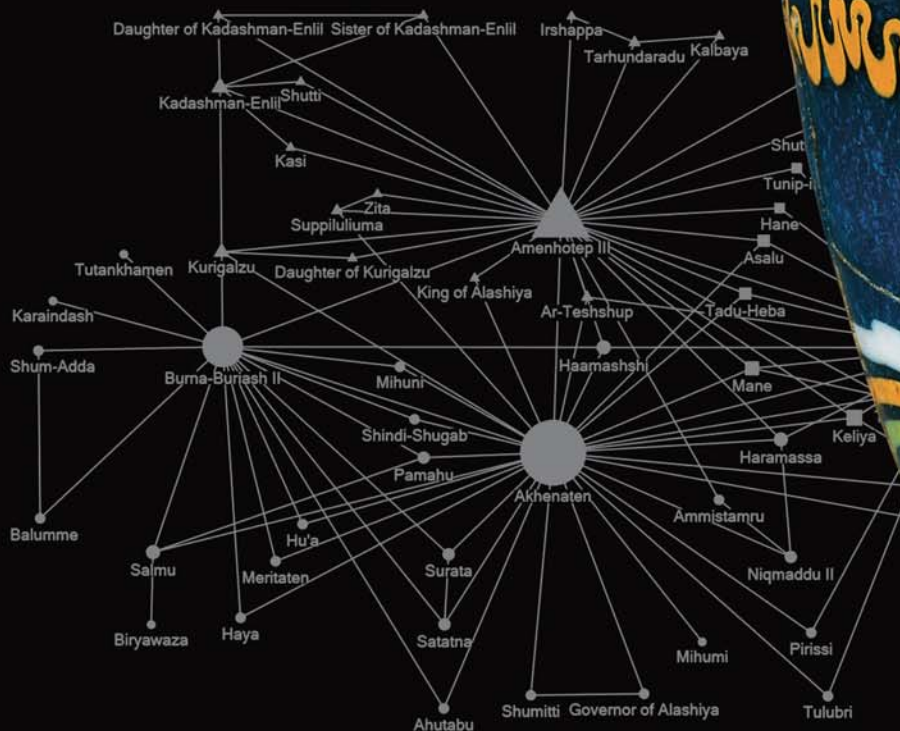
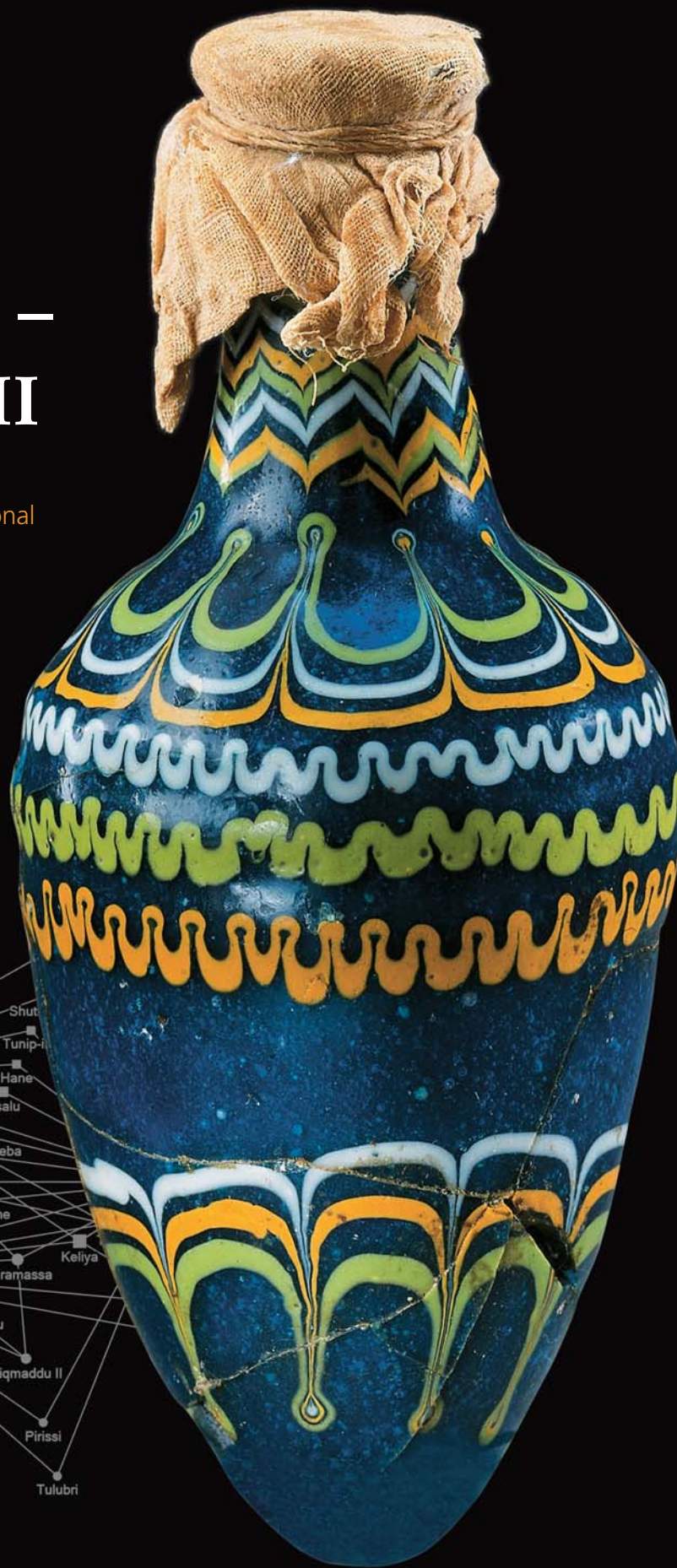


# There and Back Again – the Crossroads II

Proceedings of an International  
Conference Held in Prague,  
September 15–18, 2014

edited by Jana Mynářová,  
Pavel Onderka  
and Peter Pavúk





# **There and Back Again – the Crossroads II**

Proceedings of an International Conference Held in Prague,  
September 15–18, 2014

edited by Jana Mynářová,  
Pavel Onderka  
and Peter Pavúk

Charles University in Prague  
Faculty of Arts  
2015



The book was published from the financial means allocated for the research project of the Czech Science Foundation GA ČR P401/12/G168 “History and Interpretation of the Bible”.

Reviewed by Luca Girella and Jordi Vidal

Contributors: A. Ahrens, F. Blakolmer, L. Bonadies, V. Boschloos, D. H. Cline, E. H. Cline, S. Cohen, P. P. Creasman, V. Dubcová, J. P. Emanuel, G. Gestoso Singer, F. Höflmayer, D. Kahn, U. Matić, E. Morero, A. Morriconi, E. F. Morris, J. Mynářová, P. Onderka, N. Papadimitriou, P. Pavúk, R. Prévalet, G. Tucci, Z. Simon, V. Vrtal, J. Weingarten, H. Wilde

Cover: Glass flask of Maiherperri from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Photo by Andreas F. Voeglin, Photographer Antikenmuseum Basel, Switzerland; the entire Social Network of the Amarna letters with four clusters (© D. H. Cline – E. H. Cline).

Type-setting layout: AGAMA® poly-grafický ateliér, s.r.o., Praha  
Print: PBTisk a.s.

© Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Arts, 2015

ISBN: 978-80-7308-575-9

---

## EGYPT, UGARIT, THE GOD BA<sup>c</sup>AL, AND THE PUZZLE OF A ROYAL REBUFF

Ellen F. Morris

Letters written three thousand years ago are difficult to decipher. There are nuances of vocabulary and discourse that defy easy understanding as well as lacunae that loom up malevolently as if to taunt the translator. Intent and context—factors crucial to the interpretation of any text—are rarely spelled out. Indeed, in encountering an ancient letter, we moderns arrive late (*very* late) as eavesdroppers to a muffled conversation between strangers that we don't fully understand. In certain cases, however, the exchange is so interesting and the content so seemingly counter-intuitive that the snatched fragments warrant concentrated attention. Moreover, as any agent of espionage would readily confirm, when an intercepted conversation occurs between two heads of state, its potential to shed light on questions of political import is ratcheted up significantly.

The intercepted conversation that lies at the heart of this essay occurred between the pharaoh Merneptah (1213–1203 BCE)<sup>1</sup> and his counterpart on the throne of Ugarit. At the time at which the letter was written, Egypt and Hatti were the two most important superpowers in the ancient Near East. The kingdom of Ugarit, which was without a doubt the largest, richest, and most powerful polity on the Levantine coast, had been one of Egypt's highest status vassals in the Amarna period. Following the aggressive incursions of Šuppiluliuma I (1343–1322/18 BCE), however, the city had switched its loyalty to Hatti and consequently terminated all intercourse with the Egyptian court. Relations did not thaw until midway through Merneptah's father's reign, when the Egypto-Hittite peace treaty was ratified in 1258 BCE. No longer enemies with Egypt, Hatti evidently granted Ugarit permission to send trading expeditions to the Nile Valley. The intensity of these renewed commercial and diplomatic relations is betrayed by the abundance of Egyptian artifacts excavated from 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty levels at the site.

The fact that Ugarit owed fealty to Hatti, however, makes the content of RS 88.2158, a letter discovered in the archive of an Ugaritic palace official and commercial agent named Urtenu, that much more intriguing. Merneptah's letter to the king of Ugarit begins with the pharaoh recapping his correspondent's last letter, often employing direct quotes to do so. The king of Ugarit had apparently begun that letter with an imagined protestation before the feet of the pharaoh, fol-

---

<sup>1</sup> The dates employed are those given in W. G. E. Watson – N. Wyatt, eds. (1999).

lowed by a reference to his ancestors' status as vassals of Egypt and his own assertion that, like them, he too was a servant of the king:

"[...] sept fois sept fois [je tombe aux pieds de mon seigneur [.....] parmi les serviteurs de/qui [.....] qui/que/du roi, l'excellent fils [du Soleil .....] toi, [tu t'es exprimé ain[si.....] tout ce que [....., tes] ancêtres (étaient) vraiment les serviteurs du roi, [l'excellent fils du Soleil]: toi aussi (tu es) le serviteur du roi, l'excellent fils du Soleil, comme eux," (Lackenbacher 2001: 241).

These pledges of past and present allegiance put into the mouth of a Hittite vassal are surprising, especially as there is no indication that the Hittite king took kindly to sharing his vassals. Indeed, in one letter written to Ammurapi—quite likely the same king who Merneptah corresponded with in RS 88.2158—the Hittite monarch warned his Ugaritic counterpart in no uncertain terms "You belong to the Sun your master; a servant indeed, his possession are you" (RS 18.038; Singer 1999: 707).

If the king of Ugarit was a possession, however, he was one that was dangerously close to being lost, for in the letter he shows no signs of serving Hittite interests. Indeed, according to Merneptah he had gone on to issue the pharaoh an intriguing invitation: "Que le roi accorde que vienne un sculpteur et [qu'il sorte] vers m[oi(?)] pour faire une image de Marniptah Hatpamua en face de l'image de Ba'al qu'il a présentée dans le temple que, moi, je suis en train de faire pour Ba'al de l'Ougarit" (Lackenbacher 2001: 241). Thus it would seem that the king of Ugarit had proposed that Merneptah should send him a sculptor who would then fashion a statue of the pharaoh that the king of Ugarit would erect directly facing Ba'al—a sanctified image of the city's patron deity that the pharaoh had apparently donated to the temple some time prior! As excavations of Ugarit have revealed, Ba'al's temple was one of the two largest in the city, perched prominently on its acropolis (Callot 2011; see Fig. 1). Thus, the letter's twin revelations—that the deity's statue was Egyptian in origin and that the king of Ugarit desired to place a statue of Merneptah before this god to eternally revere it—are entirely unexpected.

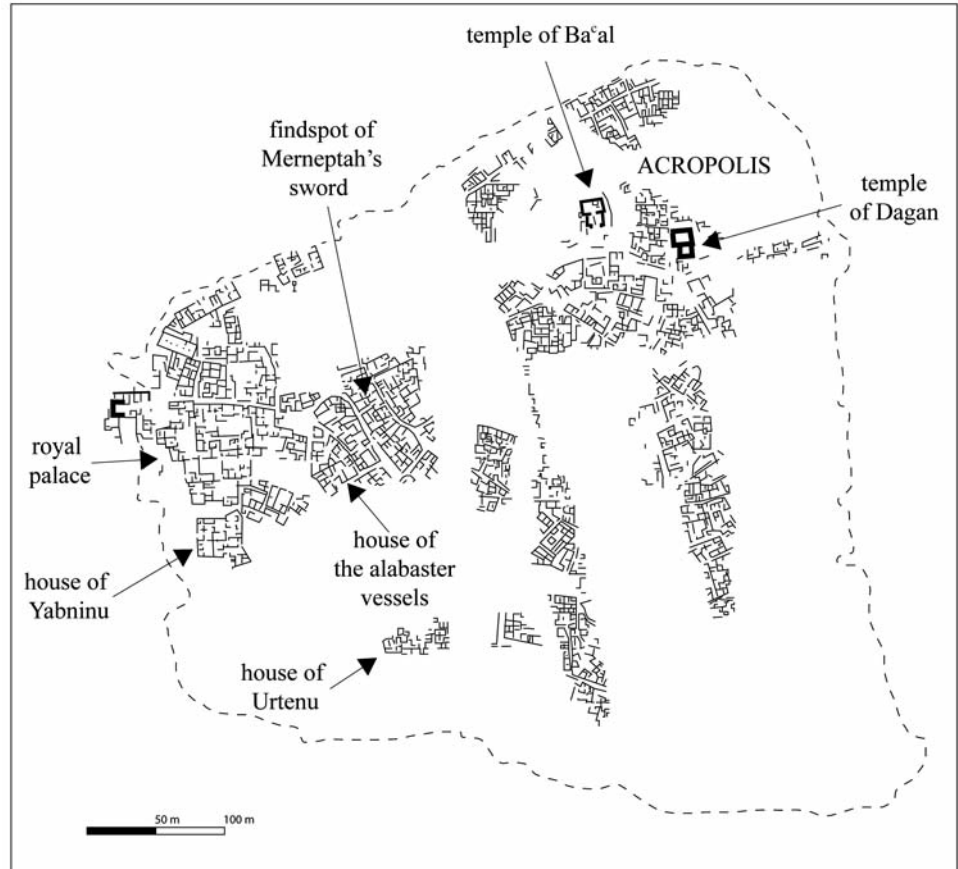
In response to this request, however, Merneptah replied in a seemingly evasive manner.

"Les sculpteurs qui travaillent ici, en Égypte, sont en train d'exécuter la tâche requise pour les grands dieux d'Égypte. Vois: comme le roi est assis sur le trône du Soleil ceux-ci travaillent pour les grands dieux d'Égypte; et comme ceux-ci *achèvent (leur travail)*, le roi enverra vers toi les menuisiers dont tu as parlé pour que ceux-ci fassent (alors) tous les (types de) travaux que toi tu leur ordonneras (en disant): 'Fais-les!'" (Lackenbacher 2001: 241)



**Fig. 1**

Schematic plan of the excavated portion of Ugarit. Places discussed in the text are labeled.



The pharaoh's response to the king of Ugarit's offer was effectively, "Not now, thanks." Egypt's artisans were all busy working on projects for the country's own gods. At some point in the indefinite future, when some were freed up from this work, however, craftsmen capable of carrying out any orders given would be sent.

So here, then, is a triple-pronged puzzle. First, why had Merneptah supplied the temple of Ba'al with a cultic image of its main deity? Second, why would the king of Ugarit, a Hittite vassal, approach an Egyptian pharaoh with an invitation to create a statue of himself that would be placed directly facing Ba'al? Third, why would Merneptah refuse this request under the guise of being unable to accommodate it at that time? Egypt was, after all, a land riddled with accomplished sculptors, many of whom, no doubt, had spent their entire adult lives helping to create the innumerable images of Merneptah's father, the great god, Ramesses II, that littered Egypt and Egyptian-occupied Nubia. Even if many artisans were busy preparing for Merneptah's coronation, as Sylvie Lackenbacher (1995: 79–80) suggests was the underlying issue, surely one or two competent craftsmen could be spared as a favor to a high-status king who wished to display a statue of the pharaoh in such an important venue.

It will be argued that the discussion surrounding the gifting (and *not* gifting) of statues was part and parcel of an on-going renegotiation of the nature of Ugarit's political relationship with Egypt. Thus, after first reviewing the frayed state of Ugarit's interactions with its Hittite overlord in and just prior to the reign of Merneptah, the essay will address the multifaceted role statues played in Egypt's foreign relations.<sup>2</sup> Egyptian and Near Eastern statues were anything but inert, and the gift of a statue of a god and/or a divine king could have a whole host of related repercussions. In attempting to interpret Merneptah's original gift of the Ba'al statue, as well as the pharaoh's reluctance to furnish a statue of himself to go with it, at least four distinct rationales may have come into play, each of which will be discussed separately. The original sender and recipient of this letter, no doubt, had a clear sense of which—or which combination—of these possible factors was to be found lodged between the dense cluster of cuneiform lines. For contemporary scholars, sifting through the mail of long dead strangers, however, a whole host of possibilities must be considered. While a few of these might be justly criticized as speculative, it is the goal of this essay to identify a set of questions and to provoke generative thought about possible answers.

### **Relations between Ugarit and Hatti Were Often Acrimonious**

Although Merneptah's correspondent is nowhere named, RS 88.2158 must necessarily have been addressed either to Niqmaddu III (if composed early in the pharaoh's reign) or to Ugarit's last king, Ammurapi. To some degree, however, it hardly matters. Relations between the Hittite and Ugaritic courts were fractious in both reigns and, indeed, even in the generation prior. Niqmaddu III's father, Ibranu, had already run into trouble for not sending the proper embassies and gifts to the Hittite court. In response to this perceived affront, a Hittite prince dispatched a curt letter (RS 17.247) that refrained from addressing Ibranu as king, informed the errant vassal of his overlord's anger, and demanded that Ibranu promptly comply with expected protocol. While the king of Ugarit no doubt did so, the tone of the correspondence sent by Hittite functionaries during his reign never warmed. Based on a letter from the king of Carchemish (RS 17.289) that ordered Ibranu to furnish troops to Hatti because it was "(a matter of) death (or) life", however, one suspects that the vassal's original snub may have been intended to ascertain whether Hatti's weakness might provide an opportunity for increased Ugaritic independence (Dupont 1987: 146–149, 153; Weber 1966: 155–156).

---

<sup>2</sup> Most of the statues discussed here are (or would likely be) smaller than life-size and thus might more properly be termed statuettes. I will utilize "statue" as a generic term for the representations of gods and pharaohs erected in temple contexts, given the evident religious, economic, and social importance of cultic images. The sole example of a statue known to be life-size is designated as such in the text.



If a letter sent to Niqmaddu III by the Hittite queen (RS 17.435) is any indication, relations between Ugarit and Hatti continued to be difficult in the subsequent reign. The fragmentary missive seems to reveal that Niqmaddu III had been made very upset by the rerouting of caravans between Egypt and Hatti such that they no longer passed through his realm. His frustration at losing such a lucrative opportunity to levy taxes and to trade may have prompted Niqmaddu to withhold both messengers and tribute from the Hittite court (Singer 1999: 674–675, 693–694). Such defiance, followed perhaps by an only half-hearted attempt at submission, may have led to a particularly humiliating incident, which was related in retrospect by the king of Carchemish (RS 34.136). According to his account, Ugaritic ambassadors were bound like criminals after their king had sent them to the Hittites bearing patently inadequate gifts (Singer 1999: 695).

The fact that the king of Carchemish felt it necessary to remind his Ugaritic counterpart of this shameful incident is indirect evidence that the reluctance of Ugarit's ruler to pay the Hittites proper homage persisted into the next reign. Indeed, from the diplomatic correspondence, it is clear that Ammurapi refused to send his messengers to the Hittite court for one or two years at a time and also failed to extradite an individual to Hatti when requested to do so (RS 18.038 and RS 13.007; Singer 1999: 707–708, 722).<sup>3</sup> As in the reign of this king's grandfather, however, Ugarit's separatist inclinations may have been emboldened by Hittite weakness. In Ibranu's reign, Ugarit's immediate assistance in providing troops was presented as a matter of life or death, while in a letter written to Ammurapi, the Hittite king refused to send grain to help ameliorate a potentially devastating famine in Ugarit because, as he stated dramatically, "the Sun himself is perishing" (RS 18.038; Dupont 1987: 210–211). During this same crisis, however, it would appear that the Hittites ordered Ugarit to furnish a large ship to transport 2,000 measures of grain from Mukiš to Ura because, again, it was "(a matter) of death (or) life" (RS 20.212; Astour 1965: 254–255; Singer 1999: 716). Needless to say, no effort was made to provide relief to Ugarit.

Thus, whether Merneptah corresponded in RS 88.2158 with Niqmaddu III or Ammurapi is of little matter. Either way, the king who issued the invitation was an unenthusiastic Hittite vassal who enjoyed a strained relationship with his overlord, a man he seems often to have felt free to defy.<sup>4</sup> Niqmaddu may have been prompted to solicit increased Egyptian attention once the caravans from this rich nation had been rerouted to bypass his territory. For Ammurapi, faced with

<sup>3</sup> Certain documents indicate that Ammurapi may have divorced his Hittite wife, a scenario that, if true, would obviously have exacerbated relations between the king of Ugarit and his former father-in-law (RS 17.226; RS 17.355; Dupont 1987: 200–203; Weber 1966: 53–54, 59, 140, 176–77).

<sup>4</sup> Other letters, unfortunately omitting personal names, also point to the strained relationship between Ugarit and Hatti at this time (RS 20.212; RS 34.143; Astour 1965: 254–255; van Soldt 2010: 200).

a famine, on the other hand, Egypt's famously full granaries may have provided an incentive to summon his scribes. Regardless, given the fraught nature of interactions with Hittite authorities, the king of Ugarit—whichever one it was—may well have decided to explore the possibility of returning his city to its former status as a voluntary, and thus especially privileged, protectorate of Egypt. Or, at the very least, the Ugaritic king may have considered covertly dividing his loyalties between multiple overlords and thus putting himself in a position to play one off of the other, a tactic employed by some of Amurru's most famously opportunistic rulers (Morris 2010; Devecchi 2012).

Having considered the political milieu in which RS 88.2158 was composed, it is vital to investigate the tacit agreements and underlying consequences for both Ugarit and Egypt in the provision of statues by the latter to the former. What role did statues play as political actors and ambassadors? What were the obligations inherent in such a gift? And how did or would the donation of a statue transform the nature of the relationship between the two countries? Although each of the explanations offered here for why Ugarit may have requested a statue and Egypt have chosen to send or to withhold it is discussed separately, the various considerations at play undoubtedly overlapped. Statues are, after all, multidimensional entities, designed to be viewed from numerous perspectives.

### **First Explanation: Egyptian Statues Were Valuable in and of Themselves**

In the Second Intermediate Period, when northerners with far-flung trade connections ruled the Delta, they seem to have exported the stone statues they looted to foreign courts throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, creating and then feeding an appetite for such statuary that may perhaps be seen as an early incidence of aesthetic Egyptomania (Helck 1976; Ahrens 2011). Certainly, the technical expertise of Egyptian stone carvers in the Middle Bronze Age equaled or (much more often) exceeded that of their Levantine counterparts. Although the dynamics are poorly understood, it is likely that foreign kings viewed Egyptian statues in much the same way that Romans viewed ancient Greek statuary, i.e. as collector's items—the actual subject of which may have been of less interest than the style.

In the New Kingdom, however, the value of an Egyptian-made statue, at least in diplomatic contexts, likely resided primarily in the precious materials from which it was crafted. The Egyptians took great pride in creating cult statues from the most expensive substances on earth. Ramesses III, for example, donated upwards of 3,650 pounds of gold and silver, and virtually the same quantity of precious stones, to Theban temple workshops for the production of divine images (Hill 2007: 23). Likewise when Tutankhamun commissioned a statue of Ptah, he boasted that the god's body was composed "of electrum, lapis lazuli, turquoise

and every precious stone" (Murnane 1995: 213). Not surprisingly, very few cult statues have survived to the present day. Two stunning exceptions to this rule—a 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty falcon-headed deity fashioned from silver, gold, lapis lazuli, and rock crystal, housed in the Miho Museum in Kyoto, and a Third Intermediate Period solid gold image of Amun on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (26.7.1412)—demonstrate the potential intrinsic value of Merneptah's gift (Roehrig 1997; Hill 2007: 84–87).

Conveniently, a pharaoh could hardly be faulted for commissioning and presenting such a pious gift as a divine statue, and thus the act provided an ideal sanctimonious pretext for instances when it was seen as advantageous to transfer wealth from Egypt's treasury to that of a foreign ruler. The pharaonic practice of deploying statues in order to further a foreign policy agenda may have been almost as old as its northern empire. Certainly, both Thutmose III and his son Amenhotep II had made it a practice "to give things" to Syro-Palestinian rulers as tokens of gratitude for their loyalty (Morris 2005: 128). While the nature of these gifts is nowhere stated, it is not improbable that precious statues may have been included among them. The citizens of Tunip, for instance, wrote to the pharaoh in the Amarna period stating, "Tunip—who *ruled* it in the past? Did not Manakhpirya: *am-ma-ti-wu-uš* (your ancestor) rule it? The gods and the ... : *na-ab-ri-il-la-an* (?) of the king of Egypt, our lord, dwell in Tunip, and he should inquire of his ancients: *am-ma-ti* (ancient) when we did not belong to our lord, the king of Egypt" (EA 59; Moran 1992: 130).

If Thutmose III had donated statues of deities along with something else, stated to be "of the king of Egypt", to Tunip's temple(s), it may have been in hopes that such costly gifts might provide the city with an incentive to cease inciting rebellion and otherwise interfering with Egyptian activities on the Levantine coast. Given the trouble that Tunip caused Egyptian troops in Thutmose's fifth, seventh, and sixteenth campaigns (Redford 2003: 63, 71, 95) and the fact that the city lay at the contested margins of both Egypt's empire and that of its arch-enemy, Mitanni, such incentives may have been deemed prudent. "If you can't (easily or cheaply) beat them, pay them", is an old imperial adage, followed almost invariably in tense and unstable borderlands. Thus, Thutmose's gifts almost certainly served as bribes, designed to demonstrate to possibly wayward northern vassals a tangible benefit to casting their lot with the Egyptians.

The same policy is likely attested in another Amarna letter, this time sent by the ruler of Qatna to Akhenaten ostensibly to report on a recent Hittite incursion into his land. Directly following what the king of Qatna must have known would be worrisome news, he mentioned another matter.

"My lord, your ancestors made (a statue of) Šimigi, the god of my father, and because of him became famous. Now the king of Hatti has taken (the statue of)

Šimigi, the god of my father. My lord knows what the fashioning of divine statues is like. Now that Šimigi, the god of my father, has been reconciled to me, if, my lord, it *pleases* him, may he give (me) a *sack* of gold, just as much as is needed, for (the statue of) Šimigi, the god of my father, so they can fashion it for me. Then my lord will become, because of Šimigi, *more famous than before*"<sup>5</sup> (EA 55; Moran 1992: 127–128).

The letter reveals three valuable pieces of information: first, that a prior Egyptian king had fashioned a statue (presumably of gold) for a king of Qatna, a ruler situated in the ever-insecure, northern frontier of Egypt's empire. Second, that the ruler of Qatna was under direct threat from Hatti and from Hittite allies who had been kidnapping his citizens and now, in a typically Hittite fashion, had even absconded with the city's patron deity. Third and finally, that a sack of gold was just as much as was needed, undoubtedly, both to recast the flesh of the god and, perhaps more pressingly, to purchase the continued cooperation of a vassal who could otherwise clearly be forgiven for switching his allegiance to the Hittite camp.

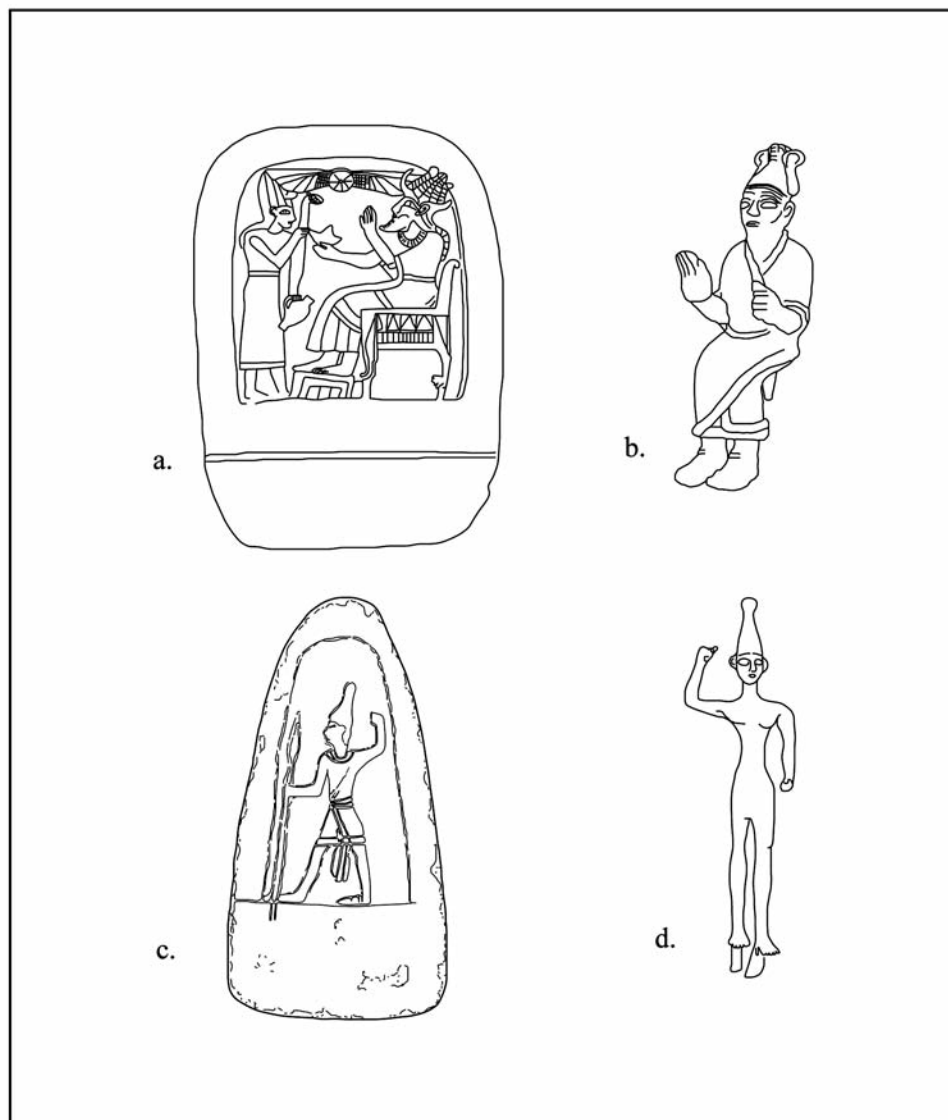
If the Egyptians were known to bestow precious statues on valued vassals whose allegiance the government wanted but could not take for granted, then perhaps the king of Ugarit invited Merneptah to contribute a statue of Ba'al to his temple in order to signal his willingness to further Egypt's interests, however covertly he might have to do so. In this respect, it is worth noting that many of the statues excavated at Ugarit that are commonly identified with Ba'al and El exhibit strong Egyptian influence in their iconography, as do their representations on stelae (see Fig. 2). El, for example, wears the type of feathered Atef crown known from Egyptian statues of Osiris, while Ba'al's crown is effectively that of Upper Egypt. The latter's wide, striding pose, with arm held high, moreover, is reminiscent of that adopted by Egyptian kings depicted smiting foes (see the examples and discussions in Negbi 1976: 29–33; 46–49; Yon 1991; Yon 2003: 45–46). While the majority of these statues and stelae were likely of local manufacture, it would not be surprising if the larger cult statues that served as models had originally been fashioned by Egyptian artisans conscious of producing for the tastes of a foreign client. Such commissions, as already discussed, did occur.

---

<sup>5</sup> The notion that a divine statue erected in foreign lands might bring fame to its donor finds a later parallel with regard to the shrine of Apollo at Delphi. By donating a particularly impressive statue to this well-frequented temple complex, political entities might attempt to buy influence with the oracle but also, in one fell swoop, to "advertise and proclaim wealth, military victory, deference to the gods, diplomatic relations, family and civic pride, and membership in the Greek world" (Scott 2014: 111).

**Fig. 2**

Egyptianized stelae and statuettes of El and Ba'al, excavated at Ugarit, that likely refer back to a larger cult statue. Not to scale. a. Stele of El, RS 8.295 (redrawn from Yon 1991: fig. 16a); b. Gilded bronze statuette of El, RS 23.384; c. Stele of Ba'al, RS 23.218 (redrawn from Yon 1991: fig. 21); d. Bronze statuette of Ba'al (AO 17329; redrawn from Negbi 1976: 31, fig. 45, no. 1226).



If the solicitation of a divine statue from Egypt makes some sense, the king of Ugarit's subsequent request for a pharaonic statue is more difficult to understand. Perhaps the most plausible explanation is that the king who requested the pharaonic statue was not the same ruler who had solicited the statue of Ba'al. Merneptah's reign overlapped, after all, with those of both Niqmaddu III and Ammurapi. Upon ascending the throne, the latter may have been desirous of securing as lavish a gift as his predecessor. The fact that the author of the letter quoted in RS 88.2158 began his missive with the assurance that just as his ancestors were loyal servants of the pharaoh, so too was he, suggests that like his predecessor(s) this king may have been requesting a material acknowledgement of this loyalty.

When the king of Ugarit requested that a craftsman<sup>6</sup> come to fashion a statue of the pharaoh, it may have been understood that such a man would travel together with all the equipment he would require for this task. If this was indeed the assumption, Ugarit's king had every right to expect that the materials shipped by the pharaoh for his own statue would be opulent. Rulers from Assyria and Mitanni both stated their belief that gold was as common as dust in Egypt (EA 16, 27, 29).<sup>7</sup> Likewise, when the king of Mitanni requested solid gold statues of himself and his daughter, Amenhotep III is reported to have replied, "Don't talk of giving statues just of solid cast gold. I will give you ones made also of lapis lazuli. I will give you, too, along with the statues, much additional gold and (other) goods beyond measure" (EA 27; Moran 1992: 87).

Although the king of Mitanni reported Amenhotep III's words after the pharaoh had died, his claims could not have been too exaggerated. Records of royal correspondence were kept by both parties for reference and were often extracted from the archives to be quoted verbatim. Further, the ruler of Mitanni had every expectation that Amenhotep III's widow would confirm his claim (EA 26, 29; Moran 1992: 85, 92, 94, 96). Indeed, it seems that the same pharaoh may have made a similar promise to Šuppiliuma before he died, for the Hittite king wrote Akhenaten in much the same irritated and impatient vein, stating, "My brother, do not hold back anything that [I asked] of your father. [As to the 2 st]atues of gold, one [should be *standing*], one should be seated. And, my brother, [*send me*] the 2 [*silve*]r statues of women" (EA 41; Moran 1992: 114). Thus, even if gold-plated statues were in fact more common than statues of solid gold—as Akhenaten's gifts to the Kassite king (EA 14; Moran 1992: 29) and many of the statues found in Tutankhamun's own tomb might imply—Amenhotep III's purported promise surely represents the bounty (in statue form) that an ally or a high status vassal might aspire to receive from Egypt's Golden Horus.

<sup>6</sup> Merneptah refers to sending "NAGAR.MEŠ", carpenters (Lackenbacher 2001: 240; RS 2158, l. 23). While Forstener-Müller *et al.* (2002: 162) have concluded that this would imply that the statue to be created would be of wood, the same term was employed by the Kassite king Burna-Buriaš when he wrote Akhenaten stating, "There are skilled carpenters (NAGAR.MEŠ) where you are. Let them represent a wild animal, land or aquatic, lifelike, so that the hide is exactly like that of a live animal" (EA 10; Moran 1992: 19). The portion of the letter immediately preceding this excerpt is damaged, but the prior discussion had concerned gold. The fact that Burna-Buriaš did not care what animal was fashioned, that he went on to state that if time was an issue then sending old statues would be fine, and that he had pitched the last shipment of gifts from the pharaoh into the kiln to see how much gold came out, strongly suggests that his desire for the statues that the carpenters would make had much more to do with their materials than their subject matter. The fact that in RS 88.2158 the king of Ugarit had requested one sculptor and that Merneptah suggested that he might eventually send a plurality of carpenters remains a puzzle (Lackenbacher 1995: 80, 82).

<sup>7</sup> Although hyperbolic, the statement reflects a relative truth. In Egypt the ratio of the value of gold to silver was 1:2, while elsewhere it was much higher: e.g., in Ugarit 1:3–4, in Babylonia and Nuzi 1:9, and in Hatti 1:36 (Heltzer 1978: 101).



The question remains, however, as to why Merneptah would have refused (however politely) to commission a statue of himself to compliment the statue of the deity that he had already bestowed upon the temple. Perhaps he was annoyed to have been asked for another statue so soon. The king reigned for only a decade, so the request for a second statue may have seemed to come rather quickly after the first. Speaking against concerns of cost, however, is the rich list of goods that Merneptah sent as greeting gifts along with his letter of deferral (including fifty logs of ebony, a thousand plaques of red, white, and blue stones, twelve large packages, eight hundred whips or flails, and great quantities of clothing). The evident value of this cargo strongly suggests that it wasn't the cost of fashioning a statue, nor the inconvenience of missing a craftsman or two, that deterred Merneptah from agreeing to the king of Ugarit's proposal. Rather it was a factor of far more consequence.

Perhaps, then, Merneptah's discomfort lay in the nature of the statement that placing his own statue in the temple of Ba'al would make. While his provision of a cultic statue to Ugarit's temple might be passed off as a pious gesture, it is hard to imagine that allowing an image of himself to be placed directly before the deity would not be read as a challenge to Hittite authority. The likelihood of incurring an armed reprisal would no doubt give Merneptah pause, as his own father had spent much of his career fighting the Hittites. Despite having raised massive armies and having launched numerous campaigns, Ramesses II had made no serious headway in reclaiming those portions of Egypt's northern empire that had been lost to Šuppiluliuma. The ratification of the Egypto-Hittite peace treaty, then, must have finally allowed the famous warrior king to lay down his arms with dignity and to redirect state resources to address internal priorities. For Merneptah, who in his reign faced organized invasions of Libyans and Sea People as well as rebellions in core territories of his northern and southern empires, the prospect of reawakening the Hittite war machine must have sounded like trouble he did not need and could not afford (Singer 1999: 711).

### **Second Explanation: Divine Statues Made Useful Trade Partners**

The Egyptians evidently bestowed statues on polities that they viewed as loyal to their cause and wanted to reward. It is important to acknowledge, however, that the subsequent employment of these statues may have served other covertly economic purposes. In his book *Prestige and Interest: International Relations in the Near East ca. 1600-1100 B.C.*, Mario Liverani (1990: 240–254) argued that the Egyptians routinely recoded mercantile payments to foreign agents as pious offerings to gods of foreign lands. Thus, prior to obtaining the myrrh trees, ivory tusks, logs of ebony, exotic animals, and other sub-Saharan products that their queen desired, Hatshepsut's emissaries made offerings of "every good thing from the court (life, prosperity, [and] health), for Hathor mistress of Punt" (Liverani 1990: 243). Like-

wise, when Thutmose III's chief treasurer, Sennefer, claimed that he obtained fine quality timber in Byblos after making "offerings of millions of things on behalf of his majesty (life, prosperity, [and] health)" to Hathor (Liverani 1990: 248–249), he deftly employed the same ideological sleight of hand to obscure the true nature of the transaction.

These mid-18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty exchanges are reminiscent of the promise made by a sailor in a Middle Kingdom tale to a god who showed mercy to him after his ship went down, and he washed up on an island in the Red Sea. With a nod to Egypt's apparently already long-standing tradition of depicting international trade as a primarily religious act, the shipwrecked sailor vowed to his divine savior, "I shall have barges brought to you laden with all the products of Egypt, as should be done for a god who loves men in a far-off land which men do not know" (Simpson 2003: 52). Authorities altered and improved upon this same ideological cover story in the New Kingdom by transforming the divine recipients of these barges into deities that the Egyptians *did* know. By syncretizing foreign gods with Egyptian counterparts, the act of "offering" became even more firmly lodged within the relations of reciprocity that bound Egypt's kings to its gods from time immemorial.

Divine statues, then, served as unimpeachable surrogates for mortal trading partners. In Egypt, as in ancient Greece and Rome, gentlemen were not traders, and no one of good birth who served as a merchant bragged of it. By recasting high-level trade as an exchange of divine offerings for divine blessings, however, transfers of payment could be purified. The goods that returned to the Egyptian court along with royally sponsored traders were thus presented as wonders from "god's land", a move that both sidestepped the stigma of trade and enhanced the prestige of Egypt's gods by extending their spheres of authority to the far edges of the earth.

As Sennefer's inscription attests, such "offerings" were necessary even for the gods of vassals, if the "blessings" desired by the Egyptians exceeded the tribute that had been negotiated. The gift of a statue to a vassal, then, may have served to set up an economic relationship, whereby the pharaoh would have a suitable divine trading partner in residence to whom offerings could be made in return for both immaterial blessings (i.e., payments of subsidies given in return for the local leader's loyalty) and material blessings (i.e., trade items given in return for other trade items). In RS 88.2158, the god placed in partnership with the pharaoh was clearly Ba'al, who, as will be discussed below, was equated with the god Seth. It is worthwhile delving back a little further into Ugarit's past, however, when the god that received Egyptian attention may have been more closely identified with Amun.

On a statue that Thutmose III's chief architect, Minmose, commissioned, this official proudly enumerated the construction he carried out in the king's name on temples that extended from Medamud in the south all the way to a polity beyond

Byblos in the north (Cumming 1984: 140). His self-proclaimed work at the temple of “Hathor, Lady of Byblos”—a.k.a. Ba'alat, a local goddess that the Egyptians had long identified with Hathor—is almost assuredly attested by the presence at the site of architectural elements bearing Thutmose’s cartouches (Dunand 1939: pl. 27, nos. 1317 and 1318). Thus, the king’s divine trading partner certainly received help with the refurbishment of her temple, though it is unclear if the king gifted the goddess a statue as well.<sup>8</sup> Minmose also claimed to have worked on behalf of his king at a temple to “Amun” located somewhere north of Byblos. Unfortunately, the statue suffered damage right at the point at which this particularly important toponym would have been divulged.

It is telling that Ugarit<sup>9</sup> is the only polity north of Byblos that has yielded not only an assemblage of Egyptian imports comparable in quantity, quality, and diversity to that found at Byblos but also a temple crowded with votive monuments that were strongly influenced by Egyptian aesthetics (Yon 1991: 274). While there is some evidence, discussed elsewhere (Morris 2015: 177–179), that the “Amun” temple might conceivably have been situated at the Egyptian base of Ullaza, the bustling maritime commercial center of Ugarit would make an even more fitting parallel to Byblos. While Thutmose never conquered Ugarit by force of arms, a five deben weight inscribed with Hatshepsut’s cartouche (RS 26.280) and a vase bearing the name of Thutmose III (RS 21.110) are clues as to the re-establishment of commercial and diplomatic ties between the two countries in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Matoian 2015: 50, n. 139; 52).

Given the presumably lucrative nature of the commercial interchange and the vigor of Thutmose III’s campaigns, Ugarit’s ruler may well have offered allegiance voluntarily in return for diplomatic privileges of the type that the elevated greeting formulae and epistolary presumptions assumed by the rulers of Ugarit in the Amarna archive suggest that they enjoyed somewhat later (Mynářová 2006; Morris 2006: 180–188). Certainly, the ruler of Ugarit boasted already in one such letter that his city had been loyal since the time of his ancestors (EA 47; Moran 1992: 119). Perhaps not coincidentally, the citizens of Tunip, a polity that had received statues from Thutmose III, made a similar statement in their letters to the Egyptian court, as did the ruler of Qatna, who likely received his god’s golden statue in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty as well (EA 55, 59; Moran 1992: 127–128, 130).

If the Egyptians did aid Ugarit in augmenting a temple, and perhaps even providing a new cult statue to reside in it, the divine recipient of such generosity may have been an aspect of Ba'al or perhaps another deity altogether that they

<sup>8</sup> The fact that representations of Ba'alat excavated at Byblos often depict her in a very similar manner to the goddess Hathor may suggest that Egypt had a tradition of gifting divine statues to Byblos (e.g., Montet 1998, 35, fig. 6; 42, fig. 10).

<sup>9</sup> Minet el-Beida is here treated as an extension of Ras Shamra-Ugarit. Situated less than a kilometer away, it served Ugarit as a harbor installation and as a necropolis.

felt comfortable conflating with Amun. A letter sent by the king of Ugarit to the king of Egypt either in the Amarna period or, perhaps more likely, in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, reads, "I am [your servant] who begs [for life to] the Sun, the great king, my lord. Then do I not pray for the life of his soul before Ba'al Saphon my lord, and length of days for my lord before Amun and before the gods of Egypt who protect the soul of the Sun, the Great King, my lord?" (RS 16.117; Dijkstra 1999: 157–158; Singer 1999: 623, 713; Ahl 1973: 421–422). While the king of Ugarit, who was evidently striving to prove his loyalty to his Egyptian counterpart, may simply have mentioned the pharaoh's patron deity in parallel with his own, he does state that he prays "before Amun" just as he prays "before Ba'al Saphon".

An argument that his statement should be taken literally is perhaps to be found in two limestone stelae that were excavated a few meters from the Ba'al temple (see Fig. 3). Although tentatively identified as otherwise unattested incarnations of Ba'al and Anat—stressing the former deity's dominion over agricultural fertility and his sister's equation with beautiful birds of prey (Schaeffer 1949: 95–106, pl. 22; Yon 1991: 288–293)<sup>10</sup>—the deities depicted resemble far more closely Egyptianizing portraits of Amun and his wife Mut. The plumed crown worn by the male looks far more like one of Amun's ostrich feathers, complimented by the curious curl of the Lower Egyptian crown, than it does the headdress of any known Near Eastern deity. Likewise, the goddess is cloaked in a gown that imitated the patterning of a vulture's wings, evoking those of Mut's own avian avatar. The poor quality limestone used for the stelae suggests that they were made locally, as do the patently non-Egyptian kilt and dagger of the male and the strappy sandals of both divine entities. Art historically, the stelae have been tentatively dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (Yon 1991: 291, 293). Given archaizing elements in their iconography and the reference to Amun's presence north of Byblos in the reign of Thutmose III, however, it is tempting to interpret the images as two-dimensional renderings of mid-18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty cult statues in which salient aspects of Amun and Mut had been consciously fused with those of Ba'al and Anat.

By the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, however, the Egyptians may have preferred an equation that felt less forced, namely that between Ba'al and Syro-Palestinian Seth. From the perspective of a 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty pharaoh, the act of presenting offerings to Seth-Ba'al in return for his material blessings was no doubt nearly as orthodox an act as presenting such offerings to Amun. Seth was at once the god of foreigners and the god of storms, and thus the combination of his cult with that of Ba'al, the foreign storm god, as occurred at Avaris at the start of the Second Intermediate

<sup>10</sup> Schaeffer (1931: 12–14) first tentatively identified the male deity as Tešub or Rešef and the goddess as Hathor, Selket, or Ba'alat. These two stelae were found together with a third, of similar style, bearing the image of an entity identified by Schaeffer (1949: 102–106, pl. 22; National Museum of Aleppo 4624) as Mot, though the rationale for the identification was not strong. The deity is currently viewed as yet another aspect of Ba'al (Yon 1991: 299–300).

**Fig. 3**

Stelae showing two highly Egyptianized deities, excavated near the temple of Ba'al at Ugarit (after Schaeffer 1949: pl. XXII).



Period, made perfect sense (Allon 2007: 19–21). Merneptah's ancestors had hailed from the Eastern Delta, and thus his family paid special reverence to Seth of Avaris. His grandfather had been named after Seth, and his father had erected a fascinating stele in the god's honor on the 400<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the founding of his temple at Avaris (see Fig. 4a).

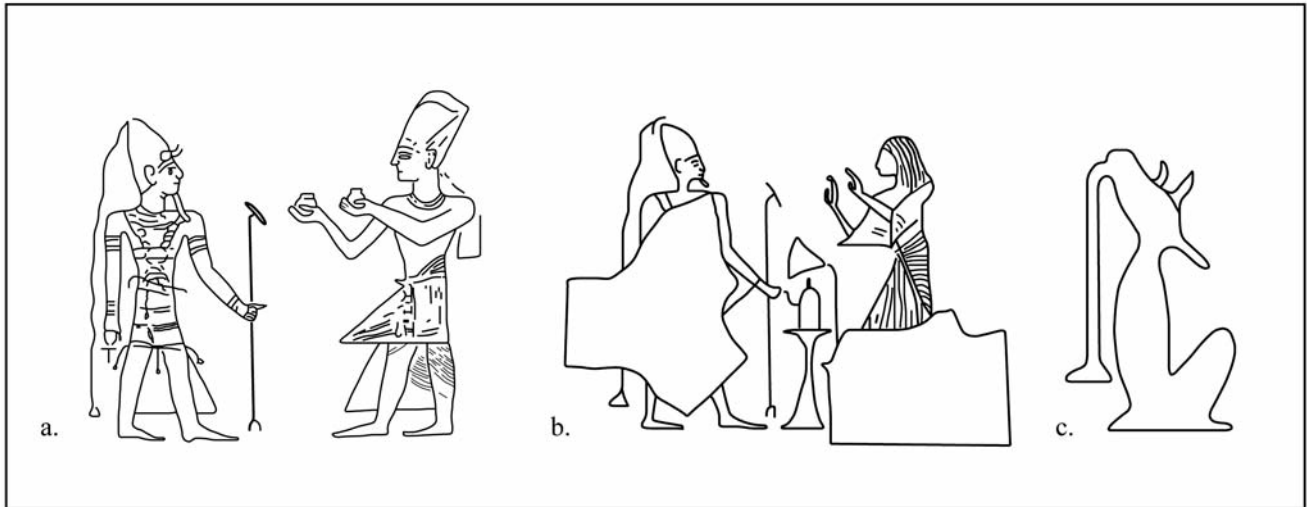
At the time that it flourished under Hyksos rule, this temple was one of the largest in the Eastern Mediterranean. Built in a northern style and patronized by the settlement's largely Levantine population, the temple's prestige grew along with Avaris's status as a major trade emporium (Bietak 1996: 36–38, 40–41). Intriguingly, a smiting god striding atop mountains, discovered on a cylinder seal excavated at the site's palace, has been argued to represent Ba'al Saphon, a form of Ba'al especially revered in Ugarit (Bietak 1996: 26, 28–29). Regardless of whether the Ugaritic and Deltaic Ba'als were directly related, however, Avaris's status as a rich trading hub would have ensured that emissaries from Ugarit frequented

Avaris and vice versa. Ba'al's temple in Ugarit had existed already for centuries (Al-Maqdissi *et al.* 2007: 37), and so one imagines that Ba'al's pre-eminence at both sites would have prompted the emissaries of each city to present offerings before their patron deity while abroad in hopes or gratitude for safe voyages and profitable enterprise. Indeed, given the evident antiquity in Egypt of the masking of trade as piety, it is plausible that the emissaries from Egypt already at this time offered all good things from their own country before Ba'al Saphon in return for his material blessings (i.e., Ugaritic trade goods).

Following the defeat of the Hyksos, Seth of Avaris was never expelled or repudiated but maintained a presence in the Eastern Delta for centuries to come. The stele that Ramesses II erected to celebrate Seth's 400<sup>th</sup> birthday is of special interest because on it the king is depicted standing and offering before the god in his manifestation as Ba'al. Indeed, Ramesses's stele depicts Seth as virtually identical to a depiction of Ba'al Saphon on a stele donated by an Egyptian official named Mamy at the Ba'al temple at Ugarit (see Fig. 4b). As numerous authors have noted, the iconographic similarity is too strong to be coincidental, though a number of different scenarios might explain it (Schaeffer 1949: 101–103; Gasse – Yon 1991: 280; Yon 1991: 286). Regardless, given that Seth and Ba'al Saphon were evidently flip sides of a single deity, the scene on the 400 Year Stele of an Egyptian pharaoh posed, stock still, in a gesture of offering before Ba'al is a near perfect illustration of the vision conjured up for Merneptah's imagination by the king of Ugarit in the letter quoted in RS 88.2158.

The 400 Year Stele has been dated on multiple lines of evidence to the second half of Ramesses II's reign, i.e., around the time that relations warmed with the Hittites and thereby also with Ugarit. One wonders, therefore, whether the stele celebrated not only the king's relationship with his ancestral patron, Seth of Avaris, but also the renewal of his relationship with Ugarit's patron deity. Perhaps, then, the king of Ugarit's invitation to Merneptah was not unique but was rather an invitation to the pharaoh to renew or amplify the trade ties mediated through the temple that had already been set up in his father's reign. Luxury goods found at Ugarit bearing the cartouche of this king suggest that trade resumed in the latter half of Ramesses's reign to levels last seen in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Matoian 2015: 50; Caubet 1991: 213–214; Singer 1999: 673). If Ramesses II dedicated an image of Ba'al Saphon that he had commissioned after the likeness of the cult statue of Seth-Ba'al of Avaris, then the mystery surrounding the iconographic similarity between Ramesses' Seth and Mamy's Ba'al would be easily explained. Indeed, it is even possible that Ramesses dedicated an image of himself to accompany the cultic statue. The fact that he erected such a statue at Dapur (Kitchen 1996: 47) indicates that he had no compunctions in this regard. Unfortunately, as there is no evidence that Ramesses II dedicated one statue to the Ba'al temple at Ugarit, much less two, it is unabashedly rash to speculate.





**Fig. 4**

Forms of Baʿal worshipped by Egyptians.  
 a. Seth of Avaris and Ramesse II on the 400 Year Stele (redrawn from Kitchen 1982: 14);  
 b. Baʿal Saphon on the stele of Mamy found at Ugarit; c. the determinative for Baʿal on a socle found at Ugarit, RS 19.186 (redrawn from Schaeffer 1962: 124, fig. 101).

Turning back, then, to Merneptah, questions remain. Did this king’s gift to Ugarit of a new statue of Baʿal—a deity beloved by the city’s population and eminently acceptable as the recipient of Egyptian offerings—signify an intensification of renewed trade relations? And, moreover, would the proposed gift of a statue of the king have instantiated a commitment on Merneptah’s part to institute regular offerings, of course, for the deity’s gift of life, prosperity, health, and a steady supply of exports? Certainly, the Egyptian character of the material culture found in the Baʿal temple struck its excavator as remarkable. He wrote, “À ce propos il convient de souligner le caractère égyptien de tous les reliefs, de toutes les statues et inscriptions trouvés à l’intérieur du sanctuaire, ce qui prouve que celui-ci, en dépit de l’origine locale des divinités, était sous l’influence égyptienne” (Schaeffer 1931: 11; see also Lagarce – Lagarce 1974: 23; Callot 2011: 50, 52–53). Thus, it seems safe to assert that the cult of Baʿal Saphon and Egyptian interests in Ugarit were closely aligned. Given that the city was not an Egyptian protectorate in the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the tie that bound was likely commercial.

Although a substantial amount of the Egyptian imports at Ugarit were recovered from the palace as well as the temple, records show that trade with Egypt in the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty was largely mediated through professional merchants who bid for expensive trade concessions (McGeough 2007: 132, 217–218). While they received their concession from the palace, had ties to the administration, and might in fact have a royal backer, these men operated largely under their own initiative—independently raising capital, securing guarantors, organizing expeditions, and thereby profiting handsomely.<sup>11</sup> Excavations in the mansions attributed to

<sup>11</sup> RS 19.050; Ahl 1973: 296–298; Heltzer 1978: 128–129, 141–142; Courtois 1990: 106–107, 111–112, 114–115; Routledge – McGeough 2012: 24, 27, 29.

these men suggest that they retained control of a significant quantity of the Egyptian luxury items that they had presumably imported (Matoian 2015: 35, 50–51, 55, 64–65; McGeough 2007: 254).<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the king of Ugarit may have found himself at an increasing disadvantage when it came to clearly distinguishing himself from his richest and most important subjects. He neither had a monopoly on the possession of foreign exotica, nor even the privilege of being the sole avenue of its distribution. His invitation to the pharaoh, if in reality an invitation to regularize a royal exchange, then, may have been part of an effort to reposition himself at the center of Ugarit's trade network, rather than contenting himself with being a top consumer or simply one rich agent out of many.<sup>13</sup> To Merneptah, however, who was likely satisfied with the status quo (being at the center of his own trade network), the benefits of renegotiating commercial relations may not have been obvious. For this reason, the pharaoh was perhaps reluctant to commit to a new agreement by commissioning a statue of himself to be placed before Ba'al in a pose of continual giving.

### Third Explanation: Statues Own Land

There is yet a third important point to consider with respect to the societal significance of ancient Near Eastern statues, namely their status as landowners. In Egypt, certainly, any statue that was installed in a temple—whether it depicted a god, a king, or a high official—arrived together with a dowry, i.e., with a wealth of land and chattel that was dedicated to supporting the statue's prodigious appetites. The amount of land and property varied, of course, with the relative wealth of the donor and the perceived power of the entity depicted (see Katary 2013: 760–765; Haring 1997: 143). For instance, a statue of Ramesses VI erected in the Nubian temple of Aniba, which bore strong parallels to a statue of the same king at Megiddo, came to the temple endowed with five different parcels of land (Breasted 1906: 231–235; *id.* 1948: 135–138).

<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the richest assemblage of Egyptian material came from the "house of the alabaster vessels", located in the district frequented by high officials and assumed by its excavators to have belonged to an Egyptian national who served as a merchant or diplomat. Among the elite goods discovered in the house were a statuette of an Egyptian, a bronze statuette of an Egyptianized Ba'al, an ivory tusk, and fragments of an alabaster vessel with a cartouche of Ramesses II (Lagarce – Lagarce 1974). The house may have been occupied by an effectively bicultural individual, perhaps resembling the Ugaritic queen's agent Šipti-Ba'alu. This man bore a good Semitic name but used a seal written in hieroglyphs that bore the titles "sealer" and "herald". Like many of his colleagues, he worked both as an agent for royal interests and as a merchant (Vita – Galán 1997).

<sup>13</sup> Heltzer (1978: 121–131) argued that while all Ugaritic merchants operated under the auspices of the palace, some (*tamkāru ša šēpīšu*) were more closely associated with the king and should therefore be classified as royal dependents. Even these individuals, however, seem to have also operated on their own behalf.

It is possible, of course, that when pharaohs gave statues as gifts to northern temples questions of property were not at play. On the other hand, there is evidence that “Egyptian” gods did own property abroad in the New Kingdom. Already in the reign of Thutmose III, at a time when a temple to “Amun” existed in the northern reaches of Egypt’s empire, the annals inform us that this same divine entity enjoyed rights to the produce harvested in three locales formerly owned by the king of Qadesh (Redford 2003: 37–40, 121). Likewise, in the reign of Thutmose’s son, an official bore the title “overseer of the foreign lands of Amun”. While these lands might have been situated in Nubia and/or owned by Amun of Thebes, Amenhotep II purportedly sacrificed Syrian enemies in front of the god Amun before suspending them upside down from the prow of his ship and sailing back to Egypt (see Morris 2005: 118–120, 127, n. 48). Thus, under this king, the divine occupant of an Egyptian-affiliated temple to “Amun” may have continued to reap the produce of northern fields.

Papyrus Harris I, dating from the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, likewise indicates that the god Amun had rights to property at a number of locales in Egypt’s northern empire. A life-size statue of Ramesses III, undoubtedly the object of a statue cult, was excavated in conjunction with the temple situated at the Egyptian base at Beth Shan. Moreover, “Amun of Ramesses, Ruler of Heliopolis”, a divine fusion of god and king, held court in a temple that the Egyptians built or refurbished at their base in Gaza. According to Papyrus Harris I, foreigners would come to this statue bearing their gifts and produce (i.e. *b3kw*-taxes<sup>14</sup>). Indeed, bowls inscribed with tax receipts written in hieratic—found at a number of Egyptian bases from the period of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasties and widely viewed as votive in character—suggest that northern taxes were increasingly collected at Egyptian-affiliated temples.<sup>15</sup> Some of these deliveries surely constituted a portion of the produce reaped from land directly owned by the statues themselves.

Between the reigns of Thutmose III and Ramesses III, evidence is less forthcoming, although the Amarna archive provides plentiful documentation that, as in the time of Thutmose III, Egyptian-owned land in the north was worked by local corvée labor and that the produce from these estates served to support its imperial infrastructure (Galán 1994: 98). Given the situation earlier and later, the produce of some of these lands, as well as the taxes levied on vassal territories, may have been processed through Egyptian-affiliated temples. When the deity

<sup>14</sup> As will be discussed below, *b3kw*-taxes were a type of levy most often delivered to temples, processed through them, and used for their own maintenance as well as to support state enterprises (Bleiberg 1988).

<sup>15</sup> The role of Egyptian statues in resource extraction during Egypt’s 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty is discussed at length in Goldwasser (1984) and Morris (2015), while the numerous textual and archaeological sources mentioned here are referenced and discussed in Morris (2005: 704–705, 707, 713–714, 727–731, 744–762, 767–773, 799).

that received the offerings on behalf of the Egyptians was one adored by the locals, this practice presumably provided taxpayers with a palatable landlord and made them feel as if the produce they delivered ensured them spiritual as well as imperial credit.

At the empire's far outer edges, however, where Egyptian presence was presumably invited rather than asserted by force of arms, one has to imagine that the process functioned somewhat differently. If the statue of Ba'al that Merneptah donated to the temple at Ugarit had come endowed with land (and/or if Merneptah had sent a statue of himself together with a dowry), where would this land have come from? One possibility is that the fields would have been usurped from the property of defeated foes; Amun, after all, had been granted three of the king of Qadesh's estates in the reign of Thutmose III. Likewise, produce from directly owned land elsewhere in Egypt's empire might also have been dedicated to the temple at Ugarit and shipped from Egyptian granaries and storehouses at harbors like Jaffa and Tel Mor.<sup>16</sup> In either case, the local ruler would presumably have been pleased at this increase in temple income. It is also possible that Ugarit's king allowed the Egyptians usufruct of state-owned property. If so, the Egyptians may have leased this land for the statue's support as a covert way of transferring funds. On the other hand, it is perhaps more probable that Ugarit's king might have granted it to them in return for a profit-sharing arrangement and for commercial and/or military benefits. This latter possibility will be expanded upon in the subsequent section.

A thorough understanding of Ugarit's temple finances and land-tenure is at present unachievable, as the vast majority of the financial records discovered thus far have come from the palace or from private archives. These records are enough to reveal, however, that the temples did own agricultural estates. Like their Egyptian counterparts, they also almost certainly maintained magazines and granaries devoted to storing the produce from their lands and productive estates, even if these were located off-site rather than in the dense thicket of architecture that covered the acropolis (Wyatt 1999: 563–564; Rainey 1965: 123; McGeough 2007: 213).

Very little, it seems, separated temple and state. Cultic documents show that the king played an extremely important role in temple affairs at Ugarit, spearheading refurbishments and serving as the nominal principal officiant. The priests, too, seem to have been recruited out of the same elite social stratum from which the main body of palace officials was drawn (Vita 1999: 468, 474; McGeough 2007: 121, 190). Given the intimacy of this arrangement, it would appear likely that the king would have been empowered to issue a land grant either from temple land

---

<sup>16</sup> A cuneiform letter found in the Egyptian administrative center at Aphek demonstrates that Ugarit already engaged in transactions with administrators of Egypt's granary at Jaffa in the reign of Ramesses II (Owen 1981).

or from land that would subsequently be administered through the temple. There is evidence in the archives certainly for royal land granted to Egyptians in usufruct, such as RS 16.136, in which an Egyptian received a grant of a house and two fields from King Ammittamru II, properties that had formerly belonged to three other individuals (Dupont 1987: 115; Libolt 1985: 363–364). Moreover, among the non-heritable land grants, roughly 80% were given to individuals with non-Semitic names (Libolt 1985: 100), suggesting that the granting of estates to foreigners occurred fairly frequently.

Of paramount interest in this regard, however, is the stele that a man named Mamy, who was a royal scribe and superintendent of the royal domain, erected in or very near the sanctuary of the Ba'al temple. As discussed previously, Mamy depicted himself in typical Egyptian fashion adoring Ba'al Saphon (see Fig. 4b; Levy 2014; Gasse – Yon 1991: 280; Schaeffer 1931: 10–11). While hypothetically Mamy might have served as a superintendent of a royal domain in Egypt and have simply visited Ugarit for business purposes, this is not likely. Even if the stele were carved in Egypt, as the use of sandstone would suggest, commissioning a personalized stele of this quality would be expensive. Moreover importing it and donating it to the temple at Ugarit makes very little sense unless the donor had a relationship with the god Ba'al, whose aid he sought in the stele's text in order to achieve a blessed afterlife. One would imagine also that Mamy must have had a relationship with the temple authorities at Ugarit as they evidently allowed him to place his stele on prime sacred ground. It is likely, therefore, that the royal domain that he supervised was situated in Ugarit.

There is evidence in Ugarit's archives for state farms—of the type known from numerous polities and empires, including Egypt's own. Such estates, farmed for maximum profit, often were used to finance state or imperial infrastructure. As discussed above, ever since Thutmose III's victory at Megiddo, Egyptian administrators and Canaanite mayors had overseen corvée work on this type of land, the profits of which were stored throughout the empire in granaries that supported the requirements of Egyptian soldiers, messengers, administrative personnel, and Canaanite collaborators (Ahituv 1978: 93–99; Na'aman 1981: 178–180; Redford 2003: 42–43). This type of landholding, designated as “*gt*” or *gittu*-estates in Ugarit's archives, consisted of fields, industrial equipment, and warehouses that produced and stored foodstuffs such as wine, olive oil, and various cereals. This category of estate was capable of yielding an almost 50% profit, because the personnel that served as labor consisted of corvée workers and a smattering of others that had no means to profit from the land they farmed (Libolt 1985: 57–58; Liverani 1989; Schloen 2001: 232–239).

If the royal domain that Mamy oversaw was indeed located at Ugarit, it may well have been classified as a *gittu*-estate and have been devoted in part to producing exports. One of the six fabric groups of “Canaanite” storage jars found at

the royal and sacred cities of Memphis, Amarna, and Thebes has been sourced to Ugarit (i.e., fabric group IV), which is not surprising as Egypt and Ugarit enjoyed a healthy trade relationship for much of the New Kingdom. Residue analysis and the examination of jar docketts suggest that the amphorae most often contained olive oil, though moringa oil and honey were also exported (Bourriau *et al.* 2001; Bavay 2015: 131). What is much more surprising, however, is that the jars often had very precise measurements written on them in hieratic, such that it is almost certain that they were inscribed at the moment the commodities were transferred into the jar. The hieratic notations thus serve to indicate the on-site presence of literate Egyptians acting as managers for the production and eventual shipment of commodities to Egypt—a much more direct oversight of resources than had been previously suspected (Bavay 2015: 136–137).

A community of literate Egyptians, capable of interpreting offering formulae, is likewise implied by the fact that at least three individuals composed their memorials in hieroglyphic script. Mamy and another official, whose stele was unfortunately shattered but who depicted himself in an act of adoration, dedicated their memorials inside the Ba'al temple (Schaeffer 1931: pl. IV, pl. XIII.3). A third Egyptian invoked the blessings of Ba'al on the socle of his statuette (RS 19.186; see Fig. 4c). Although the donor's name, titles, and depiction are lost, enough survives to demonstrate that he would have been posed in a posture of worship and thus that this statuette may have been intended for dedication in the Ba'al temple as well. Interestingly, it was found instead in the house of Yabninu, a wealthy merchant and chief administrator with strong ties to Egypt who also seems, from the diplomatic texts found in his house, to have been involved in Ugarit's foreign affairs (Schaeffer 1962: 124, 133, 135, fig. 101; van Soldt 2000: 230–231). Whether he was effectively bicultural is not known, but it is fascinating that the population of Egyptians at Ugarit evidently grew large enough that a census was undertaken to assess their numbers (KTU<sup>2</sup> 4.644; McGeough 2007: 215).

Given that statues often owned land or at least enjoyed usufruct of its produce, the tie between the royal domain that Mamy oversaw and the placement of his stele in the temple of Ba'al was unlikely to be happenstance. Instead, the statue of the god may well have come to the Ba'al temple along with land that the Egyptians leased from the authorities at Ugarit.<sup>17</sup> One can easily imagine a profit-sharing agreement being worked out such that a portion of the profits would go to the support of Ba'al's statue and then, once the god had eaten his fill, to his temple personnel. As in Egypt, priests at Ugarit subsisted in part on divine leftovers (McGeough 2007: 190). A further portion of the profits would perhaps have been allotted to supporting Egyptian administrators stationed at Ugarit, such as Mamy,

---

<sup>17</sup> Mamy's stele is undated, but Callot (2011: 62) believes it to be roughly contemporary with the reign of Merneptah.



so they could operate in a relatively self-sufficient manner. These first two categories may not have been entirely separate, however, considering that in Egypt the administrators of land donated to a statue often subsequently served as priests of that statue, thereby justifying their remuneration from the produce of the estate (Katary 2013: 763–764; Haring 1997: 143). Minmose certainly claimed an ongoing stake in the temples he refurbished, stating, “offices of prophets and w<sup>ab</sup> priests were given to me in these temples in which I administered construction works” (Cumming 1984: 140). Whether the temples of Hathor (Lady of Byblos) and Amun were included in this statement is not specified, but no exception is noted. Finally, an additional cut of the proceeds was perhaps channeled towards the industrial production and shipment of olive oil and other exports.

Such a seemingly intricate arrangement would fit well with Egyptian practice. According to Edward Bleiberg (1988: 161) such regularized deliveries of temple-produce (*b3kw* in Egyptian parlance) were used in four primary ways: for supplying the rations of state functionaries such as the workmen at Deir el-Medina, for “decorating the temple, providing *htp-ntr* offerings for the god, and provisioning the harbors for military operations”. This last employment is well known from the annals of Thutmose III where the king boasted, “Now all the harbors were stocked with every good thing in accordance with their yearly custom (for) both [northward] and southward journeys, (with) the *b3kw* of Lebanon likewise, and the harvest of Djahy, consisting of grain, fresh oil, incense, [wine and honey]” (Redford 2003: 89, see similarly 75, 84, 91). It is quite possible, then, that in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty Egypt and Ugarit had brokered a variant on this arrangement that centered on land linked to a statue cult. It is certainly intriguing, however, that the products shipped in Canaanite jars from Ugarit were among those stocked by Thutmose III at his harbor depots.

### **Third Explanation, Part Two: The Land Belonging to a Statue Might Help Support a Small Garrison**

There is no reason, of course, that a land grant that supported the needs of local priests, Egyptian administrators, and ships bound for the palaces and temples of Egypt would also fund a small cadre of soldiers. One wonders, however, if the Ugaritic ruler that invited Merneptah to donate a statue of himself to the temple at Ba'al did not have such a scenario in mind. This supposition is not as unlikely a possibility as it might first appear, as there is good evidence that a small garrison had been situated at Ugarit in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

A controversial passage in the records of Amenhotep II's first victorious campaign in his seventh regnal year has been taken by many scholars to indicate that Egyptian troops resided at Ugarit in this king's reign. The point at which the garrison was established is not specified, but considering that the soldiers were res-

ident already at the time of Amenhotep II's first campaign, it is likely that the king of Ugarit invited the garrison after having voluntarily sworn fealty during the time that Thutmose III was battling Mitanni and consolidating his northern empire. The narrative of Amenhotep II's campaign placed the pharaoh near the city of Niya when "his Majesty heard as follows: some of the Asiatics who are in the city of *I-k3-ty* are conspiring to forge a plan in order to expel the troops of his Majesty from the town and to overthrow the ruler of *I-k3-ty* who is loyal to his Majesty" (Cumming 1982: 34). According to the text, the pharaoh then traveled to the city and punished the plotters before they could act on their ill intentions. At the heart of the controversy is whether the city of *I-k3-ty* should be interpreted as a variant writing of Ugarit (*I-k3-ri-ti*) or whether the toponym refers to an otherwise unattested polity.

Objections to identifying the city as Ugarit are on three grounds. First, Michael Astour has argued that the timing was too tight for a trip to Ugarit. According to the campaign narrative, Amenhotep II had heard of the trouble while at Niya; ten days later, plot quelled, he and his army camped outside the walls of Tjalkhi. Based on the supposition that Niya underlay the Roman city of Apamea, and that the trip would thus have necessitated a detour around marshy terrain, Astour (1981: 14) argued that Amenhotep II would have had to fight a battle and make a 260 km round trip in ten days. Given that neither Niya nor Tjalkhi are securely identified and that a round trip is nowhere specified, however, Astour's reconstruction is far from secure. Even if Niya were indeed situated at the site of Apamea, however, a detachment of troops making a quick march could have conceivably covered the roughly 110 km journey in two days, while a slower march with the full army would likely have taken four or five days.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, a protracted struggle need not be envisioned, as the narrative states that upon arriving at the city, Amenhotep II "summoned all those who had disobeyed him and slew them" (Cumming 1982: 30). Astour's logistical discomfort with the equation of *I-k3-ty* and Ugarit, therefore, should not be considered damning.

The second objection is that *I-k3-ty* cannot be equated with the spelling for Ugarit (*I-k3-ri-ti*) that is first attested on the walls of Soleb in the reign of Amenhotep III (Yeivin 1967: 122). As Raphael Giveon (1981: 55–56) has demonstrated, however, the *k3*-sign (D.28 in Alan Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar*) could have the value *kr* in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Thus Amenhotep II's toponym is in fact a valid transliteration and does not violate linguistic rules. Alternatively, a misspelling or a misreading may well have occurred either in the daybook of the campaign or else when the toponym was transcribed from hieratic to hieroglyphs for pub-

<sup>18</sup> The travel times were calculated using the figures given in ORBIS: The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World from Apamea to Laodicea. According to Spalinger (2005: 33–34), Thutmose III's army would have covered an average of 20 km a day.

lication on stelae (Edel 1953: 150). Modern scholars, after all, have experienced a similar confusion when interpreting the toponym as written in hieratic on a storage jar sourced to Ugarit (Bavay 2015: 131–132). *Ikaty* is otherwise unattested in Egyptian and Near Eastern archives, a significant absence considering the vast numbers of place names that do recur. Thus it seems likely that the toponym is nothing more than a variant spelling of *Ikariti*, resulting either from a scribal error or from the difference between mid and late 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty conventions of transcription.

The last objection—that Ugarit was independent in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, and thus Egyptian troops would not be located there (Astour 1981: 12–13)—is also not convincing, as the relationship between the two powers is never specified as one of domination and submission. Today, as Europeans know well, Americans have numerous military bases in allied countries that they do not dominate. These bases are leased or owned by the United States, but their presence is allowed because of treaty negotiations that stipulate attendant benefits to host countries, most especially with regard to favorable trading statuses and clauses of mutual defense (Johnson 2004: 151–185). If Ugarit had voluntarily pledged loyalty to Egypt, perhaps because the idea was preferable to forming an alliance with Mitanni, then Ugarit would not appear in lists of conquered polities because it was not in fact conquered. Any agreement between the two countries, however, likely included oaths of mutual defense, perhaps solidified by the presence of a small garrison. The Amarna archive reveals that modest cohorts of Egyptian troops were routinely solicited and frequently granted. If an anti-Egyptian (and perhaps pro-Mitanni) faction at Ugarit had been agitating for a regime change, then it would have been incumbent upon the pharaoh to come to the aid of the city's ruler and of the Egyptian troops that were sworn to protect him. With the perpetrators punished and the king's hold on power secure, the tangible benefits of such an alliance would be keenly felt and perhaps even remembered.

In Merneptah's reign, Ugaritic archives demonstrate that the city was increasingly under threat and that its overlord was often unable or unwilling to come to its aid. Given this climate, the Ugaritic king may perhaps once again have been willing to grant Egyptian troops a permanent presence in the city. If so, it is possible that they were supported by a similar system as proposed above for the support of Egyptian administrators, i.e., by the produce of estates that belonged to statues that the Egyptians had donated (or would hopefully donate) to the Ba'al temple. Certainly, "Egyptians who entered for service" are mentioned in RS 18.118, a text that seems to have dealt with *gittu*-estates, and David Schloen (2001: 238, n. 50) has noted that the term *msry* ("Egyptians") is found here and elsewhere at Ugarit amidst attestations of military personnel. As both Schloen and Liverani are in agreement that a portion of the grain grown on such estates at Ugarit was likely used to feed military personnel (see Schloen 2001: 239), it would not be

surprising if, at some point during Merneptah's reign, these soldiers included a small Egyptian garrison.

In this regard, it is also perhaps significant that Egyptian stewards—such as Mamy—when found abroad were generally associated with Egyptian bases. This was the case certainly at Ramesses-nakht (the location of which is unfortunately unknown) and at Beth Shean. Like Mamy, the steward Ramesses-user-khepes, stationed at the latter base, also held the office of royal scribe. Further, Amenemope, a New Kingdom steward whose stele was found in a secondary context at Beth Shean, bore the title “overseer of the granaries of the lord of the two lands” (Morris 2005: 250 n. 137, 393, 479, 484). The association of stewards with military bases and granaries is highly significant as Thutmose III's annals and the Amarna letters both reveal that Egyptian bases were generally well stocked with grain.

Numerous documents bear witness to a devastating famine that plagued Ugarit and surrounding lands in Merneptah's reign (RS 18.147; RS 34.159; RS 18.38; Klengel 1974: 170–173; Singer 1999: 715–719). Thus a detachment of Egyptian troops might be expected to have imported grain for their own supply, a situation that would no doubt have been extremely welcome at Ugarit. As documented in the Amarna archive, local rulers often enjoyed some oversight over such stores, a situation that was evidently viewed as highly desirable, even in times of plenty. Indeed, the numerous advantages of working for the Egyptians—and thus having access to the food, silver, and supplies stored at Egyptian bases—caused Egypt's vassals, even those who seemed often to slyly subvert Egyptian authority, to actively solicit the presence of garrisons and bases in their territory (EA 83, 125, 26; Morris 2010).

#### **Fourth Explanation: The Pharaoh's Statue Might Act as a Tripwire**

Even if Egyptian troops were not resident at Ugarit at the time RS 88.2158 was written, it is possible that the king of Ugarit's invitation to Merneptah to install an image of himself in the temple of Ba'al still had an underlying military logic. American consulates and embassies situated in allied countries are often utilized as “tripwires”, offering convenient pretexts for military intervention should any American property or personnel abroad come under attack (Johnson 2004: 151). A similar logic may help explain why the numbers of Egyptian troops requested in the Amarna letters were often so seemingly insignificant. The idea, no doubt, was that the bestowal of even a token amount of Egyptian troops signaled that a vassal enjoyed pharaonic support, a factor that would be recognized and hopefully respected by potential aggressors (Bernhardt 1971: 139). All parties no doubt understood that if Egyptian troops came under attack, pharaonic intervention was far more likely than if only local levies had suffered. According to Near Eastern logics, however, soliciting a statue of the pharaoh may have served much the same purpose.

In Egypt, the connection between self and effigy was uncomfortably close, such that violence done to an image was thought, through the power of sympathetic magic, to have the potential to harm its referent. Enemies were cursed by the breaking or burning of their likenesses, and judicial authorities ordered the statues of those deemed criminals to be literally de-faced (Wilson 2005). Given that an image could serve as a potential resting place for the disembodied soul, to render it harm was to threaten its referent both in this life and the next, as well as to do harm to that person's "image" in a more modern sense of the word. At the city of Hazor, unknown assailants dramatically mutilated and/or decapitated statues of Egyptian royalty that had likely been exported to the site in the Second Intermediate Period and thereafter served as monumental decoration for the Late Bronze Age palace. Here, anti-imperial sentiment no doubt provided the provocation (Ben-Tor 2006). As discussed above, the Amarna letters reveal that statues might also be kidnapped as a political ploy or be pitched in the fire such that the weight of the gold utilized in their manufacture might be easily assessed. Likewise, if composed of numerous precious materials, statues were fated often to be summarily dismantled for parts—a gruesome fate if statue was viewed as self.

In the Amarna period, the ruler of Byblos expended a great deal of energy attempting to prod the Egyptians into action against the ruler of Amurru by reporting on his blatantly provocative behavior. Rib-Hadda wrote with righteous indignation that when Abdi-Aširta took over the Egyptian base at Sumur he had the effrontery to sleep in the pharaoh's own bedchamber (EA 84; Moran 1992: 155). How much worse would it have been, one imagines, if the ruler of Amurru had mutilated the pharaoh's statue in a like manner to the methods employed at Hazor! Thus, while one might envision Merneptah passing off the capture of the statue of Ba'al as poor luck on Ugarit's part, his reaction might have been far more pointed if his own statue had been a target of attack. It is possible, then, that a ruler who gifted his statue to a polity that wasn't a vassal thereby provided himself with a convenient pretext for military intervention and that this was, in fact, the strategic logic that lay behind the king of Ugarit's otherwise odd invitation.

In an unstable climate like that evidently existing at Ugarit at the close of the Late Bronze Age, the local ruler might well have desired a pretext to invite Egypt's military intervention. Hatti was weak but angry, Sea People were swirling, and famine conditions were creating unrest. Merneptah, however, had plenty of troubles of his own, as he staunchly incursions at Egypt's borders and quelled rebellions just beyond them. Thus the pharaoh would likely have been reluctant to invite the type of risk that sending his image abroad might entail if the act also included a tacit commitment to exact retribution on any aggressors who might do it harm. Merneptah's energies in this chaotic era were evidently directed at preserving his empire, not expanding it.

## The End of the Discussion?

RS 88.2158 constitutes the barest a fragment of a conversation. It is possible to gather that at some point in the past Merneptah had donated a cult statue of Ba'al to the god's temple at Ugarit. At the time his scribe penned the letter, however, Merneptah evidently preferred to tell a transparent fib to Ugarit's king rather than to commission a statue of himself to be erected facing the god, as his correspondent had invited him to do. One wonders, however, whether the discussion ended here.

In a letter written to Akhenaten, Tušratta of Mitanni proudly informed the pharaoh that Mitanni princesses were ordinarily extremely difficult to obtain in marriage. Thutmose IV, when requesting the hand of a royal princess from the king of Mitanni

“wrote 5, 6 times, but he did not give her. When he wrote my grandfather 7 times, then only under such pressure did he g[iv]e her. When Nimmureya, your father, [wro]te to Šutt[arna], m[y] father, and asked for my father's daughter, my own sister, he wr[ote] 3, 4 times, but [he did not giv]e her. When he wrote 5, 6 times, only under such pressure did he g[iv]e [her]” (EA 29; Moran 1992: 93).

Rather than being anomalous, such protracted negotiations characterized Late Bronze Age diplomatic correspondence. Concerning this curious fact, Mario Liverani has remarked “The objective slowness of the journeys, basically for technological reasons, and the possible additional delay for political reasons, are exacerbated by the practice of repeated bargaining, which makes it almost impossible to resolve a transaction in only two “moves,” request and acceptance” (Liverani 2000: 22). Archaeological and textual sources demonstrate that by the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty pharaonic statues were installed in numerous Canaanite temples and cultic contexts.<sup>19</sup> Did Merneptah eventually relent, then, and send a statue, perhaps paving the way for additional statues to be sent to Near Eastern sanctuaries in subsequent reigns? Fragments of New Kingdom stone statues were indeed discovered in the environs of the Ba'al temple, though the monuments were so damaged that the king(s) they depicted could not be discerned (Schaeffer 1931: 9). Without a securely identified statue of Merneptah, the question is, of course, unanswerable.

A few developments that occurred in Merneptah's reign, however, perhaps suggest that an agreement had been forged between the pharaoh and his Ugaritic counterpart of the type that it has been argued in the course of this essay might well have been sealed with a statue. The Ugaritic king who wrote Merneptah

---

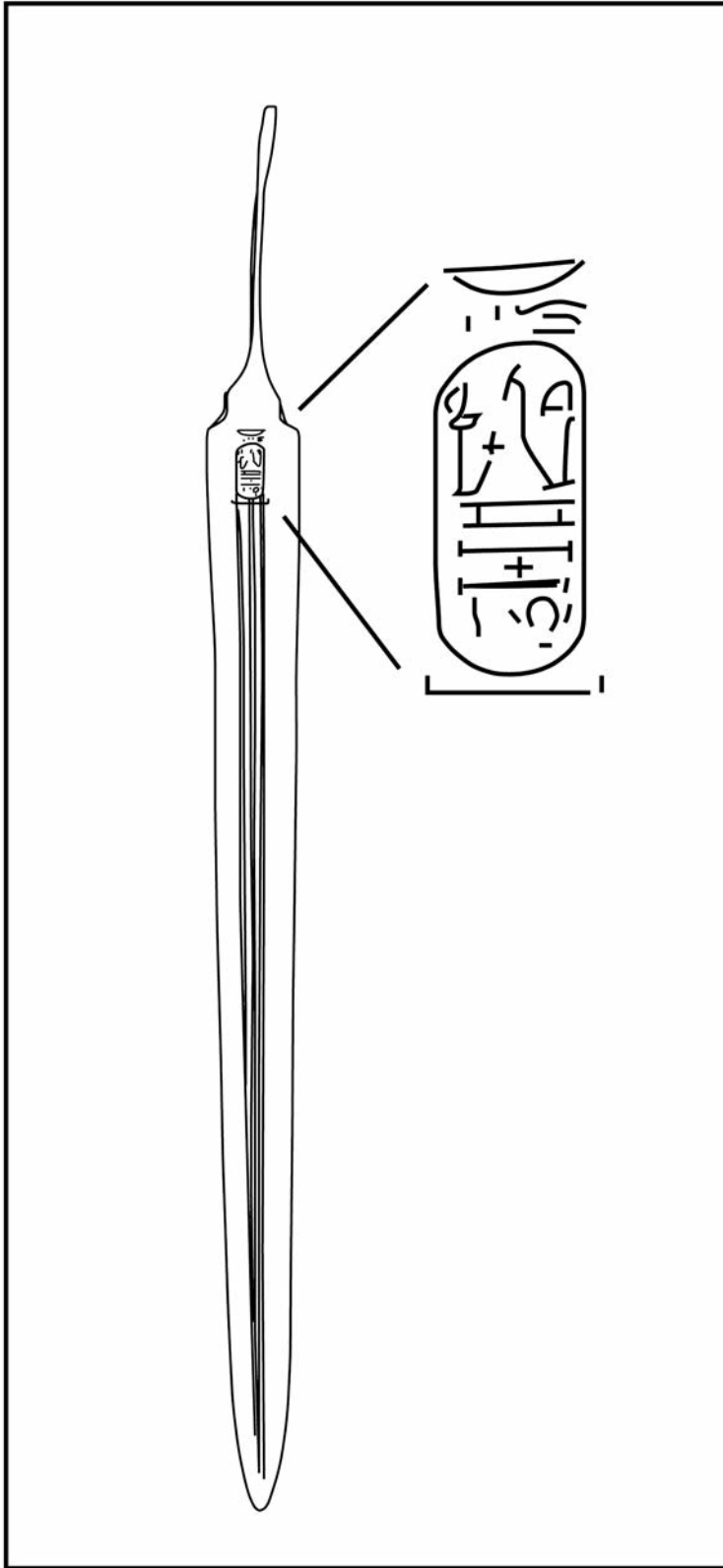
<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that the stone statuette of Ramesses III, discovered in the temple precinct at Byblos (Dunand 1958: 618), was likely too small to have owned land or received cult.



inviting him to install his statue in the temple of Ba'al may have been exploring the possibility of switching his allegiance from an increasingly beleaguered and distracted Hatti to Egypt, a country that was still militarily powerful, that had important maritime trade connections, and that, perhaps most importantly, possessed vast storehouses of grain. In interpreting ancient Near Eastern diplomatic correspondence, it is absolutely vital to attempt to read between the lines in order to determine what decorum dictated should remain only implied rather than baldly stated. As Liverani (2000: 17) has again observed, "In decoding a letter, the logic and procedures of bargaining, of rhetorical argument, of emotional metaphors, are much more apposite than a strictly juridical logic." Thus, by inviting Merneptah to place himself directly before the city's patron deity, the Ugaritic king was no doubt inviting the pharaoh to place himself in a position to protect and serve both Ba'al and Ugarit.

Along these lines, a sword bearing Merneptah's cartouche (see Fig. 5), discovered together with other bronze objects and a figurine of a Mycenaean-style goddess in a cache that was later buried beneath destruction debris, is worth pausing to examine. Stylistically, the sword has often been viewed as locally made, although a very similar sword was discovered at Qantir (Schaeffer 1956: 169–177). Thus, the jury is still out as to whether it was manufactured in Egypt or in Ugarit (Singer 1999: 711). What is not in debate, however, is that the sword appears to have remained unused. It is perhaps speculative to imagine that it had served as a material seal to a pact on Egypt's part to defend the city in which its statues resided. That such a pact had indeed been forged, however, is suggested by the fact that in the reign or two following the death of Merneptah, the king of Ugarit exchanged letters with the "Chief of the troops of the Great King, King of the Land of Egypt" (RS 86.2230; Singer 1999: 714). Were the two countries not militarily allied at that time, the reason for this correspondence would be difficult to discern (Lackenbacher 1995: 77).

Of even greater interest is a letter from Merneptah (RS 94.2002 + 94.2003) that was discovered, like RS 88.2158 and the document just discussed, in the house of Urtenu. In the letter the pharaoh consented to send consignments of grain in order to help alleviate the famine raging in Ugarit (Singer 1999: 712). As discussed earlier, this was not an act of kindness that Ugarit's erstwhile overlord, Hatti, was either ready or able to render. Moreover, yet another letter, this time sent from Hatti to Ugarit, stated that the Ugaritic king had been absolved of every "service". He was, however, still requested to "listen and to execute" orders, like furnishing a ship upon request, (RS 20.212; Astour 1965: 254–255; Singer 1999: 716–717). Whether this absolution was due to the extraordinary circumstance of the famine or whether it tacitly acknowledged that Ugarit had entered into a new political status with respect to Egypt is not known. Nor is it known if the ship was sent.



**Fig. 5**

Sword bearing Merneptah's cartouche found at Ugarit, RS 17.090 (redrawn from Schaeffer 1956: 172, fig. 124 and pl. VIII).

It is fitting to end with a mention of yet one more letter exhumed from the house of Urtenu (KTU<sup>2</sup> 2.81). In it, the king of Ugarit wrote to Merneptah and employed a greeting formula that was even more obsequious than that adopted in the Amarna archive by Ugaritic vassals when they addressed their pharaoh as overlord.<sup>20</sup> It began, “[To the Sun], the great king, the king of Egypt, [the gracious] [king], the just king, [the king of ki]ngs, the lord of all the land [of Egypt]” (Singer 1999: 712). This letter has been argued to have been an attempt on the part of the Ugaritic king, almost certainly Ammurapi, to renegotiate his country’s tribute from 2,000 shekels of silver down to 1,300 or so (Dijkstra 1999: 157). While these sums might seem steep, Ugarit had in the past paid 5,000 shekels to Amurru simply to ensure military assistance (Singer 1999: 635), and this sum was in addition to what the city paid (or often didn’t pay) to Hatti. Perhaps, then, this extended correspondence concerning statues, into which RS 88.2158 provides a window, eventually did pave the way for a new relationship to be forged between a king of kings and an honored vassal, welcomed back into the fold.

## Bibliography

Ahituv, S.

1978 “Economic Factors in the Egyptian Conquest of Canaan.” *Israel Exploration Journal* 28, 93–105.

Ahl, S. W.

1973 *Epistolary Texts from Ugarit: Structural and Lexical Correspondences in Epistles in Akkadian and Ugaritic*. Waltham: Brandeis University, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Ann Arbor, ProQuest/UMI Publication No. 73-32,365).

Ahrens, A.

2011 “A ‘Hyksos Connection’? Thoughts on the Date of Dispatch of Some of the Middle Kingdom Objects Found in the Northern Levant.” In *Egypt and the Near East – the Crossroads. Proceedings of an International Conference on the Relations of Egypt and the Near East in the Bronze Age, Prague September 1–3, 2010*, edited by J. Mynářová, 21–40. Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague.

Allon, N.

2007 “Seth is Baal: Evidence from the Egyptian Script.” *Ägypten und Levante* 17, 15–22.

Al-Maqdissi, M. *et al.*

2007 “Rapport préliminaire sur les activités de la Mission Syro-Française de Ras Shamra-Ougarit en 2005 et 2006 (65<sup>e</sup> et 66<sup>e</sup> campagnes).” *Syria* 84, 33–56.

Astour, M. C.

1965 “New Evidence on the Last Days of Ugarit.” *American Journal of Archaeology* 69/3, 253–258.

1981 “Ugarit and the Great Powers.” In *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic*, edited by G. D. Young, 3–29. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

---

<sup>20</sup> For a diachronic study of the greeting formulae in Ugaritic letters, see Mynářová 2010.

Bavay, L.

2015 "Canaanite Jars and Jar Sealings from Deir al-Medina: Scattered Evidence of Egypt's Economic Relations with the Levant during the New Kingdom." In *Policies of Exchange: Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium B.C.E. Proceedings of the International Symposium at the University of Freiburg Institute for Archaeological Studies, 30<sup>th</sup> May-2<sup>nd</sup> June 2012*, edited by B. Eder, and R. Pruzsinszky, 129–139. Oriental and European Archaeology 2. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press.

Ben-Tor, A.

2006 "The Sad Fate of Statues and the Mutilated Statues of Hazor." In *Confronting the Past, Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever*, edited by S. Gitin, 3–16. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

Bernhardt, K. H.

1971 "Verwaltungspraxis im spätkbronzezeitlichen Palastina." In *Beiträge zur sozialen Struktur des alten Vorderasien*, edited by H. Klengel, 133–147. Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des alten Orients 1. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

Bietak, M.

1996 *Avaris: The Capital of the Hyksos. Recent Excavations at Tell el-Dab'a*. London: British Museum.

Bleiberg, E.

1988 "The Redistributive Economy in New Kingdom Egypt: An Examination of *B3kw(t)*." *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 25, 157–168.

Bourriau, J. – Smith, L. – Serpico, M.

2001 "The Provenance of Canaanite Amphorae found at Memphis and Amarna in the New Kingdom." In *The Social Context of Technological Change: Egypt and the Near East 1650-1550 BC. Proceedings of a Conference Held at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford 12–14 September 2000*, edited by A. J. Shortland, 113–146. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Breasted, J. H.

1906 *Ancient Records of Egypt, IV: The Twentieth to the Twenty-Sixth Dynasties*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

1948 "Bronze base of a statue of Ramses VI discovered at Megiddo." In *Megiddo II: Seasons of 1935–1939, Text*, edited by G. Loud, 135–138. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Callot, O.

2011 *Les Sanctuaires de L'Acropole d'Ougarit: Les Temples de Baal et de Dagan*, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 19. Lyon: Publications de la Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée.

Caubet, A.

1991 "Répertoire de la Vaisselle de Pierre. Ougarit 1929–1988." In *Arts et industries de la pierre*, edited by M. Yon, and A. Caubet, 205–272. Ras Shamra – Ougarit 6. Paris: Éditions recherche sur les civilisations.

Courtois, J.-C.

1990 "Yabninu et le Palais sud d'Ougarit." *Syria* 67: 103–142.

Cumming, B.

1982 *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty. Fascicle 1*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.

- 1984 *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty. Fascicle 2*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.
- Devecchi, E.  
2012 "Aziru, Servant of Three Masters?" *Altorientalische Forschungen* 39/1, 38–48.
- Dijkstra, M.  
1999 "Ugaritic Prose." In *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, edited by W. G. E. Watson – N. Wyatt, 140–164. *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 39. Leiden – Boston: Brill.
- Dunand, M.  
1939 *Fouilles de Byblos I*. Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve.  
1958 *Fouilles de Byblos II*. Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve.
- Dupont, R. F.  
1987 *The Late History of Ugarit (circa 1260-1182 B.C.)*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Ann Arbor, ProQuest/UMI Publication No. 8801612).
- Edel, E.  
1953 "Die Stelen Amenophis' II. aus Karnak und Memphis mit dem Bericht über die asiatischen Feldzüge des Königs." *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 69, 97–176.
- Forstner-Müller, I. – Müller, W. – Radner, K.  
2002 "Statuen in Verbannung. Ägyptischer Statuenexport in den Vorderen Orient unter Amenophis III. und IV." *Ägypten und Levante* 12, 155–166.
- Galán, J. M.  
1994 "The Heritage of Thutmose III's Campaigns in the Amarna Age." In *Essays in Egyptology in Honor of Hans Goedicke*, edited by B. M. Bryan, and D. Lorton, 91–102. San Antonio: Van Siclen Books.
- Gardiner, A. H.  
1988 *Egyptian Grammar. Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*. Oxford: Griffith Institute (3<sup>rd</sup> revised edition).
- Gasse, A. – Yon, M.  
1991 "Stèle de Mamy." In *Arts et industries de la pierre*, edited by M. Yon, and A. Caubet, 284–288. Ras Shamra – Ugarit 6. Paris: Éditions recherche sur les civilisations.
- Giveon, R.  
1981 "Some Egyptological Considerations Concerning Ugarit." In *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic*, edited by G. D. Young, 55–58. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Goldwasser, O.  
1984 "Hieratic Inscriptions from Tel Sera' in Southern Canaan." *Tel Aviv* 11, 77–93.
- Haring, B. J. J.  
1997 *Divine Households: Administrative and Economic Aspects of the New Kingdom Royal Memorial Temples in Western Thebes*, *Egyptologische Uitgaven* 12. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten.
- Helck, W.  
1976 "Ägyptische Statuen im Ausland – ein chronologisches Problem." *Ugarit-Forschungen* 8, 110–115.

- Heltzer, M.  
1978 *Goods, Prices and the Organization of Trade in Ugarit*. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag.
- Hill, M.  
2007 "Shifting Ground: The New Kingdom from the Reign of Thutmose III (ca. 1479-1070 B.C.)." In *Gifts for the Gods: Images from Egyptian Temples*, edited by M. Hill, 23–36. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Johnson, C.  
2004 *The Sorrows of Empire. Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*. New York: Metropolitan Books Henry Holt and Company.
- Katary, S. L. D.  
2013 "The Administration of Institutional Agriculture in the New Kingdom." In *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, edited by J. C. Moreno García, 719–783. *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 104. Leiden – Boston: Brill.
- Kitchen, K. A.  
1982 *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.
- Kitchen, K. A., trans.  
1996 *Ramesseid Inscriptions: Translated and Annotated. Vol 2, Ramesses II, Royal Inscriptions*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Klengel, H.  
1974 "'Hungerjahre' in Hatti." *Altorientalische Forschungen* 1, 165–174.
- Lackenbacher, S.  
1995 "Une Correspondance entre l'Administration du Pharaon Merneptah et le Roi d'Ougarit." In *Le Pays d'Ougarit autour de 1200 av J.C.: Histoire et archeology. Actes du Colloque International; Paris, 28 juin-1<sup>er</sup> juillet 1993*, edited by M. Yon, M. Sznycer, and P. Bordreuil, 77–83. Paris: Éditions recherche sur les civilisations.
- Lackenbacher, S.  
2001 "Une lettre d'Égypte." In *Études Ougaritiques I. Travaux 1985-1995*, edited by M. Yon, and D. Arnaud, 239–248. Ras Shamra – Ougarit 14. Paris: Éditions recherche sur les civilisations.
- Lagarce, J. – Lagarce, E.  
1974 "Le Chantier de la 'Maison aux Albâtres.'" *Syria* 51, 5–25.
- Levy, E.  
2014 "A Fresh Look at the Baal-Zaphon Stele." *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 100, 295–312.
- Libolt, C. G.  
1985 *Royal Land Grants from Ugarit*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Ann Arbor, ProQuest/UMI Publication No. 8600489).
- Liverani, M.  
1989 "Economy of Ugaritic Royal Farms." In *Production and Consumption in the Ancient Near East*, edited by C. Zaccagnini, 127–168. Budapest: University of Budapest.  
1990 *Prestige and Interest: International Relations in the Near East ca. 1600-1100 B.C.*, History of the Ancient Near East, Studies. Padova: Sargon.



- 2000 "The Great Powers Club." In *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, edited by R. Cohen, and R. Westbrook, 15–27. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Matoian, V.  
 2015 "Ugarit et l'Égypte: essai d'interprétation de la documentation archéologique et perspectives de la recherche." In *Policies of Exchange: Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium B.C.E., Proceedings of the International Symposium at the University of Freiburg Institute for Archaeological Studies, 30<sup>th</sup> May–2<sup>nd</sup> June 2012*, edited by B. Eder, and R. Pruzsinszky, 35–84. *Oriental and European Archaeology 2*. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press.
- McGeough, K. M.  
 2007 *Exchange Relations at Ugarit*, *Ancient Near Eastern Studies*, Supplement 26. Leuven: Peeters.
- Montet, P.  
 1998 *Byblos et L'Égypte: Quatre Campagnes de Fouilles 1921–1924. Texte*. Beirut: Éditions Terre du Liban (reprint of a 1928 edition).
- Moran, W.  
 1992 *The Amarna Letters*. Baltimore – London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Morris, E. F.  
 2005 *The Architecture of Imperialism: Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom*, *Probleme der Ägyptologie 22*. Leiden – Boston: Brill.  
 2006 "Bowling and Scraping in the Ancient Near East: An Investigation into Obscureness in the Amarna Letters." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 65, 179–195.  
 2010 "Opportunism in Contested Lands, B.C. and A.D. Or How Abdi-Ashirta, Aziru, and Padsha Khan Zadran Got Away with Murder." In *Millions of Jubilees: Studies in Honor of David Silverman I*, edited by Z. Hawass, and J. H. Wegner, 413–438. Cairo: Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt.  
 2015 "Exchange, Extraction, and the Politics of Ideological Money Laundering in Egypt's New Kingdom Empire." In *Policies of Exchange: Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium B.C.E., Proceedings of the International Symposium at the University of Freiburg Institute for Archaeological Studies, 30<sup>th</sup> May–2<sup>nd</sup> June 2012*, edited by B. Eder, and R. Pruzsinszky, 167–190. *Oriental and European Archaeology 2*. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press.
- Murnane, W. J.  
 1995 *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, *Writings from the Ancient World 5*. Atlanta: Scholars Press.
- Mynářová, J.  
 2006 "Ugarit: 'International' or 'Vassal' Correspondence?" In *L'État, le pouvoir, les prestations et leurs forms en Mésopotamie ancienne. Actes du Colloque assyriologique franco-tchèque. Paris, 7–8 novembre 2002*, edited by P. Charvát, B. Lafont, J. Mynářová, and L. Pecha, 119–128. Praha: Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Filozofická fakulta.  
 2010 "Tradition of Innovation? The Ugaritic-Egyptian Correspondence." *Ägypten und Levante* 20, 363–372.
- Na'aman, N.  
 1981 "Economic Aspects of the Egyptian Occupation of Canaan." *Israel Exploration Journal* 31, 172–185.

Negbi, O.

1976 *Canaanite Gods in Metal: An Archaeological Study of Ancient Syro-Palestinian Figurines*, Publications of the Institute of Archaeology 5. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, Institute of Archaeology.

ORBIS: The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World. (n.d.), <http://orbis.stanford.edu/> (accessed on 3 December 2014).

Owen, D. I.

1981 "Ugarit, Canaan and Egypt: Some New Epigraphic Evidence from Tel Aphek in Israel." In *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic*, edited by G. D. Young, 49–53. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

Rainey, A. F.

1965 "The Kingdom of Ugarit." *Biblical Archaeologist* 28/4, 101–125.

Redford, D. B.

2003 *The Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III*. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 16. Leiden – Boston: Brill.

Roehrig, C. H.

1997 "Cult Figure of a Falcon-Headed Deity." In *Miho Museum: South Wing*, edited by T. Umehara, 18–21. Kyoto: Miho Museum.

Routledge, B. – McGeough, K.

2012 "Just What Collapsed? A Network Perspective on 'Palatial' and 'Private' Trade at Ugarit." In *Forces of Transformation: The End of the Bronze Age in the Mediterranean: Proceedings of an International Symposium Held at St. John's College, University of Oxford 25-6 March 2006*, edited by C. Bachhuber, and R. G. Roberts, 22–29. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Schaeffer, C. F. A.

1931 "Les fouilles de Minet el-Beida et de Ras-Shamra. Deuxième campagne (printemps 1930). Rapport sommaire." *Syria* 12/1, 1–14.

1949 *Ugaritica II: Nouvelles études relatives aux découvertes de Ras Shamra*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 47, Mission de Ras Shamra 5. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner.

1956 "Une Épée de Bronze d'Ugarit Portant le Cartouche du Pharaon Mineptah." In *Ugaritica III*, edited by C. F. A. Schaeffer, 169–178. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 44, Mission de Ras Shamra 8. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner.

1962 "Fouilles et Découvertes des XVIII<sup>e</sup> et XIX<sup>e</sup> Campagnes, 1954-1955." In *Ugaritica IV*, edited by C. F. A. Schaeffer, and J.-C. Courtois, 1–150. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 74, Mission de Ras Shamra 15. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner.

Schloen, J. D.

2001 *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East*, Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant 2. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

Scott, M.

2014 *Delphi: A History of the Center of the Ancient World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Simpson, W. K. *et al.*, eds.  
2003 *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Singer, I.  
1999 "A Political History of Ugarit." In *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, edited by W. G. E. Watson and N. Wyatt, 603–733. *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 39. Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill.
- Spalinger, A. J.  
2005 *War in Ancient Egypt: the New Kingdom*. Malden: Blackwell.
- van Soldt, W.  
2000 "Private Archives at Ugarit." In *Interdependency of Institutions and Private Entrepreneurs. Proceedings of the Second Mos Symposium, Leiden 1998*, edited by A. C. V. M. Bongenaar, and G. van Driel, 229–245. *Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archeologisch Instituut te Istanbul* 87. Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-archeologisch Instituut te Istanbul.  
2010 "Ugarit as a Hittite Vassal State." *Altorientalische Forschungen* 37, 198–207.
- Vita, J.-P.  
1999 "The Society of Ugarit." In *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, edited by W. G. E. Watson, and N. Wyatt, 455–498. *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 39. Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill.
- Vita, J.-P. – Galán, J. M.  
1997 "Šipti-Ba'alu, un 'égyptien' à Ougarit." *Ugarit-Forschungen* 29, 709–713.
- Watson, W. G. E. – Wyatt, N., eds.  
1999 *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*. *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 39. Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill.
- Weber, C. P.  
1966 *The Foreign Relations of Ugarit*. Waltham: Brandeis University, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Ann Arbor, ProQuest/UMI Publication No. 6613666).
- Wilson, P.  
2005 "Naming Names and Shifting Identities in Ancient Egyptian Iconoclasm." In *Negating the Image: Case Studies in Iconoclasm*, edited by A. McClanan, and J. Johnson, 113–136. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Wyatt, N.  
1999 "The Religion of Ugarit: An Overview." In *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, edited by W. G. E. Watson, and N. Wyatt, 529–585. *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 39. Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill.
- Yeivin, S.  
1967 "Amenophis II's Asianic Campaigns." *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 6, 119–128.
- Yon, M.  
1991 "Stèles de pierre" In *Arts et industries de la pierre*, edited by M. Yon, and A. Caubet, 273–344. Ras Shamra – Ougarit 6. Paris: Éditions recherche sur les civilisations.