LÚ, PA-MA-ḪA-A IN EA 162:74 AND THE ROLE OF THE MHR IN EGYPT AND UGARIT*

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The first fifty-four lines of El Amarna letter 162 spell out two charges leveled by the sender of the missive, Pharaoh Akhenaten, against “the m[a]n of Amurru,” almost certainly Aziru. Aziru is first chastised for his treatment of Rib-Addi for trying to hide certain actions from the Pharaoh (2–21) and for consorting with the “man of Kadesh” (22–25); he is then castigated for his delay in coming to Egypt to answer for himself and for not sending his son in his place (42–54).

Lines 77–81 are a closing in the form of a veiled threat. Aziru should know that both the king and his army are well.

Between these two blocks of text is a passage, lines 55–77, which is a demand by the king that Aziru extradite to him a group of people whose names were contained in a letter brought to Aziru by the messenger Ḥanni (56–57, 61–63). They are said to be enemies of the king (58, 62); not one of them is to be left behind (64–65). They are to be returned to Egypt in shackles (66).

The section containing the names of the individuals runs as follows:

67. a-mur l.Ú.mEš ša tu-še-ib-bi-il a-na LU.GAL en-li-kā
68. mša-ar-ru qa-du gab-bi DUMU.mEš-šu
69. mtu-u-ia
70. mli-e-ia qa-du gab-bi DUMU.mEš-šu
71. mpi-iš-ia-ri qa-du gab-bi DUMU.mEš-šu
72. l.Ú.ḫa-at-nu ša mma-an-ia qa-du DUMU.mEš-šu
73. qa-du DAM.mEš-ti-šu aš-ša-te-e-šu
74. l.Ú.pā-ma-ḫa-a ša ḥa-an-ni-pa ḫa-e-e-ḫu
75. ša-šu (ša) u-bā-a-ra il-ta-na-aš

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1 Since the name of the sender is not given, and that of the recipient is not preserved, their identities must be deduced from historical allusions in this letter. The letter refers to the expulsion of the “man of Byblos” from his city; this can only refer to Rib-Addi (152: 2–6). Having exhausted all his other hopes, Rib-Addi turned to his old foe in the hope that he could convince him to reinstall him in Byblos. The “man of Amurru” here must be Aziru. The plight of Rib-Addi indicates that the letter belongs well along in Aziru’s career but before the Abimilki correspondence, showing that the Pharaoh involved must be Akhenaten. E. F. Campbell, Jr., The Chronology of the Amarna Letters (Baltimore, 1964), p. 135, places this letter in the intermediate part of Akhenaten’s reign.

2 See W. Moran, Les Lettres d’El-Amarna (Paris, 1987), pp. 401–2, and n. 10, for an improved understanding of this line. W. Helck, Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr., 2d ed. (Wiesbaden, 1971), p. 433, suggests that some of these words might be Egyptian, although, to me, such a large concentration of Egyptian words in a letter to an Amorite ruler seems unlikely. See Ahw., p. 1399b, for ubāru, “Ortsfremder, Beisasse, Schutzburger.” The translation of this section is still open to question, as Moran’s italics indicate.
76. ṯa-a-šar-ti-i ṯa-a-lu-ú-ma
77. ṯi-im-ma-ḫe-e lù.ḫa-bá-tú i-na Kur.a-mu-rí šu-ú

See the people whom you are to send to the king, your lord:
Sárru, together with all his sons;
Túya;
Léya, together with all his sons;
Píšyari, together with all his sons;
the son-in-law of Manya, together with all his sons,
together with his wives,
the “lù.ṣa-ma-ḫa-a,” the one who is an expert in sacrilege,
this person who ridicules the foreign envos;
Daʿšarti, Baaluma,
Nimmahē (he is a brigand in the land of Amurru).

Most of the men bear good Egyptian names. The crimes committed by these individuals must have been serious indeed, for not only are the perpetrators to be returned, but, in most cases, all their sons and, in one instance, all the wives as well.

The son-in-law of Manya is singled out as a special troublemaker. He is not mentioned by name but elliptically; he is “the one who is an expert in sacrilege, this person who ridicules the foreign envoys” (11.74–75). Not only are his sons to be returned, but he is the only one of the king’s enemies whose wives are to be sent back with him; and he is the only individual given a title. And a title it must be, for all personal names in this letter are carefully marked with a single vertical wedge and titles are marked with lù.

The title given to Manya’s son-in-law is written out lù.ṣa-ma-ḫa-a, and the exact meaning of this word has never been satisfactorily explained. Early on, it was recognized that the word was probably Egyptian in origin, the initial “ṣa” being Egyptian p, the definite article, and maḫa a noun. The problem of defining this term is compounded by the fact that this is its only occurrence in the entire Amarna corpus. J. A. Knudtzon was not willing to offer a translation for it, nor did O. Weber and E. Ebeling have anything to add. See also Edel, Der Brief des ägyptischen Wesirs Pašijara an den Hethiterekönig Ḥattušili und verwandte Keilschriftbriefe, Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen I, phil.-hist. Kl. (Göttingen, 1978), pp. 120–21. Baaluma is Semitic for Ba’aluma or the like.

For example, lines 64 and 77. See R. S. Hess, “Amarna Proper Names” (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1984), does not even list it in his discussion.


6 Line 74.

In 1937, W. F. Albright devoted a lengthy space in a footnote to a discussion of this term.\(^8\) There he affirmed that ṭū. pa-ma-ḫa-a was an Egyptian title, p\(^3\) mh-ib, literally “the one who fills the heart (of the king).” Albright translated this as “plenipotentiary” and equated it directly with the Akkadian word ṭābišu, with the sense of “governor.” E. Edel accepted Albright’s identification, but whereas Albright wanted to connect ṭū. pa-ma-ḫa-a of EA 162:74 with ṭā. pa-ma-ḫu-[?] of EA 7:76–77 (here written with the determinative for a personal name), Edel wanted to keep the two separate and saw the latter as a name derived from p\(^3\)-n-mḥyt, “the one of (the goddess) Mḥyt.”\(^9\)

Mḥ-ib is not, however, an official title but an epithet, first rendered by “confidant” or the like.\(^10\) Certainly Akhenaten is not calling here for the return of a close friend but an inveterate enemy. Furthermore, final /b/ does not generally disappear in Egyptian. The only example Albright cites for ib preserves the final /b/\(^11\). Understanding ma-ḫa-a as being mh-ib fails on three counts: it is not a title, its literal rendering as “confidant” does not fit the context of the passage, and a final /b/ is expected. It should also be noted that the term ṭābišu had a very broad “official” usage and covered a variety of Egyptian titles; no single Egyptian term is a suitable translation for ṭābišu.\(^12\)

S. A. B. Mercer’s translation, “prisoner,” derives from the perfect passive participle of mh, “to seize, lay hold of, capture.”\(^13\) W. Helck entertained this possibility without dismissing it completely.\(^14\) “Refugee” was another possible meaning which Helck derived from mh. Neither of these fits the context here. ṭū. pa-ma-ḫa-a is a word used of only one person in this letter. If it were really derived from mh, with either the meaning “prisoner” or “refugee,” any of the individuals mentioned in this passage could have been so described. Certainly if they had all fled Egypt they were all “refugees,” and, if they were being turned over to Pharaoh, they were all equally “prisoners.” Helck, however, struck a welcome cautionary note regarding the uncertainties about some of the vocabulary in lines 74–75.\(^15\)

A. F. Rainey adopted Albright’s suggestion without discussion.\(^16\) W. Moran, in his recent treatment of this text, also accepted Albright’s opinion but italicized this section in order to show his uncertainty.\(^17\)

Since a viable understanding of ṭū. pa-ma-ḫa-a has not yet been achieved, I wish to put forward a possible new interpretation for the term.

The word mḥr is well known from Egyptian sources of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties, where we find it used as an epithet of Ramses II and Ramses III,\(^18\) as a title in

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\(^8\) Albright, “The Egyptian Correspondence of Abimilki, Prince of Tyre,” *JEA* 23 (1937): 200–201, n. 4.


\(^14\) Helck, *Beziehungen*, p. 433.

\(^15\) Ibid.


a private stela, as a component in theophoric personal names, and in Papyrus Anastasi I, the so-called Satirical Letter. The literature on the discussion of the origin and meaning of mhr in Egyptian was summarized by B. Couroyer, who showed that in the New Kingdom the word was not derived from an Egyptian root hr, “to milk,” with the nominalized meaning of “nurseling,” but, rather, from a Semitic root.

Mhr ultimately derives from West Semitic. It occurs in West Semitic personal names of the Amarna correspondence. Three times we find the name mdm-me-hr, and once, applied to another individual, it is hā-l-m̂-um-er. These are variants of the same name “Ba’al is a mhr.” The same root is known from Ugaritic literary and administrative documents.

Although the root mhr occurs in Hebrew, it is not used as a noun describing a type of soldier. It does appear in military contexts where the swiftness of soldiers is being emphasized. However, it appears much more often in non-military contexts as a simple verb or adverb. Mhr is also used of scribes, and others, who are skilled in their work. Finally, one of David’s “mighty men” was Māharī of Nēzōphāh. Mhr does not have a cognate in Akkadian.

Below, I will discuss the context and meaning of this word in the Egyptian and Ugaritic texts. Here, I wish to suggest a number of reasons for accepting lū-pa-ma-ha-a as a cuneiform rendering of p3 mhr.

The pace of the introduction of West Semitic loan words into Egyptian would have increased markedly with the repeated campaigns of Tuthmosis III into Asia. EA 10:8–10 speaks of the exchange of messengers between Egypt and Kassite Babylonia as extending back into the reign of Karaindash (I), probably around 1425 B.C., which would most likely make him a contemporary of Amenophis II. The cuneiform archive found at Taanach was dated to the fifteenth century B.C., and two of the letters are addressed to an Egyptian with the name Amanhatpa. If cuneiform was already being used for international diplomacy between Egypt and Mesopotamia and for correspondence between Egyptian officials and local rulers in Canaan at the end of the fifteenth

20 M. Burchardt, Die Altkanaanaischen Fremdworte und Eigennamen im Aegyptischen (Leipzig, 1909), nos. 334a and 487.
24 Most notably in the stories of “Ba’al and ‘Anat” and “Aqhat”; see the discussion below, pp. 135–36.
25 Josh. 8:14, 19; 1 Sam. 23:27; 2 Sam. 19:17; 1 Chron. 12:19. In one example, in the story of David’s duel with Goliath, 1 Sam. 17:48, David runs “quickly” toward the battle line to engage the Philistine.
26 Gen. 18:16; Jer. 48:16; Judg. 2:23.
28 2 Sam. 23:28; 1 Chron. 11:20. In 1 Chron. 27:13, he is also said to be a Zerahite who had command over 24,000 men during the tenth month of the year. Compare this name with the Mhry(s) who appear(s) in the Wilbour Papyrus; in Gardiner, ed., The Wilbour Papyrus, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1948), vol. 3, 23:24; 27:27; 89:38; 68:10.
30 Letters 5 and 6; see Albright, “A Prince of Taanach in the Fifteenth Century B.C.,” BASOR 94 (1944): 14, 26–27, for the arguments concerning the dating of the letters.
century B.C., it is entirely likely that it was used between Tuthmosis III and his Asiatic vassals and that some of the latter’s technical jargon was creeping into Egyptian. It seems very possible that a Semitic loan word, mhr, could have entered Egyptian anytime from Tuthmosis III on.

How would mhr appear in Akkadian cuneiform after passing from its point of origin in West Semitic through the “filter” of its use in the Egyptian bureaucracy? Egyptian has "to express West Semitic π; the cuneiform script could represent this sound with “ḥ” or else ignore the voiceless consonant completely. In the development of the Egyptian language, final /r/s were less and less pronounced as time went on, beginning as far back as the Old Kingdom. A West Semitic */mahar/ would be pronounced */maha/ by an Egyptian. When written in cuneiform by an Egyptian it would appear as maḥa. Names such as maš-m-me-hir and maš-ba-la-me-er are Canaanite names in which the final /r/ was pronounced; the Canaanite scribes would have written these final /r/s even though the spoken form in Egypt would have dropped it. Historically and linguistically, therefore, it is possible that tū-pa-ma-ha-a of EA 162.74 represents an Egyptianized form of West Semitic mhr.

Mhr is written in a variety of ways in the Egyptian script. The earliest attestations are from the reign of Ramses II. The catalogue of these occurrences is as follows:

1. In a private stela, probably from the reign of Ramses II,35
2. Ramses II is the mhr of ḪAnat in the Hittite Marriage stelae from Abu Simbel, Elephantine, and Karnak;36
3. is its rendering in the “abridged” version of the Marriage Stela;37
4. Ramses II is also the mhr of ḪAnat in Tanis obelisk I;38
5. occurs three times in Papyrus Anastasi I;39
6. is used four times by Papyrus Anastasi I;40
7. occurs once in Papyrus Anastasi I;41
8. the most frequent spelling, appearing eight times,42

31 See me-hir in EA 245:44 and 258:2 and mé-er in 260:2.
33 For the loss of final /r/ in Egyptian names written in cuneiform, see, for example, Pahamata = ḫm ntr (“the priest”) in EA 60:10, 20 and 32; 62:1; 68:22; 131:35; and Reanapa = ḫr nfr (“R is beautiful”) in EA 292:36; 315:13; 326:17. See also Albright, “Egyptian Prosgogrophy,” pp. 40 and 49. We cannot be certain if Egyptians would drop the final /r/ of a loan word. Presumably this would depend on how long the word in question had been in use, and if the Egyptians truly accepted it as part of their vocabulary. The case being treated here would be the first example of this Egyptian trend being applied to a loan word.
34 The final /-a/ may be compensatory lengthening due to the loss of the /-m/.
35 Schulten, “Mhr and Mškh,” fig. 1.
37 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 256.3.
38 Ibid., p. 408.11.
39 Gardiner, Egyptian Hieratic Texts, Series I: Literary Texts of the New Kingdom, Part I: The Papyrus Anastasi I and the Papyrus Koller Together with the Parallel Texts (Leipzig, 1911), p. 21, l. 8, 23.5–6, 25.5.
40 Ibid., 18.6, 19.7, 20.6, 23.1.
41 Ibid., 18.4.
is used once by Ramses III at Medinet Habu;\(^{43}\)
occurs another time by Ramses III at Medinet Habu;\(^{44}\)
is mentioned three times in the Turin Juridical Papyrus as one of
the court of inquiry investigating the assassination attempt on
Ramses III;\(^{45}\)
is found three times in the Wilbour Papyrus as the name of a
Sherden, and once as the name of a standard-bearer;\(^{46}\)
also occurs in the Wilbour Papyrus as the name of a stable
master;\(^{47}\)
is the name of an individual who received property stolen by a
certain Mose from one of the royal tombs.\(^{48}\)

The Ramesside syllabic orthography, according to Albright’s scheme, seems to favor
the reading \(\textit{mahar},\) although \(\textit{mahra}\) and \(\textit{mahi}\) also appear. In his discussion, Albright
asserted that \(\textit{mhr}\) be vocalized “ma-ha-ar” in the belief that it was properly an intransitive
adjective like Hebrew וֹּֽ֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔חַ כֹּֽ֙֔חַ וֹּֽ֔ch;\(^{49}\)
\(^{51}\) Ibid.
\(^{52}\) Two examples from the Amarna letters illustrate this usage among Egyptian words: -na-ta for \(\textit{ntr}\) and
-pa for \(\textit{nfr}\). The final /r/, though no longer pronounced, is still written.
\(^{53}\) See Gardiner, \textit{Papyrus Anastasi I}, for text and
Anastasi I}, Kleine ägyptische Texte (Wiesbaden, 1983), is the most recent edition. Papyrus Anastasi I is
called the “Satirical Letter”; Hori ridicules Amenem-Opet throughout the text. We cannot be certain
how often, or how much, Hori exaggerates. This “exaggeration” might affect Hori’s description of the
role of the \(\textit{mhr}\).
\(^{54}\) See Rainey, “Soldier Scribe,” pp. 58 ff., for a
brief discussion of the “soldier scribe.”
give reports on his travels (27.9). He is also a soldier equipped with a bow (the weapon of the chariotry), quiver, and knife (25.7–8). It seems that he could also lead troops (26.9–27.1; 19.2) and was found at the forefront of the army (23.5–6). He is directly equated with the *maryannu*/chariot-warriors (23.3; 27.9–28.1) and, as such, had a second man with him in his chariot (20.3). Indeed, much of this section of the letter is taken up with the care and handling of chariots.

The other major intent of the passage in Papyrus Anastasi I is to show the breadth of geographic knowledge that a *mhr* was expected to possess. Not only did he have to know all the major towns and kingdoms from Hatti to the border of Egypt, but also the roads, passes, and fords which linked them (28.7–8); the distances involved (27.7); and the dangers on the way (23.7 ff.).

It is not explicitly stated what the *mhr* actually did as he traveled through Canaan. When he returned to Egypt he could give reports (27.9), but were these only of the topography? Certainly he also related the doings of local rulers and political conditions. The inscriptions of Ramses III say that he was “a *mhr* valiant of horsemanship, (even) when on foot,” and was “valiant, advancing on the field of battle, a *mhr*, a lord of beauty.” Papyrus Anastasi I and the Ramses III inscriptions from Medinet Habu clearly indicate a combative role for the *mhr*. In the Pennsylvania stela, Pentawer, besides being a *mhr*, was also a *mškb*. This latter term could be used, among other ways, for some personnel connected with the chariotry, perhaps to denote “runners.”

From these sources we obtain a fairly clear picture of the duties of the *mhr*: he acted as a scribe, information gatherer, and warrior. It is difficult to find one title to subsume all these activities. Helck vacillated on the subject. In the first edition of his *Beziehungen*, he rendered it as: “Bote,” while in the revised edition it was: “Krieger.” A. H. Schulman’s definition “intelligence and reconnaissance officer” may be a touch too modern sounding but aptly describes the *mhr*’s role. Since the *mhr* of Papyrus Anastasi I was supposed to be familiar with the length and breadth of Canaan, a function credited to many Egyptian officials of the Amarna correspondence who bore the general title *rabīṣu*, it is quite possible that Manya’s son-in-law could have been a *mhr*.

*Mhr* is also known from Ugaritic literary and administrative texts. The *mhr*’s clearest association with military personnel is in the ʿAnat and Baʿal myth. *Mhr* occurs
five times in the description of "Anat’s bloody battle. In the first instance, heads are beneath her, and hands, including those of mhrs, are either “about” her or perhaps hanging “on” her as grisly trophies.63

Next, she plunges knee-deep into the blood of guards (dqmr) and hip-deep into the blood of mhrs.64 The next passage has been variously translated.65 H. L. Ginsberg translates it: “She pictures the chairs as mhrs, pretending a table is warriors (ybim), and that the footstools are troops (gzmrm).”66 G. R. Driver has: “She smashed seats over the mhrs, tables were smashed over the soldiers, stools over the heroes.”67 And J. C. de Moor reads: “She arranged chairs for the mhrs, arranged tables for the soldiers, footstools for the youths.”68 Despite the differences in the translations, it is clear that mhr is used in parallel to ybim, “soldiers,” and gzmrm, who are also some sort of soldiers.69

The fourth citation exactly duplicates the second.70 In the final couplet, she washes her hands in the blood of guards (dqmr), her fingers in the gore of mhrs.71

Mhr occurs eight times in the tale of Aqhat. Twice it is used as a noun signifying the hero’s “vigor” or “courage.”72 Five times the expression mhr st is used as an epithet of Ytpn, the assassin who slew Aqhat.73 Interpretations of this phrase again differ. Ginsberg rendered it as “drunken soldier”74; Driver translated it as “ready in battle”;75 B. Margalit suggested “Sutean warrior”76; J. Gibson read: “warrior of the Lady.”77 B. Gerdsoff even thought it might be rendered as “champion of (the Egyptian god) St,” on the basis of the name mhr b’lt discussed above.78 Such widely varying interpretations make any attempt to use st to define better Ytpn’s role as a mhr mere guesswork.

The last from Aqhat occurs in a passage where the hero is praising himself and his prized bow, the weapon for which “Anat had him murdered.”79 There, Aqhat asserts that the bow is a weapon for mhrs, not for women.80 The bow, as noted above, is the weapon par excellence of the maryannu/chariot-warrior who is synonymous with the mhr in Papyrus Anastasi I; yet its use here cannot be said to show that Aqhat himself was a
chariot-warrior, although, given his high social status, one might expect him to have been so trained.

In the Rephaim myth, Rpu-b'lt is twice called the mhr b'l wmhr ‘nt, but several sections are broken and many readings are uncertain. It appears also in a few other difficult or broken passages in mythological texts which do not throw any further light on its meaning at Ugarit or where it has the meaning “(marriage) price” and in one administrative text, as a list of merchants who are traveling without mhrs.

It is unfortunate that the Ugaritic texts add little to our technical knowledge of the role of the mhr in the ancient Near East; it is even unclear whether they served the same purpose as like-titled individuals in Egypt. Certainly, they were military personnel, and, at least on occasion, they used a bow. Nowhere is it stated whether they fought from chariots. Ytyn is a mhr; in his assault on Aqhat he is carried by ‘Anat and has no need for a chariot, even if he otherwise used one. Were he a Sutean nomad one would not normally expect him to use such a vehicle since the chariot was the property of the landed class. The epithet mhr ‘nt is found in both Ugaritic mythological texts and among the titles of Ramses II.

Is there a way to date the appearance of mhr as a term for a type of military personnel among the Canaanites and its adoption by the Egyptian bureaucracy of the New Kingdom? The dating of the Ugaritic literary texts is very difficult, and undated administrative texts cannot throw any light on the earliest use of mhr at Ugarit either; thus it cannot be shown on the basis of the material from Ras Shamra alone that the use of mhr for military personnel antedates the thirteenth century B.C. Its use by Ramses II, the beginning of whose reign spanned much of the thirteenth century by any dating system, suggests that mhr must have come into use in Egypt no later than the end of the fourteenth century or earlier. Fortunately, the use of mhr in West Semitic personal names of the Amarna age shows that the term was in common use in Canaan and was at least known to the Egyptians.

The suggestion advanced in this paper, that tū pa-ma-ḥa-a in EA 162:74 be understood as “the mhr,” has the following three points in its favor: first, it offers an interpretation of tū pa-ma-ḥa-a which fits its context better than other readings so far advanced; second, historically, the advent of mhr into Egypt could have happened anytime from the reign of Tuthmosis III on, and indeed it was already known to the Egyptian scribes through the West Semitic personal names of the Amarna period and must have come into the Egyptian vocabulary by the end of this period at the latest; third, Egyptian officials who bore the title rābiṣu in the Amarna officialdom often

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81 22[123].7–8; 22[124].8–9; Driver, Canaanite Myths, pp. 68–69.
82 10[76].1.11, 13[6].7, 24[77].19, UGS.7.74, 75; Aistleitner, Wörterbuch, p. 180; and Gibson, Canaanite Myths, p. 151.
83 1035.1.5. Does this mean that mhrs acted as military escorts for merchant caravans on occasion? It would be very interesting to know what sorts of caravans merited such protection and under what conditions.
87 With the limited textual evidence available, we cannot determine what similarities or differences existed in the role the mhr played in Egypt and Western Asia.
performed the same military and intelligence gathering functions as the *mhr* of Papyrus Anastasi I. The only argument against this identification is one of silence. Up to this time, *mhr* does not appear in Egyptian hieratic or hieroglyphic texts of the mid- to late Eighteenth Dynasty; yet the weight of such an argument could disappear with the discovery of just one text.