

Big Dreams and Broken Promises: Solomon's Treaty with Hiram in Its International Context

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Opinions remain divided over whether the Hebrew term bĕrît in 1 Kgs 5:12 refers to a preexilic idea rooted in Israel's past or a postexilic idea reformulating Israel's past. Both positions harbor elements of truth, yet the repeated occurrence of the words kittu ("treaty"), rahâmu ("love"), ahhûtu ("brotherhood"), māmîtu ("oath-treaty"), and epēšu šulmu ("make peace") in the Amarna Letters implies an entire history of covenant-making prior to Solomon's treaty with Hiram. To imagine this relationship as having no history prior to the fifth century B.C. is to deny the witness of history itself, particularly as evidenced in the Amarna texts.

Key Words: covenant, treaty, love, oath, peace, Amarna, 1 Kings

Several years ago at an annual meeting of the SBL, Prof. Frank Moore Cross presented a paper entitled "Reuben, Firstborn of Jacob."¹ Afterward, in the question-and-answer period, the late Prof. Costa Ahlström asked Prof. Cross why he continued to labor under "antiquated" notions like "tribal league" and "premonarchic covenant" in his analysis of Syro-Palestinian history. To this reprimand Cross responded with an off-the-cuff rebuke, politely asking his inquisitor why he so readily accepted every sort of ancient Near Eastern evidence as "historical" except the biblical evidence.

Eleven years later Cross fleshed out this response in a now-famous essay entitled "Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel."² Here he summarily rejected the view of Lothar Perlitt and others that *bĕrît* ("covenant/treaty") might refer only to a late idea originating in the postexilic period, and further, that it might refer only to the

1. Later published as pp. 53-70 in F. M. Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

2. *Ibid.*, 3-22.

"natural obligation" of "inferiors" to "superiors."³ Instead, he restated the thesis that "covenant" is a very old idea rooted in ancient Near Eastern kinship networks. Marshaling a wealth of onomastic, philological, anthropological, and biblical evidence, he argued that covenants and treaties were very old ideas, dependent neither on the desperate fantasies of imaginative exiles nor the romantic individualism of European Protestants. To his earlier vision of Yahweh as Divine Warrior he now added another role for Yahweh—that of Divine Kinsman.⁴ Thus,

the notion of a *bērît* . . . in the era of early Israel without the mutual bonds of kinship-in-law between Yahweh and Israel, and between the tribes of the league, is not merely unlikely; it runs counter to all we have learned of such societies.⁵

Anticipating objection to this thesis, Cross went on to ask why so many contemporary biblical scholars continue to marginalize, ignore, and misinterpret the ANE evidence about covenants and treaties: "In the face of new knowledge from the ancient Near East," he wrote, "the history of religion and law, and advances in social anthropology," the persistence of this point of view

is a testimony not to the soundness of the Wellhausenist synthesis, but to the power and perversity of Paulinist and anti-Judaic dogma, or, in other words, to the survival of stubbornly, often unconsciously held traditions of Christian apologetics in biblical scholarship.⁶

Whether these accusations are plausible or even appropriate is not the focus of the present study. I simply rehearse this debate to remind us that scholarly opinion about "covenant" and "treaty" remains volatile and unstable in much contemporary scholarship, particularly in contemporary *biblical* scholarship. While scholars like Raymond Cohen and Carlo Zaccagnini are independently and industriously fleshing out the anthropological and metaphorical implications of theses like that of Prof. Cross,⁷ the goal of *this* article is much more modest: to reflect on the character and function of the covenant/treaty semantic field in the Solomon-Hiram narrative against its counterpart in the

3. L. Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* (WMANT 36; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969).

4. F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) 91-111; *Epic to Canon*, 6.

5. *Ibid.*, 17.

6. *Ibid.*, 16.

7. R. Cohen, "All In The Family: Ancient Near Eastern Diplomacy," *International Negotiation* 1 (1996) 11-28; C. Zaccagnini, *Lo scambo dei doni del Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV—XVIII* (Rome: Centro per le antichità e la storia dell' arte del Vicino Oriente, 1973) 108-17.

Amarna correspondence.⁸ This I will attempt by addressing two questions: (1) how do the major *Leitwörter* associated with international treaty-making operate and function in a limited sampling of the Amarna correspondence? and (2) how might a study of these *Leitwörter* help us illuminate the character and contours of the *bērît*-treaty concluded between Tyre and Jerusalem as recorded in the biblical book of Kings?

The limitations I bring to this study are several: (1) I am not a seasoned cuneiformist; (2) I have not examined the tablets themselves; and (3) I have not consulted in detail the interpretations of every specialist on every Amarna text, though I am acquainted with the important linguistic work of Cord Kühne, Nadav Na'aman, Ronald Youngblood, Jean Bottéro, Richard Hess, and Anson Rainey (among others).⁹ Like many other students, I simply limit myself to the transliterations and translations of Knudtzon and Moran (who, of course, thoroughly interacts with the specialists just mentioned).¹⁰

The engine driving this study is an increasing frustration with all the old intertextual biblical arguments that claim, on the basis of alleged "stock phrases" and "stock vocabulary," to be able to date the origin and development of sociopolitical institutions such as "treaties" with any sort of intellectual precision.¹¹ While biblical scholars remain divided over whether the Hebrew term *bērît* refers to a pre-exilic idea rooted in Israel's past or a postexilic idea reformulating Israel's past, the Amarna and other texts are making it clear that the

8. For the Egyptian literature, see W Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt* (SBLWAW 5; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995). For the Hittite literature, see G. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (2nd ed.; SBLWAW 7; Atlanta: SBL, 1999). An earlier version of this article was presented to the Biblical Law section of the SBL on Nov 24, 2003, in Atlanta, GA.

9. C. Kühne, *Die Chronologie der internationalen Korrespondenz von El-Amarna* (AOAT 17; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag / Kevalaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1973); N. Na'aman, *The Political Disposition and Historical Developments of Eretz Israel according to the Amarna Letters* (Ph.D. dissertation, Tel Aviv University, 1973) [Hebrew]; R. Youngblood, *The Amarna Correspondence of Rib-Haddi, Prince of Byblos* (Ph.D. dissertation, Dropsie College, 1961); J. Bottéro, *Le problème des Habiru à la 4^e Rencontre assyriologique internationale* (Paris: Imprimerie, 1954); R. Hess, *Amarna Personal Names* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1993); A. Rainey's transliterations in his *El Amarna Tablets 359-379: Supplement to J. A. Knudtzon, Die El-Amarna Tafeln* (AOAT 8; Kevalaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1970) are critically engaged by W. L. Moran (*The Amarna Letters* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992]). I have not consulted Rainey's mammoth *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets: A Linguistic Analysis of the Mixed Dialect used by Scribes from Canaan* (4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1996).

10. J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1915); Moran, *Amarna Letters*.

11. For relatively recent reference to the continuing practice of such methods, see the sources cited in J. Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 187-88.

language of the *bērît*-treaty between Solomon and Hiram (1 Kgs 5:12) stands within a definable network of *Leitwörter* that together make up a recognizable semantic grid.¹² Saul Olyan refers to this grid as "the technical rhetoric of covenanting."¹³ William Moran refers to it as "the terminology of international relations," a grid with its own "juridical vocabulary."¹⁴ Michael Barré calls it a "literary genre,"¹⁵ while Dennis McCarthy refers to it as "the treaty genre."¹⁶ In a recent volume on the Amarna texts, Raymond Westbrook argues for a multiplicity of interconnections between the individual components of this grid and the political realities to which they refer. In this same volume William Murnane questions the existence of actual treaties behind this grid, particularly in the vassal correspondence. Others, however, see this language as intentionally "artificial"—as Samuel Meier puts it, "brothers who constantly must be reminded that they are brothers are not good brothers."¹⁷

Yet however we describe it, define it, or delimit it, most agree that there is a recognizable semantic field orbiting around the concept of treaty-making in the ANE, and further, that its various components are well documented at various sites: Ebla, Bogazköy, Mari, Alalakh,¹⁸ Sefire, Nineveh, Ugarit, and Amarna being among the

12. F. C. Fensham, "The Treaty between Solomon and Hiram and the Alalakh Tablets," *JBL* 79 (1960) 59-60; and "The Treaty between the Israelites and Tyrians," *Congress Volume: Rome, 1968* (VTSup 17; Leiden: Brill, 1969) 71-87. See also John Priest, "The Covenant of Brothers," *JBL* 84 (1965) 400-406.

13. S. Olyan, "Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 115 (1996) 202 n. 2.

14. Moran, *Amarna Letters*, xxiv n. 59; idem, "Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25 (1963) 80.

15. M. Barré, "Treaties in the ANE," *ABD* 6.656. For a prescient discussion of "genre" and "genre criticism," see C. Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) 11-15.

16. D. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant* (2nd ed.; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1978) x.

17. R. Westbrook, "International Law in the Amarna Age," in *Amarna Diplomacy* (ed. R. Cohen and R. Westbrook; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000) 38; W. Murnane, "Imperial Egypt and the Limits of Power," in *Amarna Diplomacy*, 104-5; S. Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," in *Amarna Diplomacy*, 166. Mark Mangano examines the rhetorical peculiarities of the Amarna correspondence in greater detail in his *Rhetorical Content in the Amarna Correspondence from the Levant* (Egypt) (Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, 1990).

18. In the Alalakh tablets, Abban and Iarim-lim argue over whether the city of Alalakh is a fair exchange for the city of Irridi, east of the Euphrates, and at a critical point in the discussion one says to the other, "Can I give Irridi, a smashed place, to my brother?"; (āl) ir-ri-[di KI]-mi-i KI hi-pi-im a-na a-hi-ia a-na-ad-di-in (cited in D. Wiseman, "Abban and Alalah," *JCS* 12 [1950] 124-29).

better known.¹⁹ A sampling of these *Leitwörter* might include the following:²⁰

<i>adê</i>	ABL 539:21 <i>a-di-e . . . tu-še-pi-šu-šú-nu-tu</i> , "You made them . . . take the oath (of loyalty)"
<i>ahhûtu</i>	EA 11 rev. 22 [<i>i-na</i>] <i>šarrani ah-hu-tum ta-bu-tum sa-li-mu ù a-ma-tum [ba-ni-tum]</i> , "Among the kings there are brotherhood, amity, peace, and [good] relations"; see also EA 4.15, 17 EA 29.166 [<i>ah-i-ia</i>] <i>el a-bi-šu ra-'a-mu-ta[ù] a[h-u-u]t-ta I0-šu li-te-it-te-ir-an-ni</i> , "May [my brother] treat me with ten times greater love and brotherliness than his father did"
<i>ahû</i>	EA 29.65-67 <i>na[p-]hu-u-ri-[i]a-ma ah-i-ia i-na libbi^{bi}-ni ša ni-ra-'a-a -mu [am-mi-tum i-na-an-na e]l ni-im-mu-[u-]ri-ia a-bi-i-šu [I]0-šu</i> , "Naphureya is my brother. That we love, that is in our hearts. It is going to be ten times greater than what there was with Nimmureya, his father."
<i>ardu</i>	EA 55.4-5 <i>be-Ií i-na aš-ri an-ni-im a-na-ku šu-ú-tú^{amêlu} ardu-ka</i> , "My lord, I am your servant in this place"
<i>ardûtu</i>	EA 162.39 <i>ù e-pu-uš ardu-da a-na šarri bêli-ka ù bal-ta-da</i> , "So perform service for your lord the king and you will live"
<i>atterûtu</i>	EA 20.8-9 <i>ma-ni-e amêl šipri-šu ša ahi-ia it-ta-[I]a-ka a-[n]a at-te-ru-ti a-na-aššati-šu ša ah-i-ia</i> , "In view of friendly relations, Mane, my brother's messenger, came to take my brother's wife." • Moran: "friendly relations"

19. Whether such common Heb. terms as אָדֶּ and אָהֶב are to be included in this semantic field is determinable only by context (which, of course, means that whether or not they are technical treaty-making terms will always be disputable). For a discussion, see H. Huffmon, "The Treaty Background of Hebrew *yāda'*," *BASOR* 181 (1966) 31-37; Moran, "Love of God," 77-87; and M. Weinfeld, "אָהֶב אֱלֹהִים," *TDOT* 2.266-69.

20. Olyan ("Honor," 202) suggests that a "covenant context" may include "the presence of love/hate terminology, curse/blessing, the rhetoric of brotherhood, friendship, goodness, or some combination of these," but the criteria for the present list is considerably less comprehensive. One does not see, nor should one expect to see, curse/blessing formulas in the Amarna Letters; at most one finds only vague allusions to such formulas because of the epistolary character of this correspondence.

- Knudtzon translates as a temporal adverb (*abermals*)
 - CAD calls *atterūtu* a "foreign word" (CAD A/2 511)
- EA 41.9 [i]-na bi-r[i-]ni at-te-ru-ut-[t]a ni-ip-pu-[u]š-mi, "let us make friendly relations with each other"
- KUB 3 72:7 undu abuka u anāku atterūta ni-pu-šu u ana *ahhē tābūti nitūru*, "when your father and I established good relations and became good brothers . . ."
- KBo I 5 iii 6 *Hatti u Kizzuwatna lu šummuhu atterūtu ina birīšunu lu i-teni-ip-pu-šu*, "Hatti and Kizzuwatna are united; friendly relations have been established between them."
- CAD claims that the word appears passim in Bogazköy texts (CAD E 204).
- izirtu* EA 89.17-18 *a-na-ku-me ip-ša-ti i-zir-t[a] a-n[a]* ^{alu}*sur-ri*, "I have brought security to Tyre"; lit., "made help for Tyre"
- Moran: "I made connubium with Tyre"
 - Knudtzon: "Ich habe Tyrus Hilfe verschafft"
- kittu* EA 34.42 *ù lu-[ú en-ni]-pu-uš ki-it-tu i-na bi-[ri-]ku-ni*, "So let us make an alliance between us"
- EA 83.25 *i-pu-ša a-na-ku ki-ta it-ti abdi-a-ši-ir-ta . . . bal-ta-ti ša-ni-tu*, "Send back word to me or I will make an alliance with Abdi-Aširta . . . and stay alive"
- EA 105.20-21 ^{isa}*elippē-šu-nu a-ša ki-ma ki-ta iš-tu* ^{mātu}*mi-iš-ri*, "their ships, by an agreement, left Egypt"
- EA 125.39 *a-na ma-ni i-pu-šu ki-ta*, "Why should I make an alliance?"
- EA 132.33-34 *at-ta ki-ta it-[ti] abdi-a-ši-it-ta*, "If you make an alliance with Abdi-Aširta ."
- EA 138.53 *ù ni-pu[-uš ki]-tu* ". . . and we ma[de an alliance]"
- EA 252.10 (*ki-it-me ša li-me u ki-it-me it-[t]a-me*, "Is the alliance at peace or is the alliance destroyed?"
- Knudtzon: "Ist der Treue unversehrt oder ist der Treue zerstört worden?"
 - Moran: "When I had sworn my peace—and when I swore, the magnate swore with me—the city, along with my god, was seized"

- RS 17.123:6 *inanna iš-ku-nu ki-it-ta ina berišunu*, "Inanna made a treaty with the hungry among them"
- RS 17.123:7 *iškunu kitta ina berišunu ki-i-ma da-ri-i-ti*, "They established a treaty between them as of old"
- mamîtu* EA 67.13 *e-to-pu-uš [m]a-mi-ta [it-]ti amêli [š]a^{alu}ku-ub-li^{ki} ù it-ti a[mêli] š[a^{alu} _ _] [ù] gab-bu^{amêlûu}hal-zu-uh-lu-ši mati-ka [u^d] it-ti-šu itîbu-nim*, "He made a [tr]eaty [wi]th the ruler of Gubla and with the miler of . . . and] all the fortress commanders of your land . . . [. .] became friendly with him"
- EA 148.37 *i-pu-uš nu-kur-tum la-a it-te-ir ma-mi-ta*, "He has created hostility. Has he not broken the oath-treaty?"
- KBo 1 24 rev. 9' *šitirtu ša māmîti ša šarru rabû . . . i-pu-ša-an-ni*, ". . . the text of the oath-treaty which the great king has made"; see also KBo 1 23:3ff.
- paršu* KBo 1 7:24 *paršû ša dārîti ša^dUD u^dIM i-pu-šu*, "It is an eternal order [lit., 'order which is of old'] established by the sun god [of Egypt] and the storm god [of Hatti]"; CAD D 114: "treaty, written in Egypt."
- qîštu* EA 29.83 *qi-i-ša-a-ti^{mes} ša ahi-ia-u[l]-te-e-bi-la-am-ma*, "the (peace-)gifts which my brother sent to me"
- EA 100.33 *ia-di-na qîšta a-na ar-di-šu ù ti-da-ga-lu^{amêlûu}a-ia-bu-nu ù ti-ka-lu ipra*, "May he grant a (peace-)gift to his servant(s) so our enemies will see (this) and eat dirt."
- ra'âmu (rahâmu)*
- EA 53.41 *be-lî ki-i-me-e a-na-ku a-na šarri be-lî-i[a] a-ra-ah-am ù ki-ia-am šar^{mâtu}nu-ha-aš-še*, "My lord, just as I love the king, my lord, so too the king of Nuhasse [etc] "
- EA 114.68 *[m]i-ia i-ra-mu ù a-mu-[t]a*, "Who will be loyal [lit., "love"] if I die?"
- EA 123.23 *[šum-]ma i-ra-am šarr[u^{ru} bēl]i^{li} arad ki-t[i-šu ù] uš-ši-ra [3]^d amêla ù ib-lu-ta*, "[I]f the ki[ng], my [lor]d, loves [his] loya[1] servant, [then] send (back) the [3] men that I may live"; see also EA 121.61
- EA 158.36 *š[u]m[-m]a šar[ru bē]l[-i-i]a la i-ra-am-an-ni u i-ši-i-ra-a[n]-[ni] ù a-na-ku mi-na-am l[u-ù] ak-[b]i*, "[I]f the king, my lord, does not love me and rejects me, then what a[m] I to s[a]y?"

- riksu* EA 51 rev. 4-6 *be-li tuppā^{pa}-te^{meš} ù ri-ik-[sa-te . .] ù a-na ša šar^{mātu} mi-iš-ri*, "My lord, [I have rejected] the (offer of) tr[eaty]-tablets, and [am (still) a servant of] the king of Egypt" (cf. *AHw* 984-85 for numerous references from Alalakh, Bogazköy, and Ugarit); cf. *rikiltu* in other ANE texts
- šalāmu* EA 90.27-28 *ka-li^{amēlitū} [tu] bēl alāni* *šal-mu a-na abdi-a-[ši-ir-ta]*
 • Moran: "all the [*mayors*] are at peace with 'Abdi-A[širta]," restoring *ha-za-nu* for Knudtson's suggested *bēl alāni* ("lords of the cities"); Knudtson: "alle [*Stadtherren*] sind einig mit Abdi-a[širta]"
- EA 114.14 *gab-bu i-na^{mātu} a-mur-ri šal-mu-šu-nu*, "Everyone in the land of Amurru is at peace with them"
 • Knudtson: "Alle in Amurri sind mit ihnen einig"
- EA 126.10-11 *gab-bi^{amēlitū} ha-za-nu-tum šal-mu-šu*, "All the mayors are at peace with him"
 • Knudtson: "alle Regenten mit ihm einig sind"
- EA 136.11-13 *a-li-ik-mi arki mar-abdi-a-ši-ir-ta ù ni-pu-uš šal-ma bi-ri-nu*, "Ally yourself with the son of 'Abdi-aširta so we can make peace between us"
 • Knudtson: "Gehe hinter dem Sohn Abdi-Aširtas her, und lasset uns untereinander Frieden stiften"
- EA 280.13 *ip-pu-uš-ti nu-kur-te šal-ma-at a-na ia-ti-ia šu-terat ali^{ki}-ia*, "The king, my lord, permitted me to wage war against Qeltu. I waged war. It is now at peace with me. My city is restored to me."
- šitirtu* KBo 1 23:1 *mi-hi-ir šitirti ša DN e-pu-šu ina birīt Mišri u ina birīt Hatti*, "copy of the treaty (lit., "inscription") made by the god Tešup between Egypt and Hatti" (*CAD E* 221)
- KBo 1 23:3ff. *ši-te₄-er-du ša māmīti ša šarru rabû ... īpušanni*, "the sworn written agreement which the great king made" (*CAD /3* 144)
- šulmanu* EA 9.6-18 "From the time my ancestors and your ancestors made (lit., 'spoke,' *dabābu*) a mutual declaration of friendship (*ta-bu-ta*), they sent beautiful greeting-gifts (*šu-ul-ma-na ba-na-a*) to each other and refused no request for anything beautiful. My brother has now sent me 2 minas of gold as my greeting-gift. Now, if gold is plentiful, send me as much as your ancestors (sent).

Why have you sent me 2 minas of gold? At the moment, my work on a temple (*bît ili*) is extensive, and I am quite busy with carrying it out. Send me much gold. And you, for your part, whatever you want from my country, write me so that it may be taken to you."

<i>šulmu</i>	RS 17.286:12 <i>šulma ittišunuma lu i-pa-aš</i> , "let me make peace with them" (<i>CAD</i> E 221) KBo 1 7:26 <i>ana e-bi-ši šulmi adi ūmi anni</i> , "to keep the peace until this day" (<i>CAD</i> E 221)
<i>tappûtu</i>	PN <i>u</i> PN ₂ <i>ša ina GN tappûtam i-pu-šu</i> , "PN and PN ₂ , who entered into a partnership in Isin" (<i>CAD</i> E 222) PN <i>u</i> PN ₂ <i>tappûtam i-pu-šu</i> , "PN and PN ₂ entered into a partnership" (<i>CAD</i> E 222)
<i>tābûtu</i>	EA 4.15, 17 ("friendship") // <i>ahhutum</i> EA 11 rev. 22 ("friendship") // <i>ahhutum, salimu</i> EA 136.27-29 <i>a-na-ku i-pu-ma-am tâbûta \Tu.Ka\ it-ti-šu ša am-mu-ni-ra ù al-ka-ti biti-šu as-sum e-pu-uš tâbûti biri(!)</i> , "'Come, I must make an alliance of friendship with Ammunira.' So I went to his house in order to make an alliance of friendship between {us}''
<i>temu</i>	KBo 1 24:10 <i>tema SIG₅ ša šarra raba ša Mišri i-pu-šu ittiša [Hatti]</i> , "the good relations which the great king, the king of Egypt, established with the king of Hatti"; cf. also KUB 3 65:9; KBo 1 7:12
<i>tuppu</i>	KBo 1 6:4 (and <i>passim</i> in Bogazköy documents) <i>tuppa ša rikilti ana RN . . . abua . . . e-pu-ša-aš-šu</i> , "my father drew up a treaty-tablet for RN"

Four of the most common components in this grid are: "love;" "brother(hood)," "peace(-gifts)," and "treaty/alliance/covenant."

TREATY TERMINOLOGY IN THE AMARNA LETTERS

"Love"

In EA 53, Akizzi of Qatna complains to Amenhotep III (1419-1382 B.C.E.) that the king of Hatti has sent one of his vassals, Aitukama, to harrass him, and if possible, seduce him away from his loyalty to Egypt. The purpose of this letter is to report this problem to Pharaoh

and reassure him that Akizzi has no intention whatsoever of abandoning his "love" (*ra'âmu*) for Pharaoh. In line 13, he even replays his indignant response to Aitukama for Pharaoh:

I said, "How could I go to the king of Hatti? I am a servant of the king, my lord, the king of Egypt."

Then he recommits himself to Pharaoh by pledging not only his "love" but also the love of his colleagues in four neighboring cities:

My lord, just as I love the king, my lord, so too the king of Nuhasse, the king of Nii, the king of Zinzar, and the king of Tunanab—all of these kings are my lord's servants.

As Moran notes, "love" and "servanthood" are often synonymous in this correspondence, and we might add that, whether this language is genuine or artificial, the parallel itself is ideologically significant.²¹

In line 24, however, Akizzi begins to tell Pharaoh how much this "love" is going to cost, in light of the fact that Aitukama has already launched a campaign of violence against Egyptian vassals in the region:

My lord, Aitukama came and he sent Upu, the land of my lord, up in flames. He took the ruler's house ... and he took 1 disk ... from the house of Birwaza.

In addition, Aitukama has launched a subversive propaganda campaign designed to undermine Akizzi's faith in Egypt's "love." For example, when Aitukama taunts him by saying,

The king, my lord, will not come forth,

this taunt sounds very similar to Sennacherib's taunt of Hezekiah:

Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you out of my hand. (2 Kgs 18:29)

In spite of these taunts, however, Akizzi reiterates his loyalty to Egypt as well as the loyalty of his colleagues, suggesting that, if Pharaoh were to "name his gifts," each of these colleagues would immediately respond. All Akizzi asks in return is that Pharaoh intervene in this crisis and put a stop to Aitukama's shenanigans.

Often a close synonym to *rahâmu* is the term *atterûtu*. In EA 41, for example, Šuppiluliuma writes to Pharaoh to remind him of the "friendly relations" (*atterûtu*) previously enjoyed between their countries. Thus, in light of this history of "friendly relations," he finds it difficult to understand why Pharaoh would renege on his father's promises to deliver to Hatti two male-shaped statues of gold (one

21. Moran, *Amarna Letters*, passim.

standing, one sitting) and two female-shaped statues of silver, along with several pounds of lapis lazuli.

Each of these letters, one from the vassal correspondence and one from the international correspondence, illustrates well the pervasive use of terms for "love" and "friendship" as primary components in ancient descriptions of ideal international relations.

"Peace"(-Gifts)

In EA 136, Rib-Hadda, Pharaoh's most prolific (and annoying) correspondent, writes as an old man in exile. While he languishes in Beirut, his wife and servants urge him to "make peace" with Aziru, the son of his nemesis Abdi-Aširta, though he remains deaf to their pleas. Still hoping against hope that Pharaoh will send a squadron of archers to rescue him, part of him is beginning to wonder whether he should not take his wife's advice and "make an alliance" with the mayor of Beirut, Ammunira—just in case Pharaoh refuses to show up.

Often in the Amarna correspondence disputants talk of "making peace" with their enemies even as they try to "stay at peace" with their friends. In EA 90, for example, this same Rib-Hadda (much earlier in his career) complains loudly to Pharaoh that Egypt has abandoned the cities around Byblos to Abdi-Aširta. Things are so bad that, not only have the cities of Batruna, Mittana, and Šigata fallen to Amurru, but Rib-Hadda himself has been forced to sell his belongings to survive the siege. On top of all this, he laments, "all the (neighboring) [mayors] have made peace with Abdi-Aširta," a line that in the context of the letter looks to be the proverbial "last straw." Alone and afraid, he knows that his only remaining ally now is Pharaoh, and Pharaoh is hundreds of miles away.

In EA 114, Rib-Hadda laments the fact that "everyone in the land of Amurru is at peace with" Tyre, Beirut, and Sidon, and further, that this terrible situation has forced him, by default, to become an "enemy" to this new coalition. Pharaoh's garrison has deserted Šumur, and the townspeople of Byblos—his own people—are considering doing the same. In EA 126, Rib-Hadda informs Pharaoh that he will not be able to fill his order for an exotic species of wood because the neighboring mayors, having "made peace" with Aziru, are blockading the port cities of Salḫi and Ugarit.

Syro-Palestinian neighbors, like all neighbors, cement "peace" by the giving and receiving of "peace-gifts" (*šulmanu*). From an anthropological perspective, this reciprocation of gifts—particularly the gifts of women and land and gold—is often the first stage of what can become a lengthy negotiation process. Anyone who has ever haggled with a carpet vendor in Ankara or a jeweler in Aleppo will understand

this process. The vendor's initial "gift" of hot tea, for example, looks at first glance to be a token of Middle Eastern hospitality, but more often than not it's the opening salvo of a negotiation process intended to hook a recipient into becoming a client.

Reciprocal gift-giving characterizes almost all of the peer relationships in the Amarna texts. In EA 9, for example, the Kassite king, Burnaburiaš, begins by reminding Pharaoh of their countries' peaceful history together, a history in which their ancestors made many mutual declarations of "friendship" and sent to each other many "peace-gifts."²² The objective of this history lesson soon becomes clear when Burnaburiaš suddenly complains to Pharaoh about his most recent gift: a mere 2 minas of gold. Obviously disappointed, he offers Pharaoh a face-saving way out of this "faux pas." Should gold no longer be as plentiful as it once was, he politely suggests, then perhaps Burnaburiaš will accept, say, one-half the amount originally expected. Whatever Pharaoh sends, however, he must send it quickly because (a) Burnaburiaš is building a temple and needs "much gold" to complete it, and (b) Burnaburiaš has learned that some of his Assyrian vassals have made a clandestine trip to Egypt without his permission. Thus, after a bit more lecturing, he concludes with a warning:

If you love me (*ta-ra-ah-ma-a-ni*), they will conduct no business whatsoever. Send them back to me empty-handed.

Should Pharaoh entertain this request, Burnaburiaš promises to send him another "peace-gift" (*šulmanu*) of lapis-lazuli and chariot teams.

"Brother(hood)"

A few texts from Bogazköy document the fact, not only that terms for "friendly relations" (*atterūtu*) can and do appear in discussions of treaties (KBo 15 iii 6), but also that terms for "friendly relations" and "brother(hood)" (*ahhu[tu]*) can appear in parallel (e.g., KUB 3 72:7). At Amarna, "brother(hood)" is one of the most important terms in the international correspondence between members of the "Great Powers Club." ²³ In EA 29, for example, Tušratta of Mitanni writes a long letter to Amenhotep IV practically *exuding* the language of "brother(hood)." Like Hiram with David's son Solomon, Tušratta wants to make sure that his relationship with the new Pharaoh can pick up where the old one leaves off, baptized in "brotherhood" and liberated from "distress" (*marsu*).

22. Moran (*ibid.*, 18) thinks that this letter could be addressed either to Amenhotep IV or Tutankhamun.

23. M. Liverani, "The Great Powers Club," in *Amarna Diplomacy* (ed. Cohen and Westbrook; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000) 15-27.

About halfway through the letter, however, Tušratta subtly makes clear why "brother(hood)" is so important to him—because he thinks it's being tested on two fronts. The *first* of these is the ever-sensitive problem of international political marriage. For all his "love" for Pharaoh, Tušratta feels that Egypt is not treating him fairly in this important area of exchange. Following Levi-Strauss, Kevin Avruch points out that the exchange of women between social groups was "the fundamental, indeed (the) primordial (means of) social exchange."²⁴ Thus, what we may be seeing in EA 29 is not egalitarian reciprocity but a "generalized exchange" in which one group (Mitanni) "gives" its daughters and sisters, while another group (Egypt) "takes" them. For several possible reasons (many ably discussed by Betsy Bryan in an incisive study),²⁵ Egypt seems content with this arrangement. Tušratta, however, is not. From his perspective Egypt is failing adequately to reciprocate the gift he has already given (viz., his daughter Tadu-Heba).

Why Egypt prefers generalized exchange over egalitarian reciprocity remains a mystery. Is it because Pharaoh considers Egyptian women to be superior to all other women, including Hurrian women? Is it because Egypt considers women to be "tribute," not "gifts?"²⁶ Is it because Egyptian inheritance rights are so fragile that they need to be protected at all costs from "outsiders?"²⁷ Or is it because the Egyptians fundamentally misunderstand the whole process, so ingrained are they in their own narcissism? Whatever the reasons, Pharaoh balks at the idea of sending Egyptian women to Mitanni, and this bothers Tušratta enough to write several letters to him about it, EA 29 being the most extensive.

Second, Tušratta is worried that, to paraphrase a biblical verse, "a new Pharaoh has arisen who knows not Tušratta" (Exod 1:8). Constantly he reminds Pharaoh that relations with his father, Amenhotep III, were historically very good. Constantly he challenges him to check with the queen mother, Teye, to verify this claim. Constantly he suggests, in his ingratiating way, that the stress now building between their two governments is of recent, not ancient origin. In short, Tušratta does not want the inevitable disruption of dynastic succession to tear down the diplomatic work of their ancestors. He wants to strengthen the peace between Mitanni and Egypt, though not at the expense of Mitanni or its needs, particularly its need for a Hittite strategy on its western flank.

24. K. Avruch, "Reciprocity, Equality, and Status-Anxiety in the Amarna Letters," in *Amarna Diplomacy*, 163.

25. B. Bryan, "The Egyptian Perspective on Mitanni," in *Amarna Diplomacy*, 80-83.

26. M. Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 BC* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

27. Bryan, "Egyptian Perspective," 82.

"Treaty/Alliance/Covenant"

Opinions are divided over the precise nature of the relationship between Egypt and its Asiatic provinces in the Amarna period. William Murnane thinks that, in the absence of treaty-tablets, the question of whether or not Pharaoh concludes actual "treaties" with Byblos, Qidšu, Qatna, or Tyre should remain open, and further, that fealty oaths, if taken at all, should be viewed only as unilateral promises, not actual "treaties."²⁸ Raymond Westbrook acknowledges these difficulties as well but questions whether the existence of formal treaties should be considered a "prerequisite" for understanding the reality of "vassalage."

Mario Liverani goes in a different direction, suggesting that questions of historicity, important as they are, are often irresolvable and can be much less important than questions of ideology. In his most recent book he argues that

the problem is not to sift away ideology in order to discover the "real facts," but on the contrary, to better appreciate ideology through an evaluation of its factual basis.²⁹

Applying Liverani's approach to the Amarna texts, we see that in EA 83 Rib-Hadda whines to Pharaoh that he has not yet heard back from his previous letter, prompting him to ask, "Why are you negligent so that your land is being taken?" Afraid that the Hapiru will take over Byblos, he warns Pharaoh that, to "stay alive," he may have to "make an alliance" (*i-pu-ša a-na-ku ki-ta*) with his hated enemy Abdi-Aširta. Noting that his neighbors Yapah-Hadda and Zimredda have already made alliances with him, he tells Pharaoh that he will follow their lead if he has to. In EA 105, he reports that the village of Sumur is trapped "like a bird in a cage."³⁰ The sons of Abdi-Aširta have blockaded it by land and Arwada's men have blockaded it by sea, the latter having "made an alliance" with several other mariners. So strong is this alliance, Rib-Hadda cannot break through and rescue Sumur.

In EA 125, Rib-Hadda takes off the gloves and tells Pharaoh what he *really* thinks. The Egyptian garrison has completely abandoned him. He's sold all his possessions for food and supplies. The townspeople of Byblos are leaving the city to look for food wherever they can find it, and his enemy Aziru wants him to "make an alliance" against Egypt. In a similar vein Lab'ayu, the mayor of Shechem, later reports that, despite the fact that his enemies have broken a previously-sworn

28. Murnane, "Imperial Egypt," 104-5.

29. Liverani, *International Relations*, 119.

30. Sennacherib uses the same idiom to describe his siege of Jerusalem (*ANET* 288).

"treaty" (*kittu*, EA 252.10-15), he will nevertheless obey Pharaoh and hold these men as prisoners.

THE SOLOMON-HIRAM TREATY

When we turn to the Solomon-Hiram treaty, however, several problems immediately confront us that, when taken together, militate against any sort of facile historical parallelism between the Amarna texts and the biblical book of Kings. *First*, these are very different kinds of literature. Evidence about the Solomon-Hiram treaty does not come down to us on unedited clay tablets but through a thoroughly edited religious document with a distinctive literary structure driven by a distinctively prophetic theological agenda. *Second*, the historical gap between the Amarna period and the Solomonic age is significant, even if we question, as is fashionable today, Solomon's historical existence in the tenth century. Yet, even if we assume the existence of a historical Solomon, such a historical gap says little about the question of literary and ideological parallels. *Third*, the relationship between Hiram and Solomon, in part because of the nature and character of the deuteronomistic literature, looks rather ambiguous when compared with relationships in the Amarna texts. Neither of these kings is a member of the "Great Powers Club," for example, so it is difficult to imagine their relationship as something like that between Egypt and Mitanni, or even that between Byblos and Qatna.

So how are we to view this relationship? Is this alliance political or economic or both?³¹ Are we to view these rulers as vassals dependent on a superpower (if so, which one?), or as more-or-less independent sovereigns? Certainly the deuteronomistic historian would lead us to imagine the latter as the proper characterization, but this may be due only to the fact that DH is profoundly disinterested in international politics as a general rule. If we follow Liverani, however, and pursue these questions along ideological rather than historical lines, several parallels come immediately to mind, some more focused than others.

First, the language of "love" and "friendship" is pervasive in both traditions. Just as Tušratta's love for Amenhotep III drives him to write to his son Amenhotep IV and reaffirm "friendly relations" between their two countries, so Hiram's "love" (𐤁𐤍𐤏) for David drives him to reaffirm "friendly relations" with *his* son, Solomon. Even the notice that Hiram had "love" for David "all his days" reminds us of Tušratta's claim that his love for Pharaoh's father was constant and

31. Fensham, "Treaty between Israelites and Tyrians," 74.

stable, not occasional or haphazard. According to the texts, the two wrote constantly to each other of their desire for peace. Similarly Hiram tells Solomon that his "love" for David lasted "all his days."

Second, in addition to the fact that *bērīt* signifies the formality of a "treaty" between Solomon and Hiram, note the interesting idiom used to describe it: לְעֵשׂוֹת חֶפְצִי (lit., "to make a desire/will"). The LXX translates this phrase in the first person as ποιήσω πᾶν θέλημα σου ("I will do all your desire/will") and in the second person as ποιήσεις τὸ θέλημά σου ("you will do all my desire/will"), but in light of similar usage of *ḥps* in the Old Aramaic treaty between Mati'el of Arpad and Barga'yah of KTK, its usage here looks suspiciously technical, especially when we note the cognate *ḥps* at Sefire alongside the terms *rhm* ("love") and *šlm* ("peace"):

In the case of any of the kings with whom I have trading relations or any who is a *friend* (*rhm*) of mine, when I send my envoy to him to ask about his *peace* (*šlm*), or anything else pertaining *to my desire* (*ḥpsy*) . . . the road shall remain open to me. (KAI 224.8-9)

More to the syntactic point, this Hebrew idiom, לְעֵשׂוֹת חֶפְצִי , like the Akkadian idioms *epēšu atterūtu* ("to make friendly relations"), *epēšu izirtu* ("to make help"), *epēšu kittu* ("to make an alliance"), *epēšu mandtu* ("to make an oath"), *epēšu parsu* ("to make an [eternal] order"), *epēšu šulmu* ("to make peace"), *erēšu šitirtu* ("to make a treaty"), *epēšu tappūtu* ("to make a partnership"), *epēšu tābūitu* ("to make a friendship alliance"), *epēšu tēmu* ("to make good relations"), and *epēšu tuppū* ("to make a treaty-tablet"), may be intended to convey much more about the treaty-relationship between Solomon and Hiram than simply "I will meet your needs" (NRSV) or "I will do all you want" (my).

Third, what we see at the heart of this exchange is the problem of reciprocity in the gift-giving traditions of the ANE.³² As Victor Matthews points out, obligatory gift-giving carries with it both a means of gaining honor as well as a means of imposing shame. When a balanced exchange occurs, both the donor and the recipient remain in "honorable" positions. When an unequal exchange is proposed or imposed, however (e.g., Jacob and Esau, Gen 33:8-17), this creates a social tension that can easily lead to hostility. Is this not what happened in the Cabul incident (1 Kgs 9:13)?

When Solomon makes treaties with his neighbors, some of his interests lie southward, but his primary interests lie northward, and from the Amarna correspondence we know that Acco, Shechem, and Megiddo are rival villages distinguished by little else than a pen-

32. V. Matthews, "The Unwanted Gift: Implications of Obligatory Gift Giving in Ancient Israel," *Semeia* 87 (1999) 91-104.

chant for bickering. Constantly they fight with each other. Constantly they beg Pharaoh for troops and food and horses and soldiers. Some of the Pharaohs of this period, particularly Amenhotep III (1386-1349 B.C.) and Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten, 1350-1334 B.C.) respond directly to these requests—but more often than not the Egyptians simply let the Syrians fight things out on their own.

CONCLUSION

In other words, the cities given to Hiram have a troubled history long before Solomon becomes king of Jerusalem. Abimilku of Tyre's letters to Pharaoh look very similar to the letters between Solomon and Hiram.³³ Just as Abimilku writes to Pharaoh to request cattle fodder and troops, so Solomon writes to Hiram to ask for wood, both listing their needs in measurable units (EA 148.12-14; 151.15, 46; 154.5-19; 1 Kgs 5:10-11). Just as Abimilku complains that he needs 20 palace attendants, so Hiram complains that the 20 cities he's received are inferior (EA 149.40-176; 1 Kgs 9:12-14). Jerusalem's tenth-century treaty with Tyre therefore leads to much more than a new Temple. Architecturally, Hiram builds Solomon a religious sanctuary based on Canaanite/Phoenician prototypes. Socioeconomically, Hiram invites Solomon to participate in a booming economy at a time when the Mediterranean is one huge Phoenician lake. Religiously, the deuteronomistic theologian relates these events dispassionately, even as he later punishes Solomon for marrying Pharaoh's daughter and worshiping her gods.

33. N. Na'aman, "Amarna Letters," *ABD* 1.174-81.