Hurrians and Other Inhabitants of Late Bronze Age Palestine

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A survey of recent discussions of the social components of Late Bronze Age Canaan is made. The study clarifies some observations regarding the etymologies of personal names as well as the question of how this information can be used to understand the presence of cultural elements from the north in this region. It considers questions of methodology in the analysis of the Amarna onomastica, both with respect to etymological associations and regarding the association of name bearers with place names. The evidence presently available argues for cultural influence and possible movements of peoples but does not indicate how this might have taken place.

The social formation of Canaan, as suggested by the Amarna correspondence of the fourteenth century B.C., has been a source of study for all those interested in the Levant of the Late Bronze Age. The studies of Helck (1971, 478–482) and Albright (1975, 98–116) surveyed the name bearers who ruled and were otherwise associated with place names throughout Canaan. The linguistic origins of these personal names and their distribution and concentration in various parts of Canaan led to observations regarding cultural influence in these regions (Hess 1989, 209). In particular, the presence of northerners, with personal names containing Anatolian, Indo–Aryan and especially Hurrian elements was noted. These were tested and confirmed by more recent research in onomastics, as well as by comparison to published archaeological studies and the witness of the distribution of material culture in these regions (Hess 1989). This evidence has again been reviewed and similar conclusions reached (Na'aman 1994). However, it has also been used to support an argument that the Middle Bronze Age ended with an invasion of northerners southward through the Biqaᶜ and the Jordan valleys. In the light of this assertion it is appropriate to examine a number of features of analysis of these names in order to clarify the onomastic profile of the elite classes in Canaan in the fourteenth century B.C.

An important methodological consideration is the distinction between political structures and social groupings. Thus, although one may distinguish between Egyptian name bearers, as New Kingdom officials, and non-Egyptian city rulers, this distinction is a sub category of an analysis of the political structures of Canaan. A study of the social constitution of Canaan according to geographical region must begin with a collection of all available names of the elite and their association with respective city-states or regions. On the one hand, any study should initially include both Egyptian officials and Canaanite rulers (Hess 1989; Na'aman 1994, 184 n1). On the other hand, until more is known about the administrative systems, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the Egyptian leadership from the West Semitic leadership in a reliable manner. For example, West Semitic name bearers function as officials associated with Egyptian administrative centres (see below).

Although Egyptian officials are not Canaanite city state rulers, a study of the rulership in Canaan must include all members of this elite (e.g., rulers, commissioners, plunderers) and those identifiable cities to which they are attached. This should be clear from the following explanatory note (attached to the chart in Hess 1989, 210 n 6):

The identification of name bearers as leader figures and their inclusion in this chart is based upon titles (e.g. *rābiṣu* "commissioner"), activities (Ya'maya, who appears as a plunderer of Ṣumur in EA 62), and inferences drawn from the cor-

respondence (the association of ᵓAddumi and ᵓAmqi in EA 170). Only those leaders are included whose cities or areas of rule are known.

Of course, no claim is made that Egyptian officials are Canaanite city rulers (contra Na'aman 1994, 184 n 1). However, the Amarna letters do associate these officials with the cities mentioned. There are at least five officials of the Egyptian administration who are named and associated with known cities. In Table 1 there appears: the name of each of these officials, the city or town with which they are associated in the Amarna texts, the relevant Amarna text(s) where this association is made, and additional resources for the study of these names. Although properly considered as part of the available evidence on the social constitution of society in Canaan, these individuals should not be and never were identified as 'Canaanite rulers' of any specific city (Na'aman 1994, 184 n 1).

Table 1.

ᵓAddaya – Gaza – EA 254, 285, 287, 289 (Hess 1984, 45; 1993, 19–21), a 'royal commissioner' with a residence in Gaza.
Ḫaip – Ṣumur – EA 127, 132, 149 (Hess 1984, 123; 1993, 69–70).
Paḫanate – Ṣumur – EA 60, 62, 68 (Hess 1984, 202; 1993, 121–122).
Puḫuru – Kumidi – EA 132 lines 46–50 (Hess 1984, 203; 1993, 129–130).
Yaᵓmaya – Ṣumur – EA 62, lines 37–55 (Hess 1984, 270; 1993, 81).

Regarding Ḫaip, it is preferred to Ḫaᶜpi, because Ḫa-ip is the spelling of the name in three of the four occurrences where the name appears with a readable second element (EA 107:16; 132:42; 133:9).

A second methodological consideration in the study of the society of Canaan as reflected in the Amarna correspondence is that it should be comprehensive, with the inclusion of all the 'the cities and regions of Canaan' (Hess 1989, 210). Although divisions into Egyptian administrative centres (see Helck's identification of Kumidi, Ṣumur and Gaza in this role) and Canaanite city states may be made, they are methodologically subsequent to the gathering of all available data from the Amarna correspondence for social analysis. These administrative centres all appear in what is traditionally identified by Egypt as Canaan (Aharoni 1979, 67–77).

Thirdly, the social data collected should have carefully defined limits. In the case of a study of the Amarna Age, these are logically that information available directly from the Amarna correspondence

in the form of personal names that can be analysed according to their linguistic etymology and that the correspondence explicitly associates with known cities, i.e. urban centres that have been located. For example, the identification of Miya with Ardat(a) does occur in EA 75 line 30. There he seizes the city. Of course, he is ruler of Arashni (Hess 1984, 188; 1993, 114). However, since the study is limited to places that have been located and identified with known sites, and Arashni's location is not known, it cannot be considered. Ardat(a) has been located and represents a site that Miya occupied.

In a second example, Amurru's precise location has not been established (Moran 1992, 388) nor is the existence of a city named Amurru certain. Stieglitz 1991 associates the URU a-mu-ur-ra of EA 162 line 1 with Ṣumur. If he is correct, then ᶜAziri (and perhaps ᶜAbdi-Ashirta) should be associated with Ṣumur. However, the use of URU 'city' could be a scribal error for KUR 'land' or a rhetorical attempt to contrast Rib-addi of the 'city of Byblos' (line 2) with ᶜAziri of the 'city of Amurru' (Hess 1990). Amurru is regularly identified as a land (KUR). It occurs twice in the plural, KUR.ḪÁ: in EA 145 line 24; KUR.MEŠ in EA 179 line 19 (Singer 1991). Amurru may extend across several of the topographical regions included in Amarna Age Canaan (Hess 1989, 210–213). For these reasons ᶜAbdi-Ashirta and ᶜAziri are omitted.

On the other hand, Pu-Baᶜlu who conquered Ullaza (EA 104 lines 7–9) is associated with that place name. Yapa-Baᶜlu/Haddu is nowhere explicitly identified with Beirut. Moran (1987, 588; 1993, 385; contra Na'aman 1994, 184 n 1) places a question mark after this identification. However, Yapa-Baᶜlu/Haddu is associated with Tyre (EA 83 lines 24–27).

The personal name on EA 295 line 14 is broken. Only the first two signs can be read: ia–ab . . . Whatever the remainder of the name is, its linguistic affiliation is difficult to identify on the basis of only the first two signs. Therefore, it is irrelevant that this name bearer is ruler of Sidon. Only identifiable linguistic affiliations were useful in the study. Na'aman's reconstruction of a West Semitic name, Yab[-ni-ilu] (p. 171) may be correct but it is conjecture as neither Knudtzon (1915, 186) nor my own collation (August 1991) of this text were able to read anything after the first two signs. The . . . -DI.KUD of EA 295 line 3 may be the ruler of Tyre but that is not explicit. As has been noted elsewhere (Na'aman 1975, 76; 1979, 673–676), this text was sent by the ruler of Tyre, but Tyre does not appear on the text. Therefore, it is correct not to name this association in any discussion of the evidence (Na'aman 1994,

177–178 and the same courtesy might be extended to Hess 1989). Again, Shum-adda of EA 97 is not identified clearly with any city. Therefore, the name is not useful for analysis.

Niqmaddu of EA 49 line 2 is probably the king of Ugarit by that name. However, Ugarit is nowhere so identified in the text, unlike EA 45 and ᶜAmmistamru's association with Ugarit. Baᶜluya and Betilu should be associated with Amurru rather than Byblos (contra Hess 1989).

A third methodological consideration is to avoid too many inferences built upon hypothetical reconstructions in the association of people and places. For this reason, recent identifications of Amarna leaders and the towns that they led (Na'aman 1994, 177–178) should be treated with caution.

(a) As mentioned above Yapa-Baᶜlu/Haddu is nowhere explicitly identified as leader of Beirut. Only EA 114 mentions both Yapa-Baᶜlu/Haddu and Beirut, but it does not suggest any association of the two. Ammunira, leader of Beirut, is nowhere associated with Yapa-Baᶜlu/Haddu.

(b) If the Shutarna who sends the brief letters of EA 182, 183 and 184 is identical to the Shutarna, father of Biryawaza (EA 194 line 9), then he is not leader of Damascus but of Mushiḫuna, mentioned in the itinerary of Thutmosis III and located near Damascus (Ahituv 1984, 145–146; Helck 1971, 184). The name in all four letters is spelled the same and there is no apparent reason to deny the identification (Knudtzon 1915, 57; Helck 1971, 184).

(c) In EA 292 line 43 Baᶜlu/Haddu-shipṭi is concerned with the defence of Gezer, but he is nowhere designated as the ruler of that city. Instead, he mentions other towns that he is more closely involved with fortifying (e.g., Manḥatu).

(d) Yashdata is nowhere identified as the ruler of Taanach in the Amarna correspondence. In EA 248 the context suggests that he was not ruler of Taanach.

(e) For alternatives to a northern etymology for Miya, Bieri, Abdimilki (written as ÌR.LUGAL), Yiktasu (Wiktazu) and Shubandi, see Hess 1993.

For similar reasons, some attempts at analysis of personal names should be treated with caution. For example, the analysis of the personal name ÌR-*ri-ša* as related to West Semitic *r²š* 'head, official' should not be dismissed out of hand and without evidence (Na'aman 1994, 184 n 2). This method creates an interpretation of the name that no one has ever made ('servant of the head') and then criticises someone else on the basis of this reconstruction. It is true that the structure of this name suggests that its second element should be a divine name (Moran 1992, 379). The problem with this interpretation is

that this divine name is attested nowhere else. Na'aman's (1988, 188) suggestion of a metathesis (*ša-ri* instead of *ri-ša*) is a textual change that should be considered only as a last resort. Its improbability is all the greater because ÌR-*ri-ša* is the source of the letter that bears his name. Most scribes would be inclined to write correctly the name of their master. In fact, *riš* occurs at Ugarit in the place name *rišy* and perhaps also in the personal name *rišn* Both of these names have been related to the West Semitic word for 'head, official' (Astour 1975, 328–329; 1981, 10; Gröndahl 1967, 178). The same is true of the Egyptian transcription of a West Semitic personal name from the New Kingdom period, r-y_2-s^3 (Schneider 1992, 156–157). This term is used in Akkadian and West Semitic titulary for administrative officials (Hess 1993, 16).

Otherwise, the conclusions of Na'aman's onomastic study (1994, 178) resemble those reached in Hess (1989, 213–214), and remain in the tradition of Helck and Albright. The distinctive 'cultures' of the northern and West Semitic name bearers are supported by archaeological evidence (Hess 1989, 214–216). Na'aman helpfully relates these cultural differences to possible coalitions among the Amarna forces. There is no doubt that a northern cultural presence did exist in Late Bronze Age Palestine and in regions to the north and east. Whether this can be used to explain the end of the Middle Bronze Age is another issue. The central part of his study, concerning the onomastic evidence from the Amarna correspondence, does not require an invasion to explain the northern presence. The 'Syro–African' rift can and possibly should be understood as a regular conduit for cultural exchange and small movements of peoples throughout the Late Bronze Age and perhaps earlier. Ongoing economic factors that led to internal instability in this region may provide a better explanation for the transition (Bunimovitz 1995, 322–323).

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