

# Introduction

## 1. GOALS

This monograph is an attempt at presenting the development of the Nile Delta in the Predynastic period. Particular attention will be paid to the role played by the contacts between the Delta communities and the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age societies from Southern Levant.

Many researchers of the ancient Near East have already presented their interpretations of the Egyptian-Southern Levantine contacts. They concentrate primarily on analyzing imports from Southern Levant found in Egypt, dated to the Protodynastic period and the beginnings of the Early Dynastic period, as well as Egyptian imports in Southern Levant dated to the end of the Early Bronze Age I and Early Bronze Age II (*i.e.* Yadin 1955; Yeivin 1960; 1967; 1968; Ward 1963: 1-4; 1964: 121-135; Amiran 1970; 1974; Gophna 1976; 1987; 1992; 1995b; Ben-Tor 1982; 1986; 1991; Tutundžić 1985; 1989; Brandl 1992; van den Brink 1992b; 2002; Andelković 1995; de Miroschedji & Sadek 2000a; 2000b; 2005; de Miroschedji *et al.* 2001; Hartung 2001; Kansa & Levy 2002; Levy & van den Brink 2002; Paz *et al.* 2005; van den Brink & Gophna 2004; Braun 2004; 2011; van den Brink & Braun 2006; Braun & van den Brink 2008; Dessel 2009; Sowada 2009; Czarnowicz 2011). Thus far, more comprehensive attempts at interpreting Egyptian-Southern Levantine relationships in the early Predynastic period have not been taken, mostly due to the scarcity of source materials. However, intensified excavations in the Nile Delta and today's Israel and Jordan in the recent years have brought materials that shed new light on the origins of Egyptian-Canaanite contacts (Maćzyńska 2006; 2008; Braun & van den Brink 2008; Czarnowicz 2012b). This monograph is intended to fill in the gap in the research on the prehistoric Nile Delta and its contacts with Southern Levant.

The sources used by the author include materials from 24 sites in the Nile Delta, where traces of the Lower Egyptian culture have been discovered (Fig. 1; Tab. 1; *cf.* Maćzyńska 2011: tab. 1). However, only 7 of those have seen a comprehensive publication of all materials, addressing the most important aspects of the said culture. These are: Maadi – settlement and cemetery (Rizkana & Seeher 1987; 1988; 1989; 1990), Buto settlement (von der Way 1997; Faltings 1998ab; Köhler 1998), Tell el-Iswid (van den Brink 1989), Tell Ibrahim Awad (van den Brink 1992b), Tell el-Farkha (Chłodnicki *et al.* 2012) and cemeteries in Wadi



Figure 1. Lower Egypt in the Predynastic period.

Digla (Rizkana & Seeher 1990), Heliopolis (Debono & Mortensen 1988). A considerable delay between the excavations on the one hand and the corresponding publications on the other causes certain difficulties *e.g.* in the cases of Maadi, Heliopolis and es-Staff sites (Debono & Mortensen 1988; Habachi & Kaiser 1985; Rizkana & Seeher 1987; 1988; 1989). Some materials from the most recent research projects still await proper publication and are currently available in the form of detailed excavation reports only, *e.g.* Tell el-Masha'la (Rampersad 2006), Kom el-Khilgan (Buchež & Midant-Reynes 2007; 2011; Midant-Reynes *et al.* 2004), Sais (Wilson & Gilbert 2003; Wilson 2006); Tell el-Iswid<sup>1</sup> (Midant-Reynes 2007;

<sup>1</sup> Excavations of the French Institute of Oriental Archaeology (IFAO) in Cairo under the direction of M. Beatrix Midant-Reynes.

Table 1. Sites of the Lower Egyptian culture.

NO.	SITE NAME	SITE TYPE	REFERENCES
1	Buto I-IIIa	settlement	von der Way 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1992ab, 1993, 1997; Faltings 1998ab, 2003; Faltings & Köhler 1996; Köhler 1998
2	Beni Amir	cemetery	el-Moneim 1996
3	Ezbet el-Qerdahi	settlement	Wunderlich 1988; Wunderlich <i>et al.</i> 1989
4	Giza	settlement?	Mortensen 1985; el-Sanussi & Jones 1997; Scharff 1928
5	Heliopolis	cemetery	Debono & Mortensen 1988
6	Kom el-Kanater	settlement?	Levy & van den Brink 2002
7	Kom el-Khilgan	cemetery	Buchez & Midant-Reynes 2007, Midant-Reynes <i>et al.</i> 2004; Tristant <i>et al.</i> 2008;
8	Maadi	settlement, cemetery	Menghin & Amer 1932, 1936; Badawi 1987, Rizkana & Seeher 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990; Caneva <i>et al.</i> 1987, Watrin 2000; Hartung 2004
9	Mendes B3	settlement	Hansen 1965, 1967; Brewer & Wenke 1992; Friedman 1992
10	Merimde Beni-Salame	cemetery?	Badawi 1980
11	Mersa Matruh A/600	cemetery?	Bates 1915; 1927; Levy & van den Brink 2002
12	Minshat Abu Omar I	cemetery	Kroeper & Wildung 1994; 2000; Kroeper 2004
13	Qasr Qarun	settlement?	Caton Thompson & Gardner 1934; Wenke <i>et al.</i> 1983
14	es-Saff	cemetery	Habachi & Kaiser 1985;
15	Sais	settlement	Wilson 2006; Wilson & Gilbert 2003
16	Sedment J	settlement?	Petrie & Brunton 1924ab; Williams 1982
17	Tell el-Fara'un – el-Husseiniya	cemetery	Levy & van den Brink 2002
18	Tell el-Masha'la	settlement	Rampersad 2006
19	Tell el-Murra	settlement	Jucha <i>pers. comm.</i>
20	Tell el-Farkha 1-3	settlement	Chłodnicki <i>et al.</i> 2012
21	Tell Ibrahim Awad	settlement	van den Brink 1989, 1992b; van Haarlem 1998;
22	Tell el-Iswid 7	settlement	van den Brink 1992b; Tristant <i>et al.</i> 2011
23	Tura	?	Junker 1912, 1928; Kaiser & Zaugg 1988
24	Wadi Digla	cemetery	Rizkana & Seeher 1990

Tristant *et al.* 2011; Guyot *in press*). An interesting case is that of the cemetery in Minshat Abu Omar, which had been considered as typically Naqadian for many years. Recently however some researchers have claimed that the two oldest groups of graves (I and II) could have belonged to a Lower Egyptian culture community who buried their dead right there, judging by the presence of specific grave goods, such as lemon shaped jars (Köhler 2008: 518-519; Maćzyńska *in press* c). Materials from the other Lower Egyptian culture

Table 2. Sites intentionally excluded from this publication.

NAME	SITE	CHRONOLOGY	REFERENCES
Mersa Matruh A/600	cemetery (15 graves)	Merimde culture/Lower Egyptian culture?	Bates 1915; 1927
Tell el-Fara'un/ el-Husseiniya	cemetery	Lower Egyptian culture?	Levy & van den Brink 2002: 11
Kom el-Kanater	settlement	Lower Egyptian culture?	Levy & van den Brink 2002: 11

sites relied on by the author have been published incompletely, with emphasis on selected aspects only (*e.g.* Engelbach 1923; Caton-Thompson & Gardner 1934; Badawi 1980; Williams 1982 ; el-Moneim 1996). This results first of all from the fragmentary and accidental nature of the finds (Giza, Tura), small scale of research (Ezbet el-Qerdahi) or mistaken chronology of finds (Haraga, Qasr Qarun, Sedment J). In the last case, chronology was verified on the basis of pottery analysis, as no archive information about stratigraphy, context, *etc.* was available. Materials from sites of uncertain or unspecified chronology, only available as enigmatic or brief excavation reports, were not taken into account (Tab. 2).

The Lower Egyptian culture, when identified in the 1930s, was first referred to as Maadi culture, named so after the first site bearing the traces of this culture's activity. In this way it became one of the four cultural units discovered in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Nile Delta. Not unlike Faiyumian, Merimde and el-Omari cultures, Maadi units were known from a single site only and seemed a part of the cultural tradition of the first farming communities in Lower Egypt. This situation changed in the 1980s, when intensive surveys and excavations began in the Delta area. Traces of Maadi culture were then discovered on Buto site. Excavations by the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) showed that Maadi culture was much more diverse than originally believed. As a result, the name was changed to Maadi-Buto culture. The following years brought the discoveries of new sites of the same culture: Tell el-Iswid, Tell Ibrahim Awad, Tell el-Farkha, Sais and Kom el-Khilgan. Researchers quickly realized that the phenomenon in question was quite different from the three other Neolithic cultures, as it was strongly diversified and its geographic range covered nearly the entire Delta. When the original views on Maadi-Buto culture were revised, it was necessary to update its name, so reminiscent of the first farming communities in the Delta. The term "Lower Egyptian culture" was coined in the literature (*cf.* von der Way 1992b: 217; Ciałowicz 1999; 2001; Buchez & Midant-Reynes 2011; Mączyńska 2011), making it clearly different from the traditions of Faiyumian, Merimde and el-Omari cultures. Although the term "Maadi-Buto" is still used frequently, the author insists on using the name Lower Egyptian culture in this monograph, as it is more adequate for the culture's character (see also Mączyńska 2011).

## 2. CHRONOLOGICAL RANGE

The Lower Egyptian culture appeared in the Delta area in the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. Radiocarbon dating allows to see the culture in the period between 3800 and 3300/3200 BC, corresponding to the period from Naqada I to beg. Naqada IIIA in the relative Upper Egyptian chronology (Cialowicz 1999: 46; Watrin 2000: 170-173). The genesis of the Lower Egyptian culture has not been fully explained yet. There is no cultural continuity between the Lower Egyptian society and its predecessors, *i.e.* Faiyumian, Merimde and el-Omari communities. However, analyses of the oldest Lower Egyptian pottery from Haraga and Sedement J revealed coexistence of features associated with cultural traditions of early Predynastic Lower Egypt (Williams 1982: 216-219; 221). Most researchers believe that the beginnings of the Lower Egyptian culture are linked to the influence of multiple early Neolithic cultural traditions, including Merimde and el-Omari (Levy & van den Brink 2002: 10).

An analysis of Lower Egyptian culture materials allows one to discern a clear developmental pattern. Table 3 presents the division of the said development as used herein. It is based on both the newest results of studies carried out on Tell el-Farkha site and on the results of analyses of materials from other, previously known Lower Egyptian sites. As compared to the divisions used thus far, the author proposes two important changes (see also Mączyńska 2011). Although the new overall chronology continues to assume 3 developmental phases, the respective chronologies of those phases have changed (Tab. 4).

Table 3. Relative chronology of the Lower Egyptian culture (Chłodnicki & Cialowicz 2003: 66-67; Juha & Mączyńska 2011: tab. 1; Chłodnicki 2012: tab. 1).

PHASES	UPPER EGYPTIAN CHRONOLOGY	SITES
early phase	Naqada I-IIAB	Maadi Wadi Digla I-II Heliopolis Buto I-IIa Tell el-Farkha 1 Kom el-Khilgan 1
middle phase	Naqada IIC-D1	Buto IIb Tell el-Farkha 1-2 Tell el-Iswid Tell Ibrahim Awad 7 Mendes B3 (?) Kom el-Khilgan 2 Minshat Abu Omar I Beni Amir
late phase	Naqada IID2-beg. IIIA1	Buto IIIa Tell el-Farkha 3 Mendes B3 Tell Ibrahim Awad 7 Minshat Abu Omar I Beni Amir

Table 4. Relative chronology of the Lower Egyptian culture according to T.E. Levy & E.C.M. van den Brink (2002: 13, tab. 1.4).

PHASES	UPPER EGYPTIAN CHRONOLOGY	BUTO CHRONOLOGY
early Maadi	Naqada I	Buto I a-b
middle Maadi	Naqada IIa-b	Buto IIa
late Maadi	Naqada IIc-IIId1(-2)	Buto IIb
'transitional'	Naqada IIIa1-2	Buto III

The first novelty is the merger of the first two phases from the original division into a single early phase of the culture. An analysis of source materials (pottery, flint and stone tools) showed considerable similarities between both phases in terms of forms and decoration. Furthermore, nothing indicates any changes in the area of subsistence strategy and social organization. However, the scarcity of data renders more in-depth analysis impossible, thus preventing one from understanding the rationale behind those differences. It seems likely that those differences follow from social and ideological changes that began in the early phase. However, the results of those changes are clearly visible in the middle phase of the Lower Egyptian culture development. Therefore, one can assume that both initial phases can be considered as one.

There is one more new element in the Lower Egyptian culture chronology proposed by the author. Thus far, researchers did not take into account a transitional phase between Lower Egyptian and Naqadian culture, dated to Naqada IID2/IIIA1. As a result, the final stage in the development of the Lower Egyptian culture was overlooked. Importantly, this period saw the so-called cultural unification, more accurately referred to as the Lower Egyptian-Naqadian transition, when elements of the local cultural tradition began to be accompanied by new elements originating from the south. The phase in question is marked by the presence of such elements among local pottery or stone and flint tools. The cultural change that took place in the said period is still debated. Recently, the said process can be viewed as acculturation, (*cf.* Buchez & Midant-Reynes 2007; 2011; Mączyńska 2011).

In Southern Levant, the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC coincided with the late Chalcolithic period (c. 4800/4700-3650 BC) and the beginning of EB I (Bar-Yosef 1995: fig. 2). Ca. 3650 BC important social and economic processes began in Southern Levant (Tab. 5). Changes in the settlement system (sedentary societies, establishment of fortified towns) and in economy (pastoralism losing ground to farming – Grigson 1995) were so powerful that their effects can be seen in the material culture. Therefore, archaeologists were forced to draw a clear cultural boundary between the two periods. Despite new discoveries, the cultural change between the Chalcolithic and EB I has not been fully explained and is still subject

Table 5. Chronological correlation between Egypt and Southern Levant (Levy & van den Brink 2002: 19, tab. 1.8; Braun & van den Brink 2008: tab. 1; Braun: 2011: 122; Jucha & Mączyńska 2011: tab. 1; Chłodnicki 2012: tab. 1; Czarnowicz 2012b: tab.1; *pers. comm.*).

SOUTHERN LEVANT	LOWER EGYPT	UPPER EGYPT
late Chalcolithic	Maadi Buto I, IIa	Naqada I-IIA
EB IA1	Maadi Buto IIb Tell el-Farkha 1	Naqada IIB
EB IA2	Buto IIb Tell el-Farkha 1-2	Naqada IIB-IIID1
EB IB1 – Erani C	Buto IIIa Tell el-Farkha 3-4	Naqada IID2-IIIB
EB IB2	Buto IIIB-IV Tell el-Farkha 4-5	Naqada IIIB-C1

to numerous scholarly discussions (Gophna 1995a: 269-272; Levy 1995: 241). Taking all the above factors into account one needs to realize that the genesis of Early Bronze Age societies in Southern Levant was complex and not limited to the material aspects of the culture (Commence & Alon 2002: 139; Levy & van den Brink 2002: 7).

### 3. TERRITORIAL RANGE

The boundaries of the territory hosting Lower Egyptian culture communities are marked by the sites where materials characteristic for the said culture were recorded (Figs. 1-2). On that basis it has been assumed that the Lower Egyptian culture covered Lower Egypt up to Faiyum in the south. Sedment cemetery is the southernmost site of the Lower Egyptian culture (Kaiser 1985; Ciałowicz 1999: 127).

Even though the territorial range covered by this publication goes beyond the geographical boundaries of the Nile Delta, whose tip is located in the vicinity of Cairo, the author interchangeably uses the terms Lower Egypt and Nile Delta. This is a common practice among Predynastic researchers, originating from the Old Egyptian language where a single word (*t3-mhm*) was used to denote both regions (Kroeper 1989b: 5).

The picture of Lower Egyptian settlements in the Delta reflects the current state of research. A relatively small number of discovered sites is caused by challenging field work conditions. High groundwater level makes it difficult or simply impossible to reach the older settlement stages in the area (Butzer 2002: 83). Therefore one cannot preclude the existence of Predynastic sites under thick layers of silt.



Figure 2. Southern Levant in the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze I periods.

The territory of Southern Levant corresponds to today's Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Autonomous Territories (Fig. 2). Another name for the same region used in this monograph is Canaan. Although it first appeared in written sources in the 15<sup>th</sup> century BC (Schmitz 1992), it is used by many researchers in EB contexts, despite chronological differences. Eventually, Canaan became so common in literature that it was considered to be a legitimate name with respect to Early Bronze communities (Levy & van den Brink 2002: 7).

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

The author assumed that the research process reflects the theory followed by the researcher, because it involves taking actions aiming at interpreting a given phenomenon (Popper 1992). Therefore, a key element of each publication should be the presentation of theoretical assumptions for the issue in question. The aim of this book is to present the trajectory of the Delta Nile development in the Predynastic period, with particular attention paid to the role of the contacts between Delta and Southern Levant communities. To achieve that aim the author needs to discuss the characteristics of the Lower Egyptian culture. The starting point is the system-based approach to the world, where the world is seen as a logical entity. A culture is a complex, socio-cultural system composed of numerous elements that interact with and depend on each other, such as: people in various roles, relationships or groups, their activities and products pervaded with meanings and values that intertwine in various disciplines, spatial areas and social structures (Golka 1992: 100).

The system theory was introduced to archaeology by L. Binford (1972: 22, 24-25) as part of the New Archaeology concept. The theory assumes that culture is man's extrasomatic means of adaptation, or a tool used by man to adapt to external conditions (Binford 1972: 105). Culture is treated as a system composed of subsystems of specific function, whose purpose is to accomplish that adaptation. The system functions in a state of equilibrium that can be disrupted by stimuli coming from the environment or from neighboring, competitive cultural systems. If so, the system naturally seeks to restore the balance and the changes taking place in all its aspects are interpreted as adaptive responses to those stimuli, taking the form of new social and economic behaviors. Treating culture as a system makes one concentrate on local adaptation processes as a means for explaining cultural changes.

Products of material culture – artefacts – are believed to be the effect of new behaviors and activities. Since the archaeologist investigating a past reality has access to artefacts only, he/she is supposed to use them as a basis for drawing conclusions relating to other elements of culture, such as ideology or social structure (Hodder & Hudson 2003). L. Binford (1962) distinguished three integrated culture subsystems (technological, social, and ideological), corresponding to human activities. He considered the technological subsystem to be the most important one, claiming that its role was superior to that of the social subsystem. The role of the third (ideological) subsystem was to mimic the changes taking place in the other two. Subsequently, Binford attributed specific artefacts to each of the subsystems on the

basis of their main function. The system theory in archaeology is not perfect. It has been broadly criticized for materialism, ecological determinism and the view of the artifact as a “mirror” of human behaviour (Hodder & Hudson 2003). Therefore the author decided to supplement the system theory with certain elements developed in other approaches.

The environment’s role in culture formation is to some extent limited by cultural ecology introduced by J. Steward (1983; 2006) and by biocultural evolution. They allow one to investigate bilateral relationships of humans and their environment, but they do not link culture’s structures and form to environmental factors only. Humans are seen as active entities in the adaptation process, and their decisions are set in a cultural context. Thanks to cultural background, one can control adaptation processes in a way. Humans recognize the surrounding conditions and – relying on “extra-genetically inherited cultural information” – take certain decisions on how to use the surroundings in adaptation and exploitation processes (Chmielewski 1984: 359-397; Piontek & Weber 1988; Piontek 1993).

In the 1980s attention was drawn to depositional and postdepositional processes and their influences on archaeological records, which could no longer be seen as a mirror image of past behaviours (Schiffer 1976). Furthermore, ethnoarchaeological research questioned the existence of a kind of a dictionary where each behavior corresponded to one effect (artefact). It was shown that the same behavior could lead to different effects (artefacts) and that the same artefact can reflect different behaviors.

If the Lower Egyptian culture is treated as a social and cultural system, then particular attention should be paid to its adaptation to the natural environment. The author wishes to present the ways in which the Nile Delta inhabitants used the unique conditions offered by that ecological niche. To avoid environmental determinism, the deliberations will not be limited to discussing adaptation benefits. The form of each subsystem in the Lower Egyptian culture depended not only on the natural conditions in the Delta, but first of all resulted from human activity in broadly defined human culture. One should remember that human existence is determined by nature insofar as humans are part of the animal world. Equipped with their physical and first of all cultural features, humans creatively choose rational solutions necessary to enable existence in diversified environments (Pozern-Zieliński 1978: 146-147). For this reason, an important part of this monograph will be the overview of each Lower Egyptian culture system in the context going beyond adaptation benefits. Lower Egyptian culture participants made their culturally-dependent choices, thus determining the shape of the entire system, as the diversity within the Lower Egyptian culture testifies. Despite the characteristics shared across the entire culture, connected *inter alia* with lifestyle, economy or burial customs, one can notice certain differences between each site. It seems that each settlement was inhabited by a group belonging to the cultural tradition of the entire Delta on the one hand, but on the other hand nurturing its own, local tradition determined by the cultural choices of its members. Presentation and interpretation of materials from each Lower Egyptian site will allow the author to simultaneously show this cultural uniformity and diversity.

Another important aspect will be to identify the role played by Southern Levantine communities in the development of the Lower Egyptian culture. As far as archaeological material is concerned, the only proof for the existence of a mutual relationship between the two regions are Southern Levantine imports found in the Delta area and Egyptian imports registered in Southern Levant. Most of them are clay pottery, flint tools and stone items, *i.e.* material sources. However, their analysis provides one not only with information about raw materials, manufacturing techniques, forms and motives of ornamentation. By employing additional analyses, one can identify the source of raw material, and comparative studies can determine the origin of the artefact's form or ornamentation motive. Interpretation of the mechanisms behind and the character of the contacts requires one to go beyond simple analyses of artefacts' features and to rely on additional methods of investigating mutual relationships between two communities. The presence of imported items, differing from the local ones in terms of raw material, manufacturing technology or technique, form and ornamentation can be explained in a variety of ways. Imports could have come through trade, as gift exchanged in order to establish a symbolic relationship, or as travel keepsakes. However, it should be remembered that material traces of exchange are but one of the many elements of broadly understood contacts. The encounter of two societies involved not only the exchange of vessels, flint or bone tools, but also the exchange of information and ideas (Renfrew & Bahn 2000: 352-355). C. Renfrew (1975) sees the relationship between goods and information as a natural element of exchange between moneyless societies without organized sales markets. Furthermore, one should remember the diversity of mutual relationships between individuals participating in the exchange. According to C. Renfrew (1975), exchange between two communities affects two subsystems: social and economic, and thus the analysis of contacts cannot be limited to exchanged goods and services. Equally importantly, such analysis must include the social aspects of exchange, *e.g.* the way it is organized.

Social contacts between groups could have taken place at various layers of social life (ethnic, linguistic, political, cultural and economic). Most material traces were left by trade and it is rather difficult to attribute them to non-material aspects of the inter-societal relationship. The first challenge encountered by the researcher investigating such relationships consists in identifying the underlying reason why such contacts were initiated at all. In archaeology it is common to explain such contacts by a conflict between the society's goals and the possibility to achieve them. This means that a given group or society was unable to satisfy its own need for certain goods or services. Therefore, trade contacts consisted in exchanging goods that were abundant for goods that were scarce or non-existent. On the other hand, the purely economic dimension can be questioned in the case of gift exchange, where the material aspect is of secondary importance. Gifts are interpreted in terms of their own symbolic meaning referring to social or ideological life (Mauss 1954).

Investigating mutual relations of various communities requires one to determine their nature. In archaeology, two basic models are used, namely the peer-polity interaction model and the core-periphery model. The former refers to relations between communities of an

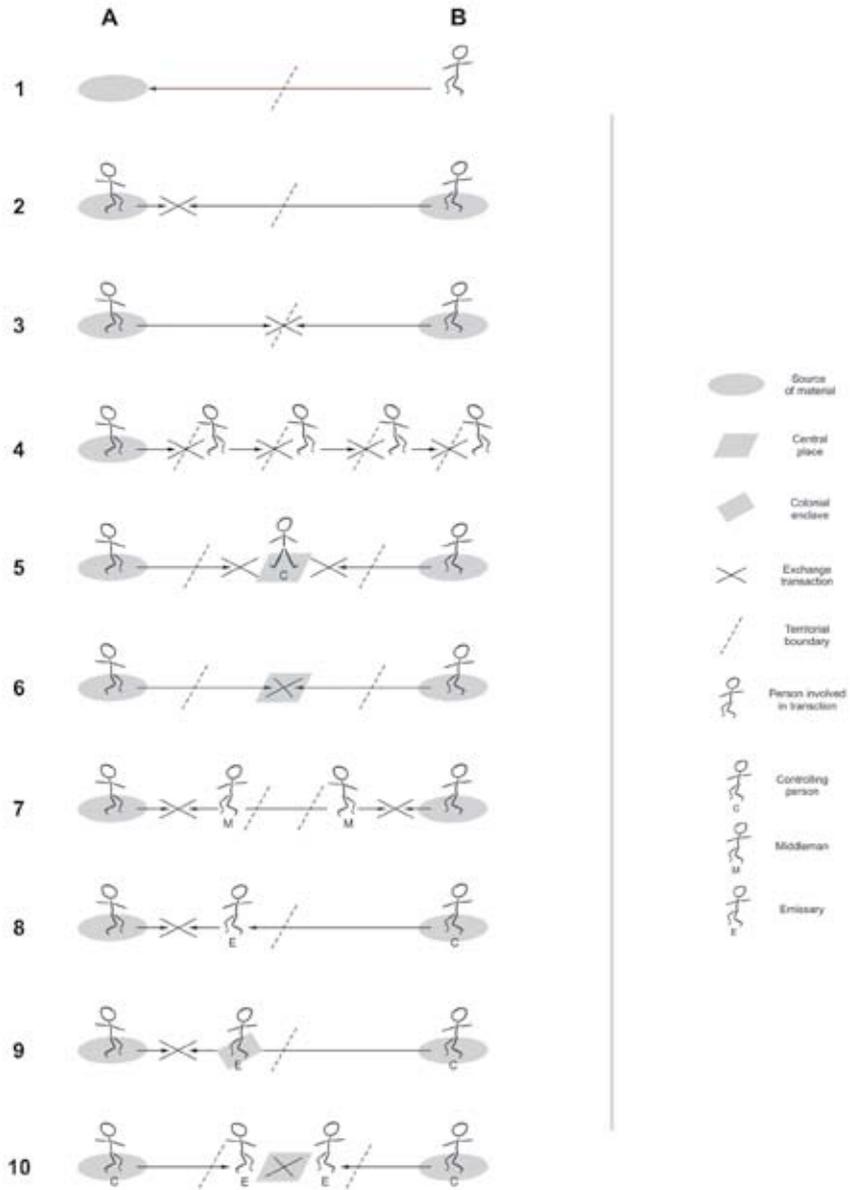


Figure 3. Exchanges modes according to C. Renfrew.

equal status (Renfrew & Bahn 2000: 368), whereas the latter is applied if each community is at a different stage of social, political and economic development (Levy & van den Brink 2002: 5-6). An analysis of social, political and economic situation in the prehistoric Delta and in the Chalcolithic and EBI Southern Levant will allow one to determine the status of both regions and the choice of the most adequate interaction model.

Determining the exchange mechanisms is another problem connected with investigating the relationship between two societies. In 1975 C. Renfrew (1975; Renfrew & Bahn 1991; 2000: 368) proposed 10 models of trade exchange (Fig. 3), differing from one another in terms of exchange organization and place, and the presence or absence of middlemen. The first model – *direct access* refers to a situation in which party A has direct access to the sources of raw materials, goods and services without relying on the assistance of party B. Another model – *reciprocity – home base* describes the exchange of goods between parties A and B on the territory of A. The third model – *reciprocity – boundary* also describes the exchange of goods between parties A and B, but taking place at the border of the two territories. The fourth model – *down-the-line trade* describes the exchange typical for models 2 and 3 between A and B, but with the participation of other territories and their representatives (K, L). The fifth model – *central place redistribution* assumes the existence of a central territory with a representative of C. Both A and B supply goods or materials to C as tribute, imposition or levy, receiving part of the other party's contribution in return. The sixth model – *central place market exchange* assumes a situation similar to the fifth model, but without the participation of C. The exchange between A and B takes place directly, in a central place. The seventh model – *freelance – middleman trading* assumes the existence of an independent middleman between A and B. The eighth model – *emissary trading* also assumes the existence of a middleman, but in this case he depends on one of the parties. In this case, party B has its own emissary who is in charge of exchanging goods with A. In the ninth model – *colonial enclave* the exchange is organized by a legitimate enclave of B in the territory of A. The last of C. Renfrew's models describes a situation where the place of the exchange between A and B is located outside the jurisdiction of both parties (*port of trade*). The above models differ from one another in terms of exchange organization, the presence or absence of middlemen and the place of exchange.

An analysis of available data on the exchange between the Nile Delta and Southern Levant in the early Predynastic period will make it possible to determine which of the above models should be employed for the purposes hereof. However, one should take note of certain limitations, resulting from concentrating on material sources only and overlooking the symbolic aspects of exchange, unavailable for archaeologists. An important element of this monograph will be the analysis of Southern Levantine imports known from Lower Egyptian culture sites and comparing them between one another, in terms of both quantity and quality (imports, hybrids of local and foreign elements, local imitations of foreign elements). Apart from a basic description of the artefacts' physical characteristics, the investigation will also include the results of material (*e.g.* petrographic) and comparative analyses taking into

account the description of similar Chalcolithic and EB I materials from Southern Levant. Another important element of the analysis will consist in discussing the distribution of Canaanite artefacts in the Delta and Egyptian artefacts in Southern Levant, as well as in proposing a possible trade route between the two regions. Last but not least, the author will present a short overview of the cultural situation in Southern Levant in the Chalcolithic and the beginnings of EB I, underlining the most important issues. The aim of the said overview is to provide a broader background for analyzing the contacts between the Delta and Southern Levant and to facilitate the comparison of both communities in the context of the exchange between them.

The assumption of one or more exchange models for the Delta and Southern Levant will also require determining the method of redistribution of imported goods among the inhabitants of the Delta. The Lower Egyptian culture is far from uniform. It consists of groups occupying each of the sites, which – apart from the characteristics shared by the entire Lower Egyptian culture – have certain endemic features, resulting from the group's adaptation to specific local conditions. Despite being part of one socio-cultural system, each such group constitutes a separate, self-contained unit. An analysis of the Lower Egyptian culture system will allow the author to determine its internal organization and the relationships between each of its individual elements. Determining those relationships will be important when trying to present the organization of the exchange of goods coming from Southern Levant in the Nile Delta, or perhaps even in the entire Nile Valley.

This monograph is an attempt at presenting the development of Delta Nile communities in the early Predynastic period. It should be treated as one of the many possible interpretations based on available sources, theoretical assumptions and research procedures. The said approach is in keeping with the interpretation model currently prevailing in the humanities, allowing one to present prehistoric reality in a different (but not any) way, using different methods (Topolski 1998: 15).