# Tomb Story:
# The Elite of Early Egypt

*An investigation concerning the influence of 'elite theory'*
*upon interpretations of elite mortuary evidence from the*
*Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods (4000–2545 BC)*

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# DECLARATION

I, Olivier Pierre Rochecouste, certify that this thesis entitled *Tomb Story: The Elite of Early Egypt*, has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

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# ABSTRACT

The word 'elite' has been used since the late 19th century as a social category to define the ruling minority of modern society. The term however, has also been used by archaeologists to socially categorise individuals from the mortuary evidence who may represent institutions or ruling minorities of ancient societies. This has been applied to the study of the Egyptian Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods (4000–2545 BC) in order to outline the role of elite interaction within the development of the state. But textual sources are too vague to provide an explanation of elite interaction within various state formation theories, which can lead to numerous conclusions concerning the archaeological evidence. This thesis will discuss how the concept of elite theory has been utilised by Early Egyptian archaeologists, to interpret the material and textual evidence that is available at numerous sites; such as Hierakonpolis, Saqqara and Naqada. I will also focus on how modern terms, such as 'elite', are obstacles for interpreting the archaeological record and prevent a thoughtful recount of the people who lived during ancient Egypt's earliest known times.

*In memory of*

*Marie Florise Fabien*

*'Grandma'*

*(1934-2014)*

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# Introduction

## Egyptology and the word *'élite'*

*'Gardons-nous des faux problèmes que les mots, sous leur rigidité, peuvent cacher!'* [1]

*'We should beware of false problems, which can be caused by the rigidity of the words we use!'*

*Beatrix Midant-Reynes* [2]

In 1992, Karla Kroeper published an article that presented the findings of eight exceptional Early Dynastic tombs at the site of Minshat Abu Omar in the north east Delta of Egypt. [3] Why she deemed them 'exceptional' was due to the choice of a particular word in the seminar title that has been used since the 16th century and has infiltrated most social sciences including Archaeology and Egyptology. 'Elite' is the word in question and Kroeper's usage of the word in her seminar title would be the first for any Egyptological publication. [4] But she does not even mention 'elite' until her conclusion in describing the owners of the tombs as the 'ruling elite' of Minshat Abu Omar. [5] How she comes to that conclusion is based on the quantity of grave goods that were found in the burials compared to the rest of the site, describing them as the 'richest grave groups'. [6] Since her contribution, there have been many working titles in Egyptian archaeology that have used 'elite'. For example, Elias (1993) analyses the production and use of coffin texts, in elite mortuary preparation of the 3rd Intermediate Period (1076-723 BC) [7], which he emphasises were a central social and economic element within that era and were related to the social persona of the dead. [8] Elias' findings are based however, on a combination of coffin development of the period in question and textual analysis, the latter of which the author admits to be fortunate to have at his disposal. [9] Nonetheless, what both these authors have in common is using the word 'elite' to express how power was used to convey the concept of

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[1] Midant-Reynes (1992:19-20).

[2] Midant-Reynes (2000a: 10). Translated by Ian Shaw.

[3] Kroeper (1992).

[4] According to the search engine of the 'Online Egyptological Bibliography', Kroeper's presentation at a seminar in Cairo, gives us the first usage of the word 'elite' in an Egyptological working title. Using the database's 'Structured Search' <http://oeb.griffith.ox.ac.uk/default.aspx> the word 'elite' was typed under 'title' and the sources were analysed in ascending order according to the date. Moreover, using the Predynastic bibliography created by Stan Hendrickx (1995), Kroeper's article also came up to be the first instance that 'elite' had been used in a title in discussing Early Dynastic finds.

[5] Kroeper (1992: 140).

[6] Kroeper (1992: 140).

[7] Hendrickx (2006a: 55-93); Hornung *et al* (2006: 490-495). All Predynastic and Dynastic absolute dates in this thesis are used from this source.

[8] Elias (1993: 9-10).

[9] Elias (1993: 853).

'social inequality'. This refers to the differences in people's share of resources, which could be money, chances of health, level of education.[10] Both authors, therefore, hope to outline how power is used from the mortuary realm to satisfy the needs of the people within the contextual social structure that they are studying.[11] But in Kroeper's instance, she has no textual evidence to support her 'ruling elite' label for the graves she categorises. Usually, interpretations within Egyptology revolve between the archaeological and the textual evidence, which are frequently corrected and amplified by each other.[12] The absence or limited amount of textual evidence however, characterises the study of the Predynastic (4000–3150 BC) and Early Dynastic periods (2900–2545 BC), which consists of studying the archaeological evidence with the aid of theoretical approaches in order to explain the development of inequality and the formation of the state.[13]

The study of Early Egypt has grown exponentially since being implemented in the late 19th century, which disrupted the view that the pyramids of Giza was the starting point for ancient Egypt's known history.[14] Upon first analysis by William Flinders Petrie (1853–1942), he deemed Predynastic evidence to be indicative of a 'New Race' who invaded Egypt following the collapse of the Old Kingdom in 2180 B.C.[15] He then conceded however, they indicated an indigenous population, due to Jacques de Morgan's excavations at Naqada.[16] Nonetheless, Petrie published *Diospolis Parva* (1901), detailing his relative 'sequence dating' method categorising the ceramic evidence he had compiled into 50 divisions, beginning with SD30 representing the earliest Predynastic pottery and ending with SD80 as the oldest.[17] This would be the first and only empirical chronological system available for Predynastic Egypt.[18] It has since been reformed throughout the 20th century, notably by Werner Kaiser (1957) and Stan Hendrickx (1989), the latter's system is commonly used today.[19] But there have been attempts to create an absolute dating system such as Dee *et al* (2013; 2014) recently.[20] Petrie did not focus too much however, on the social and economic significance behind the grave goods he found, which reflected archaeology's development at the time.[21] Vere Gordon Childe (1892-1957) would ignite the methods of categorising such archaeological evidence into 'cultural

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[10] Payne (2006: 5).
[11] Mann (1986: 6).
[12] O'Connor (1974: 16-17).
[13] Grajetzki (2010: 182).
[14] Petrie (1939: 160).
[15] Petrie & Quibell (1896: 2); Hoffman (1979: 105); Sheppard (2010: 23-24).
[16] de Morgan (1896); Midant-Reynes (2000b: 41).
[17] Petrie (1901b: 30); Midant-Reynes (2000a: 2).
[18] Midant-Reynes (2000a: 2).
[19] Kaiser (1957); Hendrickx (1989); Midant-Reynes (2000a: 2).
[20] Dee *et al* (2013; 2014).
[21] Hoffman (1979: 124).

evolution' models for ancient societies, which have been inspired by Marx's 'relations of production' theories.[22] This would inspire a chain reaction in scholarship which utilised ecosystem theory to create cultural systems that accounted for its causes of progress combined with social and ecological variables.[23] For example, Wittfogel (1957), who claims that social divisions are inevitable in society and that they were constituted through the control of power; specifically the natural resource of water since prehistoric times.[24] Nonetheless, while ecosystem approaches emphasise whole populations and whole adaptive behavioural systems, it falls short in explaining class and human agency in the prehistoric past.[25] By adding human agency within formation theories, archaeologists would attempt to define "the needs, problems, possibilities, incentives, information, and viewpoints of specific individuals or categories of individuals".[26]

Since the mid-20th century therefore, many archaeological studies have been made to account for the power relations between elites and non-elites.[27] For instance, Johnson (1982) defines the elite to be "a given individual or organisation unit" who subordinate a "number of individuals or organisational units" within a "span of control".[28] Yoffee (1991) believes ruling elites appear in history but they are not all the same within ancient states.[29] How elite power is sourced in creating a political institution however, is less clear.[30] Brumfiel (1992) also signalled aspects of elite theory to be incorporated into archaeological analysis in order to depart from the ecosystems approach by recognising "human actors" as the agents of culture change.[31] Additionally, by using the word 'elite', it creates an active "people-filled component" within formation models, who "perform managerial function" and "are endowed with the ability to impose their decisions upon the social system."[32] These publications and many more have influenced scholars of Early Egypt to incorporate the elite and define their role within their explanations of formation theories. This includes Hassan (1988) who defines the Predynastic elite to be "managerial" in nature who "fused religious power with a dazzling array of funerary and worldly goods which legitimised their supremacy."[33] Wilkinson (1999) asserts that the elites were in control of craft specialisation in order to gain "prestige objects" to display their

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[22] Childe (1956: 56); Smith (2009: 3).
[23] Brumfiel (1992: 551).
[24] Wittfogel (1957: 4).
[25] Brumfiel (1992: 551).
[26] Cowgill (1975: 506).
[27] Thurston (2010: 195).
[28] Johnson (1982: 410).
[29] Yoffee (1991: 288).
[30] Yoffee (1991: 287).
[31] Brumfiel (1992: 559).
[32] Brumfiel (1992: 555).
[33] Hassan (1988: 162-163).

"social and economic status".[34] Wengrow (2006) claims such prestige goods "must be seen in the context of existing local trends towards new techniques of display among a restricted elite."[35]

As a result, Wolfram Grajetzki (2010) notes that the word 'elite' has become commonplace in recent Egyptological literature[36] and, like other terms, such as 'class' and 'rank', it is written without a contextual definition.[37] In response he provides two definitions for 'elite', the first of which is:

*'In sociology, as in general usage, "elite" denotes a small leading group within a society, enjoying a privileged status, with access to and command of a disproportionate quantity of resources, often supported by individuals of lower social status within the structure of the group.'[38]*

The second definition that he also provides is more of a contemporary one, labelling the elite to be the best in a certain specialised group of any profession.[39] Both of these definitions carry different influences, for example, the first one talks of the elite being in control of an economic relationship between themselves and a supporting group of 'individuals of lower status' over the 'quantity of resources', which resonates a Marxist influence via the materialist theory.[40] The second definition by Grajetzki suggests that elites are described to have the best characteristics for whatever specialised occupation they work within, therefore, echoing sociological elements of 'elite theory'.[41] Nevertheless, he does raise concerns that the usage of 'elite' in Egyptological literature is often confused with the concepts of 'ruling class' or 'ruling group', which "many Egyptologists fail to draw a distinction between".[42] This is understandable, for Egyptology has been more concerned with Egyptian art and textual sources than with social theory since its inception.[43] As a result, sociological subjects, such as 'class' and the 'elite concept', are "often studied in insufficient detail and without a thorough knowledge of sociology."[44] Consequently, Egyptian archaeologists are not aware that the term 'elite' has a long history, which is linked to the discussions of power relations and has been

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[34] Wilkinson (1999: 34).
[35] Wengrow (2006: 140).
[36] Kroeper (1992); Elias (1993); Shaw (2000: 498); Richards (2005); Köhler (2010).
[37] Grajetzki (2010: 181).
[38] Grajetzki (2010: 181).
[39] Grajetzki (2010: 181).
[40] Grajetzki (2010: 181).
[41] Grajetzki (2010: 181).
[42] Grajetzki (2010: 181).
[43] Trigger (1968: 61); Grajetzki (2010: 181).
[44] Grajetzki (2010: 181).

described to have several forms.[45] For instance, the concept of 'power over' which analyses the ability of getting others to perform actions they would not otherwise perform.[46] This concept was first developed at the turn of the 20th century, and henceforth the word 'elite' has been used to express 'power over' — but what does 'elite' mean?

In the 16th century, French writer Edmond Huguet defined the word '*élite*' as simply 'choix' (a choice); he also wrote '*faire élite*' meaning 'to make a choice'.[47] A century later in the 6th edition of the *Dictionnaire de Trévous* (1771), the primary definition of '*élite*' is given as 'Ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans chaque espèce de marchandise' ('What is best in each type of merchandise').[48] Since then the word has been utilised by several social theorists, such as Henri de Saint-Simon who first advocated the law of the 'perennial two elite'; scientists and industrialists.[49] Scientists, because they are in charge of the values that contemporary society must uphold and the industrialists, for they control the material assets that society needs.[50] This was enough to influence Gaetano Mosca (1896), who along with Vilfredo Pareto (1902) and Robert Michels (1911), introduced the concept of elites into sociological studies.[51] Mosca was the first to develop the idea of 'Minority Rule' and to make a systematic distinction between 'elite', which he called the 'political class', and 'the masses' in order to challenge the class-free ideals of Marxism.[52] He also focused on what created the 'political class' in a modern democratic society which is influenced and restrained by a variety of social forces.[53] The key for 'Minority Rule' was to encapsulate these social forces by creating a 'political formula', which would express a unified culture and morality; which was constructed out of the values, beliefs and habits that are rooted in the specific historical conditions and culture of a society.[54] In doing so, this would secure the 'political class' compliance and submission from the masses in order to legitimise their position of power amongst the population.[55] Pareto further emphasised, that the 'elite' division's existence reflected the differential distribution of talents amongst the population that would probably result in distribution curves similar to that for wealth.[56] Michels would agree that the complexity of political organisations favoured those with specialist knowledge and skills associated with leadership, thus reducing the possibility of

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[45] Thurston (2010: 195).
[46] Dahl (1957: 203); Thurston (2010: 195).
[47] Bottomore (1964: 21). The reference comes from 'Note 1' which was referenced on page 7.
[48] Dictionnaire de Trévous (1771: 629); Bottomore (1964 : 21).
[49] Bottomore (1964: 21); Meisel (1980: vii).
[50] Meisel (1980: vii).
[51] Stanworth (2006: 174).
[52] Bottomore (1964: 9); Stanworth (2006: 174).
[53] Bottomore (1964: 10-11).
[54] Stanworth (2006: 174).
[55] Stanworth (2006: 174-175).
[56] Bottomore (1964: 8) Stanworth (2006: 175).

widespread participation in decision making.[57] Moreover, that such concentrations of power tended to express it as a personal possession.[58] All three scholar's views of 'elite theory' shared a rejection of Marxism and reflected their 19th century world, which contained many feudal remnants that were conveyed by European doctrines of rule.[59] These doctrines subsequently attempted to revive ancient ideas of social hierarchy and to raise obstacles to the spread of democratic notions.[60] The elite concept was praised, for it is much more understandable in "human terms" than that of Marx who analysed power relations within economic society between different systems rather than people.[61] Mann (1986) conversely criticised the elite concept as an extension of Marx's "forces of economic production" advocating that they share a "unitary view of society".[62] As an approach, 'elite theory' generally accepts the inevitability of social, economic and political inequalities, which is represented by individuals in high positions of power.[63] But overall it advocates that the elite of modern society and the past initially focused on using power to oppress others, in other words, the 'power over' concept. After seeing the rise of Mussolini and Hitler through persuasion and coercion of the majority of their population into acts of ethnocide and genocide, post-war academics from various disciplines (such as sociology and anthropology) would seek to identify how the concepts of power by elites originated.[64] It would not be until the 1960s and 1970s that the work of Mosca and Pareto would be translated from Italian into English in the United States.[65] In doing so, it would help to create "an obsession with control and central authority" with that decade and at a time when the concept of 'New Archaeology' was being introduced by Binford (1972).[66] As a part of the concept, he advocated that "the form and structure which characterise the mortuary practices of any society are conditioned by the form and complexity of the organisational characteristics of society itself."[67] Archaeologists then followed the trend of analysing elites with numerous studies indicating how social status can be identified from the mortuary archaeological record; such as identifying "symbols of authority" from tombs and analysing the size and effort expended in creating the tombs.[68]

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[57] Stanworth (2006: 176).
[58] Stanworth (2006: 176).
[59] Bottomore (1964: 15); Stanworth (2006: 177).
[60] Bottomore (1964: 15).
[61] Marcus (1983: 15); Brumfiel (1992: 555).
[62] Mann (1986: 15).
[63] Knuttila & Kubik (2000: 198).
[64] Thurston (2010: 195).
[65] Thurston (2010: 195-196).
[66] Johnson (2010: 21); Thurston (2010: 199).
[67] Binford (1972: 235).
[68] Tainter (1978: 136); Brown (1981: 29-30).

But identifying the elite from empirical sources, especially modern ones, has led to "conflicting definitions" of the word 'elite'.[69] Similarly from an archaeological point of view, the concept of identifying elites from the archaeological record in general has been criticised, especially about how one can identify ranking and social inequality from Prehistoric graves.[70] An article by Stephen Kowalewski, Gary Feinman and Laura Finsten (1992) questioned the usage of 'elite theory' within the study of archaeology, specifically Mesoamerican studies, arguing that archaeological evidence is too fragmentary to be able to prove the identity of elites.[71] Since the word elite entails a "social network and power term" it is "ill-suited for the kinds of information that archaeologists can control".[72]

Analysing 'elite interaction' from the Predynastic record is a relatively new concept; however, it "threatens to be the buzz-word and explanatory burden-bearer" for Early Egyptian scholars such as Christiana Köhler (2010), who are still debating the factors of "cultural influences" and "population pressures" within respective Egyptian formation theories.[73] The significance of this study, therefore, is to discuss the different analyses of power that Egyptologists interpret from the Predynastic and Early Dynastic evidence which they deem elite. Moreover, to analyse how the thread of elite theory has weaved into their interpretations due to the overarching formation theories they try to apply their archaeological evidence towards. This will be done by analysing numerous case studies that try to interpret power relations from the archaeological evidence. Chapter 1 will discuss how Marxism has been adopted in relation to the archaeological concept of 'craft specialisation' networks in Predynastic studies which emphasises that non-elites work to benefit the elites who supposedly own the exchange networks. While the absence of textual evidence has been highlighted for most of the Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods and acts as a limit for this study of elite existence, it does not mean that written evidence is as reliable as what most Egyptologists have come to trust.[74] Trigger himself warns that too many scholars "take ancient Egyptian statements as face value" and may not be an overall indicator for social relations.[75] Chapter 2 will, therefore, investigate the translation of certain hieroglyphic words that relate to the 'ruling class' and 'elite' ideals and how that can confuse interpretations, if the archaeological evidence is not properly analysed. A brief history of the concept of the ruling class ideal will also be highlighted and how that influenced the classical elite theorists. The classical elite theorist's

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[69] Zuckerman (1977: 324-325).
[70] Kowalewski *et al* (1992: 259-260).
[71] Kowalewski *et al* (1992: 262-263).
[72] Kowalewski *et al* (1992: 263).
[73] Kowalewski *et al* (1992: 260-261); Köhler (2010).
[74] Grajetzki (2010: 183).
[75] Trigger (2006: 19-20).

ideals will be discussed with varying examples of Predynastic and Early Dynastic mortuary evidence that try to convey how power was created and symbolised in context and interpreted to be elite in nature. Subsequently, Chapter 3 will demonstrate a development of how evidence for Predynastic Egyptian elite evidence has been used to explain the broader picture of formation theories and categorise sources of social power. The final chapter will draw together the evidence we have discussed and present the conclusions on this material.

# Chapter 1

# Marx, Childe and the Predynastic Elite Revolution

Analysing the many theoretical approaches that have been applied to understanding Egypt's 'state formation' in the late 4th millennium BC has brought to the fore a common thread through every approach, elite interaction. Implementing the word 'elite' instantly refers to influential individuals or groups who have 'power', which they wield in order to attain the best resources with the least amount of effort and at the expense of others. Due to the absence of supportive texts, scholars of the 20th century have applied sociological ideas to pinpoint how the Egyptian kingship originated to ignite the Dynastic era from the Predynastic period.[76] But the problem in studying the kingship of ancient Egypt means to understand how a political system first emerged for the civilisation. This was the same problem that the early sociologists had to comprehend in explaining contemporary society of the 19th century, asking the questions: 'How did social structure originate?', 'Why are certain individuals in positions of power compared to those who are not?' Major sociological figures who tried to answer such questions include Karl Marx (1818-1883) and his co-author Friedrich Engels (1820–1895). They introduced the materialist theories of the 'modes of production' leading to the ideals of historical 'classes' in their dissertation the *Communist Manifesto*.[77] This approach emphasised that the positions of individuals in society and history were constituted by their occupations associated with 'relations of production', thus revealing economic inequalities.[78] While Marx has been criticised for relying on a uni-linear economical approach to historical development, he initiated the 'materialist' concept to analyse material objects as indicators of the social identities of individuals within a given system of productive relations.[79] The 'relations of production' was adopted into archaeology by Australian archaeologist V. Gordon Childe (1892-1957), who believed that the material culture provided a bridge for understanding the social life and wanderings of ancient societies.[80] This then prompted some questions for Predynastic archaeologists working in Egypt: 'Who owns the means of production and the goods and services produced?' and subsequently 'Who owns power?'[81] They in turn embraced Childe's ideals in the form of 'craft specialisation' towards interpreting the quality and quantity of funerary items from Predynastic tombs in order to discern the social identity of elite individuals.

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[76] Hendrickx (2014: 263).
[77] Marx & Engels ([1848] 1967).
[78] Morrison (2006: 56).
[79] Morrison (2006: 56).
[80] Childe (1958a: 1).
[81] Wenke (2009: 287).

For example, Rough ware (R-ware) ceramic production and the presence of specially crafted fish-tail knives in Predynastic tombs at the site of Hierakonpolis have been discussed to reflect the deceased owner's elite position within the community.[82] The site of Hierakonpolis has been the subject of numerous excavations since the late 19th century, and has provided examples of elite tombs at Locality 6 with objects that symbolise power.[83]

## Predynastic 'elite power' at Hierakonpolis

From Dynastic times to possibly the Neolithic period, Hierakonpolis today is known as the largest expanse of habitation and cemetery sites dating to the Naqada I and II periods (4000–3300 BC).[84] Renee Friedman states that the recent evidence of "wood-built mortuary compounds" from the elite cemetery 'HK6' at Hierakonpolis reflects the ability of "strong leaders" who are "able to marshal labour and exotic resources to express their authority in a variety of ways".[85] Such ways are conveyed by a mortuary complex that is characterised by satellite burials gravitating towards a central tomb, 'Tomb 16'.[86] Dated to the Naqada IC-IIA period, it measured approximately 4.3 x 2.6 m with a depth of 1.45 m, making it one of the largest tombs of the Predynastic period.[87] Within this space was another brick-lined tomb that was inserted at a later period (Naqada IIIA2) which has been interpreted as a "respectful renovation".[88] 'Tomb 16' has also been described to be "rich" due to the abundance of funerary items found including a large bowl with a post-firing pot-mark depicting the earliest emblem of the cow goddess 'Bat'.[89] Additionally, two ceramic masks were found as well as bi-conical gold beads, ivory comb fragments, rock cut crystal blades and some arrowheads.[90] Finally, Black-topped (B-ware), Polished-red (P-Ware) and R-ware ceramics were also discovered.[91] In finding such artefacts, Friedman emphasises the economical wealth that such mortuary complexes like 'Tomb 16' encompassed. It is labelled as an 'elite' tomb, therefore, to highlight its importance based on economic principles and the number of subsidiary burials that have clustered around it. The subsidiary graves surrounding 'Tomb 16' composed of two rungs, the inner rung containing human burials and the outer rung containing exotic animals, including

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[82] Hikade (2003: 150); Hendrickx (2008); Köhler (2010: 39).
[83] Wilkinson (1999: 23); Wengrow (2006: 73).
[84] Wengrow (2006: 74).
[85] Friedman *et al* (2011: 157).
[86] Friedman *et al* (2011: 162).
[87] Friedman (2008a: 1188); Friedman *et al* (2011: 159).
[88] Friedman *et al* (2011: 159).
[89] Hendrickx (2005); Friedman *et al* (2011: 160).
[90] Friedman *et al* (2011: 160).
[91] Hendrickx (2008: 63-64); Friedman *et al* (2011: 160).

cats, dogs, a baboon, a hartebeest, and the remains of an elephant.[92] Friedman claims that the presence of the animal burials offers an "insight into the physical reality behind early iconographies of power", which the owner of 'Tomb 16' may have obtained.[93] But how is 'power' obtained in order to construct an 'elite' identity of the Predynastic age? In relation to the archaeological record, Yoffee defines 'power' as "the means by which leaders attempt to control the production and distribution of goods and to manage labor".[94] His statement however, mirrors that of Marx's 'relations of production' theory, which emphasises that in every stage of history there exists two classes, one which controls the forces of production and the other which provides the labour for production.[95] But, Marx never discussed how his 'materialist' theories refer to archaeology or mentions how it could be applied with his materialist framework.[96] His primary focus was detailing the problems of capitalism and the dynamics of the transition from feudalism to capitalist societies, and thence to socialist and communist societies.[97] But he does mention that the "relics of by-gone instruments of labour" act as "indicators of the social conditions under which labour is carried on".[98] This was perhaps one of many catalysts for Childe to adopt a Marxist approach towards analysing Prehistoric economies, including evidence from Predynastic Egypt.[99]

## Signs of the 'Urban Revolution' within Predynastic Egypt

Childe is credited with providing the first coherent analyses of processual change in prehistoric times.[100] He stressed the ideals of 'cultural evolution' which emphasises the analysis of patterns and regularities in the archaeological evidence, thus applying them to diverse social theoretical models.[101] This resulted in his concepts of the 'Neolithic Revolution' and the 'Urban Revolution', the latter of which details ten traits that distinguished the early states from the Neolithic.[102] While these 'Urban' traits have been criticised for looking like a "shopping list of items with no functional relationship between them", some of them have been regarded as key

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[92] Friedman *et al* (2011: 175-185).
[93] Friedman *et al* (2011: 157).
[94] Yoffee (2005: 33).
[95] Morrison (2006: 50, 405).
[96] Trigger (1989: 219).
[97] Wenke (2009: 352).
[98] Marx (1906: 200); Trigger (1989: 219).
[99] Childe (1958a); Gamble (2008: 32).
[100] Renfrew (1994: 123).
[101] Smith (2009: 4-5).
[102] Childe (1950: 9-16); Smith (2009: 10-11). See Appendix – 'Childe's Urban Revolution – The ten-point model'

factors for the rise of complex societies including ancient Egypt.[103] For example, Köhler details nearly the same 'Urban' traits when distinguishing a state from a non-state during the Egyptian Chalcolithic period which comprises the Predynastic era.[104] This includes 'specialised craft production' (trait 2) and 'social complexity' (trait 5), the latter which details the formation of the 'ruling class' who were exempt from all manual tasks.[105] Childe analyses the Gerzean period (Naqada II) as a time of "new industrial techniques" being introduced by full-time specialists that produced artefacts such as fish-tailed blades, wavy-handled and rough ceramic vessels.[106] To Childe, such artefacts reflected the "worlds of ideas" and "structure" within the unique environments of the Near East that they were made within.[107] This included the Nile River, which Childe saw as an oasis large enough to support the development of the ancient Egyptian's growth of wealth, political power and city life.[108] He also saw Egyptian society as increasingly hierarchical, eventually falling under the control of princes, priests and officials, who controlled disciplined armies; thus, it was part of his interpretations to seek burial goods that distinguished the graves of those who were 'elite' or "royal" and those who were not.[109] For example, Childe points out one tomb at the Lower Egyptian site of el-Omari from the rest of the burials that were "poorly furnished with gifts other than flowers".[110] This was tomb 'A35' which dated to at least 4100 BC of the Neolithic period and contained the body of an adult male with an accompanying carved wooden staff.[111] Childe interprets the "wooden baton" to resemble a sceptre that symbolised kingship over Lower Egypt, thence speculating that the deceased was a "chief", who could go on to be a king of the region.[112] This idea may have been prompted by Petrie's contemporary discovery of a royal sceptre found in one of the chambers of Khasekhemwy's tomb at Abydos.[113] This sceptre however, is comprised of cylinders crafted from sard minerals and decorated with "double bands of thick gold which encircle the sceptre at every fourth cylinder".[114] While Egyptologists like Michael Hoffman would prefer not to agree that this was a dead king buried in 'A35', the staff has been labelled a "symbol of authority" and a hallmark of the "highly class-conscious" ideals of the Egyptians in later

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[103] Osborne (2005: 6); Smith (2009: 11).
[104] Köhler (2010: 38) Köhler labels "specialised craft production and political economy, long distance trade, social complexity, bureaucracy and centralisation" and a "well defined state ideology" as the "subsystems" that distinguish a state from a non-state system. She does not reference Childe at all in her chapter or its bibliography.
[105] Childe (1950: 11-13); Smith (2009: 12-13).
[106] Childe (1958a: 61, 63, 70).
[107] Childe (1949: 22); Trigger (1980: 63).
[108] Childe (1928: 105); Trigger (1980: 63).
[109] Childe (1928: 170); Trigger (1980: 63).
[110] Childe (1958a: 40).
[111] Debono & Mortensen (1990: 67, 81); Hassan (1995: 674); Wilkinson (1999: 28); Köhler (2010: 43).
[112] Childe (1958a: 40-41).
[113] Petrie (1901a: 27, pl. ix.1).
[114] Petrie (1901a: 27).

times.[115] Especially when the hieroglyph for ⸢𓊹𓂋𓀻⸣ *sr* "nobleman" has a man holding a long staff as its determinative.[116] A wooden label from Abydos, depicts King Den of the 1st Dynasty (2900–2730 BC) carrying a mace and a long staff in a similar pose to that same determinative.[117] This has led scholars like Wilkinson to emphasise that ancient Egyptian society was "obsessed with status".[118] His statement however, could be re-worded to say that 'Archaeologists who observe ancient Egypt, are obsessed with status', therefore enforcing 'elite' impressions upon the funerary evidence of the Predynastic, based on certain funerary items interpreted to be displays of 'power' and 'authority'. Another example includes burial 'S24' from the western cemetery of Adaima, belonging to a man and a woman interpreted to be "warrior chiefs" due to the presence of clubs, a quiver and a knife.[119] But Childe does warn that funerary material culture does not always reveal a direct reflection of social status.[120] Rather they reflect the social conditions of the time, in other words, extravagant tombs reflect politically unstable and formative situations and that elite funerary ostentation contributed to political legitimation during those times.[121] Going back to Adaima therefore, the west cemetery – containing 'S24'– is characterised by two groups of burials. Those dating to late Naqada I and early Naqada II, and those of Naqada III and beyond, which are described as 'democratic' due to the lack of ostentation found in them, thus highlighting a change in the social conditions of the Naqada II period at the site of Adaima.[122] The wooden staff in tomb 'A35' therefore, has been used as an example to highlight that the el-Omari community was moving away from an 'egalitarian' setting and that some elements of social inequality were starting to emerge. But also the fact that the wooden staff from 'A35' was described to be "carved", thus prompting the emergence of craft specialists and making products for people like the deceased owner of 'A35'. These examples have encouraged Predynastic archaeologists to take the ideals of 'craft specialisation' seriously and that its emergence heralds the arrival of social complexity and elite individuals.

## Predynastic Craft Specialisation models and 'elite' involvement

'Specialisation', within 'craft specialisation' is defined as a "differentiated, regularised, permanent, and perhaps institutionalised production system in which producers depend on

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[115] Hoffman (1979: 196); Hassan (1995: 674); Wilkinson (1999: 187)
[116] Faulkner (1962: 235); Wilkinson (1999: 187).
[117] Petrie (1900: pl. xiv.9); Wilkinson (1999: 187).
[118] Wilkinson (1999: 28).
[119] Crubezy *et al* (2008:299).
[120] Childe (1945); Parker Pearson (1999: 86).
[121] Childe (1945: 18); Parker Pearson (1999: 87).
[122] Crubezy *et al* (2008:300).

extra-household exchange relationships at least in part for their livelihood, and consumers depend on them for acquisition of goods they do not produce themselves".[123] The aspect of specialisation that is attractive to archaeologists is that it is a multi-dimensional model rather than a uni-linear explanatory one.[124] For Predynastic Egyptian studies, the investigation of craft production/specialisation helps to provide an array of information including the scale and mode of production, technology, division of labour, social segmentation as well as trade and economic organisation.[125] While Marx's theoretical outlook on historical development may have been uni-linear in nature, it seems the concept of the 'mode of production' behind craft specialisation has been adopted.[126] It would be further developed by Durkheim (1858–1917) in the form of his multi-dimensional theory 'organic solidarity', which defines a stage of society where individuals are distinguished, not by tribal lineage or kinship, but according to the specific type of occupational activities that they carry out.[127] Two types of production, proposed by Earle (1981) and elaborated in association with Brumfiel (1987), include firstly 'independent' production where specialists produce utilitarian goods or services for an unspecified demanding crowd that is broad.[128] Secondly, 'attached' production where specialists produce high-value goods or services for a patron, either social elite or a governing institution.[129] In this type of production, elite groups sponsor the productive process in order to control the distribution and consumption of high-value, high-status goods.[130] The general consensus is that the Naqada II period is seen as the time "of the emergence of the 'elite', thus when 'attached' specialisation first occurs."[131]

Predynastic scholars have looked to basic sociological principles in order to categorise aspects of specialisation into certain social 'epochs', like Naqada II, by analysing funerary items and their possible construction in order to find indicators of social complexity behind Predynastic craft specialisation. Takamiya's study (2004) is an example which analyses published evidence of specialisation involving lithics, pottery, brewing, and writing. As a result he introduces three hypothetical stages of specialisation development for the Predynastic period.[132] This involves 'the part-time specialist stage' (Naqada I to early Naqada II); 'the

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[123] Costin (1991: 4).
[124] Costin (1991: 5).
[125] Köhler (2008: 3).
[126] Takamiya (2004: 1028). Takamiya cites F. Engels who was associated with Karl Marx's theories. Please refer to fn. 138.
[127] Costin (1991: 4); Morrison (2006: 423).
[128] Earle (1981); Brumfiel & Earle (1987: 5); Costin (1991: 5).
[129] Brumfiel & Earle (1987: 5); Costin (1991: 5).
[130] Costin (1991:7).
[131] Takamiya (2004: 1034-1035); Crubezy et al (2008:299); Hendrickx (2008: 81).
[132] Takamiya (2004: 1034-1035).

attached full-time specialist stage (Naqada IIb to end of Naqada II) and lastly 'the mass-production and developed specialist stage' (Naqada III).[133] From his results, Takamiya notes that the production of luxury items, such as 'decorated pottery', 'ripple-flaked knives' and 'bifacial lithic artefacts', were seen as a priority and thus developed to full-time intensity quickly.[134] How such items are deemed as 'luxurious' is due to the elaborate nature of their manufacture, thus prompting high value and to be executed by specialists who are attached to wealthy consumers, labelled as the elite.[135] Takamiya's study is heavily influenced by the ideals of Brumfiel and Earle (1987), who in turn were influenced by the 'Urban Revolution' concept of Childe and applied it to their analysis of past complex societies.[136] They identified three models of specialisation within the ancient Aztec state.[137] Firstly, the 'commercial model', where the increase in specialisation and exchange are integral to economic growth, in turn encouraging individuals to benefit themselves through specialisation and exchange.[138] Secondly, the 'adaptationist model' assumes that the political elite intervene in the economy, thus prompting centralised leadership to develop in environmental and demographic contexts where economic management is most effective.[139] Finally, the 'political model' assumes that "political elites consciously and strategically employ specialisation and exchange to create and maintain social inequality, as well as strengthen political coalition".[140] This being said the 'political model' is favoured by Takamiya for Predynastic 'craft specialist' activity in the Nile Valley and advocates that elite individuals or groups were behind its organisation to create and maintain social inequality, thus justifying their position of 'power'.[141] There is one issue though of taking up this model, the usage of textual evidence is needed to complement such theories of specialisation development. The source of Brumfiel (1987), who attempts to apply the 'adaptationist model', uses textual evidence in her analysis of the importance of elite craft in the Aztec state. But she looks to the pre-Aztec state of South America, which has its similarities to Predynastic Egypt in terms of social uncertainty, in order to justify such craft development.[142] In attempting to find evidence of full-time specialists appearing since the colonial era, Brumfiel relies on the *Matricula de Huexotzinco*, a document containing highly detailed information on patterns of specialisation in central Mexico during the colonial period, as well as findings of

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[133] Takamiya (2004: 1033).
[134] Takamiya (2004: 1036).
[135] Takamiya (2004: 1036).
[136] Smith (2009: 12).
[137] Brumfiel & Earle (1987: 1-3); Takamiya (2004: 1028).
[138] Brumfiel & Earle (1987: 1); Takamiya (2004: 1028). The 'commercial model' concept was developed by F. Engels in his publication *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884).
[139] Brumfiel & Earle (1987: 2); Takamiya (2004: 1028, 1034-1035).
[140] Brumfiel & Earle (1987: 3); Takamiya (2004: 1028).
[141] Brumfiel & Earle (1987: 3).
[142] Brumfiel (1987: 103).

tools and waste materials found at the archaeological site of Huexolta.[143] Her methodology quantitatively analyses the different means by which elite goods were used for consolidation before and after Aztec dominance. In doing so, it contrasted the different elite mentalities of both periods towards the material culture and manipulating them for legitimation purposes. For example, in the pre-Aztec era (1250-1430 AD) which was characterised by political instability, internal struggle and external warfare, 'elite' goods were seen as symbolic items that could help to manipulate systems of alliance between regional rulers, moreover, they were valued highly owing to the difficulty of acquiring the raw materials used to produce them.[144] In the later Aztec state period (1430-1520 AD) however, there was an increased supply of raw materials due to trade as a result of imperial expansion.[145] The Aztec rulers also used elite goods as rewards within a patronage system of their own, which prevented the re-emergence of pre-Aztec alliance systems between regional rulers that might threaten their rule.[146] Rulers, such as Itzcoatl, would bestow such rewards to regional subordinates whose acts and good service merited it.[147] Nonetheless, the model that Brumfiel uses does not predict the dynamism of the prestige goods industry, whose growth influences are described as either epiphenomenal or incidental.[148] As we shall see from the evidence at 'HK6' in Hierakonpolis, the concept of what is interpreted to be a prestigious 'elite' object is not as straight-forward as it seems from just visual appearances. The examples of R-ware ceramic sherds found in the vicinity of 'Tomb 16' of 'HK6' and the evidence of "expertly knapped" fish tail knives in a "working-class" burial of 'HK43' will help to reflect the rigid interpretation of Egyptian Predynastic 'elite' objects.

## Craft Specialisation at Hierakonpolis

We have already discussed the 'Tomb 16' complex of 'HK6' at Hierakonpolis in relation to the 'iconographies of power' that was displayed due to the surplus of funerary items found. Lavish artefacts, such as the bi-conical gold beads and the distinct funerary masks, were attested to belong to 'elite' owners due to their high quality of manufacturing prowess.[149] But Hendrickx's study (2008) of the R-ware sherds found in a chosen assemblage of 'HK6', including the southern vicinity of 'Tomb 16', indicates that as complete vessels, R-ware were

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[143] Brumfiel (1987: 104; 107).
[144] Brumfiel (1987: 112).
[145] Brumfiel (1987: 112).
[146] Brumfiel (1987: 114).
[147] Brumfiel (1987: 112).
[148] Brumfiel (1987: 117).
[149] Adams (2002: 17-19); Hendrickx (2008: 61); Friedman *et al* (2011: 160).

used for funerary purposes.[150] This is to the due to the absence of contents, which is inferred from an absence of use from the rims or the bases of the R-ware sherds.[151] These vessels are made from straw tempered Nile silt, resulting in a coarse appearance, and embodied a "brownish-red" colour when lightly fired.[152] This assemblage was chosen, for it contained the biggest quantity of well-preserved pottery sherds in 'HK6', with half of its total number consisting of R-ware vessels, dating to the early Naqada II period.[153] According to Hendrickx, it makes this particular R-ware the earliest known examples of straw tempered pottery from a cemetery context.[154] Compared to the other attractive items found, the coarse nature of the R-ware vessels would not be deemed as 'elite' objects and rather from lower-class tombs. Upon closer analysis however, the shape of the R-ware vessels are "highly uniform" and the 'coiling' technique of their manufacture is consistent, therefore, Hendrickx postulates that they were originally made for elite tombs like 'Tomb 16' rather than "lower-class" tombs as presumed.[155] This is on the basis of comparing the R-ware 'coiling' manufacture with the accompanying B-ware vessels, which was flat-based, had a wide aperture and a low-placed shoulder.[156] 'HK6' R-ware required numerous pieces to be coiled with a "pinched base", while the B-ware was coiled in one piece with a "broad base".[157] Both types of vessels have been interpreted to be well suited for food storage, but the wares found in 'HK6' were not found with any contents. In 'HK43' however, round based R-ware found *in situ* are interpreted as "cooking vessels" due to soot-stained features and some examples found to contain ashy sediments, believed to be remains of bread loaves.[158] While similar in appearance, the R-ware of 'HK6' had a different purpose compared to the R-ware of 'HK43', which may have functioned as cooking vessels.[159] As mentioned before, the R-ware vessels from 'Tomb 16' were consistently uniform in nature, therefore, indicating they had no "functional differentiation at all".[160] Instead of serving an actual use, the R-ware's physical characteristic for storage capacity probably symbolised the "personal prosperity" of the deceased owner and the "strong economic position" of his elite

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[150] Hendrickx (2008: 75-76).
[151] Hendrickx (2008: 75-76).
[152] Midant-Reynes (2000a: 189).
[153] Hendrickx (2008: 63-64). Barbara Adams has interpreted the fragmentary state of the R-ware vessels to be attributed to ritual purposes, which warranted the vessels to be smashed or "killed" (Adams 2004: 42). Hendrickx believes however, that the looting of the tombs may be the reason why, due to the high level of disturbance of the 'HK6' site (Hendrickx 2008: 77).
[154] Hendrickx (2008: 70).
[155] Hendrickx (2008: 71, 77). From Hendrickx's description and the evidence of finger marks on the inside, the 'HK6' R-ware was a coil-built vessel, for the base and the upper part were made separately.
[156] Hendrickx (2008: 77).
[157] Hendrickx (2008: 77).
[158] Hendrickx (2008: 77).
[159] Hendrickx (2008: 77).
[160] Hendrickx (2008: 80).

relatives due to their "control of surplus goods".[161] With this interpretation in mind, and the materialist theory that has been discussed with Egyptian Predynastic evidence, Hendrickx's in-depth analysis of the R-ware jars as an 'elite' funerary symbol shows that given the right context any funerary item provides a social representation of the deceased; as emphasised by Childe.[162] But, considering the R-ware as a funerary item was found within an 'elite' context, it is not surprising that the social meaning behind it is not fixed to be just a 'cooking vessel' as found in 'HK43'. So what would be the interpretation when a prestigious artefact; for example a fish-tail knife, is found outside of an 'elite' context?

Cemetery 'HK43' is located at the southern end of Hierakonpolis and is adjacent to the nearby Wadi Khamsini.[163] The site has been excavated recently over 8 years (1996–2004) by Friedman where a minimum of 452 "working-class" graves dating to Naqada IIA-B were excavated.[164] Of these graves, 202 contained funerary pottery goods, including Polished-red pottery as well as the usual B-ware and R-ware vessels.[165] Other types of funerary items were limited including palettes, copper items and beads, which would be deemed very valuable in a "working class" cemetery.[166] Specifically, a fish-tail knife, dated to Naqada IIA-B was found in 'Burial 412' found within a "protective bundle of animal hide, enmeshed in a tangle of curly brown hair".[167] Another reed handle was also found suggesting the presence of another knife.[168] Other evidence coming from the burial, one metre underneath the body, included a fabric bag containing crushed malachite, a sewn bag of leather with food inside and a large piece of resin wrapped in animal hide.[169] The knife measured 13.6cm long including the hollow handle made from the stout stem of a *phragmites* reed.[170] The blade has been described to be "expertly knapped" from fine grey flint and attached to the handle by means of a wrapped 1cm wide band of leather.[171] According to Hikade, fish-tail knives have been documented since Naqada I well in to the Naqada III period and the high quality of its manufacture has been considered to indicate the "outstanding position" of an individual "within the community".[172] The function of these fish-tail knives is still unknown but has been concluded to be a symbol of "power and prestige", especially amongst adult male burials, where these knives have been commonly

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[161] Hendrickx (2008: 80).
[162] Childe (1949: 22).
[163] Friedman (2008b: 11).
[164] Friedman (2008b: 20).
[165] Friedman (2008b: 20).
[166] Friedman (2008b: 20); Friedman *et al* (2011: 165).
[167] Friedman (2004: 8).
[168] Friedman (2004: 9).
[169] Friedman (2004: 9).
[170] Friedman (2004: 8).
[171] Friedman (2004: 8).
[172] Hikade (2003: 150; 2004: 9-10).

found so far.[173] Hikade has stated that the fish-tail knife is a symbol of "power and prestige", so what does that mean for the deceased owner of 'Burial 412'? Does the acquisition of such an item justify the social position of the deceased owner? According to the theories of 'craft specialisation' mentioned above, would the presence of the fish-tail knife make the owner of 'Burial 412' an 'elite' individual himself? Or was the fish-tail knife a gift for the deceased due to his services perhaps as a specialist of some kind to whoever was buried or associated with the 'elite' 'HK6' cemetery? The general answer may be no; however, the debate regarding 'elite' objects would beg the question: 'Is it the quality of the funerary material or its quantity?'

## Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the presence of Marx's materialist theories within interpretations of 'power' from elite tombs, such as those at Hierakonpolis. While most Egyptologists will not admit to being 'Marxist', the ideals of Marx were recycled through Childe's 'Urban Revolution' concept. Subsequently, its trait list is used to better understand the Predynastic period, by analysing the grave goods that constitute the solitary archaeological record and how they are controlled and distributed.[174] Looking at the evidence from Hierakonpolis, a "huge social distinction" is interpreted from the early Naqada II period, thanks to the presence of differing cemeteries like 'HK6' and 'HK43' and the diverse funerary items they encompass.[175] While the approach of Marx's materialist theories maybe too uni-linear for the multi-dimensional explanations that are desired by archaeologists today, they are still used in some way to tackle the complexity of the Predynastic archaeological record.[176] It must be remembered that "Marx thought only within a system of social relations", thus, in "how physical objects take on certain identities within a given system of productive relations".[177] His theories, however, are just one of the many influences upon the interpretations of Egypt's 'state formation' and a close examination of specific sites that show evidence of wealth accumulation, thus labelling it as 'elite'. While the absence of texts is a problem for Predynastic studies, archaeological data itself cannot be the single principle that validates social theory, including Marx's materialism.

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[173] Friedman (2004: 9); Hikade (2004: 10).
[174] Wenke (2009: 286); Köhler (2010: 38).
[175] Hendrickx (2008: 80).
[176] Trigger (1989: 242).
[177] Morrison (2006: 56).

# Chapter 2

# 'Patrician', 'Ruling Class' and 'Elite'

While the term 'elite' is used to denote a socioeconomic category for describing the history of the richest tombs in Predynastic studies, it is important to understand the term's conceptual history. This chapter will analyse the words 'patrician', 'ruling class' and 'elite' that scholars within Egyptology frequently use to promote the 'power over' concept. In doing so, it will connect all three words in a line of research that begins in the vocabulary of Ancient Rome to the sociological studies transitioning between the 19th and 20th centuries. It is from such influences that the realms of anthropology and archaeology (and subsequently Egyptology) borrowed sociological approaches. 'Elite theory' however, is not thoroughly discussed as a major influence as one of those sociological approaches, which initially moulded the word 'elite' as an analogous term within a critical response towards Marxism.[178] It is a research tradition that accepts the inevitability that the shape, structures, characteristics and features of a society are determined by elite persons and offering a variety of reasons as to why that is.[179] This was conducted by Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941), Vifredo Pareto (1848-1923) and Robert Michels (1876-1936), whose common distaste of Marx's conclusions of a 'classless society' was their motivation to argue that history was controlled by the powers of ruling elite groups.[180] Such groups they describe to consist of 'dominating' characters of history who are driven to monopolise power in exploiting the majority of the population.[181] Archaeologists, consequently, use the term 'elite' to label the minority group that manipulates exchange networks for personal benefit by organising the redistribution of agricultural surplus.[182] Archaeologists tend to use material evidence that convey ideological connotations to justify the existence of elite individuals following in the footsteps of anthropological theory.[183] But such approaches have been questioned, for it is still unclear how elite power is obtained by individuals.[184] There are some difficulties, however, in using such a modern term for ancient descriptions, especially when the word 'elite' holds several definitions that have been made in the 20th century by a number of scholars, such as Charles W. Mills (1916–1962) and George E. Marcus. But before analysing how 'elite theory' is applied to the interpretations of Predynastic

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[178] Bottomore (1964: 17).
[179] Knuttila & Kubik (2000: 65).
[180] Bottomore (1964: 9); Scott (1996: 127); Stanworth (2006: 174); Evans (2006: 39). See Chapter 1.
[181] Stanworth (2006: 177).
[182] Gamble (2008: 182); Köhler (2010: 40).
[183] DeMarrais *et al* (1996: 15); Perry (2011).
[184] Yoffee (1991: 287).

evidence, it is important to acknowledge what Egyptologists have defined from the hieroglyphic vocabulary to be the equivalent of the word 'elite' and how that has been applied to the archaeological evidence.

## Patrician? Or an elite exaggeration?

The hieroglyphic word ⬜🔁△𓀀𓀁𓏤𓏤 *p*ᶜ*t* has been provided with several definitions, originally held to mean as "mankind".[185] But Alan H. Gardiner (1879–1963) also proposed the definition of "patrician".[186] Gardiner's choice is odd for he criticises Jacques Pirenne (1934) for being inaccurate in translating *p*ᶜ*t* as 'nobles', yet 'patrician' has its links to the Latin adjective '*patricius*' meaning 'noble'.[187] In the *Ab Urbe Condita*, Titus Livy (64/59 BC–AD 17) uses the adjective to define the 'ruling class', who were descendants of the first 100 men appointed as senators by Romulus when Rome was founded.[188] Similarly, Gardiner constitutes 'patrician' for *p*ᶜ*t* to be linked to the "ruling caste" who were descended from the original Egyptian people who witnessed "the separation of heaven and earth" under Geb who was "the earliest terrestrial ruler".[189] This definition, therefore, has prompted *p*ᶜ*t* to be defined as "the small, ruling elite of royal kinsmen" in contrast with ▱🔁𓏤𓏤 *rhyt* "the mass of the populace", thus signifying *p*ᶜ*t* as the dominant group in ancient Egyptian society.[190] Title evidence from a funerary stela of the First Dynasty, in association with mastaba S3505 at Saqqara, has been used to attest such a definition for the Early Dynastic period.[191] In particular, the designation ▱⬜🔁 *iri̯-p*ᶜ*t,* which translates as 'hereditary prince', has been used to claim that Merka, the stela's subject, was a member of the royal family of King Qaa (2755–2732 BC), and of the royal kinsmen who were closest to him.[192] For that reason, the impressive "size and

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[185] Erman & Grapow (1971: 503); Takács (2001: 421-423).

[186] Crum (1942: 20, 23, 28); Gardiner (1947: 98, 110); Faulkner (1962: 88); Erman & Grapow (1971: 503); Takács (2001: 421-423). In assisting Crum, Gardiner translates *pot* from 'phrase 11' within a "magical" Egyptian text in Greek characters from Oxyrhynchus (Crum [1942]).

[187] Pirenne (1934: 708); Gardiner (1947: 108); Clarke (2010: 1310). See column 2 within Clarke's book.

[188] Livy, 1.8.7 «*Centum creat senatores, siue quia is numerus satis erat, siue quia soli centum erant qui creari patres possent. Patres certe ab honore **patriciique (my emphasis)** progenies eorum appellati.*» Latin text from Ogilvie (1974: 13), the manuscripts are in agreement in 1.8.7 with the exception of 'is' *MOEᶜPU*: 'his' *HE*, so the passage is secure. "He appointed a hundred senators, whether because this number seemed to him sufficient, or because there were no more than a hundred who could be designated Fathers. At all events, they received the designation Fathers from their rank, and their descendants were called patricians." Loeb translation, Foster (1919).

[189] Gardiner (1947: 18, 110); Morenz (1973: 47); Trigger (2003: 149).

[190] Gardiner (1947: 108); Faulkner (1962: 88, 152); Malek & Forman (1986: 34); Baines (1995: 133); Baines & Yoffee (1998: 218); Wilkinson (1999: 135, 185; 2001: 302).

[191] Emery (1958: pl. 39).

[192] Gardiner (1947: 108); Wilkinson (1999: 148); Jones (2000: 315); Baines (2006: 103); Wengrow (2006: 225).

sophistication of his tomb is justified, complete with its own funerary chapel".[193] This might be a good attempt to identify Merka's social position linguistically, but the same cannot be said archaeologically, for the funerary stela's original provenance has been debated.[194] Furthermore, there are some question marks about the words that have been used to emphasise the meaning of 'patrician' behind the word $p^ct$, such as 'ruling caste' and 'ruling elite', which are connected with the concept of the 'ruling class' and shall be discussed.

## The Theory of the 'Ruling Class'

The term 'ruling class' is used to denote an economic class that has successfully monopolised other power sources to dominate a state-centred society at large.[195] It is a term that has been used to distinguish a higher power in society, even in ancient Egyptian studies. As mentioned already, Gardiner has used the term to signify the higher position of the $p^ct$ and Petrie characterises the Egyptian 'ruling class' to have "a strong moral sense of duty of protection and good management".[196] But it is a "badly loaded" term, which acts as a shortcut theory combining 'class' as an economic word and 'rule' as a political one.[197] It has been accounted to have originated from the works of historical scholars such as Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527) and Ludwig Gumplowicz (1838–1909) who discuss the concept of dominant social groups in relation to early state theories.[198]

### Nicollo Machiavelli & Ludwig Gumplowicz

Machiavelli was first recognised for introducing the importance of ruling minorities, by stating that "in every republic there are two parties, that of the nobles and that of the people".[199] In his dissertations, *The Prince* and the *Discourses* [on Titus Livy], Machiavelli argues that the 'rulers' maintained their struggling control over the masses due to having both fortune and an extraordinary 'virtù'– or 'spirit'– that drives them to power.[200] Machiavelli believed that men rise from low conditions to high rank using either force, deceptive fraud or a combination of

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[193] Wilkinson (1999: 148).
[194] Kemp (1967); O'Connor (2005: 223).
[195] Mann (1986: 25).
[196] Petrie (1924: 75).
[197] Mills (1956: 276-7); Bottomore (1964: 32-33); Evans (2006: 44).
[198] Bottomore (1964: 21); Scott (1996: 127-128).
[199] Machiavelli (1891: 105); Burnham (1943: 37); Meisel (1980: 269); Scott (1996: 127-128).
[200] Machiavelli (1891: 8); Meisel (1980: 267); Scott (1996: 128).

both; but it is clear from his perspective that "cunning and deceit…serve better than force".[201] As a result, these rulers will live long in effaced memory because of their "innovations and their causes" as well as their ability to rule.[202] Similarly, Gumplowicz saw state formation as an outcome of the competitive struggles between different social groups for economic resources, especially the "ruling minority" and the "subject majority".[203] He defines the "ruling minority" as a small social group who wish "to live in better circumstances with the services of the 'subject minority' than it could do without them".[204] Despite their insignificant numbers, compared to the 'subject majority', the 'ruling minority' were disciplined, united and had superior mental capabilities, thus giving them the advantage over the 'subject majority', in terms of social power.[205] Once they attained a level of prosperity, the interests of the 'ruling minority' increase which further strains the intensity of the services by the 'subject majority', who must meet those increasing demands.[206] Mosca, Pareto and Michels were able to develop these influences into a political sociology which advocates that the power struggles between the ruling group and the subordinate populace, created history.[207] This introduces therefore, the concept of the word 'elite' to identify the ruling group and to describe their influence upon history.[208] All three scholars had similar and differing views in how the elite constituted and maintained power, which can be found in the interpretations of Predynastic evidence and how they reflect 'elite' culture.

## 'Elite theory' and the interpretations of Predynastic evidence

### *Gaetano Mosca*

In regards to modern 'elite theory', Mosca establishes the ideal of minority rule, which he first developed before Pareto.[209] He describes the 'ruling class' as an organised minority, who are composed of superior individuals who have valued attributes that are highly esteemed in contextual society and reflects their supreme power.[210] How the members of the ruling class achieve supreme power in a modern society is influenced and restrained by a variety of 'social

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[201] Machiavelli (1891: 259); Meisel (1980: 267).
[202] Machiavelli (1891: 6); Meisel (1980: 267).
[203] Gumplowicz ([1899] 1999: 116); Scott (1996: 128).
[204] Gumplowicz ([1899] 1999: 116).
[205] Gumplowicz ([1899] 1999: 135).
[206] Gumplowicz ([1899] 1999: 136).
[207] Scott (1996: 128).
[208] Scott (1996: 128-129).
[209] Stanworth (2006: 174).
[210] Mosca (1939: 53); Bottomore (1964: 9).

forces'.[211] A 'social force' is any human activity that has a social and economic impact which a respective society depends upon and a member of the 'ruling class' may more or less represent these social forces.[212] These social forces around which society is shaped may include war, religion, land, labour, money, education, science, or technological skill.[213] It is from the surrounding environment that these social forces come forth which influences the ideas, beliefs and sentiments of every human individual.[214] Individuals who have a moral and intellectual attitude acquire these social forces which accounts for their personal qualities, therefore, it gives them a competitive edge when contending for numerous advantages for pre-eminence or superiority, which is a constant phenomenon in all human societies.[215] These advantages include higher positions, wealth and authority, control of the means and instruments that will enable a person to direct many human activities.[216] As a result, ruling classes emerge because some humans prove to be more capable in competitive struggles due to their personal abilities, rather than their hereditary background and have the capacity to perform all political functions.[217] Where competition is constant within human societies, therefore, so is the concept of the ruling class.[218] This perception is reflected in archaeological discussions concerning the elite who are defined as the "non-producing population that is supported by surplus", which is sourced from "owning land, controlling labour and being able to collect taxes."[219] In order to consolidate their high position, the 'ruling class' create a 'political formula', in other words an ideology.[220] This type of formula is constructed from the values, beliefs and habits that are rooted in the specific historical conditions and culture of a society that the 'ruling class' are familiar with, in gaining their ascendency.[221] Some Egyptologists have unconsciously adopted Mosca's 'political formula' model in examining the Predynastic archaeological evidence that is believed to constitute elite power. Perry, for example, asserts that the elite of Naqada IC-IIB at the site of Hierakonpolis "employed ideological power as the principal means of political centralisation".[222] Her evidence is the ceremonial centre 'HK29A', which 'materialised' the role of the elite "as intermediaries within an emerging ideological system", which will be further discussed in Chapter 3.[223] Andelkovic attributes the 'elite' of the Naqada culture for

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[211] Bottomore (1964: 10-11).
[212] Mosca (1939: 144); Burnham (1943: 71); Scott (1996: 133).
[213] Burnham (1943: 72).
[214] Mosca (1939: 26).
[215] Mosca (1939: 26, 29); Knuttila & Kubik (2000: 57).
[216] Mosca (1939: 30); Knuttila & Kubik (2000: 57).
[217] Mosca (1939: 50, 62); Knuttila & Kubik (2000: 58).
[218] Knuttila & Kubik (2000: 57).
[219] Richards (2005: 16); Trigger (2007: 54).
[220] Mosca (1939: 70-71); Meisel (1980: 16-17); Stanworth (2006: 174).
[221] Mosca (1939: 72); Knuttila & Kubik (2000: 58); Stanworth (2006: 174).
[222] Mann (1986: 22); Andelkovic (2011: 28); Perry (2011: 1277).
[223] Perry (2011: 1278).

introducing "a set of values" and organising them within an "ideology of sacred power" that blended elements of "economic, political, and military power", which expresses dominance within the developing Predynastic social environment.[224] He uses pictorial evidence to enforce his point including the image of a ruler "smiting a group of bound captives" with a mace-head depicted on a white-cross lined jar found in 'Tomb U-239' at Abydos dated to Naqada IC.[225] He also uses a smiting scene painted within 'Tomb 100' at Hierakonpolis as a parallel that represents the "organised conflict" performed by the Predynastic elite and symbolised their "political power".[226]

### Vilfredo Pareto

Pareto's theory introduced the word 'elite' to describe the small group he believed dominated all complex societies by "being the strongest, the most energetic and most capable – for good and for evil."[227] Inspired by Machiavelli's discussions of cunning and forceful characters in history, Pareto focused more on the biological and psychological influences that determined the character of the elite individual from the rest of modern society, especially through the element of human action.[228] Human action is rooted in motivating forces or dispositions which are defined as 'residues' and the presence or absence of them determines the human actions in any given individual.[229] Those who are gifted with certain residues will emerge as superior individuals within their occupations and will eventually be part of the elite.[230] In analysing certain pictorial representations of the Predynastic, archaeologists seem to echo Pareto's theories in constituting why certain artefacts are of an 'elite' nature. As mentioned before, the painted scene of 'Tomb 100' at Hierakonpolis depicts a scenario of the "hunting and trapping of wild animals".[231] The motif of an individual holding two animals, representing "encounters with lions and men" (which can be seen in the lower left section of the scenario), is especially important.[232] Similarly, on several ripple flaked ivory knife handles, such as the Gebel el Arak knife, carved reliefs convey an individual holding two lions by their necks, which resembles Sumerian depictions.[233] This theme has been interpreted as a sign of strength against

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[224] Andelkovic (2011: 27).
[225] Dreyer *et al* (1998: 114, fig. 13); Andelkovic (2011: 27); Hendrickx (2011: 75).
[226] Quibell & Green (1902: 20-21, pls. lxxv-lxxix); Wilkinson (2003: 79); Andelkovic (2011: 27).
[227] Pareto (1968: 36); Stanworth (2006: 175).
[228] Machiavelli (1891: 259); Bottomore (1964: 60); Knuttila & Kubik (2000: 56).
[229] Pareto (1968: 6); Knuttila & Kubik (2000: 54); Stanworth (2006: 175).
[230] Knuttila & Kubik (2000: 55).
[231] Quibell & Green (1902: 20-21, pls. lxxv-lxxix); Hendrickx (2011: 75).
[232] Quibell & Green (1902: 20-21, pls. lxxv-lxxix); Hendrickx (2011: 75).
[233] Midant-Reynes (2000a: 238); Wengrow (2006: 41, fig 2.4).

the predatory nature of the physical environment that is represented in the animals carved on the ivory handle and labelled as the 'master of animals'.[234] Similar knife handles, such as the ritual knife in the Brooklyn Museum and the Gebel Tarif knife, convey numerous species of animals that represents the "moving landscape".[235] Wengrow claims that such depictions represent themes that are restricted to the circulation of 'elite' groups.[236] The ivory material used to manufacture such knives is also interpreted to reflect the 'elite' character of the owner of such possessions, for they have been sourced to come from either elephants or hippopotamus.[237] According to Raffaele, such animals, which have a dangerous and fierce character, "may have affected the symbolic and effective value" of the ivory they provide.[238] The characteristics of the animals themselves, therefore, is suspected to transfer to the persons who owned and manipulated such objects.[239] These interpretations aim at distinguishing Predynastic elite characteristics from the archaeological evidence which reflect Pareto's theory of 'residues' within elite characters and their unique behaviour; it is clear that the animals depicted in Predynastic evidence are interpreted to represent a force. In order to counter it a "limited and sheer necessary use of force and violence" is required which is represented in the act of hunting.[240] This leads scholars, like Hendrickx, to speculate that the activity of hunting, as a human action, is restricted to the elite group, who gain more varied food and exercise in the use of weapons as beneficial advantages.[241] This provides therefore, supporting evidence that the occupant of 'Tomb 100' was someone of an elite nature.

### Robert Michels

Michels' 'elite theory' is deemed the most sociological of the three due to his psychological approach and that human nature is fixed.[242] He believes that any class or group that wishes to make an impact in the political process of democracy must be linked with an organisation.[243] Accordingly, these organisations generate a demand for specialisation and an internal division of labour, subsequently developing a hierarchy.[244] The functioning of a complex organisation within this hierarchy would then require the emergence of leadership

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[234] Midant-Reynes (2000a: 238); Wengrow (2006: 115); Raffaele (2010: 258).
[235] Midant-Reynes (2000a: 238-239, fig 17); Wengrow (2006: 181).
[236] Wengrow (2006: 115).
[237] Raffaele (2010: 253).
[238] Raffaele (2010: 253).
[239] Raffaele (2010: 254).
[240] Raffaele (2010: 258).
[241] Hendrickx (2011: 77).
[242] Stanworth (2006: 176).
[243] Michels (1962: 365); Knutilla & Kubik (2000: 59).
[244] Michels (1962: 72).

positions to oversee it.[245] It seems wise to envision that appointments would be selective, since the tasks are likely to be inherently complicated, therefore, it requires people with specialist knowledge and skills associated with leadership; thereby, restricting the majority of the masses from applying for they are speculated to be incompetent.[246]

Overall Michels' 'elite theory' emphasises that organisation ignites the emergence of elite groups.[247] Like Mosca and Pareto before him, Michels' analysis maintains that humans possess a "peculiar and inherent instinct" to acquire political power as a possession and pass it on to future generations.[248] As we have seen with some of the interpretations of the aforementioned Predynastic examples, they as material possessions are argued to reflect elite power. But what happens when such possessions are found in non-adult Early Egyptian tombs? Scholars view child burials of the Predynastic and Early Dynastic with great interest for they are interpreted as the first signs of "inherited status".[249] At the site of Armant, for instance, a child was identified within 'grave 1461' accompanied by two ivory wands and dating to Naqada I.[250] As discussed previously, the fact that the wands are made from ivory, would prompt interpretations that the child inherited elite status.[251] But can the concept of ivory being a sign of strength be applicable to all types of graves including those of children? At the Eastern Delta site of Minshat Abu Omar, a 1st Dynasty burial – Grave 2275 – contained the remains of a child, aged nine years.[252] This child was accompanied with 125 grave offerings consisting of stone vessels, ceramics and ivory objects.[253] Kroeper describes the tomb as the "richest" on site and concludes that social status at the site was determined by "hereditary aspects".[254] The evidence of niche decoration found at the bottom of its mud-brick walls has been used to emphasise "elite symbolism", thus highlighting a connection to the king.[255] Mortuary evidence used to emphasise hereditary status with child burials should be approached with caution, because funerals of any kind are lively contested events where social roles are manipulated, acquired and discarded.[256] Most funerary sites in Egypt today are rarely undisturbed or have been

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[245] Knutilla & Kubik (2000: 59).
[246] Burnham (1943: 109); Stanworth (2006: 176).
[247] Michels (1962: 365); Knutilla & Kubik (2000: 60).
[248] Knutilla & Kubik (2000: 59).
[249] Wilkinson (1999: 30).
[250] Mond & Myers (1937: 28); Wilkinson (1999: 30).
[251] Wilkinson (1999: 30); Raffaele (2010: 253).
[252] Kroeper (1992: 134-136, 141).
[253] Kroeper (1992: 134-136, 141).
[254] Kroeper (1992: 140).
[255] Kroeper (1992: 135); Wilkinson (1999: 225).
[256] Parker Pearson (1999: 32).

destroyed due to increasing urban development. So, is the present state of Predynastic mortuary evidence at the disposal of archaeologists enough to make claims of elite existence?

What is unanimous between the theories of Mosca, Pareto and Michels is that elites represent necessary concentrations of power that are fundamental to shaping and structuring the social order in all complex societies.[257] Subsequent scholars like Mills would advocate that elite individuals and groups abuse the power that is given to them via their access to major institutions, which specialise in either political, economic or military matters, thus creating a society that accepts their position of power thanks to manipulation and domination.[258] Marcus also states that "elites are creatures of institutions, where they have defined functions, offices, or controlling interests; in relation to institutions though, they re-create a domain of personal relationships that extends functional and official boundaries."[259] Subsequently, this creates regions of control and the search for elites in the archaeological record hopes to find these institutions. Institutions that will transform into a state. But scholars, including Mills and Marcus, concluded about elites using extensive ethnographic evidence; such as interviews, surveys, diaries, letters and biographies.[260] These are sources which are systematic and reliable, which archaeologists do not have the benefit of obtaining, for they do not "observe people interacting in the halls and homes of power".[261] Instead, the identification of elites from the archaeological record is argued through the occasional find of a figurine with arms raised, a wall mural depicting accession to power or a tomb with subsidiary burials.[262] While these objects may convey aspects of public life, they do not provide much information about the intense and hidden interaction that Mills and Marcus would extract from their sources about elites.[263] Yet archaeologists continue to interpret the ancient evidence for the hidden meanings of interaction in order to discern elite status. This is shown by Wilkinson's linguistic approach with the stela of Merka through his sole reliance on the word $p^ct$ to be a marker of elite status.[264] As noted above however, there are issues with such an approach which analyses the titles primarily, and the archaeological evidence of the stela and the tomb in which it was found is somewhat ignored. It gives the impression that the owner's titles completely justify how we should interpret the social position of the deceased. But they are merely words, how do we know that they were not exaggerated to give more prestige to the owner himself beyond death?

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[257] Knuttila & Kubik (2000: 53); Stanworth (2006: 181).
[258] Mills (1956: 8-11); Knuttila & Kubik (2000: 61, 63); Stanworth (2006: 179).
[259] Marcus (1983: 16).
[260] Kowalewski *et al* (1992: 262).
[261] Kowalewski *et al* (1992: 262).
[262] Kowalewski *et al* (1992: 262).
[263] Kowalewski *et al* (1992: 262).
[264] Wilkinson (1999: 135, 148).

## Merka of 'S3505', whose stela is it anyway?

Walter Emery (1902-1971) who originally found Merka's stela suggested that it might belong to the subsidiary tomb connected with 'S3505' for it was a little small to fit inside the niche within its façade.[265] Furthermore, the nature of the stela's manufacture was similar to the stone slabs found in the subsidiary tomb.[266] Titles such as *irỉ-p^ct* may be an indicator of a very 'important person', but it can add prejudice to the conclusions that Merka's tomb must have been of a grand nature.[267] David O'Connor (2005) raises an interesting argument that the subsidiary tomb of 'S3505' could be the original provenance of the funerary stela. For, in terms of a regional context, 1st Dynasty 'elite' tombs at Saqqara either had no subsidiary tombs or had more than one.[268] 'S3505' is the only mastaba at the site that has only one subsidiary tomb attached, thus prompting the view that its occupant had an "unusual status" compared to other subordinate graves.[269] Furthermore, this subsidiary tomb is slightly larger and closest in proximity to its respective mastaba compared to other known subordinate graves at the site.[270] It is even constructed to run underneath the S3505 superstructure, thus distinguishing the external tomb as an important element of the overall tomb layout.[271] Finally, the construction of the subsidiary tomb is also special, with evidence suggesting that it was roofed with limestone stone slabs, supported by a layer of timber.[272] Overall, the archaeological features of this subsidiary tomb highlights its uniqueness, compared to just a criteria of size as predisposed by the translation of 'ranking titles', such as *irỉ-p^ct*. Wilkinson does not even have a translation of the compound term and relies on the *p^ct* section of *irỉ-p^ct* to designate Merka's importance as a 'ruling elite' individual.[273] This therefore highlights some scepticism that S3505 belonged to Merka, simply on the basis of his titles, without properly discussing the archaeological and art-historical deliberations.[274] Identifying elite individuals archaeologically is difficult for it requires the independent data to be controlled.[275] While a stela belonging to Sabef from Abydos has been used as a parallel due to similar titles, the general consensus prefers Merka's stela to

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[265] Emery (1958: 10, 13, 30).
[266] Emery (1958: 10, 13, 30); O'Connor (2005: 223).
[267] O'Connor (2005: 224).
[268] O'Connor (2005: 224).
[269] O'Connor (2005: 224).
[270] O'Connor (2005: 224). The subsidiary tomb of S3505 measures 2.73 x 1.75m with a depth of 1.83m. Its floor area is about 4.8m².
[271] Emery (1958: 10, 13, pl. 2 & 5); O'Connor (2005: 224-225).
[272] Emery (1958: 10); O'Connor (2005: 225).
[273] Wilkinson (1999: 135-136, 148).
[274] O'Connor (2005: 230).
[275] Kowalewski *et al* (1992: 263).

be more important due to its larger size, therefore, belonging to a larger tomb.[276] But O'Connor's reassessment of the physical properties of both stelas has urged him to question whether Sabef's status was the same as that of Merka. Sabef's stela was found by Petrie in the chamber of one of the three subsidiary tombs clustered together in the south corner of the tomb of King Qaa.[277] Collectively these subordinate tombs are the largest out of twenty in total in proximity of the complex of Qaa.[278] Unfortunately the external features for both the royal and subsidiary tombs have not survived. Nevertheless, O'Connor analyses the dimensions of both respective subsidiary tombs and notes the different architectural settings they were built in. By doing so, he was able to determine the size of the stela themselves.[279] The size and proportions of Sabef's stela would have been restricted by the architectural form of Qaa's tomb, in which it was imbedded.[280] Furthermore, the width of other stela recovered from the vicinity of Qaa's tomb, generally did not exceed its height or was smaller, which would have influenced the design of Sabef's stela.[281] In contrast, the architectural setting of S3505 at Saqqara would have allowed Merka's stela to be taller in height and larger in width, thus allowing more titles to be written.[282] This indicates that the archaeological space may have been a factor in the manufacture of the stela, rather than just the factor of a difference in rank and status.[283] Taking into account the similarities of the titles and the archaeological dimensions of both tombs, O'Connor suggests that Merka's stela belonged to the subsidiary tomb of S3505. While funerary titles are indeed valuable evidence (as highlighted by Wilkinson), they are not a reliable indication of the deceased's identity or well understood to be a marker of status.[284] Additionally, there is still a concern regarding the 'patrician' meaning behind the word $p^ct$, which Wilkinson has used to base his claims that the entire tomb of S3505 belonged to Merka.

## Conclusion

While the Predynastic period may lack textual evidence, Early Dynastic evidence has the support of some textual evidence that have been found on funerary stelas at Saqqara and

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[276] Wilkinson (1999: 135); O'Connor (2005: 227). Merka's stela measures 173 x 54cm, while Sabef's stele is 44.4 x 35.4cm.
[277] Petrie (1900: 26, pl. xxx, xxxvi, lx); O'Connor (2005: 228).
[278] O'Connor (2005: 228). These three subsidiary tombs, including Sabefs, measure on average 5.64m$^2$ in floor area. A similar tomb in the north corner of the complex measures 5.19m$^2$. The rest fall into three groups of average floor area, 4.60m$^2$, 3.35m$^2$ and 2.67m$^2$.
[279] O'Connor (2005: 229).
[280] Petrie (1900: pl. lx); O'Connor (2005: 229).
[281] Petrie (1900: pl. xxxi); O'Connor (2005: 229). Numbers 38-47 on plate xxxi
[282] O'Connor (2005: 229).
[283] O'Connor (2005: 229).
[284] O'Connor (2005: 230).

Abydos via Merka and Sabef respectively. Titles, especially $\check{i}r\check{i}\text{-}p^c t$, have been translated to be a high position of rank in proximity to the king. This has its origins in being a social category for the ruling class who are supposedly descended from the first Egyptians. This is not dissimilar to how the origins of the Roman ruling class have been recounted by Livy. While textual evidence is a useful tool for identifying tomb owners, our modern terminology is still needed to interpret the textual evidence. As shown in this chapter, however, the use of 'ruling class' and 'elite' as social categories are not definitive, which are still debated by sociologists and archaeologists. Furthermore, the evidence used by sociologists today differs in reliability and control compared to the ancient evidence that archaeologists are forced to use. Finally, the majority of the Early Egyptian evidence that has been thought to convey elite power in this chapter, is through artistic interpretations, therefore, acting as a hindrance to comprehending the well thought out intentions behind the textual and material evidence found. This then prompts the question: 'how can a modern term that is not well understood be used to explain an historical period that is not well understood; do we have another alternative?' Another issue is that there seems to be a reliance on the terms 'ruling class' and 'elite' in order to contextualise the archaeological evidence and locate it within a regional framework, which corresponds to how power is created according to what state formation theories have proposed. In the next chapter, these formation theories will be discussed in relation to the 'game theory' model that was created by Barry Kemp and we will analyse what has influenced its creation, especially surrounding the charismatic individual and the world he/she will monopolise.

# Chapter 3

# Game of Chiefs, Masters and Pendragons

So far we have analysed how the elite concept of 'power over' is used to describe individuals and groups, who have the power or authority to control or greatly influence major social institutions from the essence of modern sociology.[285] In this chapter, we will analyse various state models concerning ancient Egypt that constitute how power is created, maintained and lost by particular individuals who represent social power. This will revolve around the Egyptian 'game theory' model by Barry Kemp (1989, 2006) who asserts that "dominant individuals" are responsible for the "line of kings" of the dynastic sequence.[286] By formulating who the players are within his theory, Kemp sees Naqada as a powerful region due to the local and foreign material found in the tombs of 'Cemetery T', but Naqada will eventually be overrun by a more powerful polity, especially Hierakonpolis.[287] This site exhibits mortuary sites, including 'HK6', 'HK29A' and 'Tomb 100', which have been interpreted to convey the presence of a regional institution. Incorporating these archaeological finds within the model however, is problematic, which will be discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, numerous ideals from sociology and anthropology influence the construction of 'game theory', which are not highlighted by Kemp. Firstly, 'hydraulic theory' by Wittfogel (1896–1988) advocates that controlling the Nile for irrigation purposes constitutes complex teams that are run by leaders, who obtain high social positions within ancient civilisations.[288] Secondly, the 'environmental circumscription theory' by Robert L. Carneiro (1970, 2012) highlights the role of the war leader or the 'pendragon' who obtained unlimited power during stages of warfare that ignited state coalition.[289] Finally, the social evolutionary models by Morton Fried (1923–1986) and Elman R. Service (1915–1996), influence the perceptions of Michael Hoffman (1944–1990). He excavated the site of Hierakonpolis from the 1980s and the evidence unearthed from there has been argued to convey power relations that were expressed by the elite at the site.[290]

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[285] Kowalewski *et al* (1992: 259).
[286] O'Connor (1997: 19); Kemp (2006: 78).
[287] Kemp (2006: 79).
[288] Wittfogel (1957: 18, 26); Bard & Carneiro (1989: 16).
[289] Carneiro (2012: 17).
[290] Hoffman (1979: 306-347).

## Game Theory and the evidence of Naqada's 'decline'

Kemp's 'game theory' model analogises the form of a 'monopoly' game based on two principles, 'chance' and 'personal decisions'; this places importance on the psychological differences between the 'players' within the game.[291] It acts as a "basic progress at work" that conveys the multi-causal proportions of power struggles that contribute towards a "critical point"; the formation of the Egyptian state.[292] Consequently, a political entity emerges which fashions a body of thought to justify their responsibilities of state control; this has been labelled as 'ideology'.[293] Ideology is defined as the "distinctive filter through which society sees itself and the rest of the world, a body of thought and symbol which explains the nature of society, defines its ideal form and justifies action to achieve that ideal."[294] According to Kemp, ancient Egypt's ideology required a past or history in order to be formulated.[295] Unlike some ideologies, which may distinguish themselves by rejecting the past, ancient Egypt embraced it "or some parts of it, with respect".[296] Kemp, therefore, hopes to use the concept of ideology to assess the social "consequential power struggles" of the Predynastic within the 'game theory' framework.[297] Applying this model to the archaeological evidence of Predynastic Egypt however, is very difficult, especially when the textual evidence is limited.[298] Kemp believes though that the archaeological evidence can help confirm the usefulness of 'game theory' in explaining the state formation process.[299] This involves analysing the "evidence for conspicuous consumption and display" from the "richly equipped tombs" of the "minority", or the Predynastic elite, who emit the "signs of an emerging ideology of power".[300] At the centre of deconstructing ideology, there are the objects that can display, mask, negotiate, or evade such power struggles.[301] At the site of Naqada for example, a number of tombs were found to have such objects in 'Cemetery T', which is interpreted as "a ruler's cemetery."[302] The large "unplundered" tomb 'T5' for instance, contained various funerary goods as well as multiple skeletal remains, which measured 4 x 2.8 m and has been dated to the Naqada IIC period.[303] The funerary goods included five "valuable" polished stone vessels, some of which had flat

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[291] Kemp (1989: 32).
[292] Kemp (2006: 76).
[293] Kemp (1989: 20).
[294] Kemp (1989: 20).
[295] Kemp (1989: 20).
[296] Kemp (1989: 20).
[297] Mullins (2007: 203).
[298] Kemp (1989: 35; 2006: 78).
[299] Kemp (1989: 35; 2006: 78).
[300] Kemp (1989: 35; 2006: 78).
[301] Mullins (2007: 203).
[302] Bard (1994b: 113); Kemp (2006: 78).
[303] Petrie & Quibell (1896: 19-20, pl. lxxxii); Midant-Reynes (2000a: 188-189); Wengrow (2006: 119).

bases and pierced handles, interpreted to be hung in "suspension".[304] Furthermore, 42 ceramic vessels including coarse and wavy-handled types; moreover, a slate palette shaped in the form of a double-headed bird.[305] The skeletal remains consisted of six crania, five of which were distributed across the floor (Skulls A-E), and one placed on top of a brick by itself (Skull F) on the south side of the tomb; some of the skulls and stone vessels were associated with different assemblages.[306] For example, the hanging stone vessel 'H. 28' contained hard-stone beads, which may have been worn as part of a necklace, bracelet or a girdle that may have been wrapped around the head.[307] Beads have been found in other sites like el-Gerzeh, where it is commonly found like ceramics and stone vessels, and have been described to indicate "conspicuous bodily display".[308] Underneath the "young" and "broken" 'Skull D', stone beads were found including malachite, while other beads found were made from cornelian, steatite, garnet, lapis lazuli and gold foil.[309] 'Skull E' had an oval shell pendant underneath it, which Petrie interprets to have been worn along the forehead.[310] This interpretation has received mixed opinions such as Brunton who found similar items at Mostagedda, labelling them as "scoops".[311] Baumgartel on the other hand, interpreted them to be not pendants at all, instead that such items served as a container for cosmetics.[312] Nonetheless, these pendants are made from thin copper and grey marble stone, making them valuable commodities.[313] Overall, this tomb contains materials that would require specialised efforts to obtain; the lapis lazuli used for the beads for instance, is sourced from the mountains of Badakhshan, east of modern-day Afghanistan.[314] Other examples containing such material includes tomb '3005' from the site of Matmar, dating to the Naqada I period.[315] Based on the descriptions of the contents of 'T5' and their possible foreign sources, Kemp interprets the occupant to be part of a "ruling house of Nagada".[316] By the early Naqada III period though, the wealth of the tombs in this cemetery start to diminish, which has been interpreted to be evidence for Naqada's conquest by the elite of Hierakonpolis.[317] The basis of such an interpretation rests upon Kemp's model and the different stages he describes to indicate Naqada's so called decline, is influenced by formation

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[304] Petrie & Quibell (1896: 19, pl. viii). Labelled as H. 25, 28 & 29.
[305] Petrie & Quibell (1896: 19); Baumgartel (1970: 67); Wengrow (2006: 119).
[306] Petrie & Quibell (1896: 19, 32); Midant-Reynes (2000a: 188); Wengrow (2006: 119).
[307] Petrie & Quibell (1896: 19-20, 32); Petrie *et al* (1912: 22); Stevenson (2009: 115).
[308] Stevenson (2009: 115).
[309] Petrie & Quibell (1896: 20, 32); Baumgartel (1970: 67, pl. lxvii); Bard (1994b: 99); Wengrow (2006: 14, 51, 119).
[310] Petrie & Quibell (1896: 32, 47).
[311] Brunton (1937: pl. xxix, 227); Stevenson (2009: 123).
[312] Baumgartel (1960: 77); Stevenson (2009: 123).
[313] Petrie & Quibell (1896: 47); Payne (2000: 217).
[314] Aston *et al* (2000: 39); Hendrickx & Bavay (2002: 61).
[315] Brunton (1948: pl. ix); Hendrickx & Bavay (2002: 63).
[316] Kemp (2006: 79).
[317] Bard (1994b: 108); Wilkinson (1996: 86); Hendrickx & Friedman (2003b: 103); Kemp (2006: 81).

theories that emphasise the essence of 'power over'.[318] They will be discussed in how they influence each step and whether the Predynastic archaeological evidence fits with it. But what is the concept of 'game theory'?

## Game Theory – The Basics

'Game theory' is a study of the mathematical models of interactions regarding conflict and cooperation between 'players' armed with intelligent rational decision making characteristics.[319] This approach was introduced in the early 20th century by several authors, such as John von Neumann (1903–1957) and Oskar Morgenstern (1902–1977).[320] 'Game theory' is simply 'analytical' and is used to predict what 'players' with various degrees of rationality will do.[321] Despite its economic origins, it has branched into other forms due to the methods and goals of other disciplines. 'Behavioural game theory', for example, is used in psychology, which describes the actual behaviour of the players from an empirical observation.[322] The outcome of their actions may be affected by emotions, mistakes, limited foresight, doubts about other player's intelligence and education.[323] With that said, Kemp states that the essential factor behind his model is "psychological", which involves three stages to create this 'behavioural' type.[324]

## Stage 1: small egalitarian communities

The first stage is labelled the 'small egalitarian communities' phase which conveys small clusters of agricultural communities that are present in both Upper and Lower Egypt.[325] The term 'egalitarian' is sourced from the evolutionary theory of Fried, which characterises a society where there are no restrictions on the number of persons that can wield power and they are not grouped together to establish an authority of dominance.[326] Also, there are no constraints upon needed raw materials, therefore, ranking and social stratification is low.[327] Similarly, Service's concepts of the "bands" and "tribes" stages correspond with Fried's 'egalitarian' level

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[318] Wenke (2009: 210).
[319] Myerson (1991: 1); Camerer (2003: 1-2).
[320] Camerer (2003: 2).
[321] Camerer (2003: 5).
[322] Camerer (2003: 3).
[323] Camerer (2003: 3).
[324] Kemp (2006: 74).
[325] Kemp (2006: 74-75).
[326] Fried (1967: 33).
[327] Fried (1967: 58); Wason (1994: 42); Wenke (2009: 203).

where a 'Band' comprises nuclear families, which are kin-based and are led by "family heads or ephemeral leaders".[328] 'Tribes' are a collection of bands, which are numerous family groups linked. In general however, both evolutionary descriptions do not exhibit "institutionalised leadership".[329] Despite Wittfogel's emphasis that "small-scale irrigation" began due to experiments by "primitive man", institutionalised leadership emerges "only above the level of an extractive subsistence economy".[330] By applying the circumscription theory to Early Egypt, Bard and Carneiro believe autonomous villages existed in their hundreds in the Neolithic period.[331] Evidence for the Neolithic settlements however, is limited at Lower Egyptian sites, such as Merimda Beni Salama, el-Omari and the Fayum, where only "light housing structures" are attested, such as hearths, shallow pits and postholes.[332] Subsequently, in the Badarian period (4400–4000 BC), evidence comes from the region of Badari in Upper Egypt, which includes Qaw el-Kebir, Hammamiya, Mostagedda and Matmar.[333] The position of the Badarian period in the chronological framework though is uncertain and complex; some scholars consider it to be part of the Neolithic together with the Lower Egyptian sites above.[334] Others would consider it to be the first stage of the Predynastic period, yet it is difficult to correlate archaeological evidence for this premier stage of Kemp's model.[335] Wengrow notes though, that some scholars persist in labelling the existence of permanent contextual "villages".[336]


## Stage Two: Agricultural Towns

A second step is made when behaviour differs from the first stage, and plausible explanations must be made for what is observed.[337] Kemp brands this behavioural difference as an "advantage" that upsets the equilibrium of the first stage and having a "knock-on effect" for one player.[338] This is labelled as the 'Agricultural Towns' stage where increasing population density leads to the formation of socioeconomic polities or 'chiefdoms'.[339] A

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[328] Service (1971: 98); Wason (1994: 42).
[329] Service (1971: 100), Wason (1994: 42-43).
[330] Wittfogel (1957: 12).
[331] Bard & Carneiro (1989: 15).
[332] Tristant & Midant Reynes (2011: 46-47).
[333] Hendrickx (2006a: 58-59).
[334] Hendrickx (2006a: 55).
[335] Midant-Reynes (2000a: 115); Hendrickx (2006a: 55); Tristant & Midant-Reynes (2011: 46-47); Tristant (2014: personal communication).
[336] Trigger (1983: 10); Bard (1990: 483); Hendrickx & Vermeersch (2000: 42-3); Midant-Reynes (2000a: 160); Wengrow (2006: 63).
[337] Camerer (1997: 167-168).
[338] Kemp (2006: 74).
[339] Savage (2001: 111); Wenke (2009: 203). Kemp makes no mention of the word 'chiefdom' in describing the "polities" within his theory. Wenke in his interpretation of Kemp's model, does so to add further explanation towards 'Stage 2', despite stating that the word 'chiefdom' is a "sterile conflation of many diverse elements". He

'chiefdom' is defined as unified aggregates of previously independent villages under the control of a political leader; moreover, social inequality first arises through aspects of kinship, that is, people are ranked in accordance to their relations to the political leader labelled as the 'chief'.[340] Due to this relationship, the chief and the people within his inner circle can lay claim to the best of fishing spots, farmlands, food, exotic items compared to those outside this circle, who are labelled as "commoners".[341] Some scholars have used the 'chiefdom' term to describe the leaders of the Predynastic of the Naqada II period.[342] The term chiefdom however, has been criticised for a number of reasons, namely that its original usage was to describe Polynesian pacific-islander communities.[343] It can also mask the "global variation" of differences between societies and local communities.[344] But how these individuals gained power has also been speculated, especially in relation as to how egalitarian societies transitioned to agricultural communities.

### *Hydraulic Theory – Karl Wittfogel*

By analysing the transition from egalitarian to an agricultural community, Wittfogel calls it a "problem of choice", which he believes is because of the decrease in rainfall that prompted ancient populations to search for areas that contained accessible sources of water.[345] This could be either "below the surface as ground water, or above the surface" as separate cavities, such as holes, ponds, lakes, or continuous beds in the form of streams and rivers.[346] These sources of water though, would be of "minor significance" in an area that enjoyed continuous rainfall, but in dry areas they are "immensely important".[347] In order to extract such supplies of water however, "presents special difficulties" and "creates a technical task" that must be "coordinated, disciplined and led"; but there is a risk that it could lead to problematic consequences due to sacrificing one's individualism.[348] In order to survive though, "protofarmers" recognise the advantage of agricultural activity and combine their communities

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even adds a 'Stage 4' which takes place "a century or two" after the unification of the two lands, to emphasise the centralised unit Egypt would become due to the presence of the earliest pyramids and the monumental architecture.

[340] Service (1962: 154-155); Bard & Carneiro (1989: 17); Wason (1994: 47); Wenke (2009: 204).
[341] Wenke (2009: 205).
[342] Hassan (1988: 170-172); Bard & Carneiro (1989: 111); Savage (1997: 228).
[343] Yoffee (1993: 64).
[344] Parker Pearson (1999: 73).
[345] Wittfogel (1957: 15).
[346] Wittfogel (1957: 15).
[347] Wittfogel (1957: 15).
[348] Wittfogel (1957: 15-18).

to "work in cooperation" by submitting themselves to a "directing authority".[349] Whoever this authority is, Wittfogel describes them as "masters", for they were selected because they were "great organisers".[350] The 'masters' would then become intellectually equipped because of their complex role, by learning about the change of seasons, geometry and arithmetic from their environment.[351] Due to such knowledge they can "wield supreme political power" to maintain their high position, by using mathematical and astronomical operations to conceal themselves in a "cloak of magic and astrology" with "profound secrecy".[352] Thinking back to Mosca's theory of the ruling class, 'oriental despotism' exhibits a great number of similarities to the 'political formula' concept.[353] Mosca states that the 'political formula' "answers a real need in man's social nature", thus Wittfogel's theory advocates irrigation as that need which ignites the ruling class.[354] Wittfogel's theory looks impressive, but he does not provide much archaeological evidence to support his theories concerning the early stages of social development. Carneiro also criticises his "voluntaristic" approach, arguing that there is no historical example of a political unit giving up "its sovereignty of its own accord".[355] Instead only the "application of force, or the threat of it, would have caused it to do so."[356]

### Environmental Circumscription theory – Robert Carneiro

Carneiro's 'environmental conscription' theory is a multi-causal explanation where tight environmental constriction acts as the catalyst to population pressure.[357] These conditions would result in warfare, which is advocated by Carneiro to be the major factor in state formation within ancient societies.[358] By distinguishing his 'coercive' theory, Carneiro categorises past state theories such as Wittfogel's to be 'voluntaristic' where the state is created by "voluntary, non-coercive means" and relies on "enlightened self-interest" to cause an epochal transformation.[359] Instead, he proposes that chiefdoms and states "arose through warfare and the conquest, incorporation, and integrations of weaker polities by stronger ones" for scarce resources.[360] He asserts that behind the acts of war by a village community or a village alliance,

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[349] Wittfogel (1957: 15-18).
[350] Wittfogel (1957: 50).
[351] Wittfogel (1957: 29).
[352] Wittfogel (1957: 27, 30).
[353] Mosca (1939: 70-71). See Chapter 2 under '*Gaetano Mosca*'.
[354] Mosca (1939: 71); Wittfogel (1957: 18).
[355] Bard & Carneiro (1989: 16).
[356] Carneiro (1970: 734); (2012: 9-10).
[357] Carneiro (1970); (2012: 10).
[358] Carneiro (2012: 10).
[359] Carneiro (1970: 734; 2012: 9); Bard & Carneiro (1989: 16).
[360] Carneiro (1970: 735; 2012: 17); Bard & Carneiro (1989: 16); Savage (2001: 109).

there was a war leader labelled a "pendragon".[361] This individual gained his position by proving to be the strongest, both physically and mentally, through performing several tests.[362] His role involved the powers of recruiting and directing warriors, which only lasted during the occasion of war; but once that ceased the 'pendragon' had to relinquish them.[363] If war was common however, then the 'pendragon' had the opportunity to cement his position after the hostilities ended by gathering loyal followers who have served under him in battle.[364] Despite using 16th century ethnographic accounts of South America and Africa to validate his theory, Carneiro tries to apply it to ancient societies. This includes ancient Egypt whose source of the Nile would have created concentrations along its banks which would have created population pressure and tension.[365] He emphasises with Bard that violence was a prime mover of Predynastic state formation due to environmental circumscription.[366] But the evidence to completely support Carneiro's "coercive" theory for Predynastic Egypt is "fragmentary" and they only refer mainly to the extravagant depictions of warfare that is symbolised on the "Terminal Predynastic palettes", which display smiting images.[367] These artefacts however, are recommended to be safely ignored as historical sources, for some scholars do not qualify population pressure to have played a significant role, let alone warfare to be a prime mover towards creating institutions.[368] But Hoffman's analysis of Hierakonpolis' development has led him to consider that population concentration existed due to "environmental events", thus causing groups of people to resettle and growing to a sufficient size.[369] They would be then organised by the "political elite" and possibly be able build a ceremonial centre, such as 'HK29A'.[370]

## *'HK29A' – A source of elite power*

'HK29A' was originally labelled to be the 'oldest temple of ancient Egypt' when it was excavated by Hoffman in the 1980s.[371] A 13 year hiatus would follow until the early 21st century when the ceremonial centre was re-excavated to reveal several layers of stratigraphy outlining

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[361] Carneiro (2012: 17).
[362] Carneiro (2012: 17, 19).
[363] Carneiro (2012: 17).
[364] Carneiro (2012: 17-18).
[365] Carneiro (2012: 22).
[366] Bard & Carneiro (1989: 21).
[367] Bard & Carneiro (1989: 19); Wenke (2009: 206). Examples include the Narmer, Bull and Cities palettes, see Wengrow (2006: 42-43, 178, 209).
[368] Hassan (1988: 165); Kemp (1989: 31); Wilkinson (1999: 45, 49); Savage (2001: 109); Köhler (2002: 511); Castillos (2009: 75).
[369] Hoffman (1979: 309).
[370] Hoffman (1979: 309; 1986: 2).
[371] Hoffman (1986: 2): Friedman (2011: 35); Perry (2011: 1278).

the occupational development of the shrine enclosure.[372] The dates of usage range from Naqada IIA to the 1st Dynasty.[373] This complex consisted of a large oval courtyard that was 45 m long and 13 m wide that was covered with a series of mud plastered floors.[374] Various features surrounded the courtyard, such as an eroded thick wall that partially formed a polygonal space on the north-east end.[375] On the southern side of the courtyard, four enormous post pits that were 1.5 m deep, formed a monumental gateway or a viewing pavilion that was 6.5 m wide and 13 m long.[376] One of the post pits contains the remains of the base of a wooden post, supposedly 30 cm in diameter, that has been identified to be imported cedar wood from the Levant.[377] On the northern side of the courtyard is the wall trench feature, which is a 40 cm deep foundation, measuring 35 m long that may have held a wooden fence dating to the Naqada IIB-C period.[378] Some trash or refuse pits (150L40SW) that are as old as the trench wall were found at intervals outside the fence foundation, and were used to collect the refuse from ritual ceremonies.[379] These pits contained an abundance of animal remains, totalling 37, 500 bones, revealing a variety of domestic and wild faunal remains; such as sheep, birds, gazelles, hares, hippopotamus, crocodiles, turtles and fish.[380] From such evidence, it has been suggested by Kemp that 'HK29A' was used as just a feasting and butchering site; however, a recent study by Linseele *et al* (2009) attests that the site was used for ritual performances conducted by the elite of Hierakonpolis to signify their power and control over nature.[381] Some of these animals have been identified from the remains, specifically large fish, such as the Bagrus and *Synodontis* catfish as well as Nile perch, which are open water species.[382] Nile perch bones are the most abundant and have been found mostly by the wall trench.[383] Some of the Nile perch bones have been reconstructed into vertebrae specimens and indicate that some individual fish were at least one metre or more in length.[384] Large fish such as these would be found in deeper parts of the Nile, but due to the profusion of Nile Perch remains, it also indicates that the Nile was a deeper channel within the Hierakonpolis region in the past.[385] As a result, when the water levels were low, Nile perch would be easier to catch because they would be within reach of the local

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[372] Friedman (2003: 4).

[373] Hendrickx (2006a: 55-93); Krauss & Warburton (2006: 487-488); Friedman (2011: 35); Perry (2011: 1278-1279).

[374] Hoffman (1986: 2); Friedman (2003: 4); Wengrow (2006: 80); Perry (2011: 1278).

[375] Kemp (2006: 148).

[376] Wengrow (2006: 80-82); Friedman (2011: 35); Perry (2011: 1279).

[377] Friedman (1996: 24); Kemp (2006: 148); Wengrow (2006: 82).

[378] Friedman (2003: 4).

[379] Friedman (2003: 4); Linseele *et al* (2009: 106).

[380] Linseele *et al* (2009: 111-133); Perry (2011: 1279).

[381] Kemp (2006: 148); Linseele *et al* (2009: 133).

[382] Linseele *et al* (2009: 115).

[383] Linseele *et al* (2009: 115).

[384] Linseele *et al* (2009 : 116, fig. 5).

[385] Linseele *et al* (2009 117).

hunters.[386] Other faunal remains found, though as small samples, included crocodiles and softshell turtles, which are described to symbolise "typhonic forces or agents of chaos" in Dynastic times.[387] This helps to support the interpretation that 'HK29A' acted as a site for the ritual performance of sacrificing domestic livestock and wild animals from the desert and the Nile River.[388] This ritual would symbolise the activity of the hunt, which is considered to contain the forces of chaos by capturing or killing wild animals.[389] This is also attested at 'Tomb 100', where its depicted hunting scenes have been interpreted as a human activity that expresses elite character.[390] Pottery sherds, 25, 000 in total, were collected from the refuse pits; but 12, 000 sherds were kept as diagnostic pieces, which date to the Naqada IIA-IIC period. Two rare pottery forms, which accounted for 60% of the diagnostic total, were also discovered.[391] Firstly, "collared-rim jars of fine clay" covered with a red coating and no polish, which is contextually rare for the Predynastic.[392] Secondly, small egg-shaped jars decorated with a highly polished black slip, has also been attributed to be an exceptional find.[393] It is interpreted that such pottery were made for ceremonial purposes due to their huge concentration in the refuse pits; moreover, these particular ceramics have been found with some frequency "within the pillared halls of the elite cemetery" of 'HK6', which adds to their prestige as religious items.[394]

From analysing the faunal and ceramic evidence, Perry argues that 'HK29A' 'materialised' the role of the elite of the region as "intermediaries in an emerging ideological system".[395] This term comes from the theory of 'materialisation', which is the "transformation of ideas, values, stories, myths" into "the physical reality; either as a ceremonial event, a symbolic object, monument, or a writing system".[396] Perry proposes that such a ritual concerning the coming of the Nile inundation, would have determined the seasonal availability of desert and aquatic animals for food and ritual purposes.[397] Additionally, the decoration of the pottery has been thought to resemble the before and after stages of the Nile inundation; the red collared jars representing "the dry and thirsty red land" and the 'polished all black egg shaped jars representing "a wet black land".[398] Perry asserts that this type of ritual would have

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[386] Linseele  et al (2009 : 116).
[387] Linseele et al (2009: 133).
[388] Friedman (1996: 24; 2003: 4); Wengrow (2006: 80); Linseele et al (2009: 133); Perry (2011: 1279).
[389] Hendrickx (2006b: 735-736); Linseele et al (2009: 133).
[390] Quibell & Green (1902: 20); Hoffman (1979: 132; 310); Wengrow (2006: 109); Perry (2011: 1282). See Chapter 2 under 'élite' theory and interpretations of Predynastic evidence - *Vilfredo Pareto*.
[391] Friedman (2003: 4); Perry (2011: 1279-1280).
[392] Friedman (2003: 4); Perry (2011: 1280).
[393] Friedman (2003: 4); Perry (2011: 1280).
[394] Perry (2011: 1280).
[395] Perry (2011: 1278).
[396] DeMarrais et al (1996: 16).
[397] Perry (2011: 1280).
[398] Hendrickx & Friedman (2003a: 8); Perry (2011: 1280).

required "sacred leadership" in order to communicate the aspects of the ritual to the larger community in order for them to cooperate; otherwise, certain consequences may happen to their overall livelihood.[399] It has been suggested that such conducted rituals were "an adaptive response" to a period of aridity that occurred in the north east of Africa around 3700 BC; this echoes Mosca's 'political formula' regarding ideological control and legitimacy.[400] An interesting find that has also been used to express the character of the Hierakonpolis elite at 'HK29A', comes from within the wall trench. A sherd made of red polished Nile silt fabric was found with images on either side, which were incised upon it after the sherd was partly broken off a bowl.[401] This sherd is interpreted to be an 'ostracon', which depicts an interior image of a "stylised emblem of the cow goddess Bat" and has been compared as the same style as the cow image shown on the Gerza palette.[402] The exterior image is more complicated though, which shows a human figure on the left who seems armless and is either seated or kneeling.[403] This figure is identified to be a female due to the broad size of the lower part of the body and what seems to be long hair hanging either side of her head.[404] She also seems to be attached to a rope that leads to a bull's head which is mounted on a pole which considers her a prisoner.[405] This has been compared to a rock art inscription found at Gebel Tjauti, west of the site of Naqada, which also features the same bull's head on a pole attached to a prisoner.[406] As a result, both images are interpreted to be symbols of power, symbolising that the Predynastic elite were engaged "in religious and political action"; not only in controlling the world of nature but as well as maintaining an "orderly society".[407] Due to this piece of evidence from Gebel Tjauti, it has been argued that Hierakonpolis absorbed or "vanquished" Naqada due to its access to trade networks; this leads us to the final stage of Kemp's theory.[408]

## Stage 3: 'Elite' trading powers?

The third step extends the 'game theory' to incorporate the explanations of the previous stage.[409] This stage therefore, reflects the time before political unification and is characterised

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[399] Perry (2011: 1281).
[400] Hassan (2002: 326); Perry (2011: 1281, 1287).
[401] Hendrickx & Friedman (2003a: 8-9; 2003b: 97-101).
[402] Midant-Reynes (2000a: 193-4); Hendrickx & Friedman (2003a: 8).
[403] Hendrickx & Friedman (2003b: 98).
[404] Hendrickx & Friedman (2003b: 98).
[405] Hendrickx & Friedman (2003b: 99).
[406] Darnell *et al* (2002: 142, fig. 10); Hendrickx & Friedman (2003a: 8; 2003b: 96-97).
[407] Hendrickx & Friedman (2003a: 9).
[408] Bard (1994b: 106; 2000: 60); Darnell (2002: 151); Hendrickx & Friedman (2003b: 104); Cox (2009: 3)
[409] Camerer (1997: 168).

by intense competition and warfare between "proto-kingdoms".[410] These have been labelled to be Hierakonpolis, Naqada and This (Abydos).[411] It is argued that trade routes were the ultimate prize between these regions in an economic competition to acquire prestige goods, which were desired by their respective rulers to reinforce their social positions.[412] Perry asserts in her study, that the evidence of the 'HK6' cemetery and the 'HK29A' ceremonial centre conveys Hierakonpolis to be a powerful political region that was maintained by an elite minority.[413] It is difficult however, to consider how much political power was being held by the elite minority at Hierakonpolis in order for it to be exerted over neighbouring regions, such as Naqada.[414] Because of its close proximity to the desert roads of the Qena bend, it is debated that the "ruling house of Naqada" of 'Cemetery T' were the first to control these routes and allowed them to create an economic strength based on foreign trade.[415] This is supported by the analyses that were performed regarding the burials that dated from Naqada I to Naqada II (including 'Cemetery T'), which shows an abundance of imported luxury goods, such as lapis lazuli.[416] In the Naqada III period however, this trend drops resulting in poor burials.[417] Comparatively, at other sites like 'Cemetery U' at Abydos and 'HK6' at Hierakonpolis, Naqada III burials are abundant in both local and foreign funerary items; such as Canaanite vessels in 'Tomb U-j' at Abydos and obsidian in 'Tomb 11' of 'HK6'.[418] Competition for trade in the Early Naqada III period is evident, for the sites of Abydos and Hierakonpolis contain the only common traces of imported goods in the Upper Egyptian region; therefore, this conveys elements of elite circulation being incorporated to relate to state formation explanations.[419] Solely associating Naqada's importance as a trading centre though has some issues, which Cox has raised through her recent statistical analysis of the imported funerary goods from existing burials at Naqada.[420] Out of the 1,303 published graves, 814 were only studied that could be analysed according to Cox's modified chronological divisions; she found that 52 (6.4%) of these burials contained an imported material throughout the Naqada sequence.[421] These materials included copper, lapis lazuli, obsidian, resin, cylinder seals, turquoise, rock-crystal, silver and lead.[422] From the total

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[410] Wenke (2009: 205); Kemp (2006: 76).
[411] Wenke (2009: 205); Kemp (2006: 76).
[412] Trigger (1987: 61); Bard (1994a: 281; 1994b: 115); Savage (1997: 258); Midant-Reynes (2000a: 200).
[413] Perry (2011: 1285).
[414] Perry (2011: 1285).
[415] Darnell (2002: 151); Hendrickx & Friedman (2003b: 104); Kemp (2006: 79); Cox (2009: 1).
[416] Petrie & Quibell (1896: 19-20); Bard (1994b: 106, 111-115); Midant-Reynes (2000a: 188, 2000b: 50); Wengrow (2006: 119); Cox (2009: 3).
[417] Bard (2000: 59); Cox (2009: 1).
[418] Adams (1987: 12); Bard (2000: 60); Hendrickx & Bavay (2002: 73); Dreyer (2011: 131-132).
[419] Hendrickx & Bavay (2002: 73).
[420] Cox (2009: 1).
[421] Cox (2009: 2, 5).
[422] Cox (2009: 3-5).

of 52 graves across the Naqada periods, she established that the most number of graves with imported material were in the Late Naqada II period, totalling 23 graves, before the subsequent decline of wealth.[423] Then, she did a second calculation with the percentage of graves containing imported material out of the 814 graves applicable to her methods, which showed a different conclusion.[424] Cox found that the largest percentage of imports occurred "in the Early to Late Naqada I period, which is only 3 out of 18 graves."; moreover, the percentage of imports for Late Naqada II (8.21%) is similar to that of Early Naqada III (8.33%), but Late Naqada II tombs contained each imported type except for obsidian.[425] She concluded that there is no pattern to suggest the loss of trade routes in each time period of the Predynastic.[426] Additionally, "there is no quantifiable evidence" that trade goods were deemed that valuable within the burial assemblages of Naqada throughout the Predynastic period.[427] This may not completely disprove that trade did not have an important role within state formation theories, as many scholars suggest. But for the site of Naqada, Cox has provided an insight into the reinterpretation of foreign grave goods, which have been deemed to reflect elite status.

## Conclusion

Kemp's 'game theory' may have had the intention to reflect the social development of Predynastic Egypt; however, like most other models, they all have the phenomenal outcome that an elite group will emerge and develop into the familiar Pharaonic kingship. As a result, numerous speculations as to how power is created, maintained and destroyed have been proposed due to the cause of a particular catalyst. Even though most of the authors advocate multi-causal theories, each of them state a set of rules and conditions that must be met in order for a process to continue. Wittfogel focused on submissive cooperation to channel irrigation and Carneiro argued for coercive force as a result of environmental pressure. These theories may have been dismissed to be prime movers, but the elements of their approaches are considered as factors towards the creation of elite individuals who will fashion the state. Archaeologists may use the social evolutionary terminology loosely, but by employing them, they still adhere to a set of rules that were originally created by different disciplines for different purposes. But the "rules of the game" is not what needs to be studied, rather the "tactics and

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[423] Cox (2009: 5).
[424] Cox (2009: 5).
[425] Cox (2009: 5).
[426] Cox (2009: 5).
[427] Cox (2009: 6).

strategy" that were employed by the so-called 'elite'.[428] Kemp does concede that the "notion of rules" is a weakness in his model, but he still stands by it, for it "draws one away from the temptation to explain events through single causes".[429] But he still places a rule at the centre of his theory, for according to him, "ideology emerges with the state".[430] Advocating it, therefore, as the link that must be made between the Predynastic and Dynastic sequences to add familiarity to the evidence, which Kemp defines as the 'Preformal' and 'Formal' periods respectively.[431] Savage discusses Kemp's approach and claims that the end result may not be a properly functioning state "at once".[432] But an ideology cannot create itself, which is why Kemp puts a spotlight on "charismatic individuals", who disregard the rules and "seize everything".[433] But were they all terribly ruthless just to accumulate power? Michael Hoffman thinks otherwise.

*'To be sure, the changes wrought by elites derive ultimately from a broader culture whose traditional values have developed through countless millennia of prehistory and to be sure the elites – the early ones at least – were symbols of sentiment, not raw power: kings, popes, flags, parents, and Santa Claus all rolled into one.'*[434]

To conclude this chapter, the concept of the Predynastic elite is what archaeologists choose it to be based on the archaeological evidence that is available; the methods we use to interpret them, the outcome we hope it leads to and our personal sentiment. These and so many more will influence the opinions that are made regarding the Predynastic elite evidence, which will always be there to either support or refute.

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[428] Barnes (1980: 301); Savage (1997: 229).
[429] Kemp (2006: 76, 78).
[430] Kemp (2006: 73).
[431] Kemp (2006: 113).
[432] Savage (1997: 230).
[433] Kemp (2006: 78)
[434] Hoffman (1979: 346).

# Chapter 4

# Concluding Discussion:

# What stories are we trying to tell?

*'It is a well-known aphorism that archaeologists readily borrow from other disciplines, representing a strength through the injection of new ideas but also a weakness.'*

Tina Thurston[435]

Most would agree with Thurston's comment regarding archaeology's approach as a discipline, that it is not afraid to absorb new ideas. As mentioned above, the discipline of Egyptology initially focused on translating textual evidence due to its abundance.[436] But as a result of the lack of textual evidence, archaeological evidence is analysed primarily in the study of Egypt's prehistory'. With this approach however, theoretical and technological methods have been incorporated and developed in order to connect the Egyptian Predynastic with the familiar Dynastic epoch; this has been an experience that has been both challenging and rewarding. Nonetheless, as shown through this study, many arguments have been made regarding how such a link occurred through the variety of evidence that has been found and relating it to the several formation theories that have been proposed. Each of them have anticipated numerous catalysts to provide the momentum for systems or individuals to progress towards the first kingship of Egypt. This has all been praised and criticised, but certainly it puts a strain on the mortuary evidence in respect to how we approach it. This is especially clear when we as historians unconsciously accuse the ancient Egyptians of being "obsessed with status", therefore, enforcing an expectation of what meanings we expect the mortuary evidence to convey.[437]

Throughout this investigation, numerous examples have been presented to link the interpretations of Predynastic archaeological material and elite theory. In Chapter 1, Marx's materialist theories were taken up by Childe in order to categorise archaeological evidence into a cultural sequence that could reflect an interpretation of human social development. As a result, his 'Urban Revolution' theory was made, and it conveyed the nature of a checklist, which many archaeologists have accepted with their interpretations of social development, especially in

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[435] Thurston (2010: 198).
[436] See Introduction – Egyptology and the word 'elite'.
[437] See Chapter 1 – 'Signs of the 'Urban Revolution' within Predynastic Egypt'.

regards to 'specialised craft specialisation' and the formation of the 'ruling class'.[438] Theories like that of Childe have been adopted to give new perspectives on the information that the artefacts may have provided about the people that created them. But such a modern approach has caused archaeologists to jump to conclusions about the grave goods based on an economic nature, particularly what mortuary evidence archaeologists define to be elite and non-elite. For example, Rough ware pottery is interpreted as not being of great economic value; it is found in the "working class" area of 'HK43', but also in the elite graves of 'HK6'. This should prompt, therefore, a reinterpretation of the position of artefacts, which were possibly seen as an important item for a different purpose.[439]

By adopting elite theory, archaeologists adopted the views of not just the elite theorists, but as well as those who influenced them. In Chapter 2, the connections that the elite theorists had with previous scholars were discussed, such as Machiavelli, who developed the theory of the 'ruling class' through the interpretation of Roman sources such as Livy. This brings to light the issues in how the hieroglyphic term $p^c t$ has been translated as 'patrician' and is not as conclusive as it seems. But this has not stopped scholars from linking this translation with the word 'elite' and have used it as a social category for deceased individuals, such as Merka of 'S3505' at Saqqara.[440] A different story is told however, through a comparative analysis of the architecture of the tomb and the stela that the subsidiary burial may have been the original resting place for Merka. Examples were also shown regarding the interpretations of the Predynastic evidence and how elements of elite theory from Mosca, Pareto and Michels have been unconsciously included.[441]

Chapter 3 analysed how the Predynastic evidence has been fitted with various formation models, such as those of Service, Fried, Wittfogel and Carneiro and how their theories are incorporated with Kemp's 'game theory' model. But Kemp makes little reference to the influences of anthropological literature upon his game theory model.[442] While O'Connor acknowledges that Kemp was influenced by such theories, "he has no obligation" to reference them.[443] I would have to disagree with O'Connor because most archaeological theory comes from outside archaeology, as has been shown in Chapter 3 through the analysis of the 'game theory' model.[444] Kemp should have referenced the influences of economic game theory,

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[438] See Chapter 1 – 'Signs of the 'Urban Revolution' within Predynastic Egypt'.
[439] See Chapter 1 – 'Craft specialisation at Hierakonpolis'.
[440] See Chapter 2 – 'Patrician? Or an 'elite' exaggeration?'
[441] See Chapter 2 - 'Elite theory' and the interpretations of Predynastic evidence.
[442] O'Connor (1997: 19).
[443] O'Connor (1997: 19).
[444] Yoffee (1993: 60).

anthropology and sociology, because these theories were not created originally for the study of ancient societies, like Egypt. Nonetheless, archaeological evidence is difficult to incorporate within the 'game theory' model for it is too functionalist in nature.[445] Criticism of functional approaches can be traced to Childe, who labels them as only a "descriptive technique".[446] Furthermore, Kemp brings up many factors that influence his model, such as "dominant individuals", "chance" and "personal decisions".[447] His "observed changes must be described and explained", which he does not, thus giving the impression that "it is all too easy to appeal to external factors".[448] Kemp also states that the archaeological evidence should confirm the usefulness of his model based on his assumptions concerning ideology.[449] In truth, the model should be fitting with the archaeological evidence and not the other way around, thus allowing the evidence to speak for itself.[450] Scholars who have criticised the usage of the elite concept warn that if archaeologists are to add this as another borrowed theory in studying social complexity, then there must be an awareness of the methods we use to collect data from the archaeological evidence.[451] As shown through the site of Hierakonpolis, the incorporation of scientific and technological methods in analysing the faunal evidence, has helped to change the interpretations surrounding 'HK29A' from just being a slaughterhouse to one that may have had a ritual purpose for the community; moreover, such methods were used by Cox to revise old mortuary data from Naqada, which is becoming a common practice for archaeologists. But by re-interpreting the evidence, which was previously thought to be completely understood, we seem to be finding new questions that may have been overlooked or have never been considered.

The question that remains though, is what type of elites existed in Early Egypt? The answer is uncertain, but what is certain is that archaeologists interpret the elite to be power hungry. For example, Andelkovic states "the high elite were engaged in every domain or activity related to prestige and the acquisition, and then retention, of a better position in the Protodynastic power "food chain"."[452] It is statements like these that suggests the influence of the 'power over' concept, which analyses the ability of getting others to perform actions they would not otherwise perform; thus, interpreting the Predynastic evidence in a way that describes

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[445] Wenke (2009: 338).
[446] Childe (1946: 247); Spriggs (1977: 9); Wenke (2009: 338).
[447] Kemp (2006: 74).
[448] Childe (1958b: 5).
[449] Kemp (1989: 35; 2006: 78).
[450] Johnson (2010: 239).
[451] Kowalewski *et al* (1992: 276).
[452] Andelkovic (2011: 28).

the story of the elite of Early Egypt as being part of a competition.[453] But is outright power achieved by creating conflict? Is it right to interpret the elite of Early Egypt as people who seized everything at the detriment of others, just to be king? I quote Steven Lukes:

> *'The most effective and insidious use of power is to prevent such conflict from arising in the first place.'[454]*

There are the other concepts of power to think about, for which there was not sufficient space for discussion in this dissertation, such as "power with", which is defined as the capacity to achieve with others what one could not achieve alone.[455]

The ancient evidence that archaeologists of the 20th century have discovered has always been speculated to be associated with a variety of phenomenon; this includes suggesting the existence of elite individuals to explain the state development of Early Egypt. But is the term 'elite', which was originally developed to understand the social complexity of the emerging 20th century, appropriate to comprehend the social complexity that existed over 5000 years ago in ancient Egypt? For now it would seem, but eventually trends will change in how archaeologists attempt to tell the stories of people of the past, including the so-called 'elite'.

Childe himself speculated many ideas to understand, clarify and explain what we as archaeologists and historians find from the past; specifically the meanings they constitute. Through both criticism and praise, he and many before us today have played a unique role to inspire us as ambassadors for ancient studies, which has been a long journey and will definitely continue. This study has been a part of that journey and it is hopeful that it has furthered discussion on the issue in regards to Early Egyptian studies and archaeology in general.

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[453] Dahl (1957: 203); Thurston (2010: 195).
[454] Lukes (1974: 23).
[455] Townsend (1999: 31).

# Appendix

## Childe's Urban Revolution – The ten-point model.

1. 'In point of size the first cities must have been more extensive and more densely populated than any previous settlements.'[456]

2. 'In composition and function the urban population already differed from that of any village. Very likely indeed most citizens were still also peasants, harvesting the lands and waters adjacent to the city. But all cities must have accommodated in addition classes who did not themselves procure their own food by agriculture, stock-breeding, fishing or collecting – full time specialist craftsmen, transport workers, merchants, officials and priests.'[457]

3. Each primary producer paid over the tiny surplus he could wring from the soil with his still very limited technical equipment as tithe or tax to an imaginary deity or a divine king who thus concentrated the surplus.'[458]

4. 'Truly monumental public buildings not only distinguish each known city from any village but also symbolise the concentration of the social surplus.'[459]

5. 'But naturally priests, civil and military leaders and officials absorbed a major share of the concentrated surplus and thus formed a "ruling class".'[460]

6. 'Writing.'[461]

7. 'The elaboration of exact and predictive sciences – arithmetic, geometry and astronomy.'[462]

8. 'Conceptualised and sophisticated styles [of art].'[463]

9. 'Regular "foreign" trade over quite long distances.'[464]

10. 'A State organisation based now on residence rather than kinship.'[465]

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[456] Childe (1950: 9); Smith (2009: 10).
[457] Childe (1950: 11); Smith (2009: 10).
[458] Childe (1950: 11); Smith (2009: 10).
[459] Childe (1950: 12); Smith (2009: 10).
[460] Childe (1950: 12-13); Smith (2009: 10).
[461] Childe (1950: 14); Smith (2009: 10).
[462] Childe (1950: 14); Smith (2009: 10).
[463] Childe (1950: 15); Smith (2009: 10).
[464] Childe (1950: 15); Smith (2009: 11).
[465] Childe (1950: 16); Smith (2009: 11).

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