arts

MDPI

Article

The Forces of the Hyksos and Their Representations: Glimpse of Reality or *interpretatio Thebarum*?

Uroš Matić

Institute for Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, University of Innsbruck, 6020 Innsbruck, Austria; uros_arheo@yahoo.com

Abstract: Not much is known about the forces of the Hyksos, 15th Dynasty rulers of the Second Intermediate Period in Egypt. This was a time when Egypt and Nubia were divided between several competing royal houses and corresponding dynasties, e.g., the 14th and 15th Dynasty in Lower Egypt, 16th and 17th Dynasty in Upper Egypt, as well as the Kushite kingdom in Nubia. Loyalty to any of these polities was not based on ethnic identity. Forces of different ethnicities could pledge loyalty to any of the competitors. Bearing in mind the multi-ethnic population on the territory under the Hyksos rule, this article discusses the reality behind ideologically colored Theban representations of the Hyksos forces as consisting solely of foreigners. Starting from the premise that royal artistic production is deeply entangled with power in ancient Egypt, this article analyzes the ways private and royal inscriptions as well as literary and visual representations were employed to construct the cultural memory of the Second Intermediate Period which privileged the experience of Theban victors and degraded the experience of their rivals.

Keywords: Egypt; Second Intermediate Period; Hyksos; Apep; Kamose; Ahmose; Levant; ethnicity; cultural memory; arts; power; literature; representation; stereotype

Citation: Matić, Uroš. 2024. The Forces of the Hyksos and Their Representations: Glimpse of Reality or *interpretatio Thebarum*? *Arts* 13: 185. https://doi.org/10.3390/arts13060185

Academic Editors: Andrew M. Nedd, Kathlyn Cooney and Alisee Devillers

Received: 6 September 2024
Revised: 5 December 2024
Accepted: 7 December 2024
Published: 16 December 2024

Copyright: © 2024 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1. Introduction

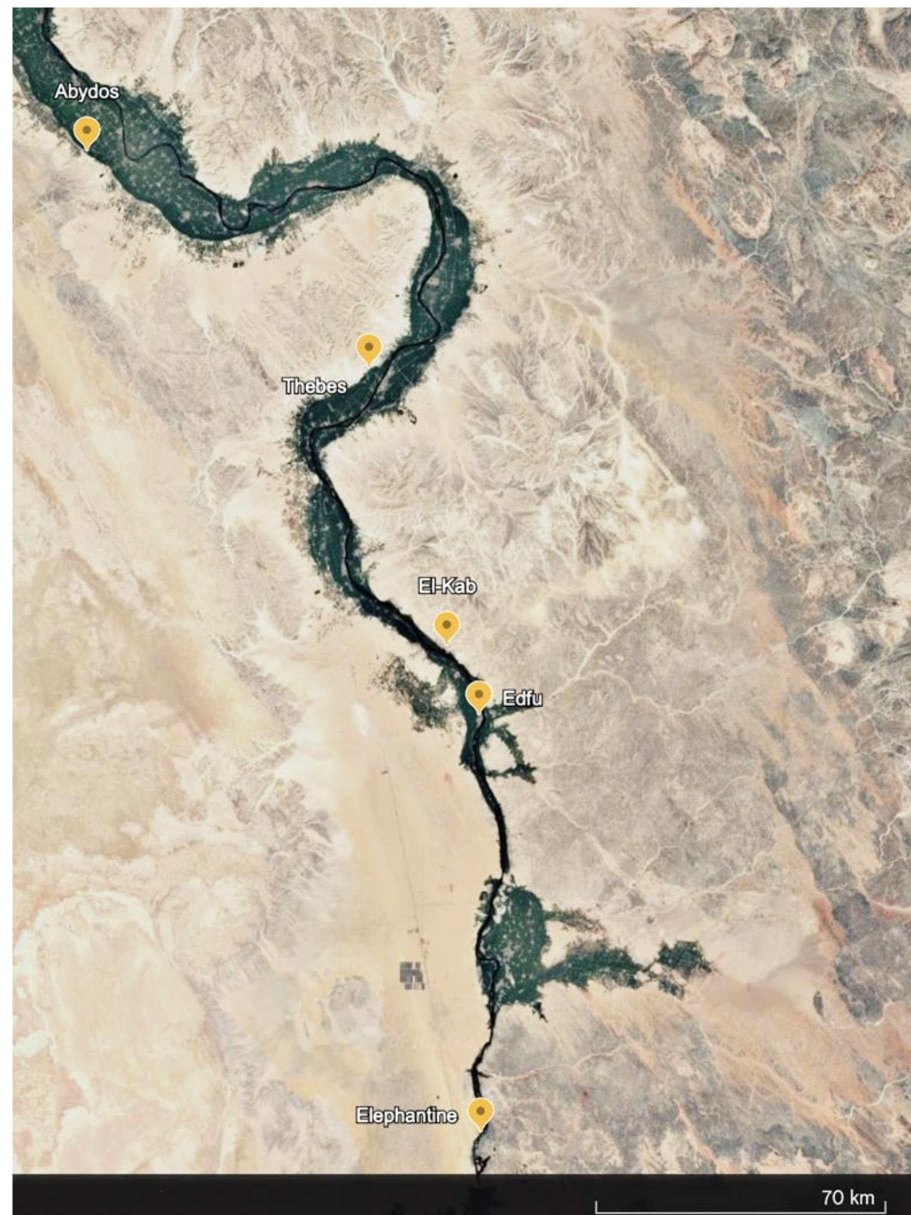
The Late Second Intermediate Period (circa 1650–1550 BCE) in Egypt (Figure 1a,b) was a time of regional division of the land between several competing dynasties (Ryholt 1997; Bourriau 2000; Mourad 2015; Ilin-Tomich 2016; Candelora 2020; Forstner-Müller 2022; Polz 2022). Tell el-Dab^{c}a in the Eastern Delta of Lower Egypt was the seat of the 14th and later the 15th Dynasty (also known as the Hyksos, a Greek version of an Egyptian title *ḥḳ3 ḫ3s.wt*—"ruler of foreign lands"). The Hyksos, at one point, extended the territory under their control up to Cusae (Al Qusiyyah) in Middle Egypt. Thebes, in Upper Egypt, was the seat of the 16th and the 17th Dynasty, the latter steadily controlling the Nile Valley from Edfu in the south to Abydos in the north (Polz 2018, p. 230). Abydos in Upper Egypt might have even been the seat of an independent dynasty (arguments pro and contra summarized in Ryholt 1997; Ilin-Tomich 2016, p. 10; Polz 2022, p. 54 and are out of this article's scope). The stability of the Theban control of the region between Edfu and Elephantine in the south is complicated by another rival polity. Namely, the territory from Elephantine to at least Kerma (Sudan) in the south was under the control of the kingdom of Kush (Williams 2021). According to the inscription from the tomb of Sobeknakht at El-Kab, the kingdom of Kush even managed to penetrate deep into the territory of Upper Egypt (El-Kab, some 25 km north of Edfu) and threaten the Theban kings, drawing allies from Wawat of Lower Nubia, Khenthennefer in Upper Nubia, Punt, and Medjay (Davies 2003, pp. 53–54). A scarab-shaped seal of the ruler of Kush was found in Elephantine in the context dated to the transitional period of the late 17th to early 18th Dynasty based on the pottery (Von Pilgrim 2015). It could be related to the Kushite presence in the region. Whether or not the kingdom of Kush remained in control of the region from Elephantine to Edfu is difficult to argue based only on the inscription of Sobeknahkt and is out of the scope of this article (see also Polz 2022, p. 89).

The complex political reality of the time is demonstrated by the Second Stela of Kamose (K2), who was one of the last rulers of the Upper Egyptian Theban 17th Dynasty. According to its text, Kamose managed to intercept a letter sent by Lower Egyptian 15th Dynasty ruler Apep to the unnamed ruler of Kush. According to the content of the letter, as reported by Kamose, Apep even attempted to form or to reaffirm a previous coalition with the ruler of Kush against the Thebans (Habachi 1972, p. 39).

In summary, in contrast to the previously politically unified Egypt of the Middle Kingdom, the Second Intermediate Period was a turbulent time in which the territory of the Nile Valley was divided by rival regional kingdoms. However, as I will argue in this article, the collective identities of its inhabitants were also re-imagined (comp. Anderson 1991). It is at this period when stereotypical ethnic and cultural representations of the Hyksos were created in the private and royal inscriptions as well as the literary and visual arts of the Thebans (comp. Candelora 2020; Peirce 2024).

(**a**)

Figure 1. *Cont.*



(b)

Figure 1. (a) Main archeological sites mentioned in this article (copyright: Uroš Matić using Google Earth). (b) Theban region and neighboring regions with archeological sites mentioned in this article.

After this introduction, the second part of this article deals with the complex issue of the ethnicity of the subjects of the Hyksos kings. It starts by stressing that the term Hyksos cannot be used for anyone else except some rulers of the 15th Dynasty. Furthermore, in the second part of this article, it will be demonstrated that the background of the equation "Hyksos=ethnicity=Middle Bronze Age II culture" is rooted in the culture–historical paradigm in archeology (for criticism see Matić 2020; Bader 2021). Contrary to this model in which the subjects of the Hyksos are understood as mono-ethnic, as it will be shown, the population under the Hyksos rule was multi-ethnic, including also Egyptians. Following on this clarification on multi-ethnic background of the Hyksos subjects, the third part of this article demonstrates that the Theban representations of the Hyksos and their subjects as foreigners should be seen as being part of the Theban royal ideology (Polz 1998; Peirce 2024) and not the reality. This royal ideology went hand in hand with imagining the community of Egyptians vs. the community of foreigners from the Levant, to an extent similar to how Benedict Anderson (1991) described this process.[1] Furthermore, this

ideology became a base for specifically Theban cultural memory (Peirce 2024), in the sense Jan Assmann (1997) and Aleida Assmann (2006) used this concept.[2] With the theories of Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann in the background, the fourth and the fifth part of this article examine whether the Theban private tomb inscriptions (self-representations), royal inscriptions, as well as literary and visual artistic representations of the Hyksos forces are to be interpreted as glimpses of reality or *interpretatio Thebarum* (Theban interpretation). More specifically, the fourth part of this article deals with the complex issue of the ethnicity of the Hyksos forces and the problems of identifying them in the archeological record (material culture and skeletal remains). The fifth part of this article deals with Theban visual representations of the Hyksos forces in relation to Theban construction of the collective memory of the Second Intermediate Period (e.g., Thebans vs. Hyksos imagined as Egyptians vs. foreigners from the Levant). The sixth part of this article draws some conclusions regarding the multi-ethnic forces of the Hyksos and their stereotypical Theban representations as a community of foreigners.

2. The Hyksos as a People and the Pitfalls of Culture-Historical Archaeology

Tell el-Dab^{c}a, in the Eastern Delta, later capital of the Hyksos 15th Dynasty, was founded as a planned workers' settlement by the Egyptian Middle Kingdom state of the late 11th–early 12th Dynasty (Czerny 1999). According to the archeological record, it was at first largely populated by the Egyptians. During the late 12th and 13th Dynasties, people from the Levant settled in the Eastern Delta, including Tell el-Dab^{c}a, and it is commonly accepted that the Second Intermediate Period kings of the 14th and 15th Dynasties descended from them (Ryholt 1997, pp. 302–304; Forstner-Müller and Müller 2006). We do not know what these settlers from the Levant called themselves (Schiestl 2009, p. 200). The Egyptian ethnonyms for the inhabitants of western Asia, Negev, Sinai, and northern parts of the Eastern Desert in Egypt, found in private and royal inscriptions as well as literature of the time, include *^{c}3m.w* "southerners from Negev"—commonly referred to by Egyptologists as "Asiatics", *Jwntj.w* "those with *jwn.t* bows", *(M)fk3tj.w* "those of the turquoise mining region on the Sinai", *Mnṯw.w* "furious ones(?)", and *Sṯtj.w* "those from the land of *Sṯt*" (Mourad 2015, p. 14; Saretta 2016; Gundacker 2017, pp. 349–53; Cooper 2020, pp. 71–74). These ethnonyms represent outsider Egyptian views of their neighbors and do not have to correspond to how these neighbors saw themselves (for similar observations on Egyptian terms for pastoral nomads of the Eastern Desert see Liszka 2011).

Incomers to the Eastern Delta from the Levant sometimes and over time adopted Egyptian names, making it impossible to differentiate between locals and incomers solely based on onomastic evidence (Ryholt 1997, p. 99). For example, some names are clearly Egyptian (e.g., *Rwj*) but they can be interpreted as hypocoristicons[3] indicating foreign origins (*rw.t*-outside, *rwt.j*-foreigner) (Gundacker 2017, p. 347). Some people in Egypt carried the epithet or name *^{c}3m* which could be an indicator of foreign descent (Schneider 2003b; but see Ilin-Tomich 2023, pp. 175–76); however, having foreign descent is not the same as seeing oneself or being perceived by others as a foreigner (Jones 1997; Matić 2020). Most of the kings of the 14th and the 15th Dynasties had West Semitic names (Ryholt 1997, pp. 98–130; Candelora 2017, pp. 209–11; Schneider 2003a). However, the 14th Dynasty rulers already used traditional Egyptian royal titles such as *nṯr nfr*—"good/beautiful/ perfect god" or *s3 R^{c}*—"son of Ra". Some 15th Dynasty rulers even used Egyptian title for foreign rulers, *ḥḳ3 ḫ3s.wt*—"ruler of foreign lands," most occurrences being on a significant type of art objects, namely the scarabs used as seals. Foreign names and the title "ruler of foreign lands" are the main reason Egyptologists consider the rulers of the 15th Dynasty to have had foreign descent (Candelora 2017, p. 216). Their foreign descent is also related to the multi-cultural or multi-ethnic community of their capital Avaris (Tell el-Dab^{c}a).

Namely, it was established long ago that, during the late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period, material culture in Tell el-Dab^{c}a changed, being increasingly influenced by that of the contemporary Levant (Bietak 1996; Forstner-Müller 2008, p. 126). However, the increase in Levantine Middle Bronze Age II material culture forms in the

archeological record is gradual. For example, during the 13th Dynasty, the percentage of imported Levantine pottery (e.g., Canaanite amphorae) increases from previous 20 to 40% (Bietak 1996, p. 49). This has led to a number of scholars to erroneously identify the presence of Middle Bronze Age II material culture as a direct indicator of foreign presence and foreign ethnic identity (e.g., Bietak and Strouhal 1974, p. 33; contra arguments in Schiestl 2009, p. 201; Matić 2020; Bader 2021). Since the gradual formation of the distinct material culture of the Eastern Delta coincided chronologically with the rise of the 15th Dynasty (Forstner-Müller 2008, p. 126), many Egyptologists have simply extended the use of the term Hyksos as an adjective to label all material culture forms which are not traditionally Egyptian (e.g., "Hyksos burials", "Hyksos tombs", "Hyksos pottery"). In result, the gradual change in material culture was understood as the replacement of Egyptians by the people from the Levant. The interpretative strategy behind this is well known in archeology as "pots equal people" premise. Within the culture–historical archeological framework, territorial distributions of the same or similar material culture forms (e.g., pottery, jewelry, weapons) are understood as reflections of the norms shared by the people who used these material culture forms, and are termed archeological cultures (Childe 1929, pp. v–vi). These norms are more often than not interpreted in ethnic terms, so that people using the material culture forms in question are considered to be an ethnic group (Childe 1929, pp. v–vi; for numerous issues with this equation see Jones 1997; Lucy 2005; Matić 2020). Thus, archeological cultures of Middle Bronze Age II in the Levant and of the Eastern Delta during the late Second Intermediate Period are erroneously understood as having belonged to people with the same ethnic identity. Since ancient Egyptian literary sources and private inscriptions refer to the inhabitants of the Levant among other terms as *ᶜ3m.w*, Egyptologists have used the common translation of this ethnonym ("Asiatics") to label these peoples of Middle Bronze Age II (Bietak 1996). Furthermore, they often interchangeably use the term "Asiatics" and "Hyksos" to refer to the same users of Middle Bronze Age II culture, without differentiating that Hyksos is a particular term for rulers. Examples of scholarly publications in which one finds erroneous use of terms such as "Hyksos burials", "Hyksos tombs", "Hyksos pottery", etc., are numerous and are beyond the scope of this article, but it is worth flagging such short-hand terms as problematic and stemming from Egyptian private and royal inscriptions as well as literary sources. Last but not least, although earlier works on Tell el-Dabᶜa were rooted in culture–historical paradigm in archeology, in the last two decades a number of scholars have voiced criticism and considered other ways of thinking about complex relations between material culture and identity at this site (Schiestl 2009; Matić 2014b, 2015, 2018, 2020; Bader 2021).

Contrary to the above-introduced culture–historical model, the people ruled by different regional powers of the Second Intermediate Period clearly had different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. We know that treasurers bearing Egyptian names were in the service of 15th Dynasty kings (Quirke 2004). Whether or not they had local Egyptian descent or were descendants of people of foreign origin, which over generations started identifying as Egyptians, is not always easy to argue. Of related interest is also the Carnarvon Tablet, a copy on a wooden tablet of a royal inscription also known on the stelae of Theban 17th Dynasty king Kamose. In the text of the Carnarvon Tablet, an Egyptian official named Teti, son of Pepi, even incurred the rage of king Kamose because he turned the Egyptian town Neferusi "into a nest of Asiatics" (Simpson 2003, p. 348). This could be interpreted as evidence of Teti's subordination to the Hyksos ruler (Flammini 2015, p. 240).

Indeed, as stressed by Robert Schiestl (2009, p. 202), the local Egyptian population was affected by the events of the Second Intermediate Period and redefined its loyalty and understanding of ethnic identity.[4] The population under the Hyksos rule was surely multi-ethnic and included people of local Egyptian descent, people descended from Levantine settlers, people from mixed unions of Egyptians and Levantines, newcomers from the Levant, and other regions of the Eastern Mediterranean (Bietak 2018; Stantis et al. 2020; for problems of identifying them solely based on material culture see Matić 2020, 2023; Bader 2021). In conclusion, being of Egyptian descent, even by several generations, did not nec-

essarily mean being loyal to a ruler from Thebes. During the Second Intermediate Period, ethnic identity did not correspond to political orientation.

3. Imagining the Hyksos and Cultural Memory of the Thebans

Although they used the title "ruler of foreign lands", among others on their scarabs, the rulers of the 15th Dynasty, according to our current knowledge, did not identify in their own inscriptions with the Egyptian term *ᶜ3m.w* "southerners from Negev/Asiatics", nor with any of the ethnonyms Egyptians used for the population of the Levant in their inscriptions. The epithet *ᶜ3m* is maybe attested with the name of an earlier 13th Dynasty king Hotepibra Sihornedjheritef on his statue (Mourad 2015, p. 27). We do not know if the term *ᶜ3m.w* correlated in any sense with the understanding of the collective identity of a part of this multi-ethnic community. Yet, it cannot be ruled out that the Hyksos avoided referring to themselves as such not to undermine their position as kings. The term *ᶜ3m.w* possibly even had pejorative connotations in the Theban royal inscriptions of the time. Namely, it is the Upper Egyptian rival of the Hyksos, king Kamose of the 17th Dynasty, who called Apep of the 15th Dynasty, as *ᶜ3m* "Asiatic" and *wr n Rṯnw* "ruler of Retjenu" in his Second Stela-K2. This and other monuments of Kamose containing the same text describe his military campaigns against the Hyksos kings. In the same royal inscription, Kamose also refers to the people in the service of Apep as *ᶜ3m.w* "Asiatics" (Habachi 1972, pp. 33–36; Mourad 2015, p. 9). Is Kamose accurately describing the subjects of the Hyksos kings? We have seen that they were a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic community, so that one can say that Kamose is deliberately misrepresenting them as a community of foreigners. One should also avoid overinterpreting Kamose's designation of Apep as ruler of Retjenu in Syria-Palestine (for recent discussion on its location see Vassiliev 2020). Although the Hyksos probably had some form of political control over Sinai and Sharuhen in the southern Levant, they had only commercial and possibly political alliances with the rest of the Levant. Therefore, it is nowadays argued that there was no such thing as a Hyksos empire in the Eastern Mediterranean, Syria–Palestine, including the Levant (summarized in Ilin-Tomich 2016, p. 7; see also Forstner-Müller 2022). Michael Bányai (2020, p. 3) made an interesting observation that, by referring to Apep as a ruler of Retjenu, the land this king de facto did not control, Kamose was making fun of him in his royal inscriptions. It is equally possible that the reason Kamose calls him that is to undermine his legitimacy, since from the Theban point of view, being a ruler of Retjenu Apep could not be a king of Egypt.

Kamose's designation of Apep as ruler of Retjenu and "Asiatic" is certainly related to what Daniel Polz (1998, p. 221) described as *interpretatio Thebarum* (Theban interpretation), an ideological mechanism for the legitimization of the expansionist war of the 17th Dynasty. Thus, according to this mechanism, in his royal inscriptions Kamose deliberately refers to his rival as a foreigner. The scribes of his stelae even carefully distinguish between Kamose and his rivals by using the same title *ḥḳ3* "ruler" for them, but with different hieroglyph classifiers. Namely, papyrus roll classifier is used for the 15th Dynasty ruler of Avaris in Eastern Delta and the ruler of Kush in Nubia, and a ruler wearing the crown of the Upper Egypt classifier is used for Kamose (Flammini 2011–2012, pp. 57–74). It is tempting to see in this a similar process to the one described by Benedict Anderson (1991). Without transferring the concept of the nation back to ancient Egypt, we can at least take from Anderson the idea that collective identities, such as ethnic identity, rely on imagining a community and communicating this using different media, such as private inscriptions from tombs, royal inscriptions, literary texts, but also visual art. The following examples serve to demonstrate this.

King Ahmose (1550–1525 BCE) was Kamose's successor and the first ruler of the 18th Dynasty who, according to ancient Egyptian sources, defeated the Hyksos and united Egypt. In the tomb inscription (self-presentation) of Ahmose, son of Ebana, a soldier in the forces of king Ahmose, we find further evidence that *interpretatio Thebarum* outlived Kamose and his court. Namely, in his tomb inscription in his decades (if not even a cen-

tury) later painted tomb in El Kab (Upper Egypt), the soldier Ahmose refers to the defeat of *Mntj.w Sṯt* which could only refer to either the inhabitants of Sharuhen (located in Negev or Gaza) mentioned previously in this text, or Avaris before that (Breasted 1906, p. 8; Sethe 1927, p. 5). In any case, the narrative of his self-presentation, just as the earlier royal inscriptions of Kamose, represents the conflict between the Thebans and the Hyksos as a conflict between Egyptians and foreigners, despite the fact that there were indeed Egyptians living in the Hyksos state and fighting for it. In this sense, in *interpretatio Thebarum* both communities are imagined and memorialized as ethnically homogenous.

According to Aleida Assmann, collective memory is a social construct, and after a period of eighty to one hundred years, several generations (three to five) co-exist and exchange experiences and memories. This leads to the formation of memory among children and grandchildren (A. Assmann 2006, pp. 25–26). Apart from the tomb of Ahmose, son of Ebana, example for this is also found in the royal inscription on the temple façade of Speos Artemidos in Middle Egypt, some hundred years after Kamose and some eighty years (three or more generations) after Ahmose. In this text, female pharaoh Hatshepsut (1473–1458 BCE) of mid-18th Dynasty claims that she made what was abandoned to prosper and that she raised the ruins of monuments (temples) in Middle Egypt which were destroyed since the time the nomads among the *ᶜ3m.w* had been in the middle of the Delta in Avaris. They supposedly ruled without god Ra and not according to the divine order (Gardiner 1946, pp. 47–48; Allen 2002, pp. 5; Mourad 2015, p. 9; Chappaz and Bickel 2024, pp. 105–132). Just like Kamose, Hatshepsut refers to the Hyksos as *ᶜ3m.w,* adding that they ruled without Ra in Avaris. In this way, by referring to them as foreigners, she is undermining their legitimacy like Kamose and later Ahmose son of Ebana. She is also strengthening the memory of them as foreign rulers. We have seen that the subjects of the Hyksos were a multi-ethnic community. Regarding Hatshepsut's statement that the Hyksos ruled without Ra, it is important to stress that the rulers of Avaris devoted monuments to not only the god Seth of Avaris, but also Hathor, Wadjet, Sobek, and Ra (Ryholt 1997, p. 11).

We should nevertheless not forget that, while it is certain that the Theban rulers had a plethora of reasons to represent the Hyksos as foreigners, the Hyksos themselves had many reasons of their own to represent themselves as legitimate kings of Egypt. For example, in later periods, Kushite kings of the 25th Dynasty, but also Persian and Roman emperors, devoted monuments to Egyptian deities. They were no less Kushite, Persian, or Roman for doing this, but they wanted to appear as Egyptian pharaohs to the local population. Thus, the very fact that the Hyksos represented themselves as legitimate kings of Egypt does not have any bearing on their ethnic identity. One cannot argue that the Hyksos were not of foreign descent based on the fact that they had themselves represented as legitimate kings of Egypt. Of course, as argued earlier in this article, this does not have any bearing on the identity of the subjects of the Hyksos. However, unlike in the case of Kushite, Persian and Roman rulers of Egypt, when the Hyksos are concerned, we are not dealing with emperors who ruled over other regions too. The Hyksos did not have their seat of rule somewhere else. Their capital was in the Eastern Delta in Lower Egypt. Persian and Roman rulers depicted themselves differently at home than in Egypt. Contrary to this, the home of the Hyksos was in Egypt. In fact, we know of no monument in which a Hyksos king is depicted as a non-Egyptian king, not even from Avaris. Therefore, although Hatshepsut refers to the inhabitants of the Delta as "Asiatics", she might have indeed raised what was destroyed or neglected in Middle Egypt during the Hyksos rule in Avaris (Taterka 2017, p. 98).

Some two hundred years later, in the literary text known as *Tale of Apophis and Seqenenre* preserved on 19th Dynasty Papyrus Sallier I (British Museum 10185), Seth is described as the sole deity worshiped by the Hyksos (Goedicke 1986; Spalinger 2010; Manassa 2013, pp. 4, 30–65). The monuments Hyksos built to other deities in Egypt are not mentioned. The fact that this is a literary story referring to events which predate it for two centuries, confirms the notion of Aleida Assmann that such collective memories rely on narration and exchange through communication (A. Assmann 2006, p. 29). The *Tale of Apophis and Seqenenre* was either read or orally performed, popularizing "historical" events

beyond their monumental sphere. Colleeen Manassa (2013, pp. 27–29) also stressed that different audiences in Ramesside Egypt could have reacted to the story differently. For example, the audience in Pi-Ramesse, with Avaris as its suburb at the time, was not the same as the one in Thebes. The fact that Hyksos are represented as being different in their religious devotion (Spalinger 2010, pp. 122–23), both here and in earlier Speos Artemidos royal inscription, points to repetition as the main principle of so-called connective structures (memory, identity, and cultural continuity). Since Theban kings Kamose and Ahmose, Egyptian royal and private inscriptions misrepresent the subjects of the Hyksos as a community of foreigners. Jan Assmann (1997, p. 17) sees such repetitions as operating in the process of cultural memory construction.

4. Ethnicity of the Hyksos Forces

Whereas ancient Egyptian textual and visual sources for the New Kingdom (ca. 1550–1070 BCE) forces are abundant and informative, sources from the Second Intermediate Period are scarce and largely silent regarding the forces of the Hyksos (comp. Ryholt 1997; Forstner-Müller 2022). For example, in the database *Persons and Names of the Middle Kingdom and Early New Kingdom* from the University of Mainz, among more than 2000 private persons associated to the 14th and 15th Dynasties, not a single person bears a title (e.g., *mšᶜ*), which could be associated to a military service (https://pnm.uni-mainz.de, accessed on 5 September 2024). However, this could be because there is no evidence of a professional army during this period, and titles usually interpreted as military are attested in non-military enterprises such as building projects and expeditions. We must remember that the same designation (*mšᶜ*) can refer to a fighting unit, an expedition force, or a labor force (Stefanović 2014, pp. 429–30). Thus, the absence of people with military titles does not mean the absence of fighting forces.

In identifying ancient soldiers, archeologists often turn to burials with weapons. A total of 32 burials with weapons are known from Tell el-Dabᶜa from Stratum d/2=H (late 12th Dynasty) until Stratum D/3 (late 15th Dynasty) (Forstner-Müller 2008; Schiestl 2009; Prell 2021, p. 43). This represents only some 3% of the total burials excavated at the site, many of which were robbed in antiquity. Furthermore, burials with weapons are missing from the peak of the Hyksos period (Strata D/2 and D/1) and the time of increased conflicts with the Theban 17th Dynasty (Table 1). Who then fought as soldiers for the Hyksos kings? The answer to this question is complex. The lack of burials with weapons during the time of war with the Thebans is not an indicator of the lack of soldiers. Forstner-Müller and Müller (2005, pp. 200–201) correctly noted that it is exactly under these new precarious circumstances that one would probably avoid depositing valuable weapons in tombs. Furthermore, those fighting for the Hyksos in the peak of the conflict with the Theban kings could have died far from Avaris and were either not buried at all or were buried somewhere else.

According to the results of strontium isotopes analyses conducted on samples of bone belonging to some of the individuals buried in tombs with weapons from Tell el-Dabᶜa (Table 1), it is clear that some were locals and others not (Stantis et al. 2020). However, strontium isotopes analyses are not an answer to the question of ethnicity because they ultimately inform us on the geographic origin of the consumed food and water (Matić 2020, pp. 53–55; 2023). Some of the people buried with weapons came from outside Tell el-Dabᶜa; however, the results of strontium isotopes analyses do not allow for a precise pinpointing of their origin, meaning that they were not necessarily and only from the Levant (Stantis et al. 2020). Thus, some of the men buried with weapons could have had either local or foreign ancestors, something the strontium isotopes analyses cannot inform us about. In the absence of ancient DNA data, this is all we can work with at the moment.

Table 1. Burials with weapons from Tell el-Dab[c]a organized into site areas and ordered chronologically from oldest to youngest (adapted and combined after Forstner-Müller 2008; Schiestl 2009; Prell 2021, p. 136, Abb. 3.30; Stantis et al. 2020 due to inconsistencies).

Area	Dating (Tell el-Dab[c]a Strata)	Egyptian Dynastic Chronology	Tomb	Weapon Assemblage	Sex	Age	Strontium Isotopes Ratio ^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr (Local and Non-Local)
F/I	H	Late 12th Dynasty	F/I-o/21, Grab 6	1 spear	male	adult–mature	
F/I			F/I-o/20, Grab 17	1 dagger, 2 spears	male	early mature	
F/I			F/I-o/19, Grab 8	1 axe, 2 spears	no remains preserved		
F/I			F/I-n/21, Grab 10	2 spears	male	mature	
F/I	G/4	Early 13th Dynasty	F/I-p/18, Grab 14	2 spears	male	mature	
F/I			F/I-p/17, Grab 14	1 dagger	badly preserved remains of several individuals		
F/I			F/I-o/17, Grab 1	1 axe, 2 dagger pommels	no remains preserved		
F/I			F/I-m/18, Grab 3	1 axe, 2 daggers, 2 spears	badly preserved remains of several individuals weapons associated to a man		
F/I			F/I-m/17, Grab 2	1 spear	no remains preserved		
F/I	G/1-G/3	Mid-13th Dynasty	F/I-m/17, Grab 5	1 spear			
F/I			F/I-i/22, Grab 31	2 spears			
F/I			F/I-i/21, Grab 34	1 dagger			0.707931 (non-local)
F/I	G/1-G/3-F	Mid-13th Dynasty	F/I-d/23, Grab 1	1 axe, 1 dagger, 2 spears, 1 dagger pommel			
F/I	G/1-G/3-E/2	Mid-13th Dynasty to early 15th Dynasty	F/I-m/17, Grab 4	1 spear			
F/I	F-E/3	Late 13th Dynasty to early 15th Dynasty	F/I-l/20, Grab 20	1 spear, 1 knife, 1 dagger pommel			
F/I			F/I-k/20, Grab 9	1 spear			
A/I	D/3	Late 15th Dynasty	A/I-g/4, Grab 3	1 axe			
A/I			A/I-g/3, Grab 1	3 axes, 3 daggers			0.707724 (local)
A/II	G	Early 13th Dynasty	A/II-m/15, Grab 9, burial 1	1 dagger	male	early adult	

Table 1. *Cont.*

Area	Dating (Tell el-Dab^{c}a Strata)	Egyptian Dynastic Chronology	Tomb	Weapon Assemblage	Sex	Age	Strontium Isotopes Ratio $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ (Local and Non-Local)
A/II	F	Late 13th Dynasty	A/II-p/14, Grab 18	1 dagger, 1 sickle shaped sword	male	early adult	
A/II			A/II-m/10, Grab 8	1 axe, 1 dagger			Burial 1: 0.707803 (non-local?)
A/II			A/II-l/16, Grab 4, burial 1	1 dagger	male	adult	0.707792 (non-local)
A/II			A/II-l/12, Grab 5	1 axe, 1 dagger			Burial 1: 0.707744 (local) Burial 2: 0.707915 (non-local) Burial 3: 0.707793 (non-local)
A/II	E/3	Late 13th Dynasty	A/II-l/14, Grab 7	1 spear, 1 knife	the knife was found in the offering chamber and the spear in the burial chamber; none could be associated to a specific individual		Burial 1 (late adult): 0.707747 (local) Burial 4 (late juvenile): 0.707734 (local)
A/II	E/2	Early 15th Dynasty	A/II-p/13, Grab 15	1 axe, 1 dagger	male	early adult	
A/II	E/1-2	Early 15th Dynasty	A/II-p/21, Grab 7	1 axe, 1 dagger			
A/II	E/1-2	Early 15th Dynasty	A/II-p/20, Grab 3	2 daggers			
A/II	E/1	Early 15th Dynasty	A/II-n/15, Grab 1, burial 1	1 dagger, 2 knives	male	late juvenile-early adult	
A/II			A/II-n/15, Grab 1, burial 2	1 knife, 1 axe	male	late juvenile	
A/II			A/II-n/15, Grab 1, burial 3	1 axe, 1 dagger	male	early mature	
A/II			A/II-l/14, Grab 5	1 axe, 1 dagger	fully destroyed through ancient looting		
A/II			A/II-l/12, Grab 2	1 axe, 3 knives			
A/II	D/3-E/1	Late 15th Dynasty	A/II-o/20, Grab 4	1 axe, 1 dagger			0.707749 (local)
A/IV	E/3−2	Early 15th Dynasty	A/IV-g/4, Grab 1	1 spear			

Still, as so often demonstrated in archeology, a weapon in a burial does not make one a warrior. Weapons can be deposited in burials as symbols of status (Schiestl 2009; Prell 2021, p. 168) and masculinity (Morris 2020). In fact, a closer look into the demographic profile of those buried with weapons in Tell el-Dab^{c}a during the later Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period demonstrates that, when data from physical anthropologists were provided, we are dealing with young and mature men (Table 1). This could indicate the physical requirement for serving in the Hyksos forces. However, in order to argue that a buried person was a warrior one would need to demonstrate that the person was engaged in combat activities; for example, via skeletal markers of occupational stress. Alternatively, one could argue this based on injuries caused by violence, healed or not. When weapons are concerned, use-wear analyses could prove to be useful indicators; however, conducting such analyses on bronze weapons is challenging. Unfortunately, we lack such information from the burials with weapons from Tell el-Dab^{c}a, but evidence for violent death of people buried with Levantine weaponry is known from earlier Kom el-Hisn in the Western Delta (Cagle 2016, p. 348).

We should also consider that most people who took military service may not be visible in the archeological record of Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period Egypt. Bearing this in mind, young adult and mature men buried with weapons in Tell el-Dab^{c}a could have fought in battles, but this can also be said for those who were not buried in this manner. Those who did not own weapons, or had families and beloved to bury them with weapons, might have received weapons in life from state authorities issuing these from an armory (*pr-^{c}ḥ3*). We have to accept that archeology is not providing us with a clear solution to this problem.

The Levantine origin of some weapon types from Tell el-Dab^{c}a warrior burials (e.g., duckbill axes, chisel shaped socketed axes) has led some authors to interpret Hyksos soldiers as being "Asiatics" (Bietak and Strouhal 1974). This view is clearly rooted in culture–historical archeology and a direct equation of material culture with ethnic identity; I referred to this problem earlier in this article. One should consider that weapons of Levantine origin could have been used by locals in Egypt who might have viewed themselves in a myriad of ways (Matić 2024).

We have seen that, by the end of the Hyksos period, one does not find burials with weapons anymore in Tell el-Dab^{c}a at least. However, there are exceptions to this outside of Tell el-Dab^{c}a. Weapons are not usually considered to be artistic objects; however, not all parts of a weapon have purely utilitarian purpose (e.g., dagger's blade). Handles of daggers are often elaborate artistic pieces displaying texts and visual representations closely related to the power and self-presentation of the owner. Nehemen's dagger (Luxor Museum JE 32735) warrants our attention because it informs us about the self-representation of men loyal to a Hyksos king and possibly being part of his forces (Figure 2).

This probably ceremonial bronze dagger with electrum handle was discovered in Saqqara, near the pyramid of king Teti, in a burial located within the no longer operational funerary temple of queen Iput from the 6th Dynasty (2345–2181 BCE). It was found inside the late Second Intermediate Period coffin of a man called Abed or Abdu (West Semitic name), positioned next to his left leg (Daressy 1900, p. 115; Arnold 2010, p. 210; Mourad 2015, p. 80). On the handle of the dagger is a depiction of a man spearing a lion, with a horned animal fleeing in the opposite direction above. The hunter is adorned with a *shendyt* kilt featuring a central lappet typical of a Middle Kingdom Egyptian official (Arnold 2008, p. 117; Aruz 2013, p. 221). In front of the horned animal is a plant with leaves, while another leaf-like object appears between the hunter's right hand and an L-shaped section of ground lion's back legs rest. Below the hunter, an inscription reads *šms.w (n) nb=f Nḥmn* "follower of his lord, Nehemen" (Daressy 1900, p. 118; Arnold 2010, p. 210). The back of the dagger bears the inscription *nṯr nfr nb t3.wy Nb-ḫpš-R^{c} s3 R^{c} Jppj dj ^{c}nḫ* "the perfect god, lord of the two lands, Nebkhepeshre, son of Re, Apep, given life" (Daressy 1900, pp. 118–19; Arnold 2010, p. 210). It has been suggested that the dagger was gifted to Nehemen (West Semitic name) by the king Apep himself, forming bonds of mutual loyalty (Arnold 2010,

p. 213). Such acts are attested in the previously mentioned tomb inscription of Ahmose, son of Ebana, who received gifts in the form of slaves and land in Egypt by king Ahmose for his service (Sethe 1927, pp. 1–11). Ahmose-Pennekhbet, another soldier in the service of Ahmose and later 18th Dynasty kings, also received gifts for his service, and among them were a golden dagger he received from Amenhotep I (1525–1503 BCE), two golden axes he received from Thutmose I (1504–1492 BCE), and a silver axe he received from Thutmose II (1492–1479 BCE) (Breasted 1906, p. 11; Sethe 1927, pp. 32–35).

Figure 2. Nehemen's dagger (Luxor Museum JE 32735), reign of 15th Dynasty king Apep, found in the Saqqara burial with a coffin belonging to a man named Abed, photo, no scale (https://upload.wikimedia.org/ikipedia/commons/b/b3/Hyksos_dagger_handle.jpg (accessed on 5 September 2024), courtesy of Wikimedia user पाटलिपुत्र).

If there was supposed to be an association between the hunter depicted on the dagger and Nehemen, then he, having a foreign name (Schneider 2003b, pp. 140–41) was depicted wearing the dress of an Egyptian official and spearing a lion. The latter motif is well known in Aegean Late Bronze Age iconography, where only the warriors of highest rank are depicted in this manner (Franković and Matić 2020). In Egypt, usually a pharaoh is depicted hunting or killing lions. Thus, Apep and Nehemen fully used Egyptian iconography and combined it with motives common in the Eastern Mediterranean (Arnold 2008; Aruz 2013).

We will never know whether Nehemen, the one to whom the dagger originally belonged, and if Abed, the one with whom the dagger was eventually buried, actually fought for the Hyksos king Apep. However, already the use of Egyptian iconography for the crafted dagger, by a man with a foreign name, indicates that the identities of those in the service of Apep, and possibly his forces, were diverse. They can hardly be understood as falling into the lump categories "Egyptian" and "Asiatic", as Kamose and later rulers of Theban descent would have us think from their own royal inscriptions and literary artistic production.

5. Egyptian Representations of the Hyksos Forces

One potential clue regarding at least the observed or better said imagined ethnicity of the Hyksos forces by the Thebans can be found in the representations on the Abydos temple walls depicting the battles of king Ahmose (Figure 3), examples of monumental royal art of the time period. These fragmentary relief blocks are currently studied by Stephen Harvey and have been only partially published (Harvey 1994, 1998, Harvey 2002–2003;

Spalinger 2005, pp. 20–21). According to Harvey (1998, p. 533, Figure 80; Harvey 2002–2003), one of the fragments has the name of Apep on it, which would indicate that the depicted battle is indeed the one between Ahmose and this Hyksos ruler. This very fact should warn us that we are not dealing simply with a representation of an event, but with a representation of a past event in a monumental temple setting. Therefore, we are dealing with a medium of cultural memory which has stability and longevity that is institutionally assured (A. Assmann 2006, p. 32). Here, the focus is on the representation of past events, and since the past emerges only when one refers to it (J. Assmann 1997, p. 31), it becomes important who represents it, how and why. I now turn to this question.

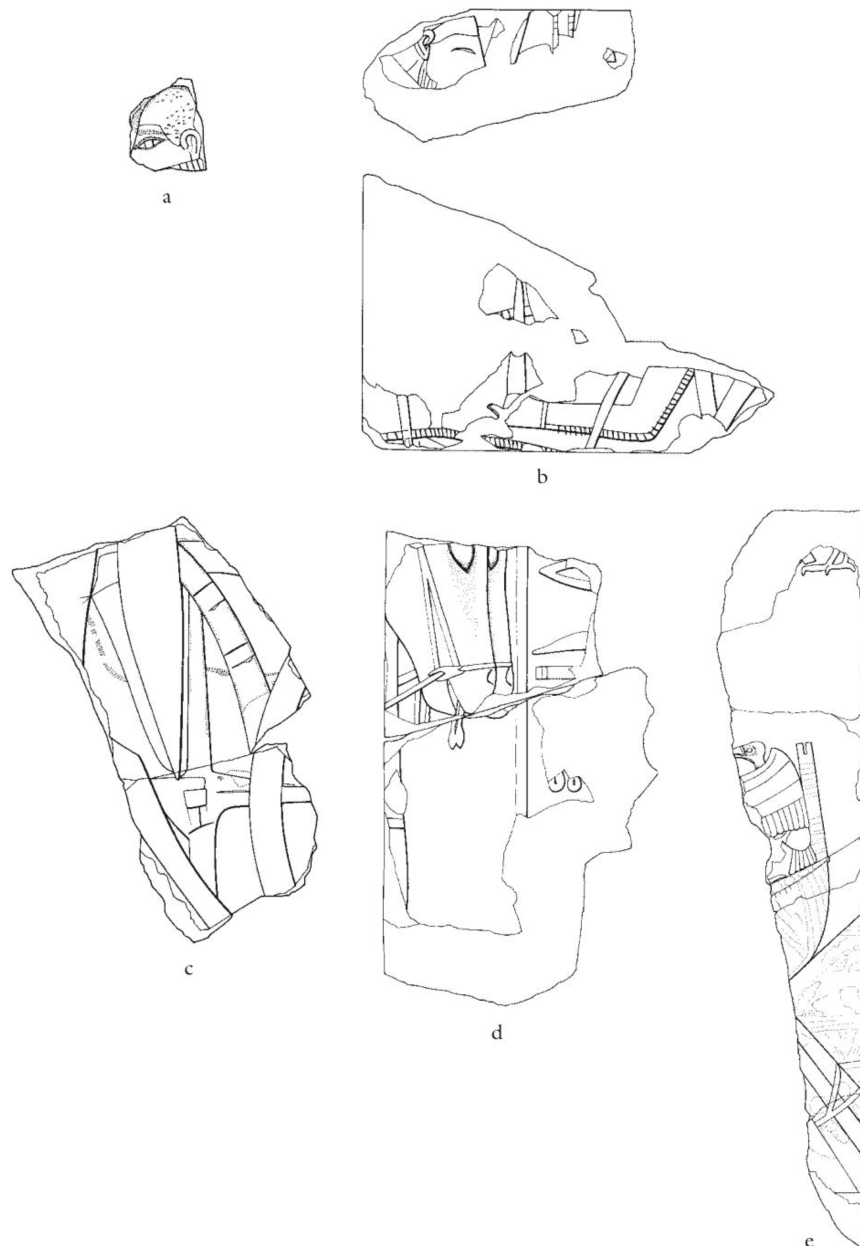


Figure 3. Battle relief fragments from the temple of king Ahmose in Abydos, line drawing, no scale. (**a**) Relief fragments showing heads of enemies with short hair and beards (**b**) Relief fragment showing the arm of an enemy dressed in a long sleeve and holding a dagger (**c**) Relief fragment showing chariot wheels (**d**) Relief fragment showing a pair of horses and an inscription to their right (**e**) Relief fragment showing a ship (after Spalinger 2005, p. 21).

Two of the relief blocks from Abydos temple of Ahmose depict enemy soldiers with short hair and beards (Figure 3a), while a third shows an arm in a long sleeve holding a dagger (Figure 3b), probably of the type of short dagger that Nehemen owned, based on the shape and the size of the blade in relation to the figure. We have seen that a dagger was often part of the weapon assemblage in Tell el-Dab^{c}a burials with weapons. However, the Abydos relief fragments are so badly preserved that one cannot recognize any other types of weapons which could have been used by enemies of the Thebans. Furthermore, in the relief fragment, the arm of the enemy is clad in a long sleeve with a border adorned with parallel lines (Figure 3b). Both the heads and arm wearing a long sleeve find close parallels in New Kingdom Egyptian representations of Levantine foreign rulers in 18th Dynasty tribute scenes found in private tombs (Hallmann 2006, pp. 261–64; Anthony 2017, pp. 23–24). Notably, such figures are found in private Theban tomb art: the ruler of Tunip in the tribute scene from the tomb of Menkheperreseneb (TT86); some of the Levantines in the tombs of Rekhmire (TT100), Sobekhotep (TT63), and Huy (TT 40). This type of a foreigner, identified in the accompanying inscription as coming from Naharin (Mitanni), is also found on the base of the throne dais of Amenhotep III (1390–1352 BCE) and Tiye in the representation of this enthroned couple in the tomb of Anen. One such figure is also depicted among the enemies on a relief block (Figure 4) housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (MMA 13.180.21). The block depicts defeated enemies under the horses of the pharaoh's chariot, recognizable through the depiction of the phalli and the legs of the horses in the upper right corner. Among the enemies are two iconographic types of Levantine men in New Kingdom Egyptian art. One type is depicted with reddish skin color wearing only a sort of kilt and a belt across the nude upper body. He has long black hair held by a white band and a long beard. The other type is depicted with yellowish skin color wearing a white robe with long sleeves. He has short black hair and a long beard. The block was found re-used in the foundation of the temple of Ramesses IV (1153–1147 BCE) in Asasif, Upper Egypt during the excavations of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1912–1913. Based on stylistic features of the depicted enemy figures, it was dated by Catharine H. Roehrig (2008, p. 263) to the reign of Amenhotep II (1427–1400 BCE).

Figure 4. Relief block from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (MMA 13.180.21), possibly from the reign of Amenhotep II or earlier, found re-used in the foundation of the temple of Ramesses IV in Asasif, Upper Egypt, photo, no scale (https://www.metmuseum.org/de/art/collection/search/544720, accessed on 5 September 2024).

Based on the northern Levantine toponyms (e.g., Tunip, Naharin) attested as places of origin for the Levantine men with short hair, beard, and long-sleeved dress in Egyptian iconography, one can easily jump to some tentative conclusions. Namely, the same type of foreigner is depicted among the forces of the Hyksos on the temple relief blocks of king Ahmose from Abydos. Therefore, one could argue that these forces of the Hyksos originate from the northern Levant, especially bearing in mind the strong cultural connections between the Hyksos and the northern Levant (Bietak 2010). Could it then be that the temple relief blocks of king Ahmose from Abydos provide iconographic evidence for this connection? Unfortunately, as tempting as this might be, Egyptian artists were not consistent in attributing iconographic types of foreigners to different toponyms and regions (Matić 2012, 2014a). As already stressed by Silke Hallmann (2006, p. 263), the old idea that Levantine men with short hair, beards, and long-sleeved dresses are Hurrians from the north Levant is not supported by a holistic examination of evidence coming from tribute scenes in private 18th Dynasty Theban tombs. This and other iconographic types of men from Syria–Palestine are attested as coming broadly from Retjenu, so one cannot speak of a correlation between an iconographic type and a more specific ethnic or geographic origin.

6. Conclusions

If the relief blocks from Ahmose's temple are indeed depicting his conflict with the Hyksos, as commonly assumed (Harvey 1994; Harvey 1998; Harvey 2002–2003; Spalinger 2005, pp. 19–22), then the soldiers shown on some of these blocks may represent the Hyksos forces. However, due to the limited number and fragmented state of these blocks, it is challenging to determine whether all of Ahmose's enemies are depicted as Levantines or only some of them. If all the enemies were portrayed in this foreign style, this could imply a deliberate distortion of reality in this monumental funerary temple relief in the service of Theban cultural memory. As Aleida Assmann (2006, pp. 34, 54) noted, cultural memory relies on material carriers such as monuments, texts, and images. We have seen the use of all of these in Theban literary and iconographic construction of the memory of the conflict with the Hyksos (Kamose stelae, self-presentation of Ahmose, son of Ebana in his tomb inscription, Abydos temple, Speos Artemidos royal inscription, *Tale of Apophis and Seqenenre*).

I have stressed throughout this article that the population under Hyksos rule was multi-ethnic and that some Egyptians likely fought in the forces of the Hyksos against the Thebans, just as some Egyptians in Lower Nubia were loyal to the king of Kush. If indeed the relief blocks from Ahmose's temple are deliberately depicting all of the soldiers in the Hyksos forces as foreigners, this would actually go hand in hand with previously mentioned *interpretatio Thebarum*, observable in textual sources from the reign of Kamose onwards. Furthermore, paraphrasing the words of Anderson (1991, p. 204), by eliminating the representation of Egyptian soldiers fighting for the Hyksos king against the king from Thebes, the artists were triggering "profound changes in consciousness, [which] by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias". Aleida Assmann (2006, p. 41) warns against viewing such practices as falsification of historical facts, as these very practices are historical facts with effects in their present and future. As Anderson (1991, p. 6) stressed, "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined". Thus, we should try, as much as possible, to transcend beyond both the Hyksos and the Theban perspective; otherwise, we only replace one biased perspective with another one. However, only the Theban perspective of the conflict remains, and as cliché as it may sound, history is written by the victors and the cultural memory the victors create predominates.

Conversely, if only some enemies of the original battle scene from Abydos temple of Ahmose were depicted as Levantines, it might suggest they were but a faction composed of individuals of Levantine descent and culture residing in Egypt, or possibly a foreign contingent within the Hyksos forces. In the latter scenario, this would be the sole evidence supporting the use of foreign troops by the Hyksos.

Clearly, private tomb inscriptions, royal inscriptions, and literary and visual artistic production of the Thebans played a crucial role in the construction of cultural memory of the Second Intermediate Period. It was necessary to commemorate the victory over the Hyksos and their subjects as a victory of Egyptians over foreigners, although in reality not all subjects of the Hyksos were of foreign descent and the Hyksos saw themselves as legitimate pharaohs of Egypt. Thebans utilized art to change this perception and construct a cultural memory in which there is no place for diversity.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: Data are contained within the article.

Acknowledgments: I am grateful to Kara Cooney and Alisée Devillers for inviting me to contribute to this special issue. My special gratitude goes to Kara Cooney for proofreading the English of this article and making a number of useful suggestions on the content. Last but not the least, I would like to thank three anonymous reviewers for their useful comments and inspiring criticism.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Notes

1. In his seminal work *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* from 1991, Benedict Anderson explores the concept of nation as an "imagined community" because its members will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their community. He places the origin of nationalism in print capitalism (mass production of books and newspapers), language, and literature which fostered a shared sense of belonging transcending local differences. Although many concepts (e.g., nation, print capitalism, mass media) discussed by Anderson cannot be applied to ancient Egypt, his idea that nations are not eternal entities but socially constructed communities proves to be useful because it puts emphasis on collective identities as emergent and changing. The author of this article does not argue that the concept of nation can be used for ancient societies; however, Anderson's concept of imagined community can be utilized to better understand ethnogenesis in the Second Intermediate Period Egypt.
2. Both Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann conducted extensive research on cultural memory in ancient and modern societies, insisting that there are even different cultures of memory, that past emerges through references to them, and that it is constructed through memories which are socially conditioned through communication and interaction (J. Assmann 1997). They argued that forgetting is a cultural strategy and that media of cultural memory have institutionally regulated stability and durability (A. Assmann 2006). Examples will be provided throughout this article.
3. A hypocoristicon (or hypocoristic) is a term used to refer to a pet name, diminutive, or affectionate nickname often derived from a person's given name. These are usually shorter or more familiar versions of the original name, used in informal or intimate contexts. For example, Liz for Elizabeth.
4. There is another example of Egyptians not being loyal to the Theban kings. At least some Egyptians, which inhabited Lower Nubian military forts built by Egyptians in the Middle Kingdom (c. 2055–1650 BCE), continued to live in them after they were taken by the kingdom of Kush. From this point on, these people were in the service of the king of Kush (Cooper 2018, pp. 145–46; Polz 2022, p. 89).

References

Allen, James P. 2002. The Speos Artemidos Inscription of Hatshepsut. *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* 16: 1–17.

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition. London and New York: Verso.

Anthony, Flora Brooke. 2017. *Foreigners in Ancient Egypt: Theban Tomb Paintings from the Early Eighteenth Dynasty (1550–1372 BC)*. London: Bloomsbury.

Arnold, Dorothea. 2008. 65. Dagger. In *Beyond Babylon. Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*. Edited by Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel and Jean M. Evans. New Haven, London and New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, pp. 116–17.

Arnold, Dorothea. 2010. Image and Identity: Egypt's Eastern Neighbours, East Delta People and the Hyksos. In *The Second Intermediate Period (Thirteenth-Seventeenth Dynasties): Current Research, Future Prospects*. Edited by Marcel Marée. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, pp. 183–221.

Aruz, Joan. 2013. Seals and the Imagery of Interaction. In *Cultures in Contact. From Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.* Edited by Joan Aruz, Sarah B. Graff and Yelena Rakic. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, pp. 216–25.

Assmann, Aleida. 2006. *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*. München: C. H. Beck.

Assmann, Jan. 1997. *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*. München: C. H. Beck.

Bader, Bettina. 2021. *Material Culture and Identities in Egyptology. Towards a Better Understanding of Cultural Encounters and their Influence on Material Culture*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. [CrossRef]

Bányai, Michael Gabriel. 2020. Retenu: Between the Fifteenth and the Nineteenth Dynasties, with an Appendix on the Chronology of Tell el-Dab'a. *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 28: 1–36.

Bietak, Manfred. 1996. *Avaris. The Capital of the Hyksos. Recent Excavations at Tell el-Dabᶜa*. London: British Museum Press.

Bietak, Manfred. 2010. From where came the Hyksos and where did they go? In *The Second Intermediate Peiod (Thirteenth-Seventeenth Dynasties). Current Research, Future Prospects*. Edited by Marcel Marée. Leuven: Uigeverij Peeters, pp. 139–81.

Bietak, Manfred. 2018. The Many Ethnicities of Avaris: Evidence from the northern borderland of Egypt. In *From Microcosm to Macrocosm: Individual Households and Cities in Ancient Egypt and Nubia*. Edited by Julia Budka and Johannes Auenmüller. Leiden: Sidestone Press, pp. 73–92.

Bietak, Manfred, and Eugen Strouhal. 1974. Die Todesumstände des Pharaos Seqenenreᶜ (17. Dynastie). *Annalen des Naturhistorischen Museums in Wien* 78: 29–52.

Bourriau, Janine. 2000. The Second Intermediate Period (c.1650–1550 BC). In *Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*. Edited by Ian Shaw. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 172–206.

Breasted, James Henry. 1906. *Ancient Records of Egypt. Vol. II. The Eighteenth Dynasty*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Cagle, Anthony J. 2016. Human Burials at Kom el-Hisn: Chronology and Context. In *Kom el-Hisn (ca. 2500–1900 BC). An Ancient Settlemen in the Nile Delta of Egypt*. Edited by Robert J. Wenke, Richard W. Redding and Anthony J. Cagle. Atlanta: Lockwood Press, pp. 343–62.

Candelora, Danielle. 2017. Defining the Hyksos: A Reevaluation of the Title *ḥḳ3 ḫ3s.wt* and Its Implications for Hyksos Identity. *Journal of the American Research Centre in Egypt* 53: 203–21. [CrossRef]

Candelora, Danielle. 2020. Redefining the Hyksos: Immigration and Identity Negotiation in the Second Intermediate Period. Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, CA, USA.

Chappaz, Jean-Luc, and Susanne Bickel. 2024. *Le Spéos Artémidos*. Cahiers de la Société d'Égyptologie de Genève 16. Genève: Société d'Égyptologie.

Childe, Vere Gordon. 1929. *The Danube in Prehistory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cooper, Julien. 2018. Kushites Expressing 'Egyptian' Kingship: Nubian Dynasties in Hieroglyphic Texts and a Phantom Kushite King. *Ägypten und Levante* XXVIII: 143–67.

Cooper, Julien. 2020. *Toponymy on the Periphery. Placenames of the Eastern Desert, Red Sea, and South Sinai in Egyptian Documents from the Early Dynastic until the End of the New Kingdom*. Probleme der Ägyptologie 39. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

Czerny, Ernst. 1999. *Tell el-Dabʿa IX. Eine Plansiedlung des frühen Mittleren Reiches*. Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Daressy, Georges. 1900. Un poignard du temps des rois pasteurs. *Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Égypte* VII: 115–20.

Davies, Vivian. 2003. Kush in Egypt: A new historical inscription. *Sudan & Nubia* 7: 52–54.

Flammini, Roxana. 2011–2012. Disputed Rulership in Upper Egypt: Reconsidering the Second Stela of Kamose (K2). *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 38: 55–75.

Flammini, Roxana. 2015. Building the Hyksos' Vassals: Some Thoughts on the Definition of the Hyksos Subordination Practices. *Ägypten und Levante* XXV: 233–45.

Forstner-Müller, Irene. 2008. *Tell el-Dabʿa XVI. Die Gräber des Areals A/II von Tell el-Dabʿa*. Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Forstner-Müller, Irene. 2022. The Hyksos State. In *The Oxford History of the Ancient Near East*. Edited by Karen Radner, Nadine Moeller and D. T. Potts. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–47.

Forstner-Müller, Irene, and Wolfang Müller. 2005. Das Phänomen der Waffengräber am Fallbeispiel von Ägypten und Rom. Zur Appropriation militärischer Ausrüstung in Gesellschaften unterschiedlicher Komplexität. In *Synergia. Festschrift für Friedrich Krinzinger II*. Edited by Barbara Brandt, Verena Gassner and Sabine Ladstätter. Wien: Phoibos Verlag, pp. 199–206.

Forstner-Müller, Irene, and Wolfgang Müller. 2006. Die Entstehung des Hyksosstaates. Versuch einer sozioarchäologischen Modellbildung anhand der materiellen Kultur Tell el-Dab'as. In *Timelines. Festschrift Manfred Bietak*. Edited by Ernst Czerny, Irmgard Hein, H. Hunger, Dagmar Melman and Angela Schwab. Leuven: Peeters, pp. 93–102.

Franković, Filip, and Uroš Matić. 2020. The Lion, the Weapon and the Warlord: Historical Evaluation of the Early Late Bronze Age Aegean Iconography. *Ägypten und Levante* XXX: 345–76.

Gardiner, Alan H. 1946. Davies's Copy of the Great Speos Artemidos Inscription. *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 32: 43–56. [CrossRef]

Goedicke, Hans. 1986. *The Quarrel of Apophis and Seqenenre*. San Antonio: Van Siclen.

Gundacker, Roman. 2017. The Significance of Foreign Toponyms and Ethnonyms in Old Kingdom Text Sources. In *The Late Third Millennium in the Ancient Near East. Chronology, C14, and Climate Change*. Edited by Felix Höflmayer. Chicago: The University of Chicago, pp. 333–428.

Habachi, Labib. 1972. *The Second Stela of Kamose and His Struggle Against the Hyksos Ruler and His Capital*. Glückstadt: Verlag J. J. Augustin.

Hallmann, Silke. 2006. *Die Tributszenen des Neuen Reiches*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Harvey, Stephen P. 1994. Monuments of Ahmose at Abydos. *Egyptian Archaeology* 4: 3–5.

Harvey, Stephen P. 1998. The Cults of King Ahmose at Abydos. Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA.

Harvey, Stephen P. 2002–2003. Abydos. In *The Oriental Institute 2002–2003 Annual Report*. Chicago: The University of Chicago.

Ilin-Tomich, Alexander. 2016. Second Intermediate Period. In *UCLA Encyclopaedia of Egyptology*. Edited by Wolfram Grajetzki and Willeke Wendrich. Los Angeles: UCLA, pp. 1–21. Available online: https://escholarship.org/uc/item/72q561r2 (accessed on 5 September 2024).

Ilin-Tomich, Alexander. 2023. *Egyptian Name Scarabs from the 12th to the 15th Dynasty. Geography and Chronology of Production*. Contributions to the Archaeology of Egypt, Nubia and the Levant 16. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Jones, Siân. 1997. *The Archaeology of Ethnicity. Constructing Identities in the Past and Present*. London: Routledge.

Liszka, Kate. 2011. We have come from the well of Ibhet: Ethnogenesis of the Medjay. *Journal of Egyptian History* 4: 149–71. [CrossRef]

Lucy, Sam. 2005. Ethnic and cultural identities. In *The Archaeology of Identity. Approaches to Gender, Age, Status, Ethnicity and Religion*. Edited by Margarita Díaz-Andreu, Sam Lucy, Staša Babić and David N. Edwards. London: Routledge, pp. 86–109.

Manassa, Colleen. 2013. *Imagining the Past: Historical Fiction in New Kingdom Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Matić, Uroš. 2012. Out of the Word and Out of the Picture? Keftiu and Materializations of 'Minoans'. In *Encountering Imagery: Materialities, Perceptions, Relations*. Edited by Ing-Marie Back Danielsson, Fredrik Fahlander and Ylva Sjöstrand. Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, pp. 235–53.

Matić, Uroš. 2014a. "Minoans", *kftjw* and the "islands in the middle of *w3ḏ wr*" beyond ethnicity. *Ägypten und Levante* XXIV: 275–92.

Matić, Uroš. 2014b. "Nubian" Archers in Avaris: A Study of Culture-Historical Reasoning in Archaeology of Egypt. *Etnoantropološki Problemi* 9: 697–712. [CrossRef]

Matić, Uroš. 2015. Was there ever a "Minoan" princess on the Egyptian court? In *A History of Research into Ancient Egyptian Culture Conducted in Southeast Europe*. Edited by Mladen Tomorad. Oxford: Archaeopress, pp. 145–56.

Matić, Uroš. 2018. Execration of Nubians in Avaris: A case of mistaken ethnic identity and hidden archaeological theory. *Journal of Egyptian History* 11: 87–112. [CrossRef]

Matić, Uroš. 2020. *Ethnic Identities in the Land of the Pharaohs. Past and Present Approaches in Egyptology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [CrossRef]

Matić, Uroš. 2023. One step forward, two steps back: Egyptology and the third science revolution. In *Archaeological Theory at the Edge(s)*. Edited by Staša Babić and Monika Milosavljević. Belgrade: University of Belgrade, pp. 135–52.

Matić, Uroš. 2024. Ethnicity of the Hyksos Forces and the Death of Pharaoh Seqenenre Tao. *Etnoantropološki Problemi* 19: 821–49. [CrossRef]

Morris, Ellen. 2020. Machiavellian Masculinities: Historicizing and Contextualizing the "Civilizing Process" in Ancient Egypt. *Journal of Egyptian History* 13: 127–68. [CrossRef]

Mourad, Anna-Latifa. 2015. *Rise of the Hyksos. Egypt and the Levant from the Middle Kingdom to the Early Second Intermediate Period*. Oxford: Archaeopress.

Peirce, Laura. 2024. The Vilification of the Hyksos: A Consideration of the Terminology. *Journal of Egyptian History* 17: 76–134. [CrossRef]

Polz, Daniel. 1998. Theben und Avaris. Zur "Vertreibung" der Hyksos. In *Stationen. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Ägyptens. Rainer Stadelmann gewidmet*. Edited by Heike Guksch and Daniel Polz. Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, pp. 219–31.

Polz, Daniel. 2018. The Territorial Claim and the Political Role of the Theban State at the End of the Second Intermediate Period. A Case Study. In *The Hyksos Ruler Khyan and the Early Second Intermediate Period in Egypt: Problems and Priorities of Current Research, Proceedings of the Workshop of the Austrian Archaeological Institute and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Vienna, July 4–5, 2014*. Edited by Irene Forstner-Müller and Nadine Moeller. Vienna: Holzhausen Der Verlag, pp. 217–33.

Polz, Daniel. 2022. Upper Egypt before the New Kingdom. In *The Oxford History of the Ancient Near East. From the Hyksos to the Late Second Millennium BC. Volume III*. Edited by Karen Radner, Nadine Moeller and D. T. Potts. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 48–100.

Prell, Silvia. 2021. *The Enigma of the Hyksos III: Vorderasiatische Bestattungssitten im Ostdelta Ägyptens–eine Spurensuche*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Quirke, Stephen. 2004. Identifying the officials of the Fifteenth Dynasty. In *Scarabs of the Second Millennium BC from Egypt, Nubia, Crete and the Levant: Chronological and Historical Implications; Papers of a Symposium, Vienna, 10–13 January 2002*. Edited by Manfred Bietak and Ernst Czerny. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 171–193.

Roehrig, Catharine H. 2008. Relief Fragment with Vanquished Enemies. In *Beyond Babylon. Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.* Edited by Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel and Jean M. Evans. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 263.

Ryholt, Kim. 1997. *The Political Situation in Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period c. 1800–1550 B. C.* Copenhagen: The Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Near Eastern Studies.

Saretta, Phyllis. 2016. *Asiatics in Middle Kingdom Egypt: Perceptions and Reality*. London: Bloomsbury.

Schiestl, Robert. 2009. Tell el-Dabʿa XVIII. In *Die Palastnekropolen von Tell el-Dabʿa Die Gräber des Areals F/1 der Straten d/2 und d/1*. Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Schneider, Thomas. 2003a. *Ausländer in Ägypten während des Mittleren Reiches und der Hyksoszeit. Band 1. Die ausländischen Könige*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Schneider, Thomas. 2003b. *Ausländer in Ägypten während des Mittleren Reiches und der Hyksoszeit. Band 2. Die ausländische Bevölkerung*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Sethe, Kurt. 1927. *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie. Historisch-biographische Urkunden aus den Zeiten der Hyksosvertreiber und ihrer Ersten Nachfolger*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung.

Simpson, William Kelly. 2003. The Kamose Texts. In *The Literature of Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 3rd ed. Edited by William Kelly Simpson. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 345–50.

Spalinger, Anthony J. 2005. *War in Ancient Egypt: The New Kingdom*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Spalinger, Anthony J. 2010. Two Screen Plays: "Kamose" and "Apophis and Seqenenre". *Journal of Egyptian History* 3: 115–35. [CrossRef]

Stantis, Chris, Arwa Kharobi, Nina Maaranen, Geoff M. Nowell, Manfred Bietak, Silvia Prell, and Holger Schutkowski. 2020. Who were the Hyksos? Challenging traditional narratives using strontium isotope (87Sr/86Sr) analysis of human remains from ancient Egypt. *PLoS ONE* 15: e0235414. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

Stefanović, Danijela. 2014. The overseer of *mšᶜ* of the section of *nfrw* (stela London BM EA 1822). *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 43: 415–19.

Taterka, Filip. 2017. Military Expeditions of King Hatshepst. In *Current Research in Egyptology 2016: Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Symposium, Jagiellonian University Kraków 2016*. Edited by Julia M. Chyla, Joanna Dębowska-Ludwin, Karolina Rosińska-Balik and Carl Walsh. Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp. 90–106.

Vassiliev, Alexandre. 2020. Upper Retenu and Lower Retenu. In *BEC 4: Proceedings of the Fourth British Egyptology Congress University of Manchester, 7–9 September 2018*. Edited by Carl Graves. London: Egypt Exploration Society, pp. 159–67.

Von Pilgrim, Cornelius. 2015. An Authentication Sealing of the "Ruler of Kush" from Elephantine. In *From the Delta to the Cataract. Studies Dedicated to Mohamed el-Bialy*. Edited by Alejandro Jiménez-Serrano and Cornelius von Pilgrim. Leiden and Boston: Brill, pp. 218–26.

Williams, Bruce Breyer. 2021. Kush in the Wider World during the Kerma Period. In *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*. Edited by Geoff Emberling and Bruce Breyer Williams. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 179–200.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.