

# CULTURE CONTACTS AND THE MAKING OF CULTURES

Papers in Homage to  
Itamar Even-Zohar



Edited by

Rakefet Sela-Sheffy and Gideon Toury



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Rakefet Sela-Sheffy  
Gideon Toury

Tel Aviv  
Tel Aviv University: Unit of Culture Research

2011

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*Culture Contacts and the Making of Cultures: Papers in Homage to Itamar Even-Zohar / Rakefet Sela-Sheffy & Gideon Toury, editors.*

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-965-555-496-0 (electronic)

The publication of this book was supported by the Bernstein Chair of Translation Theory, Tel Aviv University (Gideon Toury, Incumbent)

Culture Contacts and the Making of Cultures: Papers in Homage to Itamar Even-Zohar

Sela-Sheffy, Rakefet 1954- ; Toury, Gideon 1942-

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Printed in Israel

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# THE AFTERMATH OF THE HYKSOS IN AVARIS<sup>1</sup>

**Manfred Bietak**

The first foreign dynasty which ruled Egypt were the so-called Hyksos<sup>2</sup> (*ḥqꜣw ḥꜣswt*, “rulers of foreign lands”) c.1648–1540 BCE<sup>3</sup> (Van Seters 1966; Helck 1971: 89-106; Bietak 1980; 2001; Redford 1992: 98-122; Oren 1997; Ryholt 1997: 118-50; Schneider 1998: 31-98, 146-167). Their power backers were a large demographic group of Near Eastern origin, living on the eastern Nile delta with a large concentration at the capital of Avaris. Where they came from and how they came to overrun Egypt are still a matter of debate. This article, however, deals with another rarely asked question: what became of the Hyksos after their defeat by King Ahmose c. 1530 BCE. In order to find an answer to this question, we should concentrate on the people behind Hyksos rule. The label “Hyksos” had been misunderstood by Flavius Josephus as a kind of ethnical term for people of Near Eastern origin and as a group who established the rule of the Hyksos (Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I: 14, § 82; see Waddell 1940: 84-85). For convenience’s sake, it will also be used in that sense in this article in dealing with the people from whom these rulers came forth.

The capital of Hyksos rule was called Avaris (Egyptian *Hwt-w’rt*) which had been identified with Tell el-Dab’a in the north-eastern Nile Delta (Habachi 1954; van Seters 1966; Bietak 1975; Bietak 1981; Bietak 1996). It was later – during the time of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty – the southern part of Pi-Ramesses, the Delta capital of the Ramessides, in particular of

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to pay tribute to Itamar Even-Zohar for his outstanding scholarship in linguistics and the models of cultural contact and transformation. I would also like to mention his keen interest in a wide range of research and his readiness to share his ideas with colleagues and, finally, for his unstinting willingness to help if called upon.

<sup>2</sup> Van Seters 1966; Helck 1971, 89-106; Bietak 1980; 2001; Redford 1992, 98-122; Oren 1997; Ryholt 1997, 118-150; Schneider 1998, 31-98, 146-167.

<sup>3</sup> After von Beckerath 1997, 137: 1648/45–1440/37 BCE. Cf. High chronology of Kitchen 2000, 49: 1640-1532 BCE (low chronology: 1637–1529 BCE). Recent investigations support a high chronology for the Middle and New Kingdom of Egypt, see Schneider 2008.

Ramses II. During the Hyksos Period, it turned into one of the biggest towns in Egypt and the Near East and had pivotal importance in trade in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The end of Hyksos rule in Egypt from historical point of view is a subject rarely addressed in Egyptology. The sources available are particularly silent about the fall of their capital Avaris. Of interest are the entries on the reverse of the mathematical Papyrus Rhind in the British Museum (EA 10.057) (Peet 1923: 128-131; Robins and Shute 1987) which had been kept at Avaris during the last phase of the Hyksos Period. He mentions from the angle of the beleaguered Hyksos the way the Theban leader, who must have been Ahmose, captured in quick succession Memphis and then Zaru. Avaris is understood to have been bypassed and the eastern frontier secured. No information on the siege of Avaris. On the fall of the Hyksos capital, the most contemporary and explicit source is the autobiography of the Upper Egyptian naval officer Ahmose, son of Ibana, in his tomb at El-Kab. He makes the pithy statement: "one captured Avaris" (*Urk.* IV, 4: 10). Afterwards the last stronghold, Sharuhen, was besieged for three years and evidently ended up being taken (*Urk.* IV, 4: 14). This site is identified either with Tell el-‘Ajjul (Kempinski 1974), Tell Haror (Oren 1997) or else with Tell el-Far‘ah South (Recently by Hoffmeier 1991)

The only other information can be found in Flavius Josephus who, citing Manetho, wrote that forcing a surrender of Avaris by a blockade did not work and that the Egyptians had given up in despair (Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I: 14, § 88; see Waddell 1940: 86-89). They would have concluded a treaty making all the "shepherds" leave Egypt, taking their possessions and households with them on a desert trip to Syria ((Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I: 14, § 88; see Waddell 1940: 86-89). This information led historians to the firm conviction that the Hyksos had been driven out by the Egyptians and had moved on to Palestine; in so doing, they had returned to their original homeland.<sup>4</sup> Looking at this version critically, one cannot escape the impression that Josephus, who wanted to show the antiquity of his kin, identified the ancestors of the Jews with the Western Asiatic population who had precipitated Hyksos

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<sup>4</sup> For other reasons, this view had been adopted by Weinstein in 1981, 10; McGovern 2000, 70-74; Ben-Tor, 2007, 189-192.

rule. In accord with biblical tradition, they had indeed lived in Egypt several hundred years.

In Egyptology, the impact of Hyksos rule on Egypt has been largely neglected in research, if not ignored. Texts are understandably unforthcoming on this subject as Hyksos rule has been deemed largely influenced by the ancient Egyptian doctrine that such rule had been an unpleasant interlude in Egyptian history and had been terminated by an uprising and military campaign by the Theban dynasty which succeeded in creating the New Kingdom. Conversely, it is only logical to postulate that the presence of several ten thousands people of Western Asiatic people in north-eastern Egypt over a period of over 300 years (c. 1830–1530 BCE) must have had an impact on the successive New Kingdom culture. It is highly unlikely that such a long time span of intense interaction between Egypt and a foreign population in the north-eastern Delta did not leave any traces. Could this population have disappeared, and could it be that 300 years of cultural discourse had no effect on the cultural life in Egypt? It is implausible that Western Asiatic culture had no aftermath and stopped the moment that Avaris was captured. Over the last decades, excavations at Tell el-Dab'a, Tell el-Maskhuta and other places in the eastern Delta have turned up a lot of new evidence which may provide an answer to our question.

Archaeological evidence shows that Avaris had been largely abandoned. No traces of destruction were discoverable, except for some doubtful traces around the late Hyksos palace at the edge of the Nile. Virtually all tombs of the final occupation had been completely looted (Bietak 1991: 24; 1996: 67; Hein and Jánosi 2004: 65-182). This evidence seems to square with the Josephus story (Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I: 14, § 88; see Waddell 1940: 86-9). The 18th Dynasty re-occupied the site and at the Pelusiac branch of the Nile constructed magazines and silos, soon followed by a military camp (Figs. 2. area H and Figs. 9-10) (Bietak and Dorner 2001: 59-67; Bietak and Forstner-Müller 2007a: 38-43).

There are areas, however, where settlement activity continued into the 18th Dynasty on a limited scale. South of the New Kingdom's military installations, there may be vestiges of uninterrupted settlement, but the surface has been removed largely by agricultural levelling. In the erstwhile eastern suburbs of former Avaris (Area A/V) there is

some evidence of settlement activity in the 18th Dynasty.<sup>5</sup> This may be explained by squatting or may also have been military camps belonging to the military and naval site which we shall be discussing later (Bietak 2005).

Within the precinct of the temple of Seth (Area A/II), however, no interruption of occupation can be attested (Fig. 3) (Bietak 1985; 1990). The temple was in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty given an enclosure wall which is probably a sign of enlargement of the precinct (Fig. 4). Within the enclosed area there is evidence of settlement activity, such as waste disposal and the creation of vineyards (Fig. 4) (Bietak 1985; 1990). It was not until the Amarna Period that the temple was abandoned or destroyed. Under Tutankhamun and Horemheb, it was rebuilt once more. A lintel with an inscription mentioning Seth, “great of power” has been found there (Fig. 5). It features the prenomen of Horemheb cut into an older cartouche, most likely of Tutankhamun (Bietak 1985, fig. 6; 1990: 11-12, fig. 2; 1994a; 1996: 82, fig. 61). It seems that a continuous cult of Seth as *interpretatio aegyptiaca* of the Syrian storm god Ba‘al-Zephon and which stretched at Avaris from the late Middle Kingdom<sup>6</sup> into the Ramesside Period can be advanced. Unfortunately, there is no image of this god Seth on this stone. It would be a wonderful missing link. Taking the image of the Syrian storm god Hadad/Ba‘al-Zephon as the patron of sailors on a locally cut hematite cylinder seal from a 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty context at Tell el-Dab‘a as evidence (Fig. 6) (Porada 1984: 487; Bietak 1990: 15, fig. 5), we can speculate that it was as early as the era of king Nehesy in the early Second Intermediate Period that the image had already assumed the features of the Syrian storm god.<sup>7</sup> We find

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<sup>5</sup> Although the surface was denuded, the material garnered at A/V suggests squatters rather than a fully developed settlement. See Hein and Jánosi 2004, 183-186.

<sup>6</sup> Bietak 1990. The temple of Seth from the Hyksos Period has not, however, been discovered hitherto. We would expect it to be located somewhere underneath the vast compound of the New Kingdom.

<sup>7</sup> Sethe 1930; Montet 1931, 207-8, fig. 4; Stadelmann 1965; Goedicke 1966, 1981; Bietak 1990, frontispiece. See the representations of the Ramesside Seth as the Syrian storm god in Cornelius 1994, 146-154, pls. 35-40. Seth of Avaris can be compared with the representation of the North-Syrian storm god Ba‘al-Zephon on a stela from Ras Shamra (Louvre AO 13176): Yon 1991, 284-8 [1], figs. 6 [1] (p. 326), 8 [a] (p. 328; our Fig. 6); Cornelius 1994, 151-3 [BR 11], pl. 39.

Seth retaining the features of a Near Eastern god till Ramesside times, as seen on the “Stela of 400 Years” from the reign of Ramesses II (Fig. 7) (Sethe 1930; Montet 1931; Stadelmann 1965; Goedicke 1966; 1981; Bietak 1990, frontispiece). The family of this king is most likely to have its roots in the eastern Delta, probably even Avaris itself. This would explain why they chose the god of this place as their dynastic ancestor – “the father of the fathers”, according to this stela.<sup>8</sup> It then becomes understandable why, on the scarab iconography, there is suddenly a surge of symbolism from the Hyksos Period during the time of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. At the same time, the Hyksos’ sportive writing of the *wsr*-sign (Gardiner F12), with a canine head and walking legs which we know from throne names of the Hyksos dynasty, resurfaced on temple inscriptions in this period (Fischer 1977: 17, n. 156; 1996: 188, n. 106; Kitchen 1979: 186 [9]).

A sprawling sacred precinct from the Bronze Age to the south of the Seth temple was apparently abandoned in the New Kingdom (Fig. 8). Unfortunately, the surface is very denuded in this area. Yet the place, as the lack of later foundation walls and storage pits show, was not occupied in later centuries until the Late Period (Bietak 1981: 266). The site was apparently respected and not used for profane purposes. This shows that there was some kind of local continuity from the Hyksos Period down to the late New Kingdom.

Now there is the question of what had happened in-between, during the time of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty at that very site. It seems logical that only a community for which this cult was meaningful could have achieved the continuity of the cult of Seth/Ba‘al-Zephon from the Second Intermediate Period to Ramesside times. Conversely, this cult for a foreign god, even in Egyptian guise, must also have been useful to the new Egyptian Dynasty with a highly nationalistic ideology after long foreign domination. The explanation could be found in the harbour function of the site. Ba‘al Zephon was the patron of seafaring and sailors, as had already been articulated in the above mentioned cylinder seal from the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Fig. 6). There was no Egyptian god who could fill that call for protection. That is why it was also in the interest of the new overlords of Egypt to maintain that cult. The question is

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<sup>8</sup> Stela of 400 Years, l. 5; see Sethe 1930; Montet 1931; Stadelmann 1965; Goedicke 1966; 1981; Bietak 1990, frontispiece.

whether it was the survivors of the Hyksos occupation who also supported the cult.

Avaris, which comprised c. 680 acres, was resettled during the 18th Dynasty, and on a much smaller scale of at least 50 acres on the east bank of the Pelusiac branch of the Nile.<sup>9</sup> Magazines and numerous silos (stratum e/1.2, phase D/1.2) now occupied the site of the citadel of the Hyksos Period (stratum e/2, phase D/2) (Fig. 9) (Bietak and Dorner 2001: 59-67; Bietak and Forstner-Müller 2007a: 38-41, fig. 7). A thick mud-brick wall that was to remain intact through four strata, probably for more than a century, used to enclose them. It was within this compound that a part of a palatial building has also been found (Bietak and Dorner 2001: 60-5, fig. 22). There can be hardly any doubt that the numerous silos represent a large-scale storage facility. The installations are likely to have been built in order to concentrate large numbers of military personnel at this place. The continuity of pottery types (see below) goes to show that at least some of the people who congregated here were survivors of the Hyksos Period. The ongoing use of circular offering pits in which remains of ritual meals such as remnants of animal bones and broken pottery are evidence of a continuance of offering practices of the Hyksos Period.<sup>10</sup> We have already mentioned that it was probably south of this complex that a settlement of the Second Intermediate Period continued to be occupied non-stop into the New Kingdom (Bietak and Forstner Müller 2007a: 38, figs. 4-6, 13).

Afterwards the storage facilities at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty gave way to an open camp (Fig. 10, stratum e/1.1, Phase D/1.1) surrounded by the same enclosure wall as the previous complex. The largest part consisted of open areas with camp fires, large bread ovens for sizeable household units, postholes, internal enclosure walls, some small brick houses and a compound enclosed by a substantial mud brick wall with single graves, mostly of young men, presumably soldiers (Figs. 10-11) (Bietak and Dorner 2001: 67-74; Bietak and Forstner-Müller 2005: 69-71). Outside this compound, series of multiple burials

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<sup>9</sup> For detailed preliminary reports, see Bietak and Dorner 2001, 59-67; Bietak and Forstner-Müller 2003; 2005; 2007a.

<sup>10</sup> Bietak and Dorner 2001, 64-67, fig. 23; Bietak and Forstner-Müller 2007a, 42, fig. 10. On offering pits from the Hyksos Period and early 18th Dynasty, see Müller 2008 (preliminary reports: Müller 1997; 2001; 2002).

have been found with corpses deposited closely together and facing in opposite directions, frequently embedded on their stomachs. The suspicion of remnants of executions looms, but is difficult to substantiate, given the bad state of preservation of the skeletons. Household Kerma ware (Hein 2001; Fuscaldo 2002; Bietak and Forstner-Müller 2006: 76-77, fig. 14; 2007b: 23, fig. 4) collected from the surface of the camp and Kerma arrow-heads from other contexts<sup>11</sup> look as if some of these soldiers had been recruited from the wars of the young Theban dynasty against another major enemy, the kingdom of Kush in the Sudan. The date of this Kerma pottery fits in chronologically with the first major assault on the capital of Kush at Kerma by Amenophis I.

During the Tuthmosid Period (strata d-c, phases C/3-2), we find the site occupied by a huge compound of 13.5 acres straddling three palaces (Fig. 12). Two of these palaces show remains of Minoan wall paintings which fell off the shrinking walls and were dumped at the base of the accession ramps (Aslanidou 2002; Bietak 1994b; 1995; 1996; 1997a; 2000; Bietak and Marinatos 1995; Bietak, Marinatos and Palyvou 2007; Marinatos 1998; Marinatos and Morgan 2005; Morgan 1995; 1997; 2004; 2006). Due to agricultural levelling, a New Kingdom town south of this precinct has no longer been traceable, but surface finds bear witness to such a settlement. The palaces also featured workshops which – besides other purposes – were used for military production. Weapons, projectiles and, again, Kerma-pottery was retrievable in the basements of the largest palace (G) and the workshops. This evidence shows that the site continued to be used as a military base.

The palace precinct is of regal dimensions (the largest measuring 160 x 78 m). It was in use from the early reign of Tuthmosis III until the reign of Amenophis II, perhaps even until the end of this king's reign. The evidence of military personnel and production shows that there was a military base at 'Ezbet Helmi during the first half of the 18th Dynasty. The fact that Egyptian texts testify that Avaris had been a large harbour for hundreds of ships (Habachi 1972: 37, l. 13) and Piramesse the major naval base of Egypt during Ramesside times (Turaev 1913, with pl. 13; Papyrus Anastasi III, 7.5-6, translation Caminos 1954: 101; Bietak 1975: 205-206) begs the question of whether it had not

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<sup>11</sup> The arrow-heads were found, however, on a higher stratum dating to the Tuthmosid period; see Tillmann 1994a, 108-109; 1994b.

also been a major harbour during the era of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Indeed, the presence of a huge square basin of c. 450 x 400 m, with an inlet from the Pelusiac branch of the Nile and by another canal flowing back to the Nile, was confirmed by geophysical surveying and core drilling (Fig. 2).<sup>12</sup> Sediments from the inlet canal have been dated to the time of the Middle Kingdom<sup>13</sup> whilst walls from the late 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and the Ramesside Period are parallel to the northern edge of the basin. This result seems to confirm the old theory of Georges Daressy<sup>14</sup> and Labib Habachi (Habachi 2001: 9, 106-107, 121. See also Roehrig 1990: 125-126) that the military harbour of Tuthmosis III and Amenophis II called Peru-nefer was situated at the same site as Avaris and Piramesse, and not at Memphis as most Egyptologists still believe (Badawi 1943; 1948; Glanville 1931, 109; 1932; Helck 1939: 49-50; 1971; Jeffrey and Smith 1988: 61; Edel 1953: 155; Kamish 1985; 1986; 1987; Der Manuelian 1987; Säve-Söderbergh 1946: 37-39; Stadelmann 1967: 32-35; Zivie 1988: 107). This is understandable as, hitherto, no monuments of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty have been found at the site of Avaris. This has now changed after the discovery of the Tuthmosid palace precinct whose dimensions suggest the presence of royalty, most probably of the king himself. The combination of this compound with the harbour basins adds to the accumulating evidence favouring the site's identification with Peru-nefer. In addition to the palace and the huge harbour, another important reason for this identification is that we have texts and archaeological sources which testify to Canaanite cults one after the other at Avaris (Bietak 1981: 247-253; 1996: 36-48; 2003: 155-159; 2009c; Müller 1997; 2001; 2002), Peru-nefer (Stadelmann 1967: 32-47, 99-110, 147-150; Collombert

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<sup>12</sup> Already suggested in Bietak 1975, plan 2, but the extent of the basin has become clearer in the course of the geophysical survey by Forstner-Müller *et al.* 2007, 104, fig. 7, north-east of areas G, H. For the identification as a harbour, conclusive sediments have been examined in 2007 by Jean-Philippe Gueron (CNRS) and Hervé Tronchère (University of Lyon). Preliminary report by Tronchère *et al.* 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Unpublished results of the investigation of Hervé Tronchère, University of Lyon).

<sup>14</sup> Daressy 1928-29, 225, 322-6; see also Gauthier 1929, 141-142. S. already Spiegelberg 1927, 217. – Naville 1891, 31, pl. 35 [D], published a stone block of Amenophis II mentioning a cult of Amun-Ra "who resides in Peru-nefer". He thought that Peru-nefer ought to be located at Bubastis.



and Coulon 2000: 217; Bietak 2009a; 2009b) and Piramesse.<sup>15</sup> This makes it possible to assert with very good rationale that there had been cultic continuity from the Second Intermediate Period to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and Ramesside Period.

Let us, however, also examine the reasons why Peru-nefer has been located hitherto at or near Memphis. Important dignitaries of Peru-nefer had monuments at the necropolis of Memphis.<sup>16</sup> This argument can be dismissed since, at the time of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Memphis had the closest residential necropolis. This is also true of the era of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, when Pi-ramesse was the actual royal residence, but had no cemetery for royalty and high dignitaries who were buried either in Thebes or at Saqqara. A more cogent case for locating Peru-nefer at Memphis seems to be a passage in papyrus Sallier IV (vs. 1.6) from the Ramesside Period. This lists the gods of Memphis in a model letter (Gardiner 1937: 88-92; Caminos 1954: 333-40). After Amun-Ra, “the great ram (?) of Peru-nefer” and some other Egyptian gods, there follow the Canaanite deities Ba‘alat, Qudshu, Inyt<sup>17</sup> and Ba‘al-Zephon. They do not carry any epithets that link them to either Peru-nefer or Memphis, but papyrus Hermitage 1116 A (vs. 42) definitely mentions Canaanite gods in the same breath as Peru-nefer, also making the Canaanite gods on papyrus Sallier IV b identifiable as gods of Peru-nefer. This assumption carries all the more weight as, a few lines further down, we find a remark about Asiatics feeling well in Memphis. The necropolis of Memphis at Saqqara attests a priest of Amun, Ba‘al and Astarte as well as Canaanites for the time of the late 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty or the Ramesside Period (Zivie 1988: 107; PM III<sup>2</sup>: 717). Added to that, Amenophis II – by his military upbringing and belligerent activity in Syria – shows in his inscriptions close ties with Memphis as well as Peru-nefer (Badawi 1943; 1948; Der Manuelian 1987: 12, 187-188, 314 (Memphis); Yoshimura *et al.* 1999; 2000). All of this, taken together, seems to make out a strong case for locating Peru-nefer at Memphis.

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<sup>15</sup> Daressy 1928-29, 326; Stadelmann 1967, 148-150; Uphill 1984, 200-2, 212, 233-234, 245 (Anta), 246 (Astarte), 252 (Reshep), Seth (252-3). There was even a waterway at Piramesse called “the [...] waters of Ba‘al” (papyrus Anastasi III, 2.8; see Caminos 1954, 74).

<sup>16</sup> Survey in Kamish 1986, 32-33.

<sup>17</sup> Unknown deity; see Caminos 1954, 338.

However, examining the range of gods on papyrus Sallier IV, vs. 1.3–6, more closely, we can see that it also includes gods whose cults were based at places other than Memphis, such as *Jmn-R<sup>c</sup>-nb-nswt-t3wj*, i.e. Amun-Ra of Thebes. It is most interesting that, in this manuscript, he is identified with Amun-Ra of Peru-nefer, which suggests an affiliated cult at Peru-nefer adopted at Memphis.<sup>18</sup> There then follow once more Amun, the Ennead (of Heliopolis), the above-mentioned Canaanite gods (without associated toponyms) and Sopdu.<sup>19</sup> This god had his temple at Pi-Sopdu (Saft el-Henneh) in the north-eastern Delta and personified the Asiatic East (Schumacher 1988).

It is hardly a coincidence that Canaanite gods are mentioned together on one line with Sopdu. It seems very likely that they express the religious topography of the eastern Delta at this time. Memphis could well have accommodated, within the temple of Ptah, all the gods of the region through affiliated cults. After all, it was the traditional capital of Lower Egypt. This explanation receives strong support from new discoveries at the temple at Karnak in Thebes where blocks of a chapel of Amun of Peru-nefer, constructed by Amenophis II, have been found.<sup>20</sup> This proves that this king has not only established an affiliated cult for Amun-Ra of Peru-nefer at Memphis but also at Thebes which certainly was not the site of Peru-nefer (Bietak 2009b: 17). This shows the enormous devotion of Amenophis II to Peru-nefer and to Amun at Peru-nefer. From this site could have originated a stone block found at Bubastis (Naville 1891: 30-31, pl. 35 [D]). It shows Amun-Ra of Peru-nefer receiving offerings from Amenophis II. This block is most likely not to have been originally erected at Bubastis but, like most of the inscribed material from the New Kingdom found in Bubastis and Tanis, had been quarried from Piramesse during the Twenty-first and Twenty-second

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<sup>18</sup> For Amun in Memphis, see Guerneur 2005, 9-44. See also n. 20 for an affiliation cult of Amun of Peru-nefer at Karnak.

<sup>19</sup> Besides many gods of Memphis one also finds gods from other places without epithets and connected to Memphis. Apart from the above-mentioned examples, see especially Sobek of Mery-Ra; according to Caminos 1954, 340, the latter toponym is a corruption of *Mj-wr/Mr-wr*, designating the Fayum or the town now called Kom Medinet Ghurab at the entrance to the Fayum (Caminos 1954, 340; Leitz 2002, 261).

<sup>20</sup> Carlotti 2008, 55-66. I owe this reference to Jean-Luc Gabolde.

Dynasties. Building their new residences at Tanis and Bubastis, the new Libyan kings helped themselves to readily available building material from the old capital after that city had lost its role (Habachi 2001: 90-92; Uphill 1984: 110-125, 157-162, 223-224). It is therefore highly likely that this block of Amenophis II also, ultimately, originated from the area of Tell el-Dab'a/Ezbet Helmi. It is there that we have to look for the remains of Peru-nefer.

A passage of the Karnak stela of Amenophis II mentions Peru-nefer and Memphis separately as parts of the king's itinerary when he arrived at Egypt after returning from his Syrian campaigns (Edel 1953: 120, 123, 132, 135 [80 and 120]; Klug 2002: 265): "His Majesty went forth from Peru-nefer by proceeding<sup>21</sup> to the town (dmj) of Memphis." This text shows quite clearly that Memphis and Peru-nefer were not situated at the same place. This does not, of course, rule out locating Peru-nefer just a little downstream from Memphis, for example at Giza, but the text would also make sense if we locate it on the Delta. At Tell el-Borg, a fortress constructed by Amenophis II at the north-eastern fringes of the Delta, a stela dedicated to Reshep and Astarte has been found (Hoffmeier and Kitchen 2007). It dates, by iconography and find circumstances, to the reign of this king and would prove that he promoted Canaanite gods in this region. The special devotion of Amenophis II to Canaanite gods is well-known. He made Seth-Ba'al his personal god and liked to be compared to him (Schneider 2003b: 161).

Finally, it is the physiography of the river Nile which rules out Memphis as the site of Peru-nefer. Comparing the positions of harbours for seagoing ships in deltaic landscapes such as the Rhine Delta, the Ganges and the Punjab Delta, we find them generally 5 km to 50 km upstream. This affords shelter from storms and a position near the reach of the tides, which helps navigation of the shallows at the river-mouths. Rosetta and Damietta, harbours which have been in operation since medieval times, were chosen only a short distance upstream away from the coast. Tanis was a harbour for seagoing ships, which is confirmed by the story of Wenamun. Abess Aetheria, who visited Egypt and the Holy Land in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, happened to disem-

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<sup>21</sup> Spiegelberg 1927, 215-216; Daressy 1928-29, 225, 322-326. The emendation by Edel 1953, 123 [120], suggesting that the king went from *Peru-nefer* to Memphis by chariot: "*prt ḥmf m Prw-nfr ḥr wd3 [ḥr ḥtr r] dmj n Mn-nfr*," is without evidence.

bark at what was still a working port of Tanis (Röwekamp 1995: 345).

The position with harbours for seagoing ships in Ancient Egypt was even more complicated. Before arrival of the annual flood, during the dry season from February to June, the Nile branches were as a rule so shallow that river traffic in the Delta was extremely difficult, if not impossible, for seagoing vessels. Even riverboats had their problems. In the *Description de l'Égypte* we find the following statement on Nile navigation before the construction of barrages at the time of the French Expedition (Le Père 1822: 240-241): "Pendant les derniers temps du décroissement du fleuve, c'est-à-dire pendant quatre à cinq mois de l'année, depuis janvier jusqu'à la fin de juin, le Nil est peu navigable ... Les vents favorables pour remonter le fleuve pendant cette saison sont également rares ou faibles, de sorte que la navigation est presque nulle". This makes the situation before the introduction of barrages quite clear. According to statistics, the volume of the Nile was reduced during the dry season to about a fifth of its average water volume (Willcocks 1899: 46-8; pls. 7-8; Baumgarten ed. 1981: 21). That is why sea harbours had to be situated near the reach of the sea waters which would fill the nearly empty Nile channels at the lower reaches. Such a position would, with the help of the sea, have enabled ships to enter and leave the river mouths in all seasons. The efficiency of harbour traffic could have been enhanced by dredging the lower reaches of the river between mouth and harbour. It is speculated that such improvements had actually been carried out, *corvée* labour being well-attested for ancient Egypt. All important delta towns in antiquity like Damanhur (*Dmj-n-Hr*), Buto, Sebennytos, Abusir, Mendes and later towns such as Tanis and Herakleouspolis mikra are located along a parallel line c. 70–80 km south of the present Delta coast (Fig. 14). During the third and second millennium BCE, the northern coastline of Egypt, including its belt of lagoons, lay further south than at present. The importance of the above-mentioned towns may have been that they had been harbours within navigable distance from the coast during the dry season. This role would explain their early ascendancy to importance. For Tell el-Dab'a we even have osteological evidence from the one-time presence of brackwater fish that the town was not far beyond the reach of seawater (Boessneck and von den Driesch 1992: 42-43). Its distance to the open sea was about 20 miles in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE.

We can gauge from antique sources that Memphis, more than 100 miles upstream, could have been reached by large seagoing ships only during the second part of the year. During the dry season, due to the low river level, it had only a poor connection to the sea. Because of gales and the difficulties of navigation in cloudy and misty weather, we have also to bear in mind that marine traffic in the Aegean ceased in wintertime from mid-November to mid-March (Casson 1971: 270-273; Matthäus 2005: 360). In the Levant it discontinued only two months, namely during January and February (Yardeni 1994: 69; Stager 2003: 243). If seagoing navigation from Memphis also had to discontinue during the dry season, this would have reduced the sailing season to half a year only. It is illogical that the major naval base of Egypt should have been positioned so far from the sea and, therefore, far from all military activity in the Near East. Any swift response to a military situation in the Near East would have been delayed either way – which could have culminated in serious consequences. This makes the location of Peru-nefer at Memphis highly unlikely. It strongly supports locating it at Avaris, as already suggested by Daressy and Habachi for other reasons ( Daressy 1928-29: 225, 322-6; Habachi 2001: 9, 106-107, 121. See also Roehrig 1990: 125-126). Also the stratigraphy of the site of ‘Ezbet Helmy/Tell el-Dab’a supports this location (Fig. 15). Peru-nefer is well attested by written records for the reigns of Tuthmosis III and Amenophis II. This is precisely the period for which we have a body of strong archaeological evidence for a military and royal presence at the site (see above). At times the writings are silent about Peru-nefer, that is during the reign of Tuthmosis IV and perhaps the early reign of Amenophis III. 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty installations at ‘Ezbet Helmi are missing and were apparently abandoned. Texts mention Peru-nefer again at the time of the late 18th Dynasty (Porter and Moss 1979: 556). This is specifically a phase when we have evidence of a rebuilding of the Temple of Seth under Tutankhamun/Horemheb (Bietak 1985; 1990) and, at ‘Ezbet Helmy, there are traces of strong walls at the site (phase C/1) and of a huge fortress constructed also by Horemheb (Fig. 16) (Bietak and Dorner 2001: 101-102). Papyrus Sallier IV which mentions Amon-Ra of Peru-nefer and Canaanite gods leads us into the Ramesside Period. At that time the site of Avaris was the southern part of Piramesse, viz. that part where according to an inscription on naos doors in the Pushkin

Museum the harbour was located (Moscow I.1.a.4867; see Turayev 1913, with pl. 13). Topographically, this fits in perfectly with the discovery and positive identification of the huge aforementioned basin as a harbour.<sup>22</sup>

A strong case can be made out for the continuity of a part of the population of Avaris of the Hyksos after the political break caused by Ahmose's conquest of Avaris and his destruction of the Hyksos kingdom. The comparative study of material culture of the late Hyksos Period and the Early New Kingdom at Tell el-Dab'a and Tell Hebwa shows unbroken continuity right up to the Tuthmosid period. The specific eastern Delta blend of an Egyptian pottery tradition with Near Eastern Middle Bronze Age forms shows no break. Red-slipped burnished carinated bowls and shouldered pots continued to be used (Fig. 17). For example, all specific pottery types connected with wine production, such as Canaanite amphorae, red-slipped burnished dipper juglets and polished wine sieves (Fig. 18) were still being produced in the late Middle Bronze Age tradition of the late Hyksos period with continuing production of other customary shapes from the Middle Bronze Age, such as bowls with inner lip, cups with flat base. Also the local Marl F forms, with a blend of Near Eastern and local shapes, can still be found in the New Kingdom levels.

Also other artefacts display continuity in production, for example the scarabs (Fig. 19). Their back during the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty is still frequently shaped to the typology of the Second Intermediate Period, with the pronotum separated from the elytra by two lateral notches, whilst the seal design had already been adapted to include typical New Kingdom motifs. Even so, deeply cut figures with internal patterning, and motifs such as lions and crocodiles, are typical of the Hyksos scarabs. Conversely, scarabs that already featured the New Kingdom back shape are apt to retain typical Canaanite motifs, such as linear-cut caprids combined with palm leaves. All of this is evidence that such workshops continued in the tradition of the Hyksos Period (Bietak and Jung 2007: 217). Motifs, such as the winged sun disk, survived during the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and became commoner again in the Nineteenth Dynasty (Bietak and Jung 2007: 217-8). Obviously, the old iconography of

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<sup>22</sup> Tronchère et al. 2008, have been able to confirm samples from the bottom of the basin as harbour sediments.

the Hyksos Period had survived the political break and was deliberately adopted by the Nineteenth Dynasty. As they originated from this region it is possible that symbolisms from the Hyksos Period had a local meaning that would explain their survival.

A part of the Egyptian bronze weaponry of the New Kingdom was produced along the lines of Near Eastern typology, such as the short sword with cast-ledge handle (Raven 2004), and the typical weaponry of chariotry such as the scimitar, pair of javelins and composite bow (McDermott 2004: 129-132, 150-175). Practices and long experience of horse breeding, grooming and training were certainly introduced during the Hyksos Period as a part of their Near Eastern heritage to Egypt.<sup>23</sup> The chronology of osteological and pictorial evidence of horses in Egypt supports this postulation. The horse bones found at Tell el-Dab'a date from the early Hyksos Period (Boessneck 1976, 25; Boessneck and von den Driesch 1992, 24-25; Bietak and Forstner-Müller 2009: 99-100, fig. 8) and are the oldest in Egypt. It is an absolute mystery why the Buhen horse burial in literature is still considered by many as being from the Middle Kingdom.<sup>24</sup> It should in all likelihood be dated to the New Kingdom. It was buried on top of the Middle Kingdom rampart pavement, which had not been damaged by the burial.<sup>25</sup> The light horse-drawn chariot is an Asiatic invention and was also, as it seems, introduced during Hyksos rule in Egypt (Littauer and Crowell 1979;

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<sup>23</sup> On horses and chariots in the Eastern Mediterranean, see Littauer and Crowell 1979; Hofmann 1989, 342-505; Rommelaere 1991, 86-121, 149-247. Bibby 2003, ignores German literature and has numerous mistakes.

<sup>24</sup> Emery 1960, 8-9; Dixon *et al.* 1979; there is a long list of literature, see still Raulwing and Clutton-Brock 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Braunstein-Silvestre 1982, 37, and 1984, 272-273, although in favour of a New Kingdom date for other reasons presented the stratigraphical evidence incorrectly. The burial could have been completed only after sufficient sand and other deposits had accumulated between the buttresses of the main wall onto the rampart's pavement. This means that the lower forewall and the ditch in front of it must have been completely covered, which cannot have happened during the period of occupation of the fortress in the Middle Kingdom. It is therefore out of the question that the ash layer above the burial originates from the destruction of the fortress during the Middle Kingdom. The high date of the ash to 3630 BP  $\pm$  150 years was calibrated to  $\pm$  1680 BCE, so that an early New Kingdom date would still be within the range of possibilities.

Decker 1986: 35-36). Right into the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty it was constructed of wood and bark originating from mountain regions in Asia Minor or the Caucasus (Literature in Herold 2006: 1, nn. 17-18), as shown by the earliest preserved example from a shaft grave in Thebes from the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and today in the Museo Archeologico in Florence (Florence 2678; see Rosellini 1836: 263-271; Botti 1951). The Egyptians adopted the use of the chariot from the Hyksos and seem to have already been using it in the final battle against Avaris, as shown by representations from the temple of Ahmose in Abydos (Harvey 1994: 5, fig. at top left).

The evidence of an unbroken tradition of hybrid Middle Bronze Age culture of the late Hyksos Period to at least the time of Tuthmosis III at Tell-el-Dab'a allows the conclusion that at least part of the Western Asiatic population that had brought Hyksos rule to the eastern Delta was resettled there after Ahmose's conquest of Avaris. The other part may have been spread all over the country into state and temple institutions and among soldiers and officers who had won laurels in war. Expulsion of those people would have been illogical as they were useful to the new overlords of the country because of their skills as craftsmen, metal workers, wine farmers, horse grooms, possibly soldiers<sup>26</sup> and charioteers. One wonders whether the sailors and shipbuilders, attested for Tuthmosid times in Papyrus Hermitage 1116 B (16.30.37), did not originate from the Hyksos people or were newly captured in war in the Near East (Golénischeff 1913: 6). Most probably the prisoners of war taken from the Hyksos were also the bulk of the community who sustained Canaanite cults from Avaris to Peru-nefer and finally to Piramesse. We may assume from Papyrus Sallier IV that such a community also existed at Memphis.

Our conclusion is that, apart from the Manethonian/Josephus tradition, we have no evidence that the Western Asiatic population responsible for Hyksos rule in Egypt was expelled to the Levant. It could have been that elite groups moved to southern Canaan at the end of the

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<sup>26</sup> Western Asiatic people can be found as soldiers of the Egyptians since the Old Kingdom. They could have been employed fighting in the Egyptian campaigns against the Kingdom of Kush. On the other hand, there is evidence of Nubians in Tell el-Dab'a of Nubians in the camps of the early New Kingdom. It is conceivable that the Egyptians pressed Nubian prisoners of war into military service for their campaigns in Asia.



Hyksos Period in order to evade captivity. A movement of thousands of people from Avaris and the Hyksos cultural province to southern Canaan would have caused an impact which is culturally visible. The material culture in southern Canaan is, however, very distinct from the hybrid Middle Bronze Age culture in the eastern delta. That is why this proposition can be dismissed. I hope I have shown that there is mounting evidence that a large part of this population stayed on in Egypt and served their new overlords with their skills and experience which were in demand in their host country. They were able to contribute in many ways to New Kingdom culture and society. It seems that they had built up a lasting local tradition on the eastern Delta, kept alive by the cultic installations of Canaanite gods, particularly Seth of Avaris, down to Ramesside times. We can identify many Near Eastern features in Egyptian literature, religion and may muse whether this influence did not also exist in music and other cultural fields which are not that easily decipherable. Discoveries of a cuneiform letter from a palace of Khayan and of a cuneiform seal impression on a bag, both found at in Avaris (Van Koppen and Radner in Bietak and Forstner-Müller 2009: 115-118), give us food for thought, if it were not the Hyksos who had already introduced into Egypt 150 years before the Amarna Period long-distance letter diplomacy and use of Akkadian as a diplomatic language. The contributions made by the foreign rulers and their people to New Kingdom culture will be increasingly revealed by future studies and will no doubt let us understand much better their place in Egyptian history.

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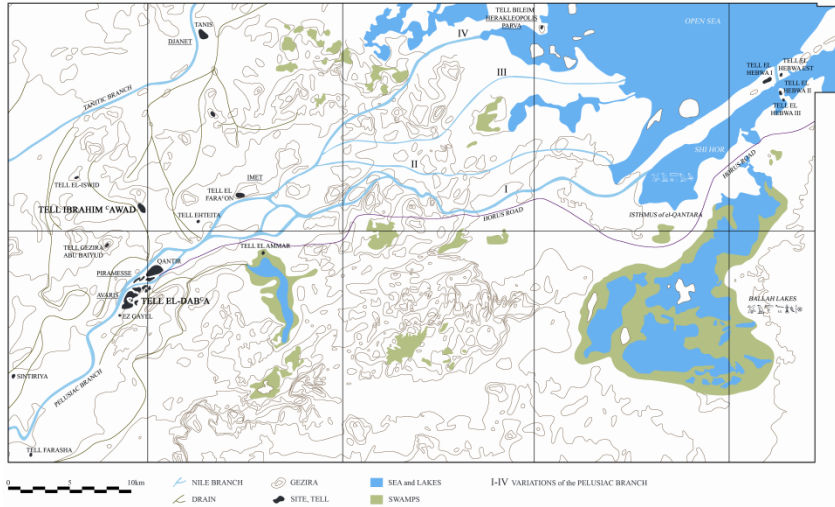
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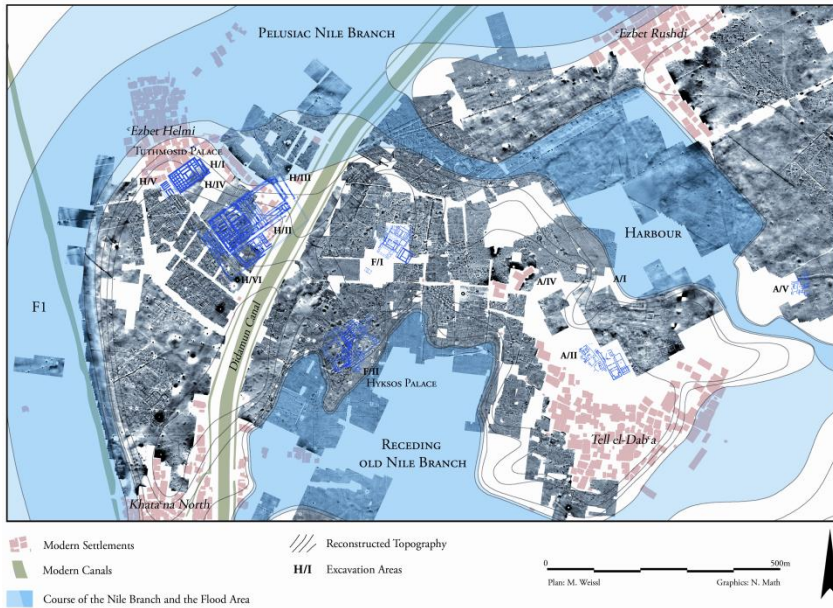
## Appendix

### Illustrations contribution Manfred Bietak:

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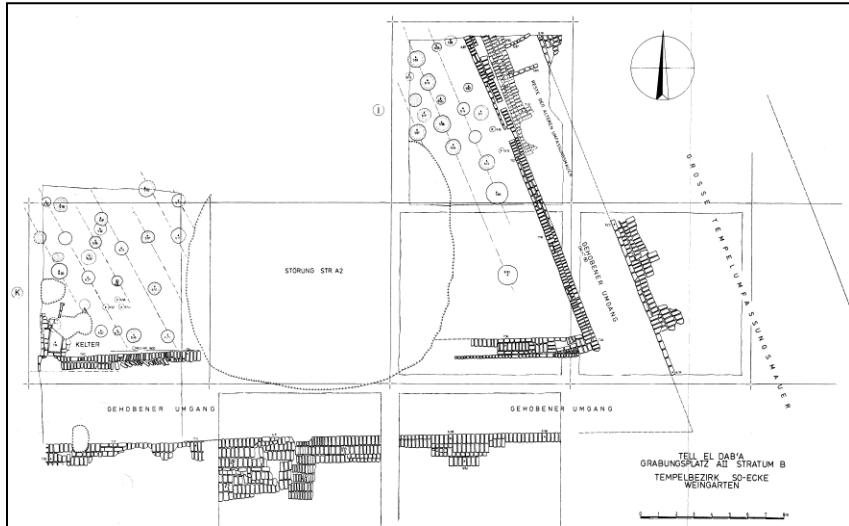
**Fig. 1:** The site of Avaris in the eastern Nile Delta and its relationship to the Mediterranean in the second millennium BCE



**Fig. 2:** Plan of the site of Avaris (Surveywork by drilling: J. Dorner, Magnetometry survey: J. Dorner, I. Forstner-Müller, T. Herbich, C. Schweitzer, M. Weißl)



**Fig. 3:** Precinct of the Temple of Seth at Avaris

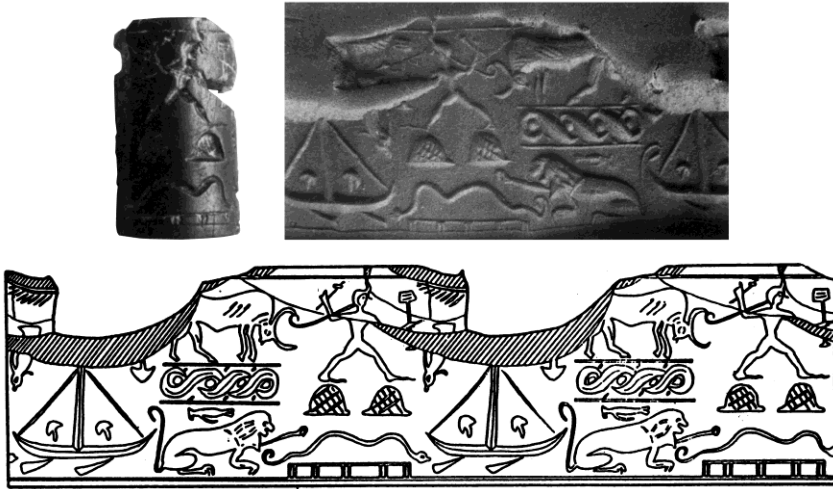


**Fig. 4:** The vineyard of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty within the temple precinct of Seth





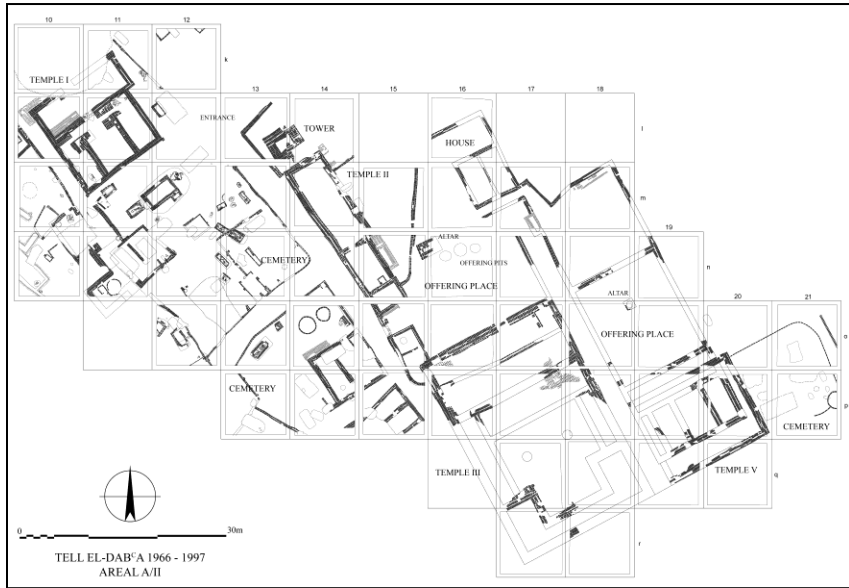
**Fig. 5:** Lintel of a door from the Temple of Seth with the name of King Horemheb, replacing probably the name of king Tutankhamun



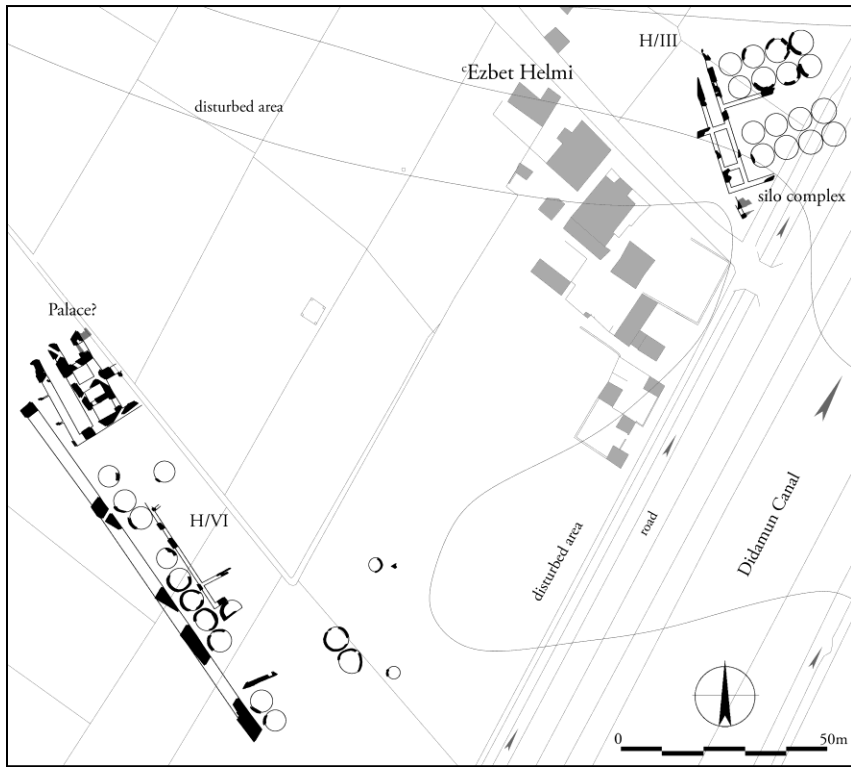
**Fig. 6:** Seal cylinder of hematite with the representation of the Syrian stormgod Hadad/Ba'al-Zephon as patron of the sailors, found in a level of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty at Tell el-Dab'a



**Fig. 7:** Stela of 400 Years of Ramses II found at Tanis, originating from the Temple of Seth at Avaris (after *Ägypten und Levante* 1, 1990, frontispiz). The representation recalls 400 years of worship of the “Father of Fathers” Seth in guise of the Syrian storm god Hadad/Ba‘al-Zephon at Avaris



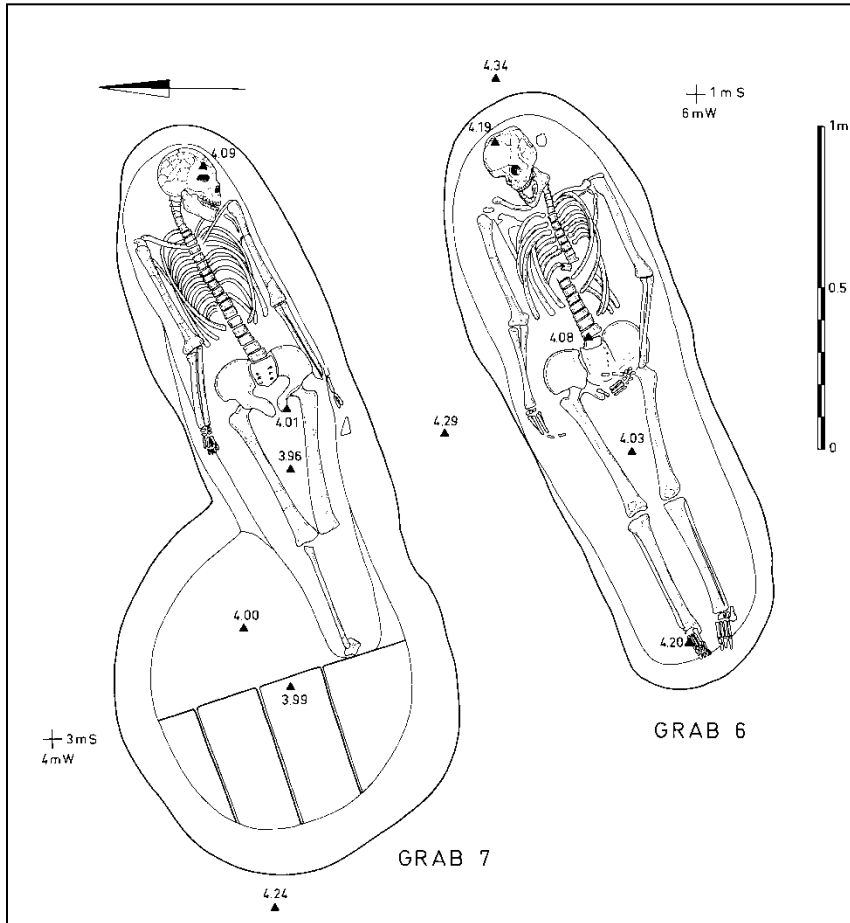
**Fig. 8:** Temple precinct of the Hyksos Period south of the Temple of Seth of the New Kingdom



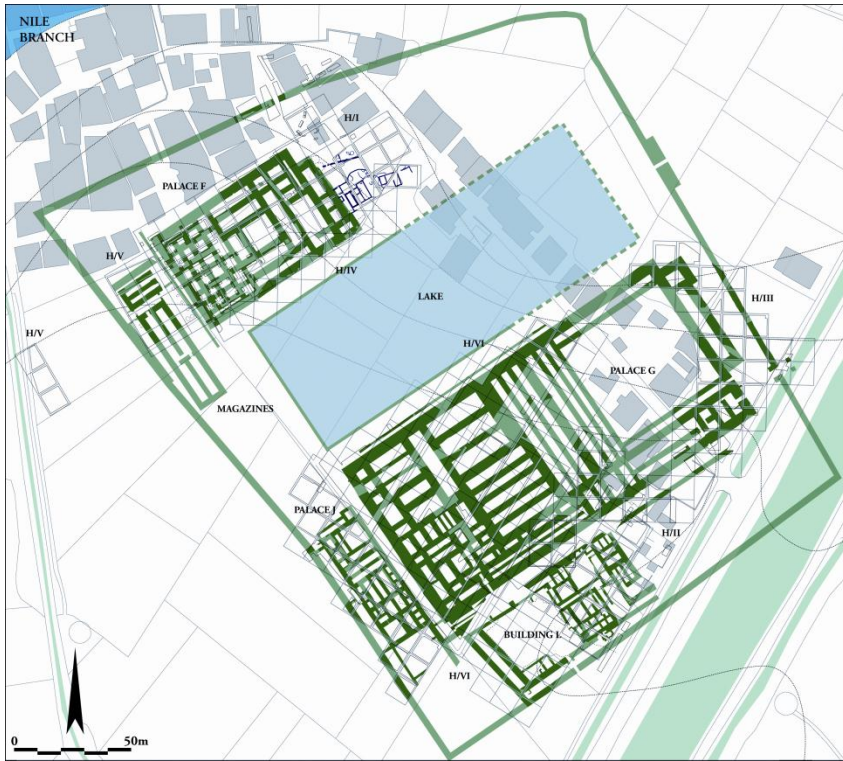
**Fig. 9:** Occupation of the early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty at the western edge of Avaris with silos, magazines and a palace, str. e/1.2, phase D/1.2



**Fig. 10:** Military camp and graves of soldiers of the early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, str. e/1.1, phase D/1.1

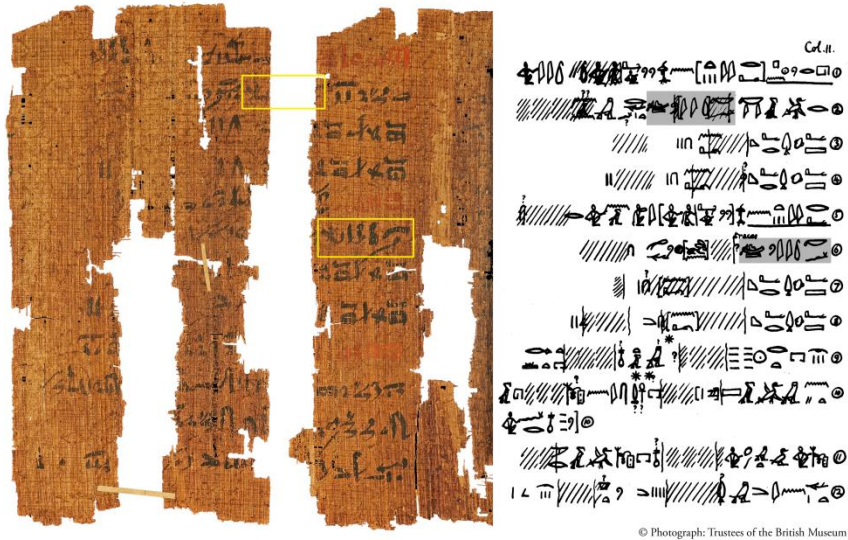


**Fig. 11:** Graves of soldiers of the early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty at the western edge of Avaris



**Fig. 12:** Palace precinct of Tuthmosis III and Amenophis II





**Fig. 13:** British Museum Papyrus 10056: Document from the dockyard of the harbour of Peru-nefer mentioning Keftiu-ships (Cretan ships) (Courtesy: The Trustees of the British Museum)

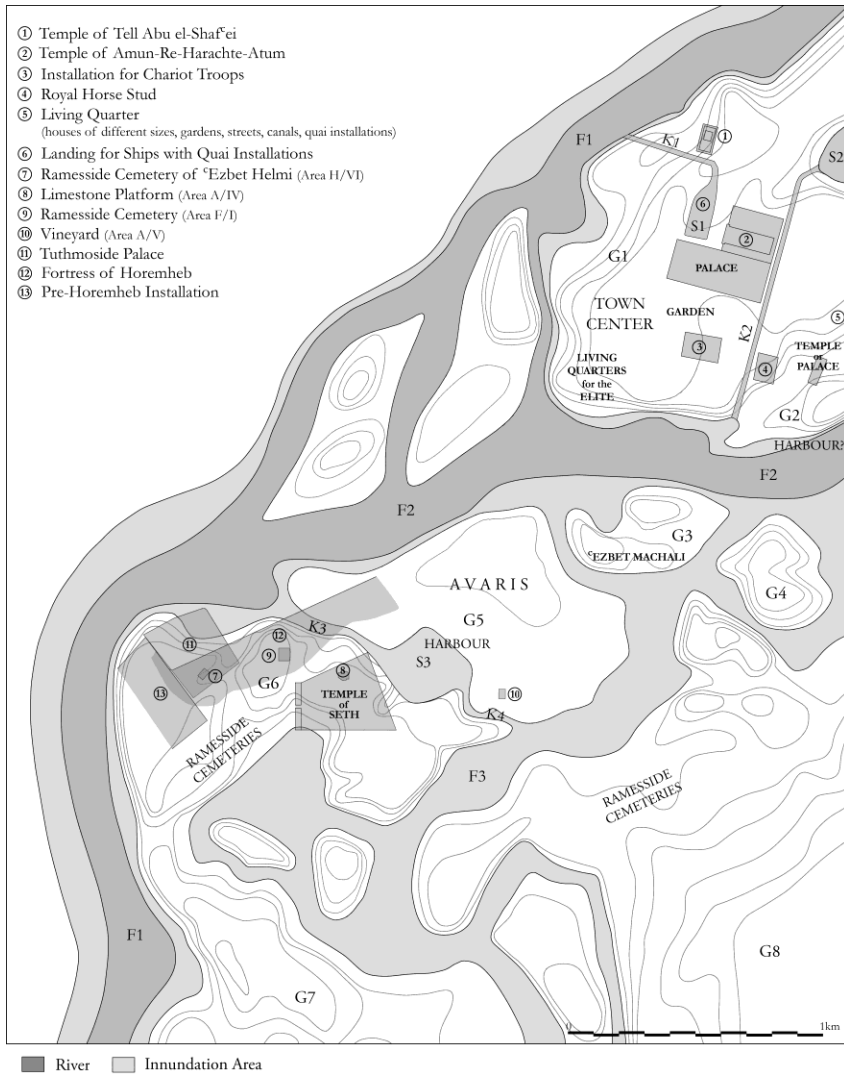


**Fig. 14:** The Nile delta and its most important ancient towns which could have been originally harbours

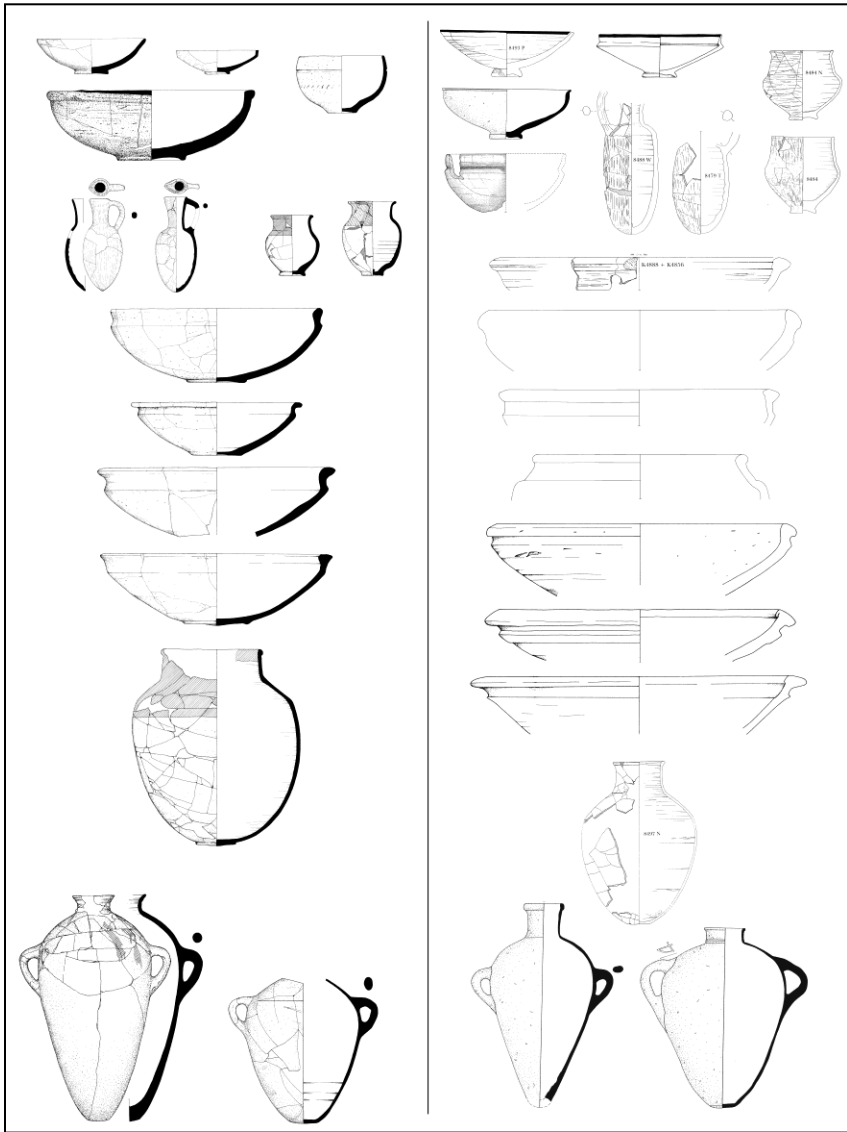
STRATIGRAPHY OF ʿEZBETH HELMY			
BC          ± 1530	PHASES	STR.	FEATURES
	B / 3	b / 2	FORTRESS, HAREMHAB
	C / 1	b / 3	BIG WALLS AMARNA PERIOD
			HIATUS
	C / 2	c	WORKSHOPS W1-2, SETTLEMENT I LATE MIDDLE EARLY
	C / 3	d	PALACES F, G, J ENCLOSURE H
	D / 1.1	e / 1.1	GRAVES AND FIRE PITS
	D / 1.2	e / 1.2	MAGAZINES, SILOS, SMALL PALACE
			CONQUEST OF AVARIS
	D / 2	e / 2	PALATIAL DISTRICT, ENCLOSURE WALL WITH BUTTRESSES, GARDENS, PLATFORM C, WATER SUPPLY
	D / 2	f	EARLY PHASE OF e/2
	D / 2-3	g - h	SETTLEMENT, HYKSOS PERIOD REVETMENT WALLS

© by M. Bietak (2001)

Fig. 15: Stratigraphy of ʿEzbet Helmy/Tell el-Dabʿa



**Fig. 16:** Tell el-Dab'a and Qantir in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Landscape reconstruction based on the survey activity of J. Dorner 1982-1990)



**Fig. 17:** Ceramic survivors of the Middle Bronze Age Culture in the time of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty



**Fig. 18:** Amphora, dipper juglet and strainer as survivor of the Middle Bronze Age Culture in the time of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty



**Fig. 19:** Scarabs of the New Kingdom from 'Ezbet Helmy with features of Middle Bronze Age scarabs

Bietak, Manfred 2011. "The Aftermath of the Hyksos in Avaris." In *Culture Contacts and the Making of Cultures: Papers in Homage to Itamar Even-Zohar*. Sela-Sheffy, Rakefet & Gideon Toury eds. Tel-Aviv: Tel Aviv University, Unit of Culture Research, pp. 19-65.

[ISBN 978-965-555-496-0] [e-book available from: [http://www.tau.ac.il/tarbut/Publications/Even-Zohar\\_Homage\\_Book.pdf](http://www.tau.ac.il/tarbut/Publications/Even-Zohar_Homage_Book.pdf)]

Manfred Bietak is Professor of Egyptology at the University of Vienna and Director of the Austrian Archaeological Institute in Cairo. He studied archeology at Vienna State University and took part 1961-1965 in the conservation expedition of the UNESCO at Sayala in Nubia and did also excavations there. He is the director of the Austrian excavations at two sites: the Nile delta site of Tell el-Dab'a, site of Avaris, the capital of the Hyksos period; and of neighboring Piramesse, the Nineteenth Dynasty capital of Egypt. Since March 1999 he has been the First Speaker of the "Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium BC – SCIEM 2000" at the Austrian Academy of Science. He is member of: Austrian Academy of Science, Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy, Foreign Fellow of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, Membre titulaire de l'Institut d'Égypte, Member of German Archaeological Institute and Honorary Member of the Archaeological Institute of America, and more. He has been awarded an honorary doctorate from the universities of Vienna and Tel Aviv. He is the author or co-author of several scholarly books, and serves as editor for the Egyptological journal *Ägypten und Levante*. 14 books and 200 reports in scientific papers are listed. In 2006, there was a three-volume festschrift published in his honor (*Timelines. Studies in Honour of Manfred Bietak*. Volume I, II and III. Leuven: Peeters [= *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 149]).