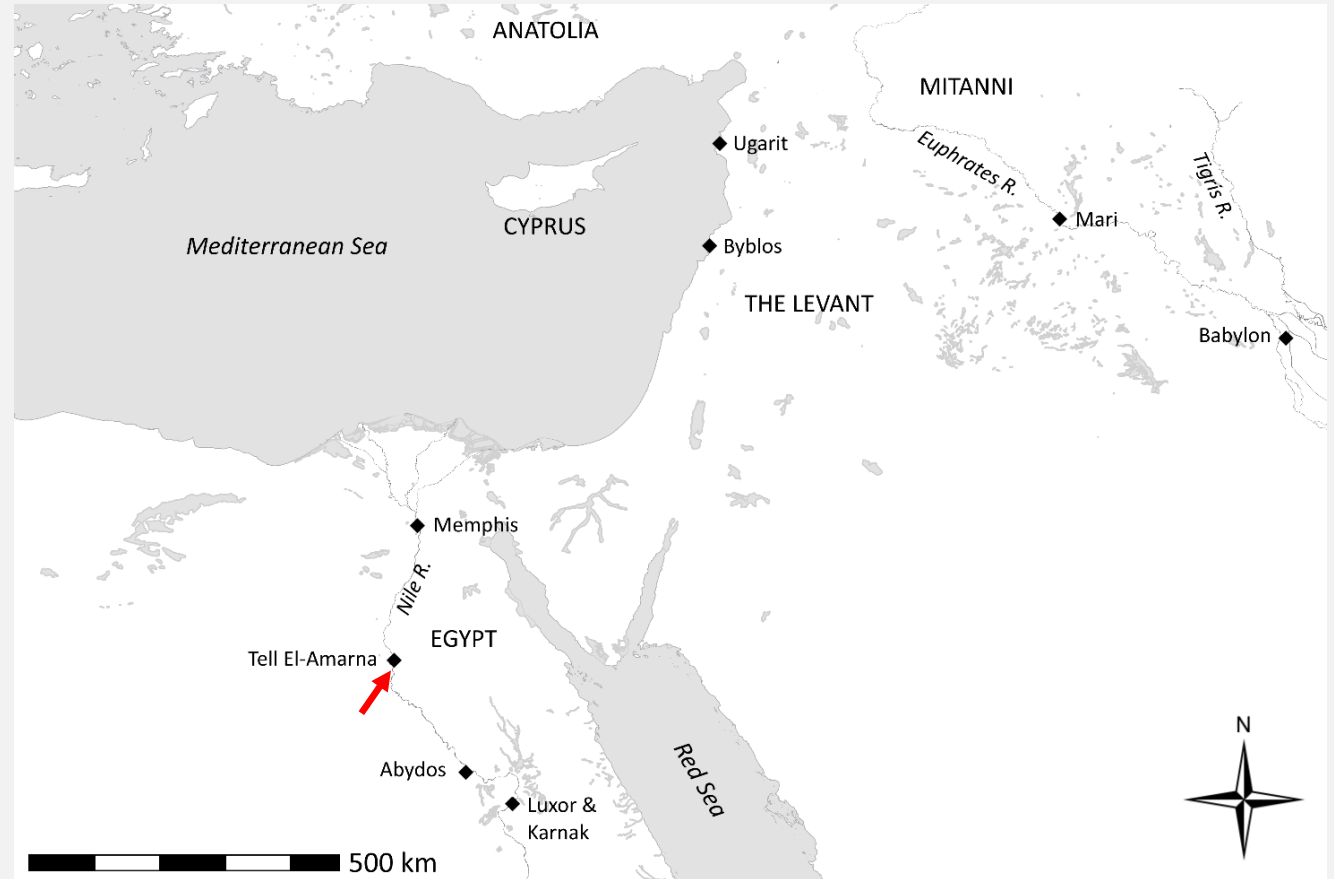


DIPLOMACY IN
THE AMARNA
PERIOD
(1360–1331 BCE)



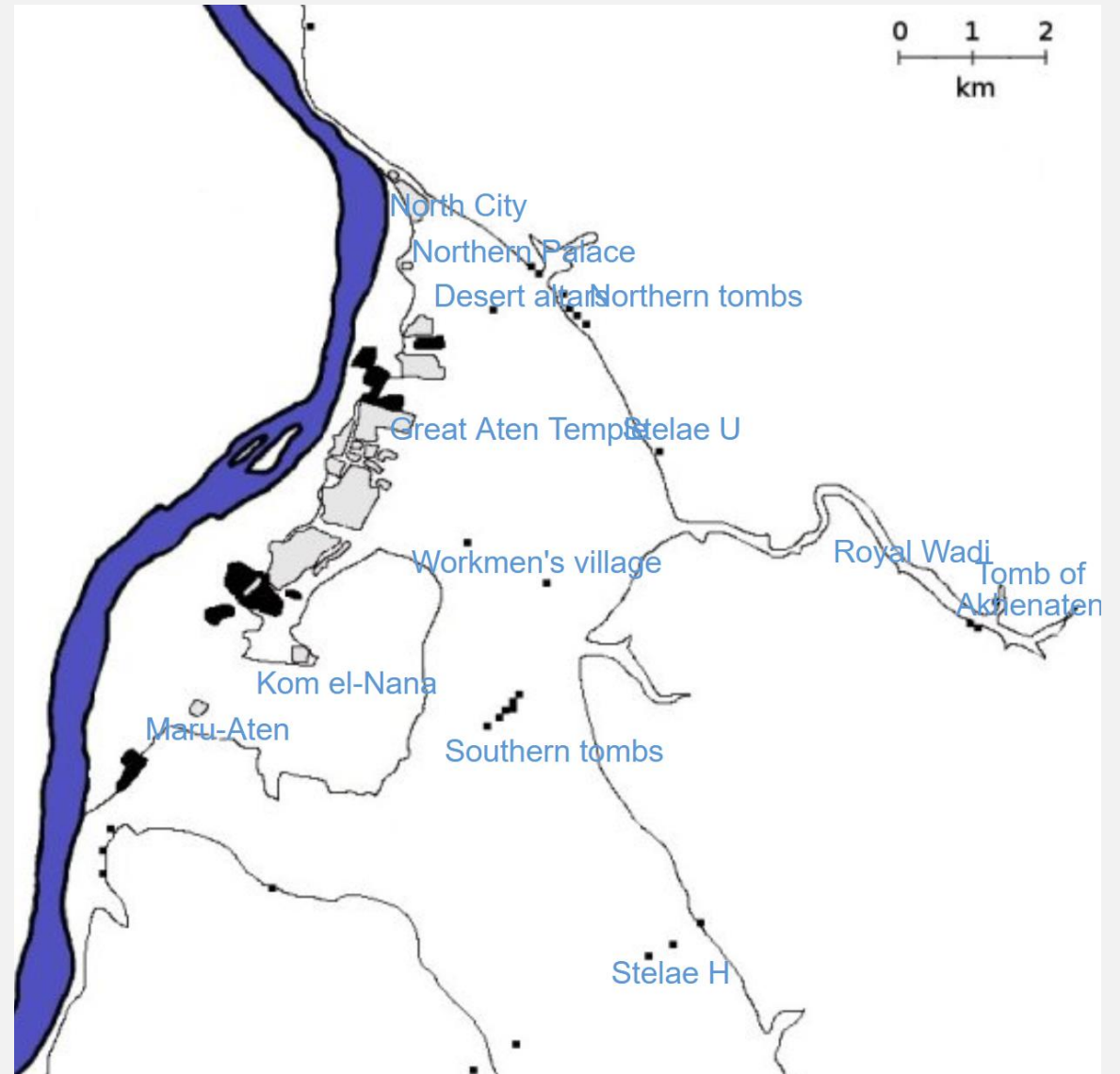
TELL EL-AMARNA

- The site of Akhenaten's (Amenhotep IV) capital of Akhetaten
- The Egyptian capital was moved from Luxor during Akhenaten's reign after changing the state religion to the worship of the sun god Aten.
- This had the (entirely intentional) consequence of stripping a significant amount of power from the priestly class.



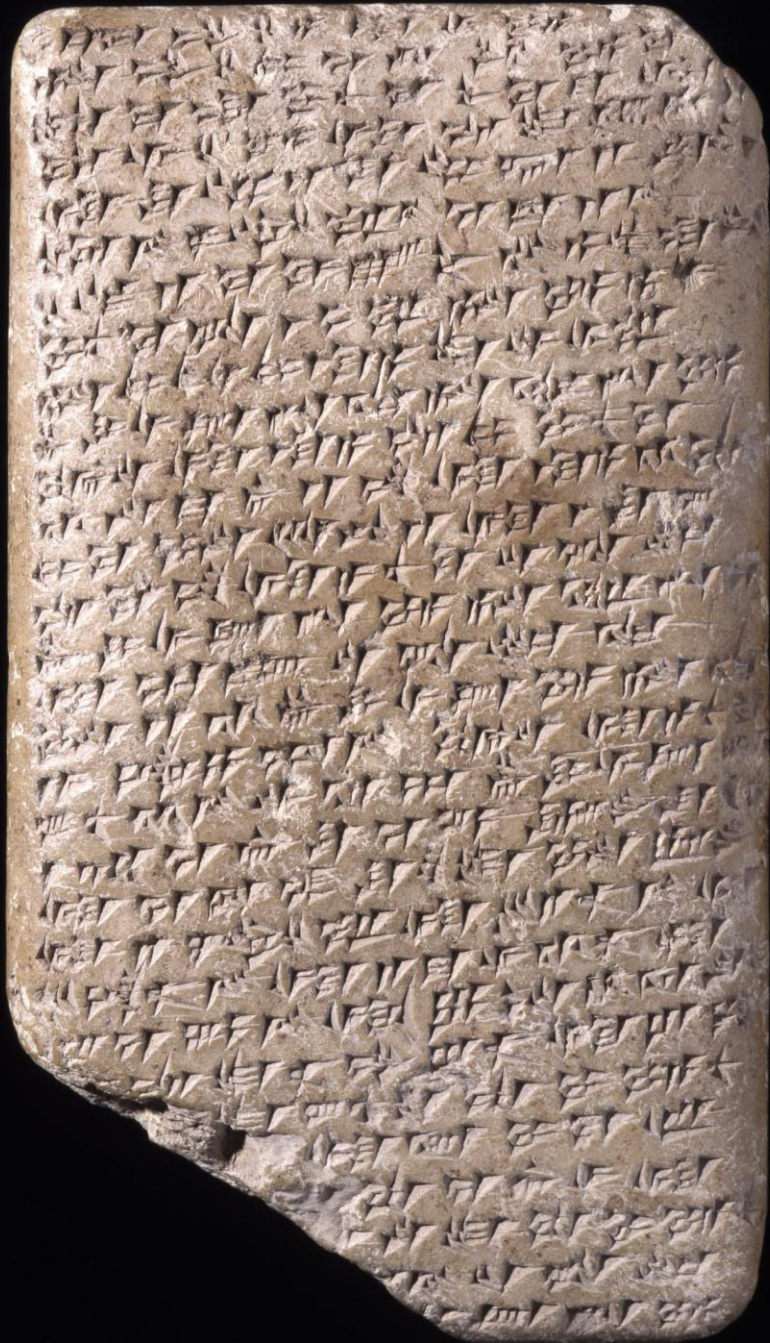
AKHETATEN

- Constructed as the seat of both the Egyptian government and worship of Akhenaten's new religion.
- Construction started in 1346 and finished in 1341 BCE on what was basically empty land on the bank of the Nile.
 - Most of the city made of mudbrick and whitewashed, with important buildings faced in stone.



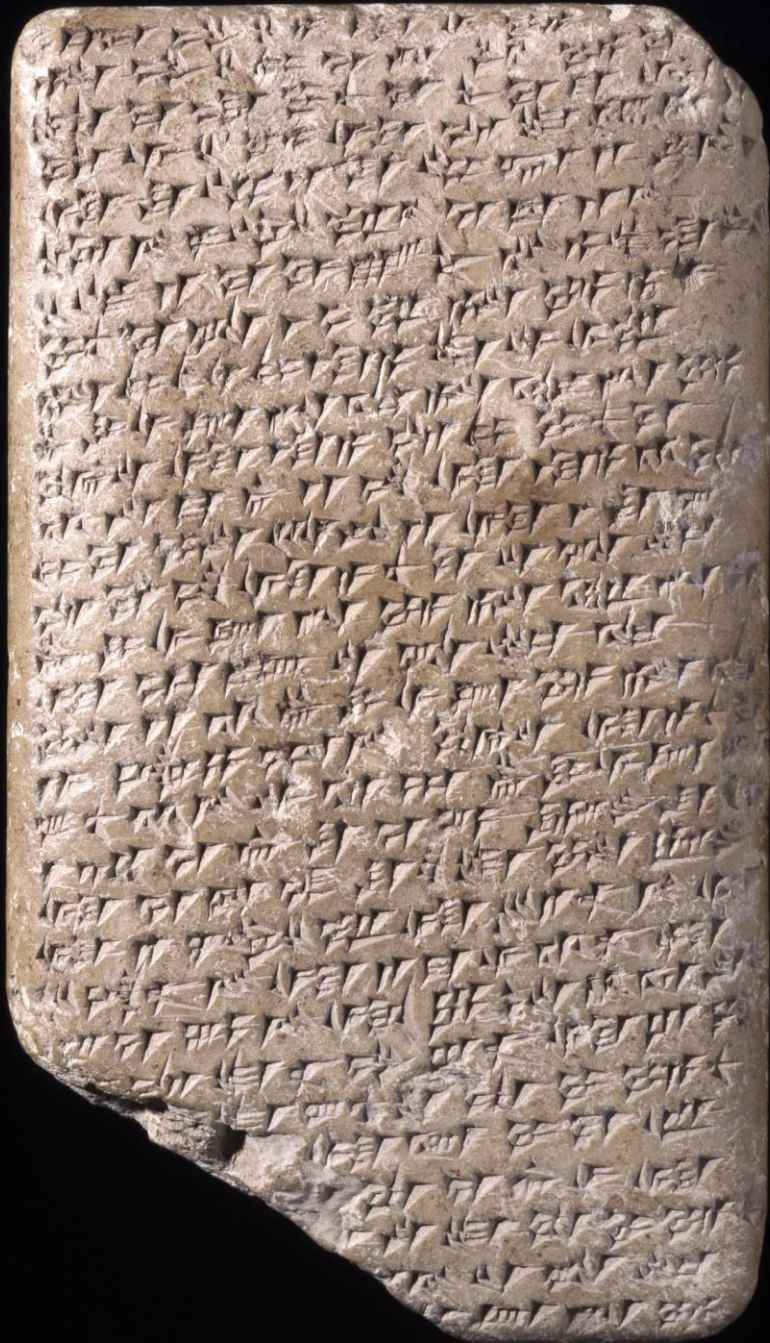
THE SOUTH TOMBS

- Excavated between 2006 and 2013 by the Egypt Exploration Society
- 381 graves excavated from the four main areas, an estimated 6000 individuals were interred in the cemetery, most of which appear to have been paupers graves.
- Osteological analysis suggests these individuals lived short, brutal lives
 - 26% were under age 7, with mortality rates increasing throughout adolescence, peaking between 15 and 25
 - Repetitive stress injuries suggest hard labour carrying heavy loads, such as building materials
 - The other means of speeding up construction?
 - Other possible explanations for the high mortality have been suggested, particularly plague.



THE ROYAL ARCHIVE

- A cache of 382 documents (clay tablets) “excavated” in 1887
- 349 were diplomatic correspondence between the Egyptian court, its Levantine vassals, and Near Eastern neighbours
- Span the reigns of Amenhotep III, Akhenaten, and possibly a third pharaoh (Smenkhkare or Tutankhamun)



THE ROYAL ARCHIVE

- Predominantly written in Akkadian cuneiform (the trade and diplomatic language of the LBA eastern Mediterranean)
- Only a small fraction of the total correspondence written in 14th century Egypt survives
- Only represent one half of the correspondence

THE AMARNA PERIOD

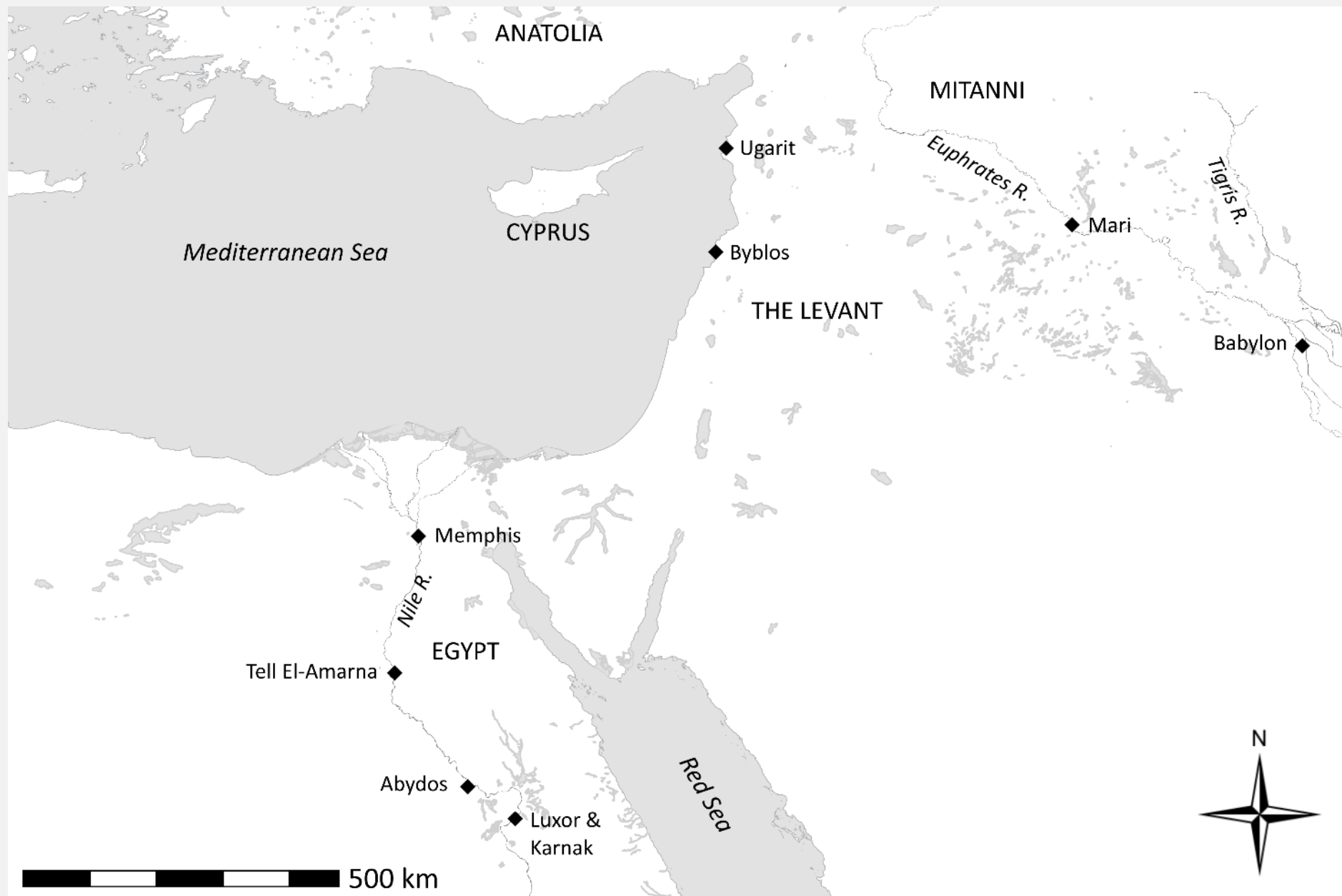
- Only spans thirty years of the 14th century (1360–1331 BCE), and this consists of a brief snapshot of the LBA
- The letters follow a certain formula, beginning with a greeting followed by a detailing of the 'gift' that accompanied the letter
 - Equals of the pharaoh (or those who presumed themselves equal) referred to him as 'my brother'
 - Subordinates referred to the pharaoh as father, and to themselves as 'your son'
 - Diplomatic language used to create an artificial kin-relationship accompanied by the obligation associated with giving and receiving gifts (cf. Liverani 2000)

THE LETTERS

- The surviving corpus of letters represents correspondence with
 - Mittani (EA 17–30)
 - Babylon (EA 1–11)
 - Hatti (EA 41–44)
 - Assyria (EA 15–16)
 - Alashiya (EA 33–40)
 - Some 40 Egyptian vassals in the Levant (EA 45–339, 362–67, 369–71, 378, and 382)

THE “GREAT POWERS” CLUB

- Not a fixed group
- Generally, those states/rulers who could call the pharaoh their equal (brother)
 - Hatti
 - Babylon
 - Mittani
 - Assyria
 - Alashiya?



THE STATE OF RELATIONS – BABYLON

- Correspondence between Kadashman-Enlil I and Amenhotep III
 - Unsuccessful attempt at intermarriage
 - Kadashman-Enlil tries to extract as much gold as possible for his daughter
- Correspondence between Kadashman-Enlil I's successor, Burnaburiash II, and Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten)
 - Clever use of diplomatic language to belittle the pharaoh? (see Westbrook 2000)

THE STATE OF RELATIONS – MITTANI

- Correspondence between Tushratta and Amenhotep III
 - A greeting on the part of Tushratta to Amenhotep once the former had gained control of his government
 - Mentions clashes with the Hittites and sends a share of the spoils
 - After Amenhotep III's death, Tushratta contacted his widow, Tye, to enquire about the stability of relations
 - The death of Tushratta eventually led to the conquest of Mitanni and North Syria by the Hittite king Suppiluliuma (described in texts from Hatti)

THE STATE OF RELATIONS – ALASHIYA

- 8 letters from Alashiya on clay from southern Cyprus (possibly around Kalavassos)
- Mostly concerned with copper shipments and other 'gifts' to Egypt and asking for silver in return (rather than gold)
- Possible evidence of a diplomatic spat between Alashiya and Egypt – accusations of piracy against Alashiya, accusations of non-payment against Egypt, and the possible kidnapping of an Egyptian messenger for 3 years
- Evidence of Alashiyan's (Cypriots) in Egypt from a request for the return of the effects of one who died in Egypt (possibly plague?).

THE STATE OF RELATIONS - BYBLOS

- Egyptian vassal
- Correspondence between the ruler of Byblos, Rib-Hadda, to both Amenhotep III and Akhenaten
- Consists of EA 68–138, 362, 139–40
- Most prolific single author to survive in the archive (EA 68–138, 362, 139–40)
- The letters to Akhenaten illustrate the change in policy that allowed for overthrow of Rib-Hadda and Byblos coming under Hittite control