Beyond Empire:
Complex Interaction Fields in the Late Bronze Age Levant
by
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To Nami

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Samuel R Burns
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Abbreviations

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CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago*
CTH	Text number after Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites*
EA	Text number after Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*
PRU I-V	*Le Palais royal d'Ugarit* (Series)
RS	Excavation number from Ugarit
URK IV	Text number after Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*

1.   Introduction

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In the Late Bronze Age, a complex relationship developed between Egypt and the northern Levant (an area that today includes Lebanon, the Syrian coast, and parts of the southern coast of Turkey). In the historical literature, a standard interpretation of this relationship has developed, which views this relationship through a model of empire. Although in recent years some scholars have begun to question aspects of this history (i.e. Higgenbotham 2000; Morris 2004; Weinstein 1981), in general it has gone without substantial challenge. However, the standard history deserves a deep and critical look.

The thesis has two main parts. The first part deals with theory and modeling. This starts with a discussion of various models of empire. There are several major theoretical problems with empire models: First, they tend to be static and rigid. Each agent's role in the system is determined merely by its place in the imperial system. This seems to be inadequate as a model to describe the inherent dynamism and complexity of human relationships. Additionally, once a particular human system has been named an empire (or a chiefdom, or a core, or a periphery), then that framework tends to color all of the evidence about the system.

After discussing these problems with current empire models, I propose a new framework that can be used to analyze the history of human societies. This framework borrows concepts from *complex adaptive systems analysis.* Recently, scholars in a wide

range of academic disciplines have developed this approach, which emphasizes this type of agent-driven dynamism and complexity.

The second part of this thesis is a case study. I begin by setting up and critiquing the standard historical reconstruction of the relationship between Egypt and the northern Levant in the Late Bronze Age. I then review the textual and archaeological evidence bearing on this relationship, and show how the standard model cannot reconcile the two types of evidence.

The last section of this thesis is some preliminary notes towards constructing a new model, one which is flexible enough to handle a wide range of human systems and types of evidence, but which also provides a framework for cross-cultural comparison.

Before moving on to the body of this thesis, I must present a brief note on the ancient texts. All English translations of the Amārna texts are adapted from William Moran's (1992) translation of the texts. In some places, in the interests of readability I have eliminated the brackets and marks which indicate broken sections and questionable readings. The transliterated Akkadian is mostly adapted from Shlomo Izreʾel and Itamar Singer's (1991) work on the texts from Amurru, with reference to Jørgen Knudtzon's (1915) canonical edition and Ronald Youngblood's (1961) dissertation. The Egyptian texts are from Barbara Cumming's (1982, 1984b, a) English translation.

2.   Modeling Empires

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2.1.   What is an Empire?

Before we can talk about specific instances of empires, we would do well to define the term. How do we divide empires from non-empires? As with many questions of demarcation, this turns out to be a tricky question. Answers to it abound in the literature, and nothing like a consensus has ever been reached. Still, certain answers are more influential than others. Carla Sinopoli (1994) provides an overview of several definitions, which each emphasizes different aspects that make up the essence of empirehood. These definitions share "a view of empire as a territorially expansive and and incorporative kind of state, involving relationships in which one state exercises control over other sociopolitical entities" (1994:160).

2.1.1.   Patrimonial Empires and Imperial Empires

Shmuel Eisenstadt's (1979; see also Wolf 1965, 1963) discussion of interaction modes focuses on the restructuring of the periphery by the center. In Eisenstadt's work, the implicit definition of an empire is a relationship between two or more polities, which is marked by an unequal distribution of power and an expansionary dynamic within the more powerful polity. Eisenstadt divides empires into two main types: *patrimonial empires* and *Imperial empires.*

The former are characterized by a homogeneity within the system, with few "symbolic and institutional [...] differences between the center and the periphery" (1979:23). In this type of empire, there is "relatively little restructuring of

the basic structural and cultural premises of the groups of the conquered and/or conquerors [... and] little restructuring of the relation between center and periphery" (1979:22). Rather, the center engages in "administration of law, attempts to maintain peace, exaction of taxation and the maintenance of some cultural and/or religious links to the center" (1979:23) via external links, which exploit preexisting local structures of authority. For example, in this type of empire the core extracts taxes in the form of tribute, which is collected from local rulers. These local rulers are allowed to maintain their power, but are subordinated to the core.

Imperial empires, on the other hand, are marked by a "high level of distinctiveness of the center and of the perception of the center as a distinct symbolic and organizational unit" (1979:25). In these systems, the center does not allow the internal structure of the periphery to persist unchanged, but rather makes "continuous attempts [...] not only to extract resources from the periphery but also to permeate it and to reconstruct it" (1979:25). Eisenstadt argues that societies which developed such Imperial systems share several important cultural features: first, a clear distinction between the "cosmic (religious) and mundane order" coupled with "a strong emphasis on the necessity to bridge between the transcendental sphere and the mundane order" (1979:27); second, a focus on "this-worldly" activity in the political, military, cultural, and economic spheres as a bridge between cosmic and mundane; and third, an emphasis on the role that each individual sector of the society played in fulfilling this necessary cosmic-mundane transcendence.

Eisenstadt divvies up the world's empires into two neat groups by focusing exclusively on the attributes of the centers. But interaction systems are not one-player games, and any successful explanatory framework will take into account all of the players.

2.1.2. *Metropole and Periphery: A Social-Structure Model*

Michael Doyle (1986) presents a model designed to correct this deficiency. Doyle defines an empire as "The political control exercised by one polity (the metropole) over the domestic and foreign policy and over the domestic politics of another polity (the periphery), resulting in control over who rules and what rulers can do" (1986:130). This definition focuses on the metropole's control of *who rules where*. Doyle divides empires into two modes, formal and informal. Formal empires are those in which the metropole officially annexes the periphery, and establishes imperial officials who oversee the local elites. Informal empires are those in which the local elites are legally independent, but where real political power still is mediated by the metropole.

On this definition, an empire has three main requirements: (1) a metropole, (2) an extension of the metropole's culture, economy, or political system, and (3) a periphery. A metropole is defined as having "a strong, united, central government, [...] a thorough sense of public legitimacy or community, [... and] a substantial degree of social differentiation" (1986:128-129). The centralized government is required to accumulate and mobilize the resources that are needed for imperial expansion and administration. The sense of community makes these resources public, and allows the central government to use them for expansion and administration. Social differentiation "helps create resources" (1986:129), presumably by creating more efficient, specialized modes of production.

The second requirement, the "transnational extension of the domestic society of the metropole" (1986:129), can take many forms. In the Athenian empire, this was the establishment of city-states, whereas for Rome it was the establishment of legal systems. But without some sort of transnational extension, the metropole cannot begin to penetrate the peripheral entity.

It is in his analysis of the periphery that Doyle differs the most from Eisenstadt. Doyle emphasizes the diversity of possible social structures within peripheries and potential peripheries. He introduces two parameters, borrowed from sociological literature, that define different types of political entities: *social differentiation* and *social integration* (see Levy 1952). Social differentiation describes the "specialization and separation of roles" (Doyle 1986:131), and social integration describes the level to which differentiated groups in a society are integrated into a single community. The various different types of political entities that result from different degrees of the two parameters are shown in figure 2.1.
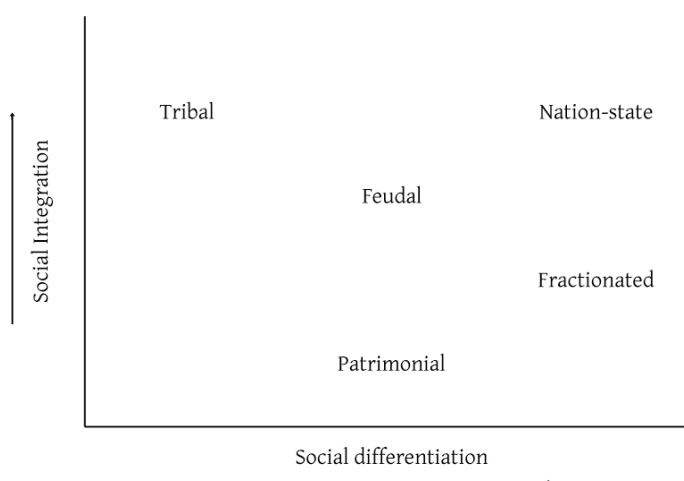
Figure 2.1. Social Parameters (after Doyle 1986: Figure 1)

Tribal societies have little or no central government or social differentiation, but have a strong sense of community integration. The lack of wide-scale political power precludes the mounting of a unified resistance to imperial attacks, and the lack of social differentiation makes technological progress difficult. This means that tribal societies are easy prey for imperially minded neighbors. *Patrimonial societies* exhibit more social differentiation than tribal societies, but they also have no strong central government. They also are less integrated, with significant populations belonging to parallel social

groups that each form a single community. Doyle argues that patrimonial societies also are prone to falling victim to imperial encroachment, but that local elites will likely collaborate with the empire. Similarly, *feudal societies* are likely to collaborate. These societies are socially differentiated to a similar degree as patrimonial societies, but exhibit greater social cohesion between different groups. *Fractionated societies* are highly differentiated, but exhibit only poor levels of social cohesion. This makes them highly volatile. The main difference between fractionated societies and nation-states is that in the latter, a sense of community or nationhood is greater than the feelings of discord between the various groups (ethnic, religious, or socio-economic). A final type of peripheral society is a *settler society*. This society is made up of people who originally come from the metropole, and whose loyalties still lie there. Settler societies can become dissatisfied with the metropole, however, destabilizing the equilibrium of the imperial system.

These various types of peripheral societies dictate different imperial strategies on the part of the metropole. Some types are more easily taken over by a metropole than others, and some types can actually bring an imperial system down. This emphasis on the important role of the second player in the trajectory of imperial relationships is an improvement over more simplified models.

2.1.3.   Empire and Colonialism

Ronald Horvath (1972) takes a different approach to defining empire. He starts by identifying variables that he believes are important for the definition, and then organizes these variables into a logical tree (see figure 2.2). For any societal relationship under examination, we ask simple yes/no questions at each stage, and follow the tree to the correct classification. The first variable Horvath considers is domination. Colonialism and imperialism are both forms of domination, so if the relationship in

question is not one of domination then we can conclude that the relationship is not a colonial or imperial one. Similarly, colonialism and imperialism are group phenomena, and concern only groups of a certain size. (Family relationships often contain some sort of domination, but families are not empires.) So if a relationship does not include large societal groups, then again it is not colonial or imperial. At the next level of the tree, we ask whether a relationship is within a group or between separate groups. If it is the former, then we are not dealing with a colonial or imperial relationship. If it is the latter, however, then we are. The next level differentiates between colonial and imperial relationships: the former involve the large-scale movement of settlers from the dominant group into the colony. We now have arrived at Horvath's basic definition of an imperial relationship: an intergroup relationship of domination that lacks settlers.

Having finally defined colonial and imperial relationships, Horvath next identifies three (non-exhaustive) strategies that imperial or colonial polities can use to dominate the periphery: extermination, assimilation, and equilibrium (see figure 2.3). This results in a six-part typology representing the six different logical possibilities. Type (1) is a strategy of colonial extermination. Here, settlers from the dominant polity move into the periphery, and attempt to completely replace the indigenous population. The American westward expansion in the nineteenth century could be seen as an example of this type. Type (2) is colonial assimilation. Here, the relationship between colonizer and colonized is one of cultural "donor" and "recipient." Horvath cites the "Islamification" of the Middle East in the seventh and eight centuries as an example of this type. Type (3), colonial equilibrium, occurs when settlers and indigenous populations live side-by-side, with neither extermination nor assimilation taking place. The European colonies in South Africa and Algeria appear to be of this type.
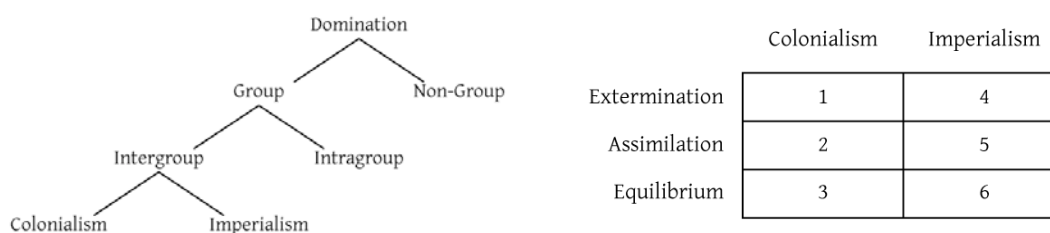
Figure 2.2. Horvath's Tree (after Horvath 1972: Figure 1)   Figure 2.3. The Typology (after Horvath 1972: Figure 2)

Next, we have three imperial strategies. Imperial relationships are differentiated from colonial relationships by the lack of any large-scale population movement from the dominant group into the periphery. Rather, the empire is controlled by a relatively small military and/or administrative force. In this classification, there are three logical types of imperial relationships. Type (4) is imperial extermination. Horvath notes that this strategy has probably never been (or ever will be) realized, since there seems to be no incentive for a dominant group to exterminate a peripheral group without subsequently colonizing their territory. Type (5), imperial assimilation, occurs when an imperialist polity attempts to "convert" the dominated population to the imperial culture. Horvath suggests that the Soviet satellite states are examples of this strategy. The final logical type in the tree is type (6), imperial equilibrium. This occurs when the imperialist polity makes no attempt to either exterminate or convert the dominated population, although Horvath allows that some level of cultural change will probably occur.

Horvath leaves this model open for further development. After outlining these six general strategies, he adds another variable, the stage of political development of the actors, to the tree. This leads to a tree with twelve logical possibilities for classifications (although we might already eliminate the two under the imperial extermination strategy). Similarly, we can easily come up with additional variables that we consider

important: economic development, levels of social integration, and so on. Each new variable doubles the number of possible classifications.

Although this approach provides a simple method for classifying different types of interaction systems, it has very little explanatory power. Describing *what* a certain relationship is may be a prerequisite to explaining *why* the relationship is that way, but mere descriptive frameworks can only be the beginning of any comprehensive analysis.

2.1.4.   *World-Systems Models*

One influential attempt to perform such a comprehensive analysis empire focuses on economic differences between the center and the periphery. Immanuel Wallerstein's (1974, 2004) world-systems theory has been the focus of intense discussion since its initial publication. This theory attempts to model the development of the European capitalist systems since the sixteenth century, replacing older modernization and dependency models (see Chirot and Hall 1982:81-84; Wallerstein 2004:1-22). Wallerstein divides the international system into three hierarchical groups: a dominant core, a dependant periphery, and an intermediate semi-periphery (1974:63; see also Stein 1999:10-14). Technically, the terms core and periphery refer to products and modes of production, not polities, but the terms are frequently used as shorthand to refer to regions where the respective modes of production predominate. The terms are relational, and deal with the relative profitability of different modes of production. Core production methods are those with a high degree of monopolization, whereas peripheral production methods are more universally accessible. This monopolization means that core products have an advantage over peripheral products, leading to unequal exchange and a flow of surplus from peripheral producers to core producers. Polities can be referred to as core, peripheral, or semi-peripheral based on the relative ratio of core and peripheral modes of production (Wallerstein 2004:28-29). Core modes

of production tend to predominate in polities with a high degree of integration; that is, a "strong state machinery coupled with a national culture" (Wallerstein 1974:349). Peripheral areas, on the other hand, have weak state machinery and are dominated by the core states. Peripheral areas primarily produce raw staple goods, which have a low return on labor investments (Wallerstein 1974:301-302). Semi-peripheral areas are in between core and peripheral areas in terms of state machinery and modes of production, but they play an essential role in Wallerstein's analysis. According to Wallerstein, the semi-periphery serves as a buffer zone between the core and periphery, deflecting political tensions that could be directed at the core.

These three types of polities make up a world-system. Wallerstein divides world-systems into two general types: world-empires and world-economies (for all of these terms, the word 'world' does not imply these systems must cover the entire world, but rather that they function as a world; that is, as a holistic unit; see Wallerstein 2004:16-17).

A world-empire is primarily a political unit. An empire maintains an economic flow from the periphery to the core via some centralized system of direct taxation or tribute, which is supported by coercive force. This centralization requires a large bureaucracy, which absorbs much of the profitability of the system. As Wallerstein puts it, "political empires are primitive means of economic domination" (1974:15).

A world-economy is a much more efficient system. The concept of a world-economy (*économie-monde*) is derived from the work of Fernand Braudel (for an overview of his views, see his 1970). A world-economy is defined as "a large geographic zone within which there is a division of labor and hence a significant internal exchange of basic or essential goods as well as flows of capital and labor" (Wallerstein 2004:23). The emphasis on basic or essential goods is not accidental: Wallerstein argues that trade in

luxury goods is "a method of consuming surplus and not producing it [...] and consequently not central to the functioning of the economic system" (1974:306-307; see also 341-342). It is also important to note that a world-economy is not a political organization; rather, it is made up of various different polities, interacting within an interstate system. This lack of centralization allows the economic system to function with a maximum of efficiency: it eliminates "the 'waste' of too cumbersome a political superstructure" (Wallerstein 1974:16).

Wallerstein argues that while world-empires have existed in various forms through much of history, there has only been one lasting world-economy: the modern capitalist system, which developed in western Europe beginning in the mid-15th century (1974:63). Wallerstein admits that world-economies had existed before this point, but he argues that these pre-capitalist world-economies were always ephemeral, transforming quickly into world-empires such as China, Persia, and Rome. The reason for this, according to Wallerstein, is that a viable long-term world-economy requires capitalism (1974:15). As we shall see, this has proved a contentious point.

Even among those who actively use world-systems theory, there is sharp disagreement about nearly every detail of the theory, even extending to the question of whether or not the term "world-system" should contain a hyphen (see Wallerstein 1993; Frank 2000). Although Wallerstein's formulation of world-systems theory was meant to describe the modern world system, since its inception adherents of the theory have debated its applicability to pre-capitalist systems. In an influential early paper, Jane Schneider (1977) argues for an extension of the world-systems framework to cover pre-capitalist societies. She primarily takes issue with Wallerstein's devaluation of luxury goods, arguing that trade in raw staple goods is not the only significant link between societies. Rather, Schneider argues that luxury goods are essential to the

development of social stratification, not only allowing the elite group to "[distinguish] itself through the careful application of sumptuary laws and a monopoly on symbols of status," but also allowing the "manipulation of various [...] middle-level groups [through] patronage, bestowals, and the calculated distribution of exotic and valued goods" (1977:23). Thus, luxury goods are not mere items of vanity that can be discarded without changing the social and political structure of a society, but structurally important goods. Based on this, Schneider argues for the existence of a pre-capitalist world-system, in which "core-areas accumulated precious metals while exporting manufactures, whereas peripheral areas gave up those metals (and often slaves) against an inflow of finished goods" (1977:25). According to Schneider, these finished goods have often been textiles, leading to a recurring "theme of precious metals for cloth" (1977:25).

2.2.   The Inadequacy of Empire

Although these different views of empire each have attractive points, each suffers from some fundamental flaws. The first flaw is a tendency towards overgeneralization and essentialism. This especially afflicts Eisenstadt's model of patrimonial and imperial empires and Wallerstein's world-system model, and to a somewhat lesser extent, Doyle's model. The shortcomings of these approaches are immediately apparent. First, essentialist models like these, which posit discrete packages of characteristics that always accompany each other, might look plausible when stated in purely abstract terms. But when faced with the rich kaleidoscope of social relationships in the real world, they rapidly fall apart. There is no *a priori* reason that a society that has mostly "peripheral modes of production" might come to dominate a society that has mostly

"core modes." There is no essential characteristic of dominance that goes along with core production modes!

Second, several of these models divide human societies into a limited number of groups based on an examination of a limited number of variables. For Wallerstein, the only variable that really matters is production modes. For Eisenstadt, it is the relative level of structural differences between center and periphery. But human societies are much too complex to be handled with such simplistic models. Many different variables – economic, social, cultural, and ideological – interact to create unique societal conditions. Focusing on a limited number of variables will inevitably distort the picture, flattening out legitimate differences between different systems. Horvath's model is designed to correct this specific deficiency. It allows for consideration of any variable that we decide is important to understanding the behavior of the system, but suffers from the opposite problem, over-specification.

If we continue to add variables to the tree, eventually we will have a tree with thousands of end nodes, each neatly containing one example of a human system. This is simply another way of stating that every human society is unique! These concerns get at a very real problem that faces anyone studying human societies. On the one hand, each human society is a unique occurrence, situated in a particular historical circumstance that can never be exactly replicated. On the other hand, within this endless novelty, there seem to be certain patterns of behavior and interactions that repeat themselves over and over. The trick is finding a model that correctly balances these two opposing facts. If our model is general enough to encompass a large number of different historical systems, then it runs the risk of being too general to provide specific historical explanations. But as a model loses generality, the number of historical systems that it can apply to shrinks, until we are left with a different model

for each and every historical system. This would make comparison between different systems difficult, if not impossible.

But beyond this tension between generality and specificity, each of these approaches suffers from the third and deepest flaw. This flaw has to do with the very nature of the exercise with which these scholars are involved, and as such cannot be solved by merely tweaking the resulting models. To see what this flaw is, we have to take a step back from the individual theories.

First, it is an important and often overlooked fact that 'empires' (along with 'states', 'chiefdoms', and 'tribes') are not what some philosophers of language would call *natural kinds.* A natural kind is some set of objects that all share some innate hidden structure (for a discussion, see Putnam 1979:238-241). For example, water is considered a natural kind, since all water shares the hidden chemical structure of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom. But empires do not share such a hidden structure. The term 'empire' is a term of convenience that we use to designate certain types of relationships in which one side dominates the other side. But the set of things that we call 'empires' is not a rigid set; that is, we can change the extension of the set almost at will, merely by changing the definition of the word 'empire'. (Indeed, when scholars are arguing about whether or not a certain system should be counted as an empire, this is usually where the disagreement lies. They often are not arguing about any of the "historical facts," but rather are arguing about the proper definition of 'empire'.) However, the set of things that we call 'water' is a rigid set, and identifying whether or not a certain sample of liquid is water is a simple matter of identifying the underlying structure of the sample.

But if the term 'empire' does not represent a natural kind, what does it represent? The answer, at least in some sense, turns out to be 'nothing'. That is, the term 'empire' is a heuristic device that we use to simplify complex systems in order to try to

understand them. There is nothing inherent to the systems under study that makes them empires: rather, it is our particular intellectual needs at any given time that determine which systems should or should not be considered empires. This by itself is not a criticism of models of empire. We all use various heuristic models every day, and they serve a valuable purpose. But sometimes, over-reliance on certain heuristic models can lead to problematic thinking. The case of empire models is one of these.

One problem lies in the tendency of empire models to divide the members of systems into two discrete types: the dominators and the dominated. Once a polity is classified as one or the other, we tend to view all of that polity's actions through the lens of the imperial relationship. We also tend to flatten differences between members of the same classification, and to interpret all of the historical data in particular ways. Of course, sophisticated scholars are able to at least partially transcend these problems by paying careful attention to their assumptions, and by focusing on accurately reconstructing the characteristics of the various agents within a system. But unfortunately, when we move from the abstract level of theory-making to the real-world level of historical reconstruction and explanation, it becomes much harder to limit the damage that these models can inflict upon the evidence.

Another reason why traditional empire models fail is that they focus on the *structure* of a society while for the most part excluding any focus on the *actors within the system.* This leaves empire models static, since it is the collective actions of the actors that create the structure and give it its constant novelty. That is, the structure is an emergent behavior of the collective whole of the actors. Neglecting this fact is one of the easiest – but also one of the most dangerous – mistakes that a historian can make.

The next chapter will describe an example of how an uncritical application of empire models can distort our evidence and influence an entire body of otherwise

outstanding historical research. Although this influence can be lessened by simply adapting a more critical approach to the same models, I believe that these problems will persist as long as these models are in use. Thus, it seems that a wholesale rejection of these theories is needed. Until now, however, such a rejection has been impractical at best, given the lack of a suitable alternative framework. But I believe that such a new framework is easy to find. Before going on to the case study, I will briefly outline a promising new approach.

2.3.   Towards a New Model

This new framework avoids the major pitfall of imperial models by focusing on the actual behavior of actors in a system rather than on any supposed characteristics of the actors. This has two benefits: first, the focus on behavior treats each actor equally, avoiding the problems of categorization discussed above. (This is not to say that each agent in a system has an equal effect on the system, but merely that each agent is considered as the same type of actor. Exactly what is meant by this will become clear below.) Second, this approach suits the types of historical evidence that we have access to. Most of the textual evidence that we have is concerned with peoples' actions, and archaeological evidence largely consists of the material remains of such actions.

2.3.1.   Complex Adaptive Systems Analysis

This new framework borrows some conceptions from a rapidly growing field, *complex adaptive systems* analysis (for a fascinating account of the early history of this approach, see Waldrop 1992; and also Holland 1996; Holland 1998). Human interaction systems are a complex network of interdependent agents. These systems can be modeled using the concept of a complex adaptive system. This approach has been

applied with great success in fields as diverse as biology (Adami 2002), economics (Arthur et al. 1996), and business management (Dooley 1997), just to list a few

In a classic definition, John Holland lists seven basic features that define a complex adaptive system:

"(1) All CAS consist of [...] *agents* who incessantly interact with each other. (2) It is the concerted behavior of these agents, the *aggregate behavior*, which we must understand. [...] (3) The interactions that generate this aggregate behavior are non-linear, so that the aggregate behavior cannot be derived by simply summing up the behaviors of the individual agents. (4) The agents in CAS are not only numerous, but also diverse. [...] (5) The diversity of CAS agents is not just a kaleidoscope of accidental patterns; remove one of the agent types and the system reorganizes itself with a cascade of changes, usually 'filling in the hole' in the process. (6) The diversity evolves, with new niches for interaction emerging, and new kinds of agents filling them. As a result, the aggregate behavior, instead of settling down, exhibits a perpetual novelty. [...] (7) CAS agents employ *internal models* to direct their behavior, [...] a set of rules that enables an agent to anticipate the consequences of its actions" (1995:45-46).

For an interregional system such as the one under consideration, the agents are states; but in different systems the agents can be corporations, political parties, or even individual people. The agents in this interregional system are each complex systems in their own right, and the agents of those systems are also complex systems (Gell-Mann 1995:12). Changes in lower-level systems can cause changes in upper-level systems, and vice versa. For example, a political upheaval in a member state will likely cause changes in the interregional system, and a general reduction in trade between members will likely cause changes in the economies of the member states.

A complex adaptive system exists within an environment, which affects and is affected by the agents. The agents' internal models are modified as the agents receive feedback from their environment, in a continuous process of readjustment. That is, agents' behavior affects the environment, which in turn affects agents' behavior. These feedback loops exist between individual agents as well. This means that as more agents join the system, the number of feedback loops increases exponentially. When we consider that each of the agents within the system is a complex system on its own, it becomes clear just how difficult it is to produce an exact mathematical model of such a system.

However, when dealing with historical systems, we are not concerned with producing exact mathematical models. Rather, we are interested in describing the various interactions between agents, and in explaining the motivations for these interactions. Complex adaptive systems analysis provides a conceptual vocabulary that we can use to build a framework for historical description and explanation.

This vocabulary avoids our constructed division of polities into discrete groups of "centers" and "peripheries." In this framework, we do not look at the "peripheries" as entities inherently different from the "centers," but rather look at each member of the system as an adaptive agent. Each of these agents (whether it is a kingdom, a city, a group of merchants, or an individual person) is constantly making decisions about future actions, taking into consideration various features of the environment. These actions affect the other agents in the vicinity. Some agents have much more influence than others, and some have almost no influence. But the process of decision-making and acting is the same.

As an aid to visualizing how the various agents of this complex system affect each other, we can use a modified version of Kurt Lewin's (1951) classic concept of an

interaction field (see figure 2.4). A field is visualized as a dynamic whole (the system), composed of interdependent cells (agents). Where these cells overlap, a change in one cell will affect the other cells that it overlaps. Many factors can affect the degree of influence that one cell has on another. Each cell is assigned specific values for several different variables: the ability to cause change in its neighbors, the resistance to changes from its neighbors, the number of cells that it overlaps with, and so on.
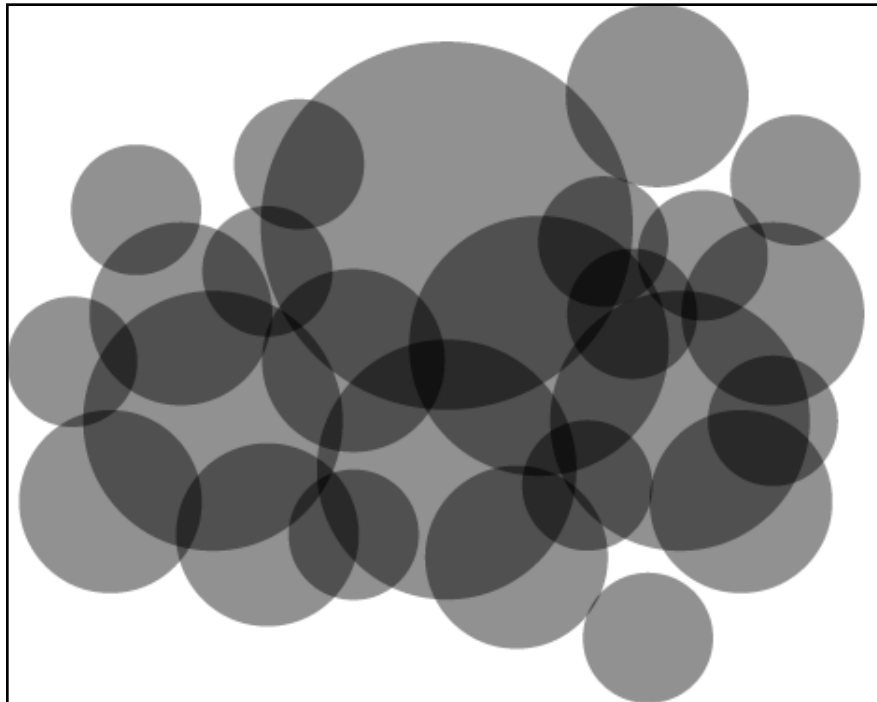
Figure 2.4. Simplified Interaction Field

This is, of course, quite simplified and abstract. Real-life systems are likely to be much messier, especially when we consider that at the level of states each of these cells is actually a system of its own. We could continue subdividing these cells until we reach a level of individual humans. We also have to remember that even within a closed population, at any one time there are numerous parallel systems (i.e. economic, ideological, military, or political, to list a few). When we are considering agents that are

aggregates of individual humans, the various groups that an individual is a member of are unlikely to line up.

We should note, of course, that this is not a theory. It is a conceptual model, which by itself has no explanatory or predictive power. Rather, like the concept of empire this is a heuristic device, which we can use to give shape to a great variety of evidence. This framework has several advantages over empire models, however. As stated above, it avoids the pitfalls of "center-periphery" vocabulary, while still allowing for real differences in the level of influence that different polities have within the system. It also can handle a much greater variety of human interaction systems, from simple "village" systems of a few hundred people to huge international systems composed of entire nations. It does this without falling into the trap of over-generalizing.

This model also has a dynamic element that traditional empire models lack. This dynamism comes from the agent-based nature of the model. Under this model, the primary locus of study is the actor, whether we take that actor to be an individual person or a collection of persons. We examine the social structures that arise from the interactions of these agents, but the structure is seen in its proper place: as a creation of the actors, not as some sort of essential nature of the system.

3.   Egypt and Amurru: Historical Background

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The previous chapter's discussion remained in the abstract realm. But theories and models in history, however interesting, are meant to be *used* for historical reconstruction. The benefits and pitfalls of any particular approach really only become clear through application. Thus, in order to demonstrate the pitfalls of the current models, and the benefit of the proposed new model, we should make a short historical study. For several reasons, the Late Bronze Age relationship between Egypt and Amurru, a small polity on the Syrian coast, provides us with a perfect opportunity for such a study.

First, in the Late Bronze Age the Near East was home to a rich network of interacting polities. These polities were of various sizes and had varying levels of political, economic, and military power, which means that the resulting system contains a great deal of built-in dynamism. Second, scholars who study this system have tended to describe it explicitly in terms of empire. As we will see, this has led to several pseudo-problems and misguided reconstructions.

3.1.   The Sources

Through a fortuitous series of archaeological accidents, we have a diverse set of sources for reconstructing the history of the Late Bronze Age in the Near East. These sources come from almost every part of the system, and show a remarkable degree of overlap in terms of the people and places mentioned.

3.1.1. The el-Amārna Archive

Tel el-Amārna is located in Middle Egypt along the Nile River. Here, in the mid-14th century BCE, the 18th Dynasty king Amenophis IV/Akhenaten built a new capital city, Akhetaten (Kemp 1989:261-266; van Dijk 2000). This city was abandoned at Akhenaten's death, but this brief episode in the history of Egypt has had lasting importance for scholars, primarily because the rapid abandonment of Akhetaten and the subsequent lack of settlement at that site means that the archaeological remains of the city have been left almost undisturbed (Hornung 1999:102). The site has been the object of scholarly attention since at least 1714, and serious excavation began in 1891 under the guidance of William Flinders Petrie. Since 1907, a succession of archaeological expeditions have dug at the site, including the Deutsche Orientgesellschaft, the London-based Egypt Exploration Fund, and the Egypt Exploration Society. The latter group has been excavating continuously at the site since 1977 (for the history of excavation at the site, see Bryan 1997).

For the historian, the most important part of the archaeological remains is the archive of Akhenaten's state department, a collection of 382 clay tablets inscribed with (mostly Akkadian) cuneiform. These tablets are mostly letters between the pharaoh and both minor Levantine rulers and the other great kings (see Moran 1992:xiii-xviii; for a discussion of couriers, see Crown 1974). This archive is of such importance that it has lent its name to the entire period, which is commonly called the "Amārna age."

These letters were published several times in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (for example, see Bezold and Budge 1892; Winckler 1896; Conder 1894). But the edition that has endured is that of Jørgen Knudtzon (1915), whose numbering system (*EA* 1-358) is still the standard for citing the letters. The discovery of new texts motivated Anson Rainey's (1978) edition, which includes texts 359-379.

William Moran, whose doctoral dissertation (2003 [1950]) showed the northwest

Semitic influence on the Peripheral Akkadian dialect of the Levantine letters, translated

the corpus into French (1987) and again into English (1992). Building on Moran's work,

Anson Rainey (1996a, b, c, d) produced a comprehensive study of Peripheral Akkadian

as it appears in the letters, and Shlomo Izreʾel and Itamar Singer (1991) analyzed the

language of the letters from Amurru.

Similar letters from the same period have also been found in the Levant. Some eight

letters have been recovered from the site of Kāmid el-Lōz, ancient Kumidi (These letters

are all published separately. See Edzard 1970, 1980, 1982; Hachmann 1970; Huehnergard

1996; Naʾaman 1988, 2005; Wilhelm 1982b). A single letter was discovered at Tell Kazel,

ancient Ṣumur (Roche 2003). Additional letters have been discovered at Tel Aphek (1

letter), Beth Shan (1), Gezer (1), and Taʿanak (9) (see Horowitz et al. 2002, and references

therein).

3.1.2.   *The Boğazköy and other Anatolian Archives*

Boğazköy, located in north central Anatolia, was the site of Ḫattuša, the capital city

of the Hittite kingdom. Discovered by Charles Texier in 1874, the site was excavated by

the Deutsche Orientgesellschaft and the Deutsches Archäologische Institut between

1906 and 1912, and has been excavated continuously since 1931 by the Deutsches

Archäologische Institut (see Güterbock 1997). The archives of Boğazköy consist of more

than 5000 clay tablets inscribed with Hittite and Akkadian cuneiform (Bryce 2005:383,

387-388). These tablets include domestic decrees, legal and religious texts, royal annals,

diplomatic letters, and treaties (Bryce 2005:390-391). It is the latter two categories, of

course, which highlight the prominent role that the Hittite kings played in the

international scene of the Late Bronze Age. Other archives of cuneiform texts have been

uncovered from various sites in Anatolia, including the major sites of Maşat Höyük,

Ortaköy, Kuşaklı, and Kayalıpınar. Together with the tablets from Boğazköy, these total more than 30,000 tablets (Hoffner and Melchert 2008:2-3). The majority of these texts appear in facsimile in three main series: *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi* (*KBo*) (1916-2008, currently at 58 volumes); the 60-volume series *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi* (*KUB*) (1921-1990); and the four-volume series *Istanbul arkeoloji müzelerinde bulunan Boğazköy tabletleri* (*IBoT*) (1944-1988). The texts are collected and numbered by Emmanuel Laroche (1971, 1972), with continuing work by Silvin Košak (2002-2010). A collection of the diplomatic texts are translated into English by Gary Beckman (1996).

3.1.3.   The Raš Šamrā Archives

Raš Šamrā, unlike el-Amārna and Ḫattuša, was not the seat of a great power, but rather a small (yet nonetheless influential) city-state, Ugarit. Ugarit, located on the northern coast of Syria at a crossroads between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean world, was an economically important center of trade in the Late Bronze Age (Caubet 2000:35; Heltzer 1999:439). It maintained trade relations with all of the great Near Eastern powers, as well as with Mycenaean Greece and the Levant (Rainey 1965:103; Malbran-Labat 2000).

The site of Raš Šamrā has been excavated continuously between 1929 and 1970 by Claude Schaeffer, and from 1978 to the present by Marguerite Yon (for a brief summary of the excavations and their results, see Yon 2006). The results of the excavation have been published in three main series (in addition to numerous articles, monographs, and conference proceedings): the seven-volume series *Ugaritica* (1934-1978); the six-volume series *Le Palais royal d'Ugarit* (*PRU*) (1955-1970); and the continuing series *Ras Shamra-Ougarit* (*RSO*) (1983-2008), currently at 17 volumes.

Raš Šamrā has yielded numerous cuneiform tablets in Akkadian and Ugaritic (a Canaanite dialect), including "administrative, economic, epistolary, legal, religious, or

mythological [texts]" (Dalix 2000:197). These texts appeared first in the series noted above (especially *Ugaritica* V and VII, *PRU* II-VI, and *RSO* II, IV, VII, and XII). The majority of the alphabetic cuneiform texts were edited separately by Andrée Herdner (1963), André Caquot and his colleagues (1974; 1989) and Cyrus Gordon (1965), but the definitive modern edition is that of Manfried Dietrich and his colleagues (1976; updated and translated into English in Dietrich et al. 1995). The Akkadian texts are collected and discussed by John Huehnergard (1989) and Wilfred van Soldt (1991). Several of these texts involve international relations.

3.1.4.   The Hieroglyphic Egyptian Sources

Textual sources from Egypt are staggeringly vast. Fortunately, the majority of the important texts for the history of the eighteenth dynasty are collected in an autographed 22-fascicle book, *Urkunden des 18. Dynastie* (Sethe and Helck 1906-1958). German translations of these texts appear in three separate volumes published by Kurt Sethe (Sethe 1914), Wolfgang Helck (1961), and Elke Blumenthal and her colleagues (1984). An English translation of fascicles 17-19 was published by Helck's student Barbara Cumming (1982, 1984b, a), and the other fascicles were translated into English by Benedict Davies (1992, 1994, 1995). Other assorted texts appear in James Henry Breasted's (1906) *Ancient Records of Egypt*, although these translations are now slightly outdated. William Murnane (1995) translated a selection of texts from the Amārna age into English.

3.2.   Historical Background: The Amārna Age

3.2.1.   *The International System in the Amārna Age*

These sources illuminate a world of rich international connections; a world in which diplomatic intrigue and political partnership entwine together, forming a complex network of interdependent – and at times conflicting – polities. Although the balance of power seems to have shifted constantly, one group of nations claimed to control the entire system. The kings of these nations – Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Hatti, and Mitanni – communicated with each other as equals, exchanging letters and gifts and marrying into each other's families (Bryce 2003:42-53; Liverani 2000). Although the indigenous cultures of each of these kingdoms are quite different, these "great kings" developed a shared international elite culture, with the Akkadian language serving as a lingua franca (Cohen and Westbrook 2000:9-10). This culture was "dominated by large palace complexes [... which] often included extensive workshops for the manufacture of specialized products" (Feldman 2002:9), which show a marked "international style" (see also Feldman 2006). Around the edges of these kingdoms, numerous independent and semi-independent polities flourished.

In this context, the Mediterranean played host to a vibrant trade network, which involved not only the great kingdoms and the Levantine polities, but also Mycenaean Greece and beyond (for a general overview, see Klengel 1979). A bewildering variety of goods, both raw and finished, luxury and staple, flowed across the Mediterranean. For example, the Amārna-period ship wrecked off of Uluburun, a cape on the southern coast of Turkey, carried a cargo of copper ingots from Cyprus and tin ingots from an unknown source; glass ingots, probably from Egypt; olive oil and pistachio resin from the Levant; Mycenaean pottery; blackwood from the Sudan; and beautifully finished

ivory cosmetic boxes, perhaps from Ugarit (for the Uluburun wreck, see Yalçın et al. 2005; for a general overview of ships and seafaring in the period, see Wachsmann 1998).

Trade patterns in the period appear to have become quite specialized. Analysis of the clay fabric and residue of amphorae from el-Amārna show that certain areas specialized in the export of certain products. It appears that the area around Ugarit and Amurru specialized in the production of olive oil, while the area south of Byblos specialized in the production of resin (Serpico et al. 2002).

3.2.2.   A Brief History of Egypt's Eighteenth Dynasty

The events of the Amārna age take place at the beginning of the eighteenth dynasty, the first of Egypt's New Kingdom period (for a general overview, see Bryan 2000; Redford 1967; van Dijk 2000). The first king of this period, Ahmose (reigned c. 1550-1525 BCE)[1], ascended to the throne just after he had driven out a dynasty of foreign Levantine rulers, known as the Hyksos (Knapp 1988:171; for discussions of the Hyksos, see Oren 1997; Van Seters 1966 and references therein). Ahmose began to take an active role in world affairs, leading expeditions into Egypt's southern neighbor, Nubia. Ahmose's grandson, Thutmose I (c. 1504-1492 BCE), continued Ahmose's international affairs, carrying out several minor campaigns in Syria (Klengel 1992:90). Thutmose's son and successor, Thutmose II, died in c. 1479 when his son, Thutmose III, was only a child (Hornung 1999:82). Therefore, Thutmose II's sister, Hatshepsut, was appointed regent. Hatshepsut quickly gave herself a throne name and declared herself pharaoh, although Thutmose III was still officially a coregent (Bryan 2000:228-229). She ruled Egypt for more than two decades, focusing on building economic ties with surrounding countries (Knapp 1988:173). After her death in c. 1458 BCE, Thutmose III assumed the throne. He did not follow his aunt's peaceful policies; but rather embarked on a series of

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[1] (All dates for Egyptian kings are after von Beckerath 1999:286)

campaigns in Syria, where a coalition of city-states had allied themselves with the rising power of Mitanni.

Thutmose III is often credited with reestablishing Egypt's control over the Levant. Egypt had a heavy presence in the Levant (especially the southern Levant) since at least the Early Bronze Age (Brandl 1992; Braun 2002; Redford 1992), and earlier 18th dynasty pharaohs had carried out sporadic campaigns (Redford 1979), but Thutmose III began campaigning on a scale that is unattested for any earlier time period. These campaigns began in earnest in the 23rd year of his reign, about a year after Hatshepsut died (for a general history of these campaigns, see Klengel 1970:178-190, 1992:91-96; Redford 2003, 2006). Between his 23rd and 42nd years, Thutmose III recorded 14 "campaigns of victory," although he probably took part in earlier, smaller campaigns during the period of the coregency (O'Connor 2006:27-29). Egyptian campaigns lasted a few months at a time, after which the non-professional army returned to their regular non-military duties in Egypt (Redford 2006:197-200).

Our knowledge of these campaigns is based largely on Egyptian sources. Extensive sections of the so-called "Daybook of the King," inscribed on the wall of a temple in Karnak, contain detailed accounts of the first campaign and the battle of Megiddo (Redford 2003:1-7). A wide variety of public and private stele, economic texts, and biographical texts provide information about Thutmose III's other campaigns (Redford 2006:101-102, 153, 164 ff). Since the following reconstruction is based only on Egyptian texts, it is inadvisable to put too much weight on the accuracy of the details. However, the general progression of Thutmose III's various campaigns is most likely accurate, even if the details of his accomplishments are probably embellished.

Thutmose III's first major campaign was mounted in response to a threatening coalition that was building in the Levant, centered on the city-states of Qedeš and

Tunip, and probably backed by the Mittani kingdom in northeastern Syria (Wilhelm 1982a:36). The Gebel Barkal stele from the temple of Amun contains an account of this campaign:

URK IV: 1234-1235	It was on my first campaign that he [Re] conferred the foreign land of Retjenu on me when they came to engage my majesty with (their) vast numbers of men, hundreds of thousands from among the finest of all the foreign lands, standing in their chariots, 330 chieftains, each one with his army.
	They were in the valley of Kyna, prepared, in fact, in a narrow defile. A successful deed took place among them at my hand. My Majesty attacked them. Then they fled at once, falling prostrate. They entered into Megiddo and my Majesty besieged them for a period of seven months until they emerged beseeching my Majesty, saying, "Give to us your breath, O Lord of ours! Never again will the foreigners of Retjenu rebel against you!" (Translation from Cumming 1982:3).

Although this text undoubtedly presents an idealized and colored version of the events, it contains what Redford argues is a historical fact: the "foreigners" of the alliance really were gathering forces for an attack on Egypt itself. As Hatshepsut neared death, this coalition began gathering forces near Megiddo in the Jordan Valley (Redford 2003:193, 2006:330). Thutmose III defeated the coalition, but continued to campaign in Syria. He carried out three campaigns over the next five years, focused on securing the southern Levant.

In Thutmose III's fifth through seventh campaigns, he turned northwards towards the Phoenician littoral. He took over several of the coastal towns and used them as bases to collect and store food and supplies for his armies (Redford 2006:331-332). During the fifth campaign, Thutmose III captured Ullaza, on the coast north of Byblos, followed by the inland site of Ardata. These two cities were defended by troops from

Tunip. The sixth campaign captured the cities of Qidšu and Ṣumur, and the seventh campaign in Thutmose III's 31st year recaptured Ullaza (Klengel 1992:92). Having lost Ullaza once before, Thutmose III left a garrison of troops in the city when he returned to Egypt at the end of that campaign (see *URK* IV:1237).

Then Thutmose III turned inland. To support these campaigns, Thutmose III relied on a system of coastal strongpoints (see Alt 1950). These strongholds included the cities of Ullaza, Ṣumur, and Tunip. In these cities, semi-permanent garrisons were installed, and food supplies for the rest of the army were collected (Helck 1971:137-138; Naʾaman 1981). In his eighth campaign in the 33rd year of his reign, Thutmose III crossed the Euphrates river with his army. This brought him directly into the territory of Mitanni. He erected a stele north of Carchemish to commemorate this historic achievement (Redford 2006:333). Thutmose III's army ambushed and defeated a Mitannian army, but did not defeat the kingdom. Only two years later, in Thutmose III's 35th year, the Egyptian force fought a set-piece battle against Mitanni, which ended inconclusively. Thutmose III was forced out of Mitannian territory. In years 34 and 38 Thutmose III turned his attention southwards, towards the inland kingdom of Nuḫašše. He defeated them, and set up one Takuwa as king (Redford 2006:333-335).

Thutmose III died in c. 1425 BCE, after a reign of some 54 years. His son, Amenophis II (c. 1428-1397 BCE), continued his father's program of campaigning in Syria (Klengel 1992:96; Malamat 1961). Thutmose IV (c.1397-1388 BCE) made peace with the Mitannian king Artatama and married his daughter (Knapp 1988:174). Thutmose IV went on at least one campaign in Syria, but the location and extent of it is still debated (see Bryan 1991).

Thutmose IV's son, Amenophis III, succeeded him in c. 1388 BCE (for this pharaoh, see O'Connor and Cline 1998). Amenophis entered energetically into relationships with

the other great powers; concluding diplomatic marriages with the daughters of the Mitannian kings Shuttarna and Tushratta as well as the sister of the Babylonian king Kadashman-Enlil (Hornung 1999:95-96; Bryce 2005:109). The earliest letters from the Amārna archive date to the reign of Amenophis III, but the majority of them come from the reign of his son, Amenophis IV (c. 1351-1334 BCE).[2]

This pharaoh is famed as Egypt's heretic king (see, for example Redford 1984). This reputation is due to his elevation of the cult of the sun god Aten above all other cults. He took the throne name Akhenaten ("He Who Acts Effectively on Behalf of the Aten"), and built a new capital city at el-Amārna, which he called Akhetaten ("The Horizon of Aten") (van Dijk 2000:269; Kemp 1989:261-266). But upon Akhenaten's death in c. 1334 BCE, Akhetaten was abandoned and Egypt reverted to its traditional religion (Knapp 1988:180). The throne passed rapidly through the hands of several kings; these included Akhenaten's son (or son-in-law) Tutankhamun, a minor king whose fame is due to the chance survival of his tomb (Hornung 1999:106). Tutankhamun's early death led to a crisis of succession: his widow, Ankhesenamun, wrote to Šuppiluliuma of Hatti asking him to send his son to marry her. If honored, this unusual request would ensure that she would retain some vestige of power, but would effectively reduce Egypt to a vassal of Hatti. After investigating, Šuppiluliuma sent his son Zannanza to marry her, but Zannanza was mysteriously killed on the way to Egypt (van Dijk 2000:283-284). In the confusion and intrigue that followed this incident, the general Horemheb seized the throne, ruling for nearly three decades. At his death in c. 1292 BCE, he passed the throne to his general, Rameses I, whose ascent ushered in the 19th dynasty (Hornung 1999:107).

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[2] There is some controversy over a hypothetical coregency of Amenophis III and Akhenaten (see i.e. Campbell 1964; Murnane 1977:123-168, 1995:4-5; Redford 1967), but the current study is not seriously affected by the controversy.

3.2.3.   Overview of the History of Amurru

The history of Amurru is still only poorly understood (for a rather dated but still comprehensive history, see Waterhouse 1965:102-158; otherwise Klengel 1964; Klengel 1969:245-325; Singer 1991b). This is due in part to Amurru's relatively small size and peripheral status, but also to a lack of serious archaeological research on the area (see Singer 1991b:135). The name Amurru (usually written logographically as MAR.TU, generally meaning "west" in Akkadian) first appears in Akkadian texts in the late 3rd millennium BCE, where it appears to refer to the general region of Syria rather than to any specific political entity (Singer 1991a:69). In the Amārna corpus, the name refers specifically to the area between Ullaza, Ṣumur, and Tunip. This change is conventionally dated to the establishment of these cities as Egyptian strongholds (for example, see Helck 1971:287; Singer 1991a:69, 1991b:139).

The city of Ṣumur, identified with the site of Tel Kazel on the Syrian coast (see Klengel 1984), is especially important in the history of Amurru. This site has been excavated most recently by the American University in Beirut (see Badre and Gubel 2000; Badre et al. 1990). Stieglitz (1991) identifies Ṣumur as the "city of Amurru" mentioned in *EA* 162, and argues that it must be the capital of the kingdom of Amurru. This kingdom was originally composed of semi-nomadic groups who dwelt in the forested inland hills (Singer 1991b:139; Liverani 1973:116-117). The first known ruler of this polity is a man named ʿAbdi-Aširta. Although his origins are unknown, ʿAbdi-Aširta rose to power and quickly began capturing coastal urban centers, exploiting the unsettled economic and political conditions of the coast. These conditions, which perhaps resulted from heavy Egyptian tribute combined with excessive extraction of wealth by the urban elite, caused a large number of the urban lower classes to flee the cities. These displaced people, called in the texts ʿapiru or ḫabiru (LÚ.SA.GAZ or LÚ.GAZ;

see CAD 16:84), moved into the hill country, where they joined forces with ʿAbdi-Aširta (Liverani 1973:117; for a discussion of this group, see Naʾaman 1986). ʿAbdi-Aširta began to lead this coalition into the coastal region. He captured the city of Ṣumur, which had been attacked by the ruler of an unidentified town called Šeḫlal (Singer 1991b:144; for a discussion of Šeḫlal, see Altman 1978:103-107). Now in firm control of the region, ʿAbdi-Aširta wrote to Egypt, claiming to be "a servant of the king and dog of his house (*EA* 60)." But ʿAbdi-Aširta's campaigns alarmed the rulers of the cities to the south – especially Rib-Hadda, the king of Byblos (for the career of Rib-Hadda, see Jidejian 1968:46-53). He also sent letters to Egypt, claiming that "the war of the ʿApiru forces against me is extremely severe (*EA* 68)." Rib-Hadda claimed that ʿAbdi-Aširta was rebelling against Egypt by occupying Ṣumur, yet it appears that Egypt did not respond. ʿAbdi-Aširta was emboldened by this and moved south into Byblian territory (Singer 1991b:144-145). Before he reached Byblos, however, ʿAbdi-Aširta suddenly was killed (c. 1345 BCE); whether by his own people or by the Egyptians is not immediately clear (Altman 1977:1-3; Moran 1969; EA 101, 108, 117, 132, 138, and 362).

Whatever the cause of ʿAbdi-Aširta's death, Rib-Hadda was not allowed a long respite from the threat of Amurru, for ʿAbdi-Aširta's son, Aziru, proved to be as ambitious and skillful as his father (Klengel 1964, 1969:264-299). Aziru and his brothers quickly began to recapture the towns along the border with Byblos (Singer 1991b:151). Aziru besieged and recaptured Ṣumur, which appears to have fallen out of the control of Amurru at ʿAbdi-Aširta's death. Rib-Hadda sent off to Egypt, protesting that "there was an attack on our garrison, and the sons of ʿAbdi-Aširta seized it (*EA* 116)." Aziru, meanwhile, sent his own letter to Egypt, claiming that "from the very first I have wanted to enter the service of the king, my lord, but the magnates of Ṣumur do not permit me (*EA* 156)." Singer (1990) argues that immediately after capturing Ṣumur,

Aziru traveled to Egypt. According to Singer's reconstruction, while Aziru was in Egypt, a Hittite army under Šuppiluliuma entered the territory of Amurru (for a discussion of this campaign, see Bryce 2005:161-180; Klengel 1999:155-167). His brothers, who were overseeing Amurru in his absence, made an initial contact with the Hittites and sent Aziru a letter advising him that "troops of Ḫatti under Lapakku have captured cities of Amqu. [...] Do not trouble yourselves, and do not worry at all" (Singer 1990:136-137). The tone of this letter implies that Aziru's brothers had come to terms with the Hittites, but Aziru used the Hittite threat as an excuse to leave Egypt and return to Amurru. Almost immediately he made an alliance with the pro-Hittite city of Kinza (Qedeš); and then began to pick off the pro-Egyptian cities, all the while professing allegiance to Egypt (Singer 1991b:151-152; for Aziru's professed loyalty see also EA 161, 164-168). But Egypt had begun to be suspicious of Aziru's loyalty; not only on account of Rib-Hadda's continued pleadings (i.e. *EA* 132-138) but also because of Aziru's slowness in rebuilding Ṣumur (Liverani 2004a:131-132) and Aziru's collusion with Kinza. Egypt sent a letter (*EA* 162) demanding that Aziru return to Egypt to account for himself and turn over several of the "king's enemies." The letter warned Aziru against allying himself with the Hittites, advising him to "consider the people that are training you for their own advantage (i.e. the Hittites). They want to throw you into the fire."

But Aziru did not obey the Pharaoh's order to return to Egypt. He instead consolidated his alliance with Aitakama of Kinza and struck a treaty (*RS* 19.68) with another pro-Hittite ruler, Niqmaddu of Ugarit (Singer 1991b:154; for the treaty between Aziru and Niqmaddu see Izreʾel and Singer 1990:88-92). Finally, he struck a treaty of vassalage with Šuppiluliuma of Ḫatti (for the translation of this treaty, see Beckman 1996:36-37).

Aziru's successors maintained this relationship with Ḫatti; his grandson Duppi-Tešub, who took the throne of Amurru in c. 1312 BCE, renewed this relationship by striking a treaty with Šuppiluliuma's son, Muršili II (Singer 1991b:162-164; Beckman 1996:54-59). Duppi-Tešub's son Bentešina supported the Egyptians during Rameses II's campaigns, but Rameses was defeated at the battle of Qedeš, and Muwattalli II carried Bentešina back to Ḫatti as an exile. Bentešina became a protégé of Muwattalli's brother Ḫattušili III, who, after seizing the throne of Ḫatti, restored Bentešina to the throne in Amurru. The two kings even exchanged daughters in marriage (Singer 1991b:164-169). In c. 1258 BCE, Ḫattušili and Bentešina renewed the treaty between the countries (Beckman 1996:95-98). The remainder of Bentešina's reign is known as the *Pax Hethitica*. Rameses and Ḫattušili had made their peace, and trade flourished throughout the Near East. But this situation was not to last forever. Bentešina's son Šaušgamuwa took the throne in c. 1235 BCE, and promptly renewed the treaty with Ḫatti, now ruled by Tudhaliya IV (Beckman 1996:98-102). This treaty hints at the growing tensions between Ḫatti and Assyria. Sometime after this treaty was signed, the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta defeated Tudhaliya at Nihriya, and the Hittite kingdom went into its final decline. The abandonment of Ḫattuša brought an end to the archive there, which extinguishes a major source of our knowledge of Amurru. Singer, however, argues that Amurru probably continued as a kingdom until at least the end of the 13th century BCE, when it disappeared along with Ugarit (Singer 1991b:174).

4.   Moving Beyond Empire

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4.1.   The Late Bronze Age: An Imperial Age?

The case of the northern Levant in the Late Bronze Age clearly shows some of the pitfalls of relying on empire models. In this chapter, I will review the standard reconstruction of this history. I will then take a critical look at the evidence for a small part of this history: Egypt's supposed domination of the northern Levant in the early part of the Amārna age, and show how the uncritical use of empire models has distorted our interpretation of the evidence.

4.1.1.   The "Standard History"

Many historians of the ancient Near East work without using explicit models of any sort. However, all of the major histories of the Late Bronze Age, those intended for the general public as well as those intended for specialists, are heavily influenced by the idea of empire. Marc Van De Mieroop's excellent introductory history is a clear example:

> "A number of large territorial states interacted with one another as equals and rivals. Located between them, especially in the Syro-Palestinian area, was a set of smaller states that owed allegiance to their more powerful neighbors, and which were often used as proxies in their competition. [...] The great states were Kassite Babylonia , Hittite Anatolia, Egypt, and, in northern Mesopotamia and Syria, first the Mittani state followed in the mid-fourteenth century by Assyria. On their eastern fringe was located the powerful kingdom of Elam, to the west

the state of Mycenae, whose political organization is difficult to describe. In their midst were the states of Syria and Palestine, mostly city-states in extent and organization, and always dependent on one of the great powers" (2007:129). The same model underlies these descriptions of the system:

"At almost any given point in the Late Bronze Age, almost every part of the Near Eastern world [...] fell within the sphere of authority of one or the other of the Great Kingdoms. There were a number of similarities in the means used by Great Kingdoms to maintain control over their subject territories. [...] Beyond their homelands, the Great Kings held sway over a number of subject territories usually acquired through military conquest" (Bryce 2003:42).

"Egypt dominates politically the entire period conventionally labeled 'Late Bronze Age' and the earliest part of the Iron Age (c. 1550-1150) in the region embracing Palestine, Transjordan, Lebanon, and southern Syria. The Egyptians began to move into this area at the very start of dynasty XVIII, and from Thutmose III's reign onwards (1490-1436 (1479-1425)), they established an empire, tightening their grip over time" (Kuhrt 1995:317).

"One important repercussion of the Egyptian conquests in western Asia was the termination, within the area conquered, of the sovereignty of the large metropolitan states [...]. Hazor, Kadesh, and Tunip, erstwhile claimants to such leadership, were now reduced in status. *All* headmen of villages and towns, together with their former overlords, descended to a common level through the obligation of taking the oath in Pharaoh's name. Thus the towns of Canaan, now transformed into "Pharaoh's towns," constituted only the residual infrastructure of the defunct metropolitan states" (Redford 1992:196-198).

"Amenhotep III came to the throne at a propitious moment in the history of Egyptian imperialism. His Eighteenth Dynasty royal predecessors had carved out a west Asiatic empire that by the early fourteenth B.C. encompassed all of Palestine, the Phoenician coast up to the area of Ugarit, and inland Syria as at least as far north as Qatna. They also had established a formal bureaucratic structure to govern the conquered territories" (Weinstein et al. 1998:223).

"Amenhotep III inherited a Levantine empire that, though not tranquil internally, was submissive to Egypt's economic, political, and military demands. [...] The threat or occasional use of limited military force was adequate to control the vassal rulers" (Weinstein et al. 1998:236).

Each of these accounts displays certain features that are typical of empire models. First, they divide the members of the system into two discrete groups: great kingdoms and minor city-states.[3] Second, they reduce the description of an individual polity's role in the system to its status as either a great kingdom or a minor city-state.

Of course, these works are all intended for a non-specialist audience, and as such must necessarily simplify matters somewhat. But works aimed at the specialist in Near Eastern history also show the same underlying framework. The underlying ideas of this framework are evident in the early histories of Carl Niebuhr (1903), James Baike (1926), Friedrich Bilabel and Adolf Grohmann (1927), and Georg Steindorff and Keith Seele (1942). These ideas are expanded upon in Samuel Waterhouse's (1965) dissertation on the topic as well as in Horst Klengel's (1965, 1969, 1970) still important history. But the most influential and explicit setting of these ideas is found in famed Egyptologist Wolfgang Helck's (1971) *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v.*

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[3] Van De Mieroop also mentions Elam and Mycenae, but these two polities are not depicted as integral parts of the system.

Chr (see also Helck 1959, 1960). As the title suggests, this work focuses on the relationship between Egypt and the Levant during the period in question, a relationship presented entirely within the framework of empire. Several features of this framework are worth exploring.

Helck argues that the swearing of oaths by Levantine rulers signifies their incorporation into an Egyptian administrative framework:

> "Die juristische Verknüpfung mit Ägypten scheint in der Weise vorgenommen worden zu sein, dass von den Stadtfürsten ein besonderer Eid geschworen werden musste, der anscheinend auch in der ägyptischen Verwaltung verwendet wurde und der als *śdfʒ-tr* bezeichnet wird" (1971:246).

Helck argues that this administrative framework was overseen by a class of Egyptian imperial officials, the *rabiṣū*:

> In den Amarnabriefen, [...] zeigt es sich, dass die Stadtfürsten die eigentlichen Träger der Verantwortung sind, besonders bei der Ablieferung von Auflagen, unter die auch Frondienst gehörte. Ihnen sind ägyptische Beamte übergeordnet, die darauf sehen, dass die Abgaben abgeliefert, die Städte versorgt werden und Ordnung gehalten wird. Sie sind auch Schiedsrichter zwischen den einzelnen Stadtfürsten. [...] Dieses Amt eines Aufsichtsbeamten heisst in den Amarnabriefen *rabiṣu*, am besten mit 'Kommissar' zu übersetzen, wenn es auch ab und zu andere Ämter bezeichnen kann.

Most translators, including Zipora Cochavi-Rainey (2005), Mario Liverani (1998), William Moran (1987, 1992), and Itamar Singer (1991b) follow Helck in translating this term *rabīṣū* (ʟú.ᴍᴀšᴋɪᴍ) (see CAD 14:20-23; and also Rainey 1996a:156-157) as 'commissioner' (or some cognate: Cochavi-Rainey 'נציב', Liverani *commissario*, Moran '*commissaire*'), and in taking it to refer to an Egyptian imperial administrator. Helck

(1971:248-255) argues that these *rabīṣū* oversaw three Egyptian provinces in the Levant, each of which had an Egyptian-controlled administrative center. According to Helck's reconstruction, the northern most province is Amurru, whose administrative center is Ṣumur. Further south is the province Upe, whose *rabīṣu* lived in Kumidi (Kāmid el-Lōz). The southern-most province is Canaan, ruled from Gaza (see also Liverani 1988:555-556; Klengel 1969:245-247).

Finally, Helck argues that Egypt kept permanent garrisons stationed in the northern Levant:

> "Die in den Amarnabriefen oft erwähnten Besatzungstruppen (*ameluti maṣṣarti*), die *jwj.t* der ägyptischen Quellen, waren in kleinen Abteilungen in den einzelnen Stadtstaaten stationiert, wohl in der Hauptsache, um das Leben der Stadtfürsten gegen ihre eigenen Untergebenen zu schützen" (Helck 1971:253-254).

On this reconstruction, the picture is clear: The northern Levant is an integral part of the Egyptian imperial structure, with parallel systems of local rulers (the *ḫazannu*) who are supervised by Egyptian commissioners (the *rabīṣu*). Egyptian garrisons, logistically supported by the local rulers, are stationed in various towns to protect the status quo. The general outline of this reconstruction is agreed upon by all of the major specialist histories of the northern Levant in this period (i.e. Hachmann 1982a; Klengel 1964, 1965, 1969, 1970, 1992; Liverani 1988; Singer 1991b, 1999). This reconstruction also colors countless other studies of the period.

Some scholars discuss the motivations behind Egyptian imperialism. Barry Kemp (1978) focuses on the ideological and symbolic aspects of Egyptian interactions with its peripheries, and suggests that these interactions were driven by a desire for prestige: "Satisfaction came from the [...] oaths of loyalty of vassals, and the many other ways in

which the vassals expressed their inferior status" (1978:57). Stuart Smith (1991, 1993; following work by Adams 1984) rejects this idea. (Although his work focuses mostly on Egypt's interaction with Nubia, his general ideas of Egyptian imperialism apply to the Levant as well.) He argues instead that Egypt was motivated by economic concerns, and that the purpose of their empire was the collection of tribute.

Other studies concern the extent to which Egypt transformed the preexisting local social structures. Albrecht Alt (1959) argues that the Egyptians left the structures essentially untouched, and that the imposition of the *rabīṣū* was merely an external change. Sarah Israelit-Groll (1983) disputes this, and argues that the Egyptians developed an entirely new hierarchy of Egyptian officials in the Levant, which in turn caused significant internal changes to the local structures.

Collectively, these works form what I will call the "standard history" of the northern Levant in this period. Although these works disagree on many of the details of the system, they have a broad agreement about its overall structure. Again and again, we see the clear-cut distinction between great and small, dominator and dominated, empire and vassal. But in light of the theoretical concerns I raised in chapter two, this reconstruction deserves a critical look. Towards that end, let's revisit the textual and archaeological evidence for the period.

4.2. Status of the Local Rulers: Kings or Mayors?

4.2.1. Subordinate Titles

Our understanding of the status of the rulers of the Levantine cities depends largely on our understanding of the various titles applied to these rulers. When writing to the pharaoh, the Levantine rulers refer to themselves with the Akkadian term *ḫazannu* (see CAD 6:163-165; and also Rainey 1996a:153-155). This word, which is usually translated

'mayor', occurs frequently in the Amārna correspondence. It first appears in tablets of the Ur III period, where it appears "only in connection with towns and small cities" (CAD 6:163b). The word *ḫazannu* is only one of several used to refer to the Levantine rulers (Moran 1992:xxvii n. 73). The letters directly from the pharaoh, and in contexts where the ruler's city is also mentioned, often have the more generic *awīlu* (LÚ), in construct with the name of his city:

EA 367   (1-2) *a-na* ᵐ*in-tar-ú-tá* LÚ ᵘʳᵘ*ak-ša-pa* / *qí-bí-ma*

           (1-2) Say to Endaruta, the ruler of Akšapa:

EA 369   (1) *a-na* ᵐ*mil-ki-li* {LÚ} ᵘʳᵘ*gaz-r[i]*

           (1) To Milkilu, the ruler of Gazru:

EA 370   (1-2) *a-na* ᵐ*i-dì-ia* LÚ ᵘʳᵘ*aš-qá-lu-n[aᵏ]ⁱ* / *qí-bí-ma*

           (1-2) Say to Idiya, the ruler of Ašqaluna:

Abi-Milku of Tyre uses the Egyptian word *wr* (Akkadian *pawuru*, see CAD 12:310), which the Egyptians use to designate any foreign ruler (see Lorton 1974:60-63):

EA 149   (30) *[*ᵐ*zi-im-re-da p]a-we-ru*

           (30) Zimredda, the prince ...

EA 151   (59-60) ᵐ*e-ta-kà-ma pa-wu-ri* / ᵘʳᵘ*qí-id-ši*

           (59-60) Etakkama, the prince of Qidšu ...

The final designation for the Levantine rulers is the standard Akkadian word for 'king', *šarru* (LUGAL) (see CAD 17.2:76-114). It appears that these rulers only refer to themselves with the word *ḫazannu* when writing to the pharaoh, otherwise referring to

themselves by *šarru* (see Naʾaman 1988:182-183 n118). In the Ugaritic texts, *ḫazannu* is differentiated from *šarru*:

PRU III: 134ff	(2-3) ᵐ*a-mis-tam-ru* DUMU *níq-me-pa* / LUGAL ᵘʳᵘ*ú-ga-ri-it*
	(2-3) Ammistamru, the son of Niqmepa, king of the city of Ugarit:
	(15-16) *ù* ˡú*ḫa-za-nu* URUᵏⁱ *ù* ˡúUGULA.ŠÁ.A.MEŠ / *la-a i-ma-li-ik eli-šu*
	(15-16) And the mayor of the city and the overseer of the fields will no longer have power over him.

Here, both terms – *šarru* (LUGAL) and *ḫazannu* – appear in one text: *šarru* applies to Ammistamru, who has authority over the *ḫazannu* (who is mentioned along with the "overseer of the field *akul eqlī* (UGULU.A.ŠÁ.MEŠ)). This Ammistamru is the author of at least one letter (*EA* 45) from the Amārna corpus, and possibly two others (*EA* 46-47) (see Huehnergard 1989:329). In these letters, Ammistamru does not refer to himself with either title. But we do have an example of a single ruler, Aziru of Amurru, referring to himself as a *ḫazannu* in the Amārna texts and as a *šarru* in another context:

EA 161 Aziru	(51-53) *u an-nu-ú* KUR EN-*ia ù* LUGAL-*ru* / EN-*ia iš-ku-na-an-ni* / {*i*}-*na* ˡú.ᵐᵉˢ*ḫa-za-nu-ti*
	(51-53) But this is the land of my lord, and the king, my lord, made me one of the mayors!
PRU IV: 284ff	(2-3) ᵐ*níq-ma*-ᵈIŠKUR LUGAL ᵘʳᵘ*u-ga-r[i-i]t*ᵏⁱ / *ù* ᵐ*a-zi-ru* LUGAL ᵏᵘʳMAR.TUᵏⁱ
	(2-3) Niqmaddu, king of Ugarit, and Aziru, king of Amurru.

The second text here is the treaty between Niqmaddu II and Aziru. In this text, both of the rulers are referred to as *šarru*, not *ḫazannu*. Thus, it seems that the use of the term *ḫazannu*, when used in the Amārna corpus, is a conscious presentation of the Levantine rulers as subordinate to the pharaoh. By refraining from using the same term

that is used to refer to the pharaoh's status to refer to their status, the rulers make a clear distinction between themselves and the pharaoh. This presentation appears to be reserved for correspondence between Egypt and the local rulers: The kings of Babylon and Mitanni refer to the Levantine rulers with the designation *šarru*:

EA 8 Burra-Buriyaš	(25) [ᵏᵘʳk]*i-na-aḫ-ḫi* KUR-*ka ù* LU[GAL].ME[*š-ša* ÌR.MEŠ-*ka*
	(25) Canaan is your country, and its kings are your servants.
EA 30 Tušratti	(1-2) *a-na* LUGAL.MEŠ *ša* ᵏᵘʳ*ki-na-a-aḫ[-ḫi]* / ÌR.MEŠ ŠEŠ-*ia*
	(1-2) To the kings of Canaan, servants of my brother:

4.2.2.   Pharaonic Power, Local Submission

EA 161, quoted above, contains an important fact: Aziru claims that the pharaoh made him a *ḫazannu*. This implies that the pharaoh has the authority to appoint, and perhaps to remove, the rulers. This is also suggested by two letters from ʿAbdi-Ḫeba of Jerusalem, and by two texts from Egypt (for the latter, see Shaw 2008:26):

EA 286	(9-15) *a-mur a-na-ku la-a* ˡᵘ*a-bi-ia* / *ù la-a* ᵐⁱ*ú-mi-ia ša-ak-na-ni* / *i-na aš-ri an-ni-e* / *zu-ru-uḫ* LUGAL-*ri* KALAG-GA / *ú-še-ri-ba-an-ni a-na* É ˡᵘ*a-bi-ia* / *am-mi-nim-mi a-na<-ku> e-pu-uš* / *ar-na a-na* LUGAL EN-*ri*
	(9-15) Seeing that, as far as I am concerned, neither my father nor my mother put me in this place, but the strong arm of the king brought me into my father's house, why should I of all people commit a crime against the king, my lord?
EA 287	(25-28) *[a-]mur* KUR ᵘʳᵘ*ú-ru-ša₁₀-lim an-n[i-]ta* / *[l]a-a* ˡᵘAD.DA.A.NI *la-a um-mi-i [a]* / *[n]a-ad-na-an-ni* : ŠU : *zu-ru-uḫ[* LUGAL-*ri* KALA]G.GA / *[n]a-ad-na-an-ni a-na ia-a-ši*

(25-28) Consider Jerusalem! This neither my father nor my mother gave me. The strong hand : *zu-ru-uḫ* (arm) : of the king gave it to me.

URK IV: 663	Now, his Majesty was appointing the chieftains anew for [every town].
URK IV: 1308	His Majesty approached Huʾaket. The chieftain of Giboa-Saman, Ḳaḳa by name, was taken, his wife, his children, and all relatives likewise. Another chieftain was appointed in his place.

The Egyptian texts contain other evidence that potentially shows the subordinate status of the *ḫazannu*. First, they record that the *ḫazannu* were expected to pay tribute to the pharaoh (see figure 4.1):

URK IV: 1235	Then that enemy and the chieftains who were with him sent out to my Majesty all their children bearing many gifts of gold and silver, with all their horses which were with them, their great chariots of gold and silver, together with those that were undecorated, all their shirts of mail, their arrows and all their weapons of war. Those were the things with which they had come for distant battle against my Majesty; now they brought them as gifts to my Majesty.
URK IV: 1247	It was with joy that that his Majesty came now that this entire foreign land was as his bondman ... The Asiatics came as one man bearing their tribute.
URK IV: 1255	Then all the lands of the limits of the earth came doing obeisance to the power of my Majesty in order to plead for the breath of life [...] ... that we might present him our dues like all the bondmen of his Majesty.

Figure 4.1. Syrians Presenting Tribute to the Pharaoh, from the Tomb of Sobekhotep (after Dziobek and Raziq 1990: Plate 3.c-d)

The Egyptian texts also mention several occasions when a local ruler swore an oath called *śḏfȝ-tr* (on the occurance of this oath in Egyptian texts, see Černý 1929:247; Edgerton 1951:141). As discussed above, Helck takes this oath as evidence of the incorporation of the local rulers into an Egyptian administrative framework. But a review of the texts shows that this is far from obvious:

URK IV: 1236   Then they stood up on their walls to give praise to my Majesty so that they should be given the breath of life. Then my Majesty made them take their oaths of allegiance as follows: "Never again shall we do anything evil against Menkheperrē (Thutmose III), may he live for ever, our lord, for as long as we live, for we have seen his might. It is his father who did it, Amun-Rē, lord of the thrones of the Two Lands, and not, indeed, the hand of men."

URK IV: 1304   His Majesty reached Kadesh. Its chieftain came out in peace to his Majesty. They were made to swear an oath of loyalty and their children likewise.

The texts are clear that the both of these acts of submission, paying tribute and swearing the oath, as well as two of the occasions of Pharaonic appointment of local

rulers, occur in the immediate context of a royal military campaign. Military campaigns are exceptional events, which occupy a very short period of time. It is very dangerous to observe the behavior of people during these events and then to assume that these behaviors are representative of normal times. In addition, the paying of tribute (or giving of gifts, depending on how we wish to translate the texts!) is a complex affair, with each side acting for its own perceived benefit (Liverani 1990:255-273). When we factor in that these references are from Egyptian royal inscriptions, which are full of hyperbole and rhetoric (Hasel 1998:17-21), taking them as evidence for Egyptian administration becomes tenuous indeed.

The Amārna letters that reference the appointment and removal of local kings do not stand as evidence of Egyptian administration. We should remember that the texts represent a sphere that is largely symbolic and rhetorical, and we have to view the letters from Aziru and ʿAbdi-Ḫeba within this sphere (see i.e. Liverani 1990; Zaccagnini 1990). In this rhetorical context, which is dictated largely by Egyptian ideologies, all legitimate power is seen as flowing from the pharaoh's divine nature. The pharaoh presents himself as the proper master of all the world (see i.e. Hornung 1966:1-29; Shaw 2000:318). A new ruler, especially one whose seizure of the throne was accompanied by controversy, could gain a powerful ideological advantage via the pharaoh's official recognition. This does not mean that local stories of legitimation follow Egyptian ideology. Rather, the international legitimacy that accompanied Egyptian recognition could then be converted into a local narrative of legitimacy (for these two different modes of political power, see Liverani 1967). It is quite likely that both Aziru and ʿAbdi-Aširta, even as they wrote these letters to the pharaoh, were telling very different stories to their citizens.

Name	Title	References (* = Addressee)
Abbiḫa	None attested, but w/ Yanḫamu in *EA* 105	*EA* 69, 100, 105(?) (see Moran 1992:381b)
Addaya	*rabīṣu*	*EA* 254, 285, 287, 289
Amanappa	None attested	*EA* 73*, 74, 77*, 79, 82*, 86*, 87*, 93*, 109, 117
Tutu	None attested	*EA* 158*, 164*, 167*, 169(*?)
Ḫaip	None attested	*EA* 107, 117(?), 132, 133, 149
Ḫamašša	*mār šipri* (?)	*EA* 11(?), 27(?), 29 (?), 98 (see Albright 1946:10-11; Hachmann 1970:77, 83)
Ḫanʾi	*targumannu* "interpreter"; *mār šipri*; *rabīṣu* (?); *akil tarbaṣi* "stable overseer"	*EA* 21, 47, 161, 162, 227, 301, 316(?), 367, 369
Ḫaya	*rābû* "magnate"; *pasitu* "vizier"	*EA* 11, 66, 71*, 101, 109, 112, 117, 166*, 255, 268, 289
Maya	*rabīṣu*	*EA* 62(?), 216, 217, 218, 292, 300, 328, 337
Paḫanate	*rabīṣu*	*EA* 60, 62*, 68, 131
Pauru	*rabīṣu*	*EA* 124, 129, 131, 132, 263, 287, 289, 362
Peya	None attested	*EA* 292, 294
Puḫuru	*rabīṣu*	*EA* 57, 117, 122, 123, 132, 189, 190, 207, 208
Reanap	*rabīṣu*	*EA* 292, 315, 326
Šuta	*rabīṣu*	*EA* 234, 288
Yamaya	None attested	*EA* 62
Yanḫamu	*rabīṣu*	*EA* 83, 85, 86, 98*, 102*, 105, 106, 109, 116, 117, 118, 127, 131, 132, 171, 215, 256*, 270, 271, 283, 284, 285, 286, 289, 296, 330, 366

Table 4.2. Egyptian Officials in the Amārna Letters

4.3. The Egyptian Commissioners: Imperial Administrators or Marauding Opportunists?

4.3.1. The Role of the Commissioners

Table 4.2 summarizes the Egyptian officials mentioned in the texts (see Albright 1946; Helck 1971:248-252; and the various entries in Hess 1985; Hess 1993).

The texts mention the *rabīṣū* in several different contexts. They have some sort of legal authority, and are occasionally called upon to settle disputes between local rulers:

EA 117	(64-67) *ša-ni-tam di-nu a-na ia-ši / it-t[i ᵐ]ia-pa-ᵈIŠKUR ù it-ti ᵐḫa (!) / ù y[u-]wa-ši-ra* LUGAL L[Ú].M[ÁŠ]K[IM] */ [ù] y[u-p]a-r[i-ì]š [b]e-ri-nu*
	(64-67) Moreover, I have litigation with Yapaḫ-Hadda and Ḫaʾip. May the king send a commissioner to decide between us.
EA 118 Rib- Hadda	(13-16) *ša-ni-tam di-nu / a-na ia-ši uš-ši-ra /* LÚ.MÁŠKIM *yi-ìš-me a-wa-te-ia / ù ia-di-na ki-ti-[i]a*
	(13-16) Moreover, I have litigation. Send the commissioner, let him hear my case, and give me my due.

The letters also show the *rabīṣū* as intermediaries between the pharaoh and the Levantine rulers. When writing to the pharaoh, the rulers assume that the *rabīṣū* function as intelligence agents for the pharaoh, bringing their first-hand knowledge of events in the Levant to a distant court (see Cohen 2000). The rulers appeal to this knowledge to protect themselves against slander:

EA 68 Rib- Hadda	(19-26) *i-na* LÚ.MAŠKÍM LUGAL-*ri / ša i-šu-ú i-na* ᵘʳᵘ*ṣu-mu-ur / ba-al-ṭá-at* ᵘʳᵘ*gub-la / a-nu-um-ma* m.pa-ḫa-am[-n]a-ta / LÚ.MAŠKÍM LUGAL *ša i[-n]a /* ᵘʳᵘ*ṣu-mu-ur*ᵏⁱ *i-de-mì / pu-uš-qám : ma-na-*AŠ *: / ša* UGU ᵘʳᵘ*gub-la*

(19-26) Through the king's commissioner who is in Ṣumur, Gubla is alive. Paḫamnata, the commissioner of the king who is in Ṣumur, knows the straits : *ma-na*-AŠ : that Gubla is in.

EA 85
Rib-
Hadda

(30-33) *ù an-nu-ú i-na <qa-at>* ^m*ia-pa*-^dIŠ[KUR] */[a]d-di<-in>* KÙ.BABBAR.MEŠ-*šu-nu al-lu-mi /* ^m*p[u]-ḫé-ya it-ka [š]a-al-šu / ù yi-iq-bi gáb-ba i-na pa-ni-ka*

(30-33) I deposited the payment for them with Yapaḫ-Hadda. Look, Puḫeya is with you; ask him to tell the whole story in your presence.

EA 60
ʿAbdi-
Aširta

(19-29) *[a?-nu?-ma?] / [*^m*pa]-ḫa-na-{te}* L[Ú.MAŠKÍM-*ia*] */ yi-iš-al-šu* LUGAL ^d[UT]Uₓ */ šum-ma la a-na-ṣa-ar /* ^uru*ṣu-mu-ri* ^uru*ul-la-sà / i-nu-ma* LÚ.MAŠKÍM-*ia / i-na ši-pir₆-ti lugal* ^dUTUₓ(ERIM*) / ù a-na-ku* ŠE.KIN.TAR É.ḪÁ */ ša* ^uru*ṣu-mur ù gáb-bi /* KUR.ḪÁ *a-na* LUGAL ^dUTUₓ(ERIM)-*ia /* EN-*ia a-na-ṣa-ar-šu*

(19-29) Look, there is Paḫanate, my commissioner. May the king, the Sun, ask him if I do not guard Ṣumur and Ullassa. When my commissioner is on a mission of the king, the Sun, then I am the one who guards the harvest of the grain of Ṣumur and all the lands for the king, my Sun, my lord.

(30-32) *ù* LUGAL EN-*[i]a lu-ú yi-da-an-ni / ù yi-ip-[q]í-id-ni i-na* ŠU */* ^m*pa-ḫa-na-te* LÚ.MAŠKÍM-*ia*

(30-32) May the king, my lord, know me and entrust me to the charge of Paḫanate, my commissioner.

EA 148

(46-47) *li-iš-al* LUGAL LÚ.MÁŠKIM-*šu ša i-de₄ /* ^kur*ki-na-aḫ-na*

(46-47) May the king ask his commissioner, who is familiar with Canaan.

But the *rabīṣū* are not always portrayed as trustworthy witnesses. Sometimes the rulers complain directly to the *rabīṣū*, and other times to the pharaoh:

EA 62 ʿAbdi- Aširta	(4-11) [*mi-*]*i-nu a-wa-te*.MEŠ-*{ka}* b[*e?-lí?*] / [*ša? ta?-d*]*áb-bu-ub-šu-nu* [*iq?-b*]*u-n*[*im? ki-ia-am(?)*] / [*ta?-dáb?-bu?*]*-ub be-lí* [*at?-t*]*a?*[/ [kur*mi-*]*iṣ-ri*{ki} *{ù} te* / [*.*]MEŠ kur*m*[*i?-i*]*ṣ?-{ri?}*{ki?}} / [*ù? ia?-n*]*u* LÚ.MEŠ [*i?-*]*{na?} {lìb}-bi* uru*su-mu-ri*ki / [*a-na na-ṣ*]*a-ri-ši*[*ù? iṣ?-*]*bat?-šu ù* / [uru*ṣu-m*]*u-ri*{ki} ÉRIN.M[E]š uru*še-eḫ-{la}*[*-li*]ki
	(4-11) (Uncertain translation) What do your words, my lord, that you speak, mean? ... [...] my lord, you speak like this: "You are an enemy of Egypt, and you committed a crime against Egyptians." May my lord listen. There were no men in Ṣumur to guard it as he had ordered, and Ṣumur was afraid of the troops of Šeḫlal.
EA 85 Rib- Hadda	(23-29) *yi-*[*i*]*q-bi* m*ia-an-ḫa-mu* / [*na-a*]*d-na-ti-mi* ŠE-*im*.ḪÁ *a-na* m*ri-ib-*dIŠKUR / [*ù n*]*a-di-in₄* [*...*] *m*[*i-n*]*a na-da-an š*[*u-u*]*t a*]*-na ia-<ši>*
	(23-29) As to Yanḫamu's having said, "I gave grain to Rib-Hadda, and I would give [...] ... : What did he give me?

Other rulers write directly to the *rabīṣū* with requests and concerns similar to those addressed to the pharaoh:

EA 98 Yapaḫ- Hadda	(1-9) [*a-n*]*a ia-an-ḫa-mi* / [*qí-*]*bí-ma* m(!) *um-ma* m*ia-pa-*[*a*]*ḫ-*dIŠKUR / *am-mi-ni-mi qa-la-ta* / *iš-tu* uru*su-mu-ra i-nu-ma* / *na-ak-ra-at-mi* / *gáb-bi* KUR.MEŠ *ar-ki* / m*a-zi-ri iš-tu* / uru*gu-ub-li*ki / *a-di* uru*ú-ga-ri-ti*
	(1-9) Say to Yanḫamu: Message of Yapaḫ-Hadda. Why have you become neglectful of Ṣumur so that all lands from Gubla to Ugarit have become enemies in the service of Aziru?

Occasionally, the local rulers write to the pharaoh to complain about the actions of the *rabīṣū*:

EA 122 Rib- Hadda	(31-35) m*pa-ḫu-ra* / *a-pa-aš ip-ša ra-ba* / *a-na ia-ši uš-ši-ir* / lú.meš.kur*su-te ù* / *da-ku* lú*še-ir-da-ni*

(31-35) Paḫura has committed an enormity against me. He sent Suteans and they killed *širdanu*-people.

EA 131 Rib- Hadda	(30-38) *[pa-na]-nu-ma / ti-pu[-š]u-na ki-a[m]-m[i ù] / [la] yu-šar-mi* LUGAL *ab-b [u-ka] /* ÉRIN.MEŠ *pí-ṭá-ta₅* TUR *ù y[i]-ì[l-]q[é] / gáb-ba ù la-a yi-iš-mu / a-na ia-a-ši* ᵐ*pa-ḫa-am-na-t[a] / ù yi-pu-šu ip-ša-ta₅ ša-r[u-t]a₅ / ù an-nu* DUMU *mar-šu yú-ḫa-[li-iq] /* ᵘʳᵘ*ṣu-mur-ri*

(30-38) Formerly, this is the way they acted: the king, your father, did [not] send a small archer force, he took everything. Paḫamnata would not listen to me, and he went on with his treacherous activities. Now his son has plundered Ṣumur.

Taken together, these texts show that the *rabīṣū* had several different roles in the interaction system. First, they provide the pharaoh with information about events in the Levant; second, they arbitrate disputes between rulers; and third, they act as proxies for Egyptian power. In addition, they seem to be able to act on their own, and can be accused of acting contrary to the pharaoh's interests. But it is nowhere clear that the *rabīṣū* function as imperial administrators, or that they are permanently posted in "administrative cities." This point is reinforced by a study of the mentioned locations of the *rabiṣū*.

4.3.2. The Location of the Commissioners

A close review of the texts that mention the *rabīṣū* reveals some problems for the traditional reconstruction. First, we would expect that during their appointment, imperial administrators would spend a majority of their time in the ruled area. But the texts show a different picture. The *rabīṣū* are mentioned in a total of 100 of the letters. In 36 of these letters, the location of the *rabīṣu* is not mentioned or is impossible to determine. Of these, 8 of the letters merely contain formulaic promises of obedience to

the pharaoh through his proxy, the *rabīṣu*. 17 letters explicitly mention that the *rabīṣu* in question is in Egypt, at the court of the pharaoh. 30 letters place the *rabīṣu* in the Levant (five of which concern a single event, the murder of the *rabīṣu* Pauru). But of special importance are 23 letters which mention either the arrival or departure of a *rabīṣu*, or contain a request to the pharaoh to send a *rabīṣu*. This breakdown suggests that rather than being posted to an administrative city in the Levant, the *rabīṣū* were constantly traveling back and forth between Egypt and the Levant.

This suggestion is supported by the archaeological evidence. If the *rabīṣū* were posted to an administrative city, we would expect them to occupy some sort of Egyptian-style palace. Indeed, for a slightly later period, we find such a palace at the southern site of Beth Shan. At this site, a large building (house 1500, figures 4.3-4) has been identified as an Egyptian "Governor's Residence" (Mazar 2006:28; see also Mazar 2002:334; James 1966:8-11). This identification is based on the observation that the building's "internal plan and architectural details, decorations, and dedicatory inscriptions [...] are all in the Egyptian tradition" (Mazar 2006:80). The building plan, which includes a large columned hall in the center of the building surrounded by numerous smaller rooms, is reminiscent of houses at el-Amārna (Ward 1966:161; see also Borchardt and Ricke 1980) (See figure 4.5). The door jambs of this building are inscribed with Egyptian hieroglyphic building inscriptions (Ward 1966) (See figure 4.6). These inscriptions show that the house was occupied by one Rameses Weser-khepesh, whose title was "Commander of the Troops of the Lord of the Two Lands" (*ṯs pḏ.t n nb tꜣ.wy*) (for this title, see Faulkner 1953:45).
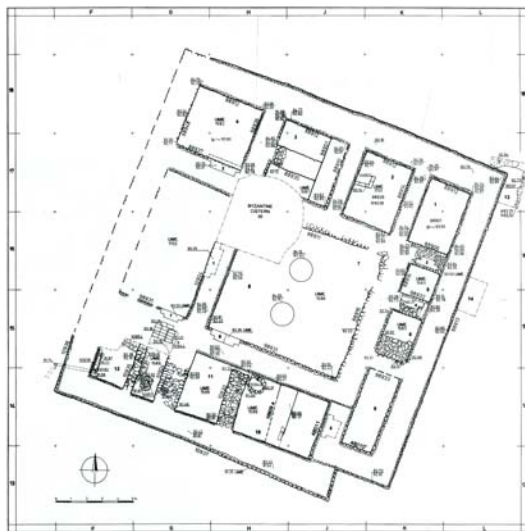
Figure 4.3. Beth Shan Building 1500 (after Mazar 2006: Fig. 3.3)
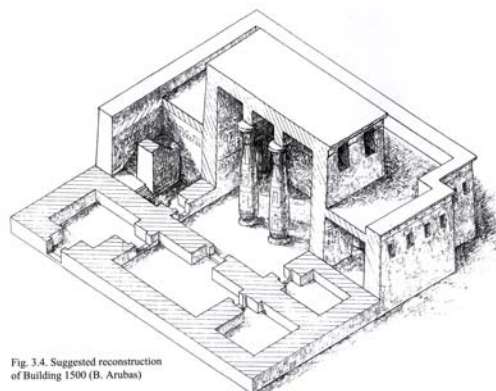
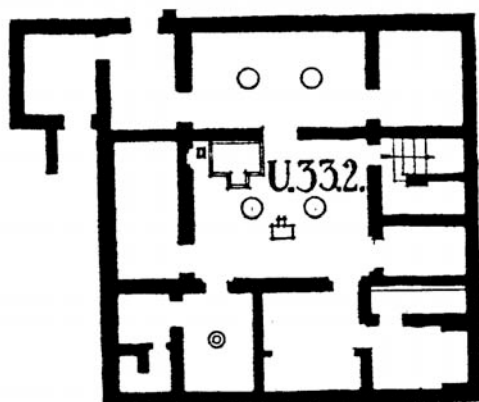Figure 4.4. Beth Shan Building 1500 (after Mazar 2006: Fig. 3.4)

Figure 4.5. Amārna House (after Frankfort and Pendlebury 1933: Plate XI)

Figure 4.6. Building Inscription (after James 1966: Fig. 88 A-1, Fig 89 A-1)

We would expect to find similar buildings in the supposed Egyptian administrative centers of the Amārna period (Ṣumur, Kumidi, and Gaza). Indeed, at Gaza, and throughout southern Canaan, evidence of Egyptian influence abounds. "Governor's Residences" similar to the one at Beth Shan, albeit less impressive, are found at numerous sites in the southern Levant, including Tel Seraʾ, Tel Masos, Tell Hesi, Tell Jemmah, and Tel Aphek (Oren 1984, 1992) (See figures 4.7-8).

But at the other two supposed administrative sites – Ṣumur and Kumidi – this is not the case.[4] Indeed, with the possible exception of Damascus, where an Egyptian-influenced palace has been uncovered (Burns 2005; Taraqji 1999), the entire Levant north of Canaan is noticeably missing any Egyptian-style remains from this period. This is true of Tell Kazel, the assumed site of Ṣumur (see Badre and Gubel 2000; Badre et al. 1990; Capet 2003). Level 6 of the site corresponds with the Late Bronze Age II (Badre 2006), the period when Ṣumur was supposed to be the Egyptian administrative center for the entire province of Amurru. Level 6 not only shows no signs of Egyptian influence on the architecture, but also no imported Egyptian pottery or locally made imitations (Badre and Gubel 2000:146-152; Badre 2000). Similarly, excavations at Kāmid el-Lōz, the site of Kumidi, have shown no evidence of Egyptian "Governor's Residences." Rather, a Late Bronze palace (figure 4.9) of a local type has been uncovered (Hachmann 1982c, a, 1989:fig 22; for a discussion of the various types of palaces in the period, see Fritz 1983:11-20).

The lack of official "Governor's Residences" in Ṣumur and Kumidi cannot, on its own, be taken as evidence for the lack of Egyptian administration. But when combined with the evidence from the texts, the assumption that Egypt posted permanent governors in the cities seems tenuous. Rather, it seems that the term *rabīṣu* covers a wide variety of Egyptian officials who carried out short-term expeditions to the Levant, where they performed various tasks for the benefit of the pharaoh (and if the letters are to be believed, the benefit of themselves). Rather than 'commissioner', perhaps a better word to translate *rabīṣu* is 'ambassador'. But even this word doesn't fully express the range of the term.

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[4] When dealing with archaeological evidence. we must be careful about making too much of negative evidence. It is entirely possible that an Egyptian palace lies just off the edge of one of the excavated areas. But the lack of Egyptian cultural artifacts at Kāmid el-Lōz suggests that this is not the case.

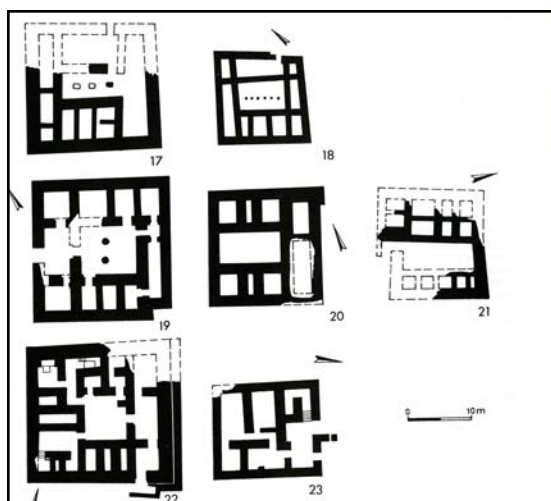*Figure 4.7. Egyptian Presence in Canaan (after Oren 1984: Fig. 1)*

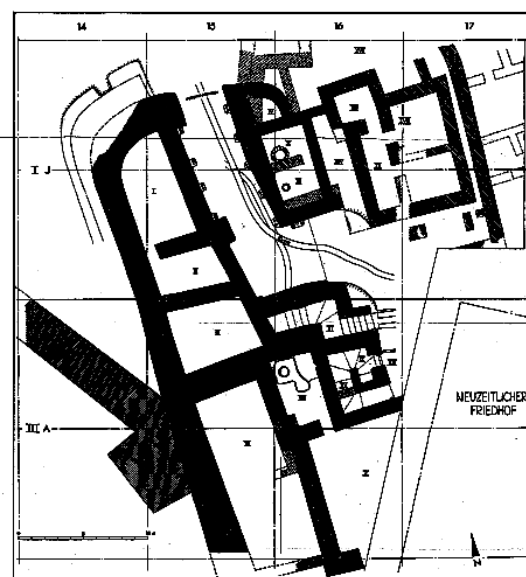*Figure 4.8. Egyptian Governor's Residences in Canaan (after Oren 1992: Figs. 17-23)*

Figure 4.9. Local-style Palace at Kumidi (after Hachmann 1982a: Fig. 4)

4.4. Egyptian Garrisons: Permanent Presence or Short-term Expeditions?

Another area of the standard history of the Levant in the Amārna age that needs a critical look is the question of Egyptian garrisons. The standard history has Egyptian garrisons permanently stationed in several Syrian *Stützpunkte* (Alt 1950). Textual references to these garrisons go back to the annals of Thutmose III, which mention the presence of an Egyptian garrison at Ullaza:

URK IV: 1237	Wood is hewn for me in Djahy each year consisting of real ʾš-wood of Lebanon, which is transported to the palace, *LPH*. A wealth of timber comes to Egypt for me, which is taken south … real ʾš-wood of Negu of the choicest of God's Land and fully grown, spars like firm alabaster for issue to the Residence without the season thereof having been missed in any year.
	My army which is in garrisons in Ullaza comes … which consists of ʾš-wood obtained by means of the victories of my Majesty, in accordance with the designs of my father, Amun-Rēʾ, who conferred on me the inhabitants of all foreign lands. I left none of it for the Asiatics, for it is a wood which he loves. He conquers that they may acknowledge my Majesty, their dissidence having been pardoned.

4.4.1. References to Garrisons in the Amārna Correspondence

In the Amārna correspondence, several letters explicitly allude to the former presence in Syria of Egyptian garrisons, *ṣāb* (ÉRIN.MEŠ) *maṣṣartu* or *awīlū* (LÚ.MEŠ) *maṣṣartu* (see CAD 10.1:333-339; and also Rainey 1996a:150-151). Most of these allusions occur in the correspondence of Rib-Hadda of Byblos:

EA 76 Rib-Hadda	(30-37) [M]U.KÁM.MEŠ *tu-ṣa-na* / [ÉRIN.M]EŠ *pí-ṭá-ti a-na da-gal* / [KUR].KI.MEŠ *ù an-nu-uš* / *[i]-na-an-na in₄-né-ep-ša-at* / KUR.KI LUGAL *ù* ᵘʳᵘ*ṣu-mu-ra* / URU *ma-ṣa-ar-ti-ku-nu* / *a-na* ˡᵘGAZ.MEŠ *ù qa-la-ta*

(30-37) [...] ... For years archers would come out to inspect the country, and yet now that the land of the king and Ṣumur, your garrison-city, have been joined to the ʿApiru, you have done nothing.

EA 81 Rib-Hadda	(48-51) *[pa-]na-nu* [u]ru*ṣu-mu-ra ù* LÚ.MEŠ-*[ši] / [da]n-nu-t[u₄ i]-ba-aš-šu ù* LÚ *[*.MEŠ*] / [ma-ṣ]a-ar-t[u] it-ti-nu mi[-n]a / [i-pu]-šu-[n]a [a-na]-ku i-na i-d[e-n]i-ia*

(48-51) Previously Ṣumur and its men were strong, and there was a garrison with us. What can I do by myself?

EA 131 Rib-Hadda	*[a]-mur pa-na-nu* lú.meš*a-bu-ti-ia / [d]a-nu* NU.KÚR *a-na ša-šu-n[u] / [ù] ma-ṣa-ar-ti /* [LUGAL *]it-<ti>-šu-nu ba-l[a-aṭ] /* [LUGAL *]*UGU*-šu-nu [ù] / [i-na-na]* KALAG.G[A NU.KÚR*] / [a-na mu-ḫi-ia ù] / [ba-la-aṭ* LUGAL*] / [ù ma-ṣa]-a[r-ti* LUGAL*] / [i]a-nu a[-n]a ia-ši m[i-na] / [i]-pu-šu-na a-nu-ma*

(21-31) Look, formerly, my ancestors were strong. There was war against them, but a garrison of the king was with them. There were provisions of the king at their disposal. Though the war against me is severe, I have no provisions from the king or garrison of the king. What shall I do?

EA 131 Rib-Hadda?	(6-7) *[yu-š]i-[r]u be-li* ÉRIN.MEŠ *ma-ṣa-a[r-ta] / a-na* uru*gub-li*

(6-7) My lord used to send a garrison to Gubla.

These texts have been taken as evidence that permanent garrisons were stationed in Amurru, at least during the reign of Amenophis III. Both of these texts, however, put the garrisons in the past tense: *previously*, archers came out, and Ṣumur was strong. A possible reference to a recently vacated garrison occurs in *EA* 67. The beginning of this tablet is broken, so the author is uncertain, but Moran notes that the word translated as "fortress commanders" (*ḫal-zu-uḫ-lu*, see CAD 6:57) as well as the writing ᵈUTU-*ši* instead of the more common ᵈUTU-*ia* "give the language and writing a northern cast" (1992:137 n.132):

EA 67   (6-12) _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ *a-ši-ib i-n[a]* / _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ MEŠ-*šu qa-du* GI[š].GIGIR.MEŠ-*šu]* / _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ *a[l-]mi* / [ᵘʳᵘṣ]*u-mu-ri*[ᵏⁱ U]RU[ᵏ]ⁱ ᵈ[UTU-š]*i be-l[í]-ia* / [*ù* ᵈU]TUᵏⁱ *lu-ú i[-di]-mi* SIG₅ *g[áb]-bu* ˡ{ú}.ᵐᵉš.ᵏᵘʳ*m[i-iṣ-ri]* / [*ša a]š-bu-nim i-na* ᵘʳᵘ*ṣu-mu-ri*ᵏⁱ URUᵏⁱ ᵈUT[U-*ši be-lí-ia]* / [*it-t]a-zu-nim ù i-na* KUR.*ti₄-ia aš-bu-nim*

(6-13) [...] He resides in Ṣumur along with his troops and along with his chariots. Now may the Sun call to account Ṣumur, the city of the Sun, my lord, and may the Sun know the facts. Is it pleasing? All the Egyptians who had resided in Ṣumur, the city of the Sun, my lord, came out and are residing in my land, my lord.

(13-18) *[be-l]í ù e-te-pu-uš [m]a-mi-ta* / *[it-]ti* LÚ *[š]a* ᵘʳᵘ*ku-ub-li*ᵏⁱ *ù it* L[Ú] *š[a* ᵘʳᵘ_ _ _ _] *[ù] gáb-bu* ˡú.ᵐᵉš*ḫal-zu-uḫ-lu-ti ša* KUR-*ka [ù]* / *it-ti-šu iṭîbu-nim be-lí i-na-an-na šu-ú-tú k[i-ma]* / [LÚ] SA.G[A]Z.ZA.MEŠ UR *ḫal-qú ù iṣ-ba-at* / [ᵘʳᵘṣu-]m[*u-r]i*ᵏⁱ ᵈUTU-*ši be-lí-i*

(13-18) He made a treaty with the ruler of Gubla and with the ruler of [... and] all the fortress commanders of your land ... [...] became friendly with him, my lord. Now he is like the ʿApiru, a runaway dog, and he has seized Ṣumur, the city of the Sun, my lord. ...

If the Egyptians (ˡú.ᵐᵉš.ᵏᵘʳ*mi-iṣ-ri*) are to be understood as a military force, then this letter adds additional evidence for an Egyptian garrison at Ṣumur. However, the use of the generic determinative ˡú.ᵐᵉš instead of the common military terms *ṣābu* (logographically ÉRIN.MEŠ, see CAD 16:50) or LÚ.MEŠ *maṣṣartu* leaves open the possibility that these men of Egypt are civilians, perhaps merchants (for Egyptian merchants at Ugarit, see e.g. Singer 1999:673).

But by far the most frequent references to Egyptian garrisons are Rib-Hadda's pleas for the pharaoh to send a garrison to help him defend his cities against Amurru:

EA 79   (13-17) *ù yi-ìš-me* EN-*li* / *a-wa-te*.MEŠ ÌR-*šu ù [yu-wa-ši-r]a-ni* / LÚ.MEŠ *ma-ṣa-ar-*
Rib-   *ta a-n[a]* / *na-ṣa-ar* URU LUGAL *a-[di]* / [*a-]ṣa* ÉRIN.MEŠ *pí-ṭá-ti*
Hadda

(13-17) May my lord heed the words of his servant. Send me a garrison to guard the city of the king until the archers come out.

(27-33) *2* URU.KI.MEŠ *ša ir-ti-ḫu a-na [ia-ši]* / *ù tu-ba-ú-na la-qa-šu[-nu]* / *ìš-tu qa-at* LUGAL-*ri yu-wa-š[i-ra]* / EN-*li* LÚ.MEŠ *ma-ṣa-ar-ta* / *a-na 2* URU-*ni-šu a-di a-ṣé* ÉR[IN.MEŠ] / *pí-ṭá-ti ù mi-im-ma* / *yu-da-na-ni a-na a-ka-li-šu-nu*

(27-33) There are two towns that remain to me, and they want to take them from the king. May my lord send a garrison to his two towns until the archers come out, and may something be given to me for their food.

EA 85
Rib-
Hadda

(39-47) *ša-ni-tam li-i[b-lu-uṭ]* / [LUGAL-]*ru* EN *a-di* [LÚ.M]EŠ-*ia ra[-i-mu(-ni/ia)]* / [ᵐ.ÌR-*a*]-*š[i]-ir-ta ù* LÚ.MEŠ G[AZ.MEŠ] / *[a-na ma-ḫa]r* ᵐ*ia-pa-*ᵈ.IŠKUR *i-na* / [ᵘʳᵘ*be-ru*]-*ta ù tu-pa-šu [ki-tu]* / *[_ _ _ _ _]* EN *ia-nu* LÚ *i-na* URU-*[ka ù]* / *[uš-]ši-ra* L[Ú].M[E]š *ma-ṣa-ar-ta [a-na]* / *[na-ṣ]a-ar* KU[R-*k*]*a ú-ul tu-ṣa-bat* / [KUR]-*ka ša-ni-tam ši-mé ia-a-ši*

(39-47) Moreover, as the king, my Lord, lives, truly my men are loyal to me. ʿAbdi-Aširta and the ʿApiru have gone to Yapaḫ-Hadda in Beirut so an alliance might be formed. As there is no one in your city, send a garrison to protect your land, lest your city be seized. Listen to me.

(75-83) *yi-ìš-mé* LUGAL-*ru a-wa-te* ÌR-*šu* / *[i]a-di-na* LÚ.MEŠ *a-na na-ṣa-ar* / [UR]U-*šu ú-ul yu-pa-ḫi-ra ka-li* / [LÚ].MEŠ GAZ.MEŠ *ù* DI.AB-*t[u]* / [URU] *ù i-na* UD.KÁM.MEŠ / *[an-nu]-ti uš-ši-ra* ÉRIN.MEŠ [GAL] / *[<ù> tu]-da-bi-ra-šu i[š-tu]* / [KUR *a-mur-*]*ri i-nu-ma* LÚ.MAŠKÍM L[UGAL] *[it-t]i-nu ù a-na ša-š[u]* / *[nu-uš-pu]-ru ú-ul nu-uš-pu-ru a-n[a _ _]*

(75-83) May the king heed the words of his servant; may he give men to guard his city, lest he gather together all the ʿApiru and they seize the city. At this time send a large force that they may drive him from the land of Amurru. When the commissioner of the king was with us, it was to him we used to write; we cannot write to him now.

According to the texts, if the pharaoh did send a garrison, then the *ḫazannu* were expected to provide food and provisions for them. A letter from the pharaoh to one Endaruta, the ruler of Akšapa, contains the following order:

EA 367 (15-17) *ù lu-ú šu-šu-ra-tá a-na pa-ni* / ÉRIN.MEŠ *pí-ṭa-ti* LUGAL NINDA *ma-a-ad* / GEŠTIN *gáb-bu mi-im-ma ma-a-ad*

(15-17) And may you prepare before the arrival of the archers of the king food in abundance, wine and everything else in abundance.

Numerous letters from the *ḫazannu* assure the pharaoh that these orders are being carried out (see Moran 1983):

EA 55 Akizzi (10-15) *be-lí e-nu-ma* ÉRIN.MEŠ-*šu ù* GIŠ.GIGIR.MEŠ-*šu* / *ša be-lí il-li-kám* NINDA.ḪÁ KAŠ.ḪÁ GU₄.MEŠ [ÙZ].ḪÁ LÀL.ḪÁ *ù* Ì.MEŠ *a-na pa-ni* / ÉRIN.MEŠ-*šu ù* GIŠ.GIGIR.MEŠ *ša be-lí-ia ú-uṣ-ṣa-ni* / *ù a-nu-um-ma* LÚ.MEŠ.GAL-*tum*.MEŠ *ša be-lí-ia* / *ù [l]i-iš-al-šu-nu be-lí-ia*

(10-15) My lord, when the troops and chariots of my lord have come here, food, strong drink, oxen, sheep, and goats, honey and oil, were produced for the troops and chariots of my lord. Look, there are my lord's magnates; my lord should ask them.

EA 216 Bayawa *iš-ti-mi ša-par* / [L]UGAL-*ri* EN-*ia a-na* ÌR-*šu* / *a-na šu-ši-ri i-na pa-ni* / ÉRIN.MEŠ *pí-[ṭ]á-ti* / *a-nu-ma [i]-šu-š[i]-ru* / *[k]i-ma qa-b[i]* LUGAL EN-*ia*

(6-11) I have heard the message of the king, my lord, to his servant to make preparations before the arrival of the archers. I am now making preparations in accordance with the command of the king, my lord.

EA 324 Yidya *a-nu-ma i-na-ṣa-ru a-wa-tú* / LUGAL EN-*ia* DUMU ᵈ.UTU *ù* / *a-nu-ma šu-ši-ir-ti* NINDA.MEŠ / KAŠ.MEŠ Ì.MEŠ ŠE.MEŠ GU₄.MEŠ / ÙZ.MEŠ *a-na pa-ni* ÉRIN.MEŠ LUGAL EN-*ia* / *[b]e-it-ti gáb-ba a-na* ÉRIN.MEŠ LUGAL EN-*ia*

(10-15) I am indeed observing the orders of the king, my lord, the son of the Sun, and I have indeed prepared food, strong drink, oil, grain, oxen, sheep and goats, before the arrival of the troops of the king, my lord. I have stored everything for the troops of the king, my lord.

EA 325
Yidya

a-nu-ma šu-ši-ir-ti gáb-bi m[i-i]m-mi / [NINDA].MEŠ KAŠ.MEŠ GU₄.MEŠ ÙZ.MEŠ / [š] E.MEŠ IN.MEŠ *gáb-bi m[i-]i[m-mi] / [š]a qa-ba* LUGAL EN-*ia[ù] / [a-n]u-ma šu-ši-ir-ti[-šu-nu(?)]*

(15-19) I have indeed prepared absolutely everything – food, strong drink, oxen, sheep and goats, grain, straw, absolutely everything that the king, my lord commanded. I have indeed prepared it.

4.4.2.   The Archaeology of Occupation

Once again, this aspect of the standard history fails to find support in the archaeological record. If there were long-standing garrisons of troops stationed in the northern Levant, we would expect to find some archaeological remains. Once again, for a comparative case we can look to Beth Shan, where we have a clear case of an Egyptian garrison in a southern Levantine town. The architectural evidence includes an Egyptian-style fortified tower known as a *migdol* (figure 4.10), a large home (figure 4.11) interpreted as a commander's residence, and a collection of residential buildings (figure 4.12) interpreted as barracks (James and McGovern 1993:4-5). The *migdol* is a "thick-walled, bastioned structure" made of mud-brick (James and McGovern 1993:56). It is of a type that was regularly built along the traditional Egyptian road through Sinai to the Levant, the so-called "Ways of Horus" (see Gardiner 1920; Oren 1987). The relief at Karnak temple (figure 4.13) shows the *migdol* as a small tower.
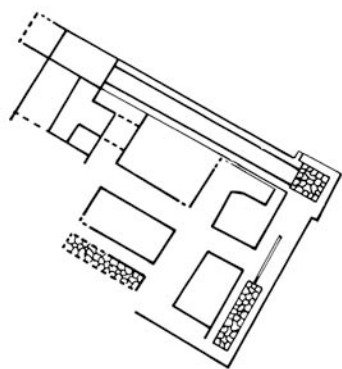
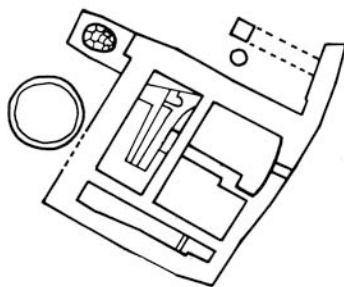*Figure 4.10. The Migdol (after James and McGovern 1993: Map 1)*   *Figure 4.11. The Commander's Residence (after James and McGovern 1993: Map 1)*   *Figure 4.12. The Barracks (after James and McGovern 1993: Map 1)*
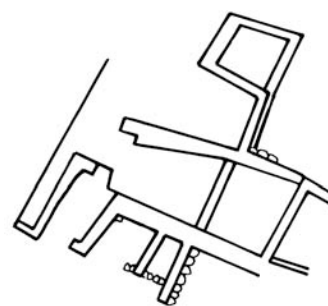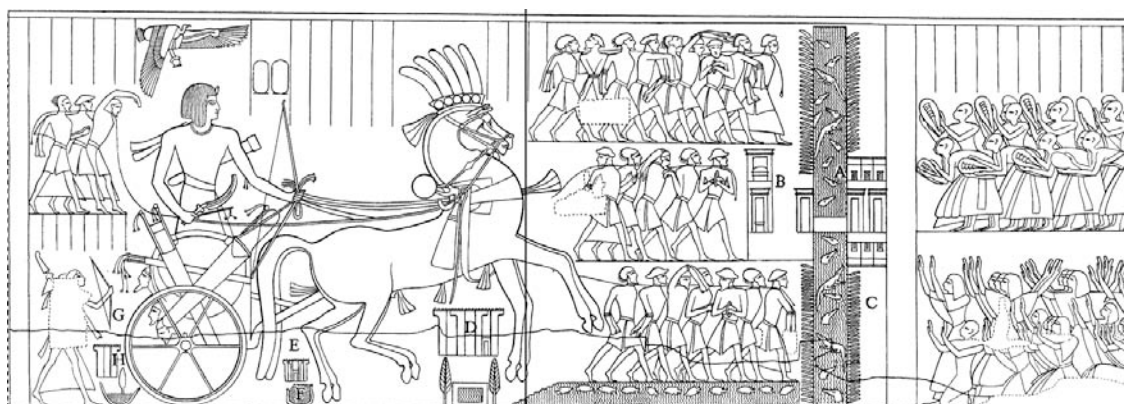

Figure 4.13. The Ways of Horus as Depicted at Karnak (after Gardiner 1920: Plate 11)

The material culture at Beth Shan also shows a strong Egyptian influence. In the same level that the Egyptian garrison buildings appear, a large number of imported Egyptian pottery and silicate objects are also attested (James and McGovern 1993; McGovern et al. 1993).

If Ṣumur and Kumidi were also the hosts of long-term Egyptian garrisons, then we would expect to find at least some level of Egyptian influence on the architecture and the material culture. However, a review of the archaeological remains for the two sites (see Badre 2000, 2006; Badre and Gubel 2000; Badre et al. 1990; Capet 2003; Hachmann 1982b, 1986, 1989; Heinz 2000; Heinz et al. 2001) shows a startling lack of Egyptian

remains. This negative evidence makes it extremely difficult to argue for a permanent Egyptian occupation of the region.

How then can we account for the textual references to garrisons? Ellen Morris succinctly states the problem:

> "Given the combined [textual] evidence for quite substantial Egyptian investment and involvement in its northern empire during the mid- and late Eighteenth Dynasty, then, the scarcity of supporting archaeological evidence is surprising. Indeed, this dearth of material confirmation is particularly striking in light of the quite ample Nineteenth Dynasty attestations of such involvement. [...] This conclusion leads, then, to a fundamental puzzle" (Morris 2004:271-272).

Morris bravely attempts to solve this puzzle without giving up the idea of garrisons. She suggests that the reason we find no evidence of Egyptian influence in the northern Levant (or in the earlier periods in the southern Levant) is because the Egyptian strategy in these areas was to (1) "require vassals to build or provide suitable dwellings for imperial administrators and troops," (2) allow the vassals "to supervise work on the most important bastions of Egyptian power," and (3) "co-opt local buildings of their choosing" (2004:273-274). The evidence on which this suggestion is based is from the Amārna letters:

EA 292   (29-35) *b[a-n]i-t[i] /* É 1-*en* URU *ma-an-ḫa-ti₇ šum-ši / a-na šu-ši-ri a-na pa-ni /* ÉRIN.MEŠ *pí-ṭá-at* LUGAL EN-*ia / ù al-lu-ú il₅-qé-ši m.ma!-a-ia / iš-tu qa-ti₇-ia ù ša-kán /* LÚ-MÁŠKIM-*šu i-na lìb-bi-ši!*

(29-35) I built a house ... to make preparations before the arrival of the archers of the king, my lord, and Maya has just taken it away from me and placed his commissioner in it.

Morris also finds fragments of evidence for this in pharaoh's orders to Aziru to rebuild Ṣumur (*EA* 160). This solution is possible, and if it is correct, would account as

well for the lack of Egyptian palaces. But I find it unlikely that any long-term garrisoning of soldiers could take this form without leaving some evidence. Besides, Egypt's interaction with the Levant (indeed with all foreigners) was highly symbolic, and public displays of "Egyptian-ness" through both architecture and material culture would, I believe, be very important in any Egyptian province.

I would suggest a different solution. Rather than the texts representing reality, the archaeological picture is the correct one. Ṣumur and Kumidi, and the entire area supposed to be their provinces, are ruled and occupied by local populations. As pointed out above, the majority of the references to garrisons in the letters are either to *past* garrisons, which served to keep the enemies of the loyal vassals and the pharaoh at bay, or pleas for the pharaoh to send *future* garrisons.

The references to garrisons in the letters, then, are part of a fictionalized, rhetorical sphere (see Liverani 2004b). In this sphere, the past and future are idealized to contrast with the miserable present. The past is what Liverani calls a "golden age, a paradisiacal state now lost" (Liverani 2004b:113). In the past, loyalty to the pharaoh was rewarded, and evildoers were swiftly punished. In the future, a simple intervention on the part of the pharaoh would be enough to restore this glorious order. In the letters these two periods of perfection are contrasted strongly with the imperfect present, where evildoers run rampant and loyal servants of the pharaoh are killed.

Of course, these rhetorical pasts, presents, and futures have very little to do with actual conditions. But there is some historical truth behind the portrayal. During the multi-year campaigns of Thutmose III, the coastal cities likely were the home of at least small numbers of soldiers who remained behind at the end of the yearly campaign season in order to maintain open supply lines. In the later "campaigns" of Amenophis III and Thutmose IV, which were largely symbolic, these cities again probably played

host to Egyptian officials and troops tasked with ensuring that the pharaoh's visit was successful. The cities selected for this role would have gained a significant amount of prestige, and it is not inconceivable that two generations later we still find a ruler calling Ṣumur the "garrison-city" (*EA* 76) and the "bedchamber of my lord" (*EA* 84). This does not mean that a garrison actually occupied Ṣumur any more than it means that the current pharaoh actually slept there!

5. Conclusion: Towards a More Complex Reconstruction

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The preceding study has, I hope, exposed some of the pitfalls of traditional empire models. By starting from those models, scholars have interpreted the evidence according to preconceived, often subconscious notions about imperial power and the inferiority of the dominated, even when the evidence itself proves ambiguous at best. For example, imperial domination requires imperial administrators. Thus the textual references to the _rabīṣū_ are immediately seized upon as references to an administrative structure. Texts that mention the swearing of oaths and the paying of tribute are taken as references to formal coercive structures of exploitation. The use of submissive vocabulary by the supposed vassals is evidence of their vassal status. Passing references to troops become evidence for the permanent or semi-permanent military occupation of the Levant. The lack of corroborating archaeological evidence is either ignored, or unconvincingly explained away. But all of these pieces of evidence, when looked at without imperial preconceptions, can be easily accounted for by considering the ideological and rhetorical context of the texts.

I believe that merely adjusting the current models is not enough. Rather, we should reject any model that divides the actors into discrete groups based on a few superficial characteristics. We should also reject any model that divides the world into incommensurably different types of polities based on their relative strength or power: cores and peripheries, metropoles and peripheries, empires and vassals. For every human society at its most basic level is made up of humans. Humans who interact with

each other in a great variety of different ways, but humans nonetheless. All human societies share this *one* hidden structure, and all the other differences in scale and complexity are merely the icing. Forget that, and we quickly run into very deep theoretical problems. Finally, we should reject any model that focuses on structure while neglecting the dynamic human forces that give rise to structures. In short, we should reject all of the current models of imperialism.

But if we are to throw out all of the current models, we have to have something with which to replace them. The model described at the end of chapter two is ready to be pressed into action. To fully fill out this model would take a much larger project than this one. But we can take some preliminary steps towards the model, and begin to get a picture of what such a model would look like in action.

First, we have to identify the important agents in this system. For reconstructing the relationship between Egypt and the northern Levant, there are many important agents: both state-level agents (the various city-states, Egypt, the other great powers) and individual agents (the *rabīṣū* would probably be here, along with anyone else whose actions can cause a demonstrable change in the overall system). There are also mid-level agents, social groups such as priests or merchants or landowners. These are groups whose actions have enough cohesion that the group itself begins to exhibit emergent behavior. (Of course, the idea of a 'state' is just as problematic as the idea of an empire. States are also not natural kinds. But that is a topic for another day.)

The next task is to identify the different actions that agents are taking, and the limitations on these actions. In this model, we are actually in a position to ask much better questions about the role of individuals such as the *rabīṣū*. On empire models, the *rabīṣū* are seen strictly through the lens of an Egyptian imperial structure. But in real life, the *rabīṣū*, although nominally acting as servants of the pharaoh, are actually

acting with a great deal of independence. In short, we can simply consider them to be adaptive agents in the interaction field. To be sure, they are linked to the pharaoh and to the Egyptian state-structure by virtue of sharing multiple ideological, military, economic, and cultural spheres, and their range of actions is limited by the pharaoh. These linkings and limitations are exactly what we must uncover for each of the important agents.

Finally, we must determine how the agents within the various spheres are acting to secure what they perceive to be their own interests. For example, one of the pharaoh's goals is to receive gifts of tribute from foreign lands, which then become a tool of legitimation within the Egyptian royal myth. In order to achieve this goal, it is imperative that messengers be able to travel throughout the lands unimpeded. I will venture that the majority of the *rabīṣū*'s activities in the northern Levant were concerned with this. On the other hand, the local rulers each have individual interests. For the rulers of Ugarit, it seems that trade and access to labor were of primary concern, but Rib-Hadda of Byblos seems to be more interested in achieving an ideological link with Egypt. These observations are, of course, very preliminary, and a full study of this system is well beyond the scope of this paper. But the advantages of this approach in terms of explanatory power and adaptability are clear.

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