

A STUDY OF SOME DOCUMENTS FROM THE SYRIAN AREA CONCERNING THE EGYPTIAN — SYRIAN RELATIONS DURING THE FIRST PART OF THE EGYPTIAN EMPIRE

By

Dr. RASHID EL-NADOURY

The documents from the Syrian area can be classified as either documents written in Egyptian or in cuneiform. Concerning those written in Egyptian, it is difficult to decide precisely whether they were imported from Egypt or manufactured in the Syrian area. Among the most important records are the cuneiform letters of the Canaanite citadel of Taanach, of these, Amankhatpa, who was the Egyptian military governor of Palestine in the Egyptian garrison town of Gaze, wrote to Rôwashsha,¹ prince of Taanach. He said, "... Send thy brothers with their chariots and send a horse, thy tribute, and presents and all captives that thou hast, send them tomorrow to Megiddo."² Albright states that "it is possible that Amanhatpe can be identified with Amenhotep, who was later viceroy of Nubia under Thutmose IV," and he dates the inscription about the third quarter of the 15th century B. C. Another document is a royal stela from Galilee in Tell el 'Origmeh.³

The inscription says, "... There was recited to him the royal decree (?) ... I have restrained the foreign countries. Mitanni is as one that never existed ..."⁴ That inscription belongs to the stage of hostile rela-

1. I mean by the Syrian area, the area covering Syria and Palestine plus the coast.

2. It is difficult to decide if "Rôwashsha" is an Egyptian or a Syrian name; but considering that he received letters written in cuneiform from the Egyptian governor, the impression is given that he is probably non-Egyptian.

3. E. Sellin and F. Hrozný, *Tell Taanach IV*. Inscription no. 5, Suppl. P. 36. W. F. Albright, "Egypt and the Early History of the Negeb," *J. P. O. S.*, IV (1924), 139 ff.

Albright, "Cuneiform Material for Egyptian Prosopography," *J. N. E. S.*, V (January, 1946), 9, n. 2. H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East* (London, 1932), P. 247.

4. It represents the ancient Canaanite and Israelite town of Chinnereth.

5. W. Albright and A. Rowe, "A Royal Stela of the New Empire from Galilee," *JEA*, XIV (1928), 281 ff., II. 2-4.

tions between Egypt and Mitanni according to Albright's and Rowe's interpretation, so it may belong to either Thutmose III's or Amenhotep II's period. The language of the stela is not late Egyptian, and since Thutmose III's inscriptions were written in Middle Egyptian, we can assume that it refers to him. Thutmose III was probably contemporary with Saushshatar. Another document in the Syrian area is a tablet bearing the seal impression of Abba-il who was an Egyptian vassal in Alalakh.¹

Egyptian scarabs in the Syrian area furnish another source of information, raising the question, however, whether they were made in Egypt or in Western Asia. The following are some of those scarabs dealing with political relations: a scarab of Thutmose III, Rowe's no. 473.² from Tell Fara says, "Thutmose III is the lord of Hekaim." The only place-name nearly resembling Hekaim in the Egyptian text is *Hikrym* which is mentioned in Thutmose III's list at Karnak,³ no. 89. Maspero⁴ places it near Hebron, but the omission of the "r" in the name on the scarab makes it difficult to equate the two. It is possible that Hekaim is actually a name for Tell Fara itself: but Albright⁵ believes that tell el Fara might be the ancient Shuruben. Another example is Rowe's no. 511 which mentions the fortification of Thutmose III; it is from Tell el 'Ajjul, and it commemorates a fortress at Tell el 'Ajjul, which was established by Thutmose III. There are many other examples of scarabs bearing the name of Thutmose III,⁶ as for instance, scarabs Rowe's no. 515, 516, which say "Thutmose III treads under foot all foreign lands." Scarab Rowe's no. 533 of Thutmose IV which mentions that he made an expedition to Naharin, cut cedar wood in Syria and settled canaanites from Gezer in his mortuary temple enclosure in Thebes. There are also a considerable number of seals bearing the names of Thutmose III, Amenhotep II, and Thutmose IV. In spite of the small amount of Western Asiatic material, that which we have bears out the conclusions drawn from the purely Egyptian sources.

1. Sidney Smith, *Alalakh and Chronology* (London, 1940), p. 38.

2. Rowe, *A Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs* (Cairo, 1936), pp. III f.

3. J. Simons, *Handbook for the Study of Egyptian Topographical Lists* (Leiden, 1937), p. 112, 112. 89 a.

4. J. Maspero "Les Noms de la liste de Thutmose III qu'on peut rapporter à la Judée." *Études Mythol. et Archéol.*, V, 73-74.

5. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible* (New York, 1935), pp. 53, 187, no. 84.

6. Rowe, *A Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs* (Cairo, 1936), pp. 112 ff.

The Western Asiatic documents also support the Egyptian evidence for the continuance of large-scale commercial relations. Many of the seal impressions of the legal and commercial documents bear the prenomen of Thutmose III.¹ One such example is a contract tablet, recording the receipt of four homers of barley made from Assyrian corn which was sealed by a merchant at Nineveh.² And even later, in the Sargonid period, there is a scarab so inscribed. These examples are valid evidence of exchange of trade, and their existence in distant Nineveh shows the wide range of commerce during this period. Also the Asiatic and Egyptian imports into Crete seem to be more numerous from 1600-1400 than the Minoan into Egypt and Canaan.³

The Ras Shamra texts mention the Egyptian god Horus,⁴ and there are numerous amulets bearing the names of Isis and Horus from Tell el Duweir, Tell es Safi and Beth-Shan.⁵ This is in addition to the Egyptian sanctuary in Byblus.

Other indications of cultural relations are found in the Egyptian vocabulary written in cuneiform.⁶ If the protosinaitic inscriptions can be proved to date not earlier than the 18th dynasty,⁷ they might provide further evidence of Western Asiatic cultural relationship with Egypt. Furthermore, there are some artifacts which bear inscriptions: a stam-

1. L. W. King, *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets in the Konyunlik Collection of the British Museum*, Supp. (London, 1914), p. xxviii.

2. King, "Some New Examples of Egyptian Influence at Nineveh," in *JEA*, I (1914), 108.

3. Albright, *The Role of Canaanites in the History of Civilization*, p. 26; *Studies in the History of Culture*, 1942, pp. 11-50.

4. T. H. Gaster, "Ras Shamra and Egypt," *Ancient Egypt* (June, 1934), p. 37. The Egyptian gods were not worshipped at Ras Shamra. H. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* (London, 1939), p. 262. Its mentioning in the Ras Shamra Texts, was as a part of a personal name. C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook, Analecta Orientalia*, xxv (Rome, 1947), Text 315, 13.

5. Rowe, *A Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs*, p. 272.

6. S. Smith and C. J. Gadd, "A Cuneiform Vocabulary of Egyptian Words," *JEA*, XI (1925), 230 ff. This is the first known cuneiform text which gives a list of Egyptian words; probably it was a section of an Egyptian Vocabulary and its cuneiform equivalents.

7. R. Starr and R. Batin, *Excavations and Protosinaitic Inscriptions at Serabit El-Khadem*, p. 34.

Albright, "The Early Alphabetic Inscriptions from Sinai and their Decipherment," *BASOR*, no. 110 (1948), pp. 6-22.

ped jar-handle found in Tell el Hesi¹ has the name of Amenhotep II; a Syro-Hittite seal dating about 1400 - 1200 bears the 'nh sign;² a fragment of a relief with the name of Thutmose III was found at Byblus;³ and the names of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III were found at Tell el 'Ajjul.⁴

Under the pressure of these new elements, then, changes occur in the local culture, "breaking its continuity"⁵ as illustrated at Alalakh. Petrie⁶ points out in his discussions of Beth-Pelet I that "the changes consequent on the Egyptian entry altered not only the form of the tomb, but also the types of pottery and the ideas of decoration as seen on the scarabs." Kantor,⁷ in her study of the plant ornament, tells of the occurrence of the earliest known Asiatic hybrid plant ornament on seals of the second Syrian group, ranging from ca. 1500 to 1350 B. C. She mentions that "sufficient evidence of their Egyptian origin is given by the gradual development of their chief components during the O. K. and M. K."⁸

The occurrence of such influences may be revealed by the Egyptian archeological material found in the Syrian area, some of which is listed in the following tables.

There are also Aegean, Cypriote, Mitannian and Hittite influences. There are several seals from Beth-Shan and Gezer and they are related to the Mitannian style.⁹ Some other seals from the second Syrian group (according to Frankfort's classification) "show a strong Egyptian element, though much confused in true Phoenician fashion, where, for instance, the sphinxes in both seals are made to tread upon snakes."⁹

1. F. J. Bliss, *A Mound of Many Cities, or Tell el Hesi Excavated* (New York, etc. 1894), p. 89.

2. Hall, "A Syro-Hittite Cylinder-Seal," *British Museum Quarterly*, I, 95, n. 64.

3. C. L. Woolley, "The Egyptian Temple at Byblus," *JEA*, VII (1921), 200.

4. Petrie, *Ancient Gaza II* (London, 1932), Pl. VIII, 117.

5. Woolley, *North Syria as a Cultural Link in the Ancient World* (London, 1942), p. 5.

6. Petrie, *Beth-Pelet, I (Tell Fara)* (London, 1930), p. 6.

7. H. J. Kantor, *Plant Ornament; Its Origin and Development in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago, 1945), pp. 12, 13.

8. O. Tufnell, C. H. Inge, and L. Harding, *Lachish II (Tell ed Duweir), The Fosse Temple* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 72.

9. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, p. 265, Pl. XLII, g. j.

SOME OF THE EGYPTIAN ARCHEOLOGICAL MATERIAL FOUND
IN THE SYRIAN AREA DURING THE FIRST PART OF THE EMPIRE

Gaza (Tell el 'Ajjul)	Jericho ^a	Lachish, II ^b (Tell Ed Duweir)
Gaza I: c	City IV:	Ivories, beads, glass and stone vases belong fairly to the 18th-19th dyn.
A bronze knife (grave 804, Pl. XVIII).	A scarab of Kamose from tomb 31. One of Thutmose III from tomb 5, one of Hatshepsut from tomb 5.	Scarabs and plaques with royal names range from Thutmose III-Ramesses II.
An Egyptian axe (Pl. XXI, 118).	Egyptian imperial signet rings from tomb 5. c (Thut indicates that the local dynast was a vassal of the pharaohs.)	A figure shows resemblance to the later Thutmose portraits (Pl. XVI, 5).
An Egyptian jar (Pl. XXVI, 12).		A spoon, toilet spoon lid and a comb (Pl. XVII, 10, 17, 29).
Gaza II: d	A representation of the typical imported (jug with a pipe-like neck) from the time of Thutmose III. e	A stone Vase (Pl. VXX, 3).
A mirror with bronze dish (Pl. XXIII, 41).		A small tall-necked vase with vertical loop handles (dated to Thutmose III).
Arrow heads, hair pin or a needle (Pl. XVIII, 234). (Dated to Amenhotep II.)		
A double-edged knife (Pl. XIX, 267).		

a. J. Garstang, "Jericho: City and Necropolis," *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology, Liverpool*, XX (1933), 3-42.

b. Tufnell, Inge, and Harding, *op. cit.*

c. F. Petrie, *Ancient Gaza (Tell el Ajjul)*, I (London, 1931).

d. *Ibid.*, II.

e. Albright, "The Chronology of a South Palestinian City, Tell El-'Ajjul," *AJSE*, LV (1938), 342. He states that "Palaces II-IV were all contemporary with the Egyptian New Empire, from ca. 1500 to ca. 1200."

f. Garstang, *The story of Jericho* (London, 1940), p. 115.

g. It can be compared with Pl. XVII-XIX in J. Garstang, *El-Arabah* (London, 1901).

CONTINUED

Gaza (Tell el 'Ajjul)	Jericho	Lachish, II (Tell Ed Duweir)
A bronze ring reading "Amon the Great" (Pl. VII, 32).	Vase* no. 4, is an example of a whole class found in several layers of tomb 5. It appears in the time of Thutmose III both in Jericho and Beth-Shan.	The evidence of scarabs suggests a date of Thutmose III to Amenhotep III for structure I.
An impress with a very rare figure of a griffin (connected with those figured at Deir-el-Bahri). (Pl. VIII, 116).	No. 6, is a decorative type which dates to Thutmose III.	
Glass vases (Pl. XXVI, 139-41).		
No. 143-144 (were with a scarab of Amenhotep II).		
3 scarabs (of the age of Thutmose III).		
a scarab (of Amenhotep II).		
Gaza III: ^b		
A long earring (Pl. XIV, 18).		
A narrow dagger (Pl. XVII, 6).		
Tweezers (Pl. XXIV, 130).		
No. 137. Egyptian razor from tomb 418. Kohl pot (Pl. XXVI, 13).		

a. Garstang. *AAA*, XX (1933), 18, Pl. XXII.

b. Petrie. *Ancient Gaza* (Tell el 'Ajjul), III (London, 1933).



A relief from Vishnu no. 212, showing a goddess ending in her right hand the 'ukh' offered to the king.

CONTINUED

Gaza (Tell el 'Ajjul)	Beth-Pelet † (Tell Fara)	Gerar † (Tell Jemmeh)
Gaza IV: *	(Scarabs from the tomb 902, cover the period from about 1450-1300.)	"The earliest group of buildings that has been disclosed, probably belongs to Thutmose III."
Lances and arrow heads (Pls. XXIX-XXX, 356, 358-60)	(Pl. XII, 161, 162 of Thutmose III.)	His scarab (Pl. XIX, 20).
A double-edged knife (Pl. XXXI, 384).	The remaining part of a fort is dated to the beginning of the 18th dyn.	A cutting knife (Pl. XXIII, 7)
A cylinder seal showing a beast ramping forward to a man seated on the ground. Behind the man is a falcon-headed figure having the double crown of Egypt.	A large well built block of masonry is the Egyptian residency. ⁴	A cutting out knife (bronze work) of the form used early in the reign of Thutmose III (Pl. LXII, 18).
The figure which restrains the lion is holding out in the left hand the figure of Ea. (The scene suggests a counter action between North Syria and Egypt.) (Pl. XII, 1.)		Egyptian glazed ware (Pl. XLII, 15-67). Petrie dated a lower stratum by a scarab of Thutmose III to his reign. It is notorious that Thutmose III's cartouche was used as an amulet for centuries after his death.

a. Petrie, *Beth-Pelet* (Tell Fara), I (London, 1930), British School of Archaeology in Egypt. Univ. Coll.

b. Petrie, *Gerar* (London, 1928).

c. *Ibid.*, IV (London, 1934).

d. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

e. C. McCown, *The Ladder of Progress in Palestine* (London, 1943), p. 121.

CONTINUED

Megiddo	Beth-Shan	Aichana
A scarab dated to the 18 th dyn. (Pl. 152, 164).	The Egyptian influence in Beth-shan is illustrated in the Northern and Southern temples (c) of Thutmose III.	Tablet AL 212a shows a goddess tendering in her right hand the 'ah symbol to the king. In the king's right hand is a scimitar of the type called <i>Khpah</i> by the Egyptians. Between the two figures and above them is the winged disk.
A scarab of Thutmose III (Pl. 153, 230). a	A seal bearing the name of Amenhotep II.	(See the accompanying plate.)
The prenomen of Thutmose III between feathers. c (Pl. 131, 4.)	A falience scarab bearing the name of Thutmose IV. d	
(In L. B. II are several specimens which follow Egyptian patterns.)		
Ugarit	Hama	Qatna
Egyptian features appear in the representation of the deities.	A scarab furnishes the name of Thutmose III. e	The site does not furnish except rare objects from this period in spite of the Egyptian occupation of the area. f

a. S. Smith, "A Preliminary Account of the Tablets from Aichana," *The Antiquaries Journal*, XIX (1939), 40.

b. C. Lloyd, *Megiddo II* (Seasons of 1935-39) (plates) The Univ. of Chicago Oriental Inst. Publ. LXII, Chicago, 1948.

c. P. L. O. Guy, *Megiddo Tombs*, Oriental Inst. Publ. XXXIII, Chicago, 1938.

d. A. Rowe, *The Topography and History of Beth-Shan* (Philadelphia, 1930), p. 17.

e. H. Ingholt, *Rapport Préliminaire Sur Sept Campagnes de Fouilles à Hama en Syrie* (København, 1940), p. 75.

f. Comte du Mesnil du Buisson, *Le Site Archéologique de Midwafi-Qatna* (Paris, 1935), p. 35.