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Models of State Formation in Predynastic Egypt

1. Introduction

The theories regarding complexity and state emergence in Egypt, as noted by Geller (1992: 154), “could be grossly labeled as ecological, economic, or ideological explanations, or combinations of these”. It is clear that we cannot attribute state formation to any single factor *per se*, although, as we shall see, there may have been a predominant one. State formation was rather the result of a wide spectre of constituents operating together (cf. Anđelković 2002) and to achieve it, to paraphrase Cottrell (1955: XI), geography, energy resources, climate, population and ideology had to be mixed in certain right proportions.

As summarised by Levy and Holl (1998: 4), there are three major groups of processes which operate contemporaneously but at different levels through time: *short-term* processes, such as, for instance, political history, events, the acts of individuals; *medium-term*, characterised among other things by cycles of socio-political, economic, agrarian and demographic change; and *long-term* that may include the natural environment with geological, climatic and geomorphologic aspects, as well as the social environment with dominant controls over production, technology and ideology that affect social evolution.

There are many limitations on our attempts to provide an explanatory spatio-temporal-causal model of state formation: not only the modest amount of available data, but also the practically unlimited number of possible combinations of factors and the fact that sometimes a cause and its effect are so distant one from another in time, space and even in category that it is not easy to define, trace and understand properly their interconnection and the related causality. For instance, Hassan (1997: 472) suggested that “the course of state formation may be traced back to the herders of the Sahara approximately 2,000 years before unification”.

2. State formation models, hypotheses and theories

The way in which the terms *hypothesis*, *theory* and *model* are used in a number of works on the subject, do not always enable us to make the necessary contextual distinction between them. According to Campagno (2001) state formation theories can be categorised as *monocausal* (single factor) or *pluricausal* (several factors), as well as universal (the very same factors cause emergence of the state wherever it occurs) or *particular* (the factor/factors can be applied to just one particular case), while the factors themselves can be classified after two basic criteria: consensus (social agreement) or violence (conflict inside a society and between different societies). As stated by Campagno (2001) “wars or conquest seem to be the more appropriate to produce a State-like situation (...) winners and losers of the war might become dominators and dominated of a new social situation of State type”. Theories of state formation, as seen by Bard and Carneiro (1989: 22), fall into two basic groups: conflict theory and integration theory. We agree with Kemp (1989: 31) that individual cases “vary a great deal in their particular circumstances”. Even if we manage to assemble “a check-list of universally valid causes” (Kemp 1989: 31) the precise mode, timing and proportion by which the “ingredients” of the state formation “recipe” are mixed together would probably be very different, but paradoxically with the very same final result – emergence of the state (for the parameters of statehood see Anđelković 2005).

The formation of the state in Egypt has been explained by several main models (cf. Siegemund 1999). The models were grouped by Griswold (1992: 237-238) into two categories: *prime-mover* models – utilize factors like circum-scription, irrigation, warfare, trade, population pressure, and technological development (the last two primary causes of the rise of the Egyptian state added from Hassan 1997: 473) – and *systems theory* models (there was no prime-mover but the state formed through a combination of interacting factors, none of which was sufficient in itself to enable state formation). However, we believe that the border between the two suggested groups of models is more porous than hermetically sealed. Although we incline to the systems theory approach, we tend to think that the interacting factors cannot be of uniform importance and in equal proportion. On the other hand, it is highly unlikely that the predominant factor would be effective at the crucial moment – to bring about the formation of the state – if deprived of interaction with its proper framework. That brings us to some sort of a hybrid “systems prime-mover theory” model as perhaps the most plausible. As noted by Hassan (1997: 473), if the rise of the Egyptian state is regarded as a sequential development in successive stages, it is possible that *different* variables (such as fluctuations in rainfall and Nile floods, farming and herding, political organization, demographic changes and religion) were influential at each stage.

Butzer (1976: XIV) defined three *independent* variables as: environment, technology and population (in terms of demographic and/or cultural context), on or through which the fourth *dependent* variable – social organization and differentiation, with factors such as trade, religion and warfare – is modelled.

Although Hassan's statement (1988: 164, with references) that models of the political evolution of Predynastic Egypt and state formation are still largely exploratory – referring to population, irrigation, technology, warfare and trade – is on the whole still valid, yet there are significant recent contributions in the domain of state origin (e.g. Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz & Chłodnicki 2004; Midant-Reynes et al. 2005). The main approaches concerning state emergence in Egypt are presently to be perceived as:

1. *Unification/forcible annexation model.*

There are several variants of the theory (one of them is termed the *classical model*, see Köhler 1995: 81, 82; cf. Kaiser 1990), including warfare (e.g. Griswold 1992: 243-254) and/or the conquest option, including “a conquest by marriage” (Griswold 1992: 246; cf. Petrie 1939: 79), but most of them are inspired by “the traditional, semi-mythological explanation provided by the Egyptians themselves” (Savage 1997: 226) who “viewed their internal universe in terms of the symbolic dualism” (Butzer 1976: 99). Namely, the Two Lands, i.e. Lower Egypt (northern Egypt or the Nile Delta) and Upper Egypt (southern Egypt or the Nile valley), were unified by a victorious king. As noted by Hassan (1988: 174) if “there is any truth to the unification conquest myth, it may reside in the “conquest” of the Nagada region by the followers of Horus from Hierakonpolis”; namely, the unification of the predynastic kingdoms of Hierakonpolis and Naqada “may have been generated the legend of the Two Lands identified with the gods of Nagada (Seth) and Hierakonpolis (Horus)” (Hassan 1997: 477); for the view that mythology was developed by the elite to explain their position as leaders see Griswold (1992: 253). A broad consensus has been reached that northern Egypt was conquered by the ruler of the south. Although a significant amount of data testify to a rapid development of socio-political complexity and eventually state level society in protodynastic Upper Egypt (e.g. Andelković 2002; 2004; 2005), the evidence for an equal political counterpart, entity of Lower Egypt is mostly lacking. Moreover, the differences in architecture, pottery production (for instance, Köhler's 1995: 87 research on the pottery from Buto pointed to “an apparently less developed social system than in Upper Egypt”), quality and quantity of grave goods, so-called artistic achievements, “power artefacts”, etc. (some of the “powerfacts” are unpretentiously listed by Geller 1992: 168 as “maceheads and palettes, and pottery and stone form abroad”), appear to imply, at least judging from the data in hand, a certain developmental gap between “culturally advanced neighbours” of Naqada culture on one side, and

Maadi-Buto/Lower Egyptian culture on the other (cf. Fattovich 1984: 51). As Trigger put it (1983: 68) “the especially rich natural resources of the Delta may have resulted in an even slower realization of the full potential of a food-producing economy than took place in Upper Egypt”. There is also a possibility that, in contrast to Upper Egypt, the Lower Egyptian culture(s) longer adhered to the Neolithic-minded logistic and world view (despite the introduction of copper) (cf. Seeher 1991: 317). Note that the Lower Egyptian Maadi community was on a chiefdom level (as suggested by Köhler 2005) while the Upper Egyptian culture approached the threshold of statehood already in Naqada IC-IIB; and a proto-state emerged in Naqada IIC-IID1 (Anđelković 2002; 2004; 2005). Finally according to Childe, a group of Upper Egyptian *nomes* conquered Lower Egyptian *clans* (Bard 1994: 3) [emphasis added]. Moreover, as noted by Wilkinson (2002: 244) “An iconography of power (...) was being developed by the rulers of Predynastic Upper Egypt, not by their Lower Egyptian counterparts, if such figures even existed”. The swift, easy and permanent spread of Naqada culture to the north seems to confirm this notion. Some Lower Egyptian sites, such as Maadi, were brought to an end, other sites (with so-called “transitional” phase/layer), such as Buto, were assimilated, along with the establishment of some Naqada culture settlements in Lower Egypt (cf. Midant-Reynes 2003: 114, Carte 3). A different opinion, that “the social, political, economic, logistical, administrative and ideological foundations” of the state formation “had been laid in both parts of the country”, was presented by Köhler (2005). The Lower Egyptian culture was defined as “a vast cultural complex which spread over the Nile Delta and as far as Fayum in the south in the early Predynastic period” (Maćzyńska 2003: 223). As noted by Bard (1994: 24) “the emerging picture of Egypt in the 4th millennium BC is of two different material cultures with different belief systems”. Concerning the “Lower Egyptian Predynastic cultural zone”, Kemp (1989: 43) concluded that “In comparison with their Upper Egyptian equivalents, their pottery and other products appear crude and unsophisticated”.

The versions of unification theory mainly vary in regard to who united the country, whether it was in a peaceful – according to Wildung (1984: 269) “The rise of the Egyptian state occurred (...) as a broad-range evolution in the whole area (...) and it seems to have been carried out harmoniously, without any major conflicts” – or violent manner and how long it took (i.e. was it achieved by one ruler/generation or several of them?). According to the Abydos list and Manetho’s *Aegyptiaca*, the first king of unified Egypt was the legendary Menes, the debate about the true identity of whom is still open (cf. Wilkinson 1999: 66-67). However, note that the “fact that on the Cairo fragment some of these little figures wear the double crown means also that the Egyptians themselves did not, at least in earlier times, see Menes as the very first unifier” (Kemp 1989: 46, 352 n. 44). The ideas that the changes in material culture evident in the successive

predynastic stages, the establishing of “two well-organized monarchies, one compassing the Delta area and the other the Nile valley proper” (Emery 1984: 38), and the transition to the Dynastic period, should all be ascribed to the New Race, Dynastic Race, master race, originating “from somewhere else” (for a brief summary see Geller 1992: 48-49) that entered the valley by “gradual infiltration or horde invasion” (Emery 1984: 38) are now generally untenable and abandoned. As Holmes has noted (1989: 21), there is no need to look for some foreign invaders who brought civilization to Egypt from what is a vaguely defined “east”, since the origins of Egypt are firmly rooted in its prehistoric past.

As stated by Hassan (1997: 476) the rise of a unified state was most likely “not the result of a single battle, but the culmination of alliances, as well as fragmentation and reunification, over a period of at least 250 years or about ten to 12 generations”. Until the 1980s, the Narmer palette was regarded as evidence for the “unification”, despite the obvious fact that the violent scene of the “kneeling, conquered enemy whom the king is about to smite with his mace” is depicted (Bard 1992b: 304). As noted by Wilkinson (1996: 95) such “unification” rather represents “successful expansion of Upper Egyptian power into (...) Lower Egypt”. Although the term “unification” is still in use, what is practically meant by it is a process through which one side eventually “conquered and annexed” the other (for the interchangeable use of the terms see for instance Hassan 1997: 477), so the present author applied the term *forcible annexation* (Anđelković 1995: 17) or assimilation by power. As Savage put it (1997: 230) “we might even envision a Narmer or Menes initiating *warfare* upon a polity in Lower Egypt, thus *uniting* the Two Lands” [emphasis added]. Indeed, this “was not a process of peaceful expansion, but one that involved warfare for the acquisition of [the] cattle, booty or land” (Bard 1994: 3) that supported the power base. Note that after the disappearance of Lower Egyptian tradition – starting shortly after the beginning of Naqada IIC, to be completed toward Naqada IID2 – only one culture was left in both Upper and Lower Egypt. However, this by no means stopped the power struggle “both within and between” (Hassan 1988: 172) Naqada lords/lineages/elite/interest groups and a similar trend continued throughout the Dynastic period. Since the omnipresent and diverse evidence of conflict (Anđelković 2002; Campagno 2004; van Wetering 2005) hardly signify “political unification” but rather “the wars of unification” it seems that the prevailing factor in the unification/forcible annexation model is that of a conflict over power.

2. Hydraulic model.

According to the “hydraulic hypothesis”, the state development was dependent on irrigation, i.e. the rise of political power is attributed to the need to manage expanding irrigation systems as a complex subsistence activity. In the 1920s Moret and Davy suggested that controlling a river the magnitude of the

Nile required the coordinated labour of a large group of people spread over a wide area and organized by a central governing agency (Haas 1982: 70-71; cf. Geller 1992: 16, 155). Such an approach was, with significant differences, promoted by the works of Wittfogel (1955; 1957; cf. Steward 1955; cf. Siegemund 1999: 254 n. 119), Butzer (1976) and Krzyżaniak (1977; cf. Griswold 1992: 238). Not necessarily in disagreement with the views that the “Nile regime provided for easy production of agricultural surpluses with no need for centrally controlled irrigation schemes” (Geller 1992: 155) and that effective large scale irrigation (as far as the “large scale” or “sophisticated” notion is concerned, we should bear in mind that for the “proportional” understanding of the particular pre- and protohistoric context it is very important to perceive Predynastic phenomena “in forms, terms and standards appropriate to their own times”, Anđelković 2005) probably did not exist in Egypt before modern times – i.e. there is “no sophisticated irrigation before it was introduced effectively during our modern era” (Hassan 1988: 165) – some scenes on C-class pottery (van Lepp 1995) and the Scorpion macehead (Butzer 1976: 20-21) bear witness to the presence of an irrigation system “composed of complex canals, basins and weirs” (van Lepp 1995: 208) and attest that “hydraulic engineering” was practiced in the predynastic period in Upper Egypt. As stated by Atzler (1995: 46) intensive agriculture and production “was only feasible through artificial inundation landscape manipulation, and the often assumed picture of a relatively small population which could have used abundant natural resources until dynastic times is apparently misleading”. The two main versions (cf. Griswold 1992: 238-239) of the hydraulic model differ in regard to: whether the leaders/elite bring about the construction of public works such as irrigation canals, or if it was *vice versa* – the central control becomes necessary to coordinate large scale irrigation/public works? Although Butzer (1976: 110-111) actually argues against irrigation as a basis for the state-centred society and the linear causality model of stress→irrigation→managerial bureaucracy→despotic control, he consents that “the transition from natural to (...) artificially regulated irrigation had been *completed* by the end of the Predynastic era” [emphasis added]. In fact, Butzer (1976: 100-101) was right in rejecting population pressure, ecological stress or reaching of the carrying capacity of the land as prime movers in stimulating intensification of agricultural production. But what he severely underestimated was the emerging political ambition and “exploitative capabilities” of the local rulers/elite who were not hungry for agricultural products but rather for prestige goods and power (cf. Anđelković 2004: 543) – as noted by Bard (1994: 118) “Irrigation agriculture provided a surplus (...) but it also supported corvée labor, full-time specialists, elites and a kingship”. That is why the surpluses (and more and more surpluses) were needed. According to Bard (1992a: 16) “controlling surplus agricultural wealth was *the key* to social differentiation”. Since the “surpluses do not just

develop, because most people and small groups produce only what they need to survive”, to “produce a surplus a force must be applied” (Griswold 1992: 238-239) – including surplus created from raiding and warring (Griswold 1992: 249, 254). The potential for accumulating pockets of surplus form the basis of power (Kemp 1989: 35). Accordingly, the important factor in the hydraulic model is again conflict over power, partly realized by water management. To paraphrase Siegemund (1999: 255), not subsistence but rather surplus was dependent upon coping with large masses of water. Besides, the role of the Nile, as a “uniquely serviceable river” (Wittfogel 1957: 250) in state formation processes was important in enabling development of “inundation culture” (Atzler 1995), as well as fast and effective internal communication and easy, low cost transportation. As noted by Wenke (1989: 135) “the location of almost every settlement within a few kilometers of this transport network, probably explains much of the political and religious unity of Egypt”. All in all, “Wittfogel got it right (the association between Social complexity and rivers) but for the wrong reasons” (Guillermo Algabe, personal communication, April 6, 2001).

3. *Circumscription model.*

The theory, introduced by Carneiro (1970) with revision (Bard & Carneiro 1989) and later withdrawal (Bard 1992a: 16), indicates a process of conflict over scarce resources, namely, population pressure within local polities led to inter-regional competition and eventually warfare. As Siegemund put it (1999: 248), an ecological setting physically circumscribes a particular territory on which live a certain number of people – in other words, “Dry desert sand circumscribes the arable part of the Egyptian Nile Valley” (Geller 1992: 156); in time the resources for subsistence become scarce (the shortages induced by the circumscription), so the people will fight over them to gain control over these resources; a complex organization of the prevailing group arises, making the others subservient, and eventually a state comes into being. This scenario denotes the major factors in Egyptian socio-political evolution as: environmental circumscription, resource concentration, population pressure, increasing social complexity and warfare. Increasing trade and exchange of agricultural surplus and elite goods may also have been important in the establishing of the managerial institutions of local polities, whereas social circumscription would have been a significant factor in limiting the expansion of regional polities into new territories (Bard & Carneiro 1989: 21, 23). As we have said elsewhere (Anđelković 2004: 543) the circumscription model had the potential to explain state formation in predynastic Egypt, except in failing to introduce the main and most important reason for the competition, the true prime mover – the will to power. Natural resources and energetic potential were more than abundant in the Nile Valley (cf. Anđelković 2002) so, the conflict was hardly caused by scarce resources, population pressure or

approaching the carrying capacity (i.e. the maximum population that a particular territory will support without undergoing deterioration). Whatever (battles or alliances, force or fraud) made hundreds of small autonomous villages yield their sovereignties to proto-nomes, and made proto-nomes in their turn yield sovereignties to a more complex and powerful polity, and so forth until the early state emerged, it was ultimately power-related. The most manifest aspect of “the play of power” (Hassan 1988: 175) was a fight over land, or better said, fight over territory (and more territory) and that is why every subsequent political entity, from Upper Egyptian proto-nomes to the all-Egyptian early state (cf. Anđelković 2004), encompassed a larger territory in comparison to its precursor. The process was driven by “the inherent tendency of absolute power to expand beyond its borders” (Needler 1984: 31). That power has both material and ideological components was confirmed by a simultaneous development of characteristic – “from conqueror to god” as Griswold put it (1992: 252) – iconography, poses and actions of pharaonic symbolism (such as, for instance, the figure of a ruler smiting his enemy/enemies represented on a vase from Umm el-Qaab Naqada Ic grave U-239, the Hierakonpolis Naqada IIc painted tomb T 100, or Narmer Naqada III palette). The rise of the state also coincides with the monopolization of force, manifested in a decreasing number of confronting sides (Anđelković 2005). Although Siegemund (1999: 371) suggested that what was actually circumscribed were the “needs” of elite (wood, ivory, copper, gold, precious stones etc.), restricted by ecological and political factors, we believe that the named items, and many more, merely belonged to “a long list of gains that went to the ultimate winner (...) because what the Egyptian elite were really fighting for was absolute power” (Anđelković 2004: 542). It seems that the key factor in the circumscription model is again a conflict over power, i.e. not over scarce resources but rather caused by a sort of “power circumscription”.

4. Multivariate-multistage systemic interplay model.

There are several scenarios that explain state formation by a multiplicity of factors, as the result of many inter-related sets of factors, such as access to land, trade goods, religious ideology, warfare, political manipulation, etc. (cf. Savage 1997: 226). Two main branches of this model, despite the factors involved (as noted by Griswold 1992: 241, one can practically “insert any elements that he/she feels are important to the formula”), centre either on competition, or consensual behaviour and mutual benefits respectively. According to Kemp (1989: 32, 34) through the analogy of game playing (namely, a board game of the ‘Monopoly’ kind where players compete to acquire wealth through stylised economic activity, as players take turns moving around the board according to the roll of the dice; the game is named after the economic concept of monopoly, the domination of a market by a single seller) we can envisage the

course which took the competition of individuals/communities with one another; thousands of games proceeding simultaneously, with the winning 'players' (sometimes "many generations treated as a unity", but also lineages or individuals) reaching higher and higher game levels until finally a single winner – i.e. "the winning kingdom (centered at Hierakonpolis)" – takes all. Namely, a "Proto-kingdom of Upper Egypt based at Hierakonpolis (...), embarked on a military expansion (...) which engulfed the whole of Egypt" (Kemp 1989: 45, Fig. 13). This serious war game probably started because of the "propensity to compete" or more specifically "a powerful urge to dominate", whereas important determinative factors were: a remarkably fertile "natural resource base" and "the creative power of the [Egyptian] imagination to fashion a distinctive ideology" (Kemp 1989: 35). Kemp (1989: 34) continues with the notion that game theory helps "to understand the process of massive social and structural change which lay behind the appearance of the first states". Savage (1997: 228-231), along with emphasizing that the state formation for Kemp may be seen as "a process of the accumulation of power", suggests that "the creation of the Egyptian state, as a state, is probably the by-product of economic ambition", concluding that a combination of Kemp's game theory with action/practice theory best explains the available data. There are fewer positions of valued status than there are people capable of filling them, so the limited supply of high-ranking positions creates a struggle for their occupancy; the struggle occurs not only at the level of single polities, but at the inter-polity level as well, until eventually, from a milieu of competing chiefdoms, the state emerges (Savage 1997: 228-231). A multivariate-multistage systemic interplay model that promotes consensual behaviour and mutual benefits is offered by Hassan (1988: 165-175). According to his view, attempts of neighbouring communities to dampen the fluctuations of yield (as the most destabilizing factor of agricultural production) by pooling the resources, led to the emergence of community representatives/chiefs; further enlargement of the economic units "through alliances, with occasional incidents of fightings", led to a hierarchy of chiefs and the emergence of larger regional political units; legitimation of power, emphasized by status goods and funerary offerings, stimulated trade and the industry of funerary goods; skirmishes with "Libyan" and "Asiatic" raiders added to the image of chiefs as keepers of world order; the dramatic reduction in the Nile flood by the end of the Late Predynastic, promoted the fusion of Hierakonpolis and Naqada, followed by expansion northward to Lower Egypt as the final enlargement of economic units that "led to the rise of a state society governed by supreme rulers" (Hassan 1988: 135, 165-166). It is reasonable to believe that instead of only pooling the resources, neighbouring communities rather cooperated in coordinating and combining their hydraulic-economy-related efforts (manipulated ponds, basins, canals, river-levee-fixations, weirs construction, etc.), that brings us close to the hydraulic model.

No matter which side of the medal a particular author may chose to single out, whether competition or consensus, in both cases the role and significance of power – that turns out to be system's goal – is prominent. Hassan (1988: 166) argues for mutually beneficial economic decisions and consensual “organization through coordination” but yet notes that his model may also be construed in terms of “conflict theory”, acknowledging that conflict between social groups is ubiquitous. In other words, “the play of power among various actors within a hierarchical organizational pyramid is perhaps the most important force structuring social relations and economic pursuits” (Hassan 1988: 175) As indicated by Griswold (1992: 241, 243, 250) some “largescale interregional cooperation” is not supported by the palettes of the period. Indeed, violence is highlighted in several other instances as well (e.g. Campagno 2004: 690). Along with the power iconography – i.e. representations “sustaining and underscoring dominance” (Hassan 1988: 165) – the tendency toward warfare is reflected by early royal symbols (bull, lion, falcon, scorpion) and the bellicose personal names of several Predynastic kings (Kemp 1995: 684). Partially revising his model, Hassan (1997: 478-479) states: “Conflicts arising from agricultural failures and alliances formed to secure trade goods (...) and to aggrandize the power of the chiefs led to a series of political developments, including the rise of petty states and regional kingdoms, which were subsequently fused in yet larger kingdoms”. Indeed, a conflict over power turns out to be the key factor in the multivariate-multistage systemic interplay model as well.

5. Trade model.

By this model trade was seen as a prime mover to state formation. Two kinds of trade have been suggested: trade in general [i.e. within the Nile valley] and foreign trade (Griswold 1992: 239). Over the distance of approximately 100 km there are some differences in regard to plant and animal life as well as minerals (Hartung 1998: 37) that promoted regional trade, along with the differences in skilfulness of the local craftsmen. Moreover, the demand for status goods “stimulated and fostered quarrying and mining activities, as well as artistic and industrial developments” (Hassan 1997: 474). As stated by Wilkinson (2000a: 382, 385, 395) in early Naqada II, “Foreign trade – the acquisition of imported goods, control of commodities with which to trade, and access to trade routes themselves – seem to have played a crucial role in the process of state formation”, whereas in late Naqada II “trade in prestige commodities seems to have become a decisive factor in the politics of Predynastic Upper Egypt”; and the “ultimate triumph of the Thinite kingdom [over the kings of Hierakonpolis and founding of the Egyptian state] is at least partly explicable in terms of its strategic advantage for foreign trade”. According to Trigger (1983: 68-69) the mineral resources, especially gold, became an important item of trade that

“enhanced the regulatory power of those headmen whose communities were well situated to exploit these resources and may have been a major factor promoting the emergence of these communities as important economic and political centres”. Fattovich (1984: 52-55; cf. Geller 1992: 157-158) noted that there is “a direct link between trade and the accumulation of wealth” and suggested that the transition from segmentary society, via chiefdom, to “a proto-statal society” is caused by: a) “the progressive development of an extensive exchange network within the population and of long distance trade”; b) the increasing specialization in prestige items production (that in turn improved trade); c) the progressive development of collective activities connected to subsistence and to the production of instrumental goods and prestige items (the latter as a consequence of the improvement of the internal and external exchanges); d) the progressive accumulation of political power by individuals originally charged only with ritual functions. According to Fattovich (1984: 54) a personage, originally charged with hunting rituals in Naqada I, progressively acquired other ritual functions and political power, becoming a chief in Naqada II and a king in Naqada III. Following the similar thread, Siegemund (1999: 503, 506, 669, 683-686) argues that gradually more and more political power was added to an originally spiritual leader, namely “Pharaoh as spiritual leader came first and the state grew around that position”. In Naqada II, Fattovich continues (1984: 52-55), the development of long distance trade (...) affected the emergence of two chiefdoms [Naqada and Hierakonpolis]; in Naqada III “a complex administrative system of statal type developed as possible consequence of the progressive conquest of the northern regions by the chiefs of Hierakonpolis”. As noted by Bard (1994: 117) the geography of the Nile valley would have greatly facilitated regional trade and exchange of craft goods and materials by water; however, “conflict inevitably arose (...) as economic competition within the narrow valley increased”. Trigger (1983: 69) suggested that “Competition over trade may also have led to political struggles among the emerging polities (...) and the desire to protect trade (...) or to eliminate middlemen, may have led to the conquest of northern Egypt”. According to Campagno (2004: 694, 700; cf. Campagno 2001) “wars at the time of the emergence of the state might be related to the competition for prestige goods”, or more precisely – the competition “between Upper Egyptian communities to monopolise the trade networks that connected them to faraway regions (such as Nubia, Syro-Palestine and Mesopotamia)”. The “members of the elite” as “the main local beneficiaries of these exchange practices” (Campagno 2004: 696), or we can rather call them ‘players’, “compete (...) by exchanges of different commodities, and later more openly by conflict” (Kemp 1989: 32). Moreover, what perhaps started as the war for prestige goods, in time turned into the war for: “the right order”, the redefinition of “the cosmic conception (...) in the Nile Valley” (Campagno 2004: 700), and “regulatory power” (Trigger 1983: 69).

In a word, it turned into a war for power (Anđelković 2004: 542-543). It seems that warfare and conquest either introduced to access the trade routes, to control the trade routes, to eliminate middlemen, or to monopolize trade, promoted the conflict over power as the important factor of the trade model too.

6. *Cultural transplantation model.*

According to Rice (1991: 32-36) Naqada II was “responsive to a much more powerful and (...) more sustained alien influence” and “these foreign influences seem especially to have heightened the native Egyptian genius and to have produced a galvanic series of new advances in the Valley’s society”; “Naqada II phase (...) is one which was crucial for the formation of the Pharaonic or dynastic state” so the “influences from the east at this time did act as significant stimulus to the course of Egyptian development”. This model in a way leans on the trade model because “International trade (...) appears to have provided some motive force to drive the evolution of Egyptian complexity” (Geller 1992: 159). The “Mesopotamian connection” may have been, according to Savage (1997: 258) “the primary factor which stimulated the emergence of the state in Egypt”. The “gold-hungry easterners”, namely, south-western Asian people/ Sumerians/ Elamites/ Mesopotamians, made their way to “little independent ‘courts’ which (...) were established in various of the Predynastic centres of population such as Hierakonpolis and Naqada” and “touched off some of the most important elements in Egypt’s development” (Rice 1991: 35-36). Enabled by Egypt’s efficient foreign trade network (demonstrated for instance by lapis lazuli in Naqada II graves), on one side, and by the enthusiasm for profit of “a mercantile, seagoing culture, [and] its people avid for trade” on the other, “a degree of contact existed in the late Predynastic period between the *Egyptians* and Sumerian and Elamite *ideas* and *concepts*” (Rice 1991: 34, 45, 242; cf. Mark 1998) [emphasis added]. According to Griswold (1992: 253) foreign interaction, including the incorporation of foreign elements into Egyptian constructions, can be seen as a way of consolidating power. That fits well with Rice’s notion that “Most of the evidence for contact with western Asiatic ideas (...) is visual and is connected with the Kingship” (Rice 1991: 259). As noted by Smith (1992: 240) “it seems that most of the elements of (...) ‘greater royal cycle’: the hunt, the victory, the royal progress by boat and possibly the sacrifice, can be paralleled in early Susan/Sumerian sealings”. Although it is to be expected that foreign trade was accompanied by “a transfer of ideas and symbols” (Smith 1992: 245; cf. Griswold 1992: 80-85) it is much less possible that some “state formation seed/recipe” was either transplanted-exported from Mesopotamia or imported by Upper Egypt. The Upper Egyptian rulers simply “needed administrative mechanisms to maintain their authority” (Wilkinson 2002: 244). The evolution of writing “may have been partially a result of contact with Mesopotamia but was in

most ways essentially a native Egyptian development” (Wenke 1989: 139). Moreover, “by the end of Naqada I (...) the ideology and institution of kingship were already emerging at a few key centres in Upper Egypt” (Wilkinson 2002: 237) which means that chronologically succeeding incorporation of “artefacts of complexity” and elite/status/ruling-related foreign elements, was indeed a “creative borrowing” serving to consolidate the power of Upper Egyptian lords/political structures. In other words “symbols of control and authority were borrowed from contemporary Mesopotamian iconography by Egyptian rulers anxious to develop and promote the ideology of power” (Wilkinson 2000b: 28). This again implies conflict over power as the dominant factor.

3. Discussion

It seems that the more the significant recent developments in the domain of Egyptian Pre-/Protodynastic archaeology progress, the further the state formation “border line” has to be pushed back (cf. Anđelković 2005). Accordingly, the models presented above – and these models are not necessarily mutually exclusive – although in many of their elements they were shaped by authors that referred to the beginning of the Dynastic period as the “point zero” of state formation, should rather be transferred to the Predynastic period. The proto-state, also termed the Upper Egyptian Commonwealth, which emerged in Naqada IIC-IID1, was followed by the All-Egyptian early state (Upper and Lower Egypt) in Naqada IID2-IIIB/IIIC1 (politically the term Dynasty 0 can be applied to this phase) (Anđelković 2002; 2004; 2005). Whatever factors, including the *motivating factors* (cf. Ortner 1984: 151) and perhaps *negative factors* (i.e. those that enabled state formation by their absence), we decide to consider as prevailing, it is obvious that many more causes, charismatic individuals, personal decisions, world views, chances and circumstances, probably even emotions – according to Ortner (1984: 151) a whole range of emotions, for instance need, fear, desire, must surely be part of the motivating force – contributed to the development of Egypt as an entity. Evidently, it is impossible for such complex and intricate environmental, social and individual choreography to happen twice in the same way, even within the very same environmental setting, so it seems that some “state-by-numbers” formation model of the “check-list” type can hardly be established as universally valid. And indeed, that would not be necessary, since paradoxically, as we have already stated – despite the variety of different factors, elements, environmental and chronological frameworks (cf. Haas 1982; Feinman & Marcus 1998; Yoffe 2005) – after the particular point, all roads of state formation, so to speak, “lead to Rome” – namely in the end a state arises/comes into being/is created. However, the paradox is present only at first sight. In spite of the differences, there seems to be the predominant factor – conflict over power – as a sort of common denominator in all six presented models. The pattern sug-

gested by all the models demonstrates that: a) in the functionally interwoven matrix of various, synergic elements, perhaps diverse in every model, at some “point of no return” the concentration/cumulative effect of economic power reaches its critical mass b) crossing such an “event horizon” inevitably provokes conflict over political power – present in all models – namely, a “power chain reaction”, from which emerges c) conflict over absolute power, that ultimately leads to state formation. Hats off to the ruler – the god on earth – the Divine King.

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