

FOREIGN RULERS ON THE NILE –

**a reassessment of the cultural contribution
of the Hyksos in Egypt**

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requirements for the degree MPhil in Ancient Cultures
at Stellenbosch University**

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DECLARATION

**I hereby declare that the work
contained in this thesis is my own original work.
It has not been submitted previously in part or as a whole
to procure a degree at any other university.**



J.A. Brönn

April 2006

FOREIGN RULERS ON THE NILE

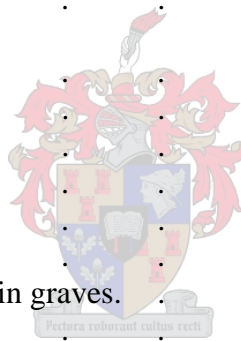
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Abstract

The time between the Middle and New Kingdoms in Ancient Egypt is known as the Second Intermediate Period. It was the time during which Egypt, for the first time in its history, lost autonomy and the inhabitants of Egypt became the vassals of the Hyksos, a name transcribed by Manetho, a historian of the third century BCE as 'shepherd kings', but which actually designated 'princes of foreign lands'.

The term 'Hyksos' at first referred to the rulers only, but later became the accepted word to indicate the rulers, the people themselves and everything pertaining to them. The Hyksos were not a homogenous race, but were a conglomerate of peoples from the Near East. For centuries people from the east had been filtering into Egypt. Transhumants and nomads came in search of pasture for their animals and elected to stay. Others were employed by the Egyptian administration as shipbuilders and mining engineers or as workers in the copper and turquoise mines in the Sinai. These workers were all settled in the Delta, the hub of mining and shipbuilding activities. Others were slaves who were dispersed all over Egypt as workers in households and on farms. Despite Egypt's best efforts to keep out Asiatics who wanted to enter the country of their own volition, their fortresses on the border between Egypt and Sinai proved ineffective, especially when the Egyptian administration faltered and collapsed during the Seventeenth Dynasty.

It is still a point debated by historians whether a strong military force from the East overran Egypt in c.1658 BCE or whether the transition from Egyptian rule to Hyksos rule was a gradual and comparatively peaceful process. There is evidence that the Hyksos were supported by many Egyptians who collaborated with the Hyksos and who even served in the Hyksos administration which lasted from c. 1658 – 1550 BCE. However, the vassal princes in Upper Egypt saw the Hyksos as usurpers and amassed forces to expel the enemy. This they achieved in c. 1550 BCE, after which it was possible to once again unite Upper and Lower Egypt.

This thesis probes the rule of the Hyksos and the influence they might have had on Egyptian culture. Part One (chapters 2-7) deals with the Hyksos *per se*: their origin, their rise to power, their rule, and how they were expelled. Part Two (chapters 8-12) investigates the Hyksos culture and has a close look at their architecture, arts and crafts, burial practices, warfare and weapons, and religion. Part Three (chapter 13) examines the influence the Hyksos might have had on Egyptian culture, with special attention to architecture, burial practices, arts and crafts, warfare and weapons, and religion.

Chapter 14 rounds off the thesis and comes to the conclusion that the Hyksos made very little impact on the Egyptian culture in general, but contributed greatly to Egypt's development in warfare and weapons, and also for a period exerted some influence on religious practices, especially in the Delta. Finally, the Hyksos contributed to Egypt's altered world vision by forcing them to shed their complacency, which in turn opened the way to expansionism in countries in the Near East.

Samevatting

Die tydperk tussen die Middel en Nuwe Koningryke in antieke Egipte staan bekend as die Tweede Intermediêre Periode. Gedurende hierdie periode het Egipte vir die eerste keer in sy geskiedenis selfbeskikking verloor en het sy inwoners onderhorig geword aan die Hiksos, 'n naam wat deur die geskiedskrywer Manetho in die tweede eeu V.C. vertaal is as 'herder-konings', maar wat in werklikheid 'prinse uit vreemde lande' beteken het.

Die woord 'Hiksos' het aanvanklik alleenlik na die heersers verwys, maar mettertyd het die betekenis van die term verbreed sodat dit nou verwys na die heersers, hul ondergeskiktes, hul kultuur, en alles wat op die tydperk betrekking het. Die Hiksos was nie 'n homogene nasie nie maar het bestaan uit groepe uit verskeie lande in die Nabye Ooste. Vir eeue reeds het Asiate Egipte ingesypel. Baie van hulle was nomade of trekboere op soek na weiding vir hul vee. Ander was slawe wat deel was van oorlogsbuit. Daar was ook Asiate in diens van die administrasie van Egipte wat diens gedoen het as skeepsbouers, myn ingenieurs en mynwerkers in die koper- en turkooismyne in Sinai. Al hierdie werkers is in die Delta gevestig want dit was die landstreek wat gerieflik geleë was vir bogenoemde aktiwiteite. Om verskeie redes was ander Asiate ook begerig om hulself in Egipte te vestig ten spyte van al Egipte se pogings om hul toegang tot die land te verhinder. Egipte se pogings was egter nie geslaagd nie want die forte op die grens tussen Sinai en Egipte het met die agteruitgang en val van die faraos in Egipte teen die einde van die Sewentiende Dinastie die pad oopgelaat vir die Asiate om Egipte binne te stroom.

Daar word vandag nog onder geskiedskrywers getwis oor hoe die Hiksos Egipte oorgeneem het. Sommige beweer dat daar 'n skielike inval van 'n sterk militêre mag was wat Egipte onverwags oorrompel het. Ander weer is van mening dat daar 'n geleidelike oornam van die land was deur die Asiate wat reeds in die Delta gewoon het, en wat versterk is deur die instroming van hul landgenote nadat die grens nie langer verdedig is nie. Hoe ook al, die Hiksos het met behulp van goedgesinde Egiptenare beheer van die land oorgeneem en tussen c. 1658 en 1550 VC die land regeer. Teen die einde van hierdie periode het onderhorige prinse in Tebes kragte saamgesnoer en die Hiksos uit die land verdryf, waarna die twee dele van Egipte herenig is.

Hierdie tesis ondersoek die heerskappy van die Hiksos in Egipte en hul invloed op die Egiptiese kultuur. In Deel Een (hoofstukke 2-7) word gekyk na die oorsprong van die Hiksos, hul oornam van mag in Egipte, hul bewind, en hul verdrywing uit Egipte deur die prinse van Tebes. In Deel Twee (hoofstukke 8-12) kom die kultuur van die Hiksos onder die loep: hul argitektuur, kuns en handwerk, begrafnisgewoontes, oorlogvoering en wapens, en relegie. Deel Drie (hoofstuk 13) ondersoek die moontlike invloed wat die Hiksos gehad het op gevestigde kultuur in Egipte, veral op die gebied van argitektuur, kuns en handwerk, oorlogvoering en wapens, en relegie.

Die tesis volstaan met hoofstuk 14, waarin tot die slotsom gekom word dat die invloed van die Hiksos op die algemene Egiptiese kultuur betreklik klein was. Hulle het egter grootliks bygedra het tot Egipte se ontwikkeling van wapens en metodes van oorlogvoering, en het tot 'n mate die relegie beïnvloed. Die Hiksos se grootste bydrae was egter dat hulle die wereldbeskouing van die Egiptenare verbreed het. Egipte het sy oogerustheid en selfvoldaanheid laat vaar en dit het die weg gebaan vir Egiptiese ekspansionisme in lande in die Ooste.

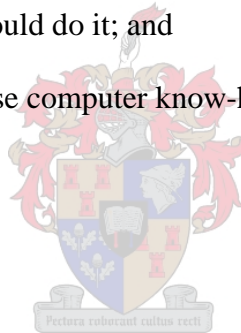
I should like to extend my sincere appreciation to the following persons:

My mentor Professor Sakkie Cornelius for the loan of books and articles, for his meticulous attention to detail, and for whipping me along when I became discouraged;

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FOREIGN RULERS ON THE NILE -

a reassessment of the cultural contribution of the Hyksos in Egypt

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Background

The traditional geographical borders of Egypt – the western and eastern deserts and the Sinai peninsula, the Mediterranean coast to the north and the cataracts in the Nile south of Aswan – were sufficient to protect Egypt's isolation and independence for thousands of years. Even so, the population of Egypt from the earliest times was of mixed racial types (negroid, Mediterranean and European)(Shaw 2003:309), confirming that there had always been a gradual infiltration of various peoples into Egypt. For much of their history the Egyptians saw themselves as midway between the black Africans and the paler Europeans. Linguistically the Egyptian tongue belonged to the Afro-Asiatic (previously called Hamito-Semitic) family of languages (Shaw 2003:309), linking the Egyptians not only to Africa and Europe but also to the Near East. Especially during the period from the late Middle Kingdom (c. 1750 BCE) onwards there was a sudden influx of peoples of a different physical type from Syro-Palestine into Egypt via the eastern Delta. The Egyptian people were willing to accept people from neighbouring countries in their midst, but as a nation they had been autonomous since the days of the first pharaohs and before, and they jealously guarded what they considered their own territory from mass insurgence by other nations. During the Twelfth Dynasty Senusret III (c. 1870-1831 BCE) built a series of fortresses at the fourth cataract of the Nile to keep the Nubians at bay and to give Egypt complete control of the southern region. During the same period the border between Sinai and the eastern Delta was also defended by a line of fortresses to keep out nomadic Asiatics. A fortress also seems to have been established at Wadi Natrum to protect the western Delta from the Libyans (Shaw 2003:313). The policy of defending its borders was maintained throughout the Middle Kingdom, but there came the time when, because of its weakened internal position, Egypt could no longer keep up its defenses. It was at this point in the late Middle Kingdom that the Asiatics living in the Delta and their compatriots in Syro-Palestine saw an opportunity to take over the rule of Egypt, heralding the rule of the Hyksos.

1.2 Motivation

From very early in their history, expeditions concerned with trade, quarrying and warfare brought the Egyptians into repeated contact with foreign nations. However, it was not simply a question of importing materials and commodities into Egypt. There was also a steady influx of people, especially during the late Middle Kingdom, which led to a distinctly cosmopolitan

and multicultural society, especially in the Delta. The tolerance of foreigners within Egyptian society was nevertheless accompanied by the continuity of the core values and beliefs of the native population. Egyptian culture was apparently strong enough and flexible enough not to be unduly affected by extrinsic influences.

Up to the middle of the seventeenth century BCE Egypt could distance itself from foreign influences since contact with nations abroad was selective and far removed in place. With the Hyksos take-over, however, the indigenous population of Egypt was forced to take a closer look at the foreigners who were now their masters. Would the Egyptians be coerced into accepting not only a new regime but also a foreign culture? Would they be compelled to forsake their own deities and follow those of strangers? Would they have to submit to unfamiliar laws, to the possibility of being killed or sold into slavery, and to all the other indignities and humiliations which usually accompany foreign rule?

The above are questions to which contradictory answers have been given by scholars of the Hyksos period. This is not surprising. Many antithetical writings have come down from the Egyptian side on the period c. 1658-1550 BCE. What might have been written by the Hyksos themselves had probably been destroyed by the Egyptians when they sacked Avaris and retook Lower Egypt.

Ongoing excavations since 1966 by Bietak and his team of archeologists at Tell el-Dab'a in the Delta have stimulated a renewed interest among scholars in Avaris and the Hyksos. This thesis is an attempt at looking at what has been gleaned from Bietak's excavations and from literary sources in order to arrive at some understanding of the Hyksos and their contribution to Egyptian culture.

1.3 Problem statement

In the third century BCE the Egyptian historian Manetho in his *Aegyptiaca* ("History of Egypt" – Waddell 1964:77-99) written in Greek (as preserved by the late 1st century AD Jewish historian Flavius Josephus in his *Contra Apionem*) preserved a very negative image of the Hyksos when he described their actions as follows: "... they thereafter savagely burned the cities and demolished the gods' shrines. They treated the inhabitants most hatefully, slaughtering some, and leading into slavery the children and wives of others" (Kuhrt 2002:175).

From the writings of the Eighteenth Dynasty onwards we have the picture of the Hyksos as usurpers, imitators, cruel oppressors of their Egyptian underlings, lovers of war, and avaricious barbarians cutting the Egyptians off from the sea by leveling inordinate taxes on ships passing a certain point in the river Nile. All these make for a very negative picture of the Hyksos, but one has to bear in mind that these writings came only from the Egyptian side, whose feelings of national pride were reawakened when first the Theban prince Kamose of Dynasty Seventeen and after him Ahmose rebelled against the Hyksos who were finally driven out of Egypt after skirmishes and warfare lasting about thirty years. Furthermore, most of these writings were penned long after the Hyksos were expelled and can be seen as negative propaganda against the usurpers in order to save Egyptian face.

With serious and systematic archeological excavations in the Delta a completely new picture has started to emerge, placing the Hyksos in a much more favourable light. From their countries of origin the Asiatic brought their own rich cultures, but over the approximately 100

years of their rule they absorbed much of the Egyptian culture so that eventually their culture was a mixture between their own and that of the Egyptians, and towards the end of their rule they were probably more 'Egyptianized' than they are being given credit for.

But were the Hyksos really as 'foreign' to the Egyptians as the writers after the event made them out to be? The Egyptians residing in the Delta had been mingling with Asiatics on home soil for probably hundreds of years, and many native Egyptians were not opposed to the Hyksos take-over at the time. On the contrary, they offered the Hyksos unstinting support and carried on with their own lives as if nothing untoward had happened.

Upper Egypt and Thebes, on the other hand, never had such close contact with the Asiatics, except that perhaps they might have had slaves of Asiatic origin. Their relationship with foreigners was never as close as that of the Egyptians living in the Delta. Also, after the Hyksos take-over the Egyptians in Upper Egypt were more or less left on their own, except that they were now no longer autonomous but vassals of the Hyksos kings. To the Thebans, the Hyksos were unwelcome foreigners, and because of the Hyksos, Egypt was now a divided country, with the unity of Upper and Lower Egypt violated. Those living in Upper Egypt could not as readily accept Hyksos rule as did their compatriots in Lower Egypt.

The problems I aim to address in this thesis are a) to assess the cultural contribution of the Hyksos and b) to determine the extent to which the Egyptians were influenced by the Hyksos culture. From the above one might assume that the Hyksos influence was stronger in the Delta than in Upper Egypt. But was this really the case? As this thesis progresses we shall find out to what extent a firm answer can be given to the problems stated above.

1.4 Research methodology

Hall and Giebel (1992:230) quote Williams (1983:87) on culture:

Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language ... This is so partly because of its intricate historical development in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought.

Hall and Giebel (1992:231ff) explain the change in the meaning of the word in the following manner. The word 'culture', they say, can be seen as encompassing political, economical and social spheres of societies. It refers to the whole texture of society and to the way language, symbols, meanings, beliefs and values organize social practices.

To complicate matters further, the meaning of the term has changed from its first use in writings of the fifteenth century AD when it referred to the tending of crops and looking after animals (horticulture and agriculture). In the seventeenth century the word became associated with abstract concepts, and thus with the cultivation of minds and manners. Culture and civilization became synonymous. The Enlightenment concept of culture was that it was a universal process, a general process of social development which all societies would pass through. Herder (as quoted by Hall and Giebel 1992:232) saw it necessary to speak of 'cultures' in the plural, referring to distinctive ways of life, of shared values and meanings common to a group in a certain historical period. This idea links up with and shares its meaning with social anthropology when it refers to shared meanings within groups and

nations. These include cultural beliefs, moral values, symbols and ideas shared collectively by members of the group.

To investigate the cultural contribution of the Hyksos in Egypt during the period c. 1658-1550 BCE and the period preceding it, we should see the Hyksos culture as a process of social, historical and political self-development. This idea may seem far-fetched at first since the Hyksos were the conquerors and the Egyptians the conquered. One should keep in mind, however, that the Hyksos were not a homogenous group, probably composed of several west-Asian nations which did not have a common culture. This strongly contrasts with what they found in Egypt – one nation with a strong, shared culture, although politically divided and weak, and lacking strong leadership.

Hall and Giebel (1992:232) suggest that one should distinguish between what culture is (the accepted older 'definition' of culture) and what culture does (the later ideas of culture introduced by social anthropology). One finds here a shift in emphasis, concentrating on the symbolic dimensions of culture. This second approach sees culture as a social practice, encompassing all values and meanings common to a group. In this thesis, Hyksos culture will be examined for both what it was and for what it did. The latter is rather more important since the important consideration in this thesis is the influence (or lack of it) of the Hyksos on Egyptian culture.

1.5 Research method and design

This thesis will encompass three distinct sections. Part One will place the Hyksos in context and will deal mainly with historical events, real or invented. It will examine the Hyksos *per se*: their origin, their rise to power, their rule, and how they were expelled. Part Two will be concerned with the Hyksos culture, and will examine, among other aspects, their architecture, arts and crafts, burial practices, warfare and weapons, and religious practices. Part Three will discuss Egypt's legacy from the Hyksos and will focus mainly on the changes in Egyptian architecture and tombs, arts and crafts, warfare and weapons, religion, and the altered perceptions of the Egyptians concerning their role in the international arena. The thesis will end with some concluding comments.

The city of Avaris and other Hyksos sites in the Delta had been obliterated by the Egyptians after the Hyksos had been expelled, and one now has to rely on archeological excavations for information on much of the Hyksos culture. In this respect several articles by Bietak in encyclopedias and elsewhere had been consulted, as well as his seminal work dealing with the excavations at Avaris in his book entitled *Avaris the Capital of the Hyksos* (1996). Van Seters' *The Hyksos: a new perspective* (1966)(although slightly outdated) was most useful in supplying information on the Hyksos history as well as on several cultural aspects. Shaw's *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2003), a compendium by several hands, was a real treasure trove, not only on the Hyksos themselves but also on the periods prior to and immediately following the Second Intermediate Period. Warfare and weapons were well covered from various angles by Yadin (1955 and 1963), Schulman (1980), Spalinger (2003), Philip (1995) and Partridge (2002), while Dunand and Zivie-Coche (2004), Cornelius (1994 and 2004) and Ions (1982) supplied invaluable information on the religious practices and iconography of both the Hyksos and the Egyptians. Other authors whose works were very useful in my research were Knapp (1988), Kemp (1998), Kuhrt (2002) and contributors to various encyclopedias such as Weinstein (1992, 1997 & 2001), Holladay (1997), and Redford (1992,

1993 & 2001), and editors of conference papers: Rainey (1987) and Davies & Schofield (1995).

While the authors cited do not agree on all aspects of the Hyksos' sojourn in Egypt and often directly contradict one another, enough room is left for the serious student of the Hyksos period to draw his own conclusions concerning this time-span. With more research by Egyptologist and further excavations of Hyksos sites, a clearer picture may in time emerge of the Hyksos rule and their cultural contribution to Egypt during the period c.1658-1550 BCE. Until such time, we will have to avail ourselves of what has already been written on them.



PART ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE HYKSOS

... history is always written by the winners. When two cultures clash, the loser is obliterated, and the winners write the history books – books which glorify their own cause and disparage the conquered foe. As Napoleon once said, 'What is history but a fable agreed upon?' By its very nature, history is always a one-sided account (Brown 2003:256).

Chapter 2 - History

2.1 The early period

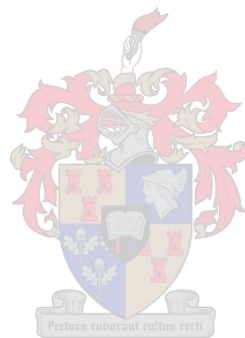
From the beginning of time Egypt has been sleeping along the Nile. Its geographic position afforded it splendid seclusion. Gods from the spirit world watched over and ruled the land, observing how the sparse inhabitants grew in number, settled in hamlets on the river banks, then grouped themselves into incipient states under leaders who fought among themselves for supremacy.

In the spirit world the gods had problems of their own. In a fit of jealousy Seth murdered his brother Osiris who died without issue. Isis, Osiris' sister-wife, gathered the shattered pieces of her husband's body and put them together again. By the miraculous intervention of the gods Isis bore Osiris' son, the falcon-headed Horus who later became the embodiment of the Egyptian kings. In a battle with Seth to avenge his father's death, Horus emerged triumphantly. Seth, because of his treacherous nature, became the antagonist to order and was held responsible for storms, hostile nature and the desert, and the exotic character of foreign gods (Kemp 1998:52). Seth agreed to the divine judgement against him and was thenceforth seen as the negative force in the struggle between good and evil in the ideal balance of harmony.

Along the Nile stronger rulers continued to subdue weaker ones until Menes, around 3100 BCE, became the first king with a recorded history to unite the hitherto divided Upper Egypt in the south and Lower Egypt in the north. The gods considered this a suitable time for transition between gods and a mortal king, and infused the multi-layered office of kingship with qualities and traits formerly only attributed to the gods. The now omnipotent king was responsible for *ma'at* which stood for justice, piety and the conquest of unruly. To maintain order was paramount. This the king managed through loyal officials, many of them nobles. They, in turn, conveyed the king's indisputable supremacy and power to the common people who unquestioning accepted the office of kingship as instituted by the gods, and the king himself as descending from the gods themselves, which made him a demigod.

The period from Menes onward later became known as the Old Kingdom. It was a period of the consolidation of the different states and the division of the Nile into different provinces or nomes, each with its own governor or nomarch who was directly responsible to the king, and later to the vizier who was the king's second in command. The nomarchs were responsible for

local concerns such as the digging of canals for irrigation, distributing food and overseeing the conscription of peasants.



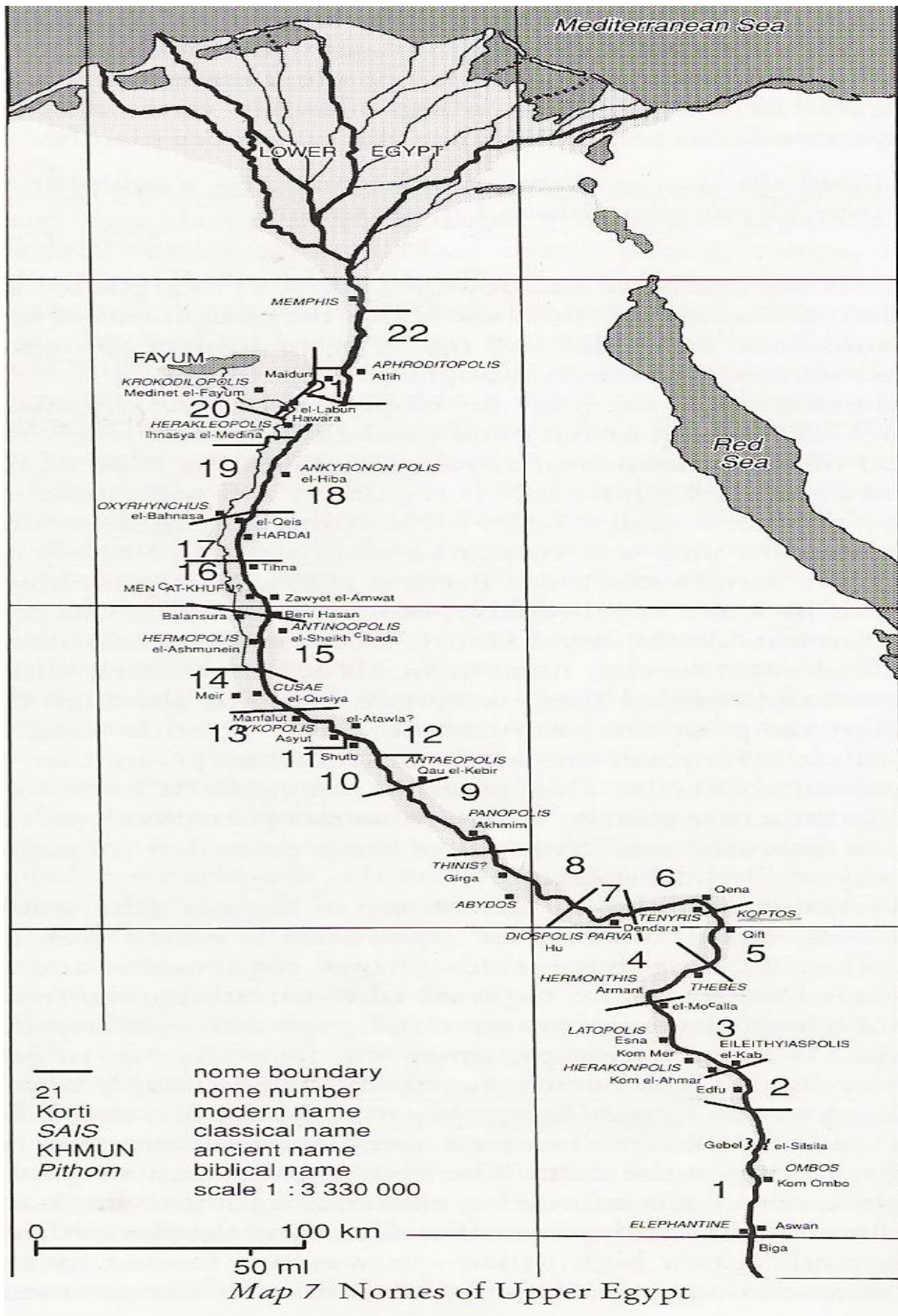


Fig. 1 - Nomes of Upper Egypt (Kuhrt 2002:152)

A successive line of kings from the same family became known as a Dynasty. A new Dynasty came into being when the previous family came to the end of its line, or through usurpation by a strong contender who, with the throne, inherited all the attributes which kingship could lay claim to.

The Old Kingdom encompassed six dynasties. The kings of the Fourth Dynasty were the first builders of pyramids, magnificent structures many of which are still in existence. These served as tombs for the kings and overawed the common populace, much as they still do today. By the end of the Old Kingdom some twenty pyramids had been built, but after the big three at Giza the pyramids diminished in size as gradually did the power of the reigning monarchs. This was due to the growing power of the nomarchs who began to claim hereditary status and refused to report to the king in person. At the same time Egypt was also struck by economic and agricultural disasters. As the Nile failed repeatedly during this period to reach adequate flood height, resulting in food shortages and famine, so the people's belief in the king's divine powers dwindled. Towards the end of the Sixth Dynasty, Pepi II outlived all his male heirs after a rule of 94 years, and when a female pharaoh, Nitocris, ascended the throne, there was a rapid decline in the central government. As in the beginning of Egypt's history, the country was fragment into minor kingdoms that fought among themselves for supremacy while violence, general disorder and anarchy became the order of the day. For the 100 years or so of the First Intermediate Period, Egypt was a land in turmoil. The petty kings in the north constituted Dynasties Nine and Ten, and kings from Thebes in Upper Egypt, Dynasty Eleven. For roughly sixty years during this period there was intermitted fighting until the kings of Thebes prevailed and once more laid claim to both Upper and Lower Egypt. With the advent of the Middle Kingdom the divine force of *ma'at* once again instilled harmony, peace and stability in an Egypt torn by civil strife. It could again resume its foreign trade, reinstate its laws and straighten out its neglected agriculture. But the office of kingship had become suspect. It was no longer revered by the common people to the same extent as during the Old Kingdom when Egypt had been a model of order, a continuous succession of reigns of kings and a direct line of sequence. The pious regard for kings was partially restored with the reign of Mentuhotep II of the Twelfth Dynasty (c. 2060-2011 BC) who resumed state building projects and foreign trade and expeditions. The succeeding kings again directed all political, economical and religious activities in the Egyptian state. Peasants returned to the cultivation of lands and the implementation of state-imposed demands. In time, centralized control was firmly reestablished over all the nomes. *Ma'at* was restored in all Egypt.

In c. 1963 BCE King Amenemhet I of the Middle Kingdom usurped the throne. He was of non-royal birth and unacceptable to many Egyptians. He turned to the nomarchs for support of his rule after reinstating many of their privileges removed by his predecessors. He also made his son Senusert I coregent to ensure smooth succession. This created a precedent which became practice in ensuing years. He fostered and maintained good relations and trade with Syria, Palestine, Anatolia and the Aegean.

Once the Dynasty was firmly established, the support of the nomarchs was no longer of paramount importance. Senusert I made sweeping administrative reforms and the nomarchs were again stripped of their prerogatives. In this way the nobility was suppressed, and the office of vizier was reinstated. In time viziers and their growth in power were to introduce new problems for the office of kingship. Initially, however, there was a vast need for personnel to assist in the running of the new administration, and so an Egyptian middle class came into being, consisting of officials, merchants, artisans and the like in service of the state. They, too, would eventually threaten kingship. Instead of having only the royal nomarchs as antagonists, two new enemies came to take their place.

2.2 The rise of the Hyksos

Egypt, always more or less isolated, felt threatened by the insurgence of wandering nomads. A series of fortresses were built both in the south to contain the Nubians, and in the north to head off the Asiatics who entered Egypt in growing numbers from before 1800 onwards, offering their services on a variety of fronts. The northern fortresses also ensured a safe passage to the copper and turquoise mines in the Sinai peninsula. Gradually the Delta gained in importance, especially with a permanent garrison stationed at Hierakonpolis.

The kingdom became increasingly difficult to administer. Senusert III, for the sake of convenience, divided the country into three major geographic departments or *w'rts* (Van Seters, 1966:93 ff; Knapp, 1998:163). The northern *w'rt* included the nome of Memphis and the whole of the Delta, the southern *w'rt* occupied Middle Egypt, and the "Head of the South" covered the area of Thebes and the six adjoining nomes. Itj-tawa, the capital built by Amenemhet I at the onset of the Twelfth Dynasty, just south of Memphis, was supported by Thebes as a secondary administrative capital, while the most southern *w'rt* probably had no independent administrative centre.

The town of Khata'ana in the eastern Delta gained in importance, chiefly because it was the base for expeditions to Sinai and Asia, and also because it was situated on a caravan route. This was also the region where most of the Asiatics in Egypt had settled from before 1800 BC onwards. In the Thirteenth Dynasty, under weak kings, the dynastic rule was replaced by some sort of "election" to the office of pharaoh for an indefinite period of time. Van Seters (1966:95) speculates that some of those chosen in the northern *w'rt* might sometimes have been military commanders and sometimes Asiatics who had established themselves in positions of importance in the eastern Delta, although this cannot be established beyond doubt.

Even in the time of the Old Kingdom Egypt had had active commercial links with the Levant, Sinai, Lebanon and Crete. Ships crossed the Mediterranean departing from Herakleopolis which was situated on the coast, trading surplus Egyptian grain for hardwood from Lebanon, oil and wine from the Levant, and luxury goods from wherever available. It was to Egypt's advantage to maintain good diplomatic relationships with its trading partners, but there is evidence of occasional hostility with parts of Palestine (Kuhrt, 2002:171).

Some fifty kilometers upstream from Hierakonpolis, on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, was the town of Khata'ana. It was strategically placed for both river and overland travel. The Horus Road leading to Sinai originated there, giving Asiatic nomads traveling to Egypt the first taste of urbanized Egypt. Many stayed there for longer or shorter periods of time, and their numbers were swelled by prisoners of war or captives. These were probably employed as soldiers (an old Egyptian custom) or as workers in the mines in Sinai, and settled in barracks or camps near Khata'ana.

Bietak (1996) refers to these Asiatics as "Canaanites" since they spoke a west-Semitic language. However, they might have come from other Near Eastern countries as well. Bourriau (2003:174) posits that the contemporary term used to distinguish the Asiatics from the Egyptians was *aamu*, a term still used long after the Second Intermediate Period had come to an end, to denote the inhabitants of Syro-Palestine. In time, however, these people became known as 'Hyksos', a misnomer since the name originally referred only to their rulers who were called *heqau khasut*, meaning 'rulers of foreign (lit. mountainous) countries'. In itself the

term held no pejorative meaning, except to denote a lower status than that of the Egyptian king.

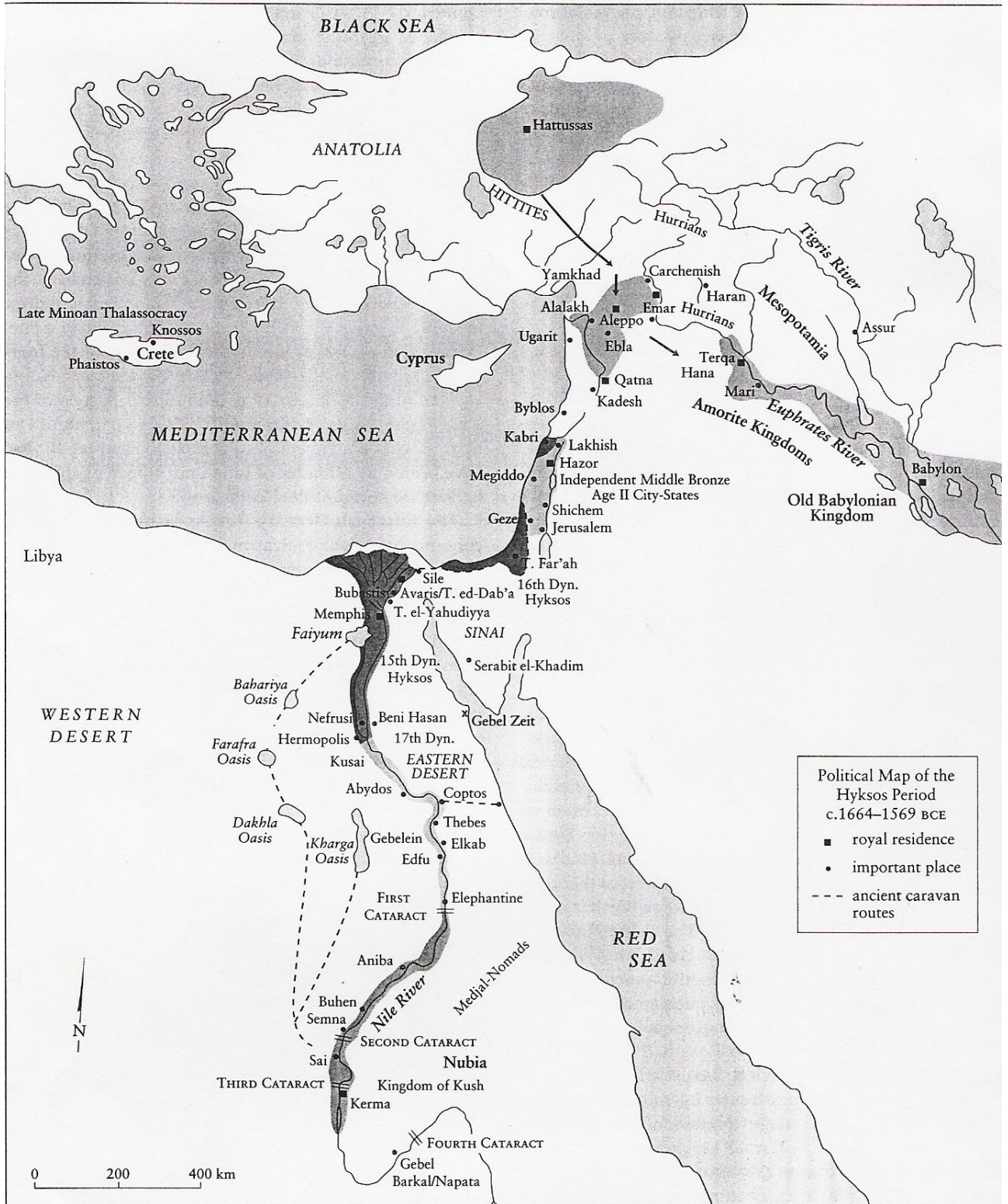


Fig. 2 - Map of the Nile Valley and Palestine in the Second Intermediate Period (Bourriau 2003:189)

2.3 Avaris

The town of Avaris was founded in c. 1725 BCE northwest of Khata'ana and situated on a series of *geziras* or turtlebacks adjacent to it. Turtlebacks were excellent areas for settlement since they stayed above the waterline of the annual Nile inundations. Avaris, situated on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, was protected on the east by an enormous drainage system with an opening to the north which allowed the Horus Road to continue towards it (Bietak, 1996:3). The marshes to the east teemed with wildlife of all description – hippopotami, crocodiles, fish, birds, gazelles, wild boar and wild cattle – which made it a hunter's paradise.

What used to be the town of Avaris is now known as Tell el-Dab'a, the site of the excavations by Bietak and his Austrian team since 1966 (Bietak, 1996). These excavations show a growing presence, basically within an Egyptian town, of a non-Egyptian population group with strong Levantine links. They also show that the town expanded enormously in the late seventeenth century which coincides approximately with the time when Dynasty Fifteen of the Hyksos assumed control over Egypt (Kuhrt, 2002:179). Avaris became the seat from which the Hyksos kings ruled .

2.4 Who were the Hyksos?

The Hyksos were not a single or simple phenomenon. They might or might not have been heralded by a foreign army from the Levant or elsewhere that conquered Egypt overnight. What we have is the steady growth in numbers of people from different Near East countries who gradually settled in Egypt and made it their home. When the central government of Egypt faltered at the end of the Thirteenth Dynasty, the Hyksos gradually extended their sphere of influence and filled the void left by the absence of Egyptian rule. This was the beginning of the Second Intermediate Period.

Bourriau (2003:172) defines the Second Intermediate Period as the time when Egypt was fragmented into Two Lands. The beginning of the period was marked by the abandonment by the Egyptian government of the Residence at Lisht just south of Memphis, and the establishment of the royal court at Thebes. The end of the period is marked by the attack on Avaris by Ahmose, king of Thebes, and by the capitulation of the Hyksos. The dates of Hyksos rule differ from scholar to scholar, but is generally taken to have been from c. 1658-1550 BCE. The Egyptian government, however, faltered long before Hyksos rule, at about the end of the eighteenth century BCE. Hyksos rule did not encompass all of Egypt, nor was it a world empire as is suggested in older books (Van Seters 1966:194), but fanned out from the Delta to as far as Cusae on the Nile close to Memphis. Up the Nile southwards Egypt was still under control of the Theban kings, but this was the first time in Egyptian history that part of the country was under foreign rule. Egypt still had control of the country from Thebes southwards, but the country was probably fragmented into smaller kingdoms. King Kamose of the Seventeenth Dynasty, ruling from Thebes, was the first to challenge the power of the Hyksos, and after him King Ahmose, founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Eventually, after about thirty years of intermitted fighting, Avaris was overcome and the Hyksos rulers were driven from Egypt.

During the period from the Thirteenth Dynasty to the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty, several parties ruled Egypt simultaneously. Kuhrt (2002:175) gives a very lucid schematic exposition of the rulers in Egypt during this period.

EGYPT FROM DYNASTY I TO DYNASTY XVII

Table 14 Chronology of the Second Intermediate Period

<i>Upper Egypt</i>	<i>Middle Egypt</i>	<i>Lower Egypt</i>
	Dynasty XIII (1785/1783–c. 1648)	
		Dynasty XIV (c. 1720–c. 1648)
Dynasty XVII (c. 1648–1552)	Dynasty XV ('Hyksos') (c. 1648–1540)	
Kamose	and 'dynasty XVI' (c. 1648–1540?)	
	Dynasty XVIII	

Fig 3 - Chronology of the Second Intermediate Period (Kuhrt 2002:175)

In studying the Second Intermediate Period, two types of sources are available, and these have to be integrated to arrive at a more or less acceptable picture. The first is the study of literary sources. These include the Turin Canon, a compilation of preexisting king lists at Memphis during the reign of Ramesses II, Manetho's *Aegyptica*, written in the third century BC, too far removed in time to be trusted and surviving only in fragments, and contemporary and later royal inscriptions written as propaganda. However, the royal inscriptions had often been removed from their original contexts. Most of the royal stelae at Thebes were broken and reused in later buildings, while at Avaris inscribed stones of the Hyksos kings were found in strata to which they did not belong, or they were carried off to distant locations. Then there are also private inscriptions, particularly 'funerary biographies', records of administration, and finally literary and scientific texts such as Papyrus Sallier I and the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus (Bourriau 2003:173).

From later archeological sources scholars also did not arrive a clear picture, due to patchy excavations by early explorers and poor survival of, for instance, mud brick structures and their foundations in the Delta. In recent times excavations are conducted much more scientifically, such as Bietak's work at Tell el-Dab'a, but exposing a lost city is slow work and it is hampered by agricultural practices and modern urbanization which encroach on the sites under excavation.

What we do surmise about the Second Intermediate Period is that there was rivalry between the Egyptians and the Hyksos, that the Hyksos ruled the northern part of Egypt for about a hundred years, and that they were finally expelled. The task now at hand is firstly to investigate the origin of the Hyksos, their rise to power and their rule, and how they were finally driven off. Next the Hyksos culture will be scrutinized – their towns, houses and temples, their burial customs, their arts and crafts, and their weapons and military technology, as well as their religion and administration. Finally an assessment of the foregoing will be made in an attempt to determine the Hyksos influence on Egyptian culture. Were the Hyksos mere usurpers, imitators and cruel oppressors of the Egyptians and Egyptian culture as history has led us to believe? Or did they make a positive contribution during their brief stay in Egypt? That is the problem this thesis aims to address.

Chapter 3 - Avaris / Tell el Dab'a

Two matters have to be discussed before we come to the Hyksos and their rule. The first is the city of Avaris, erstwhile capital city of the Hyksos. The second finds itself in the same geographical location and also deals with Avaris, but is the now defunct Avaris called Tell el-Dab'a, the archeological site excavated by a team supported by the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research, the Austrian Foundation for Science and Research, and the Austrian Academy of Sciences. The most prominent member of this team is Manfred Bietak, Professor of Egyptology at the University of Vienna, and Director of the Austrian Archeological Institute in Cairo.

3.1 Avaris

Stray finds from the Naqada III period and the beginning of the First Dynasty show that the site of the settlement which was later to become Avaris was already inhabited in the fourth millennium, possibly by nomads crossing the border from the Sinai in search of pasture for their flocks. The Delta boasted fertile land, and initially their passage was unhindered.

The origin of the settlement at Avaris was the result of a planned royal settlement foundation of King Amenemhat I (c. 1963-1934 BCE) of the Twelfth Dynasty to the east of the Pelusiac branch of the Nile in the north-eastern Delta. It probably replaced an older royal foundation of the Herakleopolitan period of King Khety (Bietak 1997:99). Soon afterwards the new settlement began on the southeastern bank of the Pelusiac at 'Ezbet Rushdie es-Saghia. In the late Twelfth Dynasty a community from Syro-Palestinian descent settled there, which led to a considerable enlargement of the town. Most were workmen, probably soldiers, but there were also sailors, shipbuilders and craftsmen in Egyptian service. Egypt had a lucrative maritime trade with countries bordering the Mediterranean, and the maintenance of old and the building of new ships must have been a priority. Also, Egypt had extensive mining operations going in the Sinai, and miners and mining experts were always in demand to extract copper and precious stones.

During the Thirteenth Dynasty the settlement to the east of the Pelusiac was enlarged and probably served trading and mining expeditions. A palatial building erected at this time was probably the residence of Egyptian officials. The title 'Overseer of Foreign Countries' was found on an official amethyst and gold seal (Bietak 1997:99) and some of them might have been 'Expedition Leaders' (Bietak 2001:351). While the tombs of the residential officials display Egyptian funerary architectural traditions, other tombs display Asiatic influences, such as donkey burials and weapons from the Middle Bronze Age.

One of the several kings of Asiatic origin took the throne for a short time during the Thirteenth Dynasty under Senusert I's new administration. His name was 'Amusa Homedjherjotef (Bietak 1997:99). It is likely that he was a native of the settlement. His statue was found in a funerary chapel at the palace, together with statues of the last ruler of the Twelfth Dynasty, the female pharaoh Sobeknefru. There was also a colossal smashed limestone statue of a seated Asiatic dignitary with a red mushroom-shaped hairstyle, holding a throw-stick against his shoulder. The destroyed statue and the sudden abandonment of the palace suggest internal political turmoil during the Thirteenth Dynasty. Soon afterwards, the material culture and specific tomb types suggest that new immigrants had moved in. The

settlement grew steadily in size, especially during the second half of the eighteenth century BCE, but soon afterwards the eastern suburbs were abandoned, probably due to an epidemic that struck the town, judging from the many shallow graves.

However, the town was strategically much too important to be abandoned altogether. Situated as it was on the river with easy access to the Mediterranean, the settlement became an important harbour town serving the trade between Egypt and the Levant. In due course a sacred precinct was constructed in the eastern part of the town, consisting of two temples of Near Eastern type and mortuary temples of the Egyptian type, with adjoining cemeteries. It was probably during this time that King Nehesy or his unnamed father separated from the reigning Thirteenth Dynasty and established a small kingdom with its capital at Avaris, as the settlement had now been named (Bietak 2001: 352). The Egyptian storm god Seth was introduced as this new-found dynasty's god. Seth is to be equated with the Syrian storm god Hadad/Ba'al-Zaphon, whose cult was already established in the eastern Delta.

The city of Avaris developed at a steady pace. At first an egalitarian pattern prevailed, but in time this gave way to social differentiation. On the same plot bigger houses became surrounded by smaller dwellings, signifying the position of overlord and underlings. With the onset of the Fourteenth Dynasty the town expanded considerably, with a gradual internal density. New settlements developed around the city at the eastern edge of the Delta. This development can be ascribed to a population influx, probably from the southern Levant, but perhaps some 'Egyptianized' groups who had previously settled in other parts of Egypt came to the eastern Delta, contributing to a 'homeland' for the Hyksos rule in Egypt (Bietak 2001:352).

Towards the end of the Hyksos period a huge citadel was constructed at the western edge of Avaris, along the eastern bank of the Pelusiac. This land had not previously been used. A mud brick buttressed enclosure was built along the river with a wall 6.2 m. wide, later extended to 8,4 m. wide at its base. This structure might have been the town wall or the citadel's enclosure. Gardens, trees and vines were planted inside the enclosure. Inside the citadel was another huge building enclosed by a buttressed wall. Royal inscriptions on some of the stone blocks signify that this was a royal citadel (Bietak 2001:352-3).

King Ahmose of the Eighteenth Dynasty conquered but did not sack Avaris in c.1550 BCE. The major part of the town was abandoned, but it was only in the destroyed citadel that evidence of violence had been found.

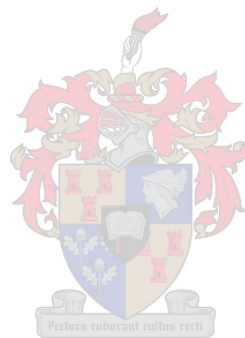
From the Twenty-first Dynasty onwards the site served as a quarry for building materials, especially stone blocks, and its monumental statues conveyed there from other parts of Egypt were used to decorate the new buildings and residences at Tanis, Bubastis and Leontopolis (Bietak 2001:352).

3.2 Tell el-Dab'a

Much of the above information would have been lost to us, had it not been for the excavations of archeologists, not only in Egypt, but also in Syro-Palestine. These areas should not each be seen in isolation, since together they supply the background needed for the origin and rule of the Hyksos. Also, they all supply information on the Middle Bronze Age in those particular parts of the world.

Soundings at Tell el-Dab'a were begun in 1885 by Edouard Naville for the Egypt Exploration Fund. In 1928 Mahmud Hamza started excavations in the area of Qantir to the north of Tell el-Dab'a and suggested it be identified with the site of Piramesse, the Delta residence of the Nineteenth Dynasty. In 1941-42 the site attract the attention of Labib Habachi, an inspector of antiquities, who suggested Tell ed-Dab'a be identified with Avaris. He also endorsed the view of Mahmud Hamza that Qantir was the erstwhile Ramesside city.

Pierre Montet (1957) and others offered the theory that Avaris and Piramesse were located at Tanis, and this surmise was followed by the majority of Egyptologists. However, from 1966 to 1969 and again from 1975 onward, Manfred Bietak and his team carried out systematic excavations at the site of Tell el-Dab'a for the Archeological Institute of Austria, Cairo Department (Bietak 1997:99) and proved beyond doubt that Tell el-Dab'a is indeed what had been the city of Avaris. To date Tell el-Dab'a is the only urban Middle Bronze Age settlement excavated in Egypt, only one of two sites (the other is Tell Farasha) to produce MB IIA materials, the only stratified Egyptian site with continuous Asiatic occupation from the late Twelfth Dynasty to the end of the Second Intermediate Period, and the source of more Syro-Palestine finds in the Second Intermediate Period context than all the other sites combined (Weinstein 1995:84).



main site, equates historically with King Ahmose's capture of Avaris at the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The event probably occurred in the eleventh year of the king's reign, c. 1550 BCE.

The initial phase of Asiatic occupation at this site is represented by stratum H = d/2 and belongs to the later part of the Twelfth Dynasty, perhaps to the reign of King Amenemhet III. The time-span between the beginning and the end of the sequence is 270 years, which Bietak calculates as follows: He divides the 270 years of occupation by the nine strata found in the excavation. The resulting 30 years is an adequate lifespan for a single building 'generation'. He concedes that some buildings and strata lasted longer than others, but all the same he gives the absolute dates for the Tell A strata as follows:

Stratum	Dates BCE
H	1800 - 1770
G/4	1770 - 1750
G/1-3	1750 - 1710
F	1710 - 1680
E/3	1680 - 1650
E/2	1650 - 1620
E/1	1620 - 1590
D/3	1590 - 1560
D/2	1560 - 1540/30

(Weinstein 1995:85).

Many Syro-Palestinian archeologists and Egyptologists are inconvenienced by this grouping since there is no reason why a major building project should be required every thirty years for almost three centuries. Also, Bietak's views on the comparative chronology of Egypt and Palestine are cause for debate. In this thesis, however, Bietak's dating will be followed.

Pectora roborant cultus recti

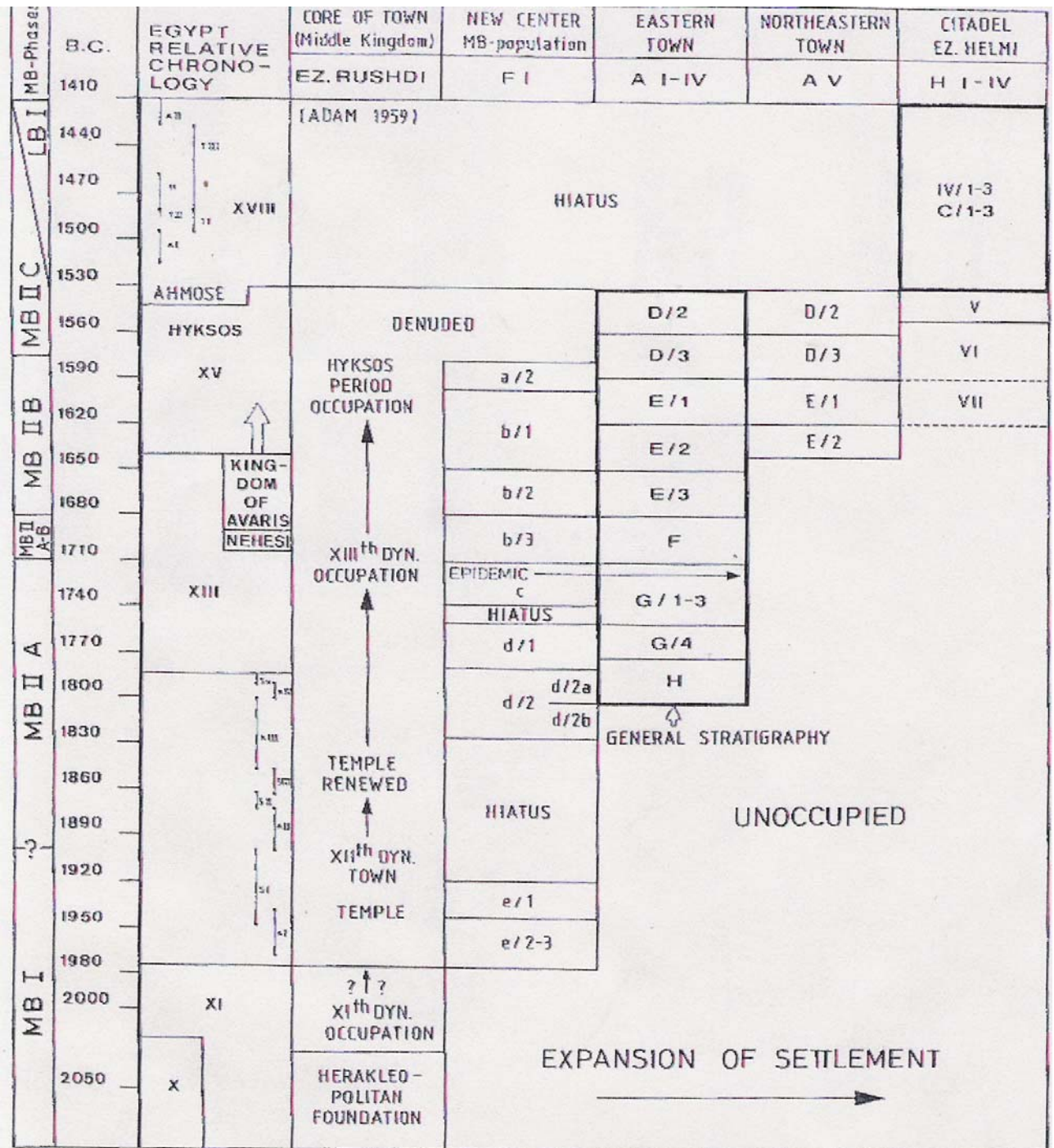


Fig. 5 - Schematic stratigraphy of Avaris (Bietak 1996:6)

Details of Bietak's finds and findings will form part of the next chapters.

Chapter 4 - The origins of the Hyksos

4.1 Literature review

When reading through the available published sources, one is struck by repeated words and phrases such as 'apparently', 'possibly', 'probably', 'it seems', 'almost certainly', 'it must/might have been', 'it may be suggested', 'maybe' and several other expressions in similar vein. It would seem that, in discussing the Hyksos, most of these published experts find themselves at times on shifting sands. Concededly, the history of the Hyksos is well but contradictory documented, and what little is available is very one-sided since almost everything that belonged to the Hyksos was destroyed by vengeful Egyptians. Since this thesis is not an on-site exploration, this section will be a mere summing up and sorting of the available published sources.

4.1.1 The name 'Hyksos'

There certainly is some confusion around the epithet 'Hyksos'. Manetho, a Greek historian (c. 3rd century BCE) referred to the foreign *rulers* as Hyksos, which he transcribed as 'shepherd kings', conjuring up rulers of a nomadic people. However, the term is made up of the Egyptian words *hk3 h3sw*, correctly interpreted as 'rulers of foreign lands', or, via the Greek, from the Egyptian epithet *hekau khasut*, 'rulers of foreign (lit. mountainous) countries' (Bourriau 2003:174).

The term Hyksos was initially applied only to the rulers of the Asiatics in the eastern Delta and in itself had no negative meaning except to denote a lower status than that of the Egyptian king. This term was used by Egyptians and Asiatic kings alike (Bourriau 2003:174). The Asiatic people of Avaris were referred to as *aamu* to distinguish them from the Egyptians. It was a term used long before the Second Intermediate Period and was still used during the Eighteenth Dynasty at the Battle of Kadesh to denote the inhabitants of Syro-Palestine.

Van Seters (1966:188-189) gives a lengthy description of the term Hyksos. He holds that, in Egyptian literature, the term *'3mw* is used to designate the foreign population in Egypt during the Hyksos period. The origin of the term is difficult to establish since it is not a generic adjective derived from the name of a territory and therefore even the term 'Asiatics' is misleading. *'3mw* is also not an occupational term as it is restricted to the population of the Levant and refers to both sedentary and nomadic peoples.

The term *'3mw* first made its appearance in the late Sixth Dynasty when it referred to a sedentary group of Asiatics, but without defining the location of their settlement (Van Seters 1966:188). In *Instructions for Merikare*, written during the First Intermediate Period, *'3mw* is used to describe the semi-nomadic population of Palestine (Van Seters 1966:189). In the Middle Kingdom the term was used consistently to designate the ethnic population of Syro-Palestine as on the famous scene from Beni Hasan (Pritchard 1969: Fig. 3), and the ethnic epithets *'3m* and *'3m.t* to distinguish the Asiatic slaves from Egyptian slaves in the late Middle Kingdom. In every case, foreign names of *'3mw* were always of the west-Semitic type (Van Seters 1966:189).

The fact that the foreign population of Egypt and its leaders in the Hyksos period were called by the same name as they were during the Middle Kingdom strongly suggests that the

Egyptians recognized a direct ethnic and cultural continuity with those of Syro-Palestine in the Middle Kingdom. The same use of *'3mw* continued for the early part of the New Kingdom.

In the Turin Canon the term Hyksos is used for the six principal rulers of the Fifteenth Dynasty (Van Seters 1966:187). The name applied to the rulers only and was not an ethnic designation for the foreigners. In revising Manetho's texts, Josephus, a Jewish historian of the first century AD, applied the term to the foreign people as a whole, rulers and commoners alike. In the Middle Kingdom text, *Story of Sinuhe*, the term refers to the rulers of Syro-Palestine, and in the New Kingdom the term occurs on the stela of Amenhotep II alongside the name "princes of Retjenu" (Van Seters 1966:188), Retjenu being Syro-Palestine.

Van Seters (1966:3) criticizes archeologists of the past for abusing the term Hyksos by employing it to describe certain cultural aspects in Palestine, Syria and Egypt, as in Hyksos pottery, Hyksos scarabs and so on. In his opinion, the use the term Hyksos as an ethnical term, or to designate a style or type, has created great confusion. He suggests that the term be used only to refer to foreign rulers in Egypt. Josephus, however, applies the term to the Asiatic people of the Second Intermediate period as a whole and to everything that had to do with their rule. To follow Josephus, in this thesis the term will be used for the Asiatic rulers of the Second Intermediate period, for their rule, for that period, and also for the Asiatic peoples of that period in Egypt. The term 'Hyksos kings' may also be used on occasion.

4.1.2 The Asiatics in Egypt

The original groups of Asiatics came to Egypt for a number of reasons. Firstly there were the nomads and transhumants who were in search of green pastures for their flocks. Some stayed only while the grazing was good, others found the lush fields much to their liking and settled permanently, as illegal immigrants. As their numbers swelled alarmingly, Egypt built a series of fortresses on the Sinai border to keep out the Syro-Palestinians and their ilk.

Then there were those who were in the service of the Egyptian crown, employed for their special skills, such as shipbuilders and mining engineers. Egypt had the need for their expert skills to keep its maritime operations going and to exploit the Sinai mines, as they had done for ages.

The next group comprised the spoils of wars. These prisoners were employed as household slaves or were put to work in the mines or to serve in the army along with Nubians, as had been the practice since time immemorial.

Finally there might or might not have been a group of west-Semitic extraction, an army, Manetho and Kamose's antagonists who attacked, plundered and looted the land.

The initial settlers in the eastern Delta were a minority group, apparently with very little intention to assert themselves. They kept to themselves and were not reluctant to adopt the customs and culture of their host country. Many of these in the Delta and those dispersed across Egypt in servitude 'Egyptianized' their names, and those of merit rose to positions of esteem. Initially they did not seem to have political aspirations. However, the poor administration of the pharaohs of Dynasty Thirteen provided the opportunity for them to eventually take over the Delta and Upper Egypt. In this they had the support of disgruntled noble families (Kuhrt, 2002:181).

Redford (1993:98ff) proposes an altogether different scenario. While conceding that there was a sizable population of Asiatics of servile status in Egypt during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasties as the result of foreign wars, he points out that there is no evidence that the population of Asiatics was more dense in the Delta than elsewhere in Egypt. He also concedes that, as royal authority gradually weakened during the Thirteenth Dynasty, the Delta defenses were allowed to lapse and transhumants found no opposition in crossing the border into Lower Egypt. However, he feels that their numbers were too small to pose a serious threat to Egypt.

Manetho, in his *Aegyptica*, relates how from 'regions of the East' invaders attacked the unsuspecting Egyptians. Redford posits that Manetho was no doubt familiar with the history of the invasions by the Assyrians (671, 666 and 663 BCE), the Babylonians (600 and 567 BCE) and the Persians (525 and 343 BCE) into Egypt, when the invader always appeared suddenly out of the north in the form of a conquering army, leaving mayhem and destruction in its wake as had, in his opinion, happened in c. 1658 BCE at the Hyksos take-over

Manetho, however, was not the only one to report negatively on the advent of the Hyksos. King Kamose of the late Seventeenth Dynasty spoke of an 'Egypt which the Asiatics have destroyed', and some fifty years later the female pharaoh Hatshepsut recalled the 'nomad groups' among the Hyksos who had 'destroyed what had been made'. There is also evidence of how statues in the Memphite area had been carried off to Avaris (and later to Tanis). This, reasons Redford, is not the conduct of a people acculturated to Egypt by long settlement. He compares Egypt's attitude towards the Hyksos to their treatment of the Libyans in Egypt, who were considered and treated politically as if they were natives, and the Libyan-born Egyptian kings as pharaohs. The Hyksos, on the other hand, remained 'Asiatics' and the kings 'foreign rulers', which underline the animosity on the side of Egypt (Redford 1993:103). He is, however, firmly of the opinion that the presence of the Asiatics already in Egypt has no bearing on the nature of the political *coup* that produced the Hyksos Dynasty Fifteen. These new invaders were rich and economically powerful. They insinuated themselves into the major sites such as the now Tell el-Dab'a, Tell el-Yehudiye and Maskhuta. These newcomers were Asiatics of the Middle Bronze Age, and this population did not take shape through sporadic infiltration but through a massive migration of communities already urban in nature.

Knapp (1988:169) suggests that the immediate predecessors of the Fifteenth Dynasty of the Hyksos were local rulers in Palestine who took advantage of the political disintegration of Egyptian rule in the Thirteenth Dynasty to extend their influence southwest into a region with which they have long been in contact. These Semitic-speaking groups migrated directly from southern Palestine into eastern Egypt and settled among the Semitic elements already there. They might have organized a mobile force to strike out against other Egyptian centers in Lower Egypt. One thinks here again of Salatis' '240,000 heavy-armed men to guard his frontier', described by Manetho, which was a quite sizeable army in those days. Knapp also posits that that the Hyksos phenomenon should be considered as the final stage of the Amorite movements that had begun in Syria and Mesopotamia almost three hundred years earlier and which had destroyed Ebla for the second time (c. 2000 BCE) and the Ur III dynasty in Mesopotamia. Knapp (1988:169) also confesses that to him it is not clear whether the initial group that settled in the Delta from Dynasty Twelve onwards evolved into the formidable political force known as the Hyksos.

The Early Bronze Age came to a gradual end at about 2000 BCE. It was followed by the Middle Bronze Age A lasting from c. 1900-1800 BCE, and in turn by Middle Bronze Age B, from c. 1800- 1650 BCE. The latter is the period which coincides with the Hyksos influx and take-over in Egypt. The material culture in Avaris preceding the Second Intermediate Period is virtually identical to that of the MB II period in Syro-Palestine (Knapp 1988:169). Prior to

and during this time the Amorites wreaked havoc in the Levant, and Knapp is of the opinion that these Amorites might have organized a mobile striking force which then easily overcame the Delta and other centers in Lower Egypt.

4.2 Archeological evidence

The ruins of the city of Avaris cover an area of about 12 sq. km. (Bietak 1996:3). The two principal areas of excavation at Tell el-Dab'a are Tell A and Area F/1. At Tell A, which is the best-documented sequence, the Second Intermediate Period strata are labeled G through D/2. The levels within these strata that can be assigned to the Hyksos period are E/2, E/1, D/3 and D/2. Bietak dates these strata to 1660 -1540/30 BCE. Strata G/1-4 represent an earlier Dynasty Thirteen occupation and include a palace of the Egyptian type in Area F/1. He attributes the architectural and other cultural changes in the succeeding Stratum F to Asiatics arriving from the area of Byblos at the time of Dynasty Thirteen. He construes the supposed influx to Avaris as providing the impetus for the rise of the Hyksos rule in Egypt. Whether there is any connection to this migration and Manetho's account of the Hyksos take-over of Egypt as a violent event is unknown (Weinstein 1992:345). There is, however, an absence of north Levantine architectural traditions, ceramic types and funerary offerings in Stratum F which would suggest that the idea of a Syrian influx be treated cautiously.

What follows is a brief summary of Bietak's finds and findings concerning the period from Dynasty Twelve to the end of the Hyksos period.

4.2.1 The planned settlement of the early Twelfth Dynasty

Avaris rested on several turtlebacks (*geziras*) to the south of the deviation F2 of the Pelusiac branch. Its position in this strategic area gave it access to the Mediterranean Sea .

The oldest settlement was found to the south of the deviation F2 and dates from c. 1963-1934 BCE, the reign of King Amenemhet I of the Twelfth Dynasty. On the adjoining turtleback was a settlement which provided shelter for workmen on the royal settlement (later resettled by Asiatics), covering the period from Amenemhet I to Senusret I. Towards the end of Dynasty Twelve the town expanded southwards, and excavations indicate that the settlers were not Egyptian but people from the Levant, although 'Egyptianized' to a great extent.

4.2.2 The late Twelfth and early Thirteenth Dynasty

In the central part of F/1 an administrative palace of the early Thirteenth Dynasty was found. Tell el-Dab'a was completely settled by this time, growing steadily (Bietak 1996:7), and near 'Ezbet Rushdi, a turtleback was covered by something like a citadel. The turtleback south of Khata'na was covered by a settlement. The site had now become a provincial center and finally grew into one of the largest towns in Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period. Tell el-Dab'a was only the eastern part of the whole settlement and was partly abandoned during the Thirteenth Dynasty, perhaps as the result of an epidemic.

During Dynasty Twelve the town could accommodate an estimated one thousand inhabitants. Spinning bowls suggest that women were also present. Coarsely fired handmade cooking pots of Syro-Palestine MB I-type show that there was contact with nomads (Bietak 1996:9).

King Senusret III founded a temple at 'Ezbet Rushdi and introduced a more rigorous policy towards settlements in the eastern Delta. The site gained importance as a result of Egypt's mining expeditions and trade with the Levant. This is substantiated by the enormous expansion of the settlement during the late Twelfth and early Thirteenth Dynasties. During this period houses followed the Syrian pattern (Bourriau 2003:175).

Area F/1 shows that the settlers here were not Egyptians but people from the Levant. The layout of the houses resembled both the *Mittelsaalhaus* and the *Breitraumhaus*, building types from northern Syria. Some of the houses had cemeteries attached to them, a practice from Syro-Palestine MBA culture but foreign to Egyptian burial customs (Bietak 1996:10). The construction of the tombs, however, was purely Egyptian, as was the majority of ceramic shards found. Half the graves of male burials yielded weapons of the Syro-Palestinian MBA type.

Using foreigners in the Egyptian army was common practice during Dynasties Twelve and Thirteen. Asiatics in the Delta were probably employed in similar fashion, using their own weaponry – two javelins, battle axes of the duck-bill type, and daggers.

The majority of settlers seems to have been from an urban background, probably from the coastal Levant in the region around Byblos (Bietak 1996:14). During the reign of King Amenemhet III Asiatics were also used in mining expeditions, and the high-ranking Egyptian functionaries who led the expeditions during the late Twelfth Dynasty were also of Asiatic descent, indicating that people of Asiatic origin enjoyed royal confidence during this period.

Avaris was ideally situated for trade by sea. An enormous quantity of broken ceramics was found at the site, estimated at roughly two million amphorae. These might have contained wine or olive oil (Bietak 1996:20). The vessels were too large and too numerous to have been conveyed by donkey caravans, and they provide added insight into the great intensity of sea traffic in the eastern Mediterranean during this period.

In the stratum belonging to the late Twelfth Dynasty or to the next stratum above it, the colossal broken statue of a seated Asiatic, mentioned earlier, was found (Fig. 15). This statue is the only one of its kind found in Egypt, but a similar one had been found in Ebla, dating from the eighteenth century BCE (Bietak 1996:20).

From the period of the early Thirteenth Dynasty a palace was uncovered. The structure grew from a huge mansion and was totally Egyptian in layout (Fig. 15). It had a staircase leading to an upper floor or canopy and a pool fed by a canal constructed of mud bricks. Later the palace was enlarged and gardens were added. The latter was later used as a cemetery for dignitaries. South of the palace a series of six tombs with chambers sunk into the ground was found. The method of construction was purely Egyptian but the close proximity of the graves to the palace shows Asiatic influence. A second series of graves south of the palace was more loosely organized, but in both these series pairs of donkeys, sheep and/or goats were found within the entrance pits. The burial of donkeys in front of tombs was an ancient custom originating in Mesopotamia in the third millennium, spreading from there to Syria, and is also known from the MBA culture of Palestine in places such as Jericho, Lachish, Tell Akko and Tell Haror. Close parallels for the tombs also come from Tell el-'Ajjul. Bietak (1996:25) is of

the opinion that animal sacrifices were placed in front of the tombs of those who were involved in caravan activities.

Most of the tombs found had been plundered, but in a number weapons from Syro-Palestine and the Levant were found. All were of the MBA type (Bietak 1996:26). Jewelry was also found, among others an amethyst scarab mounted on a gold ring inscribed with the name and title of the owner. The title had something to do with foreign countries, probably 'overseer of foreign countries'. Bietak finds this ring important since it gives an indication of the function of the palace dignitaries. Obviously their duties lay in foreign trade, and their origins gave them first-hand knowledge of the Levant. A golden diadem, probably belonging to a Hyksos princess has also been found.

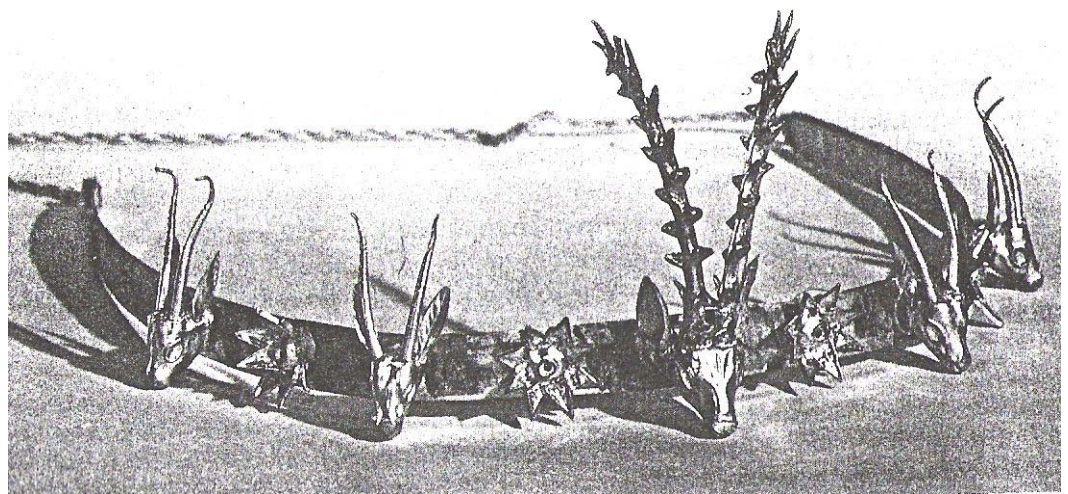


Fig 6 - Golden diadem found at Avaris (Bietak 2001:139)

Within the palace a haemetic cylinder seal was found (Fig.19), bearing a representation of the northern Syrian weather god, to be discussed later.

In the palace gardens shards of Cretan Kamares ware were found. These fragments connect Middle Minoan IIB – IIIA with the early Thirteenth Dynasty. A golden Minoan pendant representing two facing dogs was found in the palace necropolis, to be discussed later (Fig. 20). Tangential spirals found on a dagger from another palace tomb also represent a typical Minoan motif. All these together indicate that the inhabitants of the palace had wide-ranging cultural and economic relations (Bietak 1996:29).

There are indications that the palace was suddenly abandoned (Bietak 1996:29) and the doors were bricked up. This might indicate that one or more of the inhabitants fell into disgrace or was out-manuevered politically.

A statue of King Hetep-ib-Re' Amu-sa-Hornedjhyeryof was found in a small sanctuary near the palace, together with statues of the female pharaoh Sobeknefru of the Twelfth Dynasty. The Amu- part of the name of the king indicates that he was the son of an Asiatic. He had extensive connections with northern Syria where ceremonial gifts with his name on them were

found in Ebla (Bietak 1996:30). Syrian glyptic art shows a strong Egyptian influence, signifying that interaction did not only take place on royal level (Bietak 1996:30).

4.2.3 Tell el-Dab'a during the Thirteenth Dynasty

Although it took some time before the palace from the early Thirteenth Dynasty was once again utilized, the area around it continued to be occupied, but this time showing a more egalitarian pattern. The eastern part of the town was now more densely settled by Asiatics, with the proportion of MBA ceramics rising from 20 to 40%, signifying a new influx from the Levant (Bietak 1996:31). It is not certain from which part of the Levant they originated.

The production of copper instruments was one of the main economic activities in Avaris. In the Thirteenth Dynasty new technologies in metallurgy appeared which had not been used in Egypt before (Bietak 1996:31).

Whereas previously there had been a lively trade with the northern Levant, analyses of ceramic shards show that most imports now came from southern Palestine (Bietak 1996:31). However, northern influence still appears in the house styles in Stratum H(=d/2) and the MBIIA pottery types, such as brown-polished jugs with an Anatolian form of spout and jugs with ring-shaped bodies. Also the decrease in trade with the northern Levant may be ascribed to the fact that that region fell into decline (Bietak 1996:35).

There is also the possibility of trade with Cyprus, or of a Cypriot community living in the area of Tell el-Dab'a as black Cypriote slipware was locally produced (Bietak 1996:35).

The settlement grew steadily during this period, but in F/1 and A/II tombs were found that seem to be emergency graves, signifying that an epidemic might have swept through the town, something not uncommon in harbour towns.

It has been argued by Winkler (Bietak 1996:36) that the male population at Tell el-Dab'a was not of Egyptian origin, but the female population was of local stock. It is often typical for foreign mercenaries or sailors to take local girls as wives.

After Stratum G, the occupation in the eastern part of the settlement came to a temporary halt. Housing areas were converted into cemeteries. A large new temple of the MBA type was constructed. In the forecourt surrounding an altar offering pits were excavated in which fragments of pottery and calcinated cattle bones were found (Bietak 1996:36). The absence of pig bones indicates that the Asiatics already had some sort of taboo concerning the consumption of pork, or at least the use of pigs as temple offerings (Bietak 1996:36). Bietak (1997:99) argues that this temple might have been built for Asherah, first considered the consort of the Asiatic god El, but later as the consort of Ba'al.

Near the main temple two door jambs of limestone were found, inscribed with the name of King 'Aa-zeh-Re'Nehesy, probably a ruler of the Fourteenth Dynasty, whose father, who might have been a high-ranking Egyptian official, broke away from the Thirteenth Dynasty and founded a small independent kingdom in the northeastern Delta. Nehesy ruled for a short time only but left a scattering of monuments in the eastern Delta. Bietak (1996:40) speculates that his monuments found at Tell el-Muqdam and Tanis were no doubt moved there at a later date.

To the west of the sacred complex a second temple was built in the Eastern style, and on the other side a temple with Egyptian lay-out was found with an altar in front of it. This might have been a mortuary temple.

Dynasty Fourteen relied heavily on the support of the Asiatic settlers in the region, and Nehesy chose the north Syrian weather god as the city god and patron deity, soon to be identified with the Egyptian weather god Seth (Bietak 1996:41).

The tomb of the city treasurer 'Amu (= the Asiatic) was indeed pure Asiatic. The body was interred in a contracted position and accompanied by a Syro-Palestinian battle-axe of the MBIIA type. In front of the tomb five or six donkeys were buried.

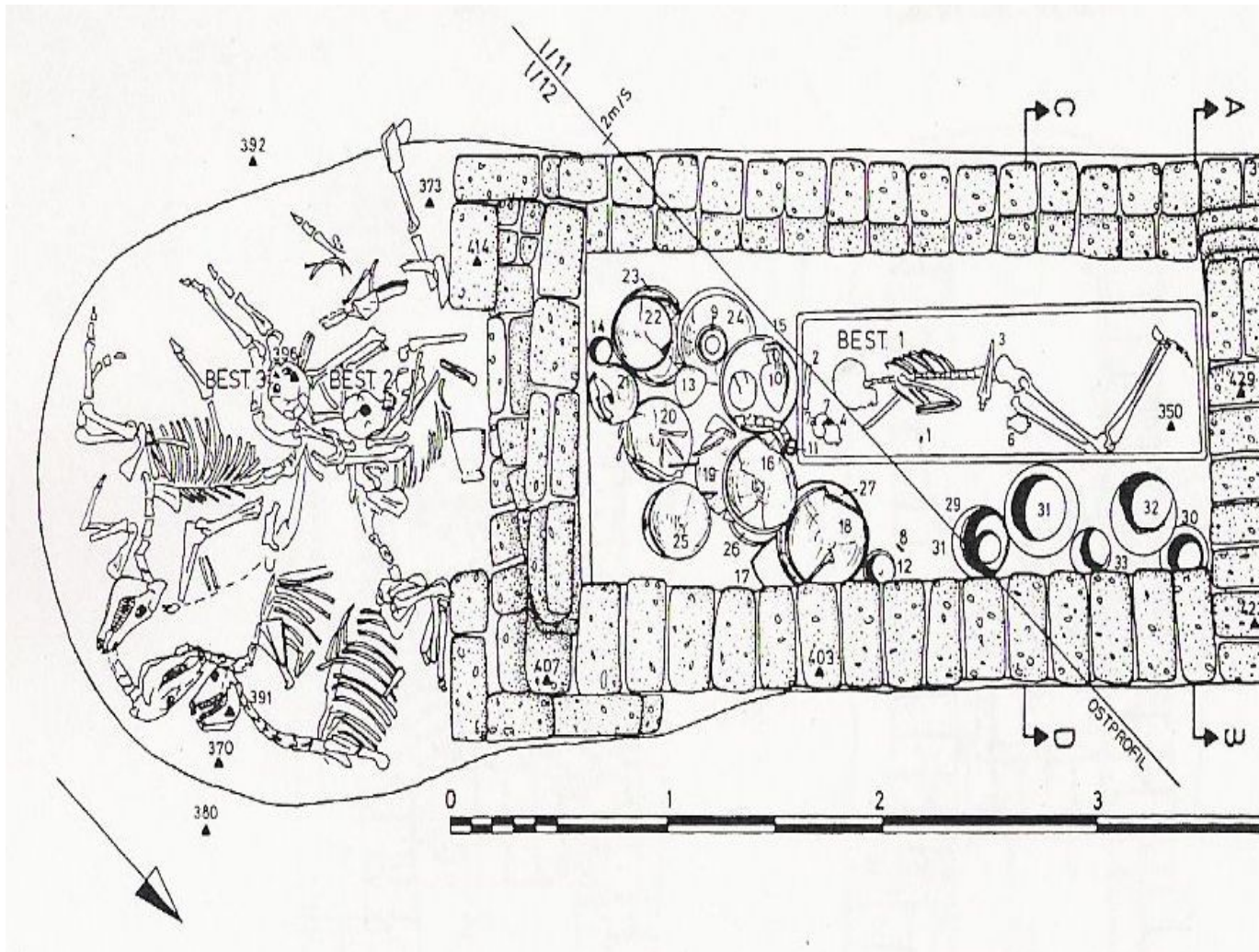


Fig. 7 - Grave of deputy treasurer with donkey burials (Bietak 1996:42)

Many of the tombs of this period belonged to warriors, equipped with daggers and battle axes. Some also wore embossed copper belts, similar to one found at Jericho (Bietak 1996:45). The grave goods were dated to the MBIIA and transitional MBIIA to MBIIB periods. The tombs themselves consisted of a vaulted chamber built in a pit, a technique known in Mesopotamia. The dead were buried in a contracted position, and tombs contained from one to five bodies. Bietak (1996:45) also points out that servants, usually girls, were interred in front of some of the tombs at the same time as their masters, a practice also known from Kerma in the Sudan (Bietak 1996:45; Kendall 1997).

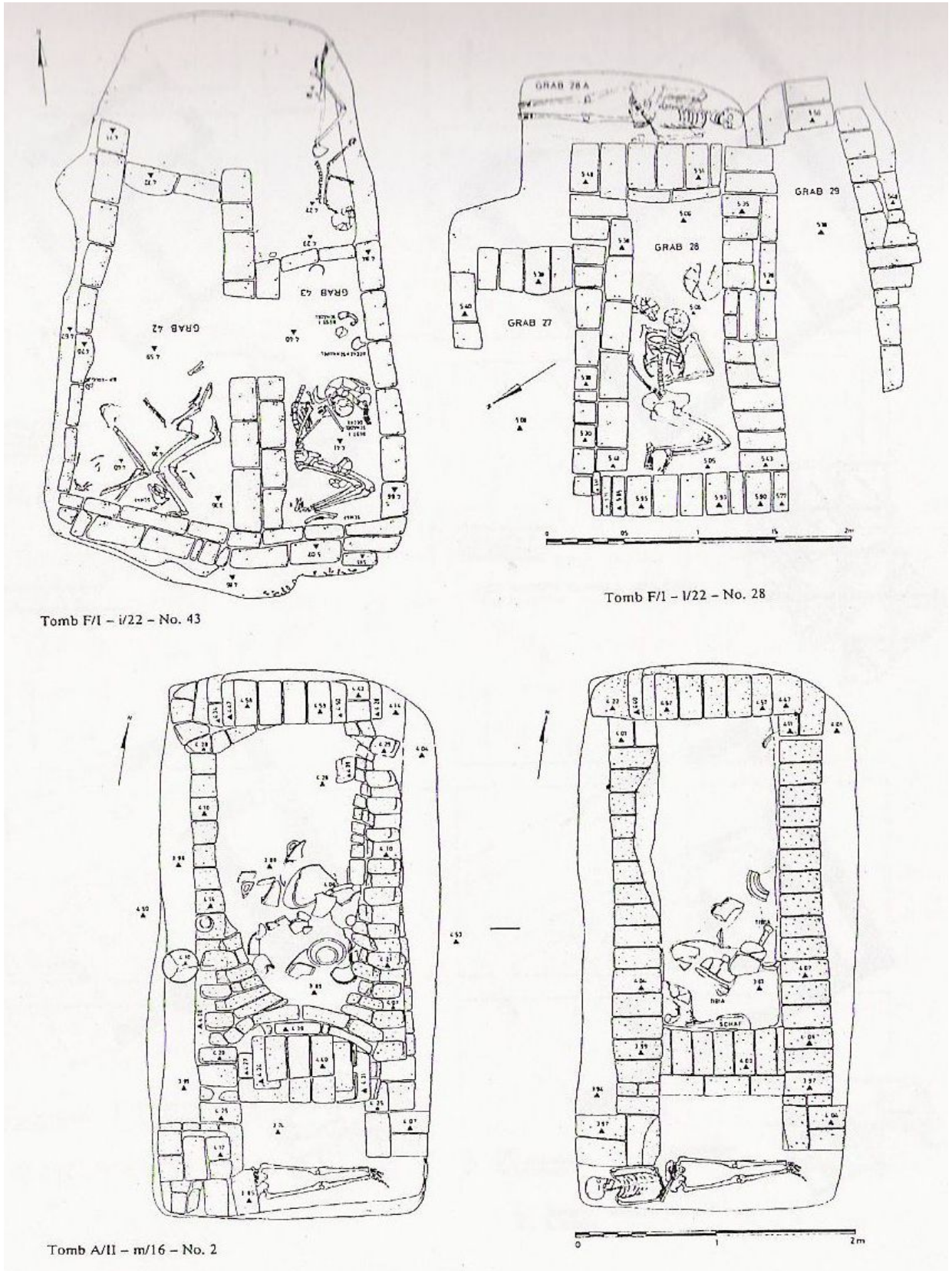


Fig. 8 - Tombs with servant burials from stratum F (Bietak 1996:44)

In the period represented by Stratum E/3, individual mortuary temples of the Egyptian type were built around the sacred precinct. The two such temples found in E/3 were replaced by similar temples in E/2, after the pattern of the customary middle class house of this period.

Excavations at Tell el-Dab'a have shown that the inhabitants, although of Asiatic origin, quickly acquired Egyptian religious traditions (Bietak 1996:48). They went through a process of 'Egyptianization', not only in their material culture but also in their funerary practices, decades before the Hyksos period.

4.2.4 Avaris before and during the Hyksos period

Strata F – E/2 of the central area show that the proportion of Syro-Palestinian pottery rose from 20 to 40% when compared with Stratum G, but it is not clear whether this was due to a further influx of Asiatics or to an increase of imports (Bietak 1996:49). Foreign house types were no longer used and were from this period onwards of purely Egyptian design.

Socially differentiated house types were found in F, E/3 and E/2. Better houses became solid and larger, surrounded by more humble structures. In the course of the Hyksos period, from c. 1600 BCE onward, the peripheral areas A/II-A/V were more densely inhabited than the central area. Space was at such a premium that mortuary temples were dismantled and cemeteries in the temple areas were covered by houses. Tombs were accommodated in the courtyards of houses or within the houses themselves. This practice had already surfaced in Stratum F (=b/3) where tombs were found sunk within the houses, or a chamber was constructed outside the house against the wall of the bedroom. The latter practice was introduced from the Levant. During the Middle Bronze Age house burials, an old urban tradition in the Near East, were found especially at Megiddo (Bietak 1996:54). This is a further indication of the Near East urban background of the majority of the population at Tell el-Dab'a (Bietak 1996:54). Due to the lack of space within the settlement, Egyptian burial customs and mortuary temples had to be abandoned. The concept of the strong belief in a life after death and the complicated use of magic was, however, not as firmly rooted in the MBA world and it seems more likely that this practice was adopted from the Egyptians.

An area settled only during the late Hyksos period and not before is represented by Strata D/3-2 (Bietak 1996:63). On a site commanding the river at 'Ezbet Helmi, a buttressed wall, citadel and garden were built. A platform was constructed south of the buttressed enclosure wall which might have served as an elevated fortress, and might have served also a military, palatial or even cultic purpose. Similar platform foundations were found on top of the defensive ramparts of Ebla and Hazor, again pointing to the Hyksos bond with the Levant (Bietak 1996:70).

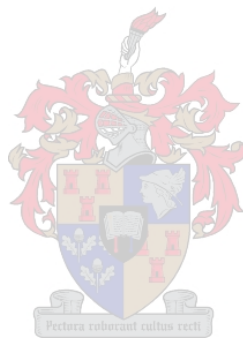
Bietak (1996:65) found evidence of Hyksos building projects in the form of palatial architecture and stelae, and objects with royal inscriptions of their Dynasty. The name Seker-her (possibly a corrupted version of Manetho's Salatis) is given in a typical Egyptian manner: "Horus-name (not preserved), Nebti (the two ladies = mistresses/goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt): Who is tying the bow countries, The Golden Horus: Who is determining his frontier, Hyksos: Seker-her/Sikru-Haddu", and written in hieroglyphs. The circumstances of the find may indicate that Seker-her was one of the six major kings of Dynasty Fifteen.

A second stela commissioned for King Apophis and his sister/consort Tany, depicted in hieroglyphs, was also found in this area. The names of the untitled donors are written in both western Semitic forms and their adopted Egyptian versions. No god is mentioned in the

inscriptions, leading one to wonder whether, in keeping with the Near Eastern custom, there was not a royal necropolis within the citadel (Bietak 1996:67).

The last stratum of the MBA settlement at Tell el-Dab'a suggests that the town was abandoned after its fall. There is some evidence of a great fire in Area H/I, but that may have been a localized affair. In the early Eighteenth Dynasty the citadel site was reoccupied and a new citadel was built and used officially for a short time.

In this chapter archeological finds and opinions and speculations of scholars have formed the body of the investigation. From the above there can be little doubt that the Hyksos had roots in many Near Eastern countries - as far east as Mesopotamia, north as far as Syria and possibly beyond, south-west to the Aegean and Crete, and in the whole of the Levant.



Chapter 5 - The Hyksos' rise to power

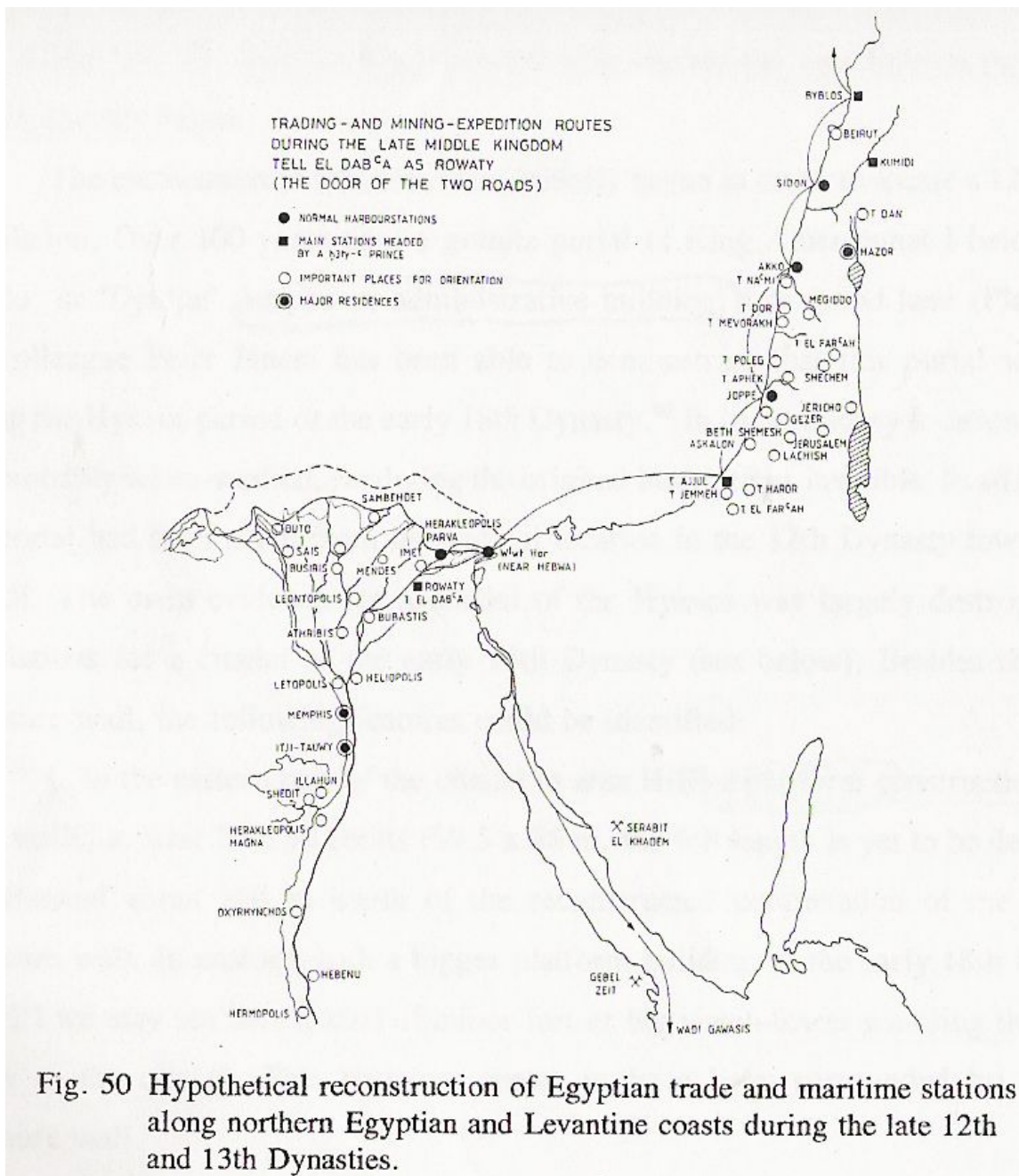
In the previous chapters we have seen that Asiatics were present in Egypt, and especially in the Nile Delta, from about 1800 onwards or even earlier. It was, however, not only those Asiatics already settled and Egyptianized who were to influence events during the Second Intermediate Period.

At this stage it might be advisable to have a close look at the chronology prior to and during the Second Intermediate Period. From c. 1720-1648 BCE two dynasties were recognized in Egypt, and from c. 1648 BCE to the end of the Hyksos period there were three, some in Upper and some in Lower Egypt. Dynasty Fifteen is taken as the rule of the Greater Hyksos, while Dynasty Sixteen belongs to the Lesser Hyksos. Kuhrt (2002: 175) gives us a schematic exposition of the chronology, presented in Chapter 2.4 (Fig. 3).

5.1 Trade and other relationships

5.1.1 Friends and enemies of Egypt

During Dynasty Twelve and more so during Dynasty Thirteen, Egypt had intensive trade relationships by sea with Syro-Palestinian coastal towns, especially with Byblos (Bietak 1982:43). From the end of Dynasty Twelve onwards, indications in Strata G and F of occupation by the Syro-Palestinian MBA culture IIA and IIB at Tell el-Dab'a suggest a build-up of a colony of Asiatics from the area of Byblos. Avaris was probably the most important partner to Byblos through its direct connection via the Mediterranean. Apart from its close ties with Byblos, other elements were present in smaller quantities in the above strata, such as MBA elements from the northern parts of Palestine and from Cyprus. Along with Byblos, there was an intense relationship between Middle Kingdom Egypt and Megiddo.



From the time of the onset of Dynasty Thirteen, there is almost no evidence of trade with the Lebanon from MB IIB onwards, and from c. 1720 BCE there seems to have been an archeological black-out (Bietak 1996:52). Trading routes from Byblos were probably seriously damaged at this time by the conquest of Mari by Hammurabi of Babylonia, and by the destruction of the kingdom of Qatna by Yamkhad (Aleppo). All these disturbances may have caused a possible exodus of the Biblites to the eastern Delta, and especially to Avaris where some of their own people had already established themselves on most advantageous terms against the background of the declining Thirteenth Dynasty.

The political scene in the eastern Delta might have undergone some reshuffling by this new influx. Archeological evidence and hypotheses concerning the decline of Byblos are backed

by Manetho who stressed that Dynasty Fifteen consisted of kings from “Phoenicia” (according to Kuhrt's scheme (Fig 3) it should be Dynasty Sixteen).

With the loss of the Byblos trade, Middle Egypt's trade relations with Cyprus and South Palestine (which might have included Tell el-Ajjul) were now intensified, as well as with the Delta province (attested to by fragments of Tell el-Yehudiyeh ware), the Southern province and Kerma in Nubia. Some close connections were also maintained with the rest of the Levant, but ties with Byblos itself seem to have ceased to exist.

It would seem that trade relationships northwards were carried out by sea and not along the coastal route on the northern coast of Sinai, since there is very little MBA evidence along that route. Also, the bulky amphorae from Dynasty Thirteen and the Second Intermediate Period found at Tell el-Dab'a and northern Egypt exclude serious considerations of a land trading route.

Towards the end of the Second Intermediate Period trade relations between Avaris and its former trading partners declined considerably as revealed by pottery analyses. The Thebans, sandwiched between the Delta and Nubia, strangled the important trading routes to the south (and its gold!). Consequently there was little in the Delta to exchange for trade with Cyprus and the other Mediterranean trade partners. This caused economic weakness and debilitated the Hyksos.

We have now established that both the Egyptians of Dynasties Twelve and Thirteen and the Hyksos had been energetically involved in trade with neighbouring and distant states, but it still is not clear how it came about that the Hyksos came to power. This is a subject that has led to many debates and postulations, but let us first consider the evidence. For this, as for most things concerning the Hyksos, we have to go back into history to where the first Asiatics settled in the Delta.

The Asiatics in the Delta were foreigners, and regarded as inferior interlopers by many Egyptians, but as happens in communities, feelings of the Egyptian population were divided on this matter. Redford (1993:73) tells of an incident as far back as the rule of the last king of Dynasty Eleven, Mentuhotep III. Nehry, who described himself as 'a brave commoner', was nomarch of the fifteenth nome of Upper Egypt during a period of stasis in the kingdom. He himself and his two sons were challenged by the king for the rule of Hermopolis. One of the sons, Kay, claimed that with the help of the draftees in the city, he defeated the government soldiers of the king which included "the Medjay (scouts from Nubia), Wowat, southerners, Asiatics, the southland and the Delta". Already here the duality can be seen, and Redford finds it interesting that Kay included the Asiatics among his opponents, and by implication, they were allies of the king's house.

Another incident of strife is recorded by Redford (1993:75). Senwosret I, son and co-ruler of Amenemhet I who founded Dynasty Twelve, embarked on a program of temple-building. In the ninth year of his rule he found the shrines and lands adjacent to the temples abandoned and in ruins, for which he pinned the blame on the foreigners. References to 'terraces' (i.e. the slopes of the mountains in Lebanon) and 'Asiatics' leave no doubt who the king had in mind, and the culprits were severely punished. Senwosret I is also acclaimed as "throat slitter of them that are in Asia" Redford 1993:77), an indication that there was no love lost between some Egyptians and the Asiatics.

An inscription from Saqqara, from a day-book of King Amenemhet III, reveals an immensely rich and powerful court, made so by exploits in Asia, listing the goods brought back, among

which were 1554 Asiatics. Sinai, Lebanon and other places in Asia were attacked and plundered. The pharaohs of Dynasties Twelve and Thirteen considered Asia and the Levant as theirs to plunder and exploit to the full, striking wherever they found the slightest indication of a weakness.

Perhaps the official Egyptian presentation of all inhabitants of other countries as 'enemies' and 'barbarians' to be persecuted relentlessly was the obligatory rhetoric sometimes hiding patterns of positive interaction. Kuhrt (2002:171) points out that, with evidence from tomb paintings at Ben Hasan in Middle Egypt, interchange of gifts and goods between Egypt and Sinai occurred, probably quite frequently. Transhumants from Sinai sought permission to pass Egypt's frontier posts in order to find grazing grounds when necessary. In exchange Egypt made formal agreements with local communities in Sinai to mine the much-prized turquoise in that region. This did not deter Egypt from exploiting other parts of the peninsula as well.

Egypt's relations with Nubia are also of importance since the Nubians became allies of the Asiatics at the time of Hyksos rule. Archeological material confirms that Egypt during Dynasty Twelve effectively occupied the land along the Nile to the Second Cataract. They subjected the Nubian population who probably provided much of the labour needs for the Egyptian mining and quarrying activities in that region. Other Nubians were directly recruited to man garrisons, or to undertake policing activities. It should, however, be kept in mind that, even though the Egyptians plundered as they pleased under military protection, there was no permanent occupation of the imperial kind. Egypt was interested in the resources, not in the land itself.

A method practiced by Egypt to deter its enemies where no direct action was possible was to curse them. The so-called Execration texts (c. 1850-1700 BCE) contained the formulae for magical curses to annihilate persons and things inimical to the pharaoh of Egypt (Redford, 1993:87). It involved either figuring the individual in a terra-cotta, stone or wooden representation, or writing the enemy's name on a pottery vessel. The curse was then pronounced and the object or vessel broken. Nubians and Asiatics were often cursed in this manner. We have no indication of how effective these curses were.

Where intimidation and exploitation failed, Egypt resorted to the cultivation of friendships. This entailed the mutual exchange of gifts at a high level and accounts for objects from Egypt found in the Levant, chiefly in the important cities of Syria. The exchange of gifts was a common practice since the onset of Dynasty Twelve.

By the end of Dynasty Twelve the whole of Lebanon-Palestine was under the influence of Egypt (van Seters 1966:191) with diplomatic ties and active cooperation between rulers of the various city-states and the rulers of Egypt. During the early Thirteenth Dynasty foreigners had much freer access to Egypt. Many Asiatics rose to places of high honour in the administration of the country. Loyal supporters of the pharaoh viewed with great concern the weakness in dynastic rule and noticed the increased strength of the Asian city-states. Their association with subversive elements in Egypt itself was seen as a serious threat to the established order.

5.1.2 The Hyksos show their teeth

As has been discussed before, there are two disparate opinions on how the Hyksos take-over took place. In Redford's (1993:111) opinion (and he has many supporters), the advent of the Hyksos took the form of a real military conquest along the lines of conquests in western Asia in the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries BCE. Redford speculates that the first Hyksos

king, Salatis, was accompanied by a number of lesser kings or princes following their suzerain, just as was the practice in western Asia. Salatis' reign proved relatively short, and the second and third generations of Hyksos kings might even have participated in the conquest. Their incursion may well have involved the kind of destruction Manetho described. Memphis and Itj-tawa ('The Residence') were probably quickly taken and pillaged. King Dedu-mose of Egypt fled and took up quarters in Thebes in the south.

At about the same time the Egyptian holdings in Nubia broke away, taking over some Egyptian fortresses at the Second Cataract. At the Third Cataract a new Nubian kingdom developed, centered at Kerma, and developed along the lines of a pharaonic monarchy.

Van Seters (1966:192) has many supporters when he posits that there was active cooperation between the Asiatics and some important Egyptians in what he calls "the Amorite *coup d'etat*". The disloyalty of these important families may be understood in the light of what went before viz. the strong decentralization of administration by the pharaohs of the late Twelfth Dynasty. In the period of dynastic weakness these families reasserted themselves. With the break-up of the land into three departments by the Middle Kingdom administration, an Egyptian, Nehesy, had control of the North, probably with Asiatic cooperation. It was just a small step for the 'Amorite' princes to oust Nehesy and take over the control of Lower Egypt. No great military conquest was needed to accomplish this. All that was now required for Egypt to become an Asiatic dynasty was that it be recognized as such by a sufficient number of the Egyptian nobles with their submission to the Asiatics as vassals (to their own advantage), and a strong foreign king in a strategic city (Van Seters 1966:193). Thus was born the Fifteenth (or Sixteenth?) Dynasty of the Hyksos.

The Egyptian Nehesy had already established his own little kingdom in the Delta with his seat at Avaris. At the Hyksos take-over, he probably moved to Xios, and his kingdom grew into what became the Fourteenth Dynasty which lasted from c. 1720-1648 BCE, coinciding with the last part of Dynasty Thirteen. According to Manetho, 76 kings ruled in the Fourteenth Dynasty. It could be that many of them ruled simultaneously, each in his own little kingdom. When the Hyksos took over Egypt, the Fourteenth Dynasty came to an end, its king(s) probably becoming vassals to Salatis as did the king(s) in Middle Egypt.

5.1.3 The Hyksos settle in

The Hyksos lost no time in making contact with the Nubians, probably employing the west oasis route instead of sailing up the Nile. A lively exchange of goods took place, and possibly mutual assurances of political relationships of dependence.

According to Manetho, the Hyksos' first choice of residence was Memphis (Redford 1993:113), but the strategic value of the eastern Delta soon became apparent to them. Situated on the southernmost branch of the Nile was a settlement called 'The Mansion of the Two Roads of Akhtoy', the two roads referring to the Horus road leading northeast to Sinai and Gaza, the other the road leading northwest to Mendes and the central Delta. As explained before, Avaris had originally been planned as a walled settlement and had been extended by King Amenemhet I and by Senwosret III in Dynasty Twelve. The town was then known as 'The Mansion of the Desert Tract', in Egyptian *hwt-w'rt*, rendered into Greek as Avaris, and the local district, because of its proximity to the desert, was known as 'The Opening of the Farmland' (Redford 1993:114). All through the Thirteenth Dynasty the town with its environs retained its importance.

After the take-over, the Hyksos instituted freedom of movement with Asia (van Seters 1966:151) and continued trade with their former trade partners. As relations with Upper Egypt deteriorated, they shut the South off from the valuable commodities such as metal and lumber by levying taxes on Upper Egypt' ships at Cusae, completely crippling its fleet and its power to resist. This the Hyksos could only do through effective control emanating from Avaris which was their key to trade, defense and administration of the North.

Even though the foreigners very likely established a colony at Tell el-Yahudiyeh, they maintained the administrative center at Avaris. They continued the worship of Egyptian deities along with their own in an elective manner and followed the cultural and artistic forms of Egypt in many other aspects as well.

Van Seters (1966:193) asserts that only *one* foreign dynasty ruled Egypt for a little more than one hundred years. According to Kuhrt's chronology (Fig. 3) Dynasty Fifteen was ruled by one group of Hyksos (the "Greater" Hyksos) and Dynasty Sixteen by another (the "Lesser" Hyksos). These two Dynasties might have run concurrently, with only the names of the kings of the Greater Hyksos known with more or less surety. Egypt became a conglomeration of vassal states, with Upper Egypt's Seventeenth Dynasty, centering in Thebes, as a separate but dependent entity. Although the Hyksos had strong connections with Nubia in the south and with the eastern Mediterranean in the north, the power of the Hyksos was in all likelihood restricted to Egypt alone.

Giveon (1987:32) remarks that we too easily make a distinction between Hyksos and Egyptian rule. It is only with hindsight and because of Kamose's belligerence, and possibly because of conditioning, that the Hyksos are looked upon as rivals of Egypt and not as welcomed co-rulers. Later on conditions might have deteriorated, but not in all places. There is ample evidence, says Giveon, that many Egyptians worked willingly along with the Hyksos and were subservient to them. The Hyksos in many ways continued the Egyptian culture for instance in their seals, which are difficult to tell from Egyptian seals. They followed the same pattern of regime, including Egyptian foreign policy which was a perpetuation of that of the Middle Kingdom. Without archeological context, the two groups cannot that easily be distinguished.

Chapter 6 - The rule of the Hyksos

6.1 Egypt from the Thirteenth to Fifteenth Dynasties

The rule in Egypt during the Thirteenth Dynasty was unstable, consisting more or less of a continuum of usurpers with short reigns, averaging three years. The power brokers of the time were administrators and generals, some of them of foreign origin (Bietak 2001:137), which means that the Hyksos might already have had a foot in the door. Towards the end of the eighteenth century parts of the Delta broke with the rule of Dynasty Thirteen, instituting Dynasty Fourteen. By a few monuments this kingdom (Dynasty Fourteen) of Nehesy (the

Nubian') is known. His monuments were only found in the north-eastern Delta, between Bubastis and Tell el-Hebwa. He seems to have resided first at Avaris and was possibly part Egyptian, a conclusion drawn from his mother's pure Egyptian maiden name (Bietak 2001:137), but his power rested on the large population of Asiatics who had been residing in the Delta long before his reign.

In the Delta several small kingdoms were formed, all loosely connected. Some of the names of these minor kings were not Egyptian, and many were western Semitic. Then a strong king, Salatis, forsook the Delta and took over the traditional capital, Memphis, so that he could be crowned there as pharaoh (Bietak 2001:137). At this, the rulers of the late Thirteenth Dynasty, long conditioned by royal protocol, either withdrew or abdicated to the new Dynasty. It was only a matter of time for the whole of the northern part of Egypt from Memphis upwards to come under the control of Salatis. The date was c.1648 BCE, which marks the beginning of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Dynasties in Lower Egypt.

It should be noted that the above is Bietak's scenario. He does not hold with the view of Redford (1993:111) that Egypt was conquered by a sudden strong invasion.

6.2 The problem of names and dates

The kings of Dynasty Fifteen are known as the 'Greater Hyksos', and by implication there then should also have been 'Lesser Hyksos', belonging to Dynasty Sixteen. Ancient historians - Josephus, Africanus and Eusebius - differ widely when it comes to the number of years of Hyksos rule. Josephus puts it down at 511 years, Africanus at 284, and Eusebius at 250 (Redford 1993:107). The most plausible figure comes from the Turin Canon which records 108 years, giving the six Greater Hyksos kings an average reign of 18 years. The ancient historians mentioned above do not agree when it comes to the names of the Greater Hyksos. They have only three names in common viz. Salatis (Saites), Bnon and Apophis. The other names on their lists seem to have little in common although Redford (1993:108) finds that Staan in Africanus' list could plausibly be derived from Iannas (Yannas) in Josephus' list, and Archles from Assis. Many of the names were later 'Egyptianized' or altered by the Greeks.

Weinstein (1997:133) is of the opinion that the Turin Canon is of little help when it comes to naming the kings since only one name, Khamudy, is preserved in the king list. Redford (1993:106) points out that there are approximately 32 names of Hyksos kings in the Turin Canon. Most are west Asiatic names, garbled in many cases beyond recognition in the course of transmission. They have defied interpretation for many years, but over time the total have been reduced to six Great Hyksos in agreement with the historical tradition. The accepted dynastic sequence of the Greater Hyksos is as follows, given by Weinstein (1997:133):

1. Maibre Sheshi (Egyptianized version Salatis)
2. Merwoerre Yaqobher
3. Seweserenve Khyan
4. Yannass
5. Apophis
6. Khamudy

Dynasty Sixteen (the Lesser Hyksos) is represented by local princes, Egyptian and foreign (Van Seters 1966:1600).

Apart from the names above, other royal names are attested on scarabs from Dynasty Fifteen. Some may have belonged to minor princes who held vassal status to the Greater Hyksos rulers, or they might have been kings of Dynasty Sixteen, the Lesser Hyksos (Redford 1993:160). According to Kuhrt (2002:175), three Dynasties ran concurrently (c. 1648-1540 BCE), two in the Delta and one in Upper Egypt, namely Dynasty Seventeen. Dynasty Fourteen ceased to exist with the crowning of Salatis as pharaoh.

Few texts from the Hyksos era have survived. Our knowledge of rulers and officials derives from their names on scarabs, cylinder seals and seal impressions. The Hyksos adopted the Egyptian hieroglyphic script for writing documents and for transcribing their personal names. Scarabs with the names and titles of high Hyksos officials have also been found, but the practice among the Asiatics to use Egyptian names makes it difficult to distinguish them from names belonging to contemporary Egyptian bureaucrats.

Many Egyptologists place most of the obscure kings with Dynasty Sixteen. One problem is that many corrupted names were used for these kings. Inclusion into the main Hyksos dynasty may therefore be doubtful (Bietak 2001a:137).

Through typological analysis of Hyksos royal-name scarabs, Egyptologists have been able to arrange many of the Hyksos rulers in a relative sequence (see the one above). A concentration of royal-name scarabs in southern Palestine suggests a connection between that region and the eastern Delta, but what the relationship was is unclear (Redford 1997:134).

Although many royal-name scarabs were found, objects of substantial size inscribed with the names of Hyksos rulers are rare (Weinstein 1992:345). The paucity of Hyksos monuments and the lack of Asiatic settlements in the Nile Valley south of Memphis suggest that the Hyksos maintained their authority in Middle Egypt and much of Upper Egypt through their local vassals. The history of the Hyksos expansion in Egypt cannot be traced since most Hyksos rulers are known solely from the appearance of their names on scarabs and other small objects. Numerous scarabs with names and/or titles of officials (e.g. Chancellor Har) who lived during this period have been found. However, the rarity of non-Egyptian names on these scarabs makes it difficult to distinguish scarabs of Hyksos officials who adopted Egyptian names from scarabs belonging to contemporary Egyptian bureaucrats.

6.3 The Hyksos administration

Reconstruction of the governmental organization of the Hyksos regime remains largely speculative, but we do know that Hyksos kings adopted Egyptian titulary and dated events to regnal years in the same manner as did the Egyptian pharaohs, e.g. dating the copying of the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus to regnal year 33 of Apophis (Weinstein 1997:133). The frequent use of the Egyptian administrative title *treasurer* by Hyksos officials suggests that the Hyksos government at least partially imitated that of the Egyptians. At the same time, however, the apparent Hyksos practice of ruling through local vassals (both Asiatic and Egyptian) reflects a Near Eastern tradition. Little is known about how the Hyksos kings governed their domain. There were many Egyptians who cooperated with the Hyksos and allowed garrisons to be stationed in their towns in Upper Egypt (Redford 1993:343).

No texts have come to light to suggest that the office of vizier was maintained (Redford 1993:116), but a simple plethora of scarab seals belonging to treasurers favours the assumption that this office ranked high in the Hyksos bureaucracy. One might assume that the Hyksos adopted forms that they found ready to hand in Egypt and used native mentors to counsel them. In the light of the whole-sale destruction by Egyptians of Hyksos goods after the Hyksos had been expelled, it is not surprising that our knowledge of the administration is rather sketchy.

Cusae, forty kilometers south of Hermopolis, was the administrative center of the Hyksos. From this point they regulated river traffic, imposing taxes on ships from Upper Egypt crossing that line. Between 1670 and 1650 BCE the river was still open (Bourriau 2003:188) but shortly thereafter Cusae marked the boundary north of which taxes to the ruler of Avaris had to be paid.

6.4 Commercial and cultural connections

It is safe to assume that during the Second Intermediate Period there were strong commercial and cultural connections between Syro-Palestine and Egypt. The culture of Syro-Palestine represents a continuous development from the Old Babylonian to the Egyptian conquest by the Hyksos, continuing into the Eighteenth Dynasty (Van Seters 1966:160). At the beginning of the Second Intermediate Period the political forms in Syro-Palestine were characteristic of the Amorite world, and it is reasonable to assume that these continued throughout the MBII age. From the earliest contact in the Middle Kingdom, the pharaohs used the type of international diplomacy current in the Amorite world in their relations with the princes of Syro-Palestine. The Hyksos, too, could be expected to reflect the same international diplomacy when dealing with parties in Syro-Palestine who, at the time, were coalitions of independent states, allied by treaties. They were little more than vassal kingdoms which acknowledged the leading king as suzerain. Likewise, the Hyksos king in Egypt was an overlord of a number of vassals, some of who were probably in Syro-Palestine (Van Seters 1966:164). He may also have had alliances with other rulers and commercial relations even further afield, such as in Cyprus. This international trade appears to have been an important factor in the development of the Hyksos' wealth and power (Weinstein 1992:345). Stone and faience vessels, jewelry, amulets, scarabs and other Egyptian merchandise were exported in exchange for raw materials and finished products. The widespread distribution of Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware in Egypt itself, in Upper and Lower Nubia, in the Aegean and in Cyprus, and the manufacture of this pottery in Egypt as well as the Levant provide further confirmation for the existence of an extensive trade network. The absence of archeological remains of this type of pottery in northern Sinai indicates that Egyptian-Levantine trade during the Hyksos period went by sea rather than overland.

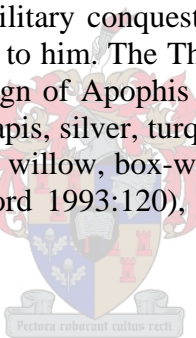
Dynasty Seventeen, ruling from Thebes, was not strong enough to maintain the fortresses between Egypt and Nubia, and these were soon taken over by the Nubians themselves. The Hyksos had control over Sako (probably modern el-Qes) via the western desert oases to the Nubian site of Tuman, midway between the First and Second Cataracts (Bourriau 2003:188). This route gave the Hyksos access to the kingdom of Kush. There were regular contact and exchange of goods between the Hyksos and Kush via the desert route, lasting without break from Dynasty Thirteen to the end of the Hyksos rule. The main commodity in which the Hyksos were interested was Nubia's gold, but there might also have been an exchange of people, judging from the pan graves (the Nubian funerary type) in cemeteries some fifty km. from Cusae. In Nubia numerous Hyksos

scarabs and seal impressions were found, especially at Kerma, evidence of a lively trade with the Sudan, with overtones of suzerainty.

6.5 Politics

It is suspected that there were a number of rulers in southern Palestine, even as far north as Tell Kabri, who were vassals of the Hyksos. There were also vassals to the Hyksos in coastal Palestine, in Middle Egypt and at Thebes, so that the political power of the Hyksos was felt far outside the boundaries of and inside Egypt (Bietak 2001b:139). The political system of the Hyksos was typical of the Amorite kingdoms in Syria and the city-states of Palestine. But it was to the natives of Egypt that the Hyksos turned for examples in kingship. They must have envied the Egyptians their long and unbroken tradition of pharaohs, and when the Hyksos came into power, they seemed to have wanted to perpetuate the tradition. The Hyksos kings adopted the standard titulary of Egyptian kings and were regularly designated 'son of Re' in keeping with Egyptian royal protocol (Kuhrt 2002:181). It might even have been possible that a dynastic marriage took place between Apophis and Tany, who could have been a royal princess from Thebes since monuments to this effect have been found (Van Seters 1966:168) (although in Chapter 4.2.4 Tany was referred to as the sister/wife of Apophis). Dynastic marriages was one certain way of cementing the relations between two royal houses.

Redford (1993:120) refers to the military conquests of Apophis in the north outside Egypt, and the vast amounts of tribute paid to him. The Theban rebel Kamose described the ships in the harbour at Avaris during the reign of Apophis when he saw "hundreds of ships of fresh cedar which were filled with gold, lapis, silver, turquoise, bronze axes without number, not to mention the moringa-oil, fat, honey, willow, box-wood, sticks, and all their fine woods - all the fine products of Syria!" (Redford 1993:120), probably tribute paid to the king by his underlings in the Levant.



6.6 The Hyksos and their Egyptian underlings

One might assume that the Egyptians resented Hyksos rule when they were subjected for the first time in their long history to the rule of foreigners, and they were bristling with patriotic zeal. This impression can be the result of the writings of Manetho which were most likely an exaggeration (Bietak 2001b:136), but one should bear in mind that the first Asiatic kings in the Delta were 'elected' after the division of Egypt into three parts in the Twelfth Dynasty (Van Seters 1966:122). Kuhrt (2002:181) rejects the idea that the Hyksos deliberately trampled on Egyptian religious and political institutions and were hated by the Egyptian population as a whole. In this she is not alone. Bourriau (2003:183) points out that there is no indisputable evidence of destruction and looting by the Hyksos. Only one known monument of a Dynasty Thirteen king was violated: the pyramidion from the top of King Merne-ferra Ay's pyramid was found close to Tell el-Dab'a. In keeping with the time-honoured tradition of the Egyptian pharaohs of claiming for themselves monuments of their predecessors, monuments from the Twelfth Dynasty ruler Amenemhat III and two statues of Smenkhare of Dynasty Thirteen were found at Tanis, inscribed with the name of Aqenenra Apepi (Apophis?). These were probably taken from Memphis since they were dedicated to Ptah, then taken to Avaris, where the name of the Hyksos king was inscribed. Many monuments were also removed and given as diplomatic gifts to the king's international partners, notably in Palestine, Syria and the Aegean, as attested by archeological excavations (Redford 1993:120). Also, numerous statues from Middle Kingdom date had been found all over western Asia,

from Gaza to the Euphrates, possibly 'booty' seized by the initial expansion of Hyksos power throughout Egypt and later used in gift exchange with the Levantine states (Redford 1993:121).

Redford (1993:120) posits that the Hyksos, although they drew on the support of the initial Asiatic immigrants, had numerous Egyptians as its confederates. Not everyone in Thebes was happy, though. Kamose of the Seventeenth Dynasty would not recognize the fragmentation of Egypt. He considered all three segments of Egypt as belonging to Egypt (i.e. Upper Egypt/Thebes) and as such came under his rule as the only legitimate king. His nobles, on the other hand, acknowledged the borders and spoke only of Upper Egypt as 'Egypt' while the land held by the Hyksos was referred to as 'the land of the Asiatics'. These nobles might have made a treaty with the Hyksos, who gave them the right to pasture cattle in the agricultural estates of the Delta. The nobles felt that their privileges had not been violated, and they were naturally reluctant to participate in a revolt which might have resulted in a break with the Hyksos since they would have had a great deal to lose.

Does one adopt a culture which one considers inferior to one's own? I think not. Yet the Hyksos aped Egyptian culture in many respects. Especially the reign of Apophis appears to have been a time of cultural prosperity along Egyptian lines. Enough time had elapsed since the conquest to lend a veneer of Egyptian sophistication to the Hyksos royal family, at least. Apophis described himself as "a scribe of Re, taught by Thoth himself", and claimed to have been interested in literature (Redford 1993:122). In the 33rd year of his reign the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus was copied, and other documents such as the Westcar Papyrus with its collection of stories set at Khufu's court may well date from the same period. Middle Kingdom archives were preserved, scribes were trained in standard Egyptian traditions and continued to practice their skills in the service of the Hyksos rulers.

High positions in the Hyksos administration were not reserved for Asiatics. Many Egyptians served as high officials (e.g. as treasurer). The local dynast at Hermopolis, Pepy, was certainly an Egyptian and a loyal Hyksos subject. The loyalty to the Hyksos regime even turned some Egyptians against their own people. King Ahmose of the early Eighteenth Dynasty had to deal with rebellions against his rule led by an Egyptian who had no doubt been a Hyksos supporter (Kuhrt 2002:181). A Memphite priest as early as the Twelfth Dynasty listed several of his ancestors as serving the Asiatics. The above suggest that the Theban-generated feeling about the Hyksos was not shared wholeheartedly by the Egyptians in northern Egypt. Initially the rule might have been foreign to them, but with the passage of time it was widely accepted and the Hyksos rulers were reasonably integrated into the Egyptian cultural and political framework, although they adapted the administration to their own tradition (Bietak 2001b:139).

6.7 Apophis, most prominent of the “Greater” Hyksos

Apophis (c.1615 -1575) was probably the opponent of the Theban princes/kings Sekerene Ta'o and Kamose of the Seventeenth Dynasty (Bietak 2001b:139; Van Seters, 1966:154). His rule marks the pinnacle of Hyksos power in Egypt and abroad. It underlines Hyksos suzerainty once the formative stage of Hyksos incursion had passed. Kamose put the following words in the mouth of Apophis: "I am lord without equal from Hermopolis to Pi-Hathor (as well as) Avaris and on both rivers" (Redford 1993:118). Hermopolis was situated in the fifteenth nome of Upper Egypt and marked the most southernmost town under Hyksos control. Pi-Hathor was northeast of Avaris, thus the furthest point on the eastern frontier. The two rivers referred to were the central and western branches of the Nile in the Delta.

On the scribal palette of Atju, Apophis describes himself as "stouthearted on the day of battle, with a greater reputation (name) than any other king, who protects strange lands that have never seen him ... there is not his peer in any land!" (Redford 1993:120). Apophis' braggadocio was another characteristic taken over from the Egyptian pharaohs, although he *really* might have been a universal monarch with far-flung obligations. Apophis was also 'the great man of Retjenu', implying that he also ruled over parts of the Levant, notably Lebanon (Kuhrt 2002:181). Van Seters (1966:170) speculates that he might have had important cities such as Byblos under his control.

South of Egypt the land was fairly well controlled by the Kushites in Nubia at the height of their power. Before the hostilities under Ta'o and Kamose, reasonably good relations seemed to have existed between Thebes and their southern neighbours. Thebes was able to regain some of its strength, despite the heavy taxes imposed on Nile traffic once the ships passed Cusae. However, at the end of the Seventeenth Dynasty the state coffers were so depleted that cedar-wood for coffins could not be imported (Van Seters 1966:167). Despite this, Kamose was able to fit out a fleet of ships when he besieged Avaris.

It is possible that Apophis considered the Thebaid an 'indigestible' part of Egypt, more trouble than it was worth to subjugate completely (Redford 1993:119). Apophis considered the Thebaid a vassal state, administered by Theban kings as vassals on his behalf. One does expect loyalty from one's vassals, not rebellion. When referring to Thebes, Apophis leaves the impression of a disappointed parent referring to a wayward child when he writes in a letter to the King of Kush, "Have you seen what Egypt has done to me? The ruler there-in, Kamose-*kn*, granted life, is driving me from my lands, though I have not attacked him in the same way as all he did to you. He has consigned the two lands to misery, even my land and thy land, and he has hacked them " (Van Seters 1966:167).

Kamose described the relationship between himself and Apophis as that between vassal and overlord, but this did not deter him from planning to throw off the Hyksos yoke. Incursions into Nubia might have been necessitated by the need for Nubian gold. Apophis, unaware of the rising tide of nationalism in Thebes, saw Kamose only as acting in bad faith towards both his neighbours, giving them the right to eliminate his realm. However, with his extended interests abroad, Apophis might have looked upon Thebes as a mere inconvenience, like a burr in his tunic. Yet alliances and diplomacy were not able to stop the rising nationalism of the princes of Thebes.

Chapter 7 - The Hyksos expelled

The records of the war between the Hyksos Apophis and Khamudy on the one hand, and the Thebans Ta'o, Kamose and Ahmose on the other are important sources for our knowledge of the politics and diplomacy of the Hyksos period. They mention the three main powers in a treaty relationship with each other: the Hyksos under Apophis, ruling the lands of Lower and Middle Egypt, Kamose of the Thebiad ruling Upper Egypt, and the native Nubian ruler controlling Nubia and the kingdom of Kush (Van Seters 1966:165). Nubia was later eliminated by the clever military strategy of the Thebans, but the struggle between Avaris and Thebes would continue for twenty years or more.

Upper Egypt was not directly in the line of the Hyksos' initial incursion and it offered a refuge for the native regime ousted from the Middle Kingdom capital of Itj-tawa. Dynasty Thirteen withered away and was replaced by an equally impoverished Dynasty Seventeen, but we can assume that by the end of the latter dynasty the Theban royal family had considerable wealth as can be judged from the tomb of King Sobekemsaf II. The tomb was not found intact, but there was a report left by grave robbers during Dynasty Twenty who described how they found the grave:

He was equipped with a sword, and there was a ... set of amulets and ornaments of gold at his throat; his crown and diadems of gold were on his head and the ... mummy of the king was overlaid with gold throughout. His coffins were wrought with gold and silver within and without and inlaid with every splendid costly stone ... we stole the furniture which we found with them, consisting of vases of gold, silver and bronze (Bourriau 2003:193).

To say that the royal family had wealth does not necessarily imply that there was enough money in the state coffers. For this Thebes had to resume its plundering of Nubian gold, which they eventually did, and toward the end of Dynasty Seventeen the Theban princes readied themselves to take back what they thought was rightfully theirs, namely Lower Egypt.

In the first decade of the sixteenth century a new family came to power in Thebes. Judging by his prenomen, Seqenenre Ta'o, founder of the house, was perhaps appointed by Apophis as his vassal (Redford 1993:125). There was little love lost between the two rulers. Hostilities commenced when Apophis complained to Ta'o that the roaring of the hippopotami at Thebes – hundreds of kilometers away – kept him from his sleep (Bourriau 2003:198). Of course this was just a pretext, but it led, if not to a full-scale war, then to a number of skirmishes.

Ta'o lodged his campaign from Ballas, about 40 km. north of Thebes at the edge of the desert, a settlement constructed especially for the envisaged military onslaught. A large contingent of Kerma Nubians, probably Pan-grave mercenaries, supplemented the Theban army. Little is known about the battle itself, but Ta'o himself lost his life. His mummy, preserved in the Deir el-Bahri cache of royal mummies (Bourriau 2003:199), shows that he succumbed of severe head-wounds. Medical forensic tests show that he must have been surrounded and cut down by spear, dagger and axe, the axe being of the same type that has been found at Tell el-Dab'a (Redford 1993:128).



Fig. 10 - Head of Ta'o (Redford 1993:127)

The battle did not have positive results for the Thebans. Ta'o was succeeded by his son Kamose and conditions continued much as they had been before the battle. Two stelae left by Kamose at the temple of Amun at Thebes describe how the royal advisors counseled the young king not to pursue the war against Avaris. A treaty had been drawn up after the demise of Ta'o, giving both Thebes and the Hyksos access to each other's territories for goods and services, and in this the Hyksos showed no signs of bad faith (Redford 1993:127). However, Kamose was adamant to continue the rebellion his father had initiated.

Kamose was probably a better military strategist than his father had been and realized that he could not fight against enemies in the south and the north simultaneously. He therefore first set out to subdue Nubia.

The fortresses at the Second Cataract had long since been taken over by the Nubians during the weak Theban regime when the King of Kush was at the height of his powers. Under Kamose the fortresses at Buhen were eventually retaken and sacked, as attested to by traces of a great fire (Bourriau 2003:194), set either by the Nubians themselves or by Kamose's army. The fortresses at Mirgissa and Askut remained occupied by the Thebans, but alongside the Nubians. In the third year of Kamose's reign the region was again under Theban control, although it would take another three years to conquer Kerma, capital of Kush. Kamose still had a vast number of Nubians in his army but it is unclear whether they were voluntarily or forcibly recruited or whether they were mercenaries.

With the taking of the fortresses the road to the gold mines and other Nubian resources was once again open to Thebes. Despite the shortage of wood, a battle fleet was made ready to set out against Avaris. Kamose's hatred for his enemy is made palpable when he says, "I will

close with him (i.e. Apophis) that I may slit open his belly; for my desire is to rescue Egypt and to drive out the Asiatics" (Bourriau 2003:197).

Kamose probably ruled for only three years, and turbulent years they were. His campaign against Apophis is reconstructed on a writing tablet in a Theban tomb (Bourriau 2003:198). First he sent out Nubian scouts to reconnoitre the positions of the enemy garrisons. When his fleet was ready he decided to attack and crossed the frontier to Lower Egypt without warning. This element of surprise enabled him to overcome the towns in Middle Egypt without much resistance (Redford 1993:125). First he sacked Nefrusi, north of Cusae. At Sako he intercepted a messenger from Apophis on his way to the King of Kush, asking for assistance. This alerted him to the possibility of being attacked from the rear, so he sent soldiers to the Bahariya Oasis in the Libyan desert to cut the lines of communication between Avaris and Kerma. At Avaris he deployed his fleet to form a blockade on the two branches of the Nile which protected the city. He found Avaris heavily fortified, surrounded by a massive wall and with a well-fortified citadel which dominated the houses. He was watched by the women in the palace: "I caught sight of his women on the top of his palace looking out of their embrasures at the river bank, their bodies not stirring when they saw me - as they peeped out of their loopholes on the walls like the young of lizards from within their holes ..." (Kuhrt 2002:180). He patrolled the river banks, but Apophis refused to engage him in battle. Eventually he was forced to return to Thebes, having accomplished nothing. But he did have the spoils from the ships which he found laying at anchor at the harbour: three hundred ships laden with precious commodities and foodstuffs which the Thebans could ill afford to pass up, and more precious still were the ships themselves which Apophis could not turn in time to the safety of the ocean (Redford 1992:344).

There were still many Egyptians in Middle Egypt who could be persuaded to help Apophis, and the attempts to secure the oasis route was therefore not very successful, ending in a failure for the Thebans. However, the attack on Avaris severely weakened the Hyksos and signaled to Thebes that the Hyksos were not invincible, and that their power resided solely within the strong walls of Avaris (Redford 1993:127).

We have no indication of how Kamose died. He was succeeded by Ahmose who was probably his brother. For the first ten years of his reign their mother Ahhotep acted as regent (Bietak 2001b:127). From the biography of Ahmose-si-Abina (Ibana?), a soldier, we learn that there must have been an advancement of Theban military power at this time (Redford 1993: 128). In the eighteenth year of the reign of Ahmose the Theban armies entered Heliopolis, bypassed Avaris to capture the frontier fortress on the edge of the Sinai, cutting off support from Asia. They then blockaded the capital.

The events of the war was written on the reverse side of the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus by some unknown scribe, one of the few documents we have written by someone in the Asiatic camp:

Regnal year 11, second month of *shomu* – Heliopolis was entered.

First month of *akhet* day 23 – this southern prince broke into Tjaru.

Day 25 – it was heard tell that Tjaru had been entered.

Regnal year 11, first month of *akhet*, the birthday of Seth – a roar was emitted by the Majesty of this god.

The birthday of Isis – the sky poured rain (Redford 1993:128).

In terms understandable to us, the southern prince is Ahmose. He entered Heliopolis in early July and bypassed Avaris to capture Sile in early October. He then blockaded the capital (Redford 1993:128).

It is not known how long the siege lasted or what happened to king Khamudy (Apophis' successor) and the royal family. It is thought that the royals fled across the Sinai and holed up in Sharuhén (now Tell el-Ajjul) on the seacoast of Gaza, which was probably a Hyksos stronghold and trading emporium. This region was rich in resources and economic strength, so a reconquest of Egypt from this base was a distinct possibility. A series of attacks over three years on Sharuhén eventually resulted in the reduction of the site, where the lower city and Palace I show evidence of a major destruction (Weinstein 1992:346). Numerous other towns in ancient Palestine were destroyed and/or abandoned in the second half of the sixteenth century. Whether most of this devastation should be attributed to Ahmose' army has yet to be resolved (Weinstein 1997:135).

Manetho, as related by Josephus, reported that the Egyptians were in despair because of the long siege of Avaris. They eventually offered the Hyksos a free retreat to Palestine. The majority of townspeople escaped destruction and the city was abandoned. There is evidence of destruction and violence in the citadel, and Bietak's excavations show that in the last Hyksos stratum (D/2) at Tell el-Dab'a occupation ended abruptly. The tombs were looted, and the area was largely abandoned until the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty (Bourriau 2003:201).

If there had been little or no looting and destruction by the Hyksos when they first took over Egypt as Kuhrt (2002:181) and Bourriau (2003:180-183) hold, the reverse is certain true when the Egyptians drove the Hyksos from Egypt. Except for one mutilated statue found at Avaris, not a single piece of statuary has been found to date that had been made by the Hyksos. None of their writings have been found, apart from the brief report mentioned above. The only traces of their regime are to be found in the ruins of Avaris and other cities for archeologists to excavate. Their brief rule had come to an inglorious end.

In the next chapters the cultural heritage of the Hyksos will be examined.

PART TWO

THE HYKSOS CULTURE

Chapter 8 - Architecture

8.1 Introduction

Up to this point I have tried to sound disinterested, not taking sides between those who advocate a military incursion by strong forces from the East, subduing the Egyptians by brute force (Manetho, Redford 1993:169ff, Knapp 1988:169 and Van Seters 1966:192ff) and those who are firmly convinced that the transition from Egyptian rule to Hyksos rule of Egypt was a gradual and peaceful one (Bourriau 2003:180, Kuhrt 2002:181 and others), passing seemingly unnoticed by most common folk living in Egypt, and merely continuing the rule of Egypt after a bout of weak kings of Dynasty Thirteen was unable to keep the country together. The time has now come for me to take a stance in this matter, and what follows might be coloured by my conviction that Manetho and his supporters were/are alarmists, that there was no sudden military take-over by a strong force from the East, and that the transition from Egyptian rule to Hyksos rule was a consensual and peaceful event, inevitable in the circumstances.

Giveon (1983:32) sees the Thirteenth Dynasty as a bridge between the Twelfth Dynasty and Hyksos rule, and Hyksos rule as a continuation of Middle Kingdom rule. There is also a continuation of culture and regime (including foreign policy) during the Middle Kingdom and the Hyksos period. The hold Dynasty Thirteen had on Asia was the result of the efforts, military, administrative and commercial, of the Twelfth Dynasty. There is no documentation of campaigns or victories of the Thirteenth Dynasty in the Levant. Dynasty Thirteen was too weak and most of the reigns of kings too short to lay the foundation of an Egyptian presence in Palestine and Syria. The sequence of 65 rulers during Dynasty Thirteen (Giveon 1983:33) shows the lack of stability during this rule. The northern part of Egypt was already technically under Hyksos rule and some of the kings of Dynasty Thirteen had Semitic names. It is therefore not surprising that there was very close contact between western Asia and Egypt at that time.

Although scholars may differ on the reality or not of a foreign invasion, all are in agreement when it comes to the cultural roots of the Hyksos. The Hyksos were not a homogenous group but all probably shared a west Semitic culture, and all lived in the Middle Bronze Age II period. This period must be considered as a cultural unity with the same basic civilization lasting throughout. This applies particularly to the Syrian coast and Palestine where there was the strongest homogeneity of culture. The Levant continued to develop its basic Mesopotamian heritage during the MBII period, but with increased influence from Egypt and the Aegean (Van Seters 1966:82).

Egypt's strong commercial interests in the Levant were controlled by means of diplomacy, but Egypt's influence on the MBII culture was limited to the important centers of Syria, primarily

Byblos and Ugarit. Palestine, on the other hand, showed evidence of great cultural borrowing from Egypt.

When we opt for a peaceful transition from Dynasty Thirteen to the Hyksos period, it is not surprising to find that Hyksos culture was heavily influenced by Egyptian culture. In many instances the cultures developed side by side. It is also not surprising to find, for instance, an Egyptian mortuary temple rubbing shoulders with an Asiatic temple dedicated to a Near Eastern god. Let us presume that the Asiatics who had been living in Egypt for several generations had been more or less 'Egyptianized', but that newcomers from the East still clung to the culture of their country of origin, hence the mingling of cultural styles.

Redford (1993:94) warns that we should not see the MBII period as a natural continuation of MBI. The former was a completely new cultural phase. MBI was a period with a sparse population of elusive transhumants, while MBIIA represented the introduction into the Levant of a culture with contacts with the north. This could have come about by considerable population movements. Also, trade and transit corridors could have played a considerable role. One sees in this period a marked change in pottery due to the introduction of the fast pottery wheel, advanced types of weaponry, and the general trend of fortifying cities and towns. New techniques in attack and defense came to the fore, such as the chariot, the siege engine and the battering ram (Redford 1993:96).

A region not previously mentioned but which is of importance in this section of the work and especially for the section on arts and crafts is the Aegean, and more specifically Crete and the Cycladic islands Thera, Kea and Melos. With favourable winds these islands are within easy striking distance of Egypt (Warren 1995:10) and trade between Egypt and the Aegean had probably been going on for centuries. These islands are also close to Syria and Palestine, and it is possible that exchange of goods between Egypt and the Aegean did not occur directly but was conducted via other trade partners.

Janson (1977:93) adds another dimension to the picture we already have of the Hyksos. He links Crete with the Mycenaeans on the Greek mainland in the following manner: In the period spanning 1700-1580 BCE Egypt strengthened its army with the aid of warriors from Mycenae. The Minoans, unmilitary themselves but famous sailors, ferried the Mycenaeans back and forth between Mycenae and Egypt so that both groups acquired a better than superficial knowledge of one another's culture. The Mycenaeans went home laden with Egyptian gold. They were also deeply impressed with Egyptian funerary customs. The Minoans as ferry-men were also well paid for their services, as is evident from their sudden prosperity towards c. 1600 BCE. During this period there was also a rapid development in naturalistic wall paintings in that country. The presence of the Mycenaeans in Egypt may shed some light on the paintings found at Avaris after the Hyksos had been driven out.

Certain aspects of Hyksos culture viz. architecture, arts and crafts, painting, metalwork and burial practices will be investigated in the rest of this chapter.

8.2 Buildings

Egypt has a very dry climate, and away from the fertile strip along the Nile the desert takes over. Provided the walls are thick enough, mud-brick structures in Middle and Upper Egypt can last for centuries in the dry climate. In the Delta, however, conditions are quite different. In places it is damp and swampy and not conducive to the conservation of mud-brick constructions. The activities of peasants searching for mud-brick and lime to use as fertilizer

on their crops have removed many remnants of Hyksos architecture (Weinstein 1997:134). Another obstacle in finding remains of Hyksos material culture is that many of the ancient settlements now lie below the water table and cannot be excavated (Weinstein 2001:368). The area of Hyksos settlement also lies beneath some of the most fertile agricultural ground in Egypt, and agricultural practices and modern settlements encroach upon the excavation sites. We shall have to turn to the work of Bietak (e.g. 1996) to learn what his archeological probings have to date brought to light.

8.2.1 Palaces

Strata E/2 to D/2 at Tell el Dab'a give us the occupation levels during the Hyksos period, but we know that the site and its environs had been occupied by Asiatics since the early twentieth century BCE during the rule of the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties. Most of the settlements at that time also housed Egyptian administrators in administrative palaces. At Avaris there were also shelters to provide for the workmen involved in the construction of the town. On the completion of the official buildings in the settlement these shelters were abandoned, or they might have been used to house soldiers and other workers in the employment of the Egyptian crown. By the beginning of the Thirteenth Dynasty (stratum H, c.1780 BCE) the town expanded to the south, covering two adjacent turtlebacks, and archeological and anthropological evidence indicates that the new settlers were from the Levant, although highly 'Egyptianized' (Bietak 1996:5).

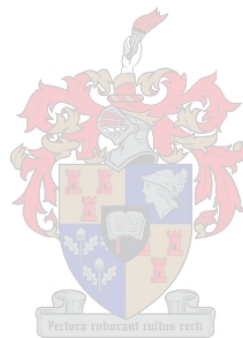
The MBII period initiated a period of well-organized urban life. In Syro-Palestine most towns were well laid out with houses arranged in blocks separated by clearly delineated streets with run-off curbs and paved with small stones (Van Seters 1966:38). Many cities had covered drains.

The center of the regular MBII town was the administrative palace. Around the palace were two or three open courts, each surrounded by rooms of which at least one was a sanctuary. Within the palace itself was a royal chapel, living quarters for high officials and a number of work-rooms. Such palaces were found at Strechem and Mari, and a fine example was excavated at Tell el-Ajjul (the city of Sharuhem)(Dessel 1997:38). This palace was built on a high base of dressed sandstone, and the walls were of mud-brick. The palace had a large central court surrounded by small rooms. One of these was a bathroom finished off with white plaster and equipped with bath, drain and cesspit (Van Seters 1966:39).

At Tell el-Dab'a a palace of the early Thirteenth Dynasty was uncovered. Since this palace was built before the Hyksos take-over, it is not surprising that the lay-out was purely Egyptian, as were the six tombs with chambers sunk into huge pits. The manner of burial (to be discussed later), however, showed that Asiatics and not Egyptians were buried in these graves. In all probability the occupants of the palace were Asiatics of high rank in service of the Egyptian administration. This palace was suddenly abandoned while it was in the process of being expanded or refurbished (Bietak 1996:29). At that time the occupants of the palace probably fell into disgrace or were removed because of political maneuvering. This palace was not built as a unit but developed from a huge mansion. Initially it consisted of a reception room with four columns, a bedroom and a magazine, with a robing room behind the reception room. Later a spacious court was added, lined along all four sides with columns. In front of the courtyard was an entrance building with a portico to the north, and in front of the portico was a garden laid out like the board of a Senet game which was possibly played with live figures (Bietak 1996:21).

Entrance into the palace was gained along two corridors at the side. One led to the reception room, the other to a staircase which led to an upper floor or canopy, the construction of which is uncertain. In the central courtyard there might have been a pool fed by a channel constructed of burned bricks, sunk into a trench beneath the floor.

Later the palace was enlarged and entirely changed. The main entrance was moved to the east, leading into a room with two columns which in turn led to a courtyard. South of this palace another palace was started but never completed, with a large reception room, a bedroom and robing room.



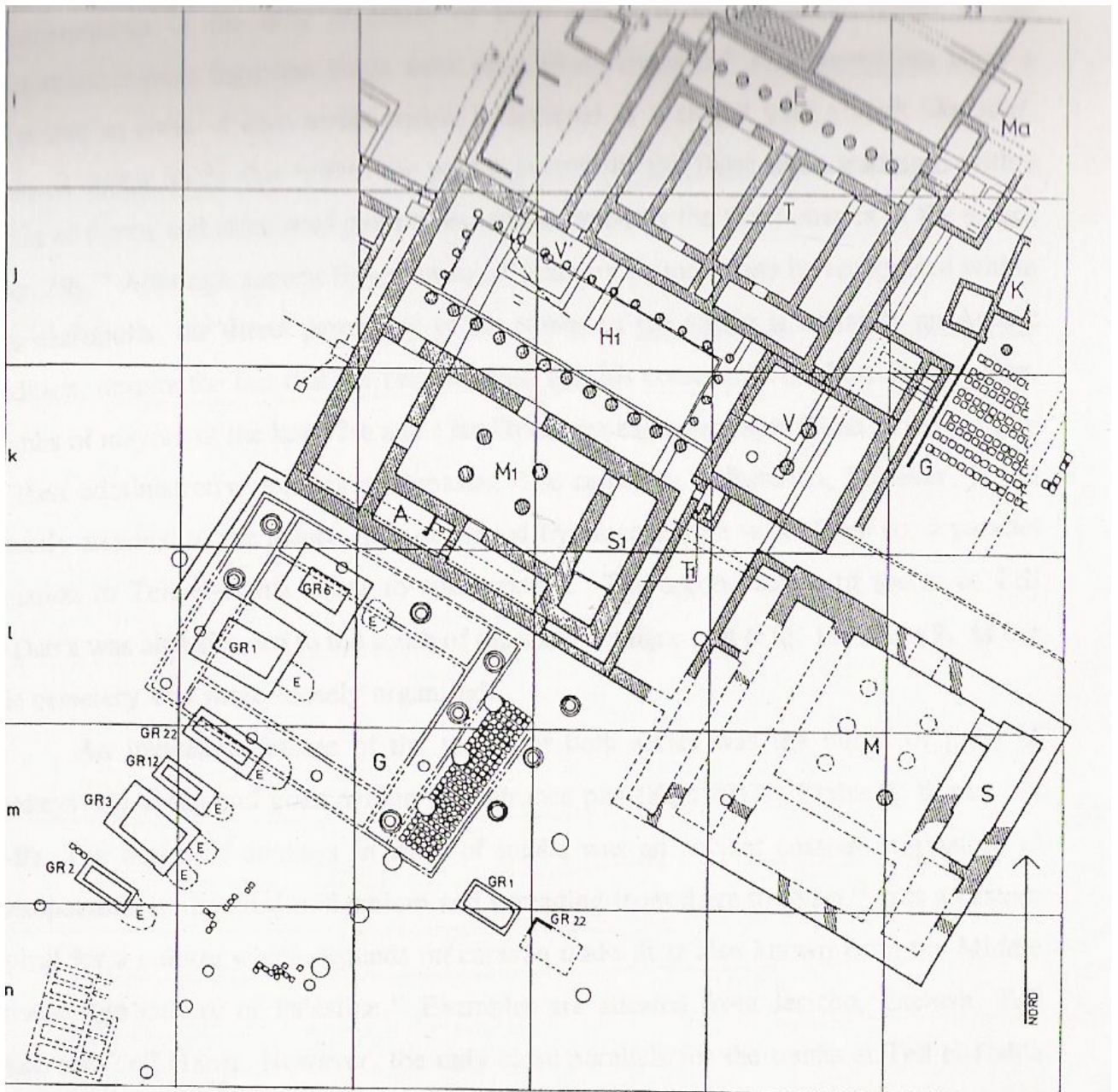


Fig. 18 Palace of the early 13th Dynasty, stratum d/1.

Fig. 19 Isometric reconstruction of the palace cemetery, reflecting the possible appearance of the holy precincts of Sais and Buto.

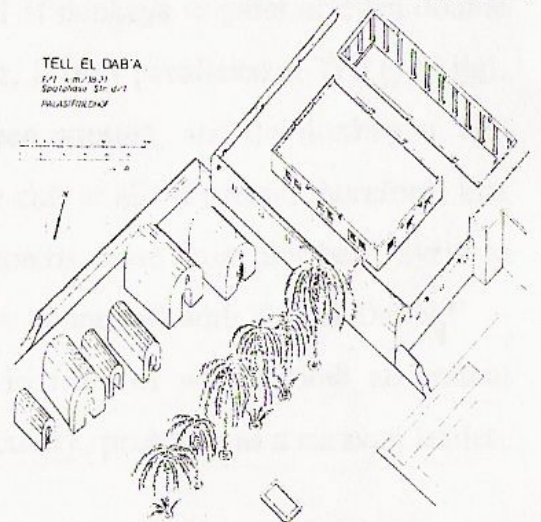


Fig.11 – Palace of early Dynasty Thirteen, and reconstruction of palace cemetery (Bietak1996:23)

The palace was surrounded by gardens. To the north was a flower garden, set out in a regular pattern. To the south was a garden lined by trees. To the east was another square of trees and a regular pattern of flower beds. The garden to the west was connected with the domestic farmland of the palace (Bietak 1996:22). The gardens were later used as cemeteries for the functionaries of the palace.

The palace described above was probably not built in Hyksos times, but a palace built during Hyksos rule was excavated at 'Ezbet Helmi as part of a citadel. This area was settled in the late Hyksos period (strata D/3-2). Apart from a huge platform and fort *cum* watchtower, a huge structure had been excavated which could have been a royal palace. Two strata of gardens in the form of tree-pits were found, enclosed by a fortified wall. It is assumed that the wall not only enclosed the gardens but also a major royal residential area. Further evidence of a palatial structure was found in the form of fragments of architecture and stelae, some of which were reused for new buildings in the Eighteenth Dynasty (Bietak 1996:65). One of these is a stela of the eldest son of King Khajan named Jannasi (Iannas, Yannas) which probably stood together with another stela on either side of a processional road.

Part of a stela commissioned for King Apophis and his consort Tany was found by Bietak's team near the stela of Jannasi on the road to 'Ezbet Helmi. Another fragment of the same stela had been found earlier in another location.

Since nothing but a few inscribed blocks and the jamb of a doorway belonging to the palace had been found, we know nothing about the layout and style of the palace. However, archeologists are hopeful that palaces pre-dating the citadel might be found as excavations are continued.

8.2.2 The citadel

Along the banks of the former Pelusiac branch of the Nile on a turtleback north-west of and adjacent to Tell el-Dab'a, a citadel at 'Ezbet Helmi has been excavated. During the Hyksos period this citadel was fortified by an enormously thick buttressed wall. The wall encapsulated a very large compound of more than 50,000 square meters and was identified as the citadel of Avaris during the late Hyksos period. Several major buildings in this compound were decorated with wall-paintings of the Minoan style (Bietak 1995:20), to be discussed later (9.5). Of special interest is a platform construction measuring about sixty by forty-five meters. It consisted of a massive brick-built wall enclosing compartments which were found filled to the top of the platform. The top of the platform is no longer preserved. The platform cut into an enclosure wall with buttresses. To the north of the platform was a garden. Pottery found under the platform in stratum D/2 dates to the late Hyksos period. The lay-out of the building can be deduced from the articulation of the walls within, which was typical of Egyptian palatial architecture.

The citadel was built in an area which had not previously been inhabited (strata D/3-2). A granite portal of King Amenemhet I of Dynasty Twelve, probably taken from 'Ezbet Rushdi, was found here. It was probably covered in white-wash to render the original inscription invisible and then used in this secondary position.

A citadel was built over this site in the Eighteenth Dynasty but many of the features of the original citadel could be identified. These include the platform mentioned above. The platform

might have been used as the foundation of a fortress or a very big watch-tower guarding the northern access to the citadel. A separate enclosure was built around the platform.

There probably was a royal residence of the late Hyksos period within the enclosure of the fortified wall. There were also two strata of gardens set out in a regular grid system, the earlier of which belonged to the late Hyksos period. Indications of enclosed gardens and vineyards were also found around the residence.

8.2.3 Temples

The early Asiatics in the Delta worshipped the gods they brought from their own countries, but as they became more and more 'Egyptianized' they also paid tribute to the gods of Egypt (religious practices to be discussed later). For all these gods temples were built by the Asiatics, initially along the lines of temples found in their countries of origin. The temples of MBII in Syria and Palestine were built according to a very simple plan. We can take the excavated temple at Shechem as an example (Van Seters 1966:39). It was built on a platform of lime and clay, six meters thick, which supported a massive rectangular structure consisting of a cult room with a simple entrance hall. The hall was formed by two tower-like projections in front of the doorway which was seven meters wide and five meters deep. The dimensions of the cult room was 11 by 13.5 meters. Two rows of three columns each divided the cult room which might have been open to the sky. The walls were more than five meters thick, indicating that the walls must have been very tall.

Not all places of worship were built structures. Some may have been open places with inscribed stelae or obelisks (*massebah*) or uninscribed standing stones (*bamah*), the latter often associated with 'high places'. Such places of worship featured an altar, elevated several steps high, and intended for burnt offering (Van Seters 1966:42).

At Avaris, one of the largest temples from the MBII period was found in strata F- E/3 in the eastern part of the town. It was thirty meters long and was painted light blue, signifying that it was probably dedicated to a cosmic god (Bietak 1996:36). The god was probably the Syrian weather god, later 'Egyptianized' and identified with the Egyptian god Seth, but more about the gods later (Chap. 12). Two limestone doorjambs, probably belonging to the temple, were found here, inscribed with the name of King Nehesy of the Fourteenth Dynasty. In front of the temple was an altar, and to the southeast of the altar two pits were found, identified as purpose-dug tree pits, in such a position that the trees would shed shade on the altar. Offering pits were also found surrounding the altar, with pottery fragments and cattle bones.

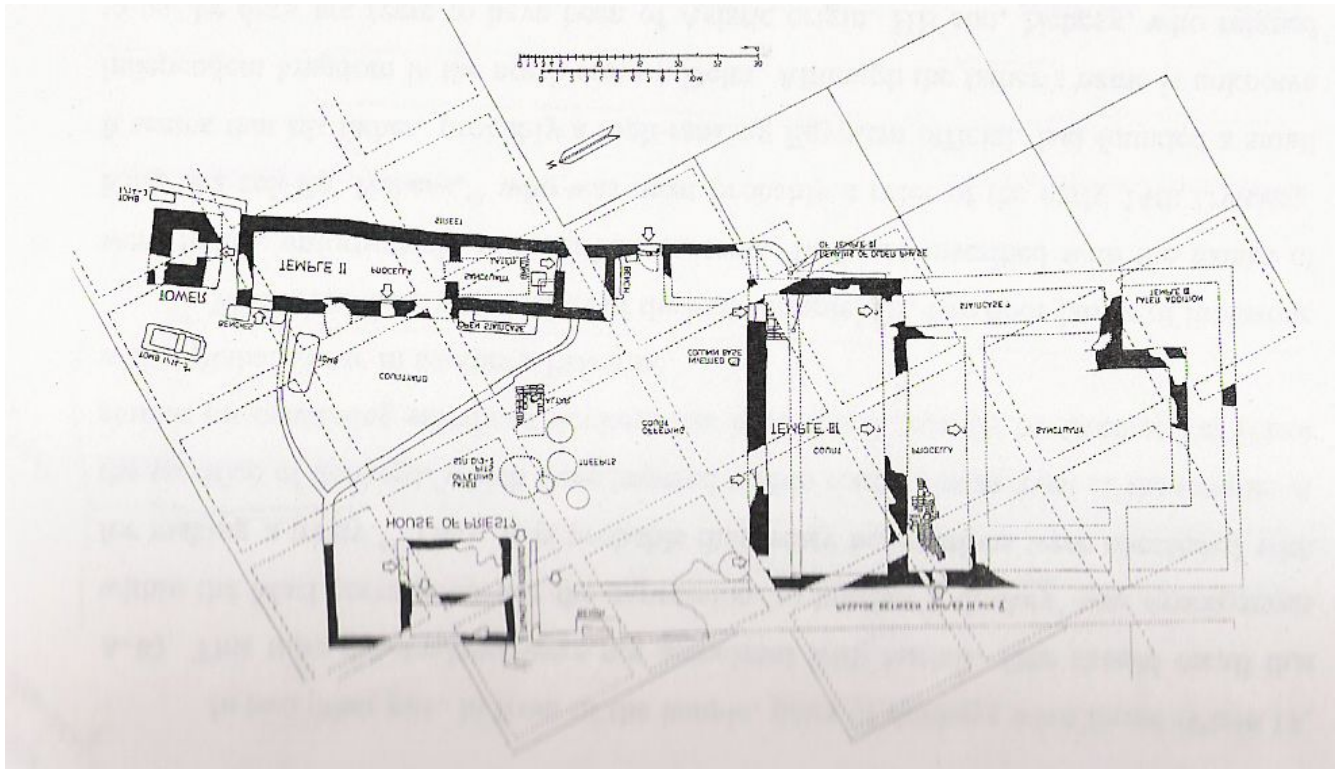


Fig. 12 - Temple from strata F-E/3 with offering pits (Bietak 1996:39)

A second temple was found on the western side of the temple above. It was a *Breihau* temple in the Near East tradition with a double entrance from the courtyard, and a tower. A third temple, probably an Egyptian mortuary temple with Egyptian lay-out, was found on the other side, also displaying an altar (Bietak 1996:40)..

Stratum E/3 marks the beginning of individual mortuary temples during the Hyksos period. These temples were built in cemeteries surrounding sacred precincts. While the temples themselves were of purely Near Eastern Bronze Age type, the mortuary temples were built in Egyptian style, representing the Middle Kingdom type of mortuary temple which developed from the customary middle-class house of that period. These types of houses were also found at Tell el-Dab'a. Bietak (1996:48) sees the similarities between the houses and the mortuary temples as follows: where the house has a vestibule, the temple has an ante-chamber. Where the house has a living room flanked by a bedroom, or by a bedroom on either side, the temple has an offering room at its center, flanked by two sanctuaries. The dimensions of the house and the temple are almost identical. The bedrooms in the house correspond to the sanctuary rooms where the statues of the deceased or the gods were kept. The same outlay was followed in large temples such as the one at 'Ezbet Rushdi. From the excavations at Tell el-Dab'a it can be seen how the temples of that period had evolved, and also how the inhabitants of Tell el-Dab'a had quickly acquired Egyptian religious traditions some time before and during the Hyksos period.

8.2.4 Houses

We have seen that the MBII period introduced a phase of urbanization. In Syria and Palestine settlements had a set layout. One can well expect that the Asiatics in the Delta used the same kind of layout in the settlements they founded.

In the excavations at Avaris, two or three of the strata showed a settlement constructed of mud-bricks, initially laid out along a very regular orthogonal plan. The living units, built together in long rectangular blocks with the houses standing back to back, each covered about twenty-five square meters, while the streets between the blocks of houses were about five meters wide. When a large number of inhabitants left the initial town to move to a new settlement, the remaining people extended their houses so that the outlay of the town became increasingly irregular (Bietak 1996:9). No social differentiation was discernable in the excavated portion of the original settlement.

Houses in stratum H revealed that their lay-out closely resembled both the *Mittelsaalhaus* and *Breitraumhaus* occurring in northern Syria. The *Mittelsaalhaus* was also an element of the palace at Mari which was approximately contemporary with the Hyksos settlement at Avaris, thus introducing a foreign element in the Egyptian townscape.

From stratum F onwards foreign house types were no longer used. The houses were of pure Egyptian design, and in strata E/3 and E/2 the original egalitarian settlement pattern became socially differentiated. Different types of house plans made their appearance. The houses of the wealthy boasted a vestibule and a living room flanked by a bedroom and a side room. Storage rooms became popular. Big houses were surrounded by smaller, much more humble dwellings, possibly those of the dependents of the overlord in the big house. Over time the bigger houses became larger still and more solid, especially with regard to their store rooms (Bietak 1996:49). Originally the living compound consisted of a house and an ample courtyard with silos, but the peripheral areas adjacent to the central house were gradually completely filled with structures, to such an extent that there was no longer room for open cemeteries. Courtyards, where available, were used for burial purposes, or else burials took place within the houses themselves. If there was enough space, a chamber for entombment of family members was constructed outside the home against the outer wall of the bedroom. Burial in courtyards or in the houses themselves was a custom introduced from the Levant and were found at important MBII sites, especially at Megiddo.

Pectora tubercant cultus recti

Chapter 9 - Arts and crafts

Bourriau (1993:189) proposes a diagram of the interrelationship of regional chronologies in the eastern Mediterranean during the Middle Bronze Age.

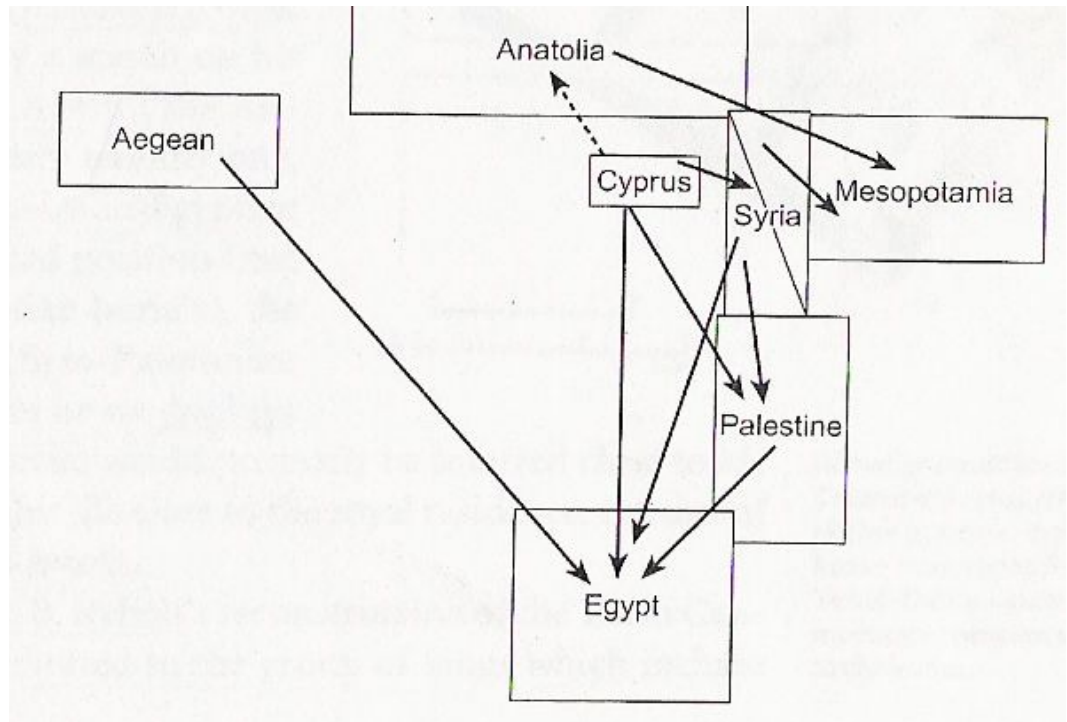


Fig. 13 - Diagram showing interrelationships between Egypt and other countries (Bourriau 1993:189)

From this diagram it would appear that there was only one-way traffic from the different states to Egypt. Warren (1995:4ff) disagrees here with Bourriau. He points out that trade and influence were reciprocal, especially when it came to trade with Crete. He bases his assumption on the wall paintings of the Minoan type found at Avaris (to be discussed later) and on finished Egyptian products such as alabaster vessels and faïencé ware found in Crete. Also, raw alabaster and semi-precious stones were exported to Crete, and organic goods most certainly formed a significant part of exports.

9.1 Statuary

In a tomb of a palace cemetery at Avaris of the late Thirteenth Dynasty a serpentine statuette (14 cms. tall) was discovered, representing an Egyptian official.. It predates what is considered the Hyksos period. The kilt and the headdress marks the figurine as Egyptian, but

we have already established that many Asiatics filled high positions at Avaris, so that this statuette might have been made for/of an Asiatic.

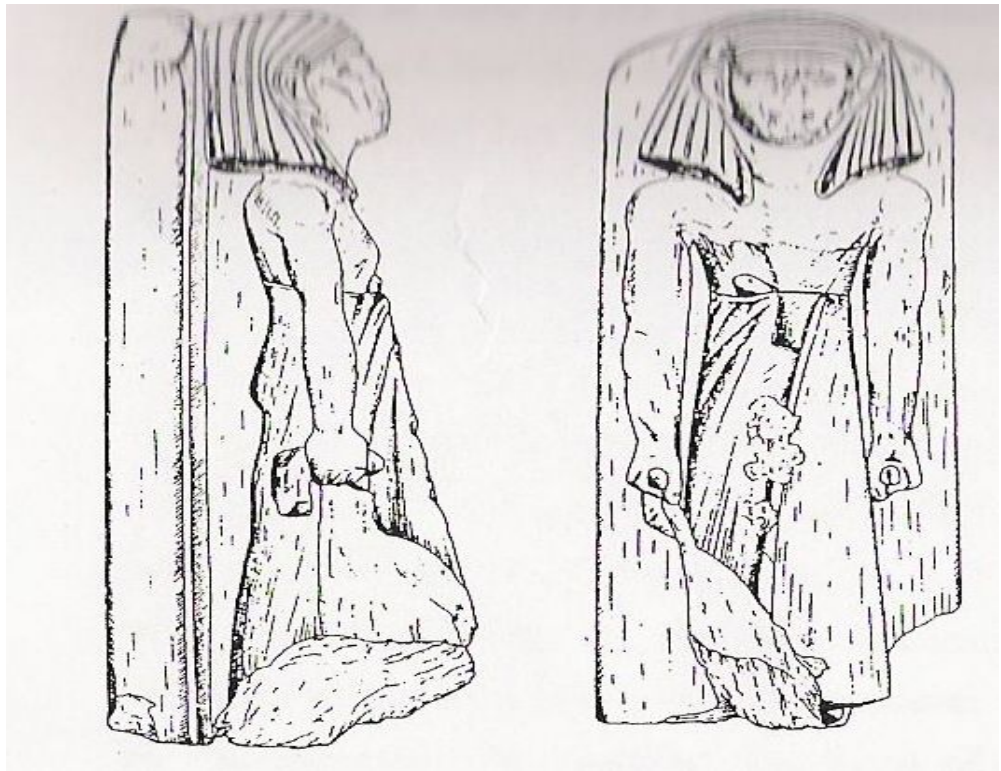


Fig. 14 - Serpentine statuette from palace tomb, stratum F/1 (Bietak 1996:plate 12A)

The only other statue found to date at Avaris was located in a robber's pit cut into a tomb chapel (Bietak 1996:plate 4 A-C). Only a fragment was found of a nearly twice life-size limestone statue of a (presumably) seated man holding a throw-stick against his shoulder. The artistic style and the clothes are non-Egyptian and the size indicates a person of the greatest importance. The mushroom-shaped coiffure was painted red while the colour of the skin was yellow, the traditional colour for Asiatics in Egyptian art. The form of this statue has no parallels in Egypt, although a similar figure is known from the palace at Ebla, dating from the same period (18th century BCE) (Bietak 1996:20). The statue at Avaris was smashed intentionally, suggesting that this was done in a period of political turmoil. None of the facial features was left intact.

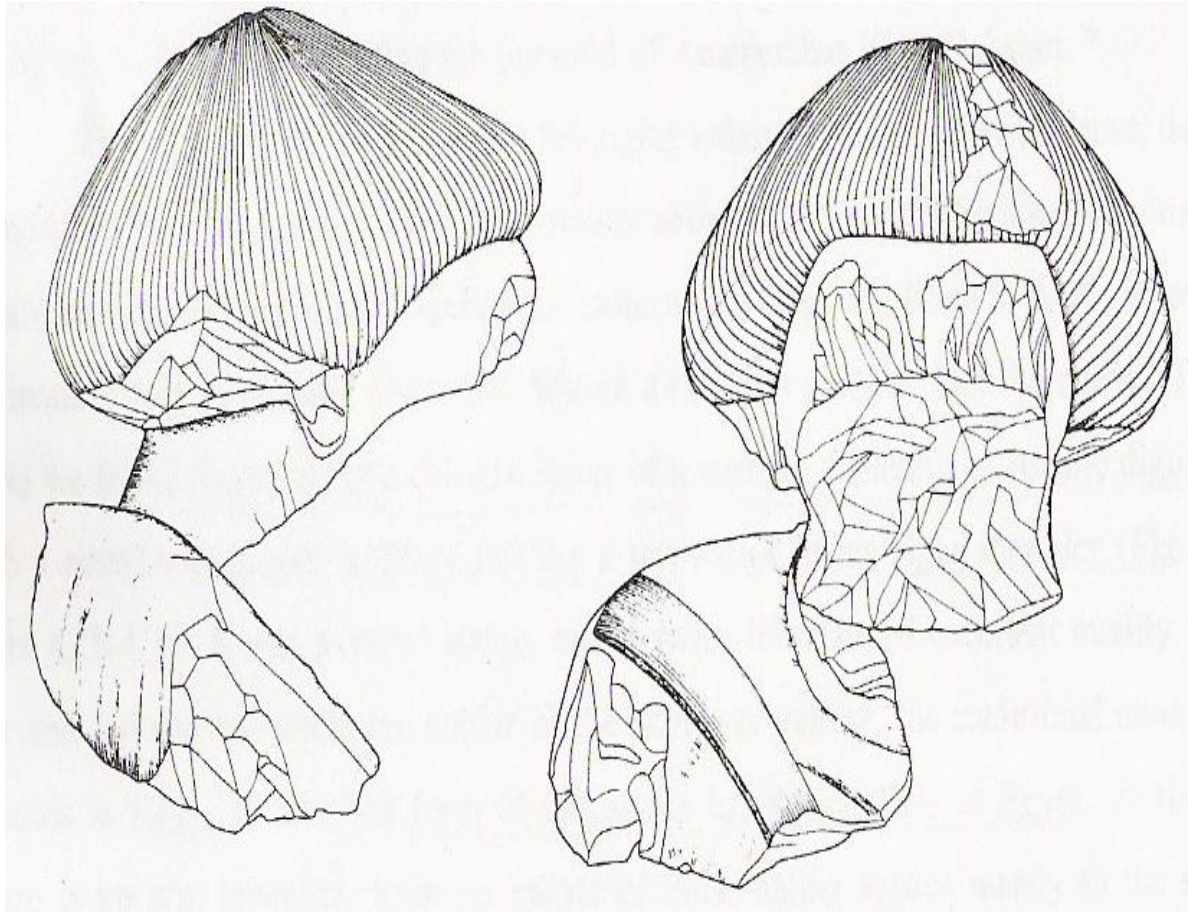


Fig. 15 - Remains of statue of Asiatic dignitary (Bietak 1996:17)

The Hyksos were not slow in following the poor example of the Egyptian kings when it came to usurping monuments of their predecessors. King Khyan, the ruler at the time of the Hyksos expulsion from Egypt, left a Middle Kingdom statue at Bubastis on which he had placed his own name. Many other monuments from Egypt bearing his name were widely dispersed throughout the Levant, among others a basalt lion (Van Seters 1966:158).

9.2 Pottery

Pottery is one of the craft forms that makes it easy to pinpoint the chronological age of a settlement. Pottery shards are found at all ancient settlements and can be used not only to date the settlement but also to tell us more about the settlers, their origins and their way of life.

Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware (Weinstein 2001:386; cf Bietak 1996:Figs.46-49, Plates 22-23), a term coined by Petrie when he found a large quantity of these ceramic utensils in graves at this site, is often associated by archeologists with the Hyksos. The decoration on this ware consists of a series of straight or wavy lines accompanied by jabs filled in with white. The surface of the ware is a burnished dark brown or black. The characteristic shapes are piriform or cylindrical juglets, although the white-filled technique is sometimes used for other forms as well (Van Seters 1966:49).



Fig. 16 - Tell el-Yahudiyeh juglets (Bietak 1996:plates 23A and 23B)

Albright (Van Seters 1966:15) points out that pottery of similar style from the MBI period was made in Palestine but that it was stopped being produced at around 1800 BCE. However, the style surfaced again in Egypt through slow cultural diffusion between 1700 and 1550 BCE. Van Seters disagrees with Albright, holding that this decorative style was very well attested in Syria and Palestine during the MBIIB-C period. He also warns against scholars who propose that Tell el-Yehudiyeh ware occurred in Egypt in the Twelfth Dynasty. These were actually Syrian juglets with the same type of decoration, but the shape of the containers differed. Syrian juglets were piriform with high round shoulders and a disk or ring base and the pattern is contained within the lines, consisting of a pricked design in triangular or diamond zones. These juglets were found in coastal Syria and also in Palestine, particularly at Megiddo, but usually in an imitated form, the body more globular and the base button-shaped. The Syrian style was found in Egypt in the Delta and also at Kahun in Middle Egypt and at Buhen and Kerma in Nubia. The Palestinian style was found in Egypt primarily at Khata'na and Tell el-Yahudiyeh, and also at Enkomi in Cyprus, but not in Nubia.

Van Seters (1966:52) suggests that, in the Delta during the period 1675-1575 BCE, contact with Palestine was greatly strengthened, and that Tell el-Yahudiyeh was probably a Palestinian settlement.

Maguire (1995:54) propounds that the Hyksos may have intensified political and economical cohesion between Egypt and the Levant. She bases her suggestion on the evidence from the distribution of jugs and juglets. She also suggests that there might have been elite groups of people operating in Syria, Palestine and Egypt during the MBII period, a trade which might have broken down in the aftermath of the expulsion of the Hyksos, since the pattern of exchange of jugs and juglets in the Late Bronze Age was quite different from that during the Middle Bronze Age.

Juglets were a consistent element in tomb assemblages. These were small, narrow-necked containers for holding a commodity which was precious in that only a small amount of it was meant to be used at any one time, such as pungent oil or perfume.

9.3 Seals and scarabs

The glyphic art of seal carving is considered a minor art (Keel & Uehlinger 1996). A seal is a die or signet having a raised or incised emblem used to stamp an impression upon a receptive such as wax or wet clay, and belonging exclusively to the user. Seals were made from hard substances such as baked clay, copper or stone. Cylindrical seals are, as the name implies, cylindrical in shape, and sometimes have a hole lengthwise in the center of the cylinder through which a peg could be inserted for rolling the cylinder along the surface to be marked. Royal seals in Egypt, often with the name of the king in a cartouche, were used on objects such as pottery jars to indicate that the jar was stamped in that king's lifetime or on behalf of his administration (Givon 1987:25).

Seals have a long history. In Mesopotamia (3500-3000 BCE) seals did not take the form of a stamp or die but was cylindrical with the decoration distributed all around the surface so that the design was repeated once the seal had made one full rotation (Garbini 1966:13). Since cylinder seals (Collon 1987) are quite small in size (between 1.5 to 3 cms. in length) it took great dexterity to carve these seals. The design on seals covered a broad field, from ritual and religious scenes to purely decorative friezes from nature. The popularity of seals continued through the Sumerian, Akkadian and later periods in Mesopotamia.

The flowering of seal carving in Syria began in the eighteenth century BCE and lasted for several hundred years (Gabrini 1966:101). Syrian seals adopted the Mesopotamian cylinder type and used some elements occurring on the Old Babylonian seals, but local motifs also occurred – divine and human figures, religious and purely ornamental motifs, and many Egyptian features (Teissier 1996). The surface of the cylinder was arranged in registers, often set off by a *guilloche* motif. In the second half of the eighteenth century the taste for ornamental seals became dominant.

The trade between Egypt and Palestine and to a lesser extent Syria, during the Second Intermediate Period is attested by great quantities of scarabs or sacred beetles. The scarab was used in ancient Egypt as a talisman or as a symbol of the soul. The development of the scarab is uncertain, but it is taken to have developed from a combination of a stamp seal with a scarab amulet (Van Seters 1966:62). Scarabs are a valuable index of the contact between Asia and Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period.

During the Middle Kingdom scarabs in Egypt were quite rare, and its widespread use as a charm cannot be dated to much earlier than the end of the Twelfth Dynasty. Not a single scarab had been found in the excavated graves of Dynasty Eleven and early Dynasty Twelve. Seals and scarabs with the names of kings of Dynasty Twelve have been found (Bietak 1995:25) and also scarabs of the lesser-known kings of Dynasty Thirteen such as those of Hetep-ib-re and Nedjem-ib-re (Giveon 1987:32). Giveon does not see these as an import into Egypt but as an inner Egyptian development, albeit influenced by foreign ideas. These royal scarabs were very similar to Hyksos scarabs, indicating the continuity of culture and regime during the Middle Kingdom and Hyksos periods. Royal scarabs of Dynasty Thirteen resemble Hyksos scarabs so much that without geological context the two groups cannot be distinguished. Giveon also suggests (1987:25) that the use of scarabs for sealing is possible but not very probable.

Scarabs were usually made from gemstones or glazed stone. The flat side or underside of the scarab was decorated with artistic motifs of various kinds. Some were purely decorative with spirals, guilloches, concentric circles, ropes and other geometric designs, many of Minoan inspiration (Van Seters 1966:63; Gabrini 1966:101). The use of hieroglyphs and good-luck signs for 'life', 'health' and 'prosperity' was common, and the signs were usually associated with royalty. These were also used as fillers between names and figures. The Asiatics took over this idea and developed it into the so-called *anra* scarabs, using hieroglyphs with the value of ' , n and r (Van Seters 1966:64). It had been suggested that it was a wish formula for the protection of the owner's name.

In scarabs decorated with human or animal figures one can see a development from purely Asiatic themes to Egyptian themes. A person holding a branch or flower on an Asiatic scarab may develop into a falcon-headed deity with an uraeus serpent (Van Seters 1966:64). Keel has shown that the god is Horus but he took over the plant scepter of the Syro-Palestinian Baal (Cornelius 1994:137; cf Fig. 29).

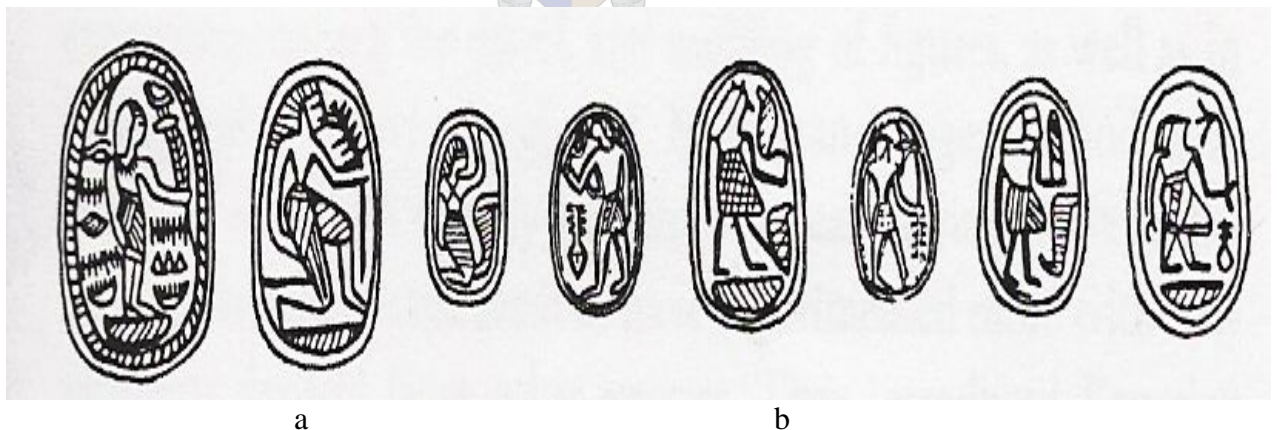


Fig. 17 - Compare scarabs a and b to see development from Asiatic to Egyptian theme (Van Seters 1966:65)

Numerous scarabs carry the names of important officials and seem to reflect the centralization of administration carried out by Senwosret III.

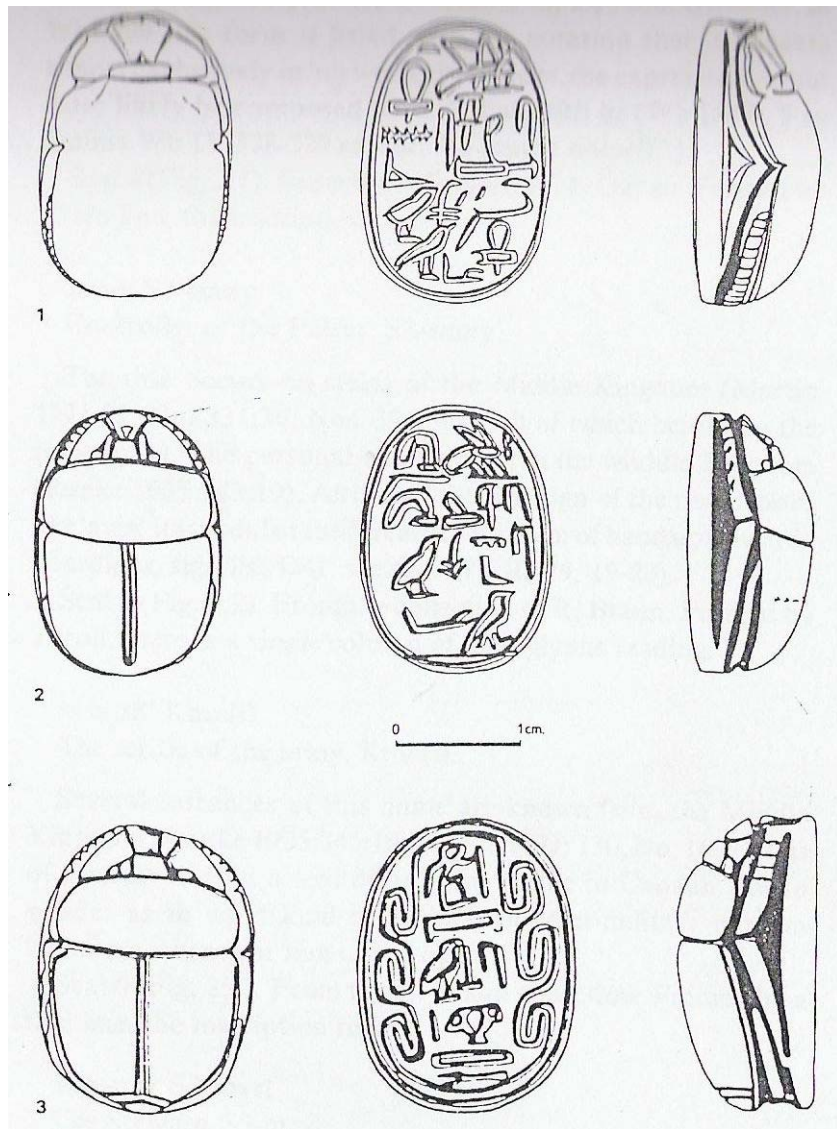


Fig. 18 - Scarabs with names of dignitaries ((Rainey 1987:34)

Scarabs with the names of kings from Dynasty Twelve were not always contemporary with these kings themselves. Many of them were possibly made during the Second Intermediate Period and used solely as amulets (Van Seters 1966:62).

A find that Bietak (1996:26) considers very important is an amethyst scarab mounted on a gold ring with the name and title of the owner. The object, found in a palace tomb of the early Thirteenth Dynasty in stratum F/1, was unfortunately damaged but the title might have been 'Overseer of Foreign Countries', belonging to a person who had the responsibility for organizing the trading expeditions to the Levant by land and/or by sea. The name of the person on the scarab is Sombekemhat, a corrupted version of an Egyptian name, indicating that the command of Egyptian script of both the seal-cutter and the commissioner was poor. This seal is important because it gives an indication of the functions of the palace dignitaries and palace tomb owners.

In the northern wing of the same palace a haematite cylinder seal was found. It represents the oldest representation of the menacing northern Syrian weather god Baal-Zaphon (Cornelius &

Niehr 2004:47). He was the protector of sailors and overlord of the sea (which is represented as a snake). Also on the seal is a portrayal of a sailing ship, a goring bull and a lion.



Fig. 19 - Cylinder seal and impression with representation of Syrian weather god (Bietak 1996:plates 12C and 12D)

According to Edith Porada this cylinder seal displays Syrian glyptic style but was cut in Egypt and influenced by Egyptian art (Bietak 1996:27).

From another tomb in the same stratum a seal impression was found. The seal probably belonged to the royal treasurer and chief steward of the King of Lower Egypt named Aya.

9.4 Metalwork

9.4.1 Jewelry

What little jewelry found at Tell el-Dab'a came from graves. An amethyst scarab mounted on a gold ring has already been mentioned, and there was also a gold and amethyst bracelet from the same grave (Bietak 1996:26) (See golden diadem fig. 6).

Warren (1995:2) feels that there was a strong bond between craftsmen from the Aegean and Egypt. Travelers and traders might have seen the Egyptian art forms and communicated them to Aegean artists, or *vice versa*. This is substantiated by shards of a Kamares ware cup from the Middle Minoan II period, in the stratum at Tell el-Dab'a representing the Twelfth Dynasty. Bietak (1995:19) holds that earlier finds of Kamares ware were all from disputable contexts, and that there were only two periods of contact between the Minoan world and Egypt: early Dynasty Thirteen, and the end of the Hyksos period or early Dynasty Eighteen. The Kamares ware shards were found in a palace compound and one might imagine that the palace had access to imported goods which were denied the common population. Objects from Middle Minoan II might have been sent to Egypt to cement or to advance trading exchanges, or might have been gifts sent in order to stabilize interstate relationships.

In Dynasty Thirteen context a small gold pendant was found in a plundered tomb. It measures only 3.6 X 3.8 cm. and has a thickness of 0.12 cm.



Fig 20 - Gold pendant from palace tomb stratum F/1 (Bietak 1996:Plate 1B)

The motif of the pendant shows two antithetical beasts, most probably dogs, in heraldic arrangement with muzzles joined and each raising one front paw. Around each neck is a rope which is twisted around the body and is fastened onto a curled tail. They stand on individual bases resembling sledges ending in volutes. One front paw and one hind leg of each animal rest on the volutes. The second hind leg of each animal rests on a ball in the center of the base. The bodies of the animals are well muscled and the ears are heart-shaped. On the top of the heads tangential spirals meet in the central axis of the pendant. On top of the spirals a loop allows the pendant to be attached to a chain. As part of a necklace the pendant was probably teamed with other beads which were indeed found in the tomb, albeit in a displaced position

(Bietak 1995:19). Judging by the technique and the subject matter, this piece of jewelry is foreign to Egypt and has been identified as Minoan or at least Aegean (Bietak 1995:20).

Rings found at Tell el-Dab'a are usually made from silver, sometimes from gold, but copper-alloy rings are rare. The range of jewelry includes earrings and fingerings. Most come from female burials, and some from infant or child graves.

Mirrors are a common feature of Egyptian burial customs but rare in MBA context in Syro-Palestine. Three mirrors have been found in female graves at Tell el-Dab'a and might be seen as the adoption of Egyptian funerary practice.

The gold diadem in Fig 6 assigned by Bietak to a Hyksos princess (2001:139) is indeed a work of art. Unfortunately Bietak gives no details of where it was found, or to which era it belongs. It is designed with representations of rosettes and heads of oryxes. It is currently in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

9.4.2 Weaponry found in graves

At Tell el-Dab'a we find a hybrid of Egyptian and Syro-Palestine traits when it comes to weaponry. Most of the preserved weapons come from graves. Many of these graves have been disturbed so that we are left with an incomplete picture. Normally the selection of artifacts is not arbitrary but carries information according to culturally developed organizational schemes. Philip (1995:67) is of the opinion that patterns archeologically detectable at Avaris may have belonged to different groups with different patterns. These patterns signified the deceased's wealth, sex, group affiliations or ethnicity, but to find a single meaning for one specific artifact is almost impossible in such a diverse group.

In ancient western Asia metalwork was a specialist activity with workshops and supplies controlled by the dominant socio-economic group. Metal goods were used as personal items, offerings to deities, for military and agricultural equipment and as status items. Metallurgical practices at Tell el-Dab'a were akin to those practiced at Jericho during the MBA (Philip 1995:66).

Weapons found in male adult graves are daggers, spearheads and axes, while archery equipment and sling-bolts are absent. Daggers were usually positioned across the abdomen of the deceased and axes at the head or shoulders with the handle pointing towards the feet. The same lay-out was employed widely throughout Syro-Palestine. Only one axe found at Tell el-Dab'a was of the narrow or 'duck-bill' type (Philip 1995:71). Notched, narrow-bladed axes are dominant in levels F and G, and some with flanges or a hook at the socket in strata E and D/3. Moulds for the production of both Egyptian and foreign style axes have been found at the site, although only the form with sockets form occurs in grave context, suggesting that flat axes which were deemed perfectly adequate for graves elsewhere in Egypt were not 'correct' for graves in the Delta and are associated with Asiatic groups (Philip 1995:71).

The earliest dagger form was found in stratum F/1. The blade bears two pronounced ribs separated by a deep central groove. It is related to those from early MBIIA Levantine warrior graves, especially those from Byblos. In strata G and F daggers were found with blades showing multiple cast-in ribs. In strata E and D the dominant form of dagger had a broad, flat mid-rib which was also common in Levantine MBIIIB-C contexts. As in the Levant, the earlier crescent-shaped pommels are replaced by limestone globular examples in later daggers (Philip 1995:71).

Two beautiful examples of weaponry from the time of the Hyksos have been found in the grave of Queen Ahhotep, mother of King Kamose who drove the Hyksos from Egypt. One is a ceremonial gold dagger given to the queen by her son, the other an axe belonging to Kamose made from copper, gold, electrum, gemstones and wood. The ornamentation of the axe strongly reflects Mediterranean motives and style.

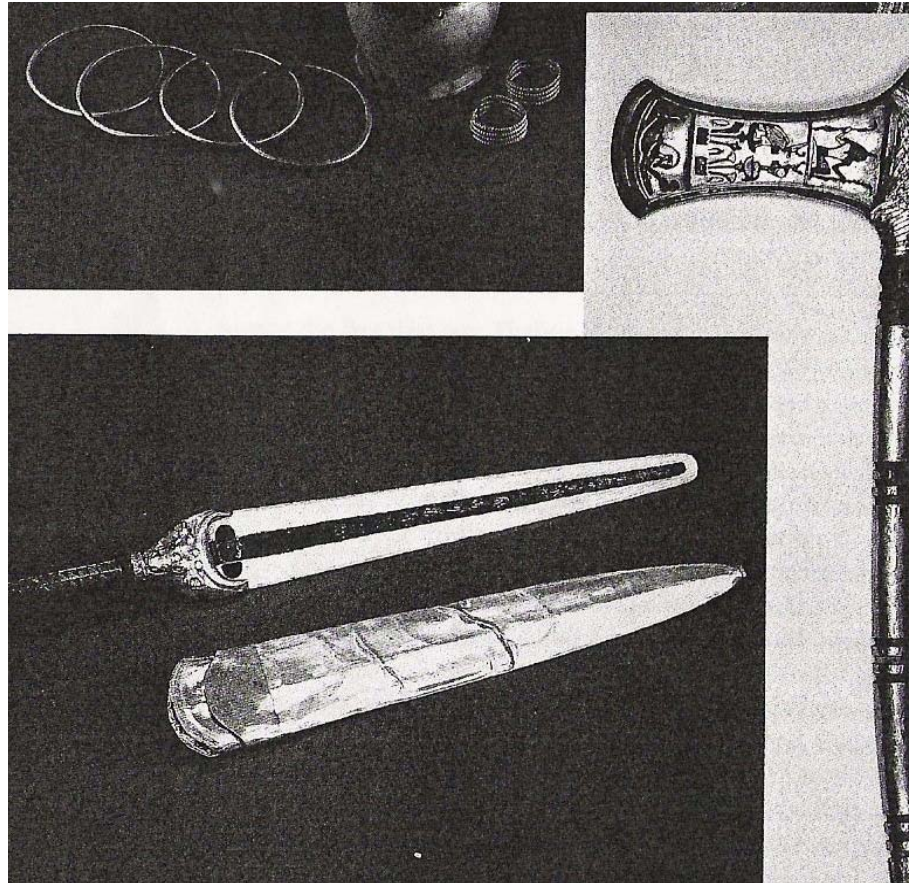


Fig. 21 - Gold dagger and axe from the early Dynasty Eighteen tomb of Queen Ahhotep (Bourriau 1993:193)

Spearheads found at Tell el-Dab'a are small and relatively light. They most likely represent throwing spears. Most examples come from the early phases of the site, strata H-F, and often appear in pairs. In warfare warriors probably shot arrows and threw javelins at their opponents prior to hand-to-hand combat involving the use of daggers and axes,

Most of the weapons found in graves at Tell el-Dab'a conform to the limited range of standard types, but many are highly decorated pieces, some using precious metals. Similarly decorated weapons were also found at Byblos. The Kamose stela lists large quantities of copper axes among the precious goods carried away from Avaris following his siege of that city.

In stratum G/4 (Dynasty Thirteen) at Tell el-Dab'a, an exceptional dagger was found in the palace compound. The basic shape of the blade is of the MBIIA type, but what is unique is firstly a cast handle in combination with an ivory hilt and pommel. Then there is the motif of tangential spires which are connected with the veins at the base of the blade, showing a combination of Near Eastern MBIIA and Minoan features. This dagger was found in the same stratum in which some Kamares ware shards and the pendant with the dogs (discussed above)

were found. Bietak (1995:20) is of the opinion that the dagger was probably produced in Syria, the meeting place of the Minoan and Oriental worlds. Articles of this type were not found anywhere else in Tell el-Dab'a – only the official palace had access to this kind of foreign luxury.

In some of the graves, probably those of soldiers, metal belts were found. These consist of a series of metal strips or circles mounted on a leather base. Small perforations around the edge of the metal permit the attachment to the leather backing. A motif of concentric circles decorate the metal.

A distinct curved knife formed an important part of the funerary equipment at Tell el-Dab'a, and also in the Levant generally. The knife has a thin blade with a sharp cutting edge which curves back towards the tip. The back of the knife is blunt. These knives were designed for cutting rather than for stabbing. Most have wooden handles secured by three or four rivets. The true position of these curved knives was at the side of the abdomen, lying point downwards as it would have been when worn on a belt. It is possible that the knives may have had a symbolic association with the meat offerings which are a feature of a number of MBA graves (Philip 1995:72). Curved knives are frequently found at Palestinian MBA sites, and several are known from the royal tombs at Byblos.

Weapons found in male graves may not represent army equipment, but are probably symbols of individual warrior heroes, those of an elite. The pattern of grave goods is related to similar practices throughout western Asia in the second millennium and had its origin outside Egypt where the picture was somewhat different. In Lisht arms have been found in the graves of both sexes. Archery equipment was also present, but was absent in the Delta.

In western Asia warrior equipment and certain other items were an expression of a particular social message conforming to the practice throughout the Levant, and there was a custom to bury the body with certain standard items. In the majority of graves at Tell el-Dab'a there were very few metal goods, while curved knives were found in only a small number of the graves.

9.5 Painting

The remains of a palatial structure in the citadel of Avaris built during the late Hyksos period at 'Ezbet Helmi has been discussed above. The building itself is typical of Egyptian palatial architecture. To the east and the south of the platform on which the structure was built were gardens where many thousands of fragments of painted wall-plaster were found (Bietak 1995:20). Bietak proposes that the most feasible explanation for these fragments is that they came from the palatial building and that they were disposed of in this location during the sacking and partial destruction of the building at the end of the Hyksos period. The greater part of the paintings might have stayed on the walls and might have been removed only later together with the building material from the platform. The fragments of the paintings removed were covered later in the early Eighteenth Dynasty by a stratigraphy (Bietak 1992:26) which included numerous scarabs from the time of Ahmose and Amenhotep II. More wall-painting fragments in the debris were found on top of the early Dynasty Eighteen stratigraphy, giving credence to Bietak's supposition. Fragments of paintings were also found some 200 meters south of the palatial structure at the site of another major building, and the remains of additional paintings of the same type were found along the enclosure wall.

The major part of the paintings depicts bulls, bull-leaping and bull-grappling scenes. Apparently the mud-brick walls of the buildings were first coated with lime-plaster in two or three layers and not with gypsum as was used in Middle and Upper Egypt (Morgan 1995:33). The surface was smoothed with a stone float. While the surface was still wet, strings were applied in order to prepare the borders and the geometrical patterns of the paintings. The mainly ochre or red background colour was painted on the wet surface. On top of the ground colour executed in fresco, figures and other features were painted in secco. Sometimes the motifs themselves were done partly in fresco. Besides the mural paintings on lime-plaster, stucco relief figure paintings were also found, some in slightly under life-size representations. This technique was unknown in Egypt and the Ancient Near East. The combined techniques of fresco and secco on lime plaster is typical of Minoan painting (Bietak 1995:23), and where these paintings are found, it may be suspected that Minoan artists had been at work.

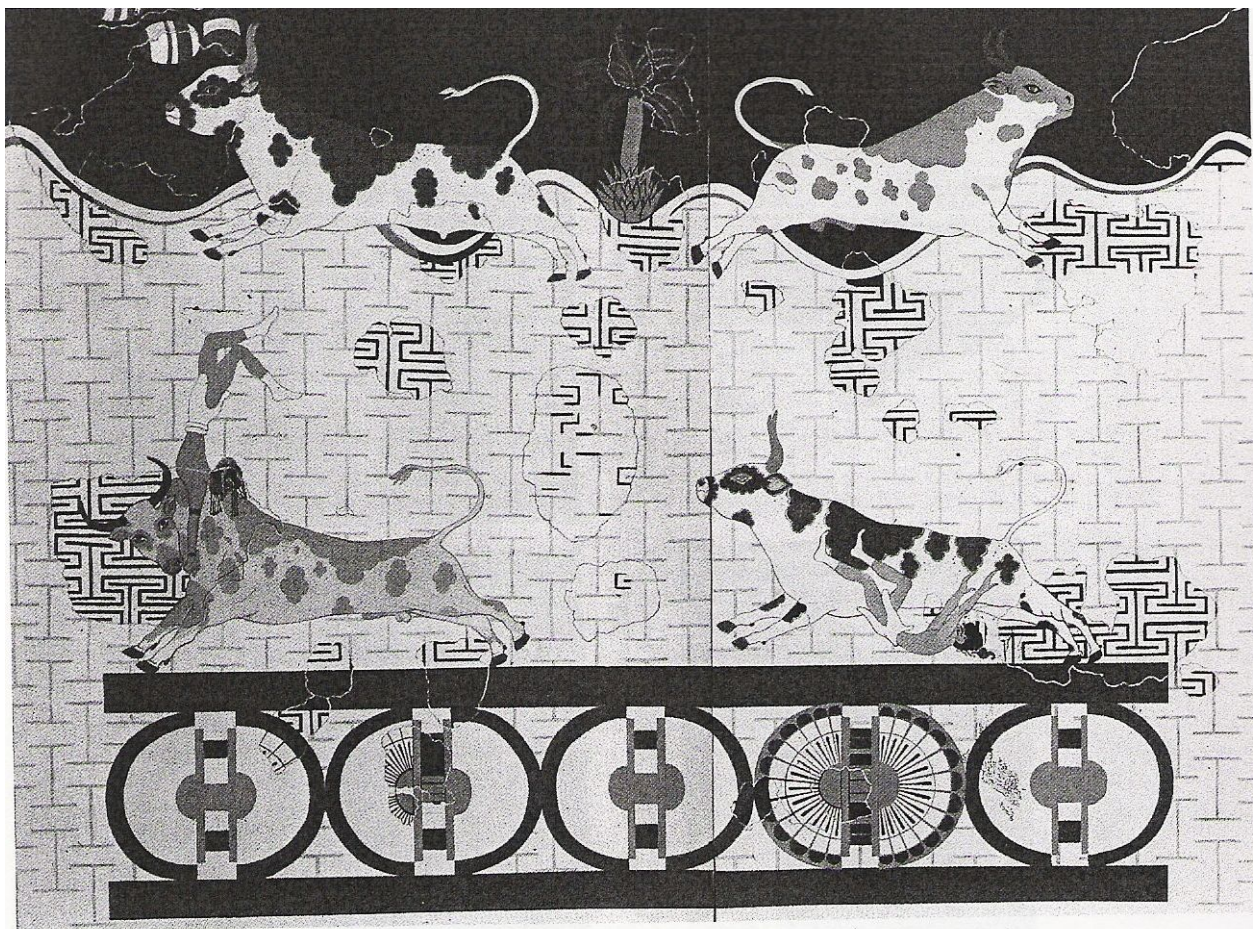


Fig 22 - Reconstruction of bull-leaping tableau (Bietak 1996:Plate IV)

The outlines of the figures were applied in red or black paint which were covered by the final over-paint. The eyes, heads and limbs of the figures were in some instances outlined to emphasize details. The basic conventions of colour and form were in keeping with Egyptian art – red ochre for the skin of males, yellow/white for that of women. Also, the posture of the body was Egyptian, with frontal shoulders, profile legs, and profile head with frontal eye (Morgan 1995:30). Morgan now poses the questions: did Aegean people actually visit or even live in Egypt prior to the Eighteenth Dynasty? Did Egyptian painting influence Minoan painting? Did Aegean craftsmen see Egyptian paintings and reliefs in Egyptian tomb chapels? Bietak (1995:23) differs here from Morgan, pointing out that the technique and colour conventions as well as the subject matter of the paintings belong absolutely to Minoan art. Also the clothing is Minoan. The leapers all wear Minoan kilts, belts and boots. The scalp of

the head is partly shaved and the remaining hair is coiffed in several strands of curls, Minoan style. The figures are far removed from the static poses of Egyptian art. The bull leapers are in joyful motion, as are the animals with their flying leaps in other paintings.

The paintings came in two sizes: frieze-size, but larger than miniature, and large paintings, slightly under life-size. The paintings were occasionally bordered by multi-coloured stripes. Large surfaces of the background were covered in an ornamental maze pattern. The base of the fresco was framed by a triglyph/semi-rosette frieze which, according to L Morgan and M Shaw, is a typical symbol of Minoan palatial architecture (Bietak 1995:24). The upper margin of the maze-pattern was framed by a landscape scene showing palm trees and perhaps hills against a red background.

Colours used were ochre, red, white, black and Egyptian blue. Yellow and blue were sometimes made lighter by adding white, and blue was sometimes changed to a greenish blue by the addition of yellow.

The fragments of the paintings are still in the process of being put together. Except for the scenes depicting bull-leaping, there are an almost life-size head of a male with a beard and curls on his forehead, and fragments of an arm and a torso of the same size. There are also fragments depicting acrobats standing on their hands next to palm trees, landscapes with rivers and aquatic plants, and hills against a red background. Craggy rocks, typical of the Minoan landscape, are absent, however, as are crocuses (Bietak 1995:24). (For a more comprehensive discussion and pictures of these paintings see Bietak 1992:26).

An amazing aspect of the Minoan-type paintings is that they predate the paintings found at Knossos by more than a hundred years (Bourriau 2003:204). It is possible that the same kind of painting had been produced elsewhere in Crete before those that had been found at Knossos, but that the former did not survive. But that does not explain how these paintings came to be executed at Tell el-Dab'a. Morgan (1995:30) suggests the possibility that Aegean people might have visited or even lived in the Delta. She also raises the possibility (1995:31) that Minoan artists traveled to selected places in the Near East and to at least one place in Egypt, apparently commissioned to paint by the local rulers. Bietak (1995:26) cautiously proposes the possibility of an inter-dynastic marriage between a Hyksos ruler and a Minoan princess, although he concedes that this cannot be proved. However, the presence of the painting of a large griffin, which was associated with queenship in Crete, lends this hypothesis some credibility. Shaw (2004:34), however, is of the opinion that the population at Avaris in the early Eighteenth Dynasty (c. 1550 BCE) may actually have included Aegean families. The frequent use of a red-painted background in these paintings may mean that the Tell el-Dab'a paintings predate those found at Crete and Thera. Unfortunately there is no Egyptian background for the Tell el-Dab'a paintings. They might have been painted at Avaris to Minoan order, but were based on knowledge of Egyptian figural painting (Warren 1995:5).

Morgan (1995:29) points out that, when comparing Aegean and Egyptian paintings, one should keep in mind the fundamental differences of context and function. The vast majority of paintings in Egypt come from tombs and funerary temples where the works have been well preserved and iconographic study is feasible. Aegean paintings come from palaces (as do those at Tell el-Dab'a) and also from town houses and country villas. The paintings have a different context - funerary versus non-funerary - and hence have a different function.

What strikes one when looking at the depiction of figures and animals in the reconstructed paintings found at Avaris is its lively quality. One has become used to the static quality of Egyptian paintings, to their frozen-in-time immobility. The paintings from Avaris, on the

other hand, have movement as their outstanding quality. The 'flying gallop' of hunting animals and the soaring leaps of the bull leapers leave one in no doubt that two different cultures were responsible for the execution of these works of art. If we concede that Morgan (1995:31) and Shaw (2004:34) are correct in assuming that there had been a Cretan settlement in the Delta, these Minoan-type paintings should be considered part of the Hyksos heritage. If not, we should view them as 'imports' executed by wandering artists or by artists imported with the specific aim to decorate the walls of the palaces at Avaris.

Minoan influence can also be seen in engravings on Hyksos weaponry, as on the hilt of a gold-plated dagger of King Apophis which depict animals in the flying gallop position, attacked by a human figure (Warren 1995:5).

Bietak (1995:26) raises the possibility of trade links or interests between Avaris and Crete, but cautions that these have not yet been established on archeological grounds. There also might have been independent relations between Dynasty Seventeen and the Aegean (Bietak 1995:26) which might explain the title of Queen Ahhotep, mother of King Ahmose of Dynasty Eighteen, which was *hnwt idbw H3w-nbwt*, 'Mistress of the Coasts of Haunebut', a country sometimes associated with the Aegean islands (Bietak 1997:100). Two items found in her tomb at Thebes, an axe belonging to her son King Ahmose I, made from precious materials, and a ceremonial dagger given by the same king to his mother (see Fig. 21), both display motifs and styles from the east Mediterranean (Bourriau 2003:180). Bourriau (2003:205) also mentions that it has been argued that the interpretation of Ahhotep's title is implausible, but she concedes that the Minoans were present at Tell el-Dab'a, whether as the artists themselves or else as supervisors guiding Egyptian artists.



Chapter 10 - Burial practices

We have established that the Hyksos probably came from several countries in the Near East. It is only to be expected that they would continue interring their deceased in the manner practiced in their countries of origin. Once settled in Egypt, however, the new-comers were influenced by their fellow Asiatics already living in the Delta, and over time they no longer strictly adhered to their traditional forms of burial. Since the Hyksos probably came from several Asiatic countries, it would serve us well to briefly look at some burial practices in the Near East.

10.1 Burial practices in the Near East

Quite a number of burial styles from the MBI and MBII periods have been found in Palestine. In the early MBI period, burials occurred outside the cities in shaft tombs, one burial to a grave. During MBII, burials were often made in shallow graves within the city area, consigning multiple burials to large tombs. Tombs from the MBI period in Asia were often reused. This period saw a great diversity of burial customs, but different ethnic groups cannot be distinguished. The diversity may be explained in terms of the internationalism of the Amorite period (Van Seters 1966:45). In Mesopotamia, for instance, tombs were built of brick or stone and displayed corbelled roofs, and in Upper Mesopotamia large slabs of stone covered the tops. The general practice in Syria was to cut shaft tombs into soft rock after the Egyptian pattern. In Syria shallow pit graves were also dug within the structures of houses as we know from Ugarit (Cornelius & Niehr 2004:79ff).

Tombs in central Palestine in the MBII period displayed characteristics similar to those found in the northwestern Euphrates. Rectangular pits were lined on the long sides with stone walling and covered by stone slabs, but in the walls of the Palestinian tombs were recesses which served as ossuaries. Bronze weapons and pottery were part of the funerary equipment.

Tombs similar to the above were found at Jericho and Tell el-Yehudiyeh, but there built within the city with bricks instead of stone, and displaying a corbelled roof. These tombs contained multiple burials and probably served as family vaults.

The whole of the MBII period displayed single burials in simple grave pits as well as shaft tombs for multiple burials. Grave deposits comprised pottery and bronze objects, and where animal bones were found in graves, the animals were probably intended as food for the deceased.

10.2 Egyptian burial practices

One sometimes tends to forget that the Hyksos did not reside at Avaris and in the Delta only but also south down the Nile as far as Memphis and probably beyond. When looking at

funerary practices of the Hyksos, one should also consider the necropoli at Saqqara, Lisht and other locations.

Bourriau (2003:172) stresses that political and cultural changes took place in Egypt in different ways and at different rates in the various regions. A survey of Memphis shows that during the Second Intermediate Period there was unbroken cultural development from the Thirteenth Dynasty onwards. At Memphis evidence of the MBA traits such as those present at Tell el-Dab'a are absent from the late Twelfth Dynasty onwards, stressing that there was no cultural break at Memphis from the mid Thirteenth Dynasty until the end of the Second Intermediate Period (Bourriau 2003:184). One should bear in mind that many of the Egyptians living at Avaris were from a lower social stratum – labourers, soldiers and so on - and that the Hyksos in the Delta were not likely to be strongly influenced by them. At Memphis, on the other hand, scribes and Egyptians of high birth might have supported the Hyksos rule, and their standing in society might have had a strong influence on the Hyksos living there.

For the Egyptians, death was just a doorway to a better, more permanent life. In order to make life in the next world more comfortable for the deceased, grave goods were interred with the body. Bodies were embalmed (not very successfully at the time of Hyksos occupation)(Callender 2003:170) to ensure that they arrive on the other side intact and in good shape, with food and worldly goods to ensure their comfort. Bodies were laid out in coffins in an extended position with arms at the side, or in the case of a monarch, bent at the elbow and crossed over the chest. This was a practice alien to the Asiatics as we shall see later, although at Saqqara, the necropolis closest to Memphis, a body was found in an extended position in a rectangular coffin. The name Abdu on the coffin suggests that he was an Asiatic, and with him was found a dagger with the name of Nahman, a follower of King Apophis. The Hyksos seemed to have had little regard for Egyptian cemeteries. Buildings were erected on the sacred ground, and in the second half of the Thirteenth Dynasty when silos built within the mortuary complex of Amenemhat III fell into disrepair, these silos were used as rubbish pits by the inhabitants of the nearby settlement (Bourriau 2003:185). It should be borne in mind that the cult of the ancestors ceased to be celebrated when the Egyptians left Itj-tawa for Thebes, although the cemetery itself continued to be used for fresh burials for some time (Bourriau 2003:185).

A large cemetery grew around the pyramid of Amenemhat I at Lisht, the necropolis closest to Itj-tawa, eventually intruding into the royal funerary complex itself (Bourriau 2003:185). Tell el-Yehudiyeh pottery was found in some of the graves, corresponding with that found in strata D/3 and D/2 at Tell el-Dab'a. The last burials at Lisht were altogether Egyptian in character, but at the same time burial shafts were found in housing complexes of that era, suggesting an un-Egyptian style of burial. This burial style is paralleled at Tell el-Dab'a (Bourriau 2003:185).

In the Twelfth Dynasty Ammenemes I revived the pyramid form for royal burials, declaring visibly and tangibly the restoration of traditional order (Kuhrt 2002:164). Royal tombs and those of many officials were relocated to the northern region at Lisht, Itj-tawa and Hawara, and for that reason officials connected with the mortuary cults also moved north.

Up to the reign of Sesostris III of Dynasty Thirteen, kings permitted nomarchs to maintain substantial power bases and even increased them. Tombs of local hereditary nobles at Beni Hassan (nome 16) and at el-Bersheh (nome 15) are impressive examples of mortuary complexes of non-royals, reflecting their power and riches (Kuhrt 2002:167).

Archeological evidence suggests that funerary wealth was greatly curtailed in Dynasty Seventeen, and that decorated tombs were almost unknown at Thebes at his time (Bryan 2003:212). The graves of the elite and slightly less wealthy were still clustered around royal burial places, but at Saqqara the non-royal cemetery at the time of Ahmose consisted of surface graves. At Abydos, the remains of pyramid monuments as well as temples have been found. Pyramids were used to mark the tombs of Dynasty Seventeen kings, and their brick remains may still have been visible in the Theban region in the nineteenth century AD (Bryan 2003:211).

Burial sites dating to the time of the wars between the Hyksos and Thebans have been found at the mouth of the Faiyum Oasis. These burials are Egyptian in character, with the bodies laid extended in rectangular coffins. In one of the coffins a scarab of the Hyksos ruler Khyan was found (Bourriau 2003:187).

Members of an unknown foreign community were buried at a small cemetery at Sedment el-Gebel. The bodies were wrapped in sheepskins and were decorated with feathers and flowers. This was not an Egyptian custom, and neither did it tie in with burials at Tell el-Dab'a (Bourriau 2003:187).

10.3 Burials at Avaris

Burial practices at Tell el-Dab'a have been touched upon previously, but let us turn again to Bietak (1996) to give a more comprehensive picture.

In stratum F/1, before 1800 BCE, the graves at Avaris were purely Egyptian in character. Many of the tombs found were plundered, but about half the male burials yielded weapons of the Syro-Palestinian MBA type when the majority of the male population worked as soldiers. Nomads from Syro-Palestine also had their weapons as grave-goods – two javelins, battle-axes and daggers. Because the tombs were so small, the javelin heads were often hidden by the bricks blocking the chamber and remained *in situ*. All other metal objects were probably carried away by robbers. Some of the F/1 graves were attached to houses, a custom foreign to Egypt but common in the Syro-Palestinian MBA culture.

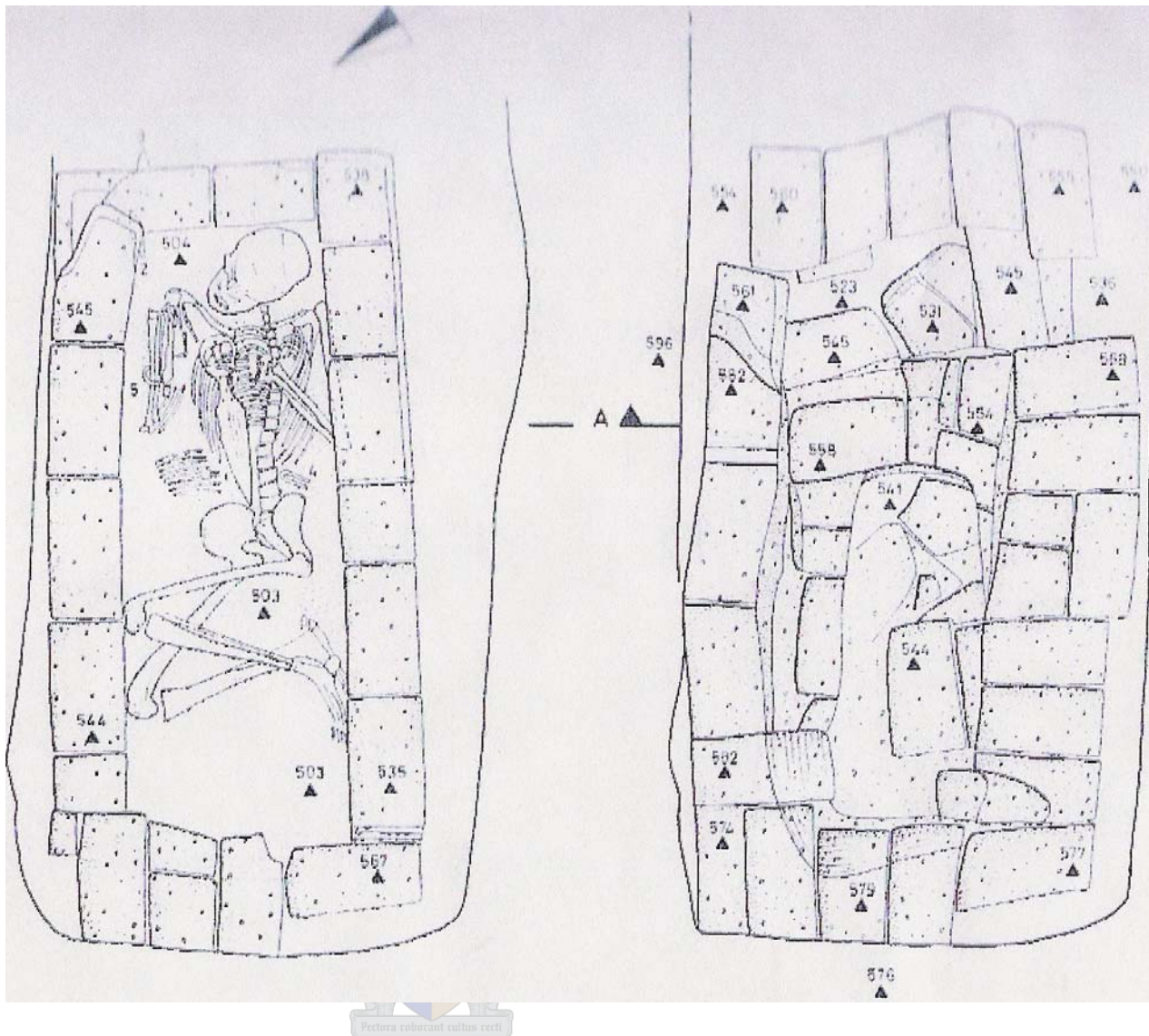


Fig. 23 - Grave of warrior with dagger from stratum F/1 (Bietak 1996:15)

Two series of tombs from the early Thirteenth Dynasty were found next to a palace in strata G/4-1. The series of six tombs on the southern side of the palace were sunk into deep pits and displayed purely Egyptian construction techniques (Bietak 1996:22). The super-structures resembled Egyptian tomb chapels and also remind of minor brick mastabas or cenotaphs of the Middle Kingdom found at Abydos. Some nine meters east from each tomb was a pit for a tree, reflecting a very archaic Egyptian funerary feature, harking back to pre-dynastic times and peculiar to Lower Egypt. It would seem that this tradition was adopted by the functionaries of the palace. The direct proximity of the tombs to the palace, however, was an Asiatic practice. This is now well attested by the finds at North Syrian Qatna (Lange 2005). A second series of tombs, more loosely organized than the first, were situated to the south of a second palace nearby.

A feature of these burial chambers which was certainly Asiatic was the burial of pairs of donkeys or sheep or goats within the entrance pits. Burying donkeys in front of tombs was an ancient custom which originated in Mesopotamia (Bietak 1996:25). From there it spread to Syria, and was typical of a culture involved in caravan trade. Examples of this custom have been found in the MB culture of Palestine at Jericho, Lachish (where only single animals were buried) and Tell Haror, and closer to Egypt, at Tell el-Ajjul (Bietak 1996:25).

At the palace complex most of the tombs were plundered, but in a small number weapons of the Syro-Palestinian type were found, among others a bronze dagger with an ivory pommel and gold mounting. Its lotus flower decoration show affinity with the Levant (Bietak 1996:26) (See also Bietak 1996:Plate 11A)

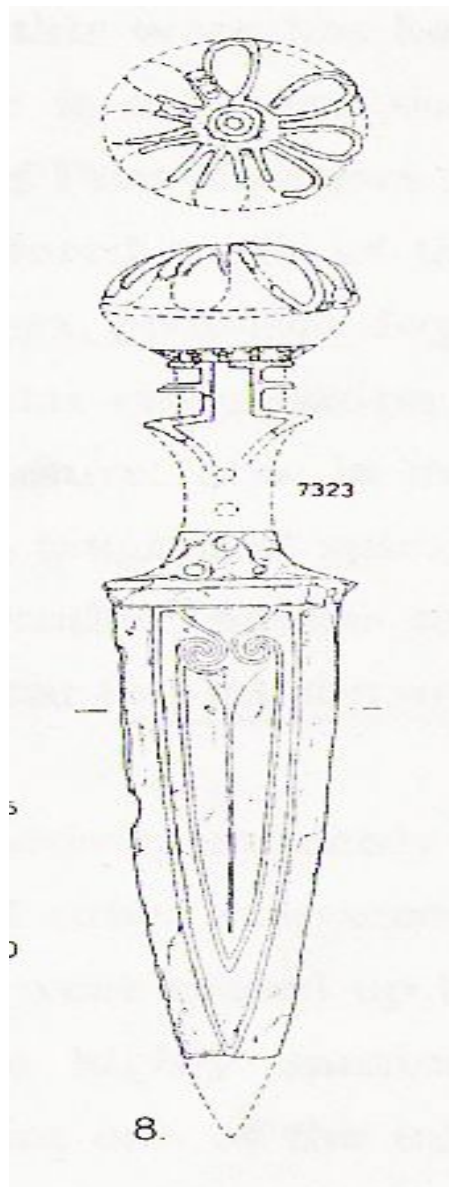


Fig. 24 - Sword from stratum d/1 (early 13th Dynasty) (Bietak 1996:Fig. 22:8)

The above tomb also yielded silver javelins, an axe-head and a curved knife. Jewelry was also found in the tomb, among others a scarab mounted on a gold ring, discussed earlier. In another tomb in the palace cemetery a serpentine statue representing an Egyptian official was found, and in yet another a seal belonging to a royal treasurer and chief steward named Aya.

Like the Egyptians, the Asiatics also provided their dead with grave goods, and as can be expected, tombs from the palace contained a rather more lavish variety of grave goods than graves of commoners. Kamares ware from Crete of superb craftsmanship had been found in the palace complex, and in one of the plundered tombs a gold pendent of Minoan design, representing two beasts facing each other, also discussed above (9.4.1 with Fig.20).

Emergency graves have been found in the excavations of strata F and E/3, signifying that the settlement at Avaris suffered some crisis, maybe an epidemic of some sort. Some of these graves were mere pits into which bodies were thrown, and no grave offerings were found. The cause of the catastrophe and the abandonment of the eastern part of the settlement have yet to be explained. This part of Avaris was later converted into cemeteries which soon surrounded the newly constructed temple complex in stratum F.

In one of the cemeteries surrounding a temple which might have been a mortuary temple, the tomb of a deputy treasurer named 'Amu (= the Asiatic) was found. He was interred in the Asiatic fashion in a contracted position. A chisel-shaped battle-axe of the late MBIIA type, a triangular dagger and offerings in pottery of the Egyptian and Tell el-Yehudiye type were found. In front of the tomb five or six donkeys were buried, the greatest number found to date. This large number of donkeys may signify that the deceased was deeply involved in trade expeditions (Bietak 1996: Fig.35)..

Many of the tombs in this stratum belonged to warriors, buried with their daggers and battle-axes. The vaulted tombs were mud-brick chambers built over a pit in a technique known in Mesopotamia, unlike those in strata H and G which employed the Egyptian style. Other graves belonged to children and infants, buried not in chambers but in imported amphorae, perhaps signifying that the Asiatics were more conservative with regard to funerary customs than in habits concerning their everyday lives.

Bodies were buried in a contracted position, one to five to a tomb. Servants have been found buried in front of some of the tombs in stratum F, and forensic examination showed that they were usually young girls with strong bones, buried at the same time as their masters. This practice was not followed by the Egyptians, but was found at the same time in the Kingdom of Kush, and continued in the Sudan (Bietak 1996:45)(cf. 4.2.3). It might have been a custom derived from the ancient Near East.

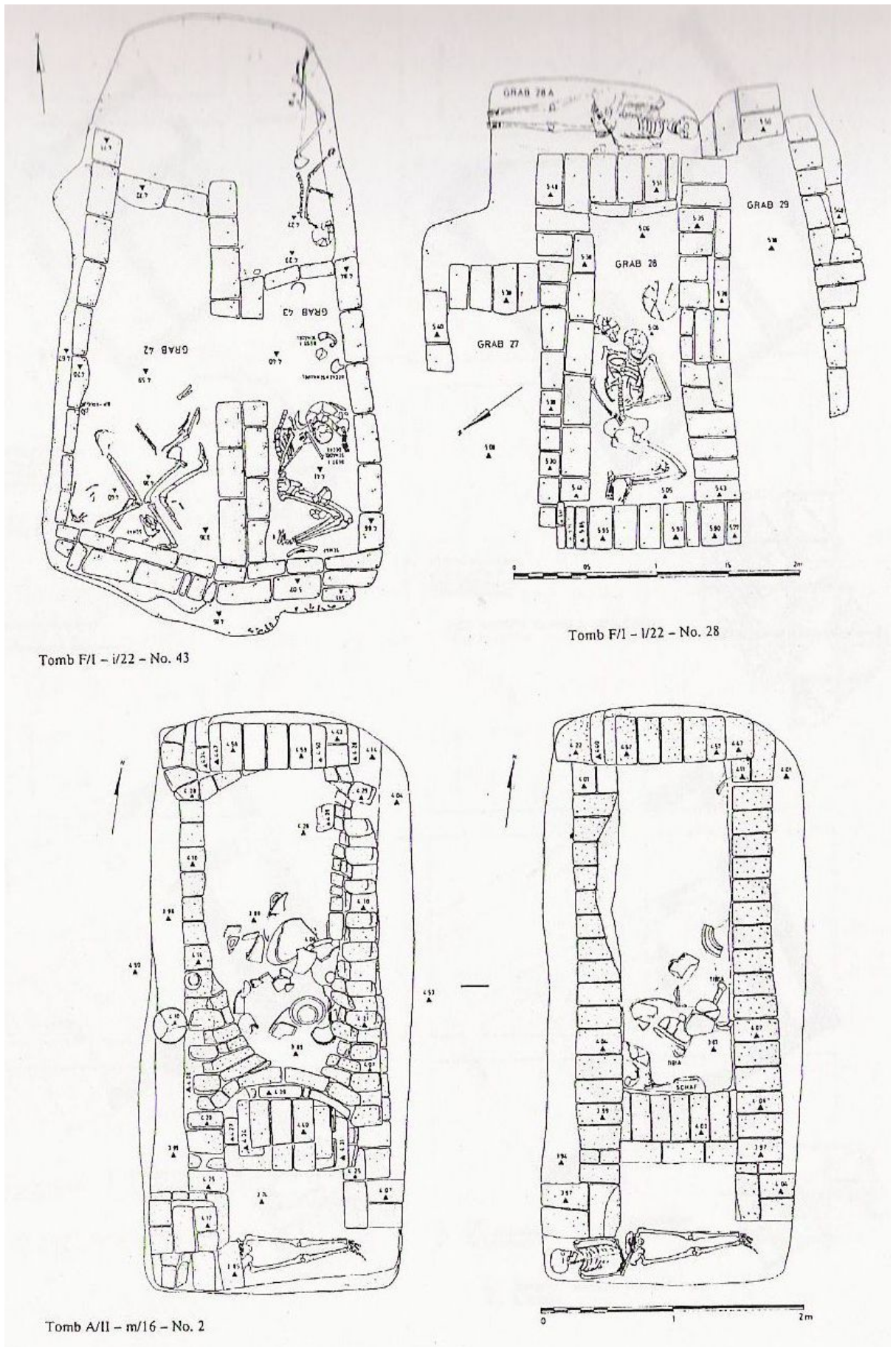


Fig. 25 - Tombs with servant burial from stratum F (Bietak 1996:Fig.38)

Individual mortuary temples of the Egyptian type were built in the period represented by stratum E/3 in the cemeteries surrounding the sacred precinct of Avaris. These were replaced by similar temples of the Middle Kingdom type. Bietak (1996:48) remarks that the inhabitants of Avaris, though of Asiatic origin, quickly acquired Egyptian religious traditions decades before the beginning of the Hyksos period.

By the beginning of the Hyksos period there was no longer room for any open cemeteries within the boundaries of Avaris. Tombs were built within the courtyards of houses or the deceased were buried within the houses themselves. A popular custom was to build a chamber outside the house against the wall of the bedroom, serving as a family tomb. This type of burial practice can be found in many MBA sites and is an old tradition in the Near East. In other instances burial chambers were dug in the ground floor of houses, with some of the rooms blocked up and only opened in order to leave votive offerings.

It has been mentioned before that the Egyptians left votive offerings for their deceased to sustain them in the after-life. These took the form of food and drink at the tomb which would serve for a short time, but to ensure that the dead was provided for in all eternity, an additional supply of miniature pottery jars ensured food forever by magical means. The concept of life after death was deeply rooted in Egyptian belief, but not so in the rest of the MBA world. The form of the votive jars served as a substitute for the original contents. Such votive jars found at Tell el-Dab'a was a custom taken over from Egyptian religious practices.

What, then, do we make of this mish-mash of mortuary practices found in the Hyksos-occupied areas of Egypt? The animal and servant burials at tombs in the Delta are certainly of a type unknown in Egypt before, and it can only be deduced that the Asiatics in the Delta continued burial customs from their countries of origin. Bourriau (2003:182) mentions that the Hyksos have been described as 'peculiarly Egyptian', and it is not really surprising to find a mixture of Egyptian and Syro-Palestinian cultural traits even in the way the Hyksos disposed of their dead.

It is possible that weapons made from inferior materials were produced as special grave items (Philip 1995:77). Early weapon types in graves at Tell el-Dab'a have good parallels throughout the Levant, but the absence of weapons assigned to the latest stratum (D/2) suggests the decline in the significance of weapons during the later MBA. Philip (1995:77) tentatively suggests that, as the upper strata of the Delta society adopted new, more 'Egyptianized' customs, traditional Levantine symbols such as weapons gradually decreased in importance, and hence the 'debasement' of alloys from which they were made to attest a decline in their significance.

Chapter 11 - Warfare and weapons

11.1 Chariotry

Schulman (1989:113) suggests a definition of chariotry as "a military organized body consisting of units of horse-drawn vehicles which operate together in a disciplined fashion with a specific tactile mission, and which cannot exist outside the framework of a formal, permanent military establishment". He also states (1980:105) that virtually all Orientalists agree that the horse and chariot were first introduced into Egypt during the time of Hyksos dominance, but little is known about exactly how and when this took place. Partridge (2002:60) concedes that horses and chariots appear to have been introduced to the whole of the Near East from the beginning of the seventeenth century BCE. The horse did appear first in Egypt during the time of Hyksos rule, but there is no real evidence to connect the arrival of the horse to any invasion by foreigners. Redford (1993:96) suggests that Amurru in Syria was a horse-rearing area, but that the horse and chariot were introduced from the north and north-east, causing the revolutionary effect in mobile warfare. On the other hand, Schulman (1989: 108-9) is of the opinion that the only group which reasonably might have introduced the horse and chariot into Egypt was a band of Asiatic mercenaries employed by the Thebans, but he adds that it is hardly credible that the Egyptians would have enlisted a body of auxiliaries equipped with powerful weapons without assuring themselves that these weapons would not be turned against them.

These divergent opinions leave us without any firm opinions, but one should take for granted that chariotry was introduced from the Near East. Horses and chariots are attested in Assyrian documents from the nineteenth century BCE, and in texts from Mari in the eighteenth century BCE (Schulman 1980:118), although at that time in Mari the horse was still a novelty (Redford 1993:96). Van Seters (1966:183-4) postulates that the Mitannians had some competence in handling the light chariot in warfare and in the training of horses to pull the chariot. Kamose refers to horses and chariotry in his accounts on the war with Apophis, but it is not mentioned whether they were used in battle. Van Seters (1966:185) suggests that horses were probably well known in Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom and cites as evidence the skeleton of a horse found at Buhen in Middle Kingdom context. Bourriau (2003:202) reads the Kamose texts as mentioning the Hyksos' horse and chariot teams from Avaris as part of Kamose's loot and suggests that this may have accounted for their introduction into Upper Egypt. She also mentions that both horses on their own and horses hitched to chariots appear on the Ahmose reliefs at Abydos.

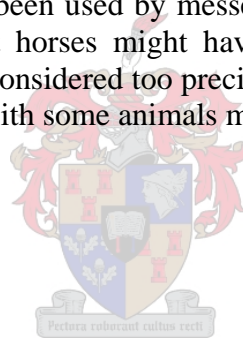
Let us then concede that horses were introduced into Egypt at some time during the seventeenth century, either by the Hyksos or by some other groups, that they had not been known in Egypt before that time, and that they were such a novelty that the Egyptians had no words of their own to call them by, using the Semitic words for horse and chariot. Much later an Egyptian name for the horse was also used which can be translated as meaning 'the beautiful' (Partridge 2002:60). There is little doubt that the horse was highly esteemed, and by influence of other religions, horses were associated with the Syro-Palestinian goddess Astarte who was known as 'Mistress of Horses' (Cornelius 2004:40-45, 93 and especially 43 with Fig. 32 and Partridge 2002:60).

11.1.1 The horse

Although they were expensive and needed a lot of fodder, horses, right from their introduction, were highly prized in Egypt. They adapted well to the climate in Egypt and thrived especially in the Delta (Partridge 2002:60). Horses were well cared for and stable blocks were attached to many of the great palaces and estate houses. Horses in Egypt appeared Arab-like and many were skew-bald, judging from images left behind on the walls of temples and tombs. The average horse stood about 13.5 hands (1.35 m) tall.

No training manuals for horses as with the Hittites survived, but it can be assumed that later the nobility would be schooled from an early age in the use of the horse and chariot for hunting and warfare. Charioteers were probably the elite unit of the army.

Asiatic nobility thought it undignified to ride on horseback and preferred to be pulled in a horse-drawn chariot (Partridge 2002:62). This idea was adopted by the Egyptians, at least in the early years of the seventeenth century BCE. However, a scene from the tomb of Horemheb at Saqqara shows a mounted rider, seated not on the downward curve of the horse's back but directly over the animal's hips, the usual position for riding a donkey (Partridge 2002:62). The style of this depiction may have arisen because the artist was familiar with riders on donkeys rather than on horses and may not have portrayed the way horses were actually ridden. Horses were equipped with bridles and reins, but no saddles or stirrups are in evidence. Horses appear to have been used by messengers but a few of the riders are shown holding weapons, indicating that horses might have been used in battle. It is likely that initially horses would have been considered too precious to risk in direct combat. As the stock of horses increased, taking risks with some animals might have been considered acceptable.



11.1.2 The chariot

The predecessor of the chariot was the war cart from Sumer, a vehicle with solid wooden wheels pulled by asses (e.g. Pritchard 1969:Figs. 163 and 303) which offered an elevated platform from which the military commander could be seen by his troops. It played a marginal role in battle (Schulman 1980:115) and initially was not seen as an instrument of warfare. From northern Syria and Cappadocia cylinder seals have been found dating from the end of the third millennium BCE, displaying images of a two-wheeled cart pulled by a team of horses. The wheels of these carts had four spokes.

The Hyksos are credited with the introduction of chariots in warfare during the MBA period (Yadin 1955:24), and it was during MBII that the chariots reached such perfection that it must have profoundly influenced the whole realm of strategy and tactics in war. We have no pictorial representations of the Hyksos chariot and no examples were preserved, but in all likelihood they resembled those of the Egyptians (Schulman 1980:117), some of which have been found in Dynasty Eighteen tombs as funerary equipment buried with their owners. Also, many Egyptian mural scenes showing chariots have survived and are very detailed, showing how the Egyptians adapted the original design by applying their own skills to make the vehicle lighter and faster.

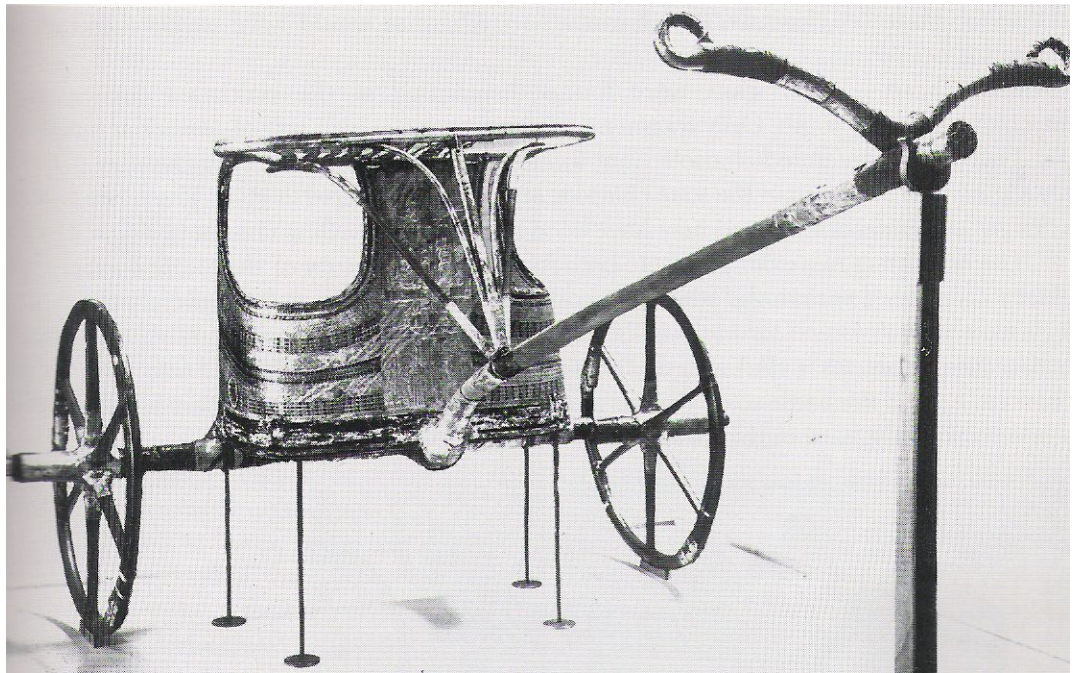


Fig. 26 - Chariot from the tomb of Tutankhamun (Partridge 2002:73)

Partridge (2002:65ff) describes chariots as vehicles which are two-wheeled, light, and designed to be drawn by two horses. They weighed about 34 kg., which made them light enough to have been maneuverable and could even be lifted by one person if necessary. Each wheel was just under one meter in diameter and had six spokes, unlike the early four-spoked wheels which were not strong enough to use over rough terrain.

The spokes had a complicated composition, with each spoke made from two pieces of wood. U-shaped elements of wood were used, the legs of two adjacent elements being glued back-to-back to form a single spoke. The bottom of the U was either joined to the wheel hub or itself formed the hub.

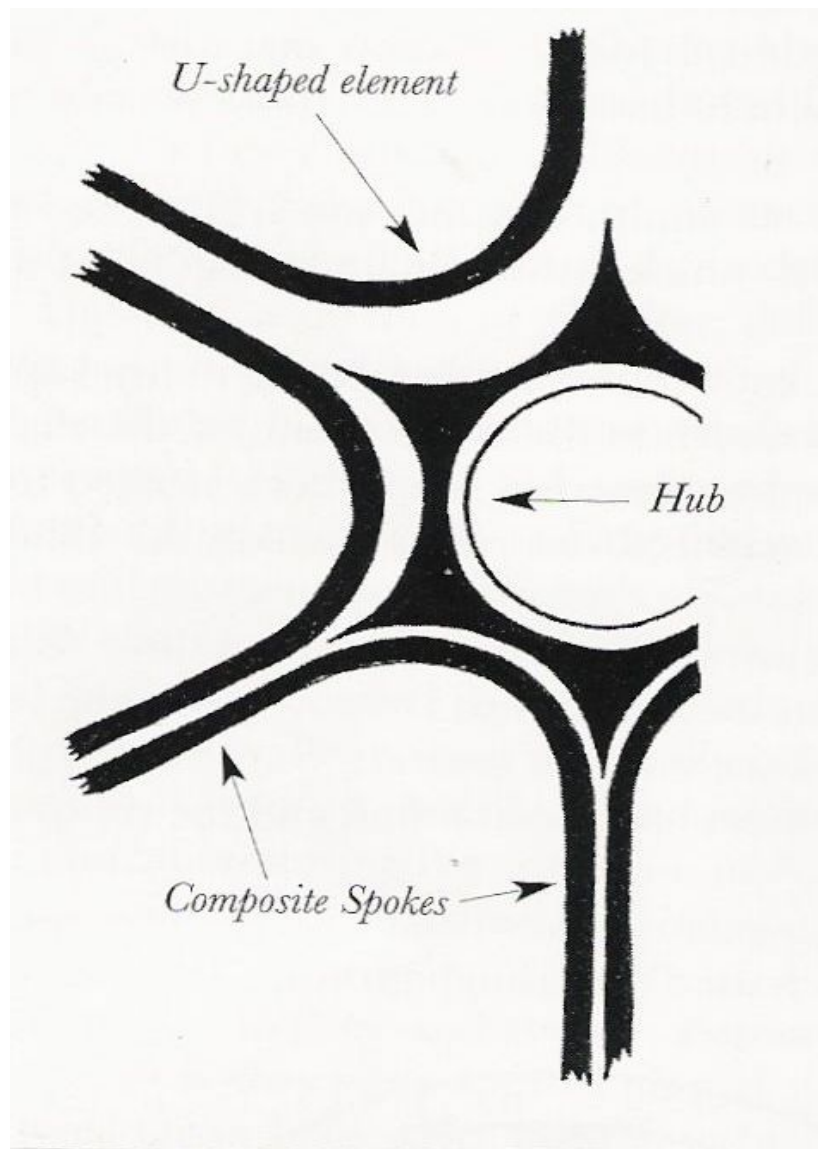


Fig. 27 - Diagram showing the construction of the spokes of a chariot wheel (Partridge 2002:66)

The rim of the wheel was made of two pieces of wood known as 'fellys', scarf-jointed together by 'felly bands'. The outer rim of the wheel was made of bent pieces of timber known as strakes. A green rawhide strip over the outer edge of the wheel served two purposes. Firstly it provided a tyre, and secondly the wet rawhide shrank and tightened up all the elements of the wheel to consolidate the pieces. The leather 'tyres' could easily be replaced when worn.

The bodies of the chariots were small with just enough room to enable two adults to stand side by side. The floor of the chariot was D-shaped. The rear of the body, the straight side of the D, was formed of a solid bar of timber set directly over the axle. The framework of the sides and front of the body was made of bent wood with the spaces filled with leather or thin wooden panels. The floor was made of thongs of leather, often covered with animal skins or other matting. This flexible construction of the floor was light and acted as a shock absorber when the chariot was driven over rough surfaces. Chariots made for war had more solid sides made from wood, laminated linen or leather. Side and front rails provided a ready hand-hold. The back of the body was left open. Additional equipment used with the chariot included bow cases, quivers for arrows, spear cases and a pouch for supplies.

When harnessed, the backs of the horses were covered with brightly coloured cloths. Ostrich feathers were attached to the bridles. Only fragments of harnesses have survived, the leather having disintegrated over time (Partridge 2002:68), but the complex harnessing used for the horses can clearly be seen in detailed reliefs and paintings. The driver and his team would have needed to train closely together over a long period to work efficiently together as a team.

11.1.3 Horses and chariot as a unit

The practical use of the horse-drawn chariot in battle is limited, yet it was in battle that the chariot really made its mark (Partridge 2002:64). A division of chariots, galloping in close formation directly towards the enemy would have been extremely intimidating. The horses would have appeared like a solid moving wall as they rapidly approached in a cloud of swirling dust. The hoof-beats of the horses would have made the ground shake. They would have been especially effective when attacking a disorganized enemy fleeing the field of battle since they were many times faster than men on foot, and no doubt battle cries ensuing from their pursuers would have added to the confusion and terror of those fleeing.

Chariots were used as a swift-moving platform from which arrows could be poured into the enemy. The use of chariots also greatly improved the means of communication in the confusion of a battle. They enabled the king to keep in touch with his commanders and the divisions of his army, and also helped to keep the commanders visible to their troops.

Horses, the chariot and its occupants would have presented a large target for enemy archers, but if the chariots were approaching at speed and were probably partially obscured by a cloud of dust they would have been difficult to hit. The enemy might also have been reluctant to shoot the horses since it might have been seen as preferable to defeat the enemy in some other way and then to capture their valuable animals.

It was principally the bow which was employed from the chariot and almost always while the chariot was in motion. The main advantage was the chariot's mobility and speed. It was a platform from which the archers could deliver a searching and harassing fire against the enemy infantry. Chariots might have been used to open a battle, but they were rarely used against other chariots. They were also used to screen the advance and protect the flanks of the infantry and should not be seen as an offensive weapon (Schulman 1980:123). Once the initial charge was launched, it was likely that the charioteer and/or his passenger got down from the vehicle and continued to fight on foot.

Chariots were virtually useless in sieges, other than traveling parallel to the wall of the city so that the archers in the chariots could harass the wall defenders with searching fire. Chariots could also not enter through the gates of cities because of the latter's construction. They could not take a fortified area, nor could they take open ground and hold it (Schulman 1980:129).

Within limits, chariots could be used in mountainous terrain if the slope was not too steep or too difficult, but they could be stopped by water and streams.

Chariots proved most useful for the transport of a driver and his passenger, to get them speedily and easily from one place to another, and to cut the enemy's lines of communication, but to postulate like Petrie (Schulman 1980:106) that the ease of the Hyksos victory over Egypt can be attributed to the horse-drawn chariot seems to be a bit far-fetched.

11.2 Metal weapons

Throughout ancient Egypt's history, weaponry changed slowly. Significant innovations and improvements appeared only during the Second Intermediate Period and in the New Kingdom. Egyptian weapons and equipment were very similar, if not virtually identical, to the weapons of neighbouring countries (Partridge 2002:21). Weapons and military equipment were traded between nations in the ancient Near East, and there was a flourishing international trade in arms. In Egypt weapons used for hunting are shown in both early and late hunting scenes.

11.2.1 Metal weapons

11.2.1.2 Copper

Copper ore was found in and around Egypt in large quantities, mainly in the eastern desert and in Sinai. Copper is obtained by the smelting of copper ore. In ancient Egypt the ore was obtained by surface working. Where particularly rich veins of ore dropped below the surface, shafts were dug to retrieve it. Before the ore could be smelted, it had to be crushed and mixed with charcoal in a heap or in a pit. Copper melts at 1083 degrees centigrade, a temperature which could easily be achieved if the furnaces were placed in a windy location or if bellows were used. The copper obtained from the smelting process was poured into moulds or hammered into the shape of the objects required. Axes and knives were probably first cast in moulds and then the cutting edges were hammered to form a blade edge. This process also hardened and strengthened the metal

11.2.1.3 Bronze

Bronze is an alloy made from a mixture of copper and tin or copper and arsenic, often with other naturally-occurring impurities. Today bronze is made with about 10% tin, but ancient bronzes vary significantly. The range of tin is from 2% (probably an naturally occurring quantity) to 16%. By adding tin to copper the metal becomes much stronger and harder. It then also needs a lower smelting temperature, from 1015 degrees centigrade for a 5% tin alloy to 960 degrees centigrade for a 15% alloy. The addition of tin also improves the fluidity of the molten metal and allows better castings to be made.

Bronze appears to have originated in Asia, as bronze was found in Ur from about 3500 BCE onwards. Analyses of Egyptian-based metalwork have shown that during the Second Intermediate Period unalloyed copper, arsenic copper and tin-bronze were all being used in the manufacture of artifacts (Philip 1995:74). Many of the bronze items found in Egypt might have been imported ready-made. It is difficult to say when bronze was introduced to Egypt, but the number of finds at Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasty sites indicates that bronze became available from this period onwards.

In Syro-Palestine bronze came to the fore in the MBIIB-C period. During MBIIA it was used to a limited extent. Byblos, where tin and copper occurred in their natural state, was the most important center (Van Seters 1966:53). The Hyksos had access to the metals (copper, tin and arsenic) necessary for the forging of bronze, while in Upper Egypt these were not readily available (Spalinger 2005:233). However, the copper-based metal found at Tell el-Dab'a is low in both arsenic and tin. There seems to have been no set pattern of association between

type of object and preferred alloy (Philip 1995:74). Some daggers and axes were manufactured from unalloyed copper which could never provide such a hard cutting edge as their arsenic-bronze or tin-bronze equivalents. Tin and arsenic appear as a natural part of mined copper, but they could be added to copper in the smelting process. At Jericho the median value of tin was about 6%, much higher than that found at Tell el-Dab'a where it was sometimes as low as 0.2% (Philip 1995:76).

The presence of about 2-4% arsenic is required to improve significantly the toughness and hardness of a worked copper object, although arsenic retains its effectiveness as a de-oxidant when present at lower levels (Philip 1995:75). In the case of Tell el-Dab'a objects only 5% lies within this range. Arsenic is volatile and can easily be removed from molten metal under oxidizing conditions such as hot working or recycling. At Tell el-Dab'a many of the objects found were probably derived from low-arsenic ore, or the metal might have been recycled so often that the arsenic content was reduced significantly. Objects other than weapons had a significantly higher arsenic content, perhaps indicating that these were not subjected to extensive recycling.

11.3 Types of metal weapons

11.3.1 Axes

The first narrow or 'duckbill' axe found at Tell el-Dab'a came from stratum H. Notched, narrow-bladed axes were predominant in graves assigned to strata G and F, and types with flanges or a hook at the socket in graves from strata E and D/3 (Philip 1995:71). Moulds indicating the production of both Egyptian and foreign styles of axes were found at Tell el-Dab'a. Traditional Egyptian forms with incurved or splayed sides could have been cast in limestone moulds, and socketed axes of the Levantine style could have been produced in a two-piece hard stone mould. Only the socketed form appeared in grave context, suggesting that flat axes, deemed perfectly adequate in graves elsewhere in Egypt, were not considered 'correct' for graves in the Delta (Philip 1995:71). Socketed axes were associated with Asiatic groups but not with Egyptians. It has been pointed out above that bronze used for the casting of grave goods, and these also included axes, were of an inferior quality, and therefore purely symbolic in nature (See Philip 1995: Fig 1, 1-3).

11.3.2 Daggers

The earliest dagger from Tell el-Dab'a appeared, like the axe above, in stratum H. The blade bears two pronounced ribs separated by a deep central groove and is related to those found in early MBIIA Levantine warrior graves. The dagger has a crescent-shaped handle, similar to those found in the Levant from the same period.

In strata G and F daggers with blades showing multiple cast-in ribs were found. The dominant dagger form in graves from strata E and D has a broad, flat mid-rib. The crescent-shaped handle was later replaced by a globular limestone pommel, found elsewhere only in the southern Levant (See Philip 1995: Fig 2, 1-2).

Ornamentation on weapons had no utilitarian function but was merely a modification and elaboration to express cultural values. In the case of daggers and axes all are to some extent 'ornate' in that they show stylistic features unnecessary for the mechanical function alone.

11.3.3 Spearheads

Most examples of spearheads come from the early phases of Tell el-Dab'a. The spearheads are small, relatively light and most likely represent throwing weapons. They are most plentiful in strata H to F and often occur in pairs. Again practices at Tell el-Dab'a reflect trends from the Levant.

In combat warriors would probably commence by shooting arrows or throwing javelins at their opponents, and then go over to hand-to-hand combat which would have involved the use of daggers and axes.

11.3.4 Curved knives

A distinctive curved knife formed an important part of MBA funerary equipment at Tell el Dab'a and also in the Levant generally and might not have been used in battle. The knife has a thin blade with a sharp cutting edge which curves back towards the tip (See Philip 1995:Fig. 2, 3). The back of the blade is straight and blunt. The shape of these knives implies that they were designed for cutting rather than for stabbing. Most have wooden handles secured by three or four rivets driven through the butt which is usually of trapezoidal form. Some examples have a longer, rectangular tang and are mostly unriveted.

Many of the curved knives at Tell el-Dab'a were found in secondary contexts (Philip 1995:72). Those found in graves were no longer in their original positions. Those which might have been *in situ* were in various positions: one in the offering chamber of a grave, another on a plate at the head of the skeleton, and yet another below the head of a slaughtered sheep. Two others were found by the right side of the skeleton's abdomen, lying point downwards as if worn on a belt.

From the MBII period there was also the scimitar, shaped like a sickle but with the cutting edge on the outside. This might have been a symbolic weapon, introduced into Egypt from Mesopotamia during the Hyksos period.

11.3.5 Other hand weapons

Slings, throw-sticks, spears and bows and arrows were weapons used by all races in the ancient Near East. The bow and arrow was one of the most effective of all weapons. The arrow was fast and quiet in flight and could be launched to a distance of up to 200 meters, although for hitting a specific target probably about 60 meters would have been the norm.

The common bow stave was made of simple acacia wood, one to one-and-a-half meters long. It tapered towards each end and was notched to allow for fixing the bow-string which was made of twisted animal gut. Bows were strung only when they were needed for use. Arrows were usually made of reeds with flights of bird feathers attached to the rear end. The arrow-heads were made from a variety of materials, including flint, bone, copper and bronze.

The composite bow was an improvement on the common bow. It was probably introduced from the eastern Mediterranean during the period of Hyksos rule. The bow had greater strength and a longer range than the simple stave bow and made it effective against any foe protected by body-armour. It could launch an arrow up to 300 meters but its effective range was probably around 120 meters (Partridge 2002:44).

The making of the composite bow was a complex and skilled task in which thin strips of wood, horn and sinew were glued and laminated together. The bow had to be treated with care since it was sensitive to moisture and could easily warp unless protected by a bow case.

Composite bows were probably a weapon for officers and charioteers, where their long range and power would make them effective against any foe not similarly equipped.

11.4 Fortifications

The Hyksos, like most of the inhabitants of the ancient Near East, used fortification walls to protect their towns, cities and property against invaders. Yadin (1955:24) opposes Kenyon who posits that sloping fortifications around cities were used as protection against chariots rushing up to the foot of the wall, and suggests that fortifications were erected as defense against the battering ram, a much more effective weapon in siege warfare than the chariot.

11.4.1 Fortified camps

When chariots came into use, a way had to be devised to protect them against raiders. Cities were too small and cramped to allow chariots to be safeguarded within city confines. Fortified camps were therefore constructed outside the cities, the remains of which have been found at Tell el-Yehudiyeh and Heliopolis in the Delta and several sites in the Levant (Yadin 1955:23). These camps were more or less rectangular in shape and of great size. The walls or ramparts surrounding this space were built of *terre-pisee* or beaten earth and other materials available. One might think of this as a simple process, but in reality the walls were constructed scientifically, designed for strength and durability.

One of two methods of construction was used (Yadin 1955:26-28). The most common method was to sandwich together layers of sand, stone, clay, mud or bricks in alternating layers on top of one another. Layers of sandstone or gravel were topped by a layer of less solid matter such as mud or clay to enable the different layers to adhere and so to form a solid structure once the clay had dried out. The surface of the structure was then faced with brick-clay to form a protective outer layer.

The other method seems much simpler to construct and might have been an earlier version. Here the fortification consisted of either a well-beaten thick layer of clay, covered with stucco or plaster. Alternatively, alternating layers of different materials such as sand and clay were used, and then covered with a plastered surface. Even though this type of construction was fairly simple, it proved to form a solid and effective protective slope.

11.4.2 Fortified towns

Again two types of fortification can be distinguished and a number of varieties have been found in the Levant. These fortifications were designed to protect the already existing cities, many of which were built on tells. One or more gateways in the wall offered entrance into the cities.

In the first type the height of the tell is used to form the foundation of the city wall. The same type of construction as for the fortified camps was used to strengthen the lower reaches, which then gradually tapered upwards on the outside to the desired height. Such a rampart could be very thick (think of the buttressed wall of the citadel at Tell el-Dab'a which was originally 6.2 m at the base, and later reinforced to 8.5 m)(Bietak 1996:63), and the top of the wall would then serve as a platform for a much thinner brick wall. In this manner the whole tell was turned into a well-fortified slope (Yadin 1955:26). In some cases additional protection was added by a moat or fosse at the foot of the glacis or in the case of Tell el-Dab'a, by the river flowing past.

The second method was to erect a substructure of massive polygonal masonry. The inner face of the structure was vertical but the outer face sloped outwards, often with a bulge, at an angle of 35 degrees or more. The top of the structure was flat and on this rested a superstructure wall of mud brick. The wall usually followed the line of the summit of the tell and was often fortified with towers. The top of the wall was crenellated, affording the archers protection and the opportunity to launch arrows at the enemy outside the walls. The lower part of the outside of the wall was often reinforced by a stone slope of lesser height, adding strength and thickness to the fortification. The effect of this type of defense was to make it difficult for the enemy to attack the wall of the city directly.

Before the Hyksos, Egyptians were not in the habit of fortifying their cities against enemies, although walls around cities might have served the useful purpose of keeping out water should the Nile rise to great heights. These walls were made of simple mud brick. Thick walls were reinforced with wooden beams built into them at regular intervals. The walls were thicker at the base than at the top, which meant that the inner and outer surfaces were not vertical but sloped inwards (Partridge 2002:127). The rough surface of the walls was finished with a smooth mud coat and sometimes also with an additional layer of white plaster, such as the 'White Walls of Memphis' described by the early kings (Partridge 2002:129).

Instead of going all out to fortify their cities, the Egyptians built border fortresses, especially when the borders of Egypt were under threat such as the ones at Buhen on the border with the Sudan. Some of these fortresses were enormous and were designed to be a visible symbol of control over the area and a deterrent to any potential invader. These fortresses did not serve them too well, though, to keep the Hyksos out of Egypt.

When storming a city, the invaders would, logically speaking, first look for the weakest point in the wall, which might have been the gate. If that could not be broken down, the attacking army had the choice of entering the city by going over the walls, or going through the walls, or tunneling under the walls. They could not rely on the support of chariots since the outside slope of the walls would ensure that they could not come near enough to the wall to be of any assistance to the attackers. Their job would be to hunt down those fleeing from the city and to draw enemy fire away from soldiers at the walls.

Using ladders to scale the walls was a method not unknown in Egypt. From a fifth-Dynasty tomb we have a painting of such a ladder with wheels at the base to enable it to be rolled swiftly into position before being raised vertically against the wall.

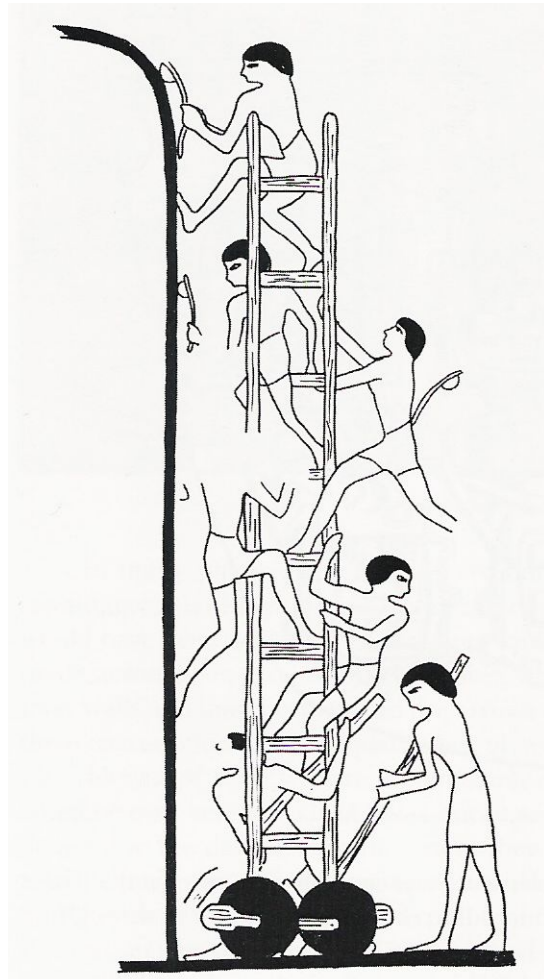


Fig. 28 - A siege ladder fitted with wheels (Partridge 2002:140)

Once in position the ladder was wedged with poles to prevent it from rolling away while the soldiers swarmed up the ladder. This process would no doubt have met with enemy fire. Only one soldier at a time would reach the top. Only when he had scaled the wall (or had been pushed off the ladder) could the next soldier in turn try his luck. The ladder later developed into the siege engine or siege tower (*dimtu*), a four-sided structure comprising four ladders joined together to form a rectangle and equipped with wheels which could be pushed against the wall. This enabled several soldiers to reach the top of the wall at the same time and to overwhelm the foe by sheer numbers.

By going through the wall soldiers were also subjected to enemy projectiles from above - arrows, rocks, and even boiling oil. The instrument for cutting through the wall or undermining the wall was the mattock, an implement used essentially for agriculture purposes to dig up soil but which also proved an effective weapon for quarrying. Walls of sun-dried mud brick were soft and could easily be cut through, especially when soldiers were protected by the cover of darkness.

Tunneling under the wall was also an option. First the base of the wall had to be reached which in itself was a difficult task. Once there, the aim would be to either cut a way under the wall by tunneling or to just undermine parts of the wall sufficiently to cause its collapse.

Soldiers engaged in the task of attacking the wall had to be protected from enemy fire. For this purpose a wooden covering or awning known as a *testudo* was developed to stop arrows and other missiles from above. This protective covering was also used to protect soldiers operating the battering ram. This instrument was probably the first tactic used in any siege, as entry into a defended town was probably easiest through the gateway. The battering ram had been known in Egypt since the Middle Kingdom (Partridge 2002:143) and did not make its first appearance only in the ninth century as pointed out erroneously by Yadin (1955:31). Van Seters (1966:36) postulates that it was not the Hurrians who invented the battering ram and other methods of siege warfare as previously supposed, but that they received them as a considerable heritage from the Amorite world, and through the Hurrians of North Syria, the techniques were passed on to the Hittites, and from there to the Hyksos.

Once the attacking enemy failed to breach or destroy the wall of a city, the only alternative was to beleaguer the town. The siege could last for any period of time, from days to years, depending on how well the inhabitants of the city was provided for in terms of water and food. We know that Kamose of Dynasty Seventeen had to call off the siege on Avaris after he could not provoke the enemy to come out and fight. It is uncertain how long this siege lasted, but we do know from the writings of Kamose, son of Ibana, that Sharuhem to which some of the Hyksos fled after evacuating Avaris, was besieged by Ahmose: "Then Sharuhem was besieged for three years. Then his majesty took it" (Partridge 2002:143).

Yadin (1955:32) has high praise for the military tactics and weapons used in the second millennium BCE. Chariotry dominated the field in warfare on open terrain with its superiority in mobility and fire power, but in siege warfare the battering ram and other siege engines were the weapons of choice.



Chapter 12 - Religion

It lies within the creative power of the human mind to fashion a distinctive ideology which, through the wealth of symbol and ritual, commands respect. The ancient Egyptians were particularly adept at inventing ideologies. We can see this trait in the different cosmogonies adhered to in the important Egyptian cities (Ions 1982:25-33). In Heliopolis, the god Atum was believed to have been the first deity to have emerged from the waters of Nun and to create the world. In Memphis, Ptah was declared to have been the creator of the world through word and thought, and the deities of the Heliopolitan Ennead were regarded as merely manifestations of the supreme god Ptah. Hermopolis, a city in Middle Egypt, substituted the Heliopolitan Ennead by a group of eight gods who together created the world. The chief god of Thebes in Upper Egypt was called Amun. To command support for the advance of their own deity to the position of chief god, the priests of Amun had to incorporate in their deity the main features of all the important cosmogonies. They claimed that Thebes was the birthplace of Osiris, and since Osiris had attained such popularity during the Middle Kingdom, he was also associated with the well-being of the royal house and the fertility of the land. Isis, the consort of Osiris, was believed to have been the mother of Horus from whom was descended every pharaoh, and on whom in turn the lives of his subjects depended (Ions 1982).

The antagonist to Osiris' protagonist was Seth.

12.1 Seth

The myth of Seth belongs to the pre-Dynastic period of Egypt. This myth has many variations but the gist is as follows.

Nut, goddess of the sky, gave birth to a number of children on five intercalary days (Ions 1982:50). They were Osiris, Isis, Seth and Nephthys. Osiris and Isis were said to have fallen in love when they were still in the womb. Re, the sun-god, acknowledged Osiris as his heir, and it was believed that Osiris was the one who instructed the people of the First Time, who were still barbarians, to the ways of civilization (Ions 1982:51). After having civilized Egypt, Osiris set out to bring his teachings to the rest of the world, leaving Isis as regent of Egypt in his absence. Seth, who coveted the throne, was enamored of Isis and sought to change the established order. With the help of his co-conspirators he plotted to do away with Osiris. On his return to Egypt Osiris fell to the plot of the conspirators and his body, chopped into fourteen pieces, was cast into the floodwaters of the Nile. Isis found all the pieces bar one and with the assistance of the gods put them together again. Then, in the shape of a bird, she miraculously conceived of the dead body. Vindication for Seth's deed was left to the son Horus, posthumously conceived. Osiris now belonged to the world of the dead where he served the sun-god Re on his nocturnal journeys (Ions 1982:50).

Geb, who was the earth itself, found that he had become old, and so he divided his kingdom between his son Seth and Horus, son of his first-born son Osiris. The greedy Seth, however, wanted all for himself, and after a feud lasting eighty years, a tribunal of the gods intervened and awarded to Horus all of Egypt, leaving Seth with nothing and banishing him. Re, however, was dependent on Seth. Seth was a war-like god and was one of the most important of those who accompanied Re on the solar barque (Ions 1984:64). Seth had to defend Re against his enemies which confronted him on his nocturnal journey, especially against the serpent Apep, and to cast all attackers back into the abyss.

This redeeming quality of Seth is often forgotten, and he is mostly seen as an outcast who had been relegated to the desert borders as the personification of aridity, of storms and as the god of foreigners. This last identification facilitated his rise to power, first under king Nehesy, founder of Dynasty Fourteen, and after that under the Hyksos of Dynasties Fifteen and Sixteen who connected Seth with their own gods from Mesopotamia and the Levant. Even after the Hyksos were driven from Egypt, Seth retained favour, especially in Dynasty Nineteen when some of the Ramesside pharaohs, wishing to emulate the military prowess of the Hyksos which lived on in folklore, gave themselves names such as 'beloved of Seth'. Seth's revival, however, was short-lived and he was increasingly degraded until by Dynasty Twenty-six he again became the personification of evil and was actually identified with his ancient foe Apep. During Dynasty Twenty-two many representations of Seth were effaced or replaced with images of Thoth or Sebek, the crocodile god (Ions 1984:65).

How is it, then, that this much despised deity came to gain such a prominent place in the pantheon in the Nile Delta to become the patron deity of the Hyksos city Avaris?

Several reasons are put forward by Van Seters (1966:102). We have seen that Nehesy, after an altercation with a pharaoh of Dynasty Thirteen ruling from Thebes, gathered his followers and settled in the Delta where he founded Dynasty Fourteen. In opposition to the preceding royal sentiments, Nehesy adopted Seth as his patron deity to make a clear break with the past. In pre-dynastic times Seth was a patron of the monarchy, and the sanction of this deity would give justification to Nehesy's rule. If Seth was associated with the northeast and with Asia he may already have become an important deity for the Asiatics in the Delta region whose support Nehesy needed to maintain his rule. If Nehesy had been a commander of the frontier garrison before he proclaimed himself king (Van Seters 1966:103), he would have had contact with the princes of the Levant and probably had their support for his rule. By distancing himself from the accepted popular deities such as Ptah and Amun and by accepting Seth and assimilating him to a major Asiatic deity, Nehesy could ensure the goodwill of the Asiatics already living in the Delta, and also of the princes of the Levant.

Confirmation of Asiatic support may be seen on an obelisk found at Byblos in which the ruler Abishemu II used the epithet 'beloved of *Hrs*', the god Arsaphes worshipped together with Seth at Heracleopolis Parva, capital of the Fourteenth nome (Van Seters 1966:101). The above ruler was a contemporary of Nehesy, and this title would probably have been used by a foreign prince only when it was in vogue with the leading power in Egypt. An obelisk of Nehesy found at Tanis bears the dedication by the 'eldest royal son, Nehesy, beloved of Seth, Lord of *r-3ht*' and also 'beloved of *Hrsf*' (Van Seters, 1966:101). Van Seters also speculates that *Hrsf* might have had a cult place in the north-eastern frontier as early as the Tenth Dynasty, and that Nehesy simply adopted the cult of this god together with the cult of Seth in spite of their apparent royal disfavour in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasties. By adopting Seth, Nehesy gave his rule a new political and religious basis, pronouncing a break with the past.

In the New Kingdom the Egyptian god Seth was identified with the Syro-Palestinian deity Ba'al and the name Ba'al is written in hieroglyphs with the determinative of the Seth animal (Cornelius 1994:134, 152 and Leitz 2002:II:778).



Fig. 29 - The so-called “Ba‘al stela” from Ugarit (Cornelius 1994:Plate 32)

The Asiatic kings who founded Dynasty Fifteen showed their origins to no greater degree than in the gods they worshipped. Although they suffered the Egyptian lector-priests to fashion for them throne-names with the infix name of the sun-god Re, they remained devoted to the native cults they had brought with them from the Levant (Redford 1993:117). Ba‘al and Reshef were two of these, although both were being equated with Seth. Could this have been to placate the Egyptians living among them and on whose goodwill they were reliant? It takes meticulous study, such as that conducted by Cornelius (1994) to distinguish between the images of these gods as depicted on seals and stelae.

The worship of Reshef is well attested from the time of Amenhotep II onwards (Cornelius 1994:239-240), but there are indications that it was known in Egypt earlier (Van Seters 1966:179). Reshef, in contrast to some other Asiatic deities, does not seem to have been assimilated to any Egyptian deity. In iconography he occasionally shares some of the features of Seth-Ba'al, such as the horns on the headdress and tassels on a short skirt. He is usually distinguished from Seth by his more Asiatic features, particularly the Asiatic beard and two straight streamers from the headdress (Van Seters 1966:180). Cornelius (1994:126) further describes Reshef as a standing menacing god, carrying a shield and a hand weapon or mace, and points out that there is no difference between the garb of Ba'al and Reshef. Both may carry bull horns, but only Reshef is depicted with gazelle horns and a shield.

Van Seters cites the story of Apophis, one of the last Hyksos kings, and one Sequenenre, from Papyrus Sallier I. This story was circulated in Egypt during Ramesside times. It describes how Apophis made Seth his personal lord and how he served no god in the entire land except Seth:

Then King Apophis – life, prosperity, health! – made him Seth as Lord, and he would not serve any god in the land except Seth. And he built a temple of good and eternal work beside the House of the King Apophis – life, prosperity, health! – and he appeared every day to have sacrifices made ... daily to Seth. And the officials of the King – life, prosperity, health! – carried wreaths, just exactly as is done (in) the temple of Re-Har-akhti (Van Seters 1966:171).

12.2 The 400-year stela

The continuity of the Seth cult from the Hyksos period to the Ramesside period had been documented by the so-called 400-year stela that was probably erected at Avaris/Piramesse (Bietak 1997:101). After the Hyksos had been driven out, most of Avaris was abandoned except for a quarter in the eastern part of the town where the temple of Seth was situated. Renovations of the temple were carried out during the restoration of the traditional cults in Egypt under the kings Tutankhamen and Horemheb in the late fourteenth century BCE, and new projects at the temple were carried out under Seti I (Bietak 1997:101).

The 400-year stela was first discovered by Mariette in 1863 and reburied, to be found again by Montet in 1933 (Cornelius 1994:147). Cornelius (1994:147-8) describes the stela as follows: It is a stela of granite dating from c. 1290-1224 BCE. It has a rounded top and stands 220 cms. high. Three figures are depicted on the surface. The male figure on the left strides to the right on a base-line. He wears a conical crown which resembles the Egyptian white crown, with a disk and two horns in front and a single streamer running from the tip of the crown to the ankles, ending in a flower. He also wears an Egyptian beard and is dressed in a decorated knee-length kilt. This is fastened to the body by two bands crossing over the chest. Around his neck is a broad necklace and on the upper arms and wrists are bangles. The right hand hangs along the body and holds an *ankh* by its loop, while the left hand holds a scepter. To the right of this figure is the king, dressed in Egyptian garb with a bull's tail. He is offering wine in two jars. To the far right is a third figure in identical garb with his hands in a gesture of praise. There are inscriptions in front of the latter figures, and a longer inscription below.



Fig 30 - The 400-year stela (Cornelius 1994:plate 35)

In the description the figure on the left is identified as 'Seth', but the god is depicted as a foreign Asiatic god with a human head and attributes which are clearly a mixture of Egyptian (sceptre, ankh and beard) and Asiatic elements. The figure is therefore not the traditional Seth but Ba'al, or better still, Ba'al-Seth. The figures in the centre and on the right depict Ramesses II and the vizier Seti.

The inscription between the god and the king and the first lines in front of the third figure reads:

Seth of Ramesses-meryamun, given all his life King of Upper and Lower Egypt. Userma'atre'setepenre', son of Re'. Ramesses-meryamun giving wine to (his) father (who made) him, given life to the *k3* of the lord Seth, son of Nut (Cornelius 1994:148).

The text below the group comprises twelve lines, with the last part partially broken away. Van Seters (1966:97) cites Montet who suggests that there were at least two more lines. The first

part of the text gives the titulary of Ramesses II and his command to make the stela to honour 'the father of his fathers' (Seth) and his own father Seti I. The second part of the text mentions a past event, dated to the four-hundredth year of Seth as king of Upper and Lower Egypt. Although the text is broken, it clearly indicates that a certain vizier named Seti honoured the god Seth in a special way on this important anniversary. It also gives the full titulary of the vizier Seti and of his father Pa-ramesses, also a vizier. Montet also proposes (Van Seters 1966:100) that the names in cartouches (*Seth pehti* and *Nubti*) refer to a king who set up independent rule in Avaris, but it is more likely that the names represent Seth himself. The stela thus commemorated both the establishment of the Seth cult in Avaris and his commencement as the patron of the monarchy in Egypt.

According to Bietak (1997:101), the stela was in all possibility commissioned by Ramesses II whose family most likely originated in Avaris. The stela can be viewed as some kind of propaganda designed to legitimize the rule of the new dynasty. Seth, in the image of the Asiatic god Ba'al, with horns and high crown with a pommel, is presented as 'father of fathers', and as the ancestor of the new dynasty.

Habachi (1975:41) is of the opinion that this monument can be interpreted in many ways since it has many points which can hardly be paralleled by any other monument. Its dating, given in terms of a kind of era, is quite unique especially as it is related to a god considered as a king. The date is given as year 400, fourth month, third season (in Egypt only three seasons were considered), fourth day and is attributed to a god but with the prenomen and nomen of a king. Habachi (1975:42) explains this in terms of other similar cases where the main gods of other capitals (Ptah of Memphis in the Old Kingdom and Herishef of Heracleopolis in the First Intermediate Period) were given the title 'King of the Two Lands', while Amenre, god of Thebes in the Middle and New Kingdoms, was recognized as 'King of the Gods'. The names of Re, Unenfer and Amenre are sometimes placed in cartouches.

But where does the '400 years' come in? Van Seters (1966:172) sees the continuation of Seth-worship at the time of Ramesses II as the most logical interpretation of the four hundred year stela. Ramesses II is described as 'Lord of the Jubilees', and Habachi (1975:42) speculates that the stela must have been erected at the earliest after Ramesses' second jubilee. His sixth jubilee must have been celebrated at Avaris/Piramesse, since clay moulds for faience tiles commemorating this jubilee were discovered there, together with a door lintel with the name of Khay, perhaps the vizier in charge of the arrangements for this jubilee. The stela was probably erected on that occasion. It seems to have been erected to justify the choice of place as a capital. Habachi (1975:43) seems convinced that it was not erected to commemorate the founding of Avaris, or to the introduction of Seth into the Egyptian pantheon. However, when Ramesses II moved his capital from Thebes to Khata'na he was in need of support for this step, and to emphasize the importance of this place as a capital. It happened about four hundred years after the end of Dynasty Thirteen, and the vizier was ordered to erect the stela to honour Seth (or Ba'al), the local god. This depiction of the god shown in Asiatic dress and with other Asiatic characteristics indicated on the stela, portrays him as Seth-of-Ramesses-meramen, and in this form he was worshipped by both Egyptians and Asiatics.

Van Seters (1966:176) is of the opinion that there is every reason to believe that the worship of Seth at Avaris continued unbroken from the Hyksos to the Ramesside periods. The 400-year stela pushes this continuity back to the very beginning of the Hyksos period, if not before. Although the Hyksos royalty and leaders were expelled, a large part of the foreign population probably remained in Egypt and carried on the worship of Seth very much like before.

12.3 Other deities

It is highly unlikely that the Asiatics of the Hyksos period restricted themselves to the worship of Seth alone. On scarabs of that period there are representations of numerous deities displaying both Egyptian and Asiatic characteristics and one has the impression of a pantheon of deities and a degree of syncretism between Egyptian gods and their Asiatic counterparts (Van Seters 1966:177). Seth might have been assimilated to Ba'al, and the religion was, therefore, Semitic. In the same way other Egyptian deities were identified with Semitic gods, although Egyptians were not against the principle of adding other gods to their already extensive pantheon.

The Late Bronze Age is known for its international contact and communication (Cornelius 1994:1). Not only goods were exchanged, but also ideas. Since there were already numerous Asiatics living in Egypt, it seems only natural that religious ideas were also exchanged. These ideas were spread in various ways. Cornelius (1994:2) mentions a few of these. There was a strong bond between Egypt and Syro-Palestine. Egyptian troops serving in the Levant took their own deities along, and returned to Egypt with the knowledge of the deities of the countries where they served. Foreign merchants and sailors were also instrumental in introducing deities previously unknown in Egypt, such as evident from the cylinder seal mentioned by Bietak (1987:43) found on the floor of a palace from the eighteenth century BCE at Tell el Da'ba, showing a representation of the god Ba'al-Zaphon, the protector of sailors (Fig.19). Not only soldiers and sailors but also slaves brought their own deities along when they found themselves in Egypt. On a higher social level, Egyptian dignitaries and officials living abroad might have embraced the religion of the region where they were stationed. In this manner there was a continuous exchange of religious ideas.

At the expulsion of the Hyksos, just about all their stelae in Egypt were damaged or destroyed. We therefore have to look to the Levant to build up a picture of what religion was practiced by the Hyksos. The texts from Ras Shamra are the only detailed first-hand contemporary written sources on Syro-Palestinian religion (Cornelius 2004:18). Our knowledge of Asiatic religion comes mainly from the LBA, but one may assume that there is a continuum in the tradition between the seventeenth and fourteenth centuries BCE (Redford 1993:117). Cornelius (2004:15) points out that thousands of iconographic sources are available in the study of visible religion. In Syro-Palestine it is especially stamp-seals and terracottas that prove illuminating sources. However, inscribed images are only available from Egypt where the names of the goddesses are depicted (Cornelius 2004:16).

In the mythology of the New Kingdom there are indications of a strong Asiatic influence, and this influence can be traced back to the Hyksos. Some of the infixes of Hyksos names point to the importance of the prominent female goddess Anat, known from the Ugarit archives as the bloodthirsty consort of Ba'al (Redford 1993:117). She appears as the quasi Hathor, with sun disk and horns, cow's ears and curls around the face. On certain scarabs she is referred to as 'Mistress of the Two Trees'. Her male partner is referred to by the epithet *hr*, 'the mountain (deity)'. Redford (1993:117) reminds us of the connection of Ba'al in the LBA with mountains, especially Mount Zaphon which might be depicted on Fig. 19 (Cornelius & Niehr 2004:47).

The assimilation of Anat with Hathor is suggested in the Ugaritic texts and the Brooklyn Papyrus (Van Seters 1966:178). Both Hathor and Anat are seen as goddesses of love and war. Hathor, in the form of Sekhmet, carried out great slaughter in much the same way as did Anat as consort of Ba'al. Unlike Ba'al who became Seth in Egypt, Anat continued to be known in

Egypt under her Semitic name and became known as the consort or 'milch cow' of Seth, while Seth is called 'the bull of Retjenu' (Van Seters 1966:179).

Another goddess whose cult was firmly attested in Egypt by the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty is the Phoenician Astarte. She was very similar to Anat and she, too, was a goddess of war. These two goddesses were a closely linked pair and were sometimes even considered as one. Astarte is usually identified as a figure on a throne with Hathor headdress and with an axe resting on her shoulder (Cornelius 2004:22). One very fragmentary text makes mention of Astarte and Yam (the Sea) in a manner reminiscent of the contest between Baal and Yam of Ugarit mythology (Van Seters 1966:175). The place of Ba'al, however, seems to have been taken in Egypt by Seth, although the details of the struggle are completely lost. One should keep in mind that the religion practiced in the Levant was not uniform throughout the region. In Ugarit, for example, Anat was the main female partner of Ba'al, while in Emar it was Astarte (Cornelius 2004:18).

Bietak (1997:99) speculates that the MBA temple found in the sacred precinct at Tell el-Dab'a (strata F/E3) might have belonged to the cult of Asherah. He comes to this conclusion because of the altar in front of the temple on which some charred acorns were found, which he finds indicative of a tree cult. Cornelius (2004:1), however, finds that the relationship between Asherah and trees has not yet been solved (Wiggins 2001).

In the same way in which Seth was assimilated to Ba'al, Re might have been identified by the Hyksos with El (Van Seters 1966:177-8). In one version of *The contest of Horus and Seth* from the Ramesside period, Re presides over the council of the gods and has the goddesses Anat and Astarte as his daughters. In another mythological text from the Nineteenth Dynasty, Re is described as an old god who is losing his control over gods and men. In these texts there is no reference to his role as the Sun, but instead they correspond entirely with the position and characteristics of El in the Ugaritic texts (Van Seters 1966:178).

The Semitic god Horon was worshipped in Palestine as early as the Thirteenth Dynasty. He was assimilated with Horus by assonance of their names and was represented as a falcon, which may explain why a falcon-headed god is very common on scarabs from Palestine during the Hyksos period (Van Seters 1966:179).

PART THREE

EGYPT'S LEGACY FROM THE HYKSOS

Chapter 13 - Legacy

13.1 Introduction

The advent of the Hyksos signaled the second period since the First Dynasty in which the internal stability of Egypt was disturbed. The feudal period of the First Intermediate Period entailed the crisis of a society and its most cherished values, but this crisis could be overcome through a purely internal process. Guided by past events the society of the Middle Kingdom felt a profound ethical obligation to renew its inherited spiritual values according to the principles dictated by the changed times. During and after the Second Intermediate Period, however, a new factor appeared, for the Hyksos invasion seems to have given Egypt its true awareness of cultures other than its own. On the one hand the Hyksos expulsion caused an upsurge of national pride in having overcome the enemy in their midst, but on the other there was a genuine desire for a closer knowledge of foreign values. This latter mind-set led to an infusion of a new strength into a civilization which for centuries had left little room for change and adjustment. Egypt might never have been able to do what it did achieve in the New Kingdom without the infusion of fresh and novel influences from other civilizations.

During the Hyksos rule it was a line of vassal princes in Thebes, forming Manetho's Seventeenth Dynasty, who felt themselves strong enough to challenge their overlords, and to eventually overthrow them and reunite the whole of Egypt and the north of Nubia. This ushered in the era of the New Kingdom, a period which saw Egypt rise to unparalleled prosperity and imperial expansion in Palestine and Syria.

The reign of Ahmose was the beginning of a brave new world. The Hyksos invasion had destroyed the Egyptians' former belief in their uniqueness and superiority. The more intimate contacts that were now established with the high civilizations of western Asia and the Aegean world brought home to them that their pharaoh, traditionally the incarnation of the god who had created their universe and who ruled its extent as far as the circuit of the sun, shared his sovereignty with monarchs in other countries. Egypt now entered a period in which its religion, culture, government and even language welcomed other ideas. Not all changes can be directly attributed to the influence of the Hyksos. Rather, it was after the Hyksos had been expelled that closer contact with the Levant and other countries was established. This contact led to several visible changes on many fronts.

It should be kept in mind, however, that if it had not been for the Hyksos domination, Egypt might never have awoken from its age-old slumber and might have happily continued their restricted sojourn along the Nile.

In investigating the legacy the Hyksos left to Egypt, we will again have to look for information to two sources. Firstly there is the written evidence, but as has been pointed out before, not all writing can be trusted since many of the reports were written long after the event and might have been riddled with hear-say and propaganda. Here Hatshepsut's comment on the façade of her funerary temple comes to mind, fifty years or more after the expulsion of the Hyksos:

I have restored that which had been ruined. I raised up that which had gone to pieces formerly, since the Asiatics were in the midst of Avaris of the Northland, and vagabonds were in the midst of them, overthrowing that which had been made. They ruled without Re', and he did not act by divine command down to [the reign of] my majesty (Van Seters 1966:173).

Note here that Hatshepsut does not accuse the Hyksos *per se* but only the criminal element 'in the midst of them'. Lawlessness, as we well know, is a natural part of the anarchy so often following a war or invasion.

Manetho, chronographer of Egypt's dynasties, writes about the Hyksos in the third century BCE:

By main force they seized it (Egypt) without striking a blow; and having overpowered the rulers of the land, they burned our cities ruthlessly, razed to the ground the temples of the gods, and treated all the natives with cruel hostility, massacring some and leading into slavery the wives and children of others (Kuhrt 2002:175).

Manetho's writings occurred hundreds of years after the event, and after such a long period of time, facts become somewhat distorted. The Hyksos might have taken over the northern part of Egypt with the full cooperation of many Egyptians, but they were not interested in occupying Upper Egypt although they relegated the ruling princes to vassal status.

Shaw (2004:80) suggests that Egyptologists have been struggling to come to terms with the basic fact that writing tends to be the product of elite members of society, whereas the bulk of archeological data derives from the illiterate majority of the population. He also refers to Egyptologists (Shaw 2004:81) who are of the opinion that textual sources can usually only reveal fragments of systems, whereas archeology can suggest the 'broad structural outlines of society'. On the other hand, textual evidence can often supply the individual details that help to transform abstract socio-economic processes into something that is closer to conventional history.

In order to arrive at a comprehensive picture of the Hyksos legacy we shall have to look at the total picture, investigating archeological, textual and also scientific evidence. Changes in Egyptian lifestyle would become even more evident after the departure of the Hyksos than during their rule. Several factors should be kept in mind. The first is that a large number of Egyptian officials cooperated willingly and with alacrity with the Hyksos. Egyptians served as advisors, as scribes and as priests, and there can be little doubt that marriages between the two groups took place, even at the highest levels. This can be seen in the added Asiatic component in the physical appearance of some Egyptians, extending even to the Egyptian ruling class in the New Kingdom (Aldred 1994:141). These changes can also be seen in statuary and paintings, as will be discussed later. Something else that should be kept in mind is that Upper Egypt was not as closely involved with the Hyksos as Middle Egypt and the Delta. It must have irked those living in Upper Egypt to have lost their right to self-rule, and to have suffered trade losses by the levies imposed on them whenever they wanted to use the Nile past Cusae.

However, the Hyksos were not forceful in compelling the Egyptians to accept their laws, their religion or their culture. The reverse might be nearer to the truth. It is almost as if the Hyksos were apologetic for their presence in Egypt.

13.2 Architecture and tombs

It has already been pointed out that little remains of the original buildings in the Hyksos capital Avaris, and that what we know of the city can be attributed to the excavations of Bietak and his team of archeologists. Most buildings and especially monuments erected by the Hyksos seem to have been deliberately demolished by the Egyptians after the fall of the city. The city was ransacked so that only pottery shards and the odd piece of jewelry and weaponry have been found among the rubble. The only building that might have been left standing was the temple of Seth, as discussed before.

Bryan (2003:208) points out that Ahmose's most immediate construction project appears to have been within the city of Avaris. Bietak's excavations have identified an early Dynasty Eighteen platform abutting a Hyksos fortification wall, and he is of the opinion that Ahmose was the builder of a palace complex decorated with Minoan frescos (Shaw 2004:34) which are now being painstakingly put together and reconstructed. It would seem that the Egyptians had obliterated the city of Avaris almost completely so that no trace of the Hyksos was left to remind them of the inauspicious rule by a foreign power, but that Avaris' position on the Nile was too strategic to abandon altogether.

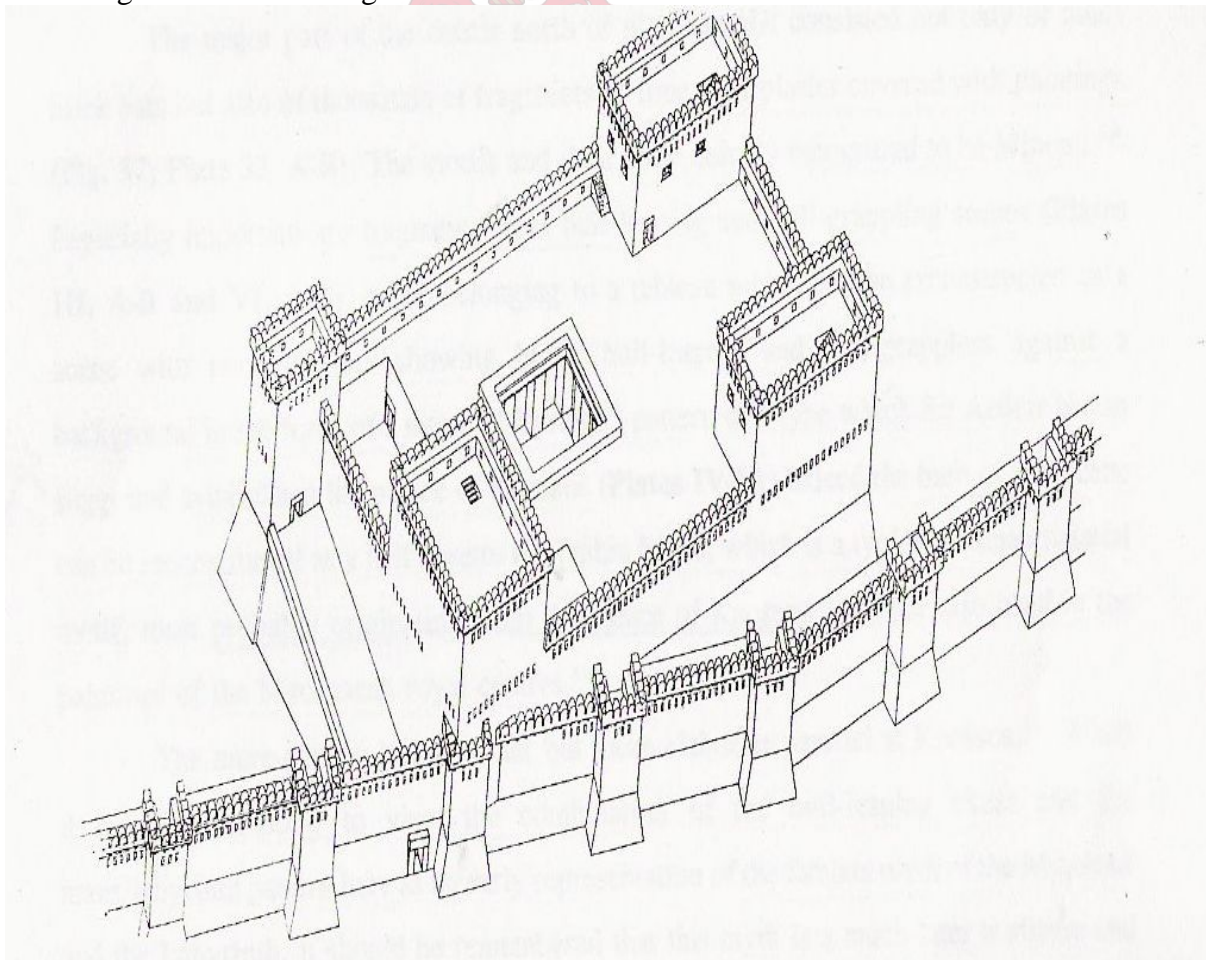


Fig. 31 - Reconstruction of the palatial platform in the early Eighteenth Dynasty (Bietak 1996:71)

13.2.1 Rock-cut tombs

No changes in Egyptian architecture can be traced directly to the Hyksos. Rather, it was the inner changes in the mindset of the Egyptians and their direct contact with other civilizations that brought about a renewal, a departure from the traditional Egyptian pre-established schemes. A taste for the colossal and opulent had existed in Egypt since the Old Kingdom when mighty monuments had been raised at Saqqara and Giza, but especially towards the end of the Middle Kingdom, pyramids became smaller and were no longer built in profusion. For non-royal persons new forms of tombs were introduced. Among the most characteristic remains of the period are the rock-cut tombs at Ben Hasan, south of Memphis (Kleiner, Mimiya & Tansy 2001:59). These largely replaced the Old Kingdom mastabas. Hollowed out of the cliffs at remote sites, these tombs were often fronted by a shallow columnar vestibule which led to a columned hall and then into a sacred chamber where the sarcophagus was deposited. These granite coffins were extremely large and heavy. They were designed like small tomb chambers and their weight, up to 150 tons, was intended to foil potential grave robbers. The Asiatic custom of burying their dead in the courtyard or next to the house or in the floor of their living quarters never seemed to have caught on with the Egyptians, neither during the Second Intermediate Period nor directly afterwards.

13.2.2 Mortuary temples and tombs

In the New Kingdom the resources that had formerly been devoted to the building of the kings' pyramid complexes now went into their mortuary temples, built on the desert margin of the western bank of the Nile at Thebes, the birthplace of Ahmose. These mortuary temples were separated from the actual burial places which from the reign of Thutmose I were hewn into the rocky walls of a Wadi, now known as the Valley of the Kings. This was a deviation from the practice during the Old and Middle Kingdoms when the mortuary temple was part of the pyramid complex. A distance of a kilometer or more separated the mortuary temple from the burial place proper which was hidden to discourage tomb robbers. Tomb robbers had already been a problem during the Middle Kingdom. It became apparent that the size of the pyramid was no defense against robbers. Builders attempted to thwart thieves by using intricate and ingenious interior layouts. Entrances were hidden and screened from the secret tomb chamber by various types of sliding doors and by a series of passages that turned and doubled back on themselves at various levels like labyrinths. The smaller pyramids of the late Middle Kingdom were built entirely of mud brick or had a stone framework filled in with brick and rubble, hence so few of them are still in a good state of repair.

The tombs cut into the rocky walls of the mountain in the Valley of the Kings were elaborately designed with long, straight passages, richly and beautifully decorated with statuary, texts and paintings depicting scenes from earthly life of the deceased and scenes of the envisaged afterlife. Numerous rooms and passages led off the main passage. The rooms served as storage place for furniture, food and other items that the king might need in the after-life. Many items of gold and magnificent jewelry were buried with the king to denote his status. After the burial the tomb was sealed and the entrance obliterated to discourage grave robbing.

Although the tombs are concerned with defined and ordered space and should therefore be considered as architecture, they do not count as 'visible' architecture because of their hidden nature. However, the mortuary temples more than made up for the tombs' imperceptibility in

visible splendour from the outside. At the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Egypt's expansionism filled its coffers, and much of the loot and booty was spent on the monarch's elaborate funerary temple. A good case in point is the funerary temple of the pharaoh Hatshepsut (c. 1501 – 1480 BCE). The temple, situated in the Valley of the Queens, was erected by her to venerate her late father, Thutmose I and her deified self, to a design known from the First Intermediate Period (Shaw 2003:232). The temple is set against the sheer cliff face of Deir el-Bahri alongside Mentuhotep II's earlier tomb and temple from the Eleventh Dynasty, and while it used the latter as its model, it exceeds it in size and impressiveness. The temple seems to flow directly out of the majestic cliffs that stand behind it. The temple with its dramatic terraces joined by sloping ramps which were probably lined by sphinxes, was originally surrounded by ponds and an avenue of trees (Pemberton 2004:54). The terraced design of the temple provided large areas for relief carving, depicting scenes from Hatshepsut's achievements such as her trading expedition to the land of Punt. The rear of the temple, built against the cliff-side, led to her tomb cut into the living rock.

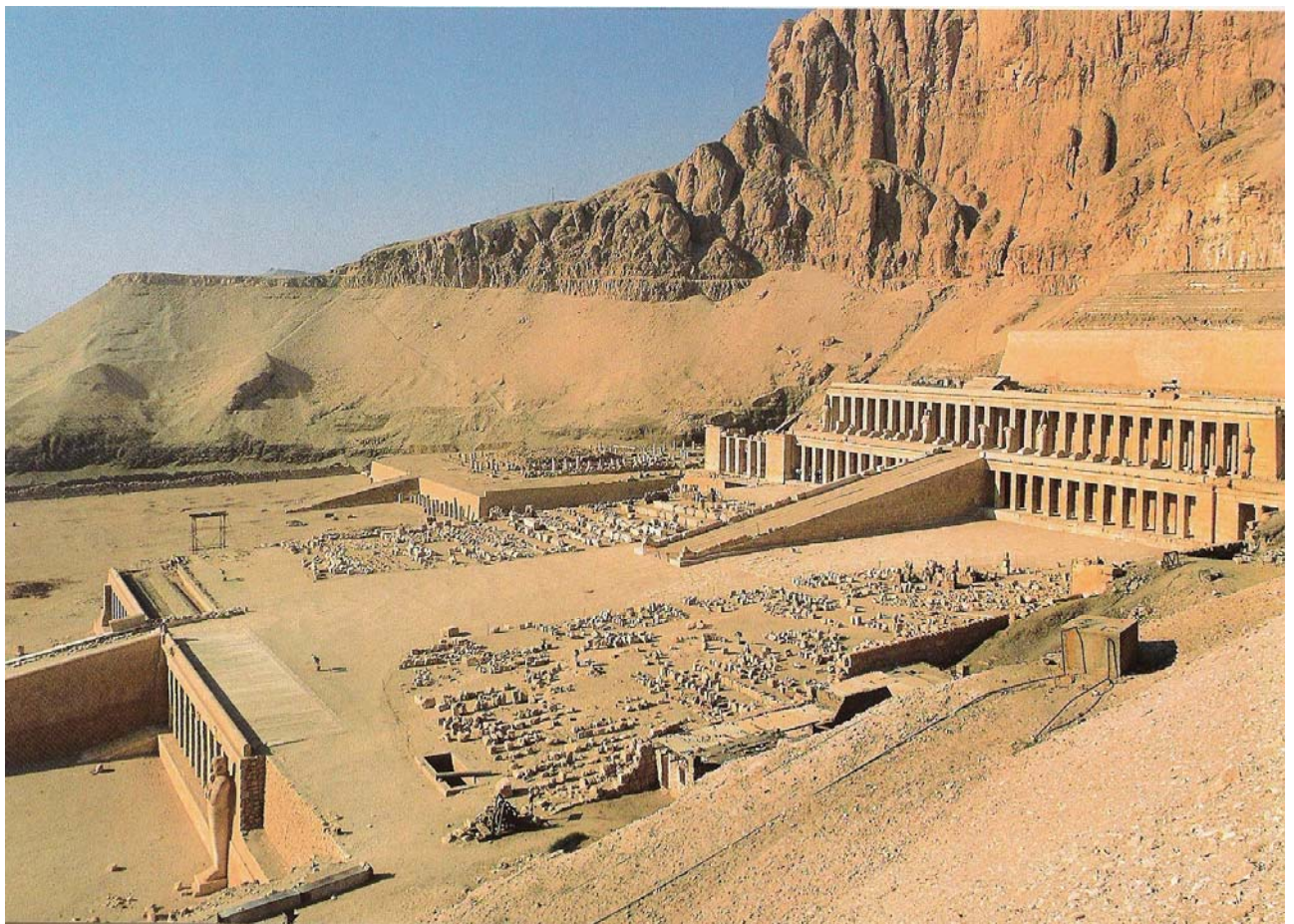


Fig. 32 - Hatshepsut's funerary temple (Pemberton & Fletcher 2004:55)

During the New Kingdom mortuary temples became increasingly elaborate. By the time of Ramesses III, mortuary temples rivaled the temples of the gods, comprising an entrance pylon leading to a pillared court fronting a portico and a hypostyle hall with shrines at the rear. The lay-out along a single axis reflects the processional nature of the temple ritual.

One of the most impressive sights in Egypt are the Colossi of Memnon, two enormous royal figures which once dominated the entrance to the funerary temple of Amenhotep III. Nothing

is left of the temple itself, but the more than 20 meter high statues give an indication of the vast scale of the temple.

Funerary culture in Thebes evolved in a number of ways. Since the centers of scribal learning were lost to Thebes, a new set of texts for funerary rituals and spells such as were known from *The Book of the Dead* had to be compiled (Bourriau 2003:193). Also, since contact with its erstwhile trading partners was limited, cedar-wood from the Lebanon, the material traditionally used for coffins, was replaced by indigenous sycamore wood which could only be roughly shaped, and they were painted in a crude fashion in a feathered pattern. Both the texts and the coffins show a lack of training in the rigid conventions of funerary art, although in some Theban workshops the tradition of Middle Kingdom coffin making survived into the Eighteenth Dynasty.

In neither the funerary temples nor the burial style in Egypt can we detect any Asiatic influence. The mortuary temples remained of unadulterated Egyptian design, and even in the necropolis at Avaris the remains of small Egyptian mortuary temples have been found.

13.2.3 Temples

Funerary temples were built to honour a deceased person; temples were built to honour the gods. Temples were massive walled structures laid out on one level and were almost always built from sandstone. Aesthetically, they were designed to be enjoyed from the inside on ceremonial occasions rather than from the outside as a decorative feature of the landscape. Their basic features were a pylon (two truncated pyramids forming a monumental gate-way); a roofless colonnade court; a lofty covered hall with a ceiling borne on mighty sandstone columns; and the private sanctuary of the god which was concealed behind walls and surrounded by small service chambers. The basic features were repeated in temple after temple, but with such variation that that no two temples were exactly alike in size, proportion or ground plan.



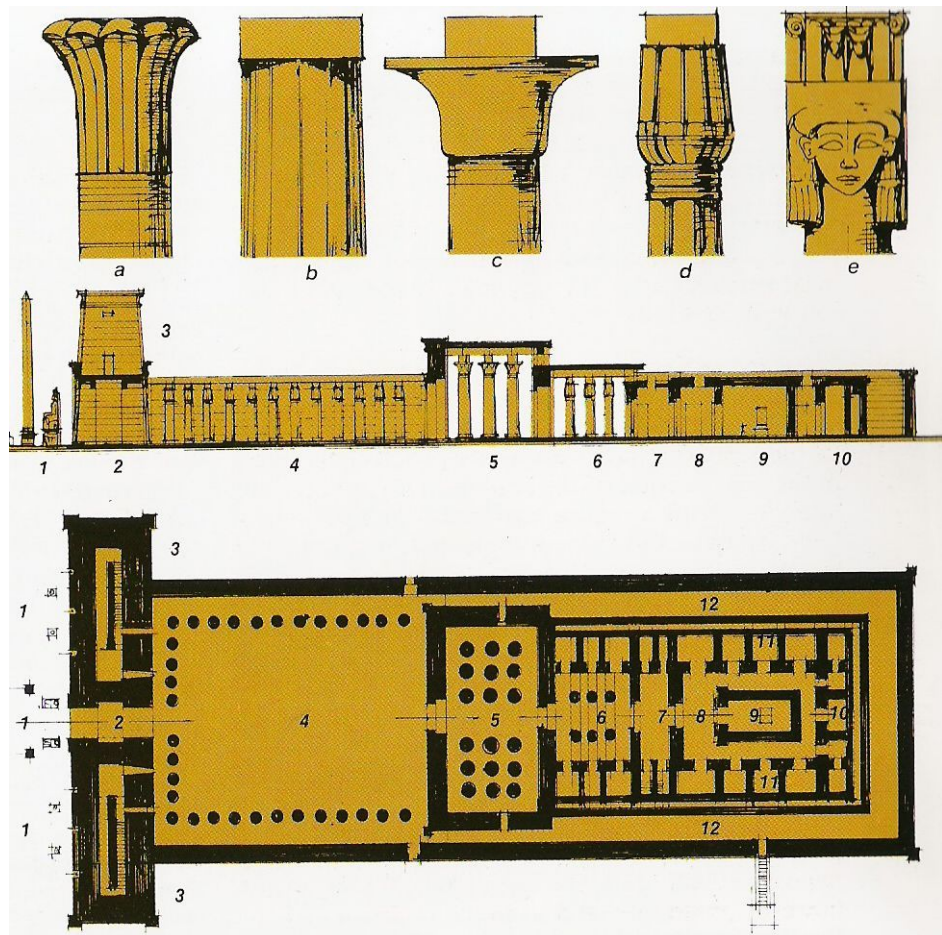


Fig. 33 - General temple plan ((Carpiceci 2001:143))

An exception to this rule is the temple of Amun at Karnak which grew out of a modest Twelfth Dynasty shrine and which was added to by almost every pharaoh from the Eighteenth Dynasty onwards to commemorate their foreign victories. The last significant addition was the huge entry gate built by the Nubian Taharqa in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.

In none of the temples built in Egypt with the exception of those built in the Delta by the Asiatics themselves can any Asiatic influence be perceived. Indeed, temples along the same Egyptian design were built in Egypt by the Greeks and the Romans many centuries later.

From archeological evidence we may speculate that the cult of Seth-worship continued in the Delta for long after the departure of the Hyksos, and it is possible that the Seth-temples remained of the same design and construction as they had been in Hyksos times. Ramesses II professed to worship Seth, but the worship of Seth and Amun was not mutually exclusive. Ramesses II also built temples to the traditional Egyptian gods on a very extensive scale. Many of the ancient temples still standing in Egypt today were built at his direction to appease his insatiable appetite for building.

13.2.4 Houses

As has been discussed before, houses in the Asiatic settlement at first resembled those occurring in northern Syria. In Avaris, from stratum F onwards (1710-1680 BCE) the Syrian model was abandoned and houses of pure Egyptian design were built. Once again it would seem that it was not a priority of the Asiatics to transfer their own building culture to the

Egyptians. Rather, it was as if they accepted the Egyptian culture without resistance even before the Hyksos came into power.

13.3 Arts and crafts

13.3.1 Statuary and reliefs

Prior to the Hyksos, divine images of gods and goddesses were made or restored at the Residence (Itj-tawa) by craftsmen, scribes and lector-priests, a practice carried on until the court of Upper Egypt removed to Thebes. Divine images were used by the Egyptian ruler to validate his divine status, a practice which went back to the beginning of the Old Kingdom (Bourriau 2003:186). The tradition of sacred craftsmanship, of which the king was guardian, was evidently broken when the Residence was abandoned and ties with Memphis were cut.

The central idea of Middle Kingdom art is difficult to define. There is respect for the positive achievements of the Old Kingdom tradition, but the underlying theme in the Middle Kingdom is awareness of the inability to regain the serenity which was typical of the Old Kingdom. Statues of the pharaohs in the Middle Kingdom seem to reflect physical reality. The pharaoh-god of the Old Kingdom who seemed to be able to maintain his vital essence even in the tomb turned in the Middle Kingdom into a brooding, rigid figure with a tragic expression.

To date no examples of Hyksos statuary have been found except for the broken remains of a very large statue found in the cellar of a temple, but of this statue little is known. The Hyksos only seem to have been interested in usurping statues made by the Egyptians and exporting them to their countries of origin or presenting them as gifts to their trade partners. Egyptian kings after the Hyksos continued to have their statues made for the temples of the gods and for their own funerary temples. Initially these did not deviate much from the models of the Middle Kingdom which can partly be explained by a shared Theban origin. But the New Kingdom statues lacked the dramatic urgency of their predecessors. They display a formal beauty, along with a facial expression of serenity. It was only with Hatshepsut and her funerary temple at Deir el-Bahri that a new trend manifested itself, while at the same time reverting to Old Kingdom traditions. The attractive realism of some of the profiles such as that of the queen mother Ahmes, and the narrative vivacity of the scenes such as those depicting the expedition to the land of Punt are certainly innovations. The latter scenes are particularly important. The figures are much more animated and display a freedom and liveliness hitherto unknown in relief decoration.

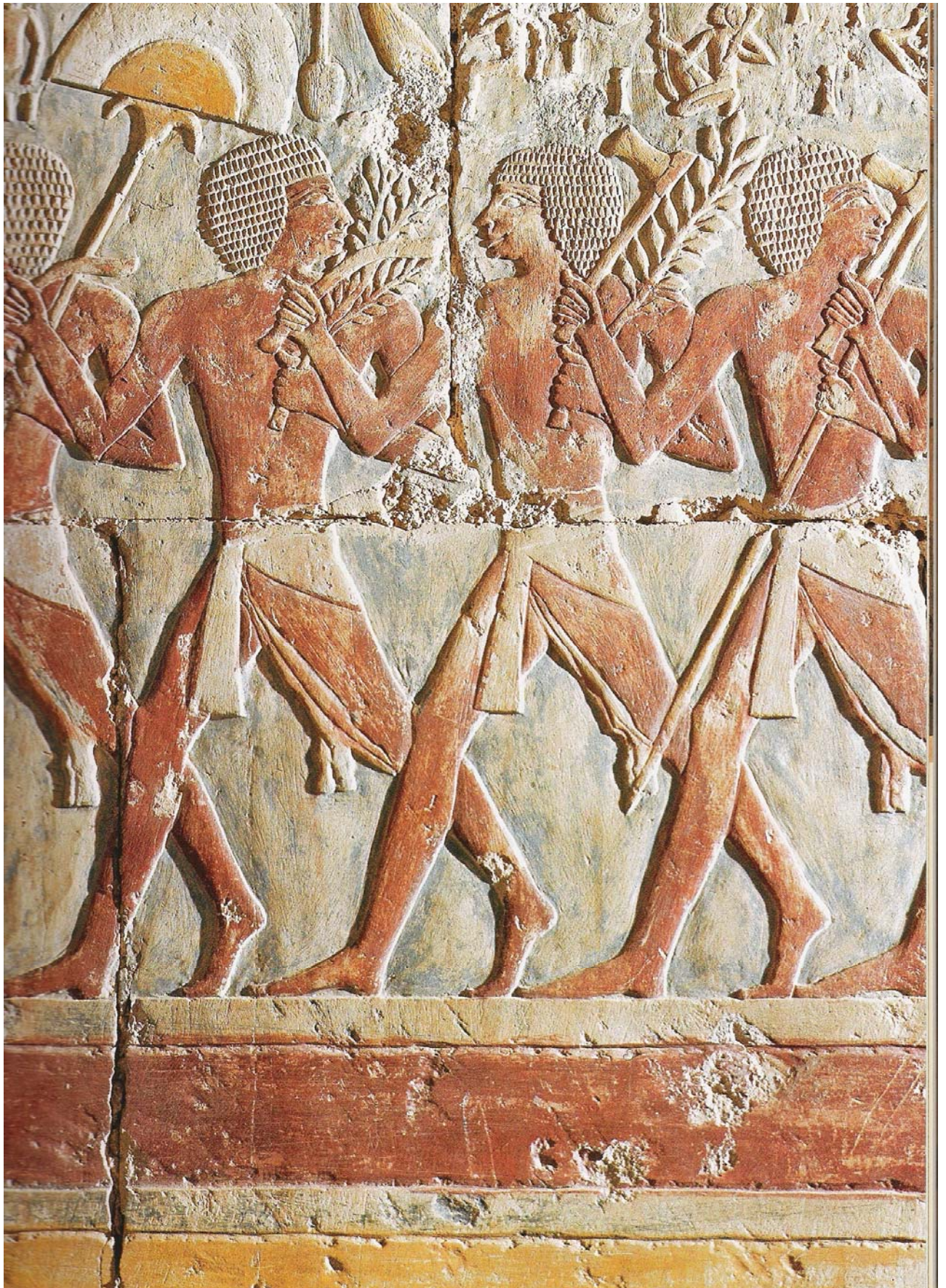


Fig. 34 - Relief on walls in Hatshepsut's funerary temple (Pemberton & Fletcher 2004:52)

In essence, statuary and reliefs remained Egyptian after the Hyksos period. Nowhere can any trace of Asiatic influence be found, neither in feature or dress. On relief carvings Asiatics are portrayed with Asiatic hairstyles and beard, but in typical Egyptian manner, with frontal eye and torso and with face and legs in profile (cf. Pritchard 1969:Figs. 4-6).

13.3.2 Painting

Paintings from the Middle and New Kingdoms have been found in the tombs of royalty and dignitaries, many of which are still in a remarkable state of preservation. Tomb paintings show little change from one kingdom to the other and from one dynasty to the next, and subject matter altered little. Scenes depict occasions from the temporal life and envisaged scenes from the after-life, but in paintings from the New Kingdom a much lighter mood is noticeable. Both men and women seem to have lost the heavy physique of their Old Kingdom counterparts and the morose solemnity of their Middle Kingdom forerunners. The countenance of the men is bland, often smiling. The women are slight and pretty with great gala wigs. This is probably due to the introduction of Asiatic princesses into the harems of the pharaohs as part of the diplomacy of the age. Also, Egyptian dress seemed to have been influenced by examples from outside Egypt. The straight sheath-like garments with shoulder straps worn by the women, leaving the shoulders bare, are now replaced by a much more elaborate voluminous draped garment, often diaphanous, covering the arms to the elbow. The straight short kilt worn by the men also seemed to have undergone some draping treatment, extending to below the knees and up the back. The style of depiction, however, remained strictly Egyptian.

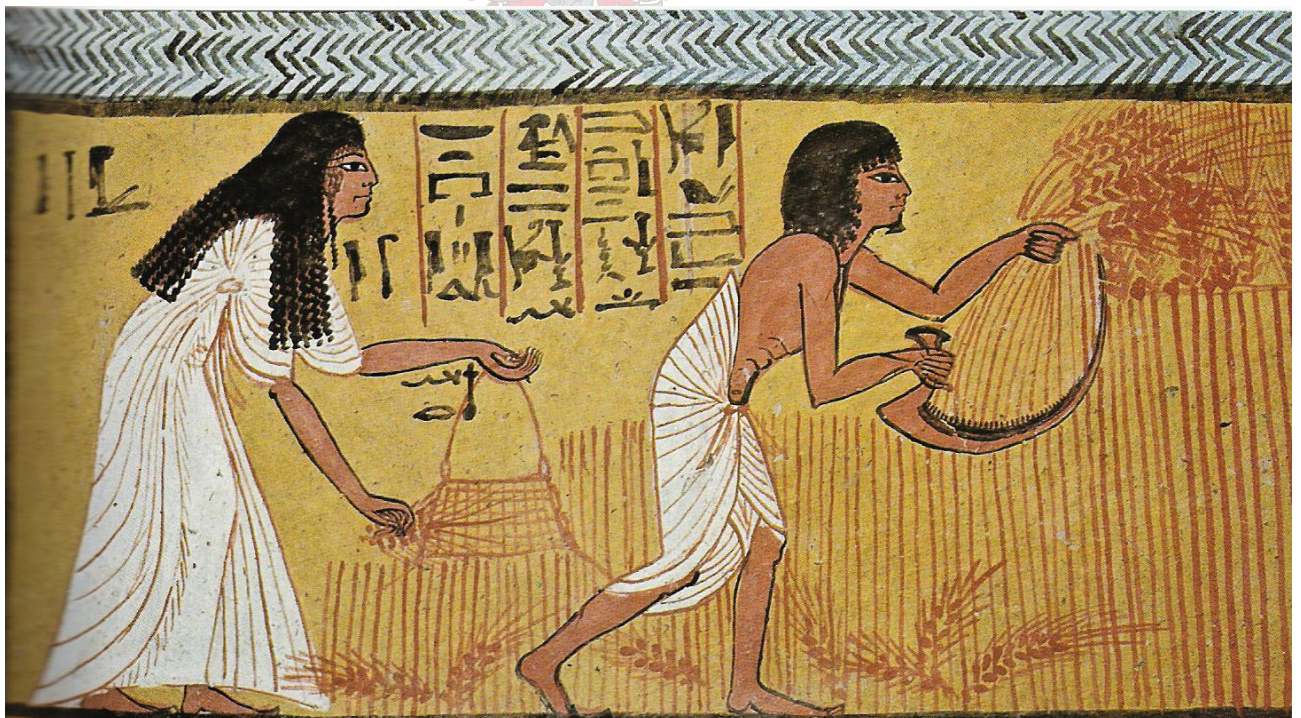


Fig. 35 - Wall painting from tomb at Deir el-Medina in the Eighteenth Dynasty, showing the new style of dress (Carpiceci 2001:33)

13.3.3 Scarabs

It has been pointed out before that scarabs were quite scarce during the Middle Kingdom and made their appearance only towards the end of Dynasty Twelve. Givon (1987:32) does not see them as an Asiatic import but as an inner Egyptian development, although their development might have been influenced by foreign ideas. Egyptian scarabs from Dynasty Thirteen are hard to distinguish from Hyksos scarabs, so much so that they cannot be told apart without archeological context. However, many Asiatic scarabs used Egyptian motifs such as the *ankh* on their *anra* scarabs for the protection of the owner's name. It would thus seem that Asiatic scarabs displayed Egyptian influence rather than the other way around. The many scarabs from Egypt which found their way into the Levant and Syria are hard to classify as either of Hyksos or Egyptian origin.

13.4 Writing

Hieratic script developed in Egypt from about the Fourth Dynasty (Kemp 1998:83). It was a much more rapid form of writing than hieroglyphs. In hieratic script, hieroglyphs were reduced to a few easy strokes of a reed pen and sometimes ran together in groups. Although hieratic script became the everyday script in use, hieroglyphs were still used for inscriptions on palace and temple walls and on monuments.

The main centre of scribal learning during the late Middle Kingdom was the capital Memphis or Itj-tawa. When the Hyksos took over, they moved their capital to Avaris in the Delta, but Memphis became part of their occupation and its facilities for the education of scribes were lost to Upper Egypt. There were, however, a few small scribal schools attached to the main temples in Upper Egypt, but a sufficient number of scribes were not delivered to fulfill the requirements of the New Kingdom administration. New scribal schools had to be opened to educate scribes in the writing and carving of hieroglyphs. Sometimes a mixture of hieroglyphs and hieratic script was used, as is evident from an inscription in the tomb of Sobekemsaf II of the Seventeenth Dynasty, in the listing of an expedition sent to the Wadi Hammamat (Bourriau 2003:193).

The Hyksos seemed to have respected all forms of Egyptian culture and adopted many of its features, as is evident from the adoption of hieroglyph script by the Hyksos rulers (Knapp 1988:170). They wrote their names in cartouches and seemed not to have altered the script in any way. As elsewhere in Egypt, scribes enjoyed a high measure of respect in Avaris. King Apophis even counted being a scribe among all his other attributes. Scribes were trained in the standard Egyptian traditions and continued to practice their skills in the service of the Hyksos (Kuhrt 2002:181).

13.5 Warfare and weapons

Because of Egypt's geographic isolation, it saw no need to support a permanent army during the period preceding the Hyksos regime. Strife was mostly internal, and when clashes occurred, each side managed to put together an *ad hoc* force in sufficient numbers consisting of mercenaries, slaves and peasants. These 'soldiers' were not advanced in the art of warfare. They fought almost nude, lugged heavy, unwieldy man-size shields, and their weapons were

small axes and feeble bows (Casson 1966:54). The soldiers also doubled up as sailors in time of need.

In the Hyksos the Egyptians of Thebes met a formidable foe. The Hyksos had military superiority, and above all solidarity among themselves. The key to the Hyksos victory in warfare was that they had at their disposal a permanent warrior elite, finely honed in the art of warfare and armed with weapons superior to those of the Egyptians (Spalinger 2005:233). In subduing the Egyptians they used ships for rapid movement on the river, and overland they used their fast-moving chariots. All Egypt was speedily under their control but they occupied Egypt only up the Nile to just past Memphis, where at Cusae they installed a 'border post' past which the Egyptians had to pay a levy on ships and goods proceeding down the Nile. This seriously hampered the vassal princes of Upper Egypt's trade with its former partners along the Mediterranean coast.

However, when the princes of Upper Egypt launched their final onslaught against Avaris they mobilized on the river, a terrain which they knew better than any other and could utilize to its full extent. Their destination was the Hyksos capital Avaris, a city protected by mighty defensive walls which the Egyptians could not penetrate. The waterways around Avaris were not as reliable and regular as the single conduit of the Nile south of Memphis. Also, the land was damp and swampy and not suitable for chariots which the Thebans had meanwhile acquired. This was not their only new acquisition. They had copied the Hyksos faithfully in the new weapons the latter had brought from Asia: body armour, scimitars, effective daggers, smaller shields, and powerful composite bows made of wood and horn. Although the Hyksos were not overcome, they were forced to leave their city after a long siege.

Bietak's excavations attest to the great expansion of Avaris and the building of immense defensive fortifications. Could it be that the Hyksos saw a real threat in the growing nationalism of the Thebans, or were they just following the customs they knew from their sojourn in the Levant? The fortifications, however, were not enough to ensure their safety. Bourriau (2003:202) finds that the reason for the Hyksos defeat may lie in the fact that the ideal of the warrior elite among the Hyksos did not correspond to reality by the time of the Theban's final onslaught. Battle axes and swords from stratum D/2 at Avaris were made of unalloyed copper, whereas weapons from the earlier strata were made from tin bronze and arsenic bronze which produced a weapon with a far superior cutting edge. Philip (1995:74) agrees with Bourriau but points out that such weapons might not represent military equipment of an army but only that of an elite, and that they were symbols of the individual 'heroic' warrior. Similar practices occurred throughout western Asia in the early second millennium BCE. Philip (1995:77) also suggests the possibility that weapons made from inferior materials were produced solely as status goods, or as special grave items rather than for real combat, and here Bourriau agrees with him. She suggests that the function of weapons might have changed from practical use to one of status and display. Might this have meant that the Hyksos no longer saw the Egyptians as a threat to their supremacy, and that they have become complacent and saw their own position as unassailable?

The Egyptians not only copied the Hyksos in the use of weapons such as the composite bow, the protection of the cuirass and the use of horse and chariot, but they also copied them in war-craft. A fatal mistake made by the Hyksos was not to subdue the whole of Egypt. They left Upper Egypt more or less to its own devices, possibly thinking that keeping it firmly in check was not worth the effort. The way it would appear to me is that the Hyksos did not see themselves as the enemy of Egypt, especially not with the cooperation of so many Egyptians residing in the Delta and elsewhere, people who even occupied important positions in the Hyksos administration. The Hyksos might have underestimated the growing dissatisfaction of

their vassals in Thebes and relied on the goodwill of all Egypt, since they themselves were so willing to be 'Egyptianized'. They knew, or thought they knew, that they could rely in times of stress on the support of the Nubians in the south and of their compatriots in Sinai and the Levant. After the defeat of the Egyptians under Aye and the partial success of Kamose, Ahmose realized that he had to change his tactics. Before he set out on his campaign to Avaris, he first had to subdue the Nubians. Then he sailed down the Nile, overcame Memphis and sailed past Avaris to cut off support from the east. He might have left part of his army on the eastern frontier to prevent any Asiatic support from reaching Avaris. Only then did he return to the capital to instigate the siege of the city.

The sack of Avaris was only the beginning of a series of campaigns needed to secure the unity of Egypt (Bourriau 2003:203). At first Ahmose pursued the Hyksos to southern Palestine, and after a long siege at Sharuhen which was probably the new headquarters of the Hyksos royals, the town was taken. The Hyksos were then pushed far into Palestine and even as far as Lebanon. Ahmose then returned to Egypt to deal with his southern neighbours. In the words of Ahmose, son of Ibana, "Now when his majesty had slain the nomads of Asia, he sailed south to Khent-hen-nefer to destroy the Nubian bowmen" (Bourriau 2003:203).

But not everyone in Egypt was happy with the expulsion of the Hyksos and Ahmose's consequent battles. After his return from Nubia, Ahmose had to deal with two uprisings. The first was led from the north by a non-Egyptian, possibly a Nubian (Bourriau 2003:203). This might have been a raid for booty, but with his chariots and superior weapons Ahmose gave short shrift to the rebels. The second uprising was led by an Egyptian, Teti-an, leader of a group of malcontents who might have been in the service of the Hyksos. The leader and all his followers were slaughtered by Ahmose's army.

The Hyksos had been driven beyond Egypt's northeastern frontier, and it was up to Ahmose to keep them there by control of military force. Egypt now controlled a substantial area and could only keep control by creating a permanent army, something that Egypt lacked previously. Such an army now became a reality.

The king of Egypt's role as mighty warrior and as defender of Egypt from its enemies had been an important one since pre-dynastic times (think of the smiting king on the Narmer palette), but the military as an important, high-ranking profession among officials was largely absent in earlier periods (Kuhrt 2002:189). With its new interests in southeast Asia, Egypt no longer had only fortresses to defend and long-term garrisons to maintain. The scale of military operations necessitated permanent forces for regular and continuous campaigning abroad. A sizable professional army was established, and the military power of the army underpinned pharaonic rule abroad (Knapp 1988:171). Soldiers were trained in camps from their early youth, and the new weapons ensured that the Egyptian army was a force to be reckoned with. People claiming military ranks of all sorts became prominent and found significant positions close to the king who was not only the ruler of the land but also the leader of the army. The new militaristic emphasis, it is argued by some (Kuhrt 2002:190), is reflected by a new item of royal headgear, the Blue Crown, which was thought to represent a war-helmet. In many representations on temple walls from Dynasty Eighteen onwards the king is depicted as a fearless warrior on his horse-drawn chariot, wearing his blue crown and aiming his bow at his adversaries.

13.6 Religion

Did the Hyksos leave Egypt anything in the way of religion? We have already speculated that the Asiatics continued to worship the gods they have honoured in their countries of origin and that they had built temples to venerate them. To all these foreign deities – Reshef, Ba'al, Anat, Astarte, Qedeshet and others – the Egyptians assigned a human figure. The Egyptians would have found it difficult to portray them as an animal or composite form, for these stem from the deep structure of the Egyptian concept of the divine (Dunant & Zivie-Coche 2004:19). The foreign deities were admitted into the Egyptian pantheon without difficulty for two reasons. Firstly, pantheism was not exclusive, and it was always possible to introduce a new divine figure having a form, a name and a function of his or her own, even one of foreign origin. Secondly, in the First Time the creator god created all the gods of Egypt and also those of other peoples, who could later pass from without to within (Dunard & Zivie-Coche 2004:18). Even Reshef or Ba'al, in the guise of Seth, was welcome to take a place among the 'foreign' deities to be accepted as a god, although in Egyptian mythology Seth was the instigator of disorder in the very bosom of the Egyptian divine realm. As has been pointed out before, Seth was the god of thunder and storms and of the desert, but he was also the god of foreigners. It was only natural for the Hyksos-loving Egyptians to show reverence to the gods of their overlords, even to the despised Seth, in order to appease their masters.

It should be borne in mind that most Egyptian deities had a local root that linked them to a city or to a geographic region that depended on these deities. Egyptians referred to such a god as a 'city god' without mentioning his name, thus leaving him anonymous. Such a god held sway over a limited territory, and his power base did not extend beyond the circumscribed area of his reign. While the rest of Egypt paid homage to their own gods as before, those who lived in the Delta, Asiatics and Egyptians alike, looked upon Seth as one of the gods on which they could rely.

The role of Seth in the Egyptian pantheon can be traced deep into the Eighteenth Dynasty. Tutankhamun's burial was overseen by Horemheb, who might have been a high officer in the Egyptian army and was also heir presumptive to the Egyptian throne (Van Dijk 2003:283). He only ascended to the throne after the death of King Aye, when he built a temple for Seth in Avaris. Horemheb and the Ramesside rulers adopted the principle of electing a non-royal heir to the throne. Paramessu, who acted as Horemheb's vizier, also held a number of military titles. His family came from Avaris (Van Dijk 2003:286) where the local god Seth still retained strong connections with the Canaanite god Ba'al. Horemheb died without issue, and Paramessu succeeded him as Ramesses I.

The Ramesside royal family considered Seth to be their royal ancestor (Van Dijk 2003:286). Seti, son of Ramesses I, was his father's vizier, but he also held a number of priestly titles including that of high priest of Seth. With the backing of the pharaoh it is easy to see that the cult of Seth was in no danger of disappearing in the Delta at any foreseeable time. The 400-year stela, discussed earlier, attests to the fact that the worship of Seth continued into the reign of Ramesses II, although the great hypostyle hall at the Temple of Amun Re at Karnak was added by Ramesses II. This underlines what has been said before about the worship of the Egyptian gods: the one did not necessarily exclude the other.

Chapter 14 - Concluding comments

What follow might have been the words of a Theban reflecting on the Hyksos take-over of Egypt.

"Squatters are such a pest, really. You notice them one day at the far end of your land and when you get around to chasing them off, you realize that they are more numerous and have been there for longer than you have realized. They go reluctantly, making threats, but when you look again, there they are back, with their friends, and on the best part of you land, too. You chase them off again, but there is no one you can rely on to keep a look-out for them. The garrison has been recalled – nothing in the state coffers, you know – and the forts just stand there, some of them in a very poor state of repair. But your own attention is needed elsewhere. The government is tottering, and the royals and others fight among themselves to be the top dog. They tell me now there was even a female on the throne, imagine! So one day you look up and see strange ships going up the river and who are on board? Nobody but the squatters, and you can see their intentions are none too friendly. Strange rumours start spreading. You keep watching the river, and when you see the ships returning you gather your family to you and flee into the desert. You keep one ear to the ground and when you finally return home, what do you find? Your crops – gone! Your animals – gone! And then you are told that these strangers, these squatters, have now taken over your land and you are beholden unto them. Can you imagine what it does to a man?"

Of course the above is purely imaginary, but for the first time in history Egypt was now under foreign rule, her inhabitants vassals in their own country. The Egyptians had lived in difficult circumstances before. The First Intermediate Period was an arduous time for Egypt, but at least no foreign powers were involved and the internal strife could be sorted out after a hundred years or so (Kuhrt 2002:123), a mere hiccup in their long history.

The Hyksos were another matter. Coming from countries in south-east Asia, they found the lure of the Delta irresistible, and when the opportunity presented itself, they took over the rule of the land. Again the Egyptians managed to overcome the problem, but the estimated 108 years of Hyksos rule could not but leave a mark on Egypt.

In the main, the Hyksos did not change the essence of Egyptian culture. After the Hyksos had been evicted, Egypt again put an Egyptian pharaoh on the throne, a semi-divine being with all the attributes and responsibilities of a king since the time of the first pharaohs. The bureaucracy showed no change, except that they now had the added responsibility of a permanent army. Egyptians still believed that after-life was more important than life on earth and buried their dead in a befitting manner with grave goods to smooth the journey to the other world. They still embraced the old gods but accepted new gods and revered them as occasion demanded. They still built temples to honour their gods and added to these mortuary temples for their dead kings. They still built canals and utilized the waters of the Nile to irrigate their crops. They still paid their taxes, celebrated their feasts and holidays, fished in the Nile and built their houses from sun-dried mud bricks.

However, they learnt two important lessons from the Hyksos. The first was that no country could assume that it was exempt from outside invasion, no matter how isolated or protected its geographical location. Desert sands and swamps could and did not keep invaders out. A strong defense force was needed to secure its territory. This army should at all times be vigilant to deal with any and all contingencies. Once the Egyptians were again in control of their country,

a permanent army was established, armed with chariots and superior weapons, many of which had been copied from the Hyksos.

The second lesson was perhaps the most important. The Egyptians had to take note of civilizations other than their own. Of course they had always been aware of other countries, other civilizations, but as trade partners, and in that guise the others posed no threat. Now, however, these countries loomed as potential enemies who, like the Hyksos, might perhaps be eager to follow the set example and overrun their country. Prevention is better than cure, says the old adage, so Egypt set out to subdue the peoples of south-east Asia. They also kept a close eye on the Nubians and Libyans, and while they were not interested in taking over any foreign administrations, troops were stationed there to keep their new vassals in check. Moreover, some of the sons of foreign princes were brought up at the Egyptian court in order to establish links of friendship and mutual obligation with members of the ruling group (Kuhrt 2002:327), while daughters of the ruling dynasts were married to high-ranking officials in Egypt.

Contact with nations and civilizations outside Egypt could only broaden the Egyptian outlook on life and initiate a change in mind-set. Also, the military successes of the first kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty and the consequent financial gains improved the overall economy of Egypt so that ultimately Egypt was better off after the advent of the Hyksos than before. The Hyksos interlude left the Egyptians with ruffled pride, but being under foreign rule for a short spell was a wake-up call for them to shed their complacency.

In a different context, Kemp (1998:319) says, "It is a truism of history that, given the chance, the underdog imitates his master". One might well ask, during the Second Intermediate Period, who was the underdog, and who the master? There is in my mind little doubt that, despite their altered and indigent circumstances, the Egyptians remained the masters, while the Hyksos, although they had political supremacy, were really the underdogs, only too eager to imitate the Egyptians in almost everything. I should like to end my argument by borrowing the words of Bryan (2003:207) when she says, "The nature of the Egyptian state at the beginning of the [eighteenth] dynasty was surely mainly a continuation of forms and traditions that had never been entirely disrupted by the internal squabbles of the Second Intermediate Period". The advent of the Hyksos signaled the beginning of the better and brighter "New Kingdom" in the history of Egypt, often described as Egypt's "golden age".

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