LETTERS TO EGYPT FROM BABYLONIA, ASSYRIA, AND SYRIA, IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY B.C.

Translated by the Editor

An account has already been given in these volumes of the recent discovery of cuneiform tablets at Tel-el-Amarna in Upper Egypt, which prove to contain official correspondence addressed to the Egyptian monarchs of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Amenophis III and his son, Amenophis IV, Khu-n-Aten, "The Heretic King" (Records of the Past, new ser., vol. ii. pp. 57 sq.) One statement, however, in that account requires correction, in view of the letters from the king of Mitanni, which have now been published. Queen Teie, the mother of Amenophis IV, was not the daughter of Duisratta or Dusratta, the Mitannian king; the daughter of the latter prince was Tadukhepa, the wife of Amenophis IV. We are still in the dark as to the parentage of Teie, and Prof. Maspero may be right in considering her to be of Egyptian origin, possibly even a sister of Amenophis III.
In the following pages I have given translations of the most important letters, from a historical point of view, which have yet been published. They are mostly to be found in the magnificent publication of Messrs. Winckler and Abel, entitled Mitteilungen aus den orientalischen Sammlungen (Berlin, Spemann, 1889, 1890), of which two parts have appeared containing the texts of a considerable number of the Tel el-Amarna tablets at Berlin and Cairo. The promptitude and carefulness with which they have been edited contrasts favourably with the tardiness of the authorities of the British Museum in putting the collection of Tel el-Amarna tablets that exists there at the service of scholars. Of the eighty-one tablets now in the British Museum four only have been published (by Mr. Budge in the Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, June 1888). A few passages in the letters have been translated by Dr. Winckler in his Bericht über die Thontafeln von Tel-el-Amarna in the Sitzungsberichte of the Berlin Academy, 1888 (No. xxiii), and Dr. Zimmer has translated four of the texts in the Zeitschrift für Assyriologie, v. (1890). Three of these are the same as Nos. 2, 3, and 10 translated by myself in the following pages.

An unexpected light is cast by these letters on the literary education and intercourse which prevailed throughout the ancient civilised world from the Euphrates to the Nile in the century before the Exodus. The government of Egypt extended as far
as Northern Syria, its political influence as far as the
frontiers of Assyria. But the culture of Western
Asia had its primitive home in Babylonia; it was
the language and complicated script of Chaldæa
which were taught and studied in the distant coun-
tries of the west, and which the educated gentleman
was required to learn. Egypt exported gold from
the mines which had been opened in the desert,
and were worked by convicts and the captives
taken in the Asiatic campaigns of the Eighteenth
Dynasty.

These Asiatic campaigns, however, had tended to
Semitise the governing class in Egypt. The king
married into the families of Asiatic princes and
filled his court with Asiatic officials. Amenophis
IV even became a convert to a Semitic faith, and
endeavoured to substitute a belief in the supreme
Semitic Baal, who revealed himself in the fiery orb
of the sun, for the old religion of his people. His
dominions in Palestine and Syria were placed under
governors who bore Semitic names, mostly of a
purely Canaanitish stamp. Even the vizier himself
has a name which is otherwise not found outside the
Bible, although the name of the Carthaginian goddess
Dido indicates that it was not unknown to the Phœ-
nicians. This is Dùdu, the Dodo of the Old Testa-
ment, etymologically related to David. Dùdu's two
sons, Aziru and Khâi, bear names which are equally
Biblical in their character.

The two letters of Aziru to his father show pretty
plainly the position occupied by Dûdu in the kingdom of the Pharaoh. He alone is addressed like the Pharaoh himself as “my lord,” and even his son calls himself his “servant.” Perhaps, however, the most significant phrase is that which speaks of “Dûdu and the king my lord and the nobles.” We are reminded of what the Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Only in the throne will I be greater than thou” (Gen. xli. 40).

The letters of Aziru possess a further interest. They bring the Hittites before us in the act of descending from their old homes in the north upon the fertile plains and cities of the Semites in the south. Kadesh, on the Orontes, has not yet become their southern capital; but they are already threatening Tunip, the Tennib of modern days, to the northwest of Aleppo. A century later, when the civil wars were ended, which the death of Amenophis IV and his attempt to introduce a Semitic religion and a Semitic government into Egypt had occasioned, when the stranger and his faith were driven from the land, and the Nineteenth Dynasty was founded by that “new king which knew not Joseph,” the Hittites were encamped on the northern threshold of Palestine. The Egyptian armies again marched into Asia, but even the power of Ramses II was unable to dislodge them from the post they had gained, and the utmost he could do was to check their southward advance. The chief result of his war was to weaken both Egyptians and Hittites, and to exhaust the
cities of Canaan, so that they became an easy prey a few years later to the invading tribes of Israel.

Assur-yuballidh, king of Assyria, whose letter to Amenôphis IV I have placed first in my series of translations, is mentioned towards the commencement of the so-called "Synchronous History of Babylon and Assyria" (line 8) as a contemporary of the Babylonian king Kara-Uršu. We learn from the letter the name of his father, Assur-nadin-akhi, who must therefore be inserted between Assur-yuballidh and Buzur-Assur (see "List of the Kings of Assyria," Records of the Past, new ser., vol. ii. p. 206). Buzur-Assur, as we learn from the "Synchronous History," was a contemporary of Burna-buryas, another correspondent of Amenôphis IV.

A third royal correspondent of the Egyptian monarchs was Dusratta or Tusratta or Duisratta—for the name is written in these various ways—the king of Mitanni. According to the Assyrian inscriptions Mitanni was the district on the eastern bank of the Euphrates which lay opposite to Carchemish. It is called Maten in the Egyptian inscriptions, and was included in the kingdom of Nahrina, the Aram-Naharaim, or "Aram of the two rivers," of Scripture, of which Chushan-rish-athaim was king (Judges iii. 8). It is possible that an obscure passage in one of the letters signifies that the Mitannian prince claimed sovereignty also over Khani-rabbit or eastern Kappadokia. Among the tablets now at Berlin is a long letter from Dus-
ratta, written in cuneiform characters, but in the language of Mitanni, which seems unlike any other hitherto known. We gather from it that the father and predecessor of Dusratta was Sutarna, who is stated in an inscription on an Egyptian scarab to have sent his daughter Kirkipa as a wife to Amenophis III in the tenth year of the latter's reign, along with 317 attendants. Artatâmas, the grandfather of Dusratta, had also married his daughter to Thothmes IV, so that for three generations the rulers of Egypt and Mitanni had been connected by marriage with one another.

The people of Mitanni, however, did not speak a Semitic language, and it is probable that they did not belong to the Semitic race. But they had adopted the Semitic adoration of the winged solar disk, and along with it, in all probability, some portion of the Semitic worship of Baal. It was this worship and adoration which Amenophis IV attempted to force upon his subjects. The Semitic tendencies of the court and the dominance of Semitic strangers from Canaan and Syria were due not so much to the intermarriages with the royal family of Mitanni as to the Egyptian conquest of Palestine.
I.—LETTER OF ASSUR-YUBALLIDH, KING OF ASSYRIA, TO
AMENOPHIS IV, KING OF EGYPT

1. To Napkhuriya (Neferu-kheper-Ra) [the great king]
2. the king of Egypt, my brother, [I write]
3. thus, (even I) Assur-yuballidh king of the country of
   Assyria,
4. the great king, thy brother.

5. To thyself, to thy house and thy country may there be
   peace!

6. That I have seen thy ambassadors
7. has pleased (me) greatly; thy ambassadors
8. I have sent for to appear in my presence.

9. A chariot [the choicest?] in the kingdom with (its)
   harness
10. and two white horses, [together with]
11. one chariot without harness and a seal of white alabaster
12. I have despatched as a present for thee.

13. For the great king is produced perpetually
14. the gold (which) in thy country (is like) the dust

1  Winckler and Abel: Mittheilungen, i. p. 8.
2  Written Mitsisari as in the letters of the king of Mitanni. The Babylonian form of the name is Mitsri, corresponding to the Hebrew Matsor and Mitsraim. In the later Assyrian inscriptions the name appears as Mutsur or Mutsri, probably through confusion with the name of Mitsri, a district to the north of Assyria.
15. (that) they collect; why in thy presence
16. is it brought and kept back, is it withheld and not
sent?
17. All the gold that is my property,
18. as well as what is lacking to it, send.

19. When Asur-nadin-akhi my father
20. sent (an embassy) to the country of Egypt (Mitsri),
21. 20 talents of gold did they despatch to him.

22. When the king of the country of Khani-rabbatu
23. to thy father and the land of Egypt
24. sent (an embassy), 20 talents of gold
25. did they despatch to him.

26. [As] to the king of Khani-[rab]bat
27. [so] also to myself
28. despatch the gold.
29. [The road both in] going and returning
30. for the hands of my ambassadors
31. I have made secure;

32. If thou inclinest thy face favourably
33. despatch much gold, and thy letter in return
34. write (to me) and what thou desirest let them take.

35. Behold, distant lands
36. have the ambassadors visited and they have journeyed
to (many) cities.

1 "Khani the great," or Eastern Kappadokia, the capital of which was
Malatiyeh,
2 Ullammatstii.
3 Literally, "If thou art good as to thy face."
4 Kugatum.
5 Ilka.
37. As for thy ambassadors
38. they have delayed on the way because the 'Sut\textsuperscript{1}
39. threatened\textsuperscript{2} them with death, until I sent and
40. the 'Sut\textsuperscript{1} took fright (?)\textsuperscript{3}.
41. My ambassadors . . . them
42. [and] they did not delay.

43. When the ambassadors (reached) the frontier (of
Assyria)
44. why do they not wait?\textsuperscript{4} and
45. at the frontier they are in a hurry (?)\textsuperscript{5}
46. It is fitting (?) at the frontier they should wait
47. for the king; everything is there
48. and he has established (it) and at the frontier .
49. he has arranged (it). Against the king who fulfils
everything
50. there is no charge (?) : why
51. at the frontier are they in a hurry (?),
52. even the ambassadors who . . .

The last three lines are too obliterated for translation.

II.—LETTER OF BURNA-BURYAS, KING OF BABYLONIA, TO
AMENOPHIS IV OF EGYPT\textsuperscript{6}

OVERSE

1. To Nipkhurri-riya king of the country of [Egypt]
2. by letter
3. I speak (even I) Burra-buriyas king of the country of
Kara-duniyas\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{1} Nomads, who ranged through the desert on either side of the Tigris,
in Mesopotamia and the south-east of Assyria.
\textsuperscript{2} Ur\textsuperscript{a}u, the Heb. yārā.
\textsuperscript{3} Probably to be read khardē, "fear."
\textsuperscript{4} Ultannasazu.
\textsuperscript{5} Imattu; the verb imattu occurs in K 1282, Rev. 18.
\textsuperscript{6} Budge, Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archeology, June 1888,
Pl. v, vi.
\textsuperscript{7} Babylon.
4. thy brother: unto myself (is) peace;
5. to thyself, thy house, thy wives, thy children, thy country,
6. thy officers, thy horses (and) thy chariots, may there ever be peace!

7. Ever since my father and thy father with one another conferred in amity,
8. they sent beautiful present[s] to one another,
9. but they did not address one another in fair (and) beautiful letter[s].
10. Again, O my brother, 2 manchs of gold I have sent as my present.
11. In return send (me) abundance of gold as much as thy father (sent),
12. or if that is displeasing send half of what thy father (sent).
13. Wherefore shouldst thou send two manchs of gold (only)?
14. For the sake of\(^1\) the folding doors in the temple\(^2\) of M\(\text{\`a\text{r}}\) and the palace
15. (which) I have undertaken\(^3\) to build send much gold,
16. and whatsoever thou desirlest in my country
17. write for and let them take it to thee.

19. In the time of Kuri-galzu my father the K\(\text{UNA(?)KHANS}\), all of them,
20. sent unto him saying: Against the government of the country (?)\(^4\)
21. let us sin and rebel.
22. [With] thee will we make (a league). My father

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\(^1\) Literally, "in favour of."
\(^2\) Literally, "house of God," \(\text{bi} \text{-} \text{ti} \text{-} \text{li}\), the Heb. \(\text{b} \text{e} \text{h} \text{-} \text{et} \text{-} \text{li}\). The following word \(\text{m\text{\`a\text{r}}}\) seems to be a proper name, though whether it denotes the name of a deity or of a place I cannot say. We may, however, read \(m\text{dd}\), "many a temple."
\(^3\) Read \(\text{ts\text{abi\text{k}}}\).
\(^4\) Perhaps the country of "Qannisat." The Kusakhians are probably to be identified with the Kinakhkhians of the next letter. Winckler compares the name of the Canaanites.
23. sent this (answer) to them
24. saying:

REVERSE

1. Cease (to ask) to ally thyself with me:
2. if thou art estranged from the king of Egypt my brother, and
3. alliest thyself with another,
4. I will not go and assist you.
5. Thus my father was like-minded with me,
6. because of thy father he did not listen to them:
7. Again, by an Assyrian who regards [my face]
8. have I not sent to thee after the news (I have) of them, asking
9. why they have gone to thy country.
10. If thou loveth me, no success
11. will they obtain; dismiss them to their distant land.
12. For a present to thee 3 manehs of alabaster,
13. (and) 14 spans of horses with 5 chariots of wood
14. I have despatched to thee.

III.—LETTER OF BURNA-BURYAS TO AMENOPHIS IV

OVERSE

1. [To] Napkhuhru-ri[ya]
2. the king of Egypt my brother [it is spoken]
3. thus: Burra-buryas the king of KARA-[DUNIYAS]
4. thy brother—unto myself (is) peace;
5. unto thee, thy country, thy house, thy wives, thy children,
6. thy officers, thy horses (and) thy chariots
7. may there ever be peace!

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1 Akhmat like khat, W. A. I., v. 1, 75.
2 That is, "is tributary to me."
3 Winckler and Abel, Mittheilungen, p. 7.
4 Miluri.
8. I and my brother with one another
9. have conferred amicably,
10. and this is what we have said
11. as follows: as our fathers with one another,
12. we also have friendly dealings.
13. Again my ministers
14. who came with Akhi-dhâbu
15. into the country of Kinakhkhî trusted to destiny,
16. from Akhi-dhâbu to visit my brother they passed;
17. in the city of Kihinnatuni of the country of Kin-

AKKHÔH
18. Sum-Adda the son of Balumme
19. (and) Sutatna the son of Saratum of the city of Akku,
20. when they had sent their men, slew
21. my ministers and carried off their treasures
22. which they [were taking] for [a present to the king of
EGYPT],
23. I have sent to you [therefore] a complainant
24. [who] may speak to thee [thus]:

REVERSE

1. Kinakhkhî (is) thy country and the king [is thy
servant?].
2. In thy country I have been injured; do thou punish
the offender.
3. The silver which they carried off [was] a present [for
thee],
4. and the men who (are) my servants they have slain.
5. Slay them and requite the blood (of my messengers);
6. but if thou dost not put these men to death,
7. (the inhabitants) of the high-road that belongs to me
will turn

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1 Dr. Zimmern compares the Biblical name of Ahibub.
2 Perhaps to be identified with the Kunakhians of the preceding letter.
3 Perhaps the Biblical Balaam. His son's name would represent Shem-Hadad.
4 The Biblical Sarah. Sutatna may be Seth-yathan; cf. Numb. xxiv. 17.
5 The Accho of Judg. i. 31, now Acre.
6 Sîtâ[śata].
8. and verily will slay thy ambassadors, and
9. a breach will be made in the agreement (to respect the persons) of ambassadors,
10. and this man\(^1\) will be estranged from thee.
11. One of my men Sum-Adda,
12. having cut off his feet,
13. detained him with him;
14. and as for another man, Sutatna of Akku,
15. having made him stand on (his) head,
16. he stood upon his face. As for these men
17. . . . one has spoken thus: I have seen indeed
18. . . . [what] thou askest that indeed thou knowest.
19. [By way of a present, I manch of alabaster I have despatched to thee.
20. [By] my ambassadors a costly gift I have [sent to thee].
21. [On account of the report\(^2\) which my brother has heard
22. my ambassadors do not detain;
23. the costly present let them offer [to thee].

IV.—LETTER FROM AZIRU TO HIS BROTHER KHĀI\(^3\)

1. To Khāi\(^4\) my brother
2. thus (I speak, even I) Aziri\(^5\) thy brother:
3. Unto thee may there be peace,
4. and from the soldiers of the palace
5. of the king my lord may there be much peace!

6. What immediately
7. I speak before the king my lord,

\(^1\) That is Burna-buryas.
\(^2\) [Dhe]ma.
\(^3\) Winckler and Abel: Mittheilungen, ii. p. 38.
\(^4\) The Hebrew khay, “living”; compare the name of Hiel, 1 Kings xvi, 34.
\(^5\) Aziru or Aziri (Azir in the Old Testament) was the son of Dādu (the Biblical Dodo or David), a high official at the court of the Pharaoh. See Letter v.
8. publicly I speak,
9. (even) I and my sons
10. and my brothers, all (being) servants
11. of the king my lord before (him).

12. Now I and Khatib
13. have gone again
14. with a present to Khazai
15. [who is] among you; verily the frontier,
16. behold! I have reached.

17. From the orders of my lord
18. I do not free myself,
19. or from your orders,
20. (even) I the servant of my lord.

21. The king of the land of the Hittites in the country of Nukhasse
22. is staying and I am afraid
23. of him (and) have defended myself.
24. To Phœnicia he ascends;
25. and if the city of Dunip falls, he stays in a place (only) 2 parasangs from here (?),
26. and I am afraid of him;
27. yet according to this order
28. he remains until he quits it.

1 This seems to be the name of the Hittite king.
2 Plural.
3 Khatte.
4 Nukhasse was in northern Syria; Dunip appears to have been one of its cities. M. Halévy suggests that Nukhasse is the land of "bronze" (Heb. nekhorahet), and compares 2 Sam. viii. 8.
5 The Timip of the Egyptian monuments, now Tannib, between Azaz and Arpad (Erad), north-west of Aleppo. In the Assyrian period, from the ninth century B.C. downwards, Timip disappears from history, its place being taken by Khazazu (Azaz) and Arpad.
6 Adi patari-su. Compare another letter of Aziru (No. 32): "The king of the Hittites is staying in the land of Nukhasse and I am afraid of him. He is staying in a place [only two] parasangs distant (?), [in] the city of Timip and I am afraid. The place he has quitted [Litur] also I
30. And now one has gone
31. with a costly present to him
32. (even) I and Khatib.

V.—LETTER FROM AZIRU TO HIS FATHER DŬDU.¹

1. To DŬdu my lord, my father,
2. thus (speak I) Aziru thy servant;
3. at the feet of my lord I prostrate myself.

4. Khatib has gone
5. and has answered (?) the words
6. of the king my lord publicly and well,
7. and I have rejoiced exceedingly;
8. and my country and my brothers,
9. the servants of the king my lord
10. and the servants of DŬdu my lord,
11. have rejoiced exceedingly.
12. Behold, there has gone
13. the prince² of the king my lord
14. unto me. From the commands
15. of my lord, my god, my Sun-god,
16. and from the commands of DŬdu
17. my lord, I do not free myself.

18. Now, O my lord, Khatib
19. remains with me.
20. I and he³ will go (together).
21. O my lord, the king of the land of the HITTITES

have reached. [So] again . . . we have gone into the land of Phoenicia,
the country of my lord, and I am afraid for the country of my lord.” So
also in another despatch (No. 33): “And again [the king of the Hittites]
is staying in the land of Nukhasse; [he is staying] two parasangs distant
(? in the city of Tunip, and I am afraid it may fall . . . may [the king
of the Hittites] quit (šipur) the city of Tunip.”

¹ Winckler and Abel, Mittheilungen, ii. p. 45.
² Sarru, which must not be interpreted “servant” here, but “prince,”
like the Heb. sar. In correct Assyrian sarru is “king,” malku (melech)
“prince,” but the writer of the letter follows the Canaanitish usage.
³ Sātu, a curious derivative from šē “he,” like yati “myself.”
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