



THE AMARNA LETTERS FROM TYRE AS A SOURCE FOR UNDERSTANDING ATENISM AND IMPERIAL ADMINISTRATION¹

Luis Robert Siddall

School of Oriental and African Studies, the University of London
and Macquarie University, Sydney

ABSTRACT

It has long been recognized that the corpus of letters from Tyre discovered in the Amarna letter archive contain a number of Egyptianisms. Scholars have also recognized the presence of some West Semitic traits in the corpus, which are typical of the letters from Syro-Palestine. However, the intellectual context of those linguistic/cultural traits of the letters has not been adequately investigated. This paper examines the Egyptianisms and West Semiticisms in the light of the contemporary religious movement in Egypt, Atenism, and the New Kingdom imperial administration. We conclude that the evidence from these letters indicates that more traditional aspects of Egyptian royal ideology might still have been current during the Amarna Period and propose that there was a pragmatic purpose for the Egyptianisms and West Semiticisms: Abi-milki, the governor of Tyre, was attempting to appeal to the Egyptian imperial administration.

One of the most fascinating eras of ancient Near Eastern history is the Amarna Period (1352–1336 BCE), late in the Eighteenth Dynasty of the Egyptian New Kingdom. The period is renowned for the large-scale religious and artistic changes introduced by Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, who would rename himself Akhenaten. Of equal fame is the letter corpus from Akhenaten's abandoned capital city at Amarna, the subject of scholarly interest since its discovery in 1887.² There are over 350 Amarna letters, most consisting of correspondence between Egypt and her vassals. The letters do not typically provide insights into the religious climate of the Egyptian court, but the letters from Tyre are an exception. These letters present a unique opportunity to view Atenism, the new religious movement introduced during the reign of Akhenaten, from outside the Egyptian royal court. The evidence comes in the form of a number of Egyptianisms found in the Tyrian letters, the most significant of which are the two hymns in EA 147. From this evidence, we seek to ascertain what principles of Egyptian ideology and philosophy the imperial administrators deemed most important, how they interpreted those ideas, and the purpose of their inclusion in the correspondence.

ABI-MILKI AND THE LETTERS FROM TYRE

The Tyrian letter corpus comprises ten tablets, EA 146–155, all of which were sent by the governor of Tyre, Abi-milki, to the pharaoh. The content of the letters is typical of the vassal corre-

spondence, which chiefly comprised requests or reports to the royal court. Abi-milki was concerned with two main agendas: the impending threat posed by Zimredda of Sidon and the desperate need for resources (military, wood, and water).

These letters have been the focus of previous scholarly investigations that sought to identify the cultural background of the Tyrian scribes and thus the linguistic content of the letters. The first significant work was Albright's 1937 study, in which he argued that the scribe at the court of Tyre was a native Egyptian. He supported this theory by identifying Egyptian vocabulary, poetic idiom, morphology, and syntax, and ruled out the possibility of Hurrian influence.³ This position, like much of Albright's work, held significant weight in the field until the 1970s. The major opposition came in a 1973 article by Stanley Gevirtz.⁴ The aim of Gevirtz's work was to reinterpret much of Albright's thesis and argue that the Tyrian letters were the product not of an Egyptian mind but a Canaanite (West Semitic) one; as a result, Gevirtz interpreted much of the data in terms of Semitic poetics.

With these two significant scholars having reached completely different conclusions on the Tyrian letters, Cecilia Grave then published three articles based on her own studies of the Tyrian Amarna corpus.⁵ Grave's position is far more balanced than Albright's or Gevirtz's, and her results show that recognizing the cultural identity of the writer of the Tyrian letters is more complicated than ascribing either an Egyptian or West Semitic/Canaanite origin; in fact, the letters contain both West Semitic and Egyptian elements.

The multilingual content of the letters can to some extent be explained by the background of the governor. Abi-milki often reminded the pharaoh that he was appointed to the position in Tyre and identified himself as an Egyptian magnate, rather than a governor or mayor of Tyre.⁶ Interestingly, a letter from Rib-Addi of Byblos informs the pharaoh that the (previous) mayor of Tyre was murdered with Rib-Addi's sister and nephews.⁷ Scholars generally agree that this was the event that led to Abi-milki's appointment.⁸

It is possible that Abi-milki was of West Semitic extraction. His name occurs eleven times in the letters and was most commonly written with a logogram as *A-bi-LUGAL*.⁹ However, on four occasions the name was written syllabically as *A-bi-mil-ki*.¹⁰ The syllabic writing makes the West Semitic origin of the name certain, for the Akkadian (East Semitic) equivalent would be *Abu/Abi-šarru*. The name means “the/my father is the king,” although “(the god) Milku is the/my father” is also possible.¹¹ The name is common in West Semitic-speaking regions, for it is attested in the Hebrew Bible, at Ugarit, in a Punic inscription, and in Aššurbanipal's annals.¹²

We suggest that this is the Tyrian ruler's real name and not a “puppet” name given him by the pharaoh to appease the people of Tyre. Such an argument finds support in the West Semitic features of the letters (see below) and on analogy with the ruler of Jerusalem during the Amarna Period, Abdi-Ḥēba, who, like Abi-milki, tells us that he was an Egyptian appointment.¹³ Abdi-Ḥēba's name indicates that he might have been Hurrian; while *Abdi* is West Semitic, the theophoric element *Ḥēba* is understood as a variant of the name of the Hurrian goddess Ḥēbat, found in a number of personal names in the Nuzi archives.¹⁴ There is a parallel between Abi-milki and Abdi-Ḥēba ascribing their positions to the power of the pharaoh and other private “loyalist” inscriptions from the Amarna Period wherein the king is praised for having established his officials.¹⁵ This connection shall be dealt with in more detail below, but for now we shall point out that it is possible Abi-milki and Abdi-Ḥēba were Egyptian officials whom the pharaoh appointed as governors to stabilize vassal cities after the outbreak of trouble. They would not be the only known members of the Egyptian administration of foreign extraction; other examples from the Amarna letters include officials with the Semitic names Yanḥamu and Addaya, as well as Puḥuru, whose name (if we understand it correctly) means “the Syrian” in Egyptian (*p³ ḥwr*), and the vizier Aper-El, who served under both Amenhotep III and Akhenaten.¹⁶ This is unsurprising in light of the rise in numbers of Asiatics and Hurrians who settled in Egypt from the Middle Kingdom on, especially in the north at Tell el-Dab'a (Avaris), Tell el-Yahudiyeh, Tell el-Maskhuta, and el-Lahun.¹⁷ Such a situation is not without parallel in the ancient Near East. Other known examples of foreigners becoming officers in another state's army or imperial administration are the Samaritans, Urartians, and Nubians who served in the Neo-

Assyrian army,¹⁸ as well as the biblical story of Daniel serving as an official of the Babylonian and Persian courts. Thus, in light of the evidence from Egypt and the ancient Near East, one could well expect to find Canaanite and Hurrian members of the Egyptian imperial administration.

Tyre's geographical location leads to the expectation that its letters, like those from other Canaanite centers, would have consistently used West Semitic grammar. In fact, the Akkadian verbal forms in the Tyrian letter corpus greatly outnumber the West Semitic. Noteworthy is the absence of the Canaanite 3.m.s. prefix conjugation (*yi-/ya-/yu-*). However, there are some West Semitic verb forms present in the letters. For instance, the Tyrian scribes often used the Canaanite *i-* prefix for the 1.c.s. prefix conjugation instead of the Akkadian *a-* prefix. Present too is the occasional use of the Canaanite jussive form of the third-person injunctive instead of the Akkadian precativ. Most illuminating is the use of the suffix conjugation, where we find forms that follow the morphology of Arabic, Hebrew, and Ugaritic. The suffix conjugation is a distinguishing feature of the West Semitic languages from East Semitic Akkadian.¹⁹ The forms *šarra* and *dāka* are particularly important, as they are two of the few instances where we find verbal morphology known from Arabic and Ugaritic and distinct from Hebrew.²⁰ We have included a register of all the West Semitic verbal forms found in the Tyrian letter corpus in an appendix.

There are other indicators that the scribes of Tyre were typical of the Phoenician cities. The use of the NI sign for the value *li* is found only in the letters of the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Byblos in the Amarna corpus;²¹ more common is the use of the LI sign. Similarly, the construction of a 1.c.pl independent dative pronoun, *yāšīnu*, has also been found only in the letters from Tyre and Byblos.²² The form of the pronoun appears to be an artificial construction of two Akkadian forms. The proper Akkadian form is *niāšim*; the present form looks to be a hybrid, with the Akkadian 1.c.s. dative *yāšim* as the base and a *-nu* suffix indicating plurality. One suspects the *-nu* was added on analogy with the Akkadian nominative form, where the 1.c.pl. is *nīnu*. Rainey suggests that the development of these forms might have been the result of the Akkadian pronominal system being either unknown or rejected by the authors of the Tyrian and Byblian letters.²³ Outside of Akkadian, Ugaritic is the only other Semitic language to use an oblique independent pronoun.²⁴ Perhaps the Tyrian letters are evidence for the use of the oblique independent pronoun in Phoenicia rather than a rejection of the Akkadian pronominal system.

Finally, there are a few orthographies that also point toward Phoenician origin. The writing of the /e/ vowel in *mé-ma*, “water” (EA 146:18, 151:10) in all likelihood represents the reduction of the diphthong found in Hebrew *maim* as opposed to Egyptian *mw* or Akkadian *mū*.²⁵ Noteworthy too is the employment of the expression *i-na ūmi u ūmi-ma*, “daily” (EA 146:16; 147:7, 28, 67). The normal Akkadian form of the adverb is

ūmišam(ma), as found in EA 148:24.²⁶ Albright and Assmann argued that this peculiar form is an Egyptianism; its equivalents have been suggested as (*m*) *hrw* (*hr*) *hrw* (Albright) and *r^c nb* (Assmann).²⁷ Rainey, however, has not only shown that the form has parallels in Biblical Hebrew and Phoenician—such as *yôm yôm* (Gen. 39:10), *yôm wāyôm* (Est. 3:4), *bēkōl yôm wāyôm* (Est. 2:4), and *ym md ym* (KAI 43:11)—but also that Egyptian equivalents are difficult to find.²⁸

In terms of techniques of style, Albright’s thesis was heavily criticized by Gevartz, who argued that much of the Tyrian text consists of Canaanite literary characteristics or “rhetoric.” Gevartz’s thesis, however, may be queried. His discussion of “Canaanite Rhetoric,” while excellent in its evidencing Hebrew, Ugaritic, and Akkadian (including Mari) parallels, does not consider whether such literary devices are found in Egyptian literature. The most obvious of the stylistic features is parallelism. Parallelism was a feature of literary works of most ancient Near Eastern societies—such as those of Ugarit, Mesopotamia, and Israel—and Egypt was no exception.²⁹ In Egyptian literary and poetic writings, parallelism is the most common structural element for securing formal cohesion.³⁰ Gevartz’s treatment of Abi-milki’s request for wood and water is also questionable. Gevartz offers what he considers to be corresponding literary uses of wood and water in Hebrew, Ugaritic, and Mari texts. However, his treatment of Abi-milki’s request does not take account of the historical context of the letters. In none of the quoted parallel texts³¹ is a request made to an overlord, nor is any dearth in commodities suggested. Quite the contrary, most examples celebrate the possession of such resources! It is implausible to see Abi-milki’s request for these resources as anything other than a historically and economically situated request for aid. Grave attempted to argue a similar case with the word pair of “breath” and “water”;³² this thesis should be rejected for the same reasons as Gevartz’s.

Finally, we must take account of the West Semitic words used in the corpus. The table below contains instances of each word with its root.

LIST OF WEST SEMITIC WORDS

Word	Root	Translation	Attestation (EA)
<i>ša-pa-ni-šu</i>	špwn	his north wind	147:10
<i>zu-ri-ya</i>	šhr/š ² r	my back	147:39
<i>ú-bu-ud</i>	‘bd	to serve	152:56
<i>ù-bu-dì</i>	‘bd	service	151:20; 155:28
<i>na-(ta)-ša-ab</i>	nšb	to stand	151:42
<i>ša-mu</i>	sym/swm	place	155:20

Albright offered no insight as to why the “Egyptian scribe” used the West Semitic glosses. Indeed, the linguistic evidence suggests Albright had the paradigm the wrong way around. We contend, based on the evidence discussed above, that it was not an

Egyptian scribe who was overcoming the surrounding “vulgarisms,” but a Canaanite who used the occasional Egyptianism for deliberate effect. A consequence of this is that the Tyrian letters are further evidence for the multicultural makeup of the Egyptian imperial administration. In light of his former role in the administration, it is probable that Abi-milki was responsible for the Egyptianisms in the letters; we turn now to examine their context and possible effect.

THE EGYPTIANISMS IN THE TYRIAN AMARNA LETTERS

The Egyptianisms can be organized into two categories: glosses and hymns. The hymns, while based on poetry, were composed in Akkadian. To begin, we shall examine the use of the Egyptian glosses, which are listed in the table below.

LIST OF EGYPTIAN GLOSSES

Word	Cognate	Translation	Attestation (EA)
<i>ḥa-ab-ši</i>	<i>ḥpš</i>	strength, power	147:12
<i>a-ru-ú</i>	<i>hrw</i>	happy	147:28
<i>ya-a-ya-ya</i>	<i>y3</i> (repeated)	yes! yes! yes!	147:38
<i>nu-uḥ-ti</i>	<i>nḥt</i>	strength, might	147:56
¹⁴ <i>wi-ma</i>	<i>w^cw</i>	soldier	150:6,9; 152:47,50
<i>pa wa-ru</i>	<i>p3 wr</i>	foreign prince	149:30; 151:59
<i>pa-ni-mu</i>	<i>bw-nb</i>	everywhere	155:46
<i>a-ku-ni</i>	<i>ikn</i>	cup/jar	148:12

The typical use of non-Akkadian in the Amarna letters was to provide a clear meaning for a Sumerian logogram.³³ However, this was not always the case when it came to the Egyptian words. If one examines the context in which the non-Akkadian words occur, there is a general consistency in the application that stands in contrast to the West Semitic glosses in the letters. The contrast is important because it indicates the reason for their use. Egyptian glosses were used when discussing a vital point of the letter, either for emphasis or perhaps clarity, whether it be Pharaoh’s might (*ḥpš* and *nḥt*) or presence (*bw-nb*), references to other mayors (*p3 wr*), requested items (*ikn*), or Abi-milki’s previous interactions (*hrw* and *y3 y3 y3*). Conversely, the West Semitic words (with the exception of *šapānu* and *kūna*) related to Abi-milki and his actions (*zūri* and *ubūdi*). Significant too is the use of Egyptian idiom, such as the reference to the pharaoh’s might, *nḥt*, as a *dūri siparri*, “bronze wall” (EA 147:53). Particularly interesting is the quotation of the pharaoh in EA 147:36, which appears to be given in West Semitic.³⁴

While the glosses seem to have reflected power and cultural relations between the pharaoh and his governor, the poetic passages of EA 147 are more focused on Egyptian royal ideology. The contemporary cultural climate was one of significant change, even turmoil, in Egyptian religion, at least at the official level. This was the period during which Amenhotep IV

changed the chief deity of the official state religion from Amun-Ra (a composite of *Imn*, who by the New Kingdom had become king of the gods, and *R^c*, the sun god) as the head of a vast pantheon to the physical sun-disk, Aten (*Itn*), as the sole, living deity. Amenhotep IV soon changed his name to Akhenaten and moved the capital from Thebes to the new city of Akhetaten (modern Amarna). While the sun always played a central role in Egyptian theology, solar religion reached new heights in the New Kingdom, and the Amarna “revolution” gave it unprecedented authority. It remains unclear, however, whether the new religion was truly monotheistic.³⁵ Much of the difficulty lies in how we interpret the other gods still mentioned in official royal documents. For example, the so-called Great Hymn to the Aten contains references to Shu (*Šu*) and Ra, but their status is unclear because their names were written without divine determinatives.³⁶ Are we to understand these as references to the divine, or to the actual sun, air, and light? Could the ancient Egyptian even distinguish between the divine and the atmospheric or celestial? If not, does Aten theology represent a demotion of other gods only, a henotheism? Unfortunately, the scant and vague nature of what has survived concerning Atenist theology does not allow these questions to be answered with certainty.

In this way, the Egyptianisms in the Tyrian letters are an important source for understanding how the change in Egypt’s official theology was understood by those outside the royal court or the country itself. The Tyrian letters have been dated to the last years of Akhenaten’s reign and perhaps even to the alleged co-regency with or succession of Semenkharu.³⁷ The evidence for this dating is the attestation of Zimredda, Aziru, and Etakkama in the letters, but most impressive are the references to Merytaten (EA 155).³⁸ This relative dating should be further limited to a small number of years, since the majority of the letters are concerned with the problems Tyre faced from a lack of wood and water, and as Gevirtz has pointed out, it is unlikely that a city could survive for a long period of time without such basic resources.³⁹ The consequence of dating the letters to a late phase in Akhenaten’s reign is that the theological concepts expressed by Abi-milki have to be read in the context of Atenist theology.

A prominent theme expressed in the letters is the “good” or “sweet breath” of the king. The concept of the breath of the king being beneficial is well attested in Egypt; the notion is expressed in inscriptions from the time of Hatshepsut to the Ramesside Period.⁴⁰ Abi-milki uses the phrase a number of times as a metaphor for pharaonic support.⁴¹ Indeed, this motif is found in column 7 of the Great Hymn to the Aten: *di ʾšw r sʾnh ʾirit.f hr kd*, “who gave breath in order to vivify all that which had been created.”

Throughout the Amarna corpus, vassals made links between the pharaoh and solar theology. However, there is little in the vassal correspondence outside of Tyre to identify them as referring directly to Atenist theology as opposed to the “new solar theology,” which saw the setting apart of the sun from its companions

in the solar journey and the development of the sun’s aspect as a life-giving deity.⁴² No other vassal showed the depth of knowledge that Abi-milki displayed, and it is the conveyance of such knowledge (and the late date of the letters) that suggests that Abi-milki was drawing on Atenist theology in his correspondence to the pharaoh. Abi-milki’s references to solar theology are most explicit in the two poems Albright identified in EA 147 5–15 and 41–56.⁴³ There is also the occasional reference to solar theology found in other Tyrian letters. While both poems attempt to distinguish Abi-milki as a good vassal, only the first relates to Atenist theology as we know it. The second is similar to the loyalist texts known from (but not exclusive to) the Amarna Period. The first poem is as follows:

be-li ^dŠamaš(utu)
ša it-ta-ši i-na muḥḫi(ugu)^{bi} *māt(kur) ma-ta-ti i-na*
u₄-mi ù u₄-mi-ma
ki-ma ši-ma-at ^dŠamaš(utu) *a-bu-šu damqu(sig₅)* *ša*
i-ba-li-iṭ
i-na še-ḫi-šu ʾābi(dùg.ga) ù i-sá-ḫur i-na ṣa-pa-ni-šu
ša it-ta-ša-ab gab-bi māt(kur)^{ti} *i-na pa-ša-ḫi i-na du-*
ni Á | ḫa-ab-ši
ša id-din ri-ig-ma-šu i-na sa-me ki-ma ^dIŠKUR
ù ʾtar¹.gu₅-ub gab-bi māt(kur)^{ti} *iš-tu ri-ig-mi-šu*

My Lord is the sun,
The one who has gone forth over the lands day
after day.
Like the mark of the sun, his good father who
enlivens,
With his good breath and returns with his north wind,
The one who has placed all of the lands at rest with
strength of might.
The one who gave his voice in heaven like Baʾal,
And all of the lands are afraid from his voice.

(EA 147:5–15)

The poem is striking in its correlation with the Great Hymn to the Aten. Abi-milki states that Akhenaten is the sun but that his father is the *mark* of the sun (*ši-ma-at* ^dŠamaš). This signifies that Abi-milki understands Aten as the actual disk—or as he puts it, “mark”—of the sun. Later, in EA 147:57–58, Abi-milki states, *annū iqbi ana Šamaš abi šar bēlīya*, “Now I said to the Sun, the father of the King, my Lord.” These two sections show that the complexity of solar theology was not lost on Abi-milki: the pharaoh is both the sun *and* the son of the Aten.

In the Great Hymn to the Aten, much emphasis is placed on the Aten’s continuity and status as living god. For example, an epithet of the Aten is “the living” (*ʾnh*). The notion of continuity is expressed through the concept of eternity; the Great Hymn discusses the Aten’s continual creation through fertility in all creatures and the repetition of the sunrise. Abi-milki

expresses such continuity in regard to the sun rising (or going forth) and the stability the king/Aten creates throughout the empire, and as a life-giving force. In Albright's second poem, two lines relate to the theme of continuity:

*a-mur arda(ir)^{da} ša iš-me a-na {a-na} be-li-šu
šul-mu āli(uru)-šu šul-mu bīti(é)-šu šu-um-šu a-na
da-ri-ti*

Behold the servant who listens to his Lord,
His city is well, his house is well, his name will be for
eternity.

(EA 147:48–51)

We see here, however, a variance in theme wherein the Great Hymn's concern for birth is replaced by the vassal's concern for imperial stability via the Aten's movements over the empire. Such a variation is understandable, as the purpose of Abi-milki's poems is different from that of the Great Hymn. Abi-milki further reinforces the idea of continuity in EA 155 by referring to the king as the everlasting sun (*šarru Šamaš dārītu*).

The second poem, which is similar to some officials' inscriptions from Amarna, is not concerned with Atenist theology per se but is akin to the loyalist or "personal piety" texts. The poem is as follows:

*ša iš-me a-na šarri(lugal) be-li-šu
ù ù-ra-ad-šu i-na aš-ra-ni-šu
ù it-šī^d Šamaš(utu) i-na muḥḫi(ugu)^{bi}-šu
ù i-sá-ḫur še-ḫu ṭābu(dùg) iš-tu^{uz} pi be-li-šu
ù la-a iš-te-me a-ma-tū šarri(lugal) be-li-šu
ḫal-qa-at āli(uru)-šu ḫa-li-iq bīti(é)-šu
ia-nu šu-um-šu i-na gab-bi māti(kur)^{ti} i-na da-ri-ti
a-mur arda(ir)^{da} ša iš-me a-na {a-na} be-li-šu
šul-mu āli(uru)-šu šul-mu bīti(é)-šu
šu-um-šu a-na da-ri-ti
at-ta^d Šamaš(utu) ša it-ta-Si i-na muḥḫi(ugu)^{bi}-ya
ù du-ú-ri siparri(zabar) ša iz-qu-pu a-na ša-a-šu
ù aš-šum idi(á) šarri(lugal) be-li-ya da-na-ti \ \ nu-ub-
ti \ \ ba-ti-i-ti*

Whoever listens to the King, his Lord,
And serves him in his place,
Then Šamaš has gone forth above him,
And the sweet breath returns from the mouth of
his Lord.
And he (who) has not heard the word of the King,
his Lord,
His city is lost, his house is lost,
His name will not be in all the land for eternity.
Behold the servant who listens to his Lord,
His city is well, his house is well,

His name will be for eternity.
You are the sun who goes forth upon me,
And a bronze wall that they erected for him,
And because of the strong arm of the King, my
Lord, I am trusting.

(EA 147:41–56)

Aspects of this poem draw upon distinctive Egyptian phraseology. It is highly likely that Abi-milki has composed a prayer of personal piety of the type known to have Middle Kingdom predecessors and continually used from the Amarna Period through the Ramesside Period.⁴⁴ An excellent parallel to Abi-milki's poem is the previously mentioned stele of Panehesy from el-Amarna.⁴⁵ Panehesy's poem is also addressed to Akhenaten, and uses the motif of the beneficial breath of the pharaoh, the imagery of the presence of the sun through sunlight, and the establishment and maintenance of the official's position due to his loyalty to the pharaoh. These loyalty texts show that there was some continuity of some aspects of Egyptian ideology in the Amarna Period, thus one should not view Atenism as a complete break from the religious philosophy of the New Kingdom.

There is a most unexpected reference in the first poem, and in EA 149:7, to ^dIŠKUR, which the contemporary evidence from Syria-Palestine indicates we should read as Ba'al rather than Hadda.⁴⁶ If the date of these letters is towards the end of the Amarna Period, then the mention of the Semitic storm-god Ba'al is most intriguing. According to our understanding of Atenism, one would not expect a vassal who seems to know as much about Atenism as Abi-milki to draw a comparison between the pharaoh and a deity not only non-solar but foreign. We cannot explain the reference to Ba'al in terms of the god's syncretism with Seth. While this syncretism had been present in Egypt from the Hyksos Period on, it did not reach the height of its popularity until the Ramesside Period,⁴⁷ and of course Seth is absent from official documents during the period of Aten's supremacy. Intriguingly, however, we find references to the pharaoh as ^dIŠKUR in Amarna letters from other cities too.⁴⁸ In light of the absence of Seth and the relatively widespread association of the pharaoh with ^dIŠKUR, we must look for another answer. Drawing on the role of the storm god in Ugarit and Sidon for evidence—in particular, the high frequency of Ba'al and Hadda as the theophoric element of personal names—Schwemer has argued that the references to ^dIŠKUR in the Amarna letters are a reflection of the high rank Ba'al/Hadda held in Levantine pantheons during this period.⁴⁹ Indeed, the primacy of Ba'al/Hadda in the Levant is undeniable. However, further clarification of the reference to Ba'al may be found in columns 9–10 of the Great Hymn to the Aten itself:

*di.n.k ḫ^cpy m pt h3y.f n.sn
irr:f hnw ḫr ḏww mi w3d-wr*

*r <ṭ> ḥb 3ḥwt.sn m dmi.sn
 smnh.wy sy šhrw.k p3 nb nhḥ
 ḥꜥpy m pt <di.k> sw{.k}
 n ḥ3styw n ꜥwt ḥ3st nbt šmwt [hr] rd.wy
 ḥꜥpy iyiy.f m d3t n ḫ-Mri*

That you have set the inundation in the sky,
 Is that it may descend to them,
 He makes waves on mountains like the Great Green,
 In order to irrigate their fields in their cities.
 How effective are they, your plans, O lord of eternity,
 The inundation in the sky, you giving it to foreigners,
 To all foreign cattle, which walk on two legs.
 The inundation came from the Netherworld to Egypt.

This passage makes a crucial point regarding the cosmology of Atenism: the foreign lands receive rain, while Egypt is maintained by the Nile, which comes from the Netherworld (*d3t*).⁵⁰ The idea of connecting the Nile with rain is made elsewhere in Egyptian literature.⁵¹ However, beyond general statements of universalism that may or may not include regions outside of Egypt, we find no explicit reference to foreign lands.⁵² To a non-Egyptian, particularly a Levantine, this section of the Great Hymn might have reminded them of the god Ba'al—especially the statement, “He makes waves on mountains like the Great Green,” which invokes the image of a great storm, a point that Near Eastern artists drew on in their iconography of the storm god.⁵³ The two areas where we find the greatest parallels between this Great Hymn passage and the Levantine Ba'al regard divine responsibility for rain and fertility. The Ba'al Cycle from Ugarit presents Ba'al, like the Aten, as functioning in both roles:

*bṭ.laliyn.bꜥl
 bṭ.lrkḫ.ꜥrpt*

Scatter, O Mighty Ba'al
 Scatter, O Cloud-rider⁵⁴

*yptḥ/bꜥl.bdqt.ꜥrpt/
 qlḫ.qdš.bꜥl.ytn
 yṭny.bꜥl.šat.špth/
 qlḫ.qdš.tr.arš*

Ba'al opens a break in the clouds,
 Ba'al gives vent to his holy voice,
 Ba'al recites the issue of his lips
 His holy voice, the earth shakes⁵⁵

*šmm.šmn.tmtm/
 nhlm.tlk.nbtm
 wiāꜥ.kḥy.aliyn.bꜥl/
 kiṭ.zbl.bꜥl.arš*

Let the heavens rain oil,
 The wadis run with honey,
 Then I will know that Mightiest Ba'al lives,
 The Prince, Lord of the Earth, is alive⁵⁶

The Hebrew Bible also connects Ba'al with rain. The account of Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Ba'al at Mt. Carmel in 1 Kings 18:41–42 states that after the victory of Elijah, YHWH sent down rain; this has been interpreted as a direct reference to the Hebrews' understanding of Ba'al's central function.⁵⁷ Thus, one may infer that the image of Ba'al as a rain god and creator of fertility is similar to the description of the Aten in columns 9–10 of the Great Hymn.

To note this similarity between the Great Hymn and the Canaanite portrayal of Ba'al is by no means to imply that Abi-milki was setting the Canaanite Ba'al alongside the Aten in equal status. One expects that Abi-milki would have understood this to have been contrary to the religious milieu. Rather, this is a Canaanite-orientated interpretation of columns 9–10 of the Great Hymn. That is, having seen aspects of other deities merged with the concept of the Aten—such as the north wind and Amun and Osiris' respective epithets “king of the gods” and “lord of eternity”—perhaps Abi-milki understood the rain and the subsequent fertility to be the Aten's appropriation of Ba'al's traditional functions. The key point is the use of the Akkadian particle *kima*: Abi-milki does not say Pharaoh *is* Ba'al, but that he is *like* Ba'al. Therefore, it is only Ba'al's attributes that the Aten had adopted. If we are correct, this is further evidence that Abi-milki was not an Egyptian but a Canaanite, albeit one whose knowledge of Egyptian culture was exceptional among vassal governors.

THE TYRIAN LETTERS AND THE EGYPTIAN ADMINISTRATION

What was the purpose of Abi-milki's references to the Great Hymn and other Egyptianisms? Is there a connection between the use of Egyptianisms and the presence of Canaanite words and West Semitic grammatical forms? We suggest there was a definite purpose for the Egyptianisms that can be read in connection with the Canaanite linguistic traits present in the corpus.

Some studies of the Amarna letters have suggested the vassals had difficulty obtaining approval of their requests from Egypt, and that the West Semitic elements found in the letters were an attempt by the vassals to find particular favor with the Canaanites working in the Egyptian administration, making the West Semiticisms a kind of cultural identifier.⁵⁸ In a recent study of the Amarna letters, Hanadah Tarawneh has convincingly advanced the thesis that the Egyptian vassals were concerned with the corruption of Egyptian officials.⁵⁹ Of particular interest to the current discussion is Tarawneh's evaluation of the Abi-milki correspondence; she argues that the use

of Egyptianisms would have strengthened Abi-milki's chances of obtaining the pharaoh's approval.⁶⁰ It is possible that the Tyrian correspondence reflects a more complex situation. The evidence suggests a two-stage process in the administration of vassals' letters, the first of which seems to involve passing through an administrative body such as a foreign office. This is evidenced by one of Abdi-Ḥēba's postscripts, which reads:

a-na tuṣṣarri(dub.sar) ṣarri(lugal)^{ri} bēli(en)-ia
qi-bi-ma um-ma^m Abdi(ṣr)-Ḥe-ba ardi(ṣr)-ka-ma
a-na šina(2) šēpē(ḡr) am-qut-mi arad(ṣr)-ka a-nu-ki
še-ri-ib a-wa-tū^{meš} ba-na-ta
a-na ṣarri(lugal)^{ri} bēli(en)-ia
^{lu}ú-e-eḥ ṣarri(lugal)^{ri} a-nu-ki
ma-at-ti a-na ka-ta₅ (!)

To the scribe of the king, my lord,
 speak, thus (says) Abdi-Ḥēba, your servant.
 I fall at your feet. Your servant, am I.
 Present eloquent words
 to the king, my lord:
 A soldier of the king, am I.
 I am always yours.

(EA 287:64–70)⁶¹

These postscripts can thus be read as attempts to construct some sort of relationship between the Jerusalem court and the Egyptian administration. EA 316 from Pu-ba'lu of Yurši further illustrates this purpose:⁶² its postscript is again directed to an Egyptian scribe, here explaining why a caravan of goods has not arrived with the letter. The intention in such postscripts is clear: the writer is attempting to find favor with the Egyptian officialdom. A short study by Oppenheim of the postscripts in letters from the Mari, Amarna, and Neo-Assyrian archives found similar results. In each case, Oppenheim demonstrated that the writer was endeavoring to impress the scribe and thereby expedite his request.⁶³ In light of this evidence, we suggest that Abi-milki was crafty in his approach to the Egyptian court and administration. We postulate (1) that the West Semitic linguistic aspects were placed in the letter to draw the attention of the Canaanites in the Egyptian administration at the first stage of the administrative process and (2) that the Egyptianisms were included to win the favor of the pharaoh.

There is, of course, the question regarding the language in which the letters were ultimately communicated to the pharaoh. One suspects that it was Egyptian, but if so, how then were the Egyptianisms distinguished? A possible scenario is that the Egyptian idioms—and, in particular, the Egyptian words—would have been noted by the official when reading the tablet to the pharaoh. Noteworthy is Eva von Dassow's thesis that the lingua franca of the Syro-Palestinian region might have been

Canaanite, not Akkadian.⁶⁴ If this were the case, the Egyptianisms would still stand out to the reader of the message. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that all the verbal forms in the poems adhere to Akkadian rather than West Semitic morphology.⁶⁵ Are we to assume, then, that Abi-milki is making reference to an Akkadian proclamation of the Great Hymn communicated to the vassals? If not, then at the very least this shows that Abi-milki (or his scribes) had competence in Middle Babylonian Akkadian, which suggests the use of West Semitic in his correspondence had a particular intent.

Abi-milki was not the only vassal to make special administrative or cultural appeals. As discussed above, Abdi-Ḥēba, who also had firsthand knowledge of Egyptian administration, used postscripts addressed directly to the relevant officials. Of great significance, however, is the fact that the West Semitic elements of the letters appear only in the postscripts.⁶⁶ Rib-Addi of Byblos, the most (in)famous of the Canaanite vassals, known for extraordinary letters that convey continual frustration with the Egyptian court and administration, often placed in his opening address a blessing for the pharaoh from the Lady of Byblos. The Lady of Byblos is understood to be the Egyptian goddess Hathor.⁶⁷ We suggest that Rib-Addi, like Abi-milki, was attempting to forge a cultural bond by drawing attention to a connection his city had with Egypt. Indeed, Rib-Addi was keen to inform Pharaoh that Egypt and Byblos had a longstanding relationship: "Previously, money and everything for their provisions were sent from the palace to my ancestors."⁶⁸ Rib-Addi's claims find currency in the literary texts of "The Report of Wenamun" and "The Story of Sinuhe."⁶⁹ In the former, Byblos is seen to be economically dependent on Egypt, while in the latter, Syria-Palestine is widely inhabited by migrant and merchant Egyptians.

Thus, by viewing the Tyrian Amarna letters in their historical context, it is possible to interpret their linguistic features. Abi-milki wrote his letters in a shrewd manner, using West Semitic and Egyptian elements in order both to attract the attention of Canaanite officials in the Egyptian administration and to delight the pharaoh. Whether Abi-milki succeeded⁷⁰ is difficult to determine. If we may judge from the conclusions drawn by modern scholarship, his subtlety might well have been effective.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has examined the Tyrian Amarna letters in the hope of shedding new light on the different linguistic features contained therein and on the culture(s) to which they were addressed. We have interpreted these linguistic features in pragmatic terms, and our findings are in accord with the content of the letters and the context in which the various linguistic/cultural traits appear. The Egyptianisms are particularly important for the study of Atenism because they provide much-wanted sources regarding contemporary religious thought in Egypt.

NOTES

1. This paper is based on the research from my Master of Arts thesis, which was submitted to the Department of Ancient History at Macquarie University, Sydney in 2007. I would like to offer a special thanks to Associate Professor Boyo G. Ockinga and Dr. Noel K. Weeks, who supervised the thesis and provided much criticism and support throughout the period of study. Any remaining errors are, of course, my own.
2. All translations of the texts in this article are my own. Previous editions can be found in cuneiform copy in Otto Schroeder (ed.), *Die Tontafeln von El-Amarna* (Vorderasiatische Schrift-denkmäler der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin 11–12; Osnabruck: Otto Zeller Verlag, 1915); and Carl Bezold and E. A. Wallis Budge (eds.), *The El-Amarna tablets in the British Museum with Autotype Facsimiles* (London: Oxford University Press, 1892); in transcription and transliteration in J. A. Knudtzon (ed.), *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln mit Einleitung und Erläuterungen I* (Aalen: Otto Zeller Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1915); Anson F. Rainey, *El Amarna Tablets 359–379: Supplement to J. A. Knudtzon, Die El-Amarna-Tafeln (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 8; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzon und Kevelaer, 1970)*; and in translation in W. L. Moran (ed.), *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).
3. W. F. Albright, “The Egyptian Correspondence of Abimilki Prince of Tyre,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 23 (1937): 190–203, esp. 196–203. See also the follow-up note by Chris Eyre, “An Egyptianism in the Amarna Letters?” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 62 (1976): 183–184.
4. Stanley Gevirtz, “On Canaanite Rhetoric: The Evidence of the Amarna Letters from Tyre,” *Orientalia* 42 (1973), 162–177.
5. Cecilia Grave, “The Etymology of Northwest Semitic *šapānu*,” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 12 (1980): 221–229; “On the Use of an Egyptian Idiom in an Amarna Letter from Tyre and in a Hymn to the Aten,” *Oriens Antiquus* 19 (1980): 205–218; and “Northwest Semitic *šapānu* in a Break-Up of an Egyptian Stereotype Phrase in EA 147,” *Orientalia* 51 (1982): 161–182. In her articles, Grave stated that she was a Ph.D. candidate at Université de Lund. It is unclear whether or not Grave completed her doctoral thesis, “Studies on the El Amarna Letters from Tyre.” I have not found a record of it on Université de Lund’s electronic library catalog, and the major Amarna bibliography does not confirm its submission; see J.-G. Heintz, *Index Documentaire d’El-Amarna 2: Bibliographie des textes babylonien d’El-Amarna [1888 à 1993] et Concordance des sigles EA* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1995), 59.
6. 148:18–22; 149:9–16; 153:16–18; and 155:47–51.
7. EA 89:20–21. See also W. F. Albright and William L. Moran, “Rib-Adda and the Affairs of Tyre (EA 89),” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 4 (1950): 163–164.
8. For example Frederick J. Giles, *The Amarna Age: Western Asia* (Australian Centre for Egyptology Studies 5; Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1997), 201.
9. EA 146:2; 147:2; 148:2; 149:2; 150:2; 151:2; 152:2, 55; 153:2; 154:2; and 155:2.
10. EA 150:2; 152:2; 154:2; and 155:2.
11. Richard S. Hess, *Amarna Personal Names* (American Schools of Oriental Research Dissertation Series 9; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993), 18–19.
12. See Hess 1993, 19.
13. EA 286:9–15.
14. I. J. Gelb, P. M. Purves and A. A. MacRae, *Nuzi Personal Names* (Oriental Institute Publications 57; Chicago, 1943), 215–216.
15. For example see the inscriptions of Panehsy and May in W. J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt* (Writings from the Ancient World 5; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 55 and 144–145. For the parallel uses of this genre in the Middle Kingdom and later in the Ramesside Period, see Jan Assmann, “Die ‘Loyalistische Lehre’ Echnatons,” *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 8 (1980), 1–32; Boyo G. Ockinga, “Zum Fortleben des ‘Amarna-Loyalismus’ in der Ramessidenzeit,” *Die Welt des Orients* 14 (1983): 207–215; and Boyo G. Ockinga, “Amarna Kingship,” *Ancient Society* 15 (1985): 10–15.
16. For a description of these officials, see Giles 1997, 242–244, 251–252; and Murnane 1995, p. 53.
17. See John Baines and Jaromir Malek, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1984), 176; Manfred Bietak, “Canaanites in the Eastern Nile Delta,” in Anson F. Rainey (ed.), *Egypt, Israel, Sinai: Archaeological and Historical Relationships in the Biblical Period* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1987), 43–50; Barry J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* (London: Routledge, 1989), 156–157; D. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 100–103; and Luis Robert Siddall, “Was There a Purpose for the Use of West Semitic in the Amarna Letters from Syria-Palestine?” *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 16 (2005): 89–94. There is also debate as to whether or not the Hyksos had a Hurrian background, compare Wolfgang Helck, *Geschichte des alten Ägypten (Handbuch der Orientalistik 1/3; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968)*, 131–133; John Van Seters, *The Hyksos: A New Investigation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); and Noel K. Weeks, “The Old Babylonian Amorites: Nomads or Mercenaries?” *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 16 (1985): 56–57.
18. Bustenay Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Beichert Verlag, 1979), esp. 50–59; and Stephanie Dalley, “Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry in the Armies of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II,” *Iraq* 47 (1985): 31–48.
19. The exception is the Akkadian stative, which uses a suffix conjugation.
20. For an outline of the *qatala* form in Ugaritic and its relationship to Arabic see Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook: Grammar (Analecta Orientalia 38; Rome: Pontificum Institutum Biblicum, 1965)*, §9.7.
21. Anson F. Rainey, *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets I* (HdO 25; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 21.
22. Rainey 1996, I 68 and 70.
23. Rainey 1996, I 70.

24. Arabic and Classical Hebrew use the independent pronouns only in a nominative fashion and mainly in nonverbal sentences. See C. L. Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*, revised ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 92–94; A. S. Tritton, *Arabic* (New York, 1943 [1978 reprint]), 48–49; and S. Moscati, A. Spitaler, E. Ullendorff and W. von Soden, *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology* (Porta Linguarum Orientalium Neue Serie 6; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1969), 102–106. For the Ugaritic *Casus Obliquus*, see Gordon 1965, §6.4.
25. Rainey 1996, I 145.
26. Wolfram von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965–1981), 1413; Rainey 1996, III 135.
27. Albright 1937, 198, n. 4; Jan Assmann, *Liturgische Leier an den Sonnengott: Untersuchungen zur altägyptischen Hymnik I* (*Münchener Ägyptologische Studien* 19; Berlin: B. Hessling, 1969), 119, n. 22.
28. Rainey 1996, III 135–136. Albright (1937: 198, n. 4) also considered the possibility of it being a Canaanite form before electing for an Egyptian reading.
29. Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Poetry of Ancient Egypt* (Documenta Mundi, Aegyptiaca 1; Jonsared: P. Aströms, 1999), xiii–xiv.
30. H. M. Stewart, “Traditional Sun Hymns of the New Kingdom,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology, the University of London* 6 (1966), 40.
31. Lam. 5:4, Eccl. 2:6, Josh. 9:21, KRT 214–217, and the document in *Syria* 32 (1956) col.ii:12–18, see Gevirtz 1973, 166–167.
32. Grave 1982, 177–178.
33. Shlomo Izre’el, “The Amarna Glosses: Who Wrote What for Whom? Some Sociolinguistic Considerations,” in *Language and Culture in the Near East*, S. Izre’el and R. Drory (eds.) (Israel Oriental Studies 15; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 104–105.
34. See Nadav Na’aman, “Praises to the Pharaoh in Response to His Plans for a Campaign to Canaan,” in T. Abusch, J. Huehnergard and P. Steinkeller (eds.), *Lingering over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 402, n. 25.
35. See R. Hari, *New Kingdom Amarna Period: The Great Hymn to Aten* (Iconography of Religions 6; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 8–14; and Rolf Krauss, “Akhenaten: Monotheist? Polytheist?” *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 11 (2000): 93–101. Cf. Jan Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 198–201; and Jan Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Times of the Pharaohs* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 216–218. For an important criticism of Amarna studies, see Samuel Jackson, “The ‘Wicked Priest’ in Egyptology and Amarna Studies: A Reconsideration,” *Antiquo Oriente* 6 (2008): 181–208.
36. Col. 1, see in N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna Part VI.—Tombs of Parennefer, Tutu, and Aj* (Archaeological Survey of Egypt Eighteenth Memoir; London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1908), pl. 27.
37. Albright 1937: 191–196; E. F. Campbell, *The Chronology of the Amarna Letters with Special Reference to the Hypothetical Coregency of Amenophis III and Akhenaten* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964), 70–72; and Giles 1997, 204.
38. On the reading of Merytaten’s name, Albright has convincingly argued that *Ma-ya-ti* is a hypocoristic form of Merytaten. See Albright 1937: 191; “Review of G. Steindorff and K. C. Seele, ‘When Egypt Ruled the East,’” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 61 (1942): 304; and “Cuneiform Material for Egyptian Prosopography: 1500–1200 B.C.,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 5 (1946): 16. On the mentioned rulers and their chronological relevance to the Tyrian letters see, Campbell 1964, 70–72; and Giles 1997, 201–213.
39. Gevirtz 1973: 165–166.
40. R. J. Williams, “Some Egyptianisms in the Old Testament,” *Studies in Honor of John A. Wilson, September 12, 1969* (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations 55; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 93–94.
41. EA 146:7; 147:9, 23–24, 34; 149:23; 155:9.
42. For an overview of the new solar theology, see Assmann 2001, 201–207; and 2002, 212–213.
43. Albright 1937: 198–199.
44. See Assmann 1980: 1–32; Ockinga 1983: 207–215; and 1985: 10–15.
45. See n. 15.
46. Daniel Schwemer, “The Storm-Gods of the Ancient Near East: Summary, Synthesis, Recent Studies. Part II,” *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 8 (2008): 8–9.
47. Rainer Stadelmann, *Syrisch-Palästinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten* (Problem der Ägyptologie 5; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 32–47; Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal: Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I (c. 1500–1000 B.C.E.)* (*Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 140; Fribourg, Göttingen University Press, 1994), esp. 242; Daniel Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen: Materialien und Studien nach den schriftlichen Quellen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001), 453; and A. R. W. Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 172.
48. Qatna (EA 52:4), Byblos (EA 108:8–10), and Amurru (EA 159:7). See Schwemer 2001, 306–307, nn. 4125–4126.
49. Schwemer 2001, 506–510.
50. Assmann 2001, 219.
51. Jan Assmann, *Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete: Eingeleitet, Übersetzt und Erläutert* (Zürich: Artemis Verlag, 1975), nos. 127B:45–46; 143:46, 100–109, 165; 144C:39; 195:166; 214:9–32; and 242:7–8. See also Assmann 2001, 456, n. 30 for literature.
52. For example, Assmann 1975, no. 143:100–109.
53. For a summary of the imagery of the storm god, see Schwemer 2008: 31–36.
54. 8.IV:28–29 in S. B. Parker (ed.), *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (Writings from the Ancient World 9; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 104.
55. 10 VII:27–31 in Parker 1997, 136.
56. 12 III:6–9, in Parker 1997, 157.
57. For example, Green 2003, 276.
58. Siddall 2005: 85–99; and Luis Robert Siddall, “A Geographical Analysis of the Injunctive in the Amarna Letters from Syria-

- Palastine and its Relevance for Egyptian Imperialism," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 1(4): 9–10.
59. Hanadah Tarawneh, "The Amarna Dialogue," M.A. dissertation, the University of Sydney, Sydney, 2005.
60. Tarawneh 2005, 54–56; also Siddall 2005: 93.
61. I have followed Moran's (1992, 328 and 330, n. 20 and literature cited there) translation of the problematic last line. The meaning of *matti* is unclear. Since the verb is written with an /a/ vowel, I favour the reading cognate to Hebrew *m'od* over Rainey's (1996, II, 364) *māwet*.
62. EA 316:6–25.
63. A. L. Oppenheim, "A Note on the Scribes in Mesopotamia," in H. G. Güterbock and T. Jacobsen (eds.), *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday April 21, 1965* (*Assyriological Studies* 16; Chicago, 1965), 253–256.
64. Eva von Dassow, "Canaanite in Cuneiform," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124 (2004): 641–674.
65. It should be noted that the Tyrian scribe did conform to the Canaanite practice of using G-stem verbal forms with a D-stem meaning. An example is the use of *balātu* in EA 147:9, see Rainey 1996 II, 135–136.
66. See EA 286:61–64; 287:64–70; 289:47–51.
67. See, most recently, Susan Tower Hollis, "Hathor and Isis in Byblos in the Second and First Millennia BCE," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 1:2 (2009): 3.
68. EA 126:14–23.
69. See the translations by Miriam Lichtheim in W. W. Hallo and L. K. Younger, Jr. (eds.), *The Context of Scripture. Volume 1: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 77–82, 89–93.
70. See Tarawneh 2005, 54–55.
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APPENDIX: THE WEST SEMITIC VERBAL FORMS IN THE TYRIAN AMARNA LETTERS

The following table contains only those verbal forms that are clearly West Semitic. Though it is possible some other forms could have been included, we have elected not to include ambiguous forms.

Verb	Translation	Form	Conjugation	Attestation (EA)
<i>aḥāzu</i>	to seize	<i>su-ḥi-iz-ti</i>	1.c.s. suffix conjugation (Š)	153:9
<i>alāku</i>	to go/walk	<i>i-la-ak</i>	1.c.s. prefix conjugation	155:72
		<i>a-li-ik</i>	3.m.s. perfect	155:69
		<i>[a]-la-ak</i>	3.m.s. perfect	155:68
<i>amāru</i>	to see	<i>i-mur</i>	1.c.s. prefix conjugation	147:69
<i>balāṭu</i>	to live	<i>i-ba-al-[lī]-iṭ</i>	1.c.s. prefix conjugation	152:53
<i>baṭū</i>	to trust	<i>ba-ṭi-i-ti</i>	1.c.s. suffix conjugation	147:56
<i>dāku</i>	to kill	<i>da-ká-at-šū-nu</i>	3.f.s. suffix conjugation	149:65
		<i>da-a-ka</i>	3.m.s. suffix (Arabic/ Ugaritic form)	154:19
<i>erēbu</i>	to enter	<i>i-ra-ab</i>	1.c.s. prefix conjugation	150:11
		<i>i-ra-bu</i>	1.c.s. prefix conjugation	151:13
<i>ešēru</i>	to go well	<i>ti-ši-ir</i>	3.f.s. prefix preterite	147:29
<i>ezēbu</i>	to abandon	<i>i-te-zi-ib</i>	3.m.s. jussive	151:35
<i>ḥadū</i>	to be joyful	<i>ḥa-ad-ia-ti</i>	1.c.s. suffix conjugation	147:27
<i>idū</i>	to know	<i>i-de</i>	1.c.s. prefix conjugation	152:53
<i>izuzzu</i>	to stand	<i>i-zi-za-t[i]</i>	1.c.s. suffix conjugation	152:52
<i>kašādu</i>	to arrive	<i>ka-aš-da-at</i>	3.f.s. suffix conjugation	149:64
<i>kānu</i>	to establish	<i>[y]a-k[u<-un>?]</i>	3.m.s. prefix conjugation	154:7
		<i>ku-na</i>	imperative	147:36
<i>le'ū</i>	to be able	<i>i-lí-e</i>	1.c.s. prefix conjugation	151:10
<i>nadānu</i>	to give	<i>na-da-an</i>	3.m.s. suffix conjugation	150:4–5
		<i>it-ta-din</i>	1.c.s. prefix conjugation	151:32
		<i>id-din</i>	3.m.s. jussive	155:27
<i>našāru</i>	to guard	<i>i-š[ur]</i>	1.c.s. prefix preterite	146:9
<i>qālu</i>	to be silent	<i>la-a i-qu-ul</i>	3.m.s. jussive (negated)	149:40–41
<i>šabātu</i>	to seize	<i>ša-ab-tu-ni₇</i>	3.m.pl. suffix conjugation + ventive	149:67
<i>šakānu</i>	to place, set	<i>ša-ak-na-ta-ni</i>	2.m.s. suffix conjugation + ventive	149:47
		<i>ni-iš-kán</i>	3.c.pl. jussive	149:52
<i>šapāru</i>	to write/send	<i>iš-pu-ur</i>	1.c.s. prefix conjugation	147:70
<i>šarru</i>	to rule	<i>ša-ar-ra</i>	3.m.s. suffix (Arabic/ Ugaritic form)	151:53
<i>wašāru</i>	to send (D)	<i>uš-še-er-ti</i>	1.c.s. suffix conjugation (D)	151:26