

EA 41 A Letter from Suppiluliuma, King of Hatti, to Akhenaten, King of Egypt

The messages I sent to your father [1] and the wishes he expressed to me will certainly be renewed between us. O King, I did not reject anything your father asked for, and your father never neglected none of the wishes I expressed, but granted me everything. Why have you, my brother, refused to send me what your father during his lifetime has sent me?

Now, my brother, you have acceded to the throne of your father, and similarly as your father and I have sent each other gifts of friendship, I wish good friendship to exist between you and me. I have expressed a wish to your father. We certainly shall make it come true between us. Do not refuse, my brother, what I wished to receive from your father. It concerns two statues of gold, one standing, the other sitting, two silver statues of women, a chunk of lapislazuli and some other thing. They are not gifts in the true sense of the word, but rather, as in the majority of similar cases, objects of a commercial transaction. If my brother should decide to deliver these, may my brother deliver them. If my brother should not decide to deliver them, as soon as my chariots are ready to carry the cloth, I shall send it to my brother. What you, my brother may want, write to me and I shall send it to my brother.

**Fragment of a letter from Suppiluliuma, King of Hatti, to Akhenaten, King of Egypt**

And now, as to the tablet you have sent me, why have you put the name of my brother above my name? And who is it who troubles the good relations between us? Has such behaviour become custom? My brother, have you written to me thinking that we become allies? If you are my brother, why have you praised my name, when I am no better thought of than a cadaver? [...] But your name [...] I rub out [...]

[1] Amenhotep III

EA 286 A Letter from Abdu-Heba of Jerusalem

To the king, my Lord, thus speaks Abdu-Heba, your servant. At the feet of the king, my Lord, seven times and seven times I prostrate myself. 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, my Lord."

I am here, as far as I am concerned, it was not my father, nor my mother, who put me in this position; the arm of the powerful king lead me to the house of my father! Why would I commit a transgression against the king, my Lord?

While the king, my Lord, lives, I will say to the commissioner of the king, my Lord: "Why do you favour the Hapiru [2] and are opposed to the rulers?"

And thus I am accused before the king, my Lord. Because it is said: "Lost are the territories of

the king, my Lord."

Thus am I calumniated before the king, my Lord! But may the king, my Lord know, that, when the king sent a garrison, Yanhamu [1] seized everything, and ///// the land of Egypt /////

Oh king, my Lord, there are no garrison troops here! (Therefore), the king takes care of his land! May the king take care of his land! All the territories of the king have rebelled; Ilimilku caused the loss of all the territories of the king. May the king take care of his land!

I repeat: Allow me to enter the presence of the king, my Lord, and let me look into both eyes of the king, my Lord. But the hostility against me is strong, and I cannot enter the presence of the king, my Lord. May the king send garrison troops, in order that I may enter and look into the eyes of the king, my Lord. So certain as the king, my Lord, lives, when the commissioners come, I will say: "Lost are the territories of the king. Do you not hear to me? All the rulers are lost; the king, my Lord, does not have a single ruler left."

May the king direct his attention to the archers, and may the king, my Lord, send troops of archers, the king has no more lands. The Hapiru sack the territories of the king. If there are archers (here) this year, all the territories of the king will remain (intact); but if there are no archers, the territories of the king, my Lord, will be lost!

To the king, my Lord thus writes Abdu-Heba, your servant. He conveys eloquent words to the king, my Lord. All the territories of the king, my Lord, are lost.

[1] *Yanhamu*: The Egyptian commissioner in Palestine

[2] *Hapiru*: Nomadic or semi-nomadic people associated with robbery.

EA 367 Letter from Pharaoh to Endaruta of Akshapa

To Endaruta [1], the ruler of Akshapa say: Thus says the king: He sends this tablet to you, saying to you, Be on your guard; guard the place of the king where you are.

*Behold, the king sends you Hanni, the son of Maireya, the *akil tarbasi* of the king in Canaan. Pay close attention to what he tells you so that the king does not find fault in you. Everything he tells you, pay careful attention and carefully carry it out. And be on guard! Be on guard! Do not be negligent. And prepare for the archers [4] a great deal of food, and wine, and a great deal of everything else. Indeed, he will reach you very quickly, and he will behead the enemies of the king. And know that the king is strong like the sun [5] in the sky. For his soldiers and his chariots are numerous and in good condition.*

[1] Endaruta supported Shuwardata.

[2] Akshapa, biblical Achshaph, near Acco. (see map)

[3] *akil tarbasi*, official

[4] archers, the Egyptian army relied heavily on archery, both on foot and on chariot.

[5] sun: this is the period of ascendancy of Aten.

EA 17 A Letter from Tushratta to the King of Egypt

To Nibmuaria [1], King of Egypt, my brother, say: Thus says Tushratta, King of Mitanni [2], your brother. It is well with me. May it be well with you; with Kelu-Heba [3], my sister, may it be well; with your household, your wives, your sons, your nobles, your warriors, your horses, your chariots, and throughout your land may it be very well.



When I sat upon my father's throne [4], I was still young, and Tuh_i did evil to my land, and he killed his lord. And, therefore, he did not treat me well, nor the one who was on friendly terms with me. I, however, especially because of those evils, which were perpetrated on my land, made no delay; but the murderers of Artashumara, my brother [5], along with all that they had, I killed.

Because you were friendly with my father, for this reason I sent and spoke to you, so that my brother might hear of this deed and rejoice. My father loved you, and you loved my father still more. And my father, because of his love, has given my sister to you. And who else stood with my father as you did? The very next year, moreover, my brother's . . . the whole land of Hatti. As the enemy came to my land, Teshub [6], my lord, gave him into my hand, and I destroyed him. And not one of them returned to his own land.

Behold, one chariot, two horses, one male servant, one female servant, out of the booty from the land of Hatti I have sent you. And as a gift for my brother, five chariots (and) five teams of horses I have sent you. And as a gift for Kelu-Heba, my sister, one set of gold pins, one set of gold earrings, one gold idol, and one container of "sweet oil." I have sent her.

Behold, Keliya, my sukkal [7] along with Tunip-ibri, I have sent. May my brother quickly dispatch them so that they may quickly bring back word so that I may hear my brother's greeting and rejoice. May my brother seek friendship with me, and may my brother send his messengers so that they may bring my brother's greeting and I may receive them.

[1] Nibmuaria (or Nimmuaria): Amenhotep III Nebmaatre

[2] Mitanni: Hurrian kingdom in what would be northern Syria today

[3] Shuttarna had married his daughter Kelu-Heba to Amenhotep III, Tushratta did later likewise by marrying his daughter Tadu-Heba to Amenhotep. After Amenhotep III's demise she married Akhenaten.

[4] Father's throne: After the death of Shuttarna II his eldest son Artassumara accessed to the throne but was toppled in a coup d'état and Tushratta was enthroned.

[5] Artashumara, it is unknown whether he was a brother of Tushratta or a brother king.

[6] Teshub, Hurrian storm-god

[7] *sukkal*, an official.

EA 23 A letter from Abi Milku of Tyre

To the king, my lord, my god, my Sun: Message of Abi-Milku, your servant. I fall at the feet of the king, my lord, 7 times and 7 times. I am the dirt under the sandals of the king, my lord. My lord is the Sun who comes forth over all lands day by day, according to the way (of being) the sun, his gracious father, who gives life by his sweet breath and returns with his north wind; who establishes the entire land in peace, by the power of his arm : ha-ap-si; who gives forth his cry in the sky like Baal, and all the land is frightened at his cry.



The servant herewith writes to his lord that he heard the gracious messenger of the kind who came to his servant, and the sweet breath that came forth from the mouth of the king, my lord, to his servant--his breath came back! Before the arrival of the messenger of the king, my lord, breath had not come back; my nose was blocked. Now the breath of the king has come forth to me, I am very happy and : a-ru-u (he is satisfied) day by day. Because I am happy, does the earth not pr[osp]er? When I heard that the gracious me[sse]nger from my lord, all the land was in fear of my lord, when I heard the sweet breath and the gracious messenger who came to me. When the king, my lord, said ku-na "(Prepare) before the arrival of a large army," then the servant said to his lord : ia-a-ia-ia ("Yes, yes, yes!"). On my front and on su-ri-ia (my back) I carry the word of the king, my lord. Whoever gives heed to the king, his lord, and serves him in his place, the sun com[e]s forth over him, and the sweet breath comes back from the mouth of his lord. If he does not heed the word of the king, his lord, his city is destroyed, never (again) does his name exist in all the land. (But) look at the servant who gives heed to his lord. His city prospers, his house prospers, his name exists forever.

You are the Sun who comes forth over me, and a brazen wall set up for him, and because of the powerful arm : nu-uh-ti (I am at rest) : ba-ti-i-ti (I am confident). I indeed said to the Sun, the father of the king, my lord, "When shall I see the face of the king, my lord?" I am indeed guarding Tyre, the principal city, for the king, my lord, until the powerful arm of the king comes forth over me, to give me water to drink and wood to warm myself.

Moreover, Zimredda, the king of Sidon, writes daily to the rebel Arizu, the son of Abdi-Asratu, about every word he has heard from Egypt. I herewith write to my lord, and it is good that he knows.

EA 35 Letter from the king of Alasiya

Speak to the King of Egypt, my brother. Thus says the King of Alashiya^[9], your brother:

All goes well with me. With my houses, my wife, my sons, my chief men, my horses, my chariots, and in my lands, it is well. And with my brother may it be well. With your houses, your

wives, your sons, your chief men, your horses, your chariots, and in your lands, may it be very well.

My brother, behold, my messenger I have sent with your messenger to you to Egypt. Now I have sent 500 (talents ^[1]) of copper to you; I have sent it to you as a gift ^[2] - for my brother. Do not let my brother be concerned that the amount of copper is too little, for in my land the hand of Nergal ^[3], my lord, has killed all the men of my land, and so there is not a (single) copper-worker.

Therefore, do not let my brother be concerned. Send your messenger along with my messenger quickly and all the copper that you desire I will send you, my brother.

You are my brother; you should send me silver ^[4], my brother - a great quantity. Give me the best silver, then I will send you, my brother, all that you, my brother, request.

Furthermore, my brother, the ox my messenger requested give to me, my brother. And sweet oil, my brother send to me, my brother: two containers; and send me a specialist in eagle-omens ^[5].

Furthermore, my brother, the people of my land speak to me about the lumber ^[6] that the king of Egypt receives from me. So, my brother, make the payment to me.

Furthermore, a man of Alashiya died in Egypt, and his possessions are in your land, but his son and wife are with me. Let my brother, therefore, attend to the affairs of the man of Alashiya; and give it into the hand of my messenger, my brother.

Do not be concerned, my brother, that your messenger has remained three years in my land, for the hand of Nergal is upon my land and upon my house. My wife bore a son, who is now dead, my brother.

Send your messenger with my messenger very promptly, then a gift for my brother I will send you.

Furthermore, my brother, the silver for which I asked you, let my brother send in great quantity. And, my brother, the gifts for which I asked you, send, and all my desires let my brother fulfill, and whatever desires you mention to me I will do.

With the King of Hatti ^[7] and the King of Shanhar ^[8] you have not been placed on the same level (?).

As for me, whatever presents my brother has sent to me, I have returned to you double.

Your messenger has come to me promptly, and my messenger shall come to you promptly.

EA 38 Letter from the king of Alasiya

Say to the king of Egypt, my brother: Message of the king of Alashiya, your brother. For me all goes well, and for you may all go well. For your household, your chief wives, your sons, your horses, your chariots, among your numerous troops, in your country, among your magnates, may all go very well.

Why, my brother, do you say such a thing to me: "Does my brother not know this?"

As far as I am concerned, I have done nothing of the sort. Indeed, men of Lukki ^[11], year by year, seize villages in my own country.

My brother, you say to me: "Men from your country were with them."

My brother, I myself do not know that they were with them. If men from my country were

(with them), send (them back) and I will act as I see fit. You yourself do not know men from my country. They would not do such a thing. But if men from my country did do this, then you yourself do as you see fit.

Now, my brother, since you have not sent back my messenger, for this tablet it is the king's brother (as messenger). Let him write. Your messengers must tell me what I am to do. Furthermore, which ancestors of yours did such a thing to my ancestors? So no, my brother, do not be concerned.

[1] talent: about 25 kg to the Greeks. If the 500 refers to the flat fourhanded copper ingots current in the Late Bronze Age which weighed a talent each, the transport would have amounted to about 12.5 tons of copper.

See [copper mining](#)

[2] gift: 'Brothers' did not trade with each other, but they certainly could exchange gifts, even if these exchanges were accompanied by requests and manifestations of dissatisfaction. Moreover as a brother king the ruler of Cyprus does not prostrate himself in front of the pharaoh.

[3] Nergal: Mesopotamian sun god and ruler of the world of the dead. In his role as god of the midday heat he caused pestilences, wars and destruction. He was also god of health and fertility.

[4] silver: compared with the later silver mines in Greece, Egyptian production of silver as an adjunct of gold was relatively small scale.

[5] eagle-omens: the Egyptians were known for their [magicians](#) throughout the Levant: *Ten measures of magic have come into this world. Egypt received nine of them, the rest of the world only one measure*

[6] lumber: Egypt imported much of its timber from the Levant, above all from Byblos in today's Lebanon

[7] Hatti: Major Anatolian power during the second millennium BCE. Rivalled Egypt for hegemony in Syria.

[8] Shanhar: country in northern Syria

[9] Alasiya: generally identified as Cyprus, sites on the Syrian mainland have also been proposed. Wherever it was located it would have to satisfy a few conditions: Local copper production during the Egyptian New Kingdom would have to have been sizable, and it had to have direct access to the sea. In EA40 the governor of Alasiya wrote to Pharaoh:

Another (matter): My brother, these people and this ship belong to the king, my lord. Send back the ship of the king, my lord, quickly and safely.

April 2003: Petrographic analysis of the Alasiya tablets performed by Yuval Goren, Shlomo Bunimovitz, Israel Finkelstein, and Nadav Na'aman proves that the clay came from the Troodos mountains in Cyprus (American Journal of Archaeology, April 2003). ^[10]

[11] Lukki: possibly the Sea People of the Lukka.