers of the king, my lord.

Further, behold the deed of Peya, the son of Gulate, against Gezer, the maidservant of the king, my lord,

²¹ In lines 15 ff. there is an almost certain reference to the town of Bethlehem, which thus appears for the first time in history. Keilah may have been the home of Shuwardata, prince of the Hebron district.

²² Ba'lu-shipti was prince of Gezer in the period following the death of Milkilu, and this letter comes from the middle of the reign of Akh-en-Aton. Maya was a high Egyptian official at the court of the latter, then acting as commander of the Egyptian forces in Palestine. Peya bears an Egyptian name, in spite of the Canaanite name of his mother(?), and he was probably a minor Egyptian officer.

how many days he plundered it, so that it has become an empty cauldron because of him. From the mountains (50) people are ransomed for thirty (shekels) of silver, but from Peya for one hundred (shekels) of silver; so know these words of thy servant!

EA, No. 297²³

To the king, my lord, my pantheon, my Sun-god, say: Thus Yapahu, thy servant, the dirt (under) thy two feet. (5) At the feet of the king, my lord, my pantheon, my Sun-god, seven times, seven times, I fall. Everything which the king, my lord, said to me (10) I have heard most attentively.

Further: I have become like an empty bronze cauldron (because of) the debt (15) at the hands of the Sutu, but now I have heard the sweet breath of the king, and it goes out (20) to me, and my heart is very serene.

EA, No. 298²⁴

To the king, my lord, my pantheon, my Sun-god, the Sun-god of heaven. Thus Yapahu, the prince of (5) Gezer, the dirt (under) thy two feet, the groom of thy horse. At the two feet of the king, my lord (10) the Sun-god of heaven, seven times and seven times I fall, both prone and supine; and everything (15) which the king, my lord, commands me I hear very attentively. A servant of the king am I, and the dirt of thy two feet. (20) Let the king my lord know that my youngest brother is estranged from me, and has entered (25) Muhhazu, and has given his two hands to the chief of the 'Apiru. And now the [land of . . .]anna is hostile to me. (30) Have concern for thy land! Let my lord write to his commissioner concerning this deed.

EA, No. 320²⁵

To the king, my lord, my pantheon, my Sun-god, the Sun-god of heaven: Thus (5) Widia, the prince of Ashkelon, thy servant, the dirt (under) thy feet, the groom of thy horse. (10) At the feet of the king, my lord, seven times and seven times verily I fall, both prone and (15) supine.

Now I am guarding the place of the king which is with me, and whatever the king, my lord, has sent to me (20) I have heard very attentively. Who is the dog that does not hearken to the words of the king, his lord, (25) the son of the Sun-god?

²³ Yapakhu was prince of Gezer after the death of Milkilu. By *Sutu* is meant the nomadic tribesmen of Semitic origin who were in Egyptian service, as we know from other documents.

²⁴ cf. the preceding note.

²⁵ Note the Indo-Aryan name of the prince of Ashkelon, whose servile words illustrate the impotence to which he was condemned by his nearness to the Egyptian residence at Gaza, as well as by the smallness of his territory.

*Letter from Tell el-Hesi*²⁶

[To] the (Egyptian) officer say: [Thus P]a'pu. At thy feet I fall. Thou shouldst know that (5) Shipti-ba'lu and Zimreda have plotted publicly and Shipti-ba'lu said to Zimreda: ["The pr]ince of Yaramu wrote to me: 'Give me 'six' bows, and three daggers, and three swords. (15) Verily I am going out against the land of the king, and thou art my ally!' " And yet he returns (the charge of) (20) lèse-majesté (saying): "The one who plots against the king is Pa'pu! And send him to (confront) me!" And [now] I have sent Rabi-ilu (25) to bring him (to thee) [because of] this matter.

*Shechem Letter*²⁷

To Birashshena say: Thus Baniti-[. . .]. From three years ago until now (5) thou hast caused me to be paid. Is there no grain nor oil nor wine which thou canst send? What is my offense that thou hast not paid me? (10) The children who are with me continue to learn. I am their father and their mother every day alike [. . . (15) . . .] Now [behold] whatever [there is] beneath the feet [of my lord] let him [send] to me (20) and let him infor[m] me].

*Taanach, No. 1*²⁸

To Rewashsha say: Thus Guli-Adad. Live well! (5) May the gods take note of thy welfare, the welfare of thy house, of thy children! Thou hast written to me concerning silver (10) and behold I will give fifty (shekels) of silver, truly I will do (so)!

Further, and if (20) there is a wizard of Asherah, let him *tell our fortunes* and let me hear *quickly*, and the omen and the interpretation send to me. (25)

As for thy daughter who is in the town of Rubutu, let me know concerning her welfare; and if she grows up thou shalt give her to become a *singer*, (30) or to a husband.

²⁶ For this letter and its interpretation see *BASOR*, No. 87, pp. 32-38. It vividly characterizes the atmosphere of mutual suspicion and treachery which prevailed in Palestine in the early part of Akh-en-Aton's reign. Zimreda was prince of Lachish (Tell ed-Duweir) and Shipti-Ba'lu was to succeed him in that capacity. As shown by his name, Pa'pu was an Egyptian official, perhaps the local commissioner at Lachish.

²⁷ For the interpretation of this letter see *BASOR*, No. 86, pp. 28-31. The letter was published by F. M. Th. Böhl, *ZDPV*, XLIX, pp. 321-27. The name *Birashshena* is Indo-Aryan.

²⁸ For a detailed study of this letter and the other letters found by Ernst Sellin at Taanach, five miles southeast of Megiddo in northern Palestine, see W. F. Albright, *BASOR*, No. 94, pp. 12-27. The tablets were first published, with some photographs, by F. Hrozný in *Tell Ta'annek (Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Klasse, L, Vienna, 1904, Part IV)*, pp. 113 ff., and in *Eine Nachlese auf dem Tell Ta'annek in Palästina (Denkschriften, LII, 1906, Part III)*, pp. 36 ff. They unquestionably belong to the fifteenth century B.C., and they may be dated roughly about three generations before the bulk of the Amarna Tablets. Rewashsha was prince of Taanach; his Egyptian name illustrates the extent of Egyptian penetration about a century after the initial conquest. The word here rendered "wizard" is Akkadian *ummanu*, which passed into Hebrew as *omman* and into later Phoenician as *ammun*, always with the general sense of "learned, skilled man, expert." The diviners of Asherah appear in the time of Elijah (1 Kings 18:19 ff.) as "prophets of Asherah": they also figure in the Baal Epic of Ugarit.