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The Political Situation in Egypt
during
the Second Intermediate Period
c. 1800-1550 B.C.

BY
K. S. B. RYHOLT

With an Appendix by
Adam Bülow-Jacobsen

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K. S. B. Ryholt:

The Political Situation in Egypt during
the Second Intermediate Period, c. 1800-1550 B.C.

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PREFACE

The present study is a completely revised and much enlarged version of my M.A. thesis submitted to the Carsten Niebuhr Institute of the University of Copenhagen in July 1993, and accepted in October of the same year. First, I would therefore like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Prof. P. J. Frandsen and Prof. J. Osing, for their advice, guidance and encouragement. Both have kept in close contact with the study until this, its final form, and have offered many useful comments.

Several institutions have kindly put material at my disposal, either allowing me to study it at first hand or by checking material or museum files upon request. In several cases, permission has also generously been granted to cite unpublished material and museum files. For this invaluable aid to my studies, I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. B. Adams (Petrie Museum), Dr. J. P. Allen (Metropolitan Museum of Art), Dr. W. V. Davies (British Museum), Dr. R. Fazzini (Brooklyn Museum), Dr. R. Freed (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), Dr. C. Hunt (Marishall Anthropological Museum, Aberdeen), Prof. J. H. Johnson (Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago), Dr. R. Krauss (Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin), Dr. J. Malek (Griffith Institute archives), Dr. P. R. S. Moorey (Ashmolean Museum), Dr. S. Quirke (British Museum), Mrs. E. Rand-Nielsen (National Museum, Copenhagen), Dr. H. Whitehouse (Ashmolean Museum), Prof. D. Wildung (Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin).

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Among my local colleges, I would like to thank Prof. Aa. Westenholz for his patience and fruitful discussions concerning the foreign names of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Dynasties, and Mr. Bo Dahl Hermansen for many critical and useful comments at various stages of my work. It is also a great pleasure to be able to include the appendix on Tutimaios by Prof. A. Bülow-Jacobsen.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
 INTRODUCTION	
0.1.: Aims	1
0.2.: Source Material	2
0.3.: Procedure and Scope	4
0.4.: Anticipation of Conclusions	5
 PART I, PRIMARY SOURCES FOR THE CHRONOLOGY	
 1.1.: The Turin King-list	
1.1.1.: Brief Description	9
1.1.2.: Credibility: Errors and Omissions	10
-1.: Omission of Kings and Lacunae	10
-2.: Incorrect Ordering of Kings	12
-3.: Incorrect Reign-Lengths	13
-4.: Incorrect Names	16
-5.: Inclusion of Fictitious Kings	17
-6.: Evaluation as a Chronological Source for the SIP	18
1.1.3.: Reconstruction	
-1.: Present State of Reconstruction	19
-2.: Revised Reconstruction of the SIP Section	22
-2.1.: Col. 7	22
-2.2.: Col. 8	23
-2.3.: Col. 9	24
-2.4.: Col. 10	24
-2.5.: Col. 11	26
1.1.4.: Notes on the SIP Section	27
1.1.5.: <i>Excursus</i> : The <i>Vorlage</i> of the Turin King-list	29
1.1.6.: <i>Excursus</i> : The Transmission of the Turin King-list and the Dynastic Divisions	31
 1.2.: Royal Scarab-Shaped Seals	
1.2.1.: Royal Scarab-Shaped Seals of the Thirteenth Dynasty	
-1.: Seals of Kings	34

-1.1.: The Genealogical Type	34
-1.2.: The <i>ntr-nfr</i> Type	37
-1.3.: The P&N Type	37
-2.: Seals of Queens	38
1.2.2.: Royal Scarab-Shaped Seals of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Dynasties	
-1.: Main Group/Sequence	40
-1.1.: Ward's Seriation	40
-1.2.: Criticism of Ward's Seriation	42
-1.3.: Alternative Seriation	43
-1.4.: The Dynastic Relationships of the Kings	46
-2.: Secondary Group	
-2.1.: Seals of Kings	51
-2.2.: Seals of Royal Women	53
-2.3.: Seals of Kings' Sons	54
-2.3.1.: <i>Excursus</i> : The Title <i>s3-nsw/r^c</i>	59
-2.4.: Seals of Treasurers	59
1.2.3.: Scarab-Shaped Seals Misinterpreted as Royal Seals of the SIP	
-1.: Legend <i>3w-ib-r^c</i>	62
-2.: Legend <i>h^c-htp-r^c</i>	63
-3.: Legend <i>3-wsr-r^c</i>	64
-4.: Legend <i>nb-hpš-r^c</i>	64
-5.: Legend <i>r^c-htp</i>	65
-6.: Legend <i>nbw-hpr-r^c</i> and <i>dsr-hpr-r^c</i>	65

PART II, DEFINING THE DYNASTIES OF THE SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

2.1.: Thirteenth Dynasty (Memphis)

2.1.1.: Kings

-1.: Turin King-list	69
-2.: Other Sources	70
-3.: Summary	72
-4.: Notes on the Transcription of the Turin King-list	74

2.1.2.: Territory

-1.: Domain	75
-2.: Residence	79
-3.: Royal Necropolis	80
-4.: Foreign Relations	84

2.2.: Fourteenth Dynasty (Avaris)

2.2.1.: Kings

-1.: King Nehsy	94
-2.: Turin King-list	94

-3.: Seriation of Royal Seals	96
-4.: Summary	97
-5.: Notes on the Transcription of the Turin King-list	99
-6.: Origin of the Fourteenth Dynasty	99
2.2.2.: Territory	
-1.: Domain	103
-2.: Residence	103
-3.: Royal Necropolis	105
-4.: Foreign Relations	105
-5.: <i>Excursus</i> : Lack of Monuments	116
2.3.: Fifteenth Dynasty (Avaris)	
2.3.1.: Kings	
-1.: Turin King-list	118
-2.: Other Sources	119
-3.: The Use of the Title <i>hk3-h3swt</i>	123
-4.: Summary	125
-5.: Origin of the Fifteenth Dynasty	126
2.3.2.: Territory	
-1.: Domain	130
-2.: Residence	137
-3.: Royal Necropolis	138
-4.: Foreign Relations	138
2.3.3.: <i>Excursus</i> : Looting of Conquered Areas	143
2.3.4.: <i>Excursus</i> : So-called 'Hyksos Religion'	148
2.4.: Sixteenth Dynasty (Thebes)	
2.4.1.: Kings	
-1.: Turin King-list	151
-2.: Other Sources	156
-3.: Summary	157
-4.: Notes on the Transcription of the Turin King-list	158
2.4.2.: Territory	
-1.: Domain	159
-2.: Residence	160
-3.: Royal Necropolis	160
-4.: Foreign Relations	162
2.5.: Abydos Dynasty (Abydos)	
2.5.1.: Kings	
-1.: Wepwawemsaf, Pantjeny, Snaaib	163
-2.: Turin King-list	164

-3.: Summary	164
2.5.2.: Territory	
-1.: Residence	165
-2.: Royal Necropolis	165
-3.: Domain	165
-4.: Foreign Relations	166
2.6.: Seventeenth Dynasty (Thebes)	
2.6.1.: Kings	
-1.: Sources	167
-2.: Order of Kings	168
-3.: Summary	171
2.6.2.: Territory	
-1.: Domain	171
-2.: Residence	174
-3.: Royal Necropolis	176
-4.: Foreign Relations	176
2.7.: CHRONOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS	
2.7.1.: The Chronological Framework	184
2.7.2.: The External Chronology	186
-1.: Fifteenth Dynasty	186
-2.: Sixteenth Dynasty	189
-3.: Seventeenth Dynasty	189
-4.: Thirteenth Dynasty	190
-5.: Fourteenth Dynasty	190
-6.: Abydos Dynasty	191
-7.: Summary	191
2.7.3.: The Internal Chronology	
-1.: Thirteenth Dynasty	191
-1.1.: Turin King-list	192
-1.2.: Contemporary Sources	192
-1.3.: Accession Dates of Specific Kings	194
-1.4.: Estimated Average Reign-lengths	195
-1.5.: Summary	196
-2.: Fourteenth Dynasty	198
-2.1.: Turin King-list	198
-2.2.: Estimated Reign-lengths of the First Five Kings	198
-2.3.: Estimated Average Reign-lengths of the Other Kings	199
-2.4.: Summary	200
-3.: Fifteenth Dynasty	201
-4.: Sixteenth Dynasty	201
-5.: Abydos Dynasty	202
-6.: Seventeenth Dynasty	203

PART III, THE ROYAL FAMILIES AND THE BACKGROUND OF THE KINGS

3.1.: Aim	207
3.2.: Filiative Nomina	207
3.3.: Thirteenth Dynasty	
3.3.1.: Amenemhet III, Amenemhet IV, Nofrusobk, Sobkhotep I, Sonbef	209
3.3.2.: Amenemhet V, Qemaw, Siharnedjheritef, Jewefni, Amenemhet VI	214
3.3.3.: Sobkhotep II	215
3.3.4.: Ranisonb	216
3.3.5.: Hor, Khabaw, Djedkheperew	216
3.3.6.: Seb, Kay, Amenemhet VII	219
3.3.7.: Wegaf	219
3.3.8.: Khendjer	220
3.3.9.: Imyremeshaw	221
3.3.10.: Sobkhotep III	222
3.3.11.: Neferhotep I, Sihathor, Sobkhotep IV	225
3.3.12.: Sobkhotep V (Merhotepre)	231
3.3.13.: Sobkhotep VI (Khahotepre)	233
3.3.14.: Aya, Ini	233
3.3.15.: Sobkhotep VII (Merkawre)	235
3.3.16.: Monthhotep V (Sewedjare)	236
3.3.17.: Sankhptahi	238
3.3.18.: Unidentified /Senior Queen Nubkhaes	239
3.3.19.: Unidentified /Queen, King's Mother Ahhotepi	242
3.3.20.: Unidentified /Queen, King's Mother Senet	242
3.3.21.: Unidentified /Queen Aya	243
3.3.22.: Unidentified /Queen Nofret	246
3.3.23.: Unidentified /King's Mother Jewhetibew and God's Father Dedusobk ...	246
3.3.24.: Unidentified /King's Son Sobkhotep and King's Daughter Ranisonb	248
3.3.25.: Unidentified /King's Daughter Dedetamen	249
3.3.26.: Unidentified /King's Daughter Neferhotep	249
3.3.27.: Unidentified /King's Daughter Nofru	250
3.3.28.: Unidentified /King's Daughter I[.....]	251
3.4.: Fourteenth Dynasty	
3.4.1.: Yakbim	251
3.4.2.: Sheshi, Nehsy	252
3.4.3.: Ya'qub-Har	254
3.4.4.: Apophis I (?)	255
3.4.5.: Unidentified /King's Mother 'Atti	255
3.5.: Fifteenth Dynasty	
3.5.1.: Khayan	256
3.5.2.: Apophis	256
3.6.: Sixteenth Dynasty	
3.6.1.: Djehuty	259
3.6.2.: Monthhotepi	261
3.6.3.: Nebiryraw I, Nebiryraw II	261

3.6.4.: Dedumose I, Dedumose II	262
3.6.5.: Unidentified /King's Sister Jewef	263
3.6.6.: Unidentified /King's Daughter [.....]	263
3.7.: Abydos Dynasty	
3.7.1.: Pantjeny	264
3.8.: Seventeenth Dynasty	
3.8.1.: Rahotep	265
3.8.2.: Sobkemsaf I, Antef VI, Antef VII, Antef VIII	266
3.8.3.: Sobkemsaf II	272
3.8.4.: Senakhtenre, Seqenenre, Kamose, Ahmose	272
3.8.5.: Unidentified /King's Son Ibiaw	280
3.9.: Notes on Succession	
3.9.1.: Thirteenth Dynasty	282
-1.: <i>Excursus</i> : Family Lists and Genealogical Seals	284
3.9.2.: Fourteenth Dynasty	286
-1.: <i>Excursus</i> : A Note on the Role of the King's Sons attested by Seals	287
3.9.3.: Fifteenth Dynasty	288
3.9.4.: Sixteenth Dynasty	289
3.9.5.: Seventeenth Dynasty	289

PART IV, AN OUTLINE OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION DURING THE SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

4.1.: The Early Second Intermediate Period (c. 1805-1649 B.C.)	293
4.1.1.: The Late Twelfth Dynasty	293
4.1.2.: The Thirteenth and the Fourteenth Dynasties	295
-1.: The General Situation	295
-2.: The Thirteenth Dynasty	296
-2.1.: Sobkhotep - Seth	296
-2.2.: Sobkhotep III - Sobkhotep IV	297
-2.3.: Sobkhotep V - Aya	298
-2.4.: Ini - end of dynasty	298
-3.: The Fourteenth Dynasty	299
-3.1.: Yakbim - Sheshi	299
-3.2.: Nehsy - end of dynasty	299
4.2.: The Late Second Intermediate Period (c. 1649-1540 B.C.)	301
4.2.1.: The Early Fifteenth, the Sixteenth, and the Abydos Dynasties	301
-1.: The General Situation	301
-2.: The Early Fifteenth Dynasty	302
-3.: The Abydos Dynasty	304
-4.: The Sixteenth Dynasty	304
4.2.2.: The Late Fifteenth and the Seventeenth Dynasties	306
-1.: The General Situation	306

-2.: The Late Fifteenth Dynasty	307
-3.: The Seventeenth Dynasty	308
4.3.: The Term 'Second Intermediate Period'	310

PART V, APPENDICES

5.1.: Appendix I: The First King of the Thirteenth Dynasty	315
5.1.1.: Background to the Discussion	315
5.1.2.: Examination of Sources	316
-1.: Kings with the Prenomen Sekhemrekhutawy	316
-2.: Wegaf and Amenemhet VII	317
-3.: Khabaw and Hor	318
-4.: Nerikare	318
-5.: Pap. Bulaq 18	319
5.1.3.: Conclusion	319
5.1.4.: <i>Excursus</i> : The Sequence of Nile-Records Dating to the Thirteenth Dynasty	320
-1.: The Accession Date of Sonbef	321
5.2.: Appendix II: The Uronarti Context	321
5.3.: Appendix III: The Supposed Existence of Vassal Kings during the SIP	323
5.3.1.: The Semitic Kings	323
5.3.2.: The Seventeenth Dynasty	325
5.3.3.: The Kushite Kingdom	326
5.4.: Appendix IV: The Abdication of Tutimaios? <i>By Adam Bülow-Jacobsen</i>	327

PART VI, CATALOGUE OF ATTESTATIONS

Arrangement	333
Thirteenth Dynasty	336
Fourteenth Dynasty	359
Fifteenth Dynasty	383
Sixteenth Dynasty	388
Abydos Dynasty	392
Seventeenth Dynasty	392
Unattributed	400

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES	407
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ABBREVIATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	411
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INDICES

Museographical Index to the Catalogue of Attestations	436
Royal Names in Transliteration	448
Kings of the Second Intermediate Period	451
Other Kings and Rulers	456

Other Royal Persons of the Second Intermediate Period	457
Officials and Privates of the Second Intermediate Period	460
Selected Titles and Designations	462
Miscellaneous	463

Introduction

§0.1

Aims

The Second Intermediate Period, covering the time span between the Twelfth and the Eighteenth Dynasties (c. 1800-1550 B.C.) has in common with the other two intermediate periods of Egyptian history (viz. the First and Third Intermediate Periods) that it is an epoch on which research is still in its pioneer stages.¹ It is not entirely clear how many kingdoms existed during the period, and those that are known are poorly defined insofar as both their territorial and chronological extent remains uncertain. Moreover, the succession of kings belonging to these kingdoms is filled with lacunae, and the identity of many of the rulers is obscure while others are mere names whose deeds remain unknown.

In 1964, Jürgen von Beckerath published his *Untersuchungen zur politischen Geschichte der Zweiten Zwischenzeit in Ägypten* (ÄF 23; Glückstadt), which has since remained the main work of reference concerning the political situation in Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period. Von Beckerath's study marked a considerable advance in comparison with its predecessor, Hans Stock's *Studien zur Geschichte und Archäologie der 13. bis 17. Dynastie Ägyptens, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Skarabäen dieser Zwischenzeit* (ÄF 12; Glückstadt 1942), which, as the title implies, was based mainly upon a study of scarab-shaped seals. It proceeded more methodically, was far more detailed, and paid special attention to many important aspects which were completely neglected by Stock. A further merit was the inclusion of a 'Belegliste' or catalogue, in which von Beckerath listed all sources that he knew to mention kings of the Second Intermediate Period.

In the 33 years since von Beckerath's publication, new material has come to light and a number of specialized studies on individual aspects of the Second Intermediate Period have appeared. In particular, the Austrian excavations at Tell el-Dab'a which began in 1966, just a few years after the publication of von Beckerath's study, and which still continue today, 30 years later, have brought forth a wealth of important information concerning the conditions in the western Delta throughout the entire Second Intermediate Period. Much of the older material has also been subject to reinterpretation, despite Helck's assertion in his review of von Beckerath's study (*AfO* 22, 97) that: 'Das

1. There is at present no scholarly agreement on a formal definition of the Second Intermediate Period; this includes disagreement as to which and how many dynasties the term covers, and uncertainty as to its chronological extent. It has even been questioned most recently whether it is meaningful to maintain this designation at all. These questions are dealt with in Part II and §4.3 where the definition here given is reached.

gezeichnete Bild werden kaum neue Überlegungen, sondern nur neues Material ändern können.'

The present study sets out to present a new and comprehensive model for the political situation in Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period by trying to identify, define and give a general description of the nature of the kingdoms that existed during this period and to establish their chronological and regional extent, including foreign relations. The main purpose of the study is to gather and discuss relevant material and thereby to provide an up-to-date framework for reference. The study does in no way claim to exhaust the available source material or even to include all possible categories of source material. There is far too much material that remains to be studied in detail and will require entire projects of their own. This material includes virtually all classes of purely archaeological material, such as studies of individual ceramic wares and other artifacts, burial and settlement patterns, etc., which have much to offer concerning social and political conditions. For dating purposes, epigraphy and art history will be of tremendous importance. Fortunately, several important and promising studies are presently being undertaken in these fields.

§0.2

Source Material

The Second Intermediate Period remains one of the most obscure periods of Egyptian history. This situation is not due entirely to a scarcity of source material as such, since certain phases at least of the Second Intermediate Period are fairly well represented both archaeologically and textually, but rather to the nature of the textual sources. Most of the latter are monuments produced for officials and remarkably few attest to the numerous kings of the period. The textual sources, moreover, provide us with surprisingly few points of historical interest. Accordingly, there is little material through which the individual dynasties can be identified and defined, and this has generally led to over-generalizations based on sources which may not be representative of the period as a whole, and an intensive use of non-contemporary sources. These latter include especially the Turin King-list, the Manethonian tradition,² the two literary texts 'Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage' and 'the Quarrel of Apophis and Seqenenre', and the 'Four Hundred Year Stela'. Most of these sources have been used without a proper examination of their source value; and progress in the study of the Second Intermediate Period, as regards its definition, has long been obstructed by scholars clinging to the corrupt and unreliable Manethonian tradition rather than confronting the diffuse and often much more difficult contemporary sources available.³ As regards Manetho, it remains unknown what sources

2. The term *Manethonian tradition* is used to designate the different copies of Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* and the extracted *Epitome*.

3. A typical example is the recent study of Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel*, which boldly claims to present the royal succession of 'the Historical Fifteenth Dynasty' (p. 110) by a trivial identification of the garbled names of the six Fifteenth Dynasty rulers in the Manethonian tradition, while simply dismissing the attempt

he used and whether these were reliable, and we depend on copies at the bottom end of a long line of transmission where numerous errors have crept in and where redactions have been made for various purposes. Similarly, the exact purpose of the 'Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage' and the 'Four Hundred Year Stela' remains unknown, and 'the Quarrel of Apophis and Seqenenre' is simply a narrative.⁴ Since there is an obvious margin for error in using such non-contemporary sources in reconstructing history, their use is restricted in the present study to the Turin King-list.

The inclusion of the Turin King-list is not a matter of choice but of necessity, since it would at present be impossible to undertake a study of the kind intended here without this document. The order, reign-lengths, and even the very existence of many kings cannot be established from the contemporary sources as yet available and are known only from the Turin King-list. A consequence of making use of this non-contemporary source is, however, that a large part of the present work will stand or fall with the accuracy of this list which, it will be shown, is not without error. It is therefore inevitable that this study should include a critical examination of this document.

Among the contemporary sources, one particularly informative body of material, the significance of which has been gravely neglected and underestimated, consists of the vast numbers of private and royal seals of the period. When properly examined, these seals provide invaluable information especially as regards chronology, administrative patterns and foreign relations, just to mention those areas that are relevant to the present study. In this respect, the two recent corpora of scarab-shaped seals published by G. T. Martin and O. Tufnell have been of paramount importance, and equally so the study of royal seals by W. A. Ward, while the catalogue of the Basel collections by E. Hornung and E. Staehelin deserves praise for its excellent standard.⁵ The royal scarab-shaped seals form the second main source for chronology in the present work.

by Ward (Tufnell, *Studies*, II, 162-173) to establish the succession on the basis of contemporary sources through a seriation of royal seals. In another study, Redford (*Orientalia* 39, 1-51) embarks upon a lengthy and problematic defence of Josephus' account of the Hyksos invasion and concludes that all the information which he believes to be correct in Josephus' account was taken from the genuine Manetho and all that evidently is incorrect was taken from a pseudo-Manetho, thus implying that all the sources to which Manetho had access were reliable and that he misunderstood nothing. Most recently, a defence of the validity of the Manethonian tradition has been presented by Greenberg (*DE* 25, 21-29), who concludes that '*Manetho was well acquainted with the events of the Second Intermediate Period and presented a highly accurate account of the dynastic chronology*'. In fact, the article consists entirely of a manipulation of the corrupt figures preserved in the Manethonian tradition and the conclusions are not the least convincing; the author argues, for instance, that the Thirteenth Dynasty lasted less than 69 years while there is no disagreement today among scholars that it lasted more than a century.

4. The text has recently been reedited by Goedicke (*Apophis and Seqenenre*)⁶ who states that his new rendering '*elevates the text from an apparently capricious fairy tale to a major historical source*' (*ibid.* 32), but most of his interpretations are speculative in the extreme and not generally accepted. For a more reliable treatment, see Wentz, *Literature of Ancient Egypt*² (ed. Simpson), 77-80. A bibliography of the text may be found in Bellion, *Cat. des manuscrits*, 343.

5. Martin, *Seals*; Tufnell, *Studies*, II; Ward, in Tufnell, *Studies*, II, 151-192. The important study of Ward-Dever, *Studies*, III, unfortunately arrived too late to be included here in more than a very cursory fashion.

Procedure and Scope

The study is divided into six parts.

Part I presents an examination and evaluation of the two main sources used to establish an internal chronology for the Second Intermediate Period, the Turin King-list and the contemporary royal seals.

In Part II, the individual dynasties of the Second Intermediate Period are defined. The definition centres upon which kings may be ascribed to the individual dynasties, and their territorial and chronological extent. The dynastic arrangement and the order of individual kings are based primarily on the Turin King-list, but where relevant contemporary sources are available, these are given priority. On the basis of the distribution of, and textual information gained from, objects inscribed with the names of the kings and officials belonging to the individual dynasties, an attempt is made to define the territorial extent of the separate dynasties, as well as their residences and royal necropolises. The significance of the location of the royal necropolis is that it usually seems to have been located near the royal residence and therefore gives a clue to the location of the latter. An attempt to establish the foreign relations of the individual dynasties is also made, but only in the most general terms. As noted by Kemp and Merrillees in their treatment of Minoan pottery in Egypt,⁶ the foreign relations of ancient civilizations are far easier to establish than to explain, and it would certainly require a study of its own to describe the nature of the relations in detail and what commodities were traded.⁷ The external chronology of the Second Intermediate Period is based on the dated astronomical observations available for the Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom. The internal chronology is based primarily on the King-list and contemporary dated material.

Part III contains a discussion of the background and family of the individual kings in order to detect patterns of royal succession and to provide a view of that political aspect of the period.

In Part IV a historical outline of the political situation in Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period is presented, based on the results arrived at in the preceding sections.

Part V consists of four appendices which contain discussions of subjects that are essential for reference in Part I and II but are too long to be included in footnotes and would disturb the line of argument if included in the main text. Appendices I and II deal with chronological matters, Appendix III with the existence of vassal kings, and Appendix IV with the supposed king Tutimaio of Josephus.

Part VI contains a catalogue of all attestations of kings of the Second Intermediate Period known to the author. It is hoped that this catalogue will facilitate future research.

Bibliography and indices follow.

6. Kemp - Merrillees, *Minoan Pottery*, 268.

7. For commodities imported from the Levant, see esp. Helck, *Beziehungen*², 380-427.

Anticipation of Conclusions

Owing to the nature of this study, where many arguments depend upon one another and where many cross-references are therefore essential in order to proceed in a methodical manner, it is necessary to anticipate some of its conclusions to facilitate its use.

The Second Intermediate Period is here divided into six dynasties. These dynasties are designated as the Thirteenth to Seventeenth Dynasties, in order to maintain the usual numbers employed for this period, and the Abydos Dynasty. The definitions and arrangement of these dynasties does, however, differ substantially from previous studies. Briefly summing up the conclusions reached in Part II, the six dynasties are defined thus:

(1) Thirteenth Dynasty: Memphite kings. It is the direct continuation of the Twelfth Dynasty, after the rise of a rival Canaanite Dynasty in the Delta (the Fourteenth Dynasty). The dynasty falls with the conquest of Memphis by the Fifteenth Dynasty. Its kings rule the whole of Egypt except for that part of the Delta which was occupied by the Fourteenth Dynasty. Trade with the Levant, Fourteenth Dynasty Egypt and Nubia.

(2) Fourteenth Dynasty: Canaanite kings with their residence at Avaris contemporary with the Thirteenth Dynasty. The dynasty came into being when the Canaanite population in the Delta proclaimed its own ruler during the reign of Nofrusobk, after having gradually seceded from the rest of Egypt during the late Twelfth Dynasty. The rise of this dissident dynasty and the subsequent division of Egypt ushered in the Second Intermediate Period. The dynasty falls with the conquest of Avaris by the Fifteenth Dynasty. Trade with the Levant, Thirteenth Dynasty Egypt and Nubia.

(3) Fifteenth Dynasty: Canaanite kings with their residence at Avaris succeeding the Fourteenth Dynasty. The dynasty arose with the conquest of Avaris by an invading *hk3-h3swt* who subsequently settled himself and his people in the Delta and thus became the founder of the Fifteenth Dynasty. It falls with the conquest of Avaris by Ahmose. Mainly trade with Canaan and Cyprus. War against the southern Egyptian dynasties (viz. the Sixteenth, Abydos, and Seventeenth Dynasties), except for shorter periods of peace during which there were also relations with Nubia.

(4) Sixteenth Dynasty: A Theban dynasty which came into being in the power vacuum created in Upper Egypt by the fall of the Thirteenth Dynasty.⁸ It falls with the conquest of Thebes by the Fifteenth Dynasty. Contemporary with the first two-thirds of the Fifteenth Dynasty. Scanty indications of relations with Nubia, otherwise no trace of foreign relations.

(5) Abydos Dynasty: A dynasty at Abydos which came into being simultaneously

8. On the basis of Africanus, who defines this dynasty as consisting of 'Shepherd (i.e. Hyksos) kings', the Sixteenth Dynasty has previously been defined as Semitic vassal kings of the Fifteenth Dynasty ruling within the Delta. In §5.3, it is argued that no such kings existed. Accordingly, the designation 'Sixteenth Dynasty' becomes vacant and is used in the present study to designate the first Theban Dynasty. Incidentally, it may be noted that Eusebius in fact defines the Sixteenth Dynasty as Theban. It is therefore possible that his version provides a more reliable version of the Manethonian Epitome as far as this dynasty is concerned. This would presuppose that Manetho divided the Theban kings of the Late Second Intermediate Period into two dynasties, one prior to and one subsequent to the Fifteenth Dynasty conquest of Thebes, as in the present study.

with the Sixteenth Dynasty in the power vacuum created in Upper Egypt by the fall of the Thirteenth Dynasty. Ephemeral and obscure.

(6) Seventeenth Dynasty: A Theban dynasty subsequent to the Fifteenth Dynasty's withdrawal from Thebes and southern Egypt. It becomes the Eighteenth Dynasty with the unification of Egypt under Ahmose. Contemporary with the last third of the Fifteenth Dynasty. Relations with Nubia and perhaps also the Fifteenth Dynasty during a period of peace. War against the Fifteenth Dynasty and the Kushites from the reign of Seqenenre.

The relative arrangement of the dynasties is presented below:

Time	Thebes	Abydos	Memphis	Avaris
1800			Twelfth Dynasty	
			Thirteenth Dynasty	Fourteenth Dynasty
1650	Sixteenth Dynasty	Abyd. Dyn.		Fifteenth Dynasty
1580	Seventeenth Dynasty			
1550	Eighteenth Dynasty			

Table 1: Chronological/Geographical Arrangement of the Dynasties of the Second Intermediate Period.