The Role of War and Violence in the Formation of the Ancient Egyptian State

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DECLARATION

I, Adam Fazzolari, certify that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

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Summary

The formation of the Egyptian state is one of the most widely debated topics within the study of Early Egypt. Scholars have argued a variety of factors for state origins including agriculture, kinship and trade, but none has been more prolific than war. This study aims to investigate a wide variety of evidence for warfare in order to clarify the role and impact it had on the origin of the state. Discussions are sourced from three different areas which include anthropological theories and concepts, archaeological evidence and iconographic data. An understanding is therefore generated on the basis of both the theory and the evidence which indicates that warfare was not a major factor of state formation in Egypt. Although evidence for violence is present in the Predynastic Period, archaeological remains are consistent with conflict, not war. This suggests that while *violence* played a role, it was not to the extent of full-scale warfare. An analysis of violent motifs within the iconographic remains supports this hypothesis as depictions appear to be symbolic representations of the power of the king rather than depictions of warfare itself. A brief investigation into the presence of warfare during cultural and political unification which were important precursor to the state shows that war was not a factor in these evolutionary processes either.

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Introduction

'It is essential that scholarship should no longer concentrate on a few remarkable objects…but try to gain in integral view of the whole…'[1]

One of the most persistent queries within Egyptological studies centres around the formation of the ancient Egyptian state. A fundamental part of the success and power which was exhibited throughout Egypt's history, the state was a political institution used as a means of control, allowing for the creation of an organised hierarchical structure throughout society, while at the same time acting as a tool to legitimize the power of the ruling elite. Events which led to the creation of a single unified state under one ruler, however, continue to remain a mystery. The event is thought to have occurred around 3100BC during the reign of Narmer, the first king of both Upper and Lower Egypt, and is often associated with the unification of the two lands (*sm3 t3.wy*).[2] Over time a variety of theories have been presented on this matter including agriculture,[3] craft specialisation[4] and cultural assimilation,[5] however thematically one concept has been given the most attention; that of war.[6] While archaeological evidence for war in Egypt is lacking, the concept of war as a major component in the origin of world states has proved to be popular amongst anthropologists, a factor which no doubt has encouraged its presence in Egyptological studies. Early iconographic representations on Egyptian artefacts including the Narmer palette have been interpreted by Egyptologists such as Marcello Campagno in order to

[1] Smith (1974: ix).
[2] Köhler (2011: 123).
[3] Wittfogel (1957).
[4] Köhler (2011: 123-125).
[5] Kaiser (1957: 69, 74); Kaiser (1964: 105-118).
[6] Petrie (1920: 49); Petrie (1939: 77); Emery (1967: 38); Carneiro (1970: 733-738); Needler (1984: 30-31); Bard & Carneiro (1989:15-23); Gilbert (2004); Campagno (2004: 691-697); Campagno (2011 : 1229-1242) are some of those who mention warfare as a factor in state origins.

suggest that war was a prime factor in the creation of a centralised state.[7]A lack of physical remains pertaining to war however, including semiotics of destruction, mass burials, skeletal wounds, fortifications and weaponry means that this theory is difficult, at this point in time, to prove conclusively. While the absence of physical evidence for warfare suggests a possible peaceful origin to the Egyptian state, the presence of iconographic imagery representing violent conflict throughout Egypt cannot be ignored and it is here that the crux of this thesis finds its origins.

The majority of scholarship within the field of Egyptian state origins fails to combine three essential characteristics to its study; anthropological theories and concepts, archaeological evidence and iconographic evidence. Works, pertaining to war often cite only one of these categories, while more in depth studies usually combine only two.[8]The objective of this project is to add to this discussion by providing a comprehensive analysis of each of these three features, allowing for a comparison of each evidence type. It is hoped that through collecting and analysing a wide range of data that a comprehensive analysis of evidence for war itself will be accomplished, thus providing further clarity to this century-long argument.

The chronological parameters of this study focus on the Late Predynastic period, from Naqada IIC/D (3500 BC), until the beginning of the 1st Dynasty around Naqada IIIC/D (3100 BC), albeit references will at times refer to periods both before and after this. The parameters were chosen in terms of major events associated with warfare and state

[7] Campagno (2004: 1230).

[8] It should be mentioned that while this applies to a majority, it does not apply to all. Examples can be seen in Gilbert (2004) along with Campagno & Bard (1989) which combine all three of these factors in their studies of war and Egyptian state formation, while Campagno (2004; 2011) combines both archaeological and iconographical evidence.

formation, notably the Naqada expansion and the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt under Narmer.

Date in Years BC	Relative Chronology
ca. 2900 onwards	Naqada IIID
ca. 3000-2900	Naqada IIIC2
ca. 3100-3000	Naqada IIIC1
ca. 3300-3100	Naqada IIIA1-IIIB
ca. 3650-3300	Naqada IIC-IID2
ca. 3900-3650	Naqada IA-IIB

Figure 1: Chronology of Early Egypt[9]

Methodology

This study is centred on the analysis of a wide-range of evidence relating to warfare at the time of state formation in Egypt, with data being collected from a variety of sources including site reports, museum catalogues, journal articles, theses and books. Of importance to this study is the distinction between anthropology and archaeology. While anthropology of warfare and the state focus largely on theoretical issues, archaeology focusses on the physical remains. For this reason, a cross-disciplinary approach has been applied to this project within the context of ancient Egypt. This is a method proposed by Jiménez-Serrano who suggests that 'in order to clarify the origin of the state from a historical point of view,

[9] Hendrickx (1996: 64).

we must confront anthropological concepts with the different archaeological remains.[10] This method has proved beneficial to this study in that it has allowed for a holistic approach, generating the ability for an in-depth understanding of the evidence and the issues involved. By analysing various state formation theories and engaging in discussions of terminology, a better contextual understanding of the physical evidence has been attainable, allowing the following questions to be answered within this thesis:

- What is the state in Egypt?
- What do the theories of war say about its role in Egyptian state origins?
- What is the difference between conflict and warfare, and is it important?
- What evidence do we have for war or conflict in the late Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods of Egypt?
- What was the impact and extent of conflict at this time?
- Does the Naqada expansion show evidence of conflict, or cultural assimilation?
- 'Is violence locally contained or is there evidence of violence between Egypt and its neighbouring countries?
- Can we determine the role of individuals within the evidence and to what extent?

  and
- Does the archaeological evidence for war correlate with the iconographic inscriptions?

These questions have been regarded systematically, with theory behind the state and the scholarship surrounding it being discussed first in order to place this research into context (Chapter 1).The analysis of previous works within the field of state formation focusses on different models, approaches and changing trends from 1920 to the most current

[10] Jiménez Serrano (2008: 1120).

publications. Next, attention is given to important terminology which has failed to form part of adequate discussion within Egyptological studies, yet is integral to our understanding of both the topic and the evidence. Both the terms *war* and *state* are used far too liberally in studies regarding the dynastic origins of Egypt and a definition is therefore provided (Chapter 2). This is then followed by an analysis of the most influential model for warfare in state origins, the circumscription theory elaborated by Robert L. Carneiro, which, while initially proposed as a model for state formation in the Andes, was later applied to Egypt by R.L. Carneiro and K.A. Bard.[11]

Chapter 3 discusses the collection of data available to Egyptologists from the archaeological record, with each evidence-type being discussed individually. Many publications which discuss archaeological remains of war in predynastic Egypt refer to major finds, such as unique examples of weaponry and important artefacts, however archaeological evidence for war is relatively scarce meaning an extensive range of evidence is able to be considered in this project. The evidence types which will be investigated include weapons, human remains, semiotics of destruction, mass burials, defensive walls and few artefacts. Architectural remains of a fortification have also recently been found outside of Egypt in Gaza belonging to Predynastic Egyptians,[12] suggesting the presence of some form of foreign conflict during this period, but to what extent has not yet been fully discussed and will therefore receive attention in this study.

[11] Carneiro (1970: 733-738); Bard & Carneiro (1989:15-23)
[12] Miroschedji (2000).

Following this is a discussion of various types of iconographic remains (Chapter4). Due to the limitations of a project this size, not all remains can be described, therefore the most contextually appropriate ones have been discussed, chosen by their date and the imagery depicted on them. As writing had not developed in the Naqada II (3600-3300 BC) or early Naqada III (3300-3200) periods these remains constitute the most exhaustive records of violence, or at least the concept of violence, in the Predynastic period. Iconographic representations found on white cross line ware from tomb U-239 at Abydos (3700 BC)[13] and on the Narmer palette (3000 BC)[14] reveal images of a king or a leader in violent poses, subjugating his enemies along with enemy captives. In addition to this, inscriptions on a variety of pottery showing victory scenes[15] and a wall painting from tomb 100[16] each represent conflict, while other artefacts include a decorated knife handle,[17] a model wall,[18] rock inscriptions[19] and weapons[20] amongst others which show scenes of conflict. While these examples by no means constitute the full assemblage of iconographic representations pertaining to war in the predynastic period, they are important for this preliminary discussion. Iconography can be explained as being concerned with "the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their form"[21] and is therefore often considered cautiously by archaeologists. However, the majority of scholarship surrounding the role of war on Egyptian state formation tends to heavily favour the iconographical evidence. The decorated palettes alone have fallen victim to vigorous analysis and re-analysis by scholars

[13] Dreyer et al (1998: 114: pl. 6d).
[14] Quibel & Green (1900: PL. XXVI-XXIX).
[15] Hendrickx (2012: 75-81).
[16] Quibell & Green (1902: 20-21).
[17] Emery (1961: 60).
[18] Petrie (1901: 32).
[19] Darnell (2002).
[20] Campagno (2004).
[21] Panofsky (1955: 26).

and it is this repetitive cycle that marks the need for a shift within the study of war and its impact on state origins if any further progress is to be made.

It is intended that by applying this methodology both the archaeological remains and the iconography will be considered equally, rather than favouring one evidence type over the other. This method will prove the most effective way to provide a comprehensive understanding of what little available evidence we have for war or violence and combining the two evidence types will prove essential in providing the most informed interpretation of the remains. While it must be noted that archaeology is never one hundred per cent accurate, combining the evidence has revealed a broader picture to the extent of violence at this time, along with a greater understanding of the iconography. The study then concludes with a discussion of the results of this analysis, with suggestions being made for future research into the state formation of Egypt.

State of Research

One of the most influential theories regarding the origin of the state in early Egyptological studies centres around hydraulics. Initially proposed for a variety of ancient states in 1957 by Wittfogel, the model was later adapted specifically to Egypt by Butzer.[22]The model theorizes that state formation occurred in arid areas when individual communities combined to create large-scale agriculture, compensating for growing populations.[23] This resulted in the long-term occupation of land and an emerging state political organization characterised by a system of both hierarchy and control. Power was delegated to certain individuals, allowing a highly centralised hierarchical structure to be created which enabled those in control to gain power over resources; mainly food and water, along with the ability to implement means of enforcement such as a military. Resistance toward this theory is presented by Bard and Carneiro who discuss the improbability of autonomous communities surrendering their sovereignty without being coerced to do so.[24] Butzer, however, is in agreement with Wittfogel in his belief that agricultural processes created the political organisation needed for military conflicts which would have led to the eventual unification of Egypt. He also contradicts Wittfogel's theory however by arguing that irrigation in the Dynastic era was regulated locally as large-scale permanent irrigation was not introduced into Egypt until the 19th century AD.[25]

V. Gordon Childe also posits that agriculture was a large factor in the creation of the Egyptian state. Yet unlike Wittfogel's theory for large-scale irrigation and hydraulics, Childe

[22] Wittfogel (1957)
[23] Wittfogel (1957).
[24] Bard & Carneiro (1989: 16).
[25] Butzer (1976: 43)

suggests that farmers of the Naqada II period automatically created an agricultural surplus which later spurred wealth through inter-regional trade.[26] This voluntaristic model describes a largely peaceful origin to the Egyptian state through the generation of trade relationships between communities conveying the idea of cultural and political integration over time.[27] While Childe's theory was created to explain the origin of a plethora of ancient states it is applied to Egypt through the use of iconography on the Scorpion macehead. Using this evidence Childe suggests that Lower Egyptian clans were conquered by a group of nomes from Upper Egypt, implying that the process of expansion involved indigenous warfare for the acquisition of livestock and land.[28] Detrimental to this hypothesis is that no settlement remains have been found showing signs of conflict or other examples of evidence relating to warfare. Perhaps more importantly however, is the argument that agriculture did not automatically create a food surplus, rather that surplus was likely created by choice as man had seasonal control over food production and the cultivatable environment.

Further studies suggest that the Naqada expansion was the means which led to the origins of the Egyptian state.[29]Kaiser saw this indigenous origin beginning from a northern expansion from Naqada initially into the Fayum and later into the Delta. This northward trajectory was later followed by a southern expansion which occurred as far south as the Second Cataract in Nubia and it is this spread of the Naqada culture systematically throughout Egypt which Kaiser believes led to the creation of the state. Recent excavations within the last decade from Hierakonpolis and Abydos however have shown that the spread of a unified culture cannot be a single factor in state origins. Discoveries have showed that an assortment of

[26] Childe (1969: 81).
[27] Childe (1969: 81).
[28] Childe (1969: 81).
[29]Kaiser (1957: 69, 74); Kaiser (1964: 105-118).

elements including war, trade, agriculture, population growth and social stratification are all characteristics to have played a role in this process. This suggests that a single origin theory of state formation is likely inaccurate and that the origin of the Egyptian state was instead inspired by a multitude of factors.

The belief that violence was at least a factor in the origin of the Egyptian state is evident as even those theories which do not revolve around warfare tend to imply the presence of some form of conflict. Barry Kemp followed this trend in 1989 with his multi-causal 'Game Theory'.[30] Kemp's model attributes psychological factors, settled agriculture and population increase as the main elements contributing to the process of state formation in a board-game type analogy.[31]Kemp explains that each 'player' or 'nome' began equal and that over time one nome began to accumulate greater resources than the others, creating a power struggle between communities.[32]This inevitably led to conflict, which caused one nome to overcome another, creating a domino effect which eventually led to the state.[33]This model is perhaps too abstract however in that it fails to recognise built-in structural inequalities within ranked societies or non-state lineage. In addition to this, Kemp's model encompasses a sort of Weberian rule, conceiving the state in terms of the 'probability that certain kinds of individual action will occur,'[34] actions which cannot be represented in the archaeological record. A similar theory is proposed by Anđelković in the sense that the main components highlight a long progression from Naqada I right through to Naqada III.[35] This theory

[30] Kemp (2007: 34).
[31] Kemp (2007: 45).
[32] Kemp (2007: 74).
[33] Kemp (2007: 75).
[34]Löwith (1982: 39).
[35] Anđelković (2004: 535).

highlights five different stages in social change from farming villages to the Egyptian empire and it is suggested that conflict was an important developmental element within this model.

As is evident in the differences between Kemp's theory and that of Kaiser, a shift began to occur in state models. Scholars no longer presented single origin theories such as hydraulics, but began to favour multi-causal theories which incorporate these earlier models and Köhler is another example of this.[36] Köhler explains that the origin of the Egyptian state is complex as its origins cannot be attributed to a single event, but instead to many. These include the initiation and development of ideology, religion, inter-polity contact through trade and conflict, agriculture, craft specialisation and the rise of social complexity.[37]Köhler elucidates that society first developed in a step by step process which commenced around 5000 BC in the early neolithic period with the emergence of agriculture.[38]Development of agricultural practice then led to the growth of villages which was followed by craft specialisation, social ranking and inter-regional trade during the Naqada IB-IIB period and neared completion through the introduction of commercial centres, long-distance trade and social complexity during Naqada IIIA.[39] This is supported by archaeological evidence from Hierakonpolis where the sites HK11, HK24A and HK29 show examples of division of labour as early as Naqada II through the remains of kilns and workshops for production of beer, ceramics and lithics,[40] while the beginnings of social differentiation at the site are observed through the 'elite' HK6 cemetery, with Tomb 23 being particularly important.[41] Although this model is successful in outlining the development of Egyptian culture and tradition at Hierakonpolis, it fails to

[36]Köhler (2011: 123-125).
[37] Köhler (2011: 123).
[38] Köhler (2011: 123).
[39]Köhler (2011: 124).
[40] Hoffman (1982: 78-85).
[41] Friedman (2008: 1157-1194).

identify differences between Upper and Lower Egypt which developed individual of each other. In addition, the Naqada expansion was an important event at this time which had a possible impact on social development, however is not discussed here.

The idea of war as a factor in the origin of state is not a modern concept. In 1896, Flinders Petrie first proposed conflict through a race of dynastic invaders from the east, where he concluded that 'the invaders destroyed or expelled the whole Egyptian population, and occupied the Thebaid alone.'[42] Petrie sees their relationship with the Egyptians as extremely hostile, thus terming them 'invaders' as there is no presence of Egyptian objects found in the vicinity of the cemetery, while the pottery found in graves revealed completely non-Egyptian characteristics, suggesting total disregard of Egyptian forms.[43] Limitations with Petrie's conclusions are evident in that the data Petrie used to reach this conclusion was sourced solely from archaeological material, mainly burials and pottery and is limited to a singular locality. A similar theory was later submitted by Emery in 1967 who suggests the incursion of Asiatics from Mesopotamia or Syria due to carvings found on the Gebel el-Arak knife handle and a wall painting from tomb 100 at Hierakonpolis.[44] In addition to this, Murray offered quite a bold theory in 1956 claiming that superior weapons from the people of the Gerzean period, associated with Naqada II, suggest a conquest over the Amratians from Naqada I.[45] He argues that the Amratians were either completely exterminated or at the very least reduced to a subordinate position. This however does not explain why the existence of superior weapons could cause the onset of war and therefore modern scholars have not aligned their theories with this. A more modern interpretation was then put forward by

[42] Petrie, (1896: 61).
[43] Petrie (1896: 61).
[44] Emery (1967: 38).
[45] Murray (1956: 4).

Needler in 1984 who argued through the iconography on the Narmer palette of a conflict between Upper and Lower Egypt. This conflict inevitably led to the unification of Egypt and a strong centralised government.[46] While war was the means in this theory, Needler argued that it was caused by power politics, trade conflicts and population pressure.

Population pressure, environmental circumscription and war are the factors at the heart of the anthropologist Robert Carneiro's circumscription theory, a theory which was not at first developed for Egypt.[47] Carneiro states that the Nile is an area of circumscribed land meaning that the area which a person was able to cultivate and live off was delimited.[48] Some 19 years after this was first published, Carneiro co-authored another version of this theory with Kathryn Bard which was adapted specifically to Egypt.[49] In this article Bard and Carneiro postulate that Predynastic chiefdoms, which were the roots of later dynastic nomes, fought over areas of circumscribed land in order to accommodate for population growth and for the acquisition of power.[50] While population pressure and circumscription are the motivating factors of this theory, war is the means by which it was dealt with. Though circumscription remains a viable argument, research which followed this publication revealed that population pressure in Egypt was not present during the predynastic Period, at least not to the extent needed to accommodate for the complete circumscription model. Population pressure in the Nile valley was discussed by Wenke where he concluded that "we find no evidence that growing populations somehow forced the origins of state institutions…population growth appears to be more a *result* than a *cause* of evolving cultural

[46]Needler (1984: 30-31).
[47]Carneiro (1970).
[48] Carneiro (1970: 734).
[49]Bard & Carneiro (1989:15-23).
[50]Bard & Carneiro (1989:15-23).

complexity."[51] Additionally Bard renounces her contribution to the circumscription model in 1992, where she states that "I no longer see population pressure as a major factor when complex society first emerged in Egypt."[52] This model was updated again in 2012, where Carneiro reformulates various aspects of his model, highlighting two important changes. The first change refers to issues surrounding the term 'circumscription' by which the model is known, claiming that environmental constriction is not essential to the rise of states rather that it assists the state formation process.[53] The second change sees Carneiro acknowledge the issues of the various types of warfare, suggesting that it is *conquest warfare* which plays an important role in societal development. The idea of conquest warfare is also discussed by Clastres,[54] yet both scholars apply an entirely anthropological approach, neglecting the support of archaeological evidence. Evidence of this type of warfare should reveal semiotics of destruction *followed* by cultural change, however, currently no evidence has been found to support this within Predynastic Egypt.

Marcello Campagno suggests that population growth, kinship and war were the prime factors in forming the Egyptian state.[55] Aligning with the model proposed by Köhler, and building from Childe's urban revolution model, Campagno states that 'archaeological information emanating from Hierakonpolis suggests a remarkable tendency towards population growth simultaneous with the process of state formation in the Nile Valley.'[56] This is supported by Hoffman who indicates that this was the result of ecological advantages of the environment, including 'an abundance of good soil and raw materials, seasonal

[51] Wenke (2004:206).
[52] Bard (1992: 16).
[53] Carneiro (2012: 12).
[54]Clastres (1981: 202-203).
[55] Campagno (2004: 659-703); (2004: 1229 1242).
[56] Campagno (2004: 1230).

rainfall, hydraulic efficiency of the Wadi Abu Suffian, and the confluence of several habitats.[57] Although the influx of population played an important role in this model, the major components are seen to include war and kinship. The concept of warfare is explained to involve several 'wars of conquest,' a type of conflict where one community attempts to appropriate the land and population of another,[58] yet Campagno stresses that these wars only occurred between communities with no relationship to one another, a factor which tends to better explain the process of development from autonomous villages into chiefdoms, rather than development into the state. Campagno supports this, in claiming that 'the existence of warlike conflicts in the Predynastic Nile Valley is relatively well documented from Naqada II onward.'[59] The evidence for this includes weaponry, such as arrows, axes, maces and spears, along with iconographical evidence and clay models or figurines.[60] There are limitations in interpreting these remains however in that this evidence is unable to indicate the scale, spread or impact of violence at this time. To date, Campagno offers the most active research on the impact war had on forming the Egyptian state; however his works focus mainly on indigenous origin of conflict and state formation and do not investigate foreign influences.

In 2004 a PHD thesis was published by Gilbert who strongly argues for the role war played in the formation of the Egyptian state.[61] To date this thesis contains the most exhaustive catalogue of evidence for warfare in Egypt, containing a specialised focus on weapons along with skeletal remains.[62] It must be noted that although the presence of weapons such as an

[57] Hoffman (1982: 145).
[58] Campagno (2004: 690).
[59] Campagno (2004: 690).
[60] Campagno (2004: 690).
[61] Gilbert (2004: 116).
[62] Gilbert (2004: 73).

arrow head or a spear are heavily catalogued in this work its presence cannot necessarily be attributed to a purpose involving war or conflict. The issue with interpreting weapons lies both in the context of their find and in their use. Many are found in graves or deposits from which their symbolic meaning cannot be properly interpreted, while weapons were also used in activities such as hunting; an important idea which is has been paid little attention within this publication.[63] Furthermore, Gilbert discusses the presence of a warrior class within Predynastic Egypt for which there is not sufficient evidence to support. While the earliest evidence of a battle is found through iconography on the Gebel el-Arak knife handle dated to Naqada IID,[64] the earliest mention of an army is not recorded until the Old Kingdom biography of Weni.[65] In addition to this, it would be expected that evidence of warriors would be found in burials in the form of skeletal wounds and weaponry for the afterlife, however there is no archaeological or iconographical data found to date which suggests that trained warriors were present during the Predynastic era.

Both Milakovic[66] and Jiménez-Serrano[67] suggest a new direction in studies of the state. Both argue that the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, and the creation of the state were separate events which transpired individual of each other. This then makes the question of the role war had on the creation of the state even more complicated. A distinction must now be made. If the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt and the creation of the Egyptian state are two events which occurred at separate times, then we must now be inclined to ask, did war have a role in both the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt *and* the creation of the

[63] Gilbert (2004).
[64] Adams (1997:55).
[65] Shaw (1991: 25).
[66]Milakovic (2010).
[67] Jiménez Serrano (2008: 1120).

state? Did it have a role in just one of these, or even still, either at all? Evidence for war after the political unification by Narmer and before the creation of the state under Den, as argued by Milakovic,[68] is almost completely non-existent at this point in time and it is impossible to draw any conclusions without any presupposition.

This then all begs the question, what is the state in Egypt? Anđelković published an article in 2005 where he attempted to explain what factors comprise a state.[69] An issue with this work however is that his attempt applies constructs of more modernised states to one that occurred around 5000 years ago. Additionally, we must be careful in our quest for truth regarding the state as the term is a modern construct that was not part of the Egyptian vocabulary. It is highly possible that research regarding the state in Egypt consists of an attempt to apply a modern construct to an ancient civilisation and it is here that we must be cautious. In addition to the articles published by Anđelković, other scholars such as Kemp,[70] Wilkinson[71] and Service[72] have provided critical studies to this issue which will be discussed in chapter 1.

The evidence which is available in relation to war and conflict in Predynastic Egypt is extremely limited; this is due to various causes. The first is the rebuilding of Egyptian sites on top of earlier ones resulting in the loss of information. This is a common issue in Egypt and does not refer only to modern times, but is also be traced as far back as the Predynastic

[68]Milakovic (2010).
[69] Anđelković (2005: 1219-1228).
[70] Kemp (2010: 61).
[71] Wilkinson (2001: 314).
[72] Service (1971).

period itself with examples from Tell Ibrahim Awad[73] and Buto[74] amongst others. The second issue relates to the lack of evidence, showing a need for further investigations. The absence of mass burials in the archaeological record for example suggests an absence of warfare, yet if mass burials were to be discovered, it could suggest otherwise. Further issues exist in evidence which has already been discovered. Many artefacts, such as the Narmer palette[75] and the Maceheads of Scorpion[76] and Narmer[77] were found out of context, while the location of tomb 100, which has an elaborate wall painting, was lost when Quibell and Green failed to record its exact location before it was reburied.[78] In addition to this, the absence of writing during this period of Egyptian prehistory means that our understanding of the iconography carved on these artefacts is based solely on individual interpretations. Found out of context and with no supporting evidence at this present time scholars should approach this iconographical evidence with caution and not be inclined to take it at face value.

In 1991, Sir Walter Fairservis produced an interpretation of the Narmer palette, one of the most influential artefacts regarding the unification of Egypt.[79] The Narmer palette shows, for the first time, a single individual wearing both the white crown of Upper Egypt and the red crown of Lower Egypt. Due to this discovery, Narmer has been recognized as the unifier of the two lands and the first king of both Upper and Lower Egypt. Additionally, depictions of subjugated victims on the palette have led to the belief that war was the means by which this unification process was established. Other work on this artefact has been published by

[73] Eigner (2000: 30).
[74] Spencer (1995: 49).
[75] British Museum EA35714
[76] Ashmolean AN 1896-1906.E3632
[77] Ashmolean AN E3631
[78] Quibell & Green (1902: 20-21).
[79] Fairservice (1991: 1-20).

authors such as David O'Connor, amongst others, all of whom have provided different interpretations of the imagery presented on the piece.[80] The many different readings of this imagery indicate the limits with the information available to us on this topic. It also highlights an individual example of the issues previously discussed, showing that a lack of archaeological evidence, combined with an absence of written language means supporting different interpretations of the iconography is oftentimes difficult. Without a context for artefacts of this importance it is difficult to interpret a proper reading of the iconography, thus outlining issues surrounding the reliance of this imagery and the need for supporting archaeological evidence.

Scholarship on the evidence for war has also undergone some study, with excavations on an Early Egyptian fortification found in Gaza being discussed by Miroschedji,[81] while Ciałowicz has dedicated time to the study of the early Egyptian mace heads and palettes.[82] Furthermore, Giannese has provided an in depth discussion on iconography from Naqada I through to Naqada III in relation to violence,[83] while Huyge provides an in-depth discussion on the wall painting scenes in tomb 100.[84] An in depth study of artefacts which relate to war and violence during Pre- and Early Dynastic Egypt would be greatly beneficial to this area of research. This would permit evidence to be compared against each other, for example the model wall found in tomb B89 at Abadiyah,[85] could be compared to both the 2m thick wall found at Naqada[86] and the Egyptian fort at Gaza[87] in order to determine if it is a

[80]O'Connor (2011: 145-152).
[81]Miroschedji (2000: 123-144).
[82] Ciałowicz (1987).
[83]Gianesse (2012).
[84]Huyge (2014: 93-103).
[85] Payne (1993).
[86] Bard (1987: 81-93).
[87]Miroschedji (2000: 123-144).

representation of a fortified wall or not. A study of this kind would enable the most informed interpretation of the archaeological evidence, thus helping us to further our understanding of warfare within the archaeological record.

The study of warfare within Anthropology is also an important aspect of the role it played in state origins and has been largely influenced by two early scholars; Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). The stance of Hobbes and Rousseau encapsulates two fundamental extremes. Hobbes identifies prehistoric societies as being barbaric, claiming that mans' natural state of being involves 'the war of every man against every man,'[88] while Rousseau argues that man was initially born with the potential for goodness, that it was the advent of civilisation and self-consciousness which made men corrupt. Rousseau further stated that man, like other animals, had an 'innate repugnance to see others of his kind suffer.'[89] Based on evidence from pre-state societies, it appears that the truth lie somewhere between these two views. Man was both peaceful and violent, with individual circumstances determining the behaviour. The two extremes presented by Hobbes and Rousseau are important to Egyptological studies as scholars have often aligned themselves with one of these two views, projecting the idea of pre-state Egypt being either peaceful, or violent.

Therefore we can see that scholarship surrounding the origins and creation of the Egyptian state still have a way to go and will only be properly understood through continuous excavations and constant new discoveries and revision. However, it is also evident that, for

[88]Oakeshott (1960: 83).
[89] Cole (1938: 164).

war in particular, a modern interpretation analysing all remains of conflict and warfare both from within Egypt and its neighbours needs to be undertaken. We have largely seen a separation between anthropological theory and archaeological evidence with these models of state formation and suggest that combining the two methodologies will yield the most positive results along with a new outlook toward the interpretation of state formation in Egyptian scholarship. In addition to this, further studies combining archaeological evidence with iconography needs to be presented in an attempt to further understand the issues surrounding war and state origins. An evolution in approach can be traced from Petrie's single origin theory, to Kemp's multi-causal theory, while further development is presently beginning to unfold in studies by Milakovic and Jiménez Serrano who have both brought a new concept to the dual creation of the state. These authors have shown that if the creation of the state in Egypt was in fact a separate event from the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt then the questions we have about war and its impact will need to be looked at from a whole new perspective.

Chapter 1: Anthropology of Warfare and the State

When analysing evidence for war and the origin of the state it is important to have a clear definition of what war and the state is. Since the works of Hobbes (1588-1679)[90] and Jean-Jacques (1712-1778)[91] Rousseau a lot of attention has been given to what can be termed the anthropology of war. Considerable research has been directed toward finding the causes of war, and on defining what it is, its motivations and outcomes, however these discussions have received little attention from scholars who argue for the role war plays in the origins of the Egyptian state. This chapter will therefore provide a definition for war in a pre-state context, while also providing a definition for conflict in order to express the important differences between the two terms. A definition for the state will also be discussed in the context of ancient Egypt in order to help mediate the increasing scholarship differentiating the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt with the creation of the Egyptian state.

War

Warfare is defined as 'a situation in which two or more countries or groups of people fight against each other over a period of time.'[92] A definition of this calibre, whilst accurate, is proven to be inadequate when defining warfare in Egyptian pre-state society. Whatever definition or culmination of definitions we agree on it must be pointed out that warfare comprises of individual elements specific to the circumstances to which it is applied.[93] These elements are often neglected in definitions for this very reason, however must be discussed in order for war in pre-state Egypt to be understood. The elements to which this refers

[90] Hobbes (1651).
[91] Rousseau (1762).
[92] Allen (1990: 1587).
[93] Livingstone (1968: 3).

include the motivating factors behind warfare and the significance of scale; characteristics which are important to discuss as small scale violence in pre-state society can, depending on context, be interpreted as violent conflict and not war.

Definitions which are better applicable to Egypt indicate war in pre-state societies to be:

1. 'An armed contest between two independent political units, by means of organized military force, in the pursuit of a tribal or national policy,'[94]
2. 'Groups in purposeful, organised and socially sanctioned combat involving killing,'[95] and
3. 'A state or period of armed hostility existing between politically autonomous communities which at such times regard the actions of their members against the opponents as legitimate expressions of the sovereign policy of the community.[96]

These definitions show relevance to this study in that they apply to war at any level of society, whether a tribe, chiefdom or state. In addition to this, each definition insinuates the need for violence, the motivation for violence, an organised military and the requirement for opposing groups to be politically autonomous in order for a conflict to be termed war.

The ability to understand motivations for violence allows us to answer an important question, why go to war? Without understanding the motives for war in Predynastic Egypt we cannot argue its importance in the creation of the state. War involves high costs in lives,

[94] Malinowski (1964: 247).
[95] Mead (1968: 215).
[96] Meggitt (1977: 8).

health, resources and effort; a point which must be stressed. Due to this, the decision to go to war is only made if it is estimated that there is sufficient material interest to do so.[97] Material interests comprise the basis for decision-making by a leader or group and are impacted by various conditions, for example the environment. Egypt is an area of circumscribed land, meaning that agricultural activities are limited to the Nile Valley. Motivations therefore may include increased access to fixed resources, the acquisition of fertile land, improvement of work situations, or the securing of trade routes.[98] In addition to this, other motivational interests revolve around security, expansion and individual goals, for example, the domination and incorporation of one group over another, the capture of moveable valuables, war with the intent of forestalling attacks by others, the enhancement of an individual's position within their own society and political superiority. [99]

We must however be cautious when discussing war. A lack of archaeological remains from Predynastic Egypt creates certain issues for Egyptologists in defining war in this period. In fact, the first attestation of an army in Egypt is not found until the Old Kingdom in the biography of Weni,[100] meaning we cannot accurately attribute the term 'army' to any Predynastic period fighting forces. Furthermore, the only evidence for war from Naqada II onwards is seen through iconographic representations on two objects, the Gebel el-Arak knife[101] and the Battlefield Palette.[102] The lack of material evidence from early Egypt also means it is impossible to determine the scale of violence at this time. For the purpose of

[97] Ferguson (1993: 30).
[98] Ferguson (1993: 29).
[99] Ferguson (1993: 30).
[100] Sethe (1932:98-110).
[101] Dreyer (1999: 200-202).
[102] Ciałowicz (2001 : 176-179).

definition however, L.H. Ward[103] indicates that at times of large wars in Rome a maximum of 10% of the population were conscripted to fight, while at other times this could be as low as 3%. If we apply this percentage to population estimates from Hierakonpolis around 3,500 BC[104] it would suggest a range of between 300 – 1,000 'fighters' at the chiefdom level of society in a war within this locality alone, however there is no archaeological evidence to support this.[105] This is comparative to a study by Williams[106] who suggests that at times of war in pre-state Fiji, forces could include anywhere from 400 – 2000 individuals depending on the scale of the war,.[107]

From this we can compose a final definition for war based on chiefdom-level society within the context of Early Egypt to be:

> *"An organised, violent contest between two or more politically autonomous groups that is sanctioned by either an individual or a community who are acting in pursuit of one or more material interests, including safety, expansion, power, political dominance or the acquisition of fertile land for cultivation and trade with combatants ranging no fewer than a few hundred."*

[103] Ward (1990: 23).
[104] Hoffman (1982) estimated the population of Hierakonpolis to be approximately 10,000 at around 3,500 BC.
[105] It must be stressed that there is NO evidence in Predynastic Egypt of individuals being conscripted to fight, nor is there extensive evidence in the archaeological record to suggest war occurred at this time. This estimate is given purely as a guide for defining warfare in early Egypt as many scholars discussing warfare associate the term conflict with war yet they are inherently different.
[106] Williams (1870: 38).
[107] A study by Gilbert (2004: 29-31) suggests that war parties of the Middle Predynastic could reach as high as 5,000 men, with expeditions involving forces of 1,000 men. This number rises to 10,000 in the Late Predynastic with 1,000 men per expedition imitating numbers from the Middle Predynastic. Gilbert does not however explain how these numbers were estimated and no comparisons are presented. For this reason I have chosen not to include these estimates within this study although they are the only example from modern studies which suggest a number for fighters in the Predynastic of Egypt.

Conflict

Conflict is more difficult to define in the setting of pre-state societies. Studies of warfare are surrounded by those who freely interchange between the terms war and conflict in discussion however whilst similar, conflict and war are inherently different. Conflict is more accurately attributed with raids, massacres, ambushes and surprise attacks by members of a band, tribe or group,[108] whereas war is often attributed with conquest, involves sustained violence and has a higher risk; effectively, conflict is a descaled form of war. Conflict however is not restricted to these types of violence. It would be naïve to suggest that conflict of varying intensity did not occur throughout prehistory. According to Margaret Mead, 'violent conflict occurs among individuals or groups who are not affiliated with a government and usually involve more than one confrontation.'[109] Although war and conflict are similar they are separated by scale, motivations and expense. Conflict is less expensive than war in terms of the loss of lives and the resources needed, while decision making by a whole community is also not required.[110]

Conflict is a multi-causal event which means that its motivations are varied. Incentives are seen through biological, socioeconomic, resource and environmental factors. These can include elite power struggles, corruption, scarcity of resources, population growth, unjust resource exploitation, poverty, inequality, sex as well as a variety of other motivations.[111] It appears that motivations for conflict are more specific to individuals then to a group as a whole, like those of war. While factors such as inequality, poverty and population growth are

[108] Gilbert (2004: 4).
[109] Mead (1968: 215)
[110] Robarchek (1968: 59).
[111] Ohlsen (2008: 136-137).

certainly group issues, sex, elite power struggles and corruption are traits which are more personalised.

The scale of conflicts is also much smaller than those of warfare. Whilst it was estimated that a few hundred people be involved in warfare, estimates by Keeley suggest only around 20-30 people in raid-type situations.[112] Raiding and surprise attacks are an important aspect of conflict which could have been influential in pre-state society. Keeley suggests that a surprise attack or a few days raiding could reduce bands, tribes or autonomous villages to be reduced to famine due to the vulnerability of communities because of their size.[113] It is likely that these forms of attacks occurred *before* the chiefdom level of society, as raids would prove less effective on a highly organised and larger territory, yet would still have been carried out.

Therefore conflict can be defined as:

> *'a violent contest between two or more groups of people in competition with each other motivated by biological, economic or sociological factors in the form of raids, surprise attacks, massacres or ambushes involving around 20-30 people.'*

State

A definition has not been provided in regards to the term 'state' which has been generally accepted by archaeologists, anthropologists or historians alike. In lieu of this, definitions are quite frequent in literature on Egyptian state formation, however with little unity between them. Toby Wilkinson offers a broad definition for the Egyptian state, describing it as 'a

[112] Keeley (1968: 74).
[113] Keeley (1968: 79).

territorial entity with a system of exercising recognised legal authority over its population.'[114] This is extended by Barry Kemp who sites the importance of ideology, hereditary kingship and both territorial and geographic unity shared within an imagined community.[115] Although both of these definitions provide examples of Egyptianized characteristics towards statehood, they both only provide partial elements which constitute the state, failing to provide characteristics of political control. This is supplemented by the works of Elman Service who describes the state as the most developed form of society, characterised by:

> *'A class based hierarchy under the authority of a single ruler, a centralised political institution with the power to impose laws and collect taxation, a territory which is comprised of urban settlements with temples and palaces along with established political frontiers and the presence of a priestly class,.'*[116]

Ultimately, the view that this research takes forward is an amalgamation of these definitions, outlining a combination of the following characteristics:

1. The rule of a king with hereditary successors
2. The existence of a defined territory
3. The ability to negotiate and interact with other states/foreign neighbors.
4. Influence over the population through implementing laws and taxation
5. A centralized, specified, and ultimately effective government
6. The presence of a religious and royal ideology along with a priestly class

[114] Wilkinson (2001: 314).
[115] Kemp (2010: 61).
[116] Service (1971 : 84).

The origin of the state has been thought synonymous with the unification of Egypt in the past,[117] however an analysis of evidence surrounding each of these characteristics suggest that this hypothesis needs questioning. Gary Milakovic,[118] Alejandro Jiménez Serrano[119] and Christiana Köhler[120] each suggest that state formation and the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt were events which occurred separate from each other. Further issues arise in regards to terminology surrounding the word 'state.' Wilkinson reveals that there is no word in the Egyptian language for 'state.'[121] In fact, this term is a modern construct which evolved from the Latin *status rei publicae*, meaning condition (or existence) of the republic.[122] Does this then mean that the state in Egypt did not exist and that scholars are simply attempting to import a modern construct into an ancient context? It would seem not. Although the Egyptian may not have had a word for the political institution for which they were a part of, it is apparent that the characteristics of a state are still present. We can establish this through the definition outlined by Brownlie who asserts that a *modern state* has a defined territory, a permanent population, an effective government, and has the independence to enter into relations with other states.[123] As we can see, each characteristic within this definition of a modern state is evident at the time of the Early Dynastic Period (3100-2685BC) in Egypt, suggesting that while the Egyptian didn't have a word for it, it did exist.[124]

[117] Jiménez Serrano (2008: 1119).
[118] Milakovic (2010: 29-46).
[119] Jiménez Serrano (2008: 1119- 1135).
[120] Köhler (2010: 36 – 54).
[121] Wilkinson (2001: 314).
[122] Klein (1966: 1506).
[123] Brownlie (1983: 43).
[124] For a discussion on the development of different levels of society leading to the state, see Anđelković (2004: 535-546 & 2008: 1219-1228) who suggests a 5 step process of state 'seriation' in Egypt. Along with Carneiro (1993: 190-210.) who discusses this is further detail.

War Models and the State: The Circumscription Theory

Now that this study has been placed into context and a description of its crucial elements has been discussed, we must investigate the validity, or indeed the necessity of models for warfare at the time of state formation in early Egypt, while also asking an important question, how does war fit into state formation in Egypt? While war is the main thesis behind this study, identifiers within the archaeological record show that cultural and political developments were fundamental precedents to state origins. Evidence of such processes suggests the state was not the outcome of a single event, but a system which developed over time. In fact, state formation was influenced by at least three *major* events which did not occur simultaneous of each other, those being: cultural unification, political unification and centralisation of the government. Our aim now is to see if theoretical models of war support the archaeological remains associated with these characteristics of state origins, a concept which will be explored in relation to the circumscription theory.

The circumscription theory presented by Robert Carneiro and Kathryn Bard postulates that the state emerged as a result of war cultivated by population pressure and environmental circumscription. Wars of conquest, as they are termed by Carneiro in a subsequent publication,[125] resulted in autonomous villages giving way to chiefdoms which in turn gave way to the state.[126] This model outlines a theoretical development of cultural and political unification through violence and domination, however fails to consider the importance of smaller elements playing a role in these processes such as craft specialisation and social differentiation. Both elements are present within the archaeological record and were

[125] Carneiro (2012: 12).
[126] Bard & Carneiro (1989: 17).

integral aspects of cultural and political development yet are not considered in this theory. Social differentiation is observed at Hierakonpolis at the HK6 cemetery where mortuary evidence represents an 'elite' class within society.[127] Craft specialisation is also observed at Hierakonpolis through division of labour at sites HK11, HK24A and HK29 where remains of kilns along with production workshops for beer, pottery and lithics are found dating to Naqada II (3650BC).[128] In addition to this, the model Bard and Carneiro present is seen to be general in its theoretical application as it fails to detail how elements of society were affected by war. This is particularly evident in that *war alone does not create a state*; it is the cultural, religious and political change which occurs after wars that does,[129] a concept which is not explored within the model. The questions we must now ask then is are we able to identify cultural and political uniformity within the archaeological record in association with war, and to what extent does the circumscription theory fit with this evidence?

Development of cultural uniformity can be attributed to the Naqada IIC/D period (3650-3300BC), where evidence suggests that material culture from southern Egypt spread into the north, merging through a process of assimilation to create a single unified tradition.[130] Representations of this are seen most notably through pottery and mudbrick architecture with the most prominent evidence emanating from the Nile Delta at sites such as Tell el-Farkha[131] and Buto.[132] Excavations of deposits dating to Naqada III at Buto reveal this process of assimilation, indicating through the stratigraphy that:

[127] Friedman (2008: 1157-1194).
[128] Hoffman (1982: 78-85).
[129] Bell (1994: 14).
[130] Köhler (2008:515).
[131] Ciałowicz (2008: 501).
[132] Way (2002:1-10).

'The earliest stratum contained typical ceramics of Lower Egypt, the pottery of the Maadi culture. Above this was…a transitional layer, which still contained vessels of traditional Lower Egyptian types but manufactured in the style of Naqada pottery. Fragments of true Naqada imports also appeared in this level, but they became very common in the higher levels of the stratified deposits. An analysis of the relative quantities of northern and southern pottery types showed…southern pottery jumped from around 2 per cent of the total to about 40 per cent and then continued to rise until it constituted 99 per cent in the strata of Naqada III date.'[133]

This evidence also seems to favour recent contributions by Krzysztof Ciałowicz who disputes that a lack of destruction layers at settlement sites throughout Egypt during the Naqada expansion determine that this was a slow process of infiltration and assimilation, not a military campaign,[134] while Thomas von der Way adds to this discussion by explaining that traditional reed dwellings with posts from Buto continued to be built alongside mudbrick dwellings local to the Upper Egyptian culture.[135]

The notion of peaceful assimilation is countered by evidence from Maadi and Tell el-Farkha however which suggests the *possibility* of violence. While there is no evidence for semiotics of destruction in settlement layers, weaponry or defensive structures to suggest war or violent coercion occurred, remains from Maadi do indicate that occupation at the site came

[133] Spencer (1995:49.).
[134] Ciałowicz (2008: 501).
[135] Way (2002: 3).

to a sudden end during the Naqada IIC/D period.[136] In addition to this, a transitional layer of aeolian sand in the stratigraphy at Tell el-Farkha suggests abandonment of the site in Naqada IIC/D with reoccupation in Naqada III, the reasons for which are not identifiable in the archaeological record.[137] So how then can we explain this? Bard suggests that this is a possible result of intimidation through violence or at least the threat of violence,[138] while von der Way offers the notion that only the elite and ruling class were wiped out, thus eliminating the requirement of semiotics of destruction as signs of conflict at sites such as Buto.[139] While this suggestion would fit better with the circumscription model, the physical evidence favours a peaceful incursion rather than a violent one. In addition to this, the motivation of the Naqada expansion has been attributed to trade access with the Levant and the Mediterranean coast.[140] Evidence of trade supersedes that of conquest warfare in that we see developed relationships between Egypt and the southern Levant, yet no evidence for war.

Political unification in Egypt also follows a different trajectory to that suggested within the circumscription theory. War initiated by population pressure is an element stressed within this model as a necessity for political development. An analysis of evidence presented by Karl Butzer however indicates that population pressure was not a factor in Egyptian state formation. Demographic studies show that at around 3,000 BC population density was low; placing estimates at around 75 people per square kilometre in the Nile Valley, 60 in the Faiyum and 30 in the Delta.[141] This low level of occupation suggests that growing

[136] Bard (2002: 62).
[137] Bard (2002: 63).
[138] Bard (2002: 62).
[139] Way (1992: 3).
[140] Wilkinson (2009
[141] Butzer (1976: 83).

populations did not force the origins of state institutions rather it appears population growth was more a result than a cause of evolving cultural complexity.[142] The first documentation of a politically unified Egypt occurs after cultural unification, during Naqada IIIC (3000 BC), where representations on the Narmer Palette indicate the first imagery of a single ruler wearing the crowns of both Upper and Lower Egypt,[143] while scenes on the Narmer Macehead depict a potential scene of unification through marriage.[144] It is during this process of political integration that scenes of violence are most attested. Violence is depicted iconographically through artefacts such as the battlefield and Narmer palettes amongst others which have fuelled theories suggesting domination of the South over the North. The circumscription model advocates conquest warfare to this event, however a lack of physical evidence consistent with this means that these representations cannot, at this time, be taken at face value. Evidence of political unification which is separate from war is also identifiable through ink inscriptions found during the reign of Ka which indicate that both Upper and Lower Egypt were being taxed by king Narmer, albeit in separate ways.[145] In addition to this, the name of Narmer inscribed within the royal Serekh has been found at sites in the Eastern and Western deserts, along with both Upper and Lower Egypt.[146] Although this most likely is not representative of the physical presence of Narmer at these sites, it certainly advocates the extent of his political control as a ruler.[147] Combined, this evidence indicates the earliest definitive evidence we have for the presence of an individual ruler over both Upper and Lower Egypt suggesting that Egypt was politically unified, however it is still uncertain to what extent war played in this process. As we can see, Narmer

[142] Wenke (2009: 206).
[143] O'Conner (2011: 145).
[144] Ridley (1973: 65).
[145] Kaplony (1964: figs 1061, 1063); Emery (1939: pls 14, 20-22). Taxation is first attested in the reign of King Ka, a predecessor of Narmer
[146] Wilkinson (1999: 69).
[147] Wilkinson (1999: 56-57).

ruled Egypt during a crucial transition in the concept of the ruler, where during his reign associations can be made to characterisations of Egypt's prehistoric past as well as forms that were to distinguish pharaonic civilisation.[148]

The final step in the state formation process was the centralization of the government. This was an ongoing process, the beginnings of which appear in the reign of Den through the treasury, a streamlining of the government and ideological unification. Ink inscriptions on cylindrical vessels from the reign of Ka indicate that preceding Den, Upper and Lower Egypt were subject to two different taxation methods.[149] Evidence from seal impressions however show that during Dens reign control of taxation was centralized through the treasury. [150]The treasury stood at the centre of the administration, managing the income of the state through the collection of taxation in the form of produce which was then stored, redistributed or used for trade.[151] This inadvertently gave more power to the king over the general populace as he had complete control over resources and trade. Ideological evidence of unification is also an important marker of state formation which is also seen at this time. A year label of Den provides the first *definitive* attestation of the dual *sḥm.ty* crown, along with the first use of the royal *nswt-bity* name.[152] These depictions symbolise the unification of rule between Upper and Lower Egypt through the concept of duality. The *sḥm.ty* is a combination of the Red and White crowns, symbolising the kings individual sovereignty over both Upper and Lower Egypt, while the *nswt-bity* name – which was in existence for the next 3,000 years of Egyptian history – can be translated as 'he of the sedge and bee', or

[148] Wilkinson (2000: 23).
[149] Petrie (1902: pls I.2, III.30).
[150] Petrie (1900: pls XXII.36, XXIII.40). First evidence of treasury, *pr-ḥḏ,* while the first official of the treasury is also found in this reign, titled *ḥri-ꜥbpr-ḥḏ,* meaning official of the white house, Petrie (1900: pls XXII.35, XXIII.40).
[151] Wilkinson (1999: 194).
[152] Edwards (1971: 26).

'king of Upper and Lower Egypt.'[153] The establishment of a state capital and the streamlining of the administration provide further evidence for centralized control which is represented on seal patterns of the 1st Dynasty where known numbers increase during the reign of Den to approximately 128 seals, yet numbered between 33 and 50 in the reigns of his predecessors.[154]

Thus as we have seen the circumscription theory does not fit into an Egyptian model for state formation, invalidated as evidence for warfare associated with *major* events is not presented within the material remains. In addition to this, the Naqada expansion appears to be a predominantly peaceful process while political unification, although surrounded by violent iconography, reveals little physical indicators for warfare.[155] As has been shown, population pressure was also a non-factor in Predynastic Egypt; therefore it is unlikely that a war occurred at this time which was motivated by this, while there is no suggestion that warfare played a role in the centralisation of the government. From this it can be concluded that current anthropological models of warfare appear to limit the interpretation of archaeological and social remains within Egypt. This is established as elements such as trade, kinship, development of religious and royal ideology, the advent of writing, and the creation of social hierarchies are incapable of being considered holistically or even at all within models such as this. These elements certainly coincide in Predynastic Egypt, interacting to facilitate the development of society from autonomous villages and chiefdoms into states and cannot be overlooked. Our aim now is to investigate all forms of evidence for warfare. Although we have excluded population pressure as a motivator and have suggested that

[153] Wilkinson (1999: 196).
[154] Müller (2012: 19).
[155] Some modern scholars who disagree with the circumscription theories applicability to Egypt due to population density are: Kemp (2010: 31); Köhler (2011: 123-126); Wilkinson (1999: 38).

warfare was not a factor in cultural and political unification, further studies into the remains and representations of war have to take place before any formal conclusion can be made about the role of war in the establishment of the state.

Chapter 2: Archaeological Evidence

In order to investigate the elements of warfare available within the archaeological record we must first determine what signposts to look for. Carmen and Harding suggest that archaeologically there are three potential signifiers for war which include:

1. Artefacts used with aggressive intent (weapons),
2. Damage inflicted on other humans in the form of pathological marks on human skeletons, and
3. Site evidence in the form of constructions for defence or, more rarely, offense.[156]

These signifiers will form the outline of this section, with the aim of identifying the level of, or presence of warfare within the physical remains. Before this investigation can begin however, it must be explained that evidence described within this chapter is not meant to be an exhaustive representation of remains.[157] Although evidence is sourced from a wide range of publications relating to the periods in question, numbers which are provided can only represent the *minimum* amount of available data from sites within Egypt due to the variety of evidence-types needed for discussed of each signifier of warfare. It is also important to note that while signifiers of warfare are largely deficient within remains from Early Egypt it does not automatically suggest the absence of it at this time. Indications of violence are certainly present however to what extant has not been widely discussed. The aim of this chapter therefore is to determine whether the remains are indicative of war or perhaps conflict based on our definitions from the previous chapter. This will then allow us to establishing a point of reference in regards to concepts which will be discussed after an

[156] Carmen & Harding (1999: 3).
[157] For the most comprehensive study to date see Gilbert (2004).

analysis of the iconography is made in chapter 3 to determine the role war played in the state formation process.

Weapons

As previously stated, the presence of weapons within an archaeological context cannot necessarily be attributed to a purpose involving war or conflict. As per Gilbert, the two main categories of weapons consist of specialised weapons and weapon-tools.[158] These include the mace, dagger, shield, bow and arrow, spear, lance, axe and throwing stick, among few others, all of which can be accredited for use in both hunting and violence.[159] Iconographic evidence from both Pre- and Early Dynastic Egypt indicates that weapons were used in both contexts therefore great care must be taken when analysing their role and impact. Furthermore, due to the limitations of this project only weapons documented within the recent catalogue published by Gilbert between Naqada IIC (3650 BC) and Naqada IIID (2900 BC) will be discussed.[160] This will allow for a more thorough investigation of weaponry while also allowing for a discussion of the development, dispersion, context and amount of weapons to take place in order to determine if any patterns are discernible from the remains.

Mace

The mace is possibly the simplest of the Egyptian weapons. Constructed of a stone head attached to a wooden haft,[161] the mace plays an important role in the ideology of the king

[158] Gilbert (2004: 33).
[159] Gilbert (2004: Table 5.1).
[160] Gilbert (2004). Although this is the most comprehensive and up to date catalogue on Pre- and Early Dynastic weaponry, it should be noted that excavations within the past 20 years, particularly those from within the Nile Delta are not included such as Adaïma and Tell el-Farkha. This indicates the need for subsequent research to update this catalogue, a task which unfortunately extends the limitations of this project.
[161] Shaw (1991: 31).

for the entirety of Egyptian history, acting as a symbol for both power and control.[162] Maces appear in 5 basic types which see a development over time, including: (1) spherical maceheads, (2) conical pear-shaped, (3) disc shaped, (4) pear shaped, and (5) double ended, all of which could form ritual functions.[163] Of these, roughly 72 examples are attested during Naqada IIC/D (3650 BC – 3300 BC),[164] where 23% are attributed to the Upper Egyptian sites of Naqada[165] and Badari alone.[166] This sees a change in Naqada IIIA/B (3300 BC – 3100 BC), where a reduced amount of maces are attested with roughly 37 examples found, 21 of which are unprovenanced and consist mainly of decorated or zoomorphic types.[167] This suggests a possible development towards votive functions of macehead as well as practical, a development which is supported in the Naqada IIIC/D period (3000 BC – 2900 BC) where numbers grow exponentially in the Abydos, Coptos and Hierakonpolis regions. Roughly 189 published examples are found at these sites, 185 originating from Upper Egypt with 4 from Abydos and 181 from Hierakonpolis.[168] The examples from Hierakonpolis were discovered in temple deposits and constitute the largest cache of weapons found between Naqada IIC-IIID, many of which are either decorated types or models. The large amount of modelled and decorated types found here highlights the importance of the mace as modelled weapons presumably performed a ritual function. This indicates the power and effectiveness of the

[162] Shaw (1991: 31).
[163] Gilbert (2004: 34).
[164] Determined by numbers of maceheads from Naqada IIC/D as published in: Crowfoot-Payne (1993: no 1251, 1256-7) ; Hendrickx (1994: 50-51); Petrie (1920: pls. 26.25-26, 26.27-29,33,39,40,42, 45-7 & 26.50) ; Quibell (1905: pl. 56); Scharff (1931: pls. 8.149, 8.150); Spencer (1981: no. 581); Ziegler (1997: 15).
[165] Baumgartel (1970: pl.72).
[166] Brunton & Caton-Thompson (1928: 46 & pls. 53.8, 53.11-53.14).
[167] Capart (1905: 94, figs. 67 & 69); Petrie (1920: pls. 26.61-63, pl. 26.64-5); Scharff (1931: pl. 7.159, 8.153 & 8.154); Spencer (1981: no. 590).
[168] Adams (1974a: 152, 159, 161 & nos. 1-2, 7, 79, 152-5); Adams (1974b: 127-128, 146, 147-8, 150 159-61 & no. 4-6, 8-10, 352); Adams (1987: 246); Adams (1995: 126-7); Cambitoglou (1991: 7); Fairservice (1986: fig 26); Quibell & Green (1902: pls. 16, 27 & 48a); Quibell (1900: pl. 12.4, 18.17, 21.6, 25, 26a-26c); Quibell (1905: pls. 64, 65). Out of these 181 examples, approximately 157 are found in the great deposit from the temple at Hierakonpolis.

practical weapon in actual conflicts, an inference which can be made as their ritual purpose otherwise would have no meaning.[169]

What is interesting to note about the mace however, is its dispersion throughout Egypt. Indications shown that in Lower Egypt there is no substantial change in the amount of maceheads in, or around, the time of the Naqada expansion, suggesting no escalation in violence during this time. A violent expansion would certainly reveal a growth in remains of weaponry found in both settlements and grave sites however it appears this is not the case from mace heads alone. It is possible at this time that weapons of opportunity in the form of stones and sticks were used which would not have been preserved in the archaeological record or which cannot be identified, meaning that we may never know the full extent of their use and influence in conflict. The only real indicator of change is represented during Naqada IIIC/D (3000 BC -2900 BC), where Upper Egyptian examples jump from 4 to 185.[170] To what extent, however could this be indicative of an increase in violence? Although it is tempting to suggest a violent connection between these numbers and the period of state formation that is contemporary with these finds, it is impossible to tell from the maceheads alone what this increase suggests. Analysis of the mace found in iconographic representations could be assist in this endeavour, with battle scenes and subjugation motifs being identified which are contemporaneous with the increase in maces within the archaeological record, a theme which will be explored within the following chapter.

[169] Gilbert (2004: 116).
[170] This number was determined from the publications found in footnotes 6 – 10.

Bow & Arrow

The bow and arrow are the most common weapons from the Pre- and Early Dynastic periods yet are also the least reliable for discussion. While none are found within a violent archaeological context, iconography in Early Egypt, such as that on the Hunters Palette, indicates their use in both hunting and conflict.[171] This makes their interpretation extremely difficult as without supportive contextual evidence these weapons cannot be properly attributed with physical violence. Evidence for the use of arrows in hunting are found as early as the Neolithic period in Egypt where concave base arrowheads have been found in the bones of African elephants and hippopotami in the desert Fayum.[172] While evidence dates back this far, it is curious that although we have arrowheads lodged in animal remains, no examples are found in Early Egypt within human skeletons. Although iconographic representations of violence will be discussed in the following chapter, observations of early conflict on the Narmer and Battlefield Palettes, along with the Gebel el-Arak knife, show no depictions of bows and arrows, whereas imagery depicting hunting scenes from the Hunters Palette contains a plethora of examples. This could perhaps indicate that this weapon-tool was primarily associated as a hunter's weapon above a weapon of conflict; however, Hendrickx suggests that themes from the Hunters palette are indicative of its use in both contexts.[173] Examples within the archaeological record also show an interesting development associated with this. Remains from Naqada IIC/D (3650 BC – 3300 BC) indicate that a minimum of 38 arrowheads are found in Upper Egypt, with none from Lower Egypt, which is juxtaposed during Naqada IIIA/B (3300 BC – 3100 BC) where we find a minimum of 3 examples in Upper Egypt and 45 in Lower Egypt. Hunting in Dynastic Egypt is often attributed to members of the elite echelons of society due to the lack of its economic

[171] Hendrickx (2011: 237-263).
[172] Caton-Thompson (1934: 72 & 84).
[173] Hendrickx (2011: 253).

importance for society, pointing to the elite status of the hunters.[174] This is supported by the remains from Naqada IIIC/D (3100 BC – 2900 BC) from which over 1,000 known examples are found,[175] the majority of which are located in either royal or elite burials from both Abydos and Saqqara in Dynasty 1.[176] In fact, 465 arrows alone were found in the tomb of Hemaka,[177] while hundreds are also found in the tomb of Djer with more in his subsidiary burials.[178] Although this is not indicative of hunting as opposed to violence no other weapons are found within these tombs, with the only exception being a single throw stick in the tomb of Hemaka. If these weapons had a symbolic function in relation to warfare we would likely find weapons of power, such as the mace or daggers along with the bow and arrows. Their absence in this context further indicates the symbolic importance of these weapons for hunting and not violence.

Axe

Axes are another complicated weapon to interpret. No depictions of their use remain from Predynastic Egypt, meaning they are perhaps even more difficult to discuss in terms of war. Gilbert suggests that their large variety of forms suggests different functions for types of axes, including use in tree felling and woodworking, along with battle.[179] Evidence from Naqada IIC/D found in both settlements and burials reveal 75 examples of axes, 53 of which are found in Upper Egypt and 4 in Lower Egypt.[180] This is drastically reduced in Naqada IIIA/B

[174] Hendrickx (2011: 253).
[175] Gilbert (2004: 189-191).
[176] Dreyer (1998b: 160-1); Emery (1938 : 48 & pl. 21); Emery (1946 : 103) ; Emery (1954 : 63-4); Petrie (1901b: pls. 34.50, 37.14, 38.5-38.7, 40.11, 43.9, 50); Petrie (1925: pls. 2.7, 20 &21).
[177] Emery (1938: pl. 21).
[178] Petrie (1901a: pl. 34.27-41); Petrie (1925: pl. 20).
[179] Gilbert (2004: 66).
[180] Baumgartel (1970: 71); Cleyet-Merle (1982: 88); Crowfoot-Payne (1993: no. 1351-1359, 1369-72, no 1384); Holmes (1989: 201); Mond & Meyers (1937: pl. 58.45, 51, 53 & pl. 65.42, 45); Needler (1984: 117, no. 186); Quibel (1905: 49).

to only 3 examples from Lower Egypt, all of which are models found in a burial context.[181] This drop in remains is not likely representative of a change in trend, but reflective of the need to continuously excavate. This is seen in the rise to over 135 examples found in Naqada IIIC/D.[182] Although the use of axes is unclear, we are able to recognise that the sharp rise in remains found dating to Naqada IIIC/D coincides with the rise of maceheads and arrows. Could this be indicative of war through the production of greater numbers of weapons, or is it simply representative of an increase in domestic function? All are possible interpretations, however a connection to war, at least in regards to state formation is an unlikely conclusion as the majority of axes and arrows discovered have been uncovered from periods post-Narmer, many of which are associated with kings of the later first Dynasty at Abydos, such as Djer and Den.[183]

Spears and Lances

Spears are less commonly attested within the archaeological record and are often associated with tools for hunting, as is evident on the Hunters Palette.[184] The lance on the other hand is interpreted to be more of a ritual weapon rather than an effective weapon in battle, an interpretation which is consistent with the number of spears discovered. During the Naqada IIC/D period Gilbert identifies only 1 spear from Upper Egypt[185] while 14 lance heads are found.[186] This is similar in Lower Egypt where only 6 spears and 5 lance heads have been uncovered.[187] The Naqada IIIA/B period shows little change with 3 spears in Upper Egypt and 1 lance head,[188] while Naqada IIIC/D contains only 1 spear head in Upper Egypt and 1 in

[181] Davies (1987: 71 & no.1); Petrie & Wainwright (1913: pl. 5.23-4). Same remark Adam
[182] Gilbert (2004:191-192).
[183] Dreyer (1990: pl. 26); Petrie (1925: pl. 5.7, 5.13, 20, , 31 & 50).
[184] Gilbert (2004: 58).
[185] Gilbert (2004: 58) ; Brunton & Caton-Thompson (1928: pl. 57.4).
[186] Brunton (1937: pl. 40.8); Needler (1984: no.169); Petrie & Quibell (1896: pls. 57.2, 57.4, 72).
[187] Cleyet-Merle (1982: 86, 88); Quibell (1905: pl. 52); Seton-Karr (1904: pl. 2.26, 49);
[188] Needler (1984: 123 & no. 171); Petrie & Wainwright (1913: pl. 1.12, 4.6).

Lower, as opposed to a single Upper Egyptian lance head. Although these numbers are not consistent with war or conflict, it is interesting to find that the most of these spears appear in Lower Egypt around the Delta, a possible indicator of their use in hunting.

Fortifications and walled towns

The only example of an Egyptian fortification associated with the period of state formation is found outside Egypt at Tell es-Sakan, near Gaza. Foundations of the site indicate Egyptian construction during Naqada IIIA2 (3200 BC) where it was occupied until possibly the reign of Den, after which it was abandoned and later reoccupied by Palestinians.[189] The Egyptian period of occupation saw two phases of construction. The first phase indicates mudbrick production of the outer wall A1, built on virgin sand to a thickness of 1.5m and preserved to a height of 1.5m.[190] The second phase saw an extension to 3.55m thickness at a length of 19.30m which, according to Miroschedji, was to prevent a natural collapse of the wall.[191] While this fortification is a solitary example, it is curious to note that no signifiers of violent activity within or around the structure are found.[192] No burials have been identified which indicate violent death, weapons are absent from the site and no architectural indictors of destruction are present during Egyptian occupation. In fact, the fortification appears to have served a purely administrative purpose, playing a role in the organisation of economic activities of Egyptian sites in the southern Levant. This is indicated through the discovery of 7 serekhs on pots at the site, dating from Dynasty 0 to Dynasty 1. Amongst these the serekh of Narmer, the first king of Dynastic Egypt is found, while the location of the fortification

[189] Miroschedji (2001: 75).
[190] Miroschedji (2001: 84).
[191] Miroschedji (2001: 84).
[192] Miroschedji (2001: 84-86).

between Egypt and Palestine, combined with the presence of Palestinian artefacts indicates its function as a possible trade post in Early Dynastic and Late Predynastic times.[193] Furthermore, wine jars from Tell es-Sakan could form a link between the many examples found in the tomb of an early ruler from tomb U-j at Abydos, providing additional indicators that this was a trade outpost, however further analysis needs to take place before a proper connection can be made.

Walled Towns, although not direct indicators of violence, must also be acknowledged. While evidence is found both archaeologically and iconographically, only archaeological evidence will be considered here in this discussion as depictions of walled towns and fortifications will be considered in the following chapter. The earliest archaeological evidence of walled towns is a solitary mudbrick wall, approximately 2m thick, located at Naqada South Town.[194] Crenelated in design, Bard suggests that this wall 'may constitute conflict or the threat of conflict,'[195] suggesting that early fortifications were built to protect towns rather than to defend frontiers. This is supported in the form of a clay model found in grave B83 at Diospolis Parva.[196] The model is the only one of its type found and features a wall with two men looking over it.[197] If the purpose of these walls were indeed for defensive purposes, intended to forestall anticipated attacks, then what is missing from the archaeological record are indicators of such violence. These would include weapons and semiotics of destruction, along with indicators of the scale or frequency of any conflict. With the absence of these

[193] Miroschedji (2001: 87-90, 98-100).
[194] Kemp (1977: 198).
[195] Bard, (1987: 83).
[196] Petrie (1901: 32).
[197] Vogel (2010: 5).

markers it is likely that these walls, if built to prevent attack, did not see any violence in Predynastic Egypt.

Destruction Layers

Destruction layers are also lacking in the archaeological record, with only one published example. The Lower Egyptian site at Maadi indicates possible destruction layers, where Hayes states that 'layers of ash, scattered human bones…and the scarcity of artefacts of value suggest that the town was sacked and burned at least once in the course of its history.'[198] Unfortunately, Hayes does not expand on this and no further explanation is given in regards to the remains or the stratigraphy of the layers in question. Remains of a large kiln are found nearby and it is possible that ash is associated with this and not destruction; however destruction through conflict is the most likely interpretation due to the scattered human bones. What this does highlight however is questions in relation to the Naqada expansion. As discussed in the previous chapter, if the spread of the Naqada culture from the South into the North was met with warfare or aggressive conflict, evidence would show signs of destruction layers at settlements and towns. This is supported by the Old Kingdom site of Mendes, where bodies were discovered dating to the 6th Dynasty sprawled in contorted positions within the settlement, accompanied by a burnt layer throughout the site.[199] This shows that semiotics of destruction are evident in the archaeological record and that they can and do show evidence of war or conquest. With this in mind, it must be stated that although many settlements have not been excavated from Early Egypt, those which

[198] Hayes (1969: 123).
[199] Giddy (2000: 32); Giddy (2001: 28).

have been subject to investigation show no signs of destruction throughout Upper and Lower Egypt, other than the settlement at Maadi.

Skeletal Remains

One of the most obvious signs of warfare in an archaeological context is the existence of human remains indicative of violence as a cause of death.[200] Indicators would be present in the form of pathological marks identifiable on skeletons consistent with weapons used in war which at times could also include remnants of weapons embedded within the bone.[201] As with the majority of archaeological data however, evidence is rarely as accurate as it may appear. Although human remains can suggest that violence indeed existed in the past, paleopathological marks offer little in the way of indicating the prevalence of such violence.[202] This holds true in relation to other data associated with violent conflict including the presence of defensive structures, semiotics of destruction and even the use of tools as weapons which are all predicated upon beliefs about past violence yet do not individually constitute evidence for it.[203]

Skull injuries are generally associated with trauma caused by a mace and comprise the most extensive indications of pathological markers for potential violence during the Predynastic Period. Examples are found at 5 separate sites, including Abydos, where burial E134 includes the remains of a male showing possible fatal trauma from a blow to the forehead along with

[200] Gilbert (2004: 73).
[201] Monks & Osgood (2000: 2); Thorpe (2001: 133).
[202] Carman & Harding (1999: 6-7).
[203] Carman & Harding (1999: 6-7).

two fingers which had been broken and mended prior to death.[204] The punctured skull of a female is found in burial b17 from el-Amrah, with indications it was 'bored as if for trephining',[205] while a skull belonging to a female from Gebelein shows additional evidence of a skull fracture.[206] Further remains of two individuals are found at Naga ed Dêr, both sustaining head injuries which had healed prior to death. One skull was noted to have suffered a blow to the cheek and the other a left sided wound, possibly 'made by an axe or a similar object.'[207] Hierakonpolis appears to be the only site which contains multiple examples of head trauma in the Predynastic period. Evidence is found in tomb 6 from cemetery HK6 where multiple individuals are interred yet only one adult is found with a cranial injury.[208] A variety of additional examples are found in the Hierakonpolis HK43 cemetery where physical anthropologists working at the site have examined approximately 160 burials out of approximately 465,[209] discovering only three cases of possible violent death in conjunction with 21 individuals who are possibly associated with sacrifice.[210] Violent indicators are found in burial 120 which shows signs of a possible fatal blow to the back of the head, while individuals in burials 24 and 123 reveal cut-marks found on their cervical vertebrae, indicative of either slitting of the throat or decapitation.[211] Burial 350 included a male with over 60 cut marks on his cranium, while 4 other individuals were found containing the same markings, including one with approximately 197 cut marks.[212] The cut marks are grouped and begin at the front of the cranium, becoming less frequent and severe toward

[204] Naville (1914: 16).
[205] Randall-MacIver & Mace (1902: 20). This is particularly interesting as there is no evidence to suggest that trephining was practiced in early Egypt.
[206] Dawson & Gray (1968: 1); BM 32752. It is not possible to determine whether this fracture occurred as a result of violence, accident or during transportation
[207] Podzorski (1990: 21).
[208] Molleson (2000: 159, 162, 167). While there were many individuals buried in this tomb, there was only an isolated example of violence
[209] Dougherty (2011: 310).
[210] Maish (1999: 11-14). Dougherty (2011: 310).
[211] Maish (1999: 11-14).
[212] Dougherty (2011: 323).

the back of the calvarium,[213] marks which are consistent with comparative remains of scalping from North America.[214] These signs of scalping are of crucial interest as it is a behaviour often associated with raiding and warfare, while arguments by Davies and Friedman have also suggested that decapitation and dismemberment has historically been used in the execution of war prisoners or criminals, while the removal of body parts has also been used to exact penalty.[215] Other observed injuries include six ulna fractures found at Adaïma,[216] which are suggested to be either possible parry fractures or more likely due to accident.[217] An individual with a broken femur was recorded from burial 2600 at Matmar, most likely the cause of an accident,[218] while only a few more remains are found including a female with a possible forearm fracture at Maadi, an elderly man with a fractured right tibia with signs of healing,[219] and a female sternum with a four sided puncture wound which could possibly be attributed to a spear.[220] As we can see, instances of skeletal remains showing evidence of physical trauma from Early Egypt are relatively scarce, and those which have been discussed cannot be conclusively attributed to death by warfare.[221] The majority can be attributed to accidents or possibly sacrifice rather than violent injuries, including many which present signs of healing prior to death, suggesting they were not fatal. Furthermore, these skeletal remains appear to represent only small indicators of violence.[222] The only examples which show multiple victims of violence occur at Hierakonpolis, where 4.7% of the examined remains revealed violent indicators, most common with scalping and

[213] Dougherty (2011: 323).
[214] Milner (1999: 105-151).
[215] Davies & Friedman (2002: 243-246).
[216] Crubézy (2002: 523-4, & fig. 105).
[217] Gilbert (2004:76).
[218] Brunton (1948: 17, & xiv).
[219] Rizkana & Seeher (1990: 124-5). Burials MA62 & MA26, while MA14 shows an early Dynastic example.
[220] Fouquet (1897: 531-2).
[221] Gilbert (2004: 116).
[222] At Naqada, Petrie believe the human remains showed that burials were not indicative of violence, stating that 'these people were certainly not quarrelsome nor given to fighting', as 'in all the hundreds of bodies examined, scarcely one shewed broken bones', and that ' no example of a skull smashed in or broken during life was noticed' Petrie (1896: 33).

cut-marks on the cervical vertebrae. This could be explained by cemeteries only representing a certain class or fraction of the society, suggesting that skeletal remains associated with violent death could also be found elsewhere in non-ritual burials. Another explanation could be suggestive of mass burials following war or conflict, none of which have so far been found at any site during the Predynastic period.[223] The lack of evidence indicating violence on human remains cannot be attributed solely to these purposes however. Paleopathology has not always been an archaeological science and excavators from the late 19th and earlier 20th century attributed little focus to studying and recording skeletal remains, meaning evidence which may have been present, is now lost.[224] These remains are not consistent with signs of warfare either during the Naqada expansion or the period of state formation. If warfare was waged in Early Egypt we would expect that paleopathological indicators would show more instances of skull damage, fractured arms, stab wounds or a variety of arrow wounds, including both bone damage or arrow heads imbedded in the bone.[225]

Human Burials

Mortuary remains in the form of multiple and mass burials are another signifier of warfare. Although to date no mass burials have been found dating to the Predynastic period, examples have been discovered both before and after. This absence suggests the *possibility* that extensive warfare did not occur, however is also indicative of the lack of information we have from this period. The earliest mass grave is found in the Northern Sudan at Jebel

[223] Cemeteries where no pathological injuries were identified include: Abu Sir el-Meleq, El-Amrah, Armant, Badari, Gerzeh, Harageh, Hierakonpolis (fort cemetery), El-Kab, Mahasna, Minshat Abu Omar, Mostagedda
[224] Armelagos & Mills (1999: 604-607).
[225] It is also important to highlight the evidence for cremation in Predynastic Egypt. Although this does not necessarily indicate a violent death, recent discoveries have allowed investigations of this kind to be studied, pointing to it being a possible act of punishment as discussed at the Egypt and its Origins conference in 2011 by Dougherty.

Sahaba, dating to the Egyptian Late Palaeolithic between 10,000 and 12,000 BC. 58 skeletons were found at site 117, 40.7% of which showed signs of violent death, some of which included remains of flint flakes or chips which were imbedded into or resting up against the skeletal remains.[226] There are three interesting points which must be discussed here. The first is that flint flakes or chips are clearly associated with these remains however are not evident in any examples from the predynastic period as discussed earlier. In addition to this, Wendorf explains that no occupation area could be found in association with these burials.[227] This suggests that if mass burials are present in Predynastic Egypt it is possible that they are located away from the excavated settlements and cemeteries, thus explaining why none have hitherto been discovered. Of further interest however is the presence of multiple burials. From the 58 remains found at the site at least 26 individuals were found in multiple burials and while an absence of mass burials may be present in Predynastic Egypt, multiple burials certainly are not. Remains from Diospolis Parva during Naqada IIC-D (3700 BC – 3500 BC) show an example of 14 bodies found within only 4 separate burials, each containing multiple weapons.[228] Of these four burials, grave B56 has 2 bodies, 2 maceheads and a lance head; B86 contains 3 bodies, 3 maceheads, 2 mace handles and 7 lance heads; B102 includes the remains of 4 males and a child, along with 3 maceheads and grave B236 has 4 males, 1 mace head and 3 lance heads.[229] Could these examples then be indicative of violence at Diospolis Parva around this time, which, coincidentally coincides with the Naqada expansion? Unfortunately, like most of the remains, it is impossible to tell. Skeletal remains from these burials were not complete. Of the three bodies in grave B86 for example, one was missing a head, the second included only the pelvis, shins and one thigh, while the third

[226] Wendorf (1968: 993).
[227] Wendorf (1968: 993).
[228] Petrie (1901a: 32-34).
[229] Petrie (1901a: 32-34).

was complete, yet had no signs paleopathological signs indicating physical trauma.[230] In addition to this, these four burials are the only examples from the entire B cemetery which include multiple interment associated with weapons.

This then begs the ever prevalent question, where are all the bodies? Bard suggests that the cemeteries recorded so far are not fair representations of the Egyptian valley culture, reflecting instead selected communities which procured access to the earliest technologies and health.[231] On the other hand, Armelagos and Mills calculate that approximately 15,000 burials have been published from the Predynastic period, with an additional 10,000 dating to the Early Dynastic.[232] Out of these 25,000 burials the percentage indicating the presence of violence is less than 2% based on the evidence discussed within this chapter, a number certainly not consistent with war.

Discussion

It would seem that while warfare has been suggested by many scholars, that a collection of the characteristic above do not indicate violence consistent with warfare. While violence is present within these remains, it is likely associated with small-scale competition. This is evident through the multiple burials associated with weapons found at Diospolis Parva and the destruction layer at Maadi which are possible identifiers of conflict. Raids and surprise attacks which are generally associated with conflict would show little identification within the archaeological record and would produce only a handful of remains, which is also consistent with paleopathological trauma at Hierakonpolis. The lack of archaeological

[230] Petrie (1901a: 33).
[231] Bard (1992: 15).
[232] Armelagos & Mills (1999: 604-607).

evidence pertaining to war makes a definitive interpretation difficult to put forth, however, the distribution of weapons combined with the fortifications at Gaza indicate no evidence for violent activities, suggesting that warfare cannot be associated with this period. The greatest evidence for conflict dates to the Naqada IIC-D periods, in regards to burials and human remains which suggests that the Naqada expansion, whilst a predominantly peaceful event, did show indicators of opposition. Indicators are so minor however that this cultural explosion can still be attributed to assimilation throughout most of Egypt rather than violence.

Chapter 3: Iconographic Evidence

'It is a constant in human history that social and political change has been more often than not linked to violence. Although it is difficult to detect warfare in the archaeological record, in Predynastic Egypt its presence is indicated by iconographic evidence.'[233]

The theme of violence is found in abundance during Early Egypt. Although we have shown that archaeological evidence fails to reveal sufficient indicators, iconographic examples are plentiful. Examples are found for the most part on a variety of different mediums including decorated slate palettes, decorated knife handles and maceheads, inscriptions on pottery, rock art, a wall painting, and ivory tags.[234] Issues arise however in that Predynastic Egypt was a preliterate society, which limits our understanding of early iconography. What may appear to be scenes depicting acts of violence could in fact be ritual symbolisms of power and control. Recent studies by scholars such as Stan Hendrickx have contributed much to our understanding of scenes from this period through analysis of contemporaneous comparisons, however much is still left unsolved.[235] Images of violence develop in the Predynastic period from as early as Naqada I (3900BC) right through to the Dynastic era (3000BC onwards), allowing us to identify recurring themes within the iconography. This chapter will therefore not look at individual artefacts, but instead investigate these various developing themes in relation to war and violence. It should be noted that the evidence used within this chapter, like the last, is not representative of all iconographic evidence for warfare and violence. The main examples which are discussed include those which are best preserved and which provide parallels for thematic discussion.

[233] Castillos (2009: 79)
[234] Ridley (1973).
[235] Hendrickx (2011a: 237-263); Hendrickx (2011b: 75-81); Hendrickx (2012: 23-72).

Historical Record vs. Symbolic Imagery

The most important question within recent studies of Early Egypt has revolved around violent images on early iconography; asking are they *real* or *ritual* images?[236] The ritual theme is linked to the Egyptians strong ideological beliefs, particularly in association with the power of the ruler. This is explained by Wilkinson who states that 'without the king as defender of order, chaos would triumph and everything would be lost.'[237] The defence of order is oftentimes represented through conflict, evidence which is attested on a set of 3 cylinders found from the Main Deposit at Hierakonpolis.[238]

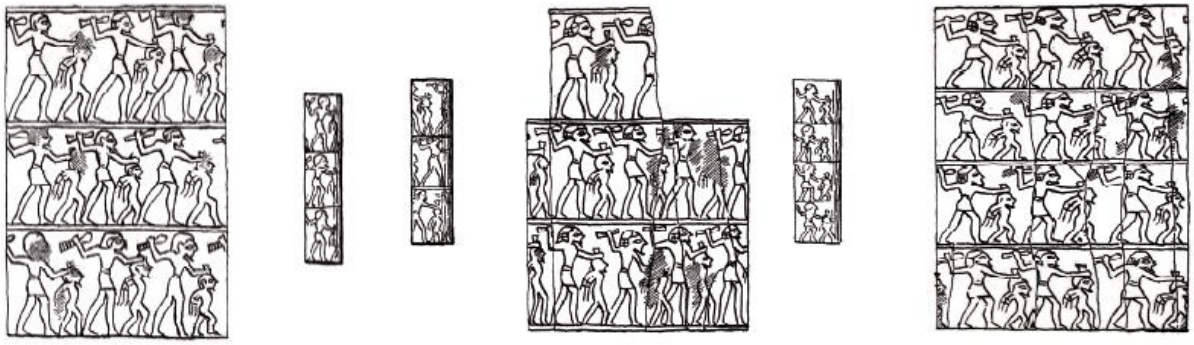

Figure 2: 3 Ivory Cylinders of Narmer (de Wit: 171).

Dating to the First Dynasty, these cylinders depict the repeated image of a possible king holding a mace in a dominant pose, symbolic of order, who is about to attack a subjugated enemy, who symbolises chaos. This is also indicated on the Narmer palette, where images of subjugation, decapitated and trampled victims along with a destroyed fortress are also indicative of the king exacting order through conflict.[239] The role of this imagery was to convey the ability of the ruler to keep in check the opposing forces of nature, thus projecting

[236] Gianesse (2012); Köhler (2002: 499-513).
[237] Wilkinson (2003: 94).
[238] Droux (2005: 33).
[239] O'Connor (2011: 145-152).

the sacred power and control he possessed as a leader.[240] On the other hand however, the opposing belief revolves around the interpretation of these images as historical records, that is, pictorial narratives in a time predating written language.[241] Within these discussions, a myriad of publications focus specifically on the Narmer Palette (Figure 6) for which 103 publications have been identified before 1995 alone.[242] The discovery of an ivory label from Abydos has been suggested by Gunter Dreyer to complement the images on the Narmer Palette, thus supporting a historical interpretation of the violent iconography.[243] The label depicts a hieroglyphic variant of Narmer's name smiting an enemy which has comparisons with a contemporaneous cylinder from Hierakonpolis which also possesses the subjugation motif.[244]

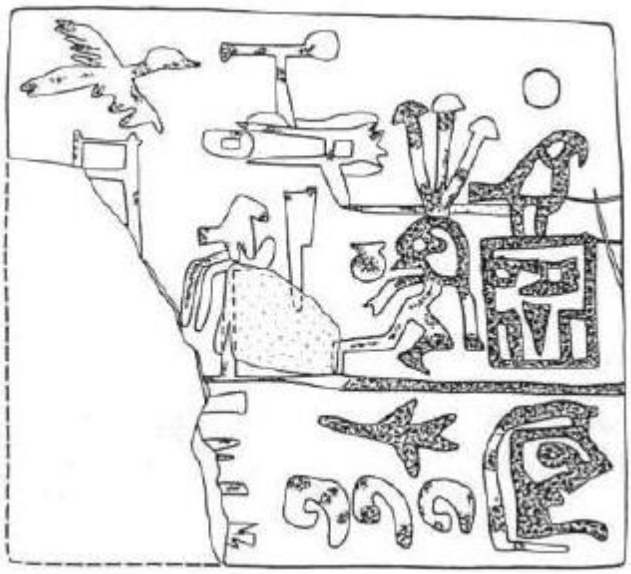

Figure 3: Ivory label of Narmer (De Wit: 167).

This view is opposed by Köhler however, who suggests that the interpretation of hieroglyphics on the label, which Dreyer suggests associates the subjugated victim with the

[240] Anđelković (2011: 28).
[241] Fairservice (1991: 1-20); Kemp (2006: 84); Yurco (1995: 85-95).
[242] Hendrickx (1995: 299).
[243] Dreyer *et al.* (1998: 33, 139).
[244] Droux (2005: 33).

western Delta, is not present on the more elaborately detailed Narmer Palette.[245] In lieu of this, the past 20 years have begun to see scholars favour the ritualistic interpretation of evidence as opposed to the historical. This is a result of new discoveries and studies which have enabled connections to be made between various motifs, including scenes of hunting, which Hendrickx suggests can symbolise military victory. In addition to this, the analysis of various themes within these images has also revealed the presence of an ideological belief system. Objects, such as a jar from tomb U-239 (Figure 5), along with a wall painting from Tomb 100, depict comparable martial motifs which predate Narmer and allow us to place this imagery 'in the context of a long and gradual evolution of iconographic themes and their underlying ideological conceptions.'[246] These images provide an insight into the ideas and beliefs of culture at the time of their construction as indicated by Kathryn Bard who suggests that 'the ideas of a culture do not develop independently of cultural processes.'[247]

Victory Scenes

'Pottery with painted decoration has always been a fundamental element for the study of Predynastic iconography.'[248] Discoveries by Gunter Dreyer at Abydos have revealed that as early as Naqada I, scenes of military victory were being depicted on pottery, with some unique examples found on White Cross-Lined vessels in the elite cemetery U (Figures 4 and 5).[249] The military aspect is not rendered by actual scenes of violence,[250] but are instead characterised by bound prisoners attached to larger figures who are either wielding a mace or have their arms raised above their heads in celebration during the aftermath of a conflict.

[245] Köhler (2002: 508).
[246] Köhler (2002: 500).
[247] Bard (1992: 3-4).
[248] Hendrickx (2011b: 76).
[249] Dreyer *et al.* (1998: fig. 12-13).
[250] Hendrickx (2011b: 76).

In addition to this, a parallel is seen between hunting and military victory within early iconography. This is represented in the form of two White Cross-Lined jars from tomb U-415 at Abydos where both hunting and military victory are represented together.[251]

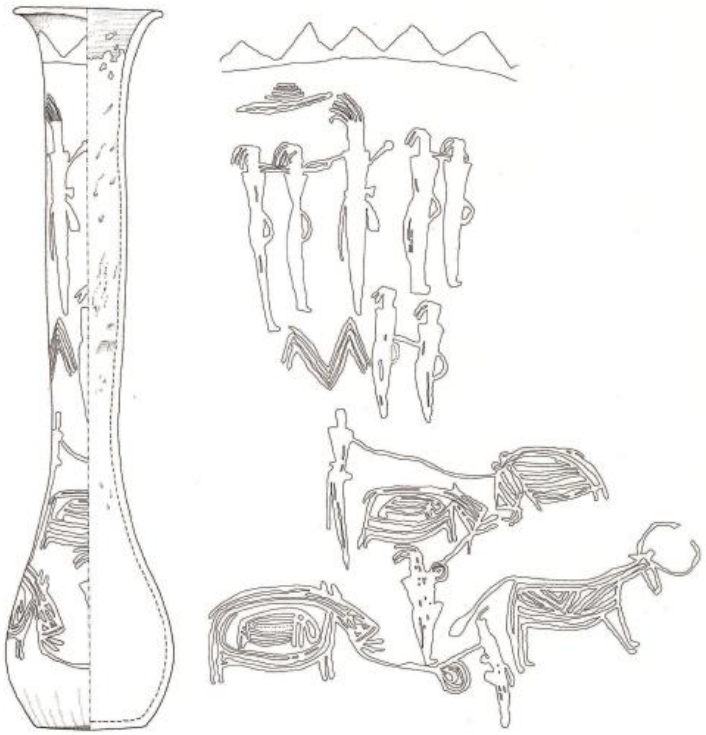

Figure 4: White Cross-Lined Vessel – Tomb U-415 at Abydos (de Wit: 145).

The parallel is seen through the absence of narrative details and direct action in both the hunting and victory scenes, while depictions from the Hunter's Palette[252] and the Narmer Palette[253] both indicate that the same weapons were used in hunting and war, while similar attire was also warn.[254] War victims and slaughtered animals are not depicted while the absence of general anecdotal details indicates that the scenes are highly stylised and to some extant standardised.[255] While the concept of violence is interwoven through symbolism of victory and defeat, sufficient indicators of warfare are not present within this

[251] Dreyer *et al.* (2003: 80-85, figs. 5-6).
[252] Ridley (1973: 34).
[253] O'Connor (2011: 145).
[254] Köhler (2002: 508).
[255] Hendrickx (2011b: 77).

motif. Victory could refer to small scale conflicts, war or hunting, which is impossible to distinguish from these images.

Subjugating the Enemy Motif

The subjugation motif in Early Egypt is a scene associated with violence that involves the king or leader smiting an individual or group with a mace or staff. The scene encompasses the ideological principle of subjugation on one side and superiority on the other in an attempt to promote the power of the king and his ability to protect his people.[256] What is interesting about this scene is that of the many depictions found throughout Egyptian history, from Naqada I until well into the Roman period,[257] the final blow is never represented.[258]This could suggest that the importance of the scene does not lie in the killing, but rather in the act itself, symbolic both of the power and dominance of the king, and the ritualistic nature of the motif. This concept is discussed by Emma Hall who suggests that the smiting scene is a way of commemorating victory as the king or ruler is never struggling with an enemy, he has already conquered him.[259] In addition to this, John Baines suggests that this topos, which is often found later in temples, formed part of the 'great Pharaonic tradition,' suggesting that it is an act completed on behalf of a god.[260] The earliest evidence of this theme is found on a White Cross-Line vessel from tomb U-239 at Abydos which dates to Naqada IC (3700BC).[261] The vessel depicts the image of four large figures, each wearing some form of headdress and wielding a mace. Groups of smaller individuals are attached to three of the larger figures by a rope and are bound and naked, each indicated by a phallus,

[256] Köhler (2002: 500).
[257] Hall (1986: 5).
[258] Gianesse (2012: 52).
[259] Hall (1986: 3).
[260] Baines (1996: 351).
[261] Dreyer et al. (1998: 111-114); Hartung (2006: 674-675).

while the fourth of the larger figures has his hands raised above his head in resemblance of the victory motif discussed above.[262]

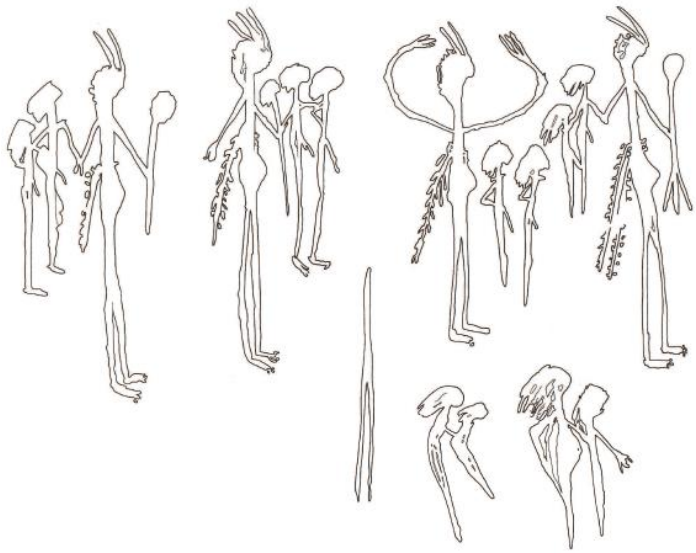

Figure 5: Line drawings from White Cross-Lined vessel, Tomb U-239 (de Wit: 141).

Although this scene does not depict the usual kneeling figure beneath the subduer, it is associated with the subjugation motif as superiority is represented through each of the larger figures holding a mace and subjugation through the prisoners.[263] An evolution of this topos is seen in the wall painting from Tomb 100, where the lower left hand side of the scene depicts three figures, each crouching and bound together with a figure standing above them about to direct a blow with a mace.[264] Three more representations are found from the reign of Narmer alone, including on the Narmer palette,[265] an ivory label from Abydos[266] and three separate pieces of an ivory cylinder found in the Main Deposit at Hierakonpolis.[267]

[262] Dreyer et al. (1998: Abb. 13).
[263] Köhler (2002: 503-504).
[264] Hendrickx (2011b: 76-77).
[265] Fairservis (1991 : 2-3).
[266] Wit (2008: 167-168)
[267] Gilbert (2004: 91).

A study by Joyce Filer has attempted to link iconography of the king smiting his enemies to examples of head injuries from the archaeological record. As discussed in the previous chapter however, there are relatively few examples of human remains from Predynastic Egypt which indicate trauma as a cause of death, none of which can be definitively attributed to depressions caused by a blow from a mace.[268] Arlette David suggests rather that the imagery presented was likely a propagandistic ritual topos which reflected Egyptian domination in a post-conflict setting.[269] This interpretation accurately identifies that the scene rarely takes place within the context of a battle, with the only Predynastic exception being Tomb 100. The scenes on the Narmer Palette, the ivory label and cylinder of Narmer along with the White Cross-Lined vase however all appear transpire *after* a supposed conflict.

Prisoners

Prisoners are often found in association with smiting or victory scenes and are generally depicted with their arms bound behind their back.[270] According to Hendrickx, scenes depicting prisoners are representative of the control and power of the king, a theme which appears to be a prevalent ideological concept throughout early iconography.[271] Early representations of prisoners are abundant, with examples being found on White Cross Line Ware from Naqada IA-IIA (3900BC-3700BC);[272] the Tomb 100 wall painting at Hierakonpolis,[273] rock art from Gebel Sheikh Suleiman,[274] the Gebel el-Arak knife handle,[275]

[268] Filer (1997: 47-74). If we did have archaeological examples limitations would be apparent in that we would not be able to indicate whether depressions on the skull were caused by a symbolic act or an injury in conflict.
[269] David (2011: 83).
[270] Gilbert (2004: 94).
[271] Hendrickx (2012: 32).
[272] Wit (2008: 147-148).
[273] Hendrickx (2011b: 76). Three kneeling prisoners in a smiting scene.
[274] Wit (2008: 197-198). Two prisoners, one standing, the other kneeling.

the Narmer Palette,[276] an ivory label of Narmer[277] and the Narmer macehead,[278] while other depictions are found on ivory objects, three-dimensional figurines and fragmentary stele.[279] It is interesting to note that, like the smiting scene, the depiction of fighting is rarely shown in relation to the prisoners, with the only exception being the Gebel el-Arak knife handle. In fact, the principle focus of the scenes tends to be on victory and defeat, rather than the conflict itself. Again this is in relation to the ideological conception of the king and his ability to exact order and dominance, rather than projecting historical events on a ritual object. Further observations show that the representation of prisoners develops following the reigns of Narmer and Aha.[280] From around this period a standardized form of a kneeling figure with his hands tied behind his back was represented and continued to be used throughout Pharaonic history. An indication of this is shown through smiting scenes on temple walls as well as through the hieroglyphic determinative for enemy as indicated by sign A13 in Sir Alan Gardiners hieroglyphic signs list.[281] This is direct evidence of the development of artistic imagery, where greater importance was placed upon aspects of royal iconography. The depiction of prisoners, as well as subjugated victims developed over time to assume the characteristics of certain non-Egyptian ethnics, possibly Nubians, Libyans and Asiatics,[282] which suggests the symbolic importance of these motifs in the control of the king over chaos, or Egypt's enemies.

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[275] Dreyer (1999: 200-202). A prisoner is standing in the battle scene.
[276] O'Connor (2011: 145). Two rows of decapitated prisoners bound at the arms
[277] Droux (2005: 39-40). A group of kneeling prisoners
[278] Quibell (1900: pl. XXVI.B). Three moving prisoners and a kneeling one.
[279] Gilbert (2004: 95)
[280] Gilbert (2004: 95-96).
[281] Gardiner (1957: 443).
[282] Köhler (2002: 505).

Corpses

The theme of symbolic meaning is also embedded within the depiction of defeated enemies or corpses. This is made apparent during the New Kingdom where defeated foes are depicted on the sole of the sandals of Tutankhamun, symbolic of the king treading on his enemies with each step.[283] Corpses are almost always shown to juxtapose the living, that is, they are usually shown to be naked and are often depicted horizontally rather than vertically.[284] This is especially apparent on the Narmer Palette, where two rows of headless, naked corpses are represented in front of the king.

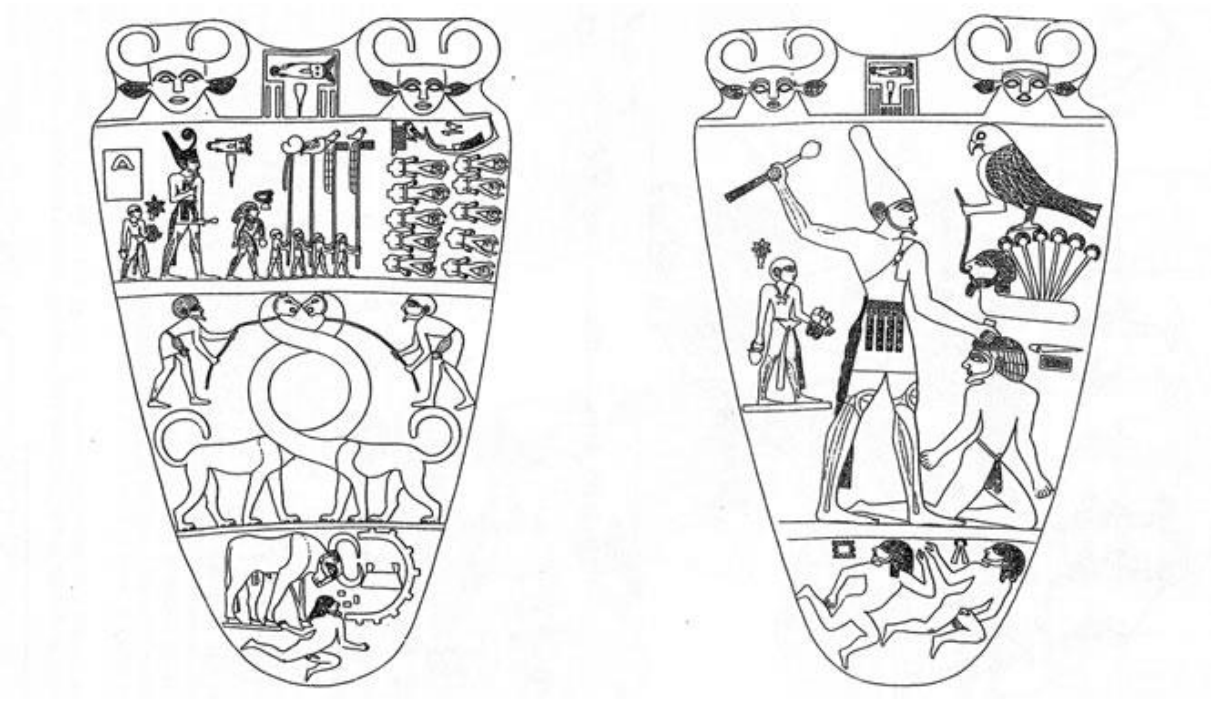

Figure 6: Narmer Palette (de Wit: 163).

The earliest depiction of a defeated enemy is found in the Tomb 100 wall scene where a defeated fighter is shown upside down, while defeated foes are also found on the Gebel el-

[283] Gilbert (2004: 92).
[284] Gianesse (2012: 51).

Arak knife handle,[285] rock inscriptions from Gebel Sheikh Suleiman,[286] the Battlefield Palette[287] and the Bulls Palette.[288] As has been evident, indicators of scale are often not indicated within the iconography. Fairservis offers an informal interpretation, where he suggests that the two defeated enemies on the bottom of the Narmer Palette are a hieroglyphic determinative which symbolises all enemies were either fleeing Narmer or had been defeated.[289] If we are to accept this interpretation, this could then be applicable to other examples where multiple defeated enemies are depicted like this. This not only suggests the artists awareness of plurality within these images, but could also show that the scene on the Battlefield palette is indicative of a large-scale battle due to the amount of corpses depicted. In addition to this, the depictions of corpses from Early Egyptian iconography also represent the hieroglyphic sign A15 from Gardiner's signs list, generally used to determine an overthrown or fallen enemy.[290]

Battles

Rarely are scenes of the actual battle ever depicted in Predynastic iconography. The only representation to survive is found on the Gebel el-Arak knife handle dating to Naqada IIIA, where scenes show nine fighters organised in combat.[291]

[285] Dreyer (1999: 200-202).
[286] Wit (2008: 197-198).
[287] Ciałowicz (2001 : 176-179).
[288] Midant-Reynes (2000: 242-243).
[289] Fairservis (1991:11).
[290] Gardiner (1957: 443).
[291] Wit (2008: 151-152).

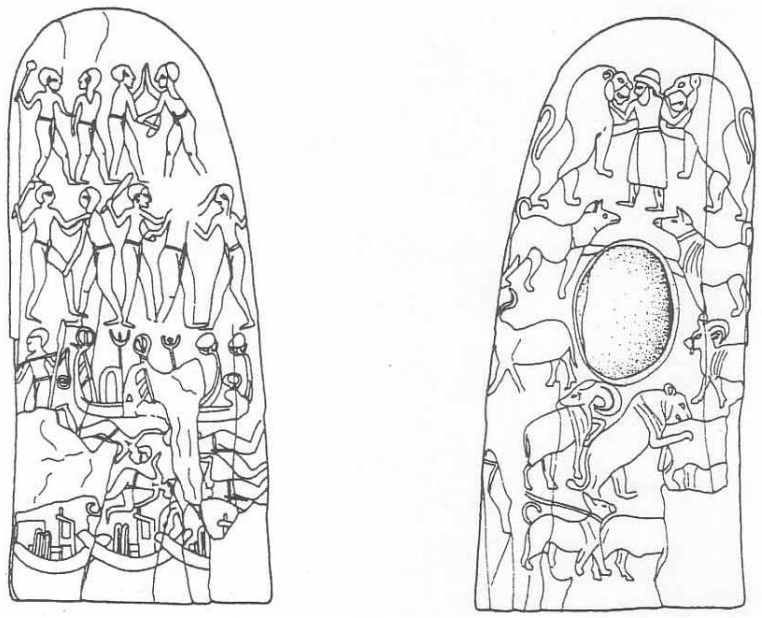

Figure 7: Gebel el-Arak Knife Handle (de Wit: 151).

Fighting occurs with bare hands, maces and possibly knives between two groups, one group with short hair, the other with long,[292] while four fallen victims are shown beneath two boats directly underneath the fighting scene.[293] Other possible scenes are identified on the Battlefield Palette, a rock drawing at Gebel Sheikh Suleiman and the Tomb 100 wall painting. The Battlefield Palette shows the aftermath of a battle through identifying multiple fallen victims, many of which are being eaten by vultures, while one is also being mauled by a lion. Unfortunately this palette is incomplete and the top half of the scene is lost, however, much debate has still surrounded the images on this artefact, particularly relating to the identity of the lion. Spencer has suggested that the lion is a scavenger and not a representation of the king in animal form,[294] while de Wit argues that if the lion were to represent the king, then the artist would have depicted him in the act of battle and not the aftermath.[295]

[292] Gianesse (2012: 38).
[293] Wit (2008: 152).
[294] Spencer (1981: 80).
[295] Wit (2008: 210).

Figure 8: Battlefield Palette (de Wit: 209).

This however is not in keeping with the subjugation motifs, which, although not definitively associated with battle scenes, does show the acts of the king after conflict. For this reason we accept the argument put forward by David, who suggests that the lion devouring his enemy is not only an expression of the king, but a form of propaganda against his foes.[296] In David's study on metaphors in Egyptian iconography, he explains that this imagery is concerned with acquiring the possessions of Egypt's enemies, notably their economy and strength.[297] This is supported by a Ramesside ostraca which is associated with a scene of a lion devouring an enemy which states 'I will sever your bones and devour your flesh. I will seize your strength, to put it in my hand.'[298] This then suggests that the lion does represent the king, yet that, while this palette does indicate the aftermath of conflict, that the focus is on the power of the king and his ability to strengthen order within Egypt, while adding to his power through external control. Another example of a battle is seen at Gebel Sheikh Suleiman.

[296] David (2011: 91-93).
[297] David (2011: 92).
[298] Shorter (1936: 165-168).

Figure 9: Gebel Sheik Suleiman (de Wit: 191).

This scene is similar to the Gebel el-Arak knife in that defeated enemies are shown in prostrated positions under a boat,[299] while two bound captives are also present. In the case of the Battlefield Palette and the Gebel Sheik Suleiman examples both represent the aftermath of a conflict, rather than the act itself. In addition to this, it would appear that the depictions focus on victory and defeat, along with power, rather than the act of conflict itself. It is also remarkable to not that of these four depictions of battles, none appear to take place within the vicinity of settlements. If this is to be interpreted literally then it would account for the lack of archaeological evidence showing semiotics of destruction, an absence of skeletal trauma and mass burials, while also eradicating the need for standing fortifications as battle is likely taking place on neutral ground. Furthermore, this suggests organised fighting and a conscripted fighting force which is an indicator of warfare rather than conflict.

Fortifications

As mentioned in the previous chapter, one of the signifiers of warfare we would expect to find within the archaeological record would be defensive structures in the form of

[299] Wit (2008: 197-198).

fortifications and defensive walls. While we showed that no examples are found around the time of political unification under Narmer, or earlier, we do have iconographic evidence of the existence of such structures. Fortifications and walled towns are represented on few artefacts from Early Egypt. The Libyan Palette is the best known example, with 7 examples of what are likely fortified towns on the recto.

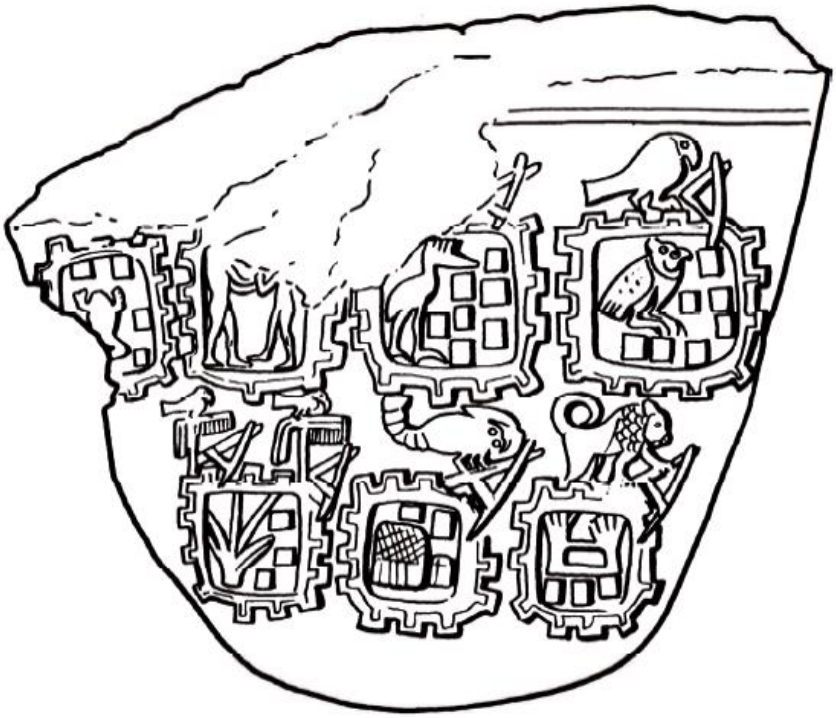

Figure 10: Libyan Palette (de Wit: 161).

Each town is surrounded by a niched wall which is surmounted by different animals holding a hoe.[300] It is generally accepted that the hoes on this palette are symbolic of the destruction of these fortifications.[301] This is supported by a label found in the tomb of Den, where the hoe is represented next to the fortified wall of a foreign city with the hieroglyphic sign *wp*, or *wpi*, to open, suggesting destruction.[302] The Bull Palette also includes two fortified towns which are most likely not under attack, however insufficient remains from the rest of the palette do not allow us to interpret this any further. The representation of a fortification on

[300] Ridley (1973: 43-46).
[301] Baines (1996: 364-366); Ciałowicz (2001:180-182); Dreyer (1998: 173-180).
[302] Petrie (1900: pls. 11.14, 15.16).

the Narmer Palette is the earliest example of a walled structure being attacked by the king that also contains the king defeating the inhabitants of the town.[303] The presence of walled towns also extends beyond these examples, however it is interesting to compare to the archaeological record, where no evidence of fortifications are found within Egypt, while only a single example of a possible walled-town is found at Naqada. This could be due to the mudbricks being reused in later periods of Egyptian history or could also point to the structures being lost, however it is also possible that these are also symbolic representations. The fortifications are always depicted being destroyed, which could be a sign of the strength of the king and the extent of his reach.

Interpretation

As we have seen, the various motifs represented within the iconography reveal little about warfare in Early Egypt. Wrought with symbolism, each theme seems to focus more on what happens after conflict rather than depicting conflict itself, with the exception being attacks on fortifications. The king is shown about to smite his enemies, however is never shown in the act of doing so, captives are always depicted after battle except in the case of the Gebel el-Arak knife, and only one true representation of a battle is shown, again on the Gebel el-Arak knife. This could possibly be explained through hunting scenes, where Hendrickx observes that the animal is never shown in the act of a hunt, but after, however this alone is not enough for proper comparison.[304] It would however be naïve to suggest that any of the themes discussed above are purely symbolic based on this preliminary discussion. Although we have shown that these motifs are wrought with symbolism and ideological beliefs, it is

[303] Gilbert (2004: 97).
[304] Hendrickx (2013: 244). Hendrickx (2012: 32).

likely that they also combine historical narrative, meaning they are both real and ritual. While it was suggested that ideological beliefs develop alongside cultural processes, it must be stressed that representations within each theme have links to actual acts or events. The imagery did not simply appear; therefore it is up to us to discover where it came from, why it developed and what real life indicators are present to support this.

Discussion & Conclusion

Discussions of the archaeological and iconographic remains have revealed that warfare cannot be definitively associated with the formation of the state in Egypt. While violence is certainly attested, remains are consistent with smaller scale conflicts as opposed to war. As discussed by Carmen and Harding, archaeological indicators would be present in the form of skeletal remains, defensive constructions and weapons,[305] definitive evidence for which is missing within the archaeological record at this time. Whilst absence of evidence certainly does not indicate evidence of absence, one can only interpret the data available at hand without falling into the trap of assuming what missing data may or may be out there. The greatest indicator for violence at this time appears to be represented through skeletal remains, however only 4.7% of remains from the Hierakonpolis HK43 cemetery indicate paleopathological signs of violent death, the majority of which are attributed to some form of sacrifice.[306] Weapons are in abundance during the Naqada IIIC/D periods; however it is impossible to determine whether they were used for hunting or violence.

In regards to the iconographic remains, the scarcity of battle scenes, along with the near absence of victorious soldiers, the exclusively royal character of the smiting scene, the minority of scenes which depict corpses and the dominant theme of prisoners over other motifs indicates that the ideology does not centre around conflict, but instead to the political and physical power exhibited by the king. Keeley agrees with this conclusion, stating that none of the violent themes in Egyptian iconography point to the virtues that warfare

[305] Carmen & Harding (1999: 3).
[306] Dougherty (2011: 323).

enforces in pre-state societies such as comradery, courage and obedience. [307] Although it was only mentioned briefly, it must be reiterated that images of violent poses, captives, corpses and other violent themes would not have simply appeared, but would have to originate from some context where violence was present and observed. Although this does not exclude the fact that violence likely occurred often enough that these depictions were culturally identifiable, the fact that violent scenes appear as early as Naqada I and show a clear development in individual motifs until the pharaonic period suggests that violence could have occurred at any time between these periods, if not at the time of construction. The few archaeological remains we have however are not consistent with this interpretation.

We observe that there is less of a crossover between the archaeological evidence and the iconographic than was originally expected. The study by Joyce Filer comparing head wounds with smiting scenes reveals an absence of this type of wound in skeletal remains from Egypt, suggesting the smiting scene is, at least during the Middle and Late predynastic periods, possible a ritual or symbolic image. This lack of crossover is also seen through fortifications, for which many are depicted, yet no contemporaneous examples are found within Egypt, the only fortification being located in Southern Palestine and showing no indicators of violence. The lack of paleopathological injuries consistent with defeated enemies also seems to contradict evidence for warfare in Egypt. The final contradiction is seen through the large amount of defeated enemies represented, especially on the Battlefield Palette, yet no mass burials or human remains are found which support this either. Although it could simply be the case that we have not found the evidence yet or much of it has perished over time, the conclusion we are forced to make from the *available* evidence is that while the results do

[307] Keeley (1996: 60-63)

not cross over to indicate the presence of warfare both around the time of and before state formation, sufficient archaeological data remains to suggest that *conflict* was a factor. We are, at this time however, unable to determine to what extent.

In relation to state origin models, an analysis of the circumscription theory indicated that single origin theories pertaining to war do not fit within the context of ancient Egypt. Population density and conquest warfare are attributed by Carneiro and Campagno to be integral factors to state formation yet evidence does not indicate the presence of either within the Predynastic Period. Furthermore, a brief analysis of two major processes in Egyptian state formation, those being cultural and political unification did not show that warfare was present at the time each event occurred. It is here that the suggestion must be made that models for warfare are outdated and underdeveloped. Egyptian state formation, as discussed by Köhler,[308] and Kemp,[309] amongst others, was a slow process which developed over time through multiple causes. Agriculture, the development of inequality, trade, craft specialisation, religious and royal ideology, writing and kinship, were only some of the factors which aided the state formation process, however models for war ado not accommodate for these important aspects.

This thesis has largely been a descriptive account of evidence for warfare in Early Egypt and the theories associated with it. Further studies would benefit from a fully analytical interpretation of this evidence in order to further understand and debunk existing archaeological assumptions about warfare in the Predynastic period. Furthermore, this

[308] Köhler (2011: 123-126).
[309] Kemp (2010: 73-76).

thesis has identified the importance of a holistic approach to state formation studies, while also highlighting the importance of recognising the difference between war and conflict.

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