INTERNATIONAL LAW

INTERNATIONAL LAW IN THE SECOND MILLENNIUM:
LATE BRONZE AGE

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1. SOURCES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

1.1 Texts of more than thirty treaties concluded during the fifteenth through thirteenth centuries have been preserved on cuneiform tablets from the archives of the Hittite kings at their capital Ḫattuša (modern Boğazköy).1 Almost all of these copies are on clay tablets and are more or less fragmentary; one, however, was engraved on a tablet of bronze and is intact. From Alalakh/Atchana have come two treaty tablets, one extremely damaged, dating to the fifteenth century.2 The only other text of a treaty available to us was incorporated in a royal inscrip-
tion of Ramesses II (thirteenth century) written in Egyptian hieroglyphs on stelae recovered at Karnak and in the pharaoh’s funerary temple (the Ramesseum) at Thebes.3 Treaty relationships whose writ-
ten documentation has been lost to posterity are also alluded to in texts of other genres.4

1.2 Codicils elaborating on the terms of treaties have come to light among the cuneiform records of Ḫattuša and those found at the north Syrian port of Ugarit/Ras Shamra.5

1.3 Edicts issued by the Hittite Great King to regulate the affairs of vassals and similar decrees emanating from the king of Carchemish,

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1 For a convenient list of these sources, see Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 6–8, hereafter cited by title.
3 The Egyptian-language treaty has been edited most recently by Edel, *Vertrag...*
4 Diplomatic correspondence is particularly rich in references of this sort. For instance, note the mention of formal relations between Ḫatti and Babylonia in *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, no. 23, §4. In EA 24 iii 109–19 (transl. Moran, *Amarna Letters*, 69, §26) the sender seems to quote from a treaty currently in force.
5 See, for example, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, nos. 18A and 20A.
who functioned as Ḫatti’s viceroy for Syrian affairs, are known from Ḫattuša and Ugarit.⁶

1.4 Various compositions of Hittite monarchs, particularly the “annals” of several kings,⁷ and Egyptian royal inscriptions⁸ provide information on international relations: on hostile and peaceful interaction with subordinate and independent foreign polities, on trade, on the treatment of fugitives, messengers, and other foreigners. The inscription on the statue of King Idrimi of Alalakh describes the conclusion of a written peace treaty with his suzerain, the king of Mittanni.⁹

1.5 Diplomatic correspondence, which has been recovered in significant quantities at Ḫattuša,¹⁰ Ugarit,¹¹ and Akhetaten/Amarna,¹² and as stray finds elsewhere,¹³ presents us with primary documentation of international communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution.

1.6 Miscellaneous texts from Ugarit,¹⁴ Egypt, and especially Ḫattuša also present scraps of information relevant to the conduct of international relations.¹⁵

2. The International System

During the Late Bronze Age in western Asia, the state was conceived of as a household on a grand scale. Within every family, the senior male exercised full authority over the social and economic activities

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⁶ Hittite Diplomatic Texts, nos. 29ff.
⁷ The materials from the Hittite archives have been ordered by Laroche, Catalogue . . . Texts particularly useful for the present discussion are “The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma I” (transl. H.A. Hoffner in Hallo and Younger, eds., Context . . . I, 185–92) and “The Ten-Year Annals of Muršili II” (transl. R. Beal, in Hallo and Younger, eds., Context . . . II, 82–90).
⁸ See Redford, Egypt, Canaan, and Israel . . ., chaps. 6–8.
⁹ Smith, Idrī-mi . . ., 16, ll. 42–58.
¹⁰ See Hittite Diplomatic Texts, pt. 2.
¹¹ See the sources listed by Klengel, Syria . . ., 100–102.
¹² All of these texts have been translated and commented upon by Moran, Amarna Letters (texts cited by EA number).
¹⁴ See Freu, “Ugarit et les puissances . . .”
¹⁵ Sections 5, 19–21, and 23 of the Hittite Laws seem to imply the existence of some sort of formal relationship between Ḫatti and the western Anatolian land of Luwiya/Arzawa, already in the Old Hittite period (sixteenth century)—see Hoffner, Laws . . ., 171.