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Trade Before Empire; Empire Before the State (c. 3500–2686)

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Trade is said to follow the flag. More often than not, however—at least at first—the reverse is true.[1] This is one of two main arguments this chapter pursues with regard to Protodynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt. The other is that nations are often a product of empires, rather than simply a producer of them. As history and archaeology demonstrate, many of the world's greatest pre-modern states arose—by virtue of sudden, successful military action—out of a constellation of relatively comparable polities to unite vast swaths of territory under their rule. In some cases, these polities were already recognizably urban (such as Teotihuacan, Uruk, and Rome), while in others thriving metropolitan centers followed on the heels of empire (as with the Inka empire and Achaemenid Persia). Regardless, the salient point is that just prior to expansion, the polity that was to become an empire may have closely resembled its peers and even have been dominated by one or another among them for a period of time. Such seems to have been the trajectory of Abydos, whose political fortune lagged behind those of Hierakonpolis and Nagada—its more precocious southern neighbors—for much of early and mid-prehistory, at least so far as it is possible to ascertain archaeologically (see Figure 1.1).

Colin Renfrew and John Cherry have termed the type of competitive milieu in which similarly sized political units tend to operate "peer polity interaction."[2] The city-states of the Mayan heartland and Early Dynastic Mesopotamia are classic exemplars of this potentially generative dynamic. Two cities in such a system might ally themselves against a mutual foe one century, might attack one another's territory the next, and might exist for a time in the relationship of vassal and overlord. Typically, however, any suzerainty enjoyed by one city remained on a relatively small scale and was balanced by similar relationships negotiated among its peers. As Renfrew and Cherry note, over the course of such intense and ever-shifting interaction, the material culture of such cities tended to become ever more homogenized, heightening the impression that one differed little from the others.

The point at which a polity switches from exercising political paramountcy to wielding imperial power is related primarily to the unprecedented size of the

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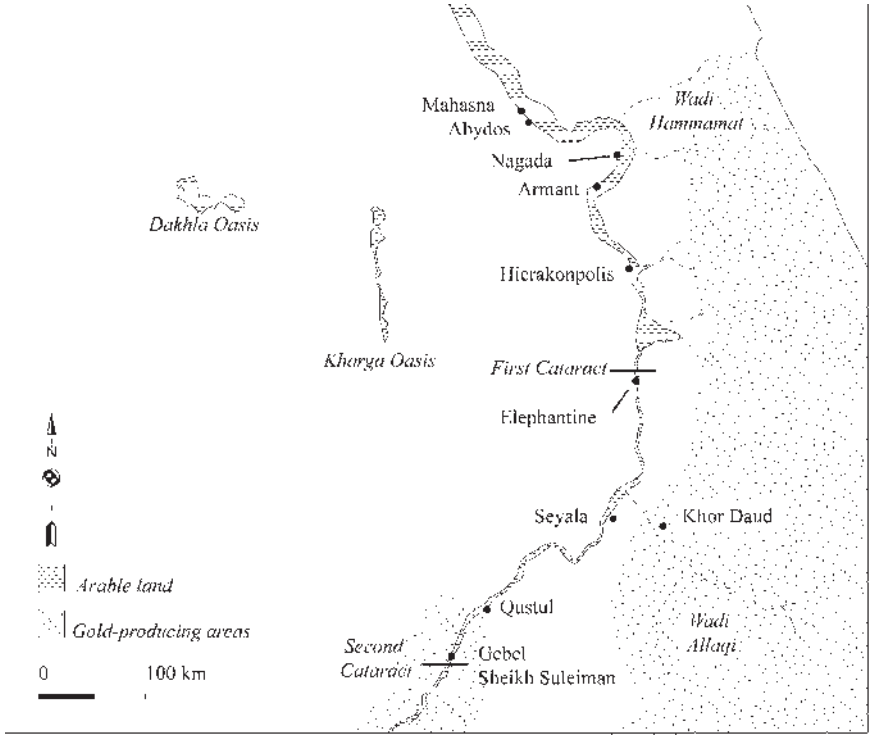


Figure 1.1 Sites from southern Egypt and Nubia mentioned in the chapter.

new dominion and to the complexity of the mechanisms necessary to govern it effectively. Definitions of empire differ widely, but one tenet that most scholars agree upon is that in order to qualify, a polity must lay claim to a vast expanse of land and great numbers of people. Further, these new subjects should lie outside the constellation of peers traditionally feuded with and include a heterogeneous assortment of cultures. Carla Sinopoli offers a pithy, yet broadly representative, definition of empires as "geographically and politically expansive polities, composed of a diversity of localized communities and ethnic groups."[3]

It is interesting, therefore, to compare this definition of an empire with Robert Carneiro's definition of a state as "an autonomous political unit, encompassing many communities within its territory and having a centralized government with the power to collect taxes, draft men for work or war, and decree and enforce laws."[4] A close look shows the two to be inextricable to some degree, for without the initial conquests typical of an empire, the consolidation of many hundreds of communities into a state is difficult to envision. By the same token, an imperial project—whether launched by a local leader, a city, or

a state—is only distinguished from a series of predatory razzias by the erection of an administration capable of doing what states do: regularly gathering resources, mustering manpower, and imposing political will.

The initial scalar leap necessary for the transformation of a relatively small polity into what was first an empire and then a consolidated (and more or less expansive) territorial state often occurred with remarkable speed.[5] While groundwork may have been laid in peaceful as well as martial interactions that occurred many years prior, the leap into unknown territory and scale often came within the reign of one highly organized and ambitious ruler, such as Sargon or Shaka. The genius of such forgers of states and empires, however, was their ability to figure out not just how to conquer but also how to consolidate and keep—how to reorganize their own political structure to cope with a massive increase in the number of communities ruled and resources requisitioned.

In the Nagada II period (c. 3500–3200),[6] Upper Egypt had been a land divided among a number of competing polities, each of which developed local industry, engaged in trade, constructed monuments, and buried its leaders in sumptuous style. The large-scale diversion of power from the courts of individual regional leaders to that of a single ruler of Upper Egypt seems to have first taken place in the Nagada IIIA period (c. 3200). This conclusion stems from the massive, symbolically potent, and extravagantly wealthy tomb U-j at Abydos; from the lack of other comparable "royal" tombs north of the First Cataract; and from the fact that the majority of known Nagada III kings (Iry-Hor, Ka, Narmer) and all of the First Dynasty kings (c. 3000–2890) were subsequently buried at Abydos. It would be foolhardy to assume, however, that the process of establishing Abydene political supremacy was easy or linear. Indeed, the fact that U-j was larger than any of the other Protodynastic tombs at Abydos—including Narmer's tomb—points to the complexity of this process.

It was Narmer, after all, whose economic and political influence is most notably attested from Upper Egypt all the way to the southern coastal plain of Canaan. While this king undoubtedly stood firmly on the shoulders of the rulers who came before him, it is Narmer whose serekhs litter the Nile Valley, the eastern Delta, and Canaan; Narmer whose victories over enemies are most coherently broadcast and whose royal iconography is most elaborately expressed; and Narmer whose achievements allowed Hor-Aha (c. 3000) to ascend to the throne of a united Upper and Lower Egypt as the first god-king of the First Dynasty. While much of our evidence concerning this Protodynastic king's purported accomplishments is gleaned from the iconography on votive gifts—sources that should not be accepted uncritically—the very fact that this king sponsored such ideologically laden pictorial statements speaks volumes about the political sophistication of his rule.

This chapter does not attempt to construct a chronological narrative of how the unification of Upper—and then Upper and Lower—Egypt progressed; such would be unabashed guesswork and would require far more space than is

available here. Rather, its aim is to bring to the fore a sampling of the many strategies employed by the Abydene kings of Nagada III and the First Dynasty to co-opt economic, political, and spiritual sources of power from the peoples they conquered and to consolidate their political grip. Many of the techniques utilized in this initial project and discussed below bear strong similarities to those that pharaohs, millennia later, were to deploy with good effect in Syria-Palestine and Nubia. The bulk of these state-forging strategies should likewise strike notes resonant to those whose investments reside in other empires.

Establish Unmitigated Access to Highly Valued Resources

Agriculture, livestock, and labor formed the basis of Egypt's economy and the building blocks of power—a power that first began to be co-opted by local rulers in the late Nagada I period at Hierakonpolis (c. 3600) and throughout Upper Egypt in Nagada II. Social prestige might be gained from gathering resources and from using these staple goods to fete others or to fund projects. The industrial breweries discovered at Hierakonpolis, capable of producing beer for hundreds of individuals at a time, represent early efforts to this end, and by the Nagada IIA period similar industrial establishments could be found at Abydos and the nearby site of Mahasna.[7]

An essential second step for rulers seeking to build and articulate power in Upper Egypt for themselves and for their earthly and divine supporters, however, seems to have been to co-opt all that inspired awe. In anthropological terms, in the Nagada II period there can be no doubt that Egypt entered into a prestige-goods economy in which items accessible only through external exchange and which lacked any practical function with regard to the physical welfare of their users became a fetishistic source of power. As Randall McGuire puts it,

> The artefacts derive their power from ideology, and their exchange and distribution maintains the ideology. Goods that are rare, that require unusual skill to produce, or that are associated with more powerful social systems provide the best candidates for valuables.[8]

Some of these marvels would be disbursed as gifts and rewards, while others (it was surely hoped) would endow the ruler, if kept by him alone, with a similar capacity to excite wonder. Such extraordinary entities, of course, did not need to be fetched from afar. At Hierakonpolis, for example, archaeologists exhumed the bones of monstrously large perch from a ceremonial precinct and the bones of a dwarf from a grave sunk into the funerary chapel of a royal tomb.[9] Admittedly, however, by far the most effective way to obtain items the likes of which had never yet been seen was to seek them out from foreign lands.

As early as the Nagada IIC period, an influx of items, images, and ideas from the greater Mesopotamian world arrived in Egypt. Their effect on the elite of Upper Egypt—a stratum of society eager to adopt new vocabularies of power into its semiotic system—was to inspire immense creativity. Although the duration of this interchange was short, ideas introduced at this time (especially regarding the technology of sealing in order to mark ownership, the utility of writing, the communicative power of heraldic imagery, and the design of niched buildings of monumental proportions) helped forge the visual insignias of high social status in the late Predynastic and Protodynastic period as well as pharaonic iconography throughout the Early Dynastic period and beyond.[10]

When this contact ceased, Upper Egyptian rulers did not have the resources to sponsor their own expeditions to Syria, but they do appear to have emulated their Mesopotamian counterparts in sending out traders in order to facilitate the importation of yet more wonders. Thus, already in the late Nagada II period caches of hundreds of Egyptian storage jars at Khor Daud (located at the mouth of the resource-rich Wadi Allaqi) betray a thriving trade between Upper Egyptian polities and contemporary peoples in northern Nubia. In such exchanges, exotica funneled up from sub-Saharan Africa and perhaps also minerals exhumed from the Wadi Allaqi were exchanged for Egyptian foodstuffs (such as jars of beer, oil, honey, cheese, and grain) and manufactured items (such as linen, metal tools, and sundry items typical of court culture).[11]

Similar ventures took place also in the foreign territories of Lower Egypt and Canaan (see Figure 1.2). Upper Egyptian material was found in greater quantities at the settlement of Maadi than at any other excavated site in Lower Egypt in the Nagada I and early Nagada II periods, suggesting a robust trade relationship. Moreover, local and imported pottery from Maadi, or settlements very much like it, was recovered from the contemporary cultic precinct at Hierakonpolis as well as from elite burials at the same site—including one belonging to a ruler's elephant![12]

Upper Egyptian traders may have been particularly attracted to Maadi due to the site's close relationships with settlements located across the Sinai in the southern coastal plains of Canaan. Archaeologists discovered that the inhabitants of the town had stockpiled goods such as shells and catfish barbs for export. Such trade commodities would likely have been supplemented with ivory and a variety of other raw and manufactured items as well as the foodstuffs originally contained in the Black Ware drop-pots commonly attested at Maadi and in the assemblages of Early Bronze IA sites such as Taur Ikhbeineh, Tel Halif Terrace, and Fara H. Egyptian-style pottery, presumably manufactured in Canaan for the use of resident traders, was also discovered in limited quantities at these sites.[13] From such enclaves, the merchants evidently loaded copper, bitumen, resins, tabular flints, and vessels (most likely originally containing wine and oil) onto donkeys for transport to Maadi. Drawing on Colin Renfrew's

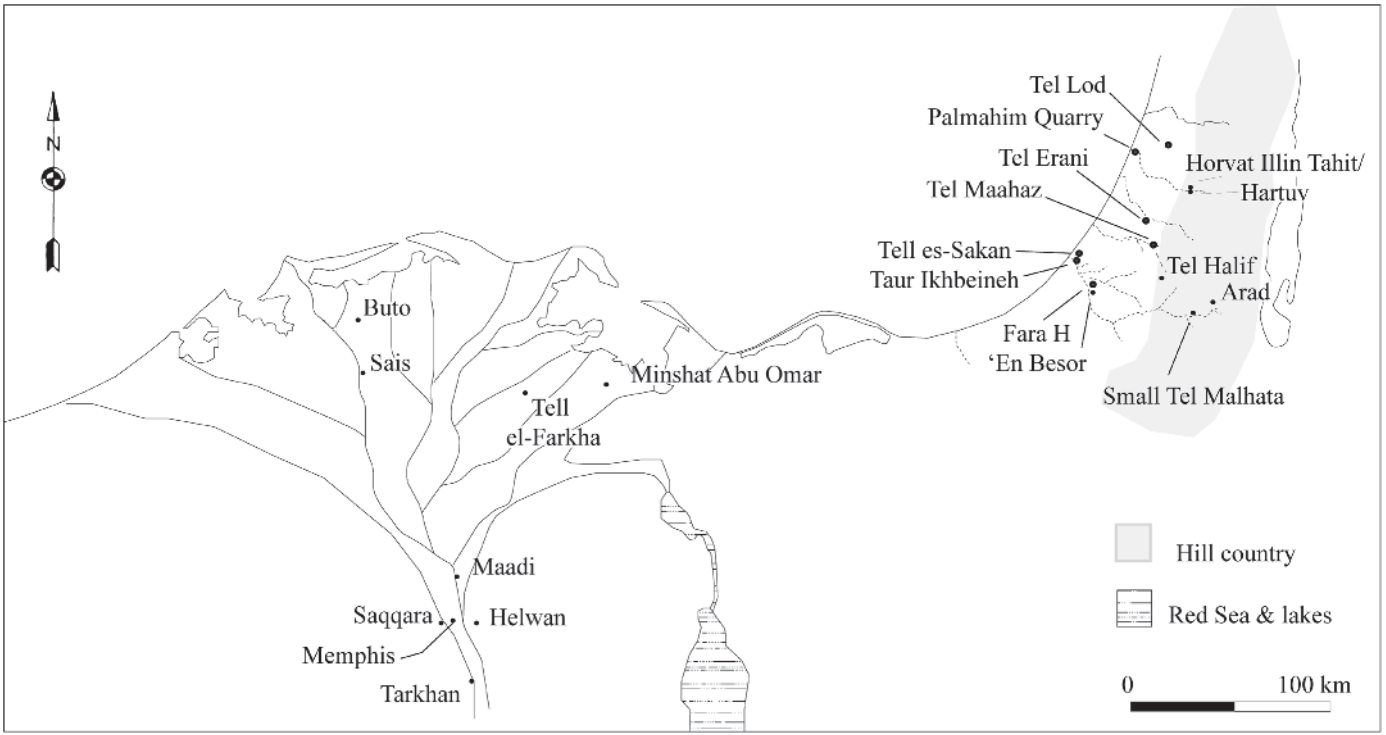


Figure 1.2 Sites from Lower Egypt and Canaan mentioned in the chapter.

typology of exchange, Tim Harrison has characterized Maadi as an entrepôt and its relations with its Canaanite partners as "freelance middleman trading."[14]

Just who initiated the early trade ventures that linked the commercial hub of Maadi with polities in Upper Egypt is unclear. One might speculate that elites from Abydos focused on fostering trade with the north, elites from Hierakonpolis on trade with the south, and elites from Nagada (ancient Nubt, meaning "gold town") on extracting gold from veins in the Wadi Hammamat. As Stephen Savage has demonstrated, however, there were more political players than only these three in the latter half of the Nagada II period, and even within specific settlements certain lineages may have specialized in obtaining access to a variety of trade goods.[15]

The manner in which the rulers of Abydos came to assert their sovereignty over their rivals in other polities is not clear. Superiority in military matters may well have played an important role. Signs of large-scale violence and militarization are difficult to discern in the archaeological record, but the numerous scenes of combat and of prisoners that ornamented the walls of the Painted Tomb at Hierakonpolis, the ivory hilts of knives, and the most elaborate of cosmetic palettes provide evidence that elite identity and martial prowess were already closely entwined in the transition between the late Nagada II and the early Nagada III periods.[16] Regardless of any practical reasons for engaging in internecine warfare (such as settling disagreements over rights to land, mineral resources, or trade routes), the ideology that victory in war brought personal glory and the reality that it also provided an occasion for plunder undoubtedly fueled the violence and encouraged the participation of all levels of society in it.

What is certain—and of paramount importance for the argument that trade often excites imperial ambition—is that after the political unification of Upper Egypt, the Abydene kings moved quickly to establish unmitigated access to the high-value resources the court desired most fervently in both Nubia and Canaan. This too is typical of early complex societies. As McGuire explains,

> Lineage heads gain power relative to their subordinates when they come to control the production or source of the valuables used in the system. The greater this control the less dependent the lineage heads are on foreign lineage heads, and the more they are able to monopolize access to valuables. This means less redistribution to dependents and an increasingly restricted circulation of valuables only to those in the elite group.[17]

Although McGuire wrote in order to elucidate the process by which the elites at Chaco Canyon assumed power, his description fits what we know of Egypt during this period as well. In Protodynastic Egypt, however, as in European colonialism, the elites mustered martial force to retain access to what had

become for them crucial resources. As in European colonialism, in Egypt the flag followed quickly on the heels of trade. The guiding policy of the new Protodynastic and early First-Dynasty rulers seems to have been to eliminate middlemen and to seize direct control of both resources and trade contacts.

Lower Nubia and the Early State

As early as the Nagada IIIA period—the time when the ruler buried in U-j and his close contemporaries flourished—the elites of Sayala in Lower Nubia may well have augmented their own power by exploiting the Wadi Allaqi, a region rich in both copper and gold. Two maces found in one exceptionally rich grave in Sayala's cemetery 137 each had handles sheathed in gold, and one was decorated with lines of animals, a motif imported to the Nile Valley from Mesopotamia. Whether these maces were diplomatic gifts from rulers at Abydos or early examples of an "international style" of luxury good is unclear. What *is* clear, however, is that local power brokers in Lower Nubia must have interacted with their northern counterparts on an equal footing.

The growing power of elites at Sayala may well have excited the envy of their counterparts at Qustul, a rival polity situated just upstream of the nearly 20-km-long outcropping of granite that disrupted the Nile and constituted its Second Cataract. Certainly, in the course of the Nagada IIIA–IIIC period, the rulers of Qustul appear to have taken the bulk of Egypto-Nubian material exchange under their stewardship and to have dictated the terms of trade. The site's most select cemetery, rich in imports from Egypt, contained several tombs that virtually all assessors deem royal. Of contemporary tombs in Egypt or Nubia, only U-j at Abydos exceeded them in size.[18]

In addition to quintessentially Nubian luxury goods and a few imports from Canaan, many of the tombs at Qustul included among their associated artifacts either Egyptian imports or objects exhibiting a similar iconographic vocabulary. The famous Qustul incense burner, discovered in the very largest of the Qustul graves (L24), provides the most interesting example of the latter category. This quintessentially Nubian object bore a carved representation of a king wearing the "white crown," which would later characterize Upper Egypt, traveling toward a niched palace façade in a high-prowed boat. The king appears in the company of the Horus falcon, a bound prisoner, and a rosette, reminiscent of the rosettes witnessed on the Narmer Palette and Macehead (see Figure 1.3a and c). The style in which this southern ruler was portrayed would not have been out of place in Upper Egypt and suggests that prior to Qustul's destruction, it and Abydos constituted each other's most prestigious peers.[19]

The amount of Egyptian pottery recovered at Qustul (at a minimum some 271 vessels) and at Khor Daud is indicative presumably of only a portion of the vast amount of Egyptian wealth expended in obtaining exotic goods from Nubia. The option to cut costs, then, by eliminating middlemen—middlemen

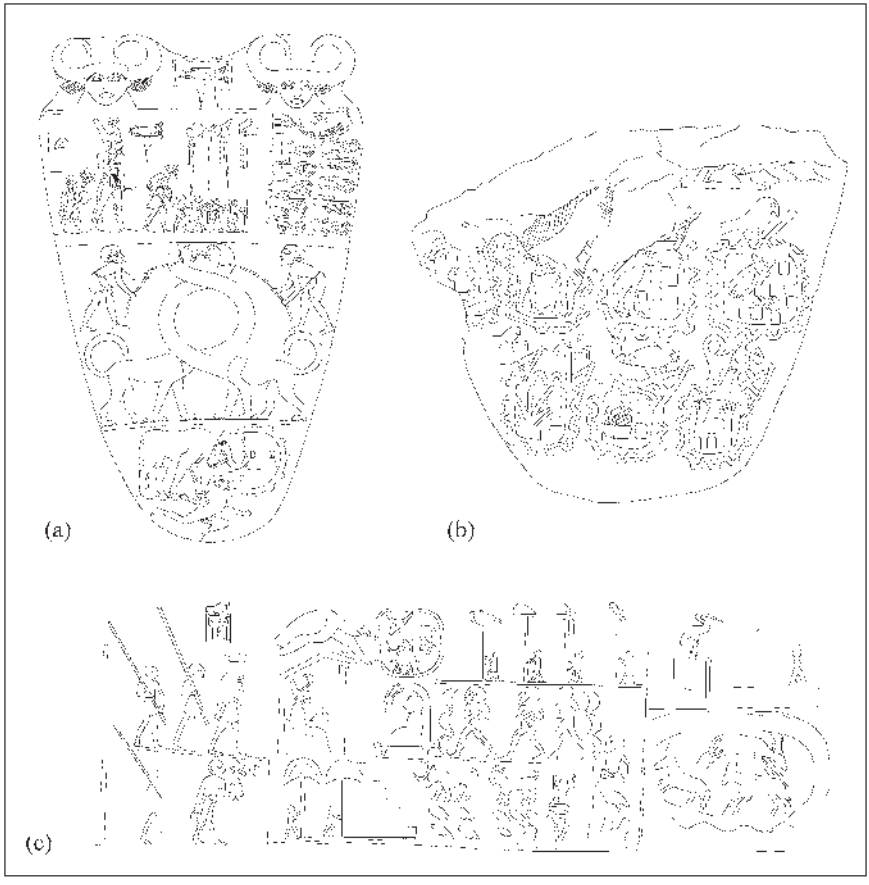


Figure 1.3 Three representations of conquest and its aftermath from the Protodynastic period. (a) The Narmer Palette (redrawn from Quibell 1898, pl. 12); (b) the Cities Palette (redrawn from Quibell 1905, 233, no. 14238); (c) the Narmer Macehead (redrawn from Millet 1990, 54, figure 1).

who held the power potentially to deny Egypt the rare and precious items its prestige-goods economy increasingly demanded, to threaten its southern borders, and ideologically to challenge the uniqueness of the role of the divine sovereign—may have been seen as increasingly attractive. Just how this program of elimination proceeded, however, is unclear and can only be surmised through clues such as the badly burned and plundered tombs at Qustul, the martial graffito just north of the Second Cataract at Gebel Sheikh Suleiman, and, most profoundly, the eerie and abrupt disappearance of robust evidence for indigenous settlement in Lower Nubia. All three of these occurrences seem to have taken place relatively early in the First Dynasty.[20]

Stuart Tyson Smith has suggested that the Egyptians practiced what Ronald Horvath has classified as Eradication Imperialism, meaning that the Egyptians preferred to rid the area of occupants rather than to attempt to politically dominate a subject people.[21] Certainly the archaeological record betrays virtually no signs of any indigenous settlements or cemeteries until some time in the late Old Kingdom. Eradication Imperialism may well be an apt characterization given the iconographic and archaeological evidence for violence. It is also important, however, to stress that the Nubians possessed agency in the matter and likely preferred, like many aggressed peoples, to withdraw beyond the imperialist reach rather than to live in subjugation.[22] Interestingly, with the exception of relatively limited mining and quarrying activity, there is little evidence that the Egyptians chose to exploit this now eminently exploitable region. Instead, the Early Dynastic and Early Old Kingdom rulers (c. 3000–2400) seem content to have left Lower Nubia as a buffer zone. Akin to the supposed tactics of the Romans in Britain, the Egyptians may well have created a wasteland and called it peace.[23]

Southern Canaan and the Early State

If Upper Egyptian elites had been obtaining Canaanite goods via freelance traders who operated out of sites like Maadi in Lower Egypt, this arrangement seems at some point to have been deemed unsatisfactory. As is well known, beginning in the Nagada IIC period, the material culture of Lower Egypt transitioned to more closely resemble that of Upper Egypt, implying that levels of interaction between the north and the south had ratcheted up significantly. Minshat Abu Omar, a site newly established in the eastern Delta in the Nagada IIC period, was built according to southern norms, and its inhabitants appear initially to have traded with the same sites as Maadi. They may, however, have acted relatively early on to establish a monopoly on this lucrative trade. Certainly it is notable that Maadi would be abruptly abandoned prior to the end of Nagada IIC, while the fortunes of Minshat Abu Omar rose such that eventually only the elites of Abydos interred more Canaanite pottery within their graves.[24]

Trade between Egypt and Canaan intensified in the Nagada IIC–D period, and imports of pottery and raw materials appeared in unprecedented quantities in the graves of Upper Egypt's wealthiest citizens.[25] Following the unification of Upper Egypt in Nagada IIIA, however, markedly elite graves and also graves containing Canaanite imports narrowed to only two sites: Abydos and (to a far lesser degree) Hierakonpolis. At this point trade emissaries were stationed at sites like Tel Erani (level C) and Hartuv, in order to contract with local vintners, who now produced, at least in part, with Egypt's market in mind.[26] The several hundred wine jars originally interred in tomb U-j—amounting to an estimated 4,500 liters—are well known, but lesser quantities of similar storage jars were

discovered in other Nagada IIIA tombs at Abydos.[27] Clearly, the power of wine to intoxicate and to impress was a factor the new court was eager to use to its advantage.

Demand for such imports evidently expanded along with the size of the state, for slightly before the reign of the Protodynastic King Ka the organization of trade shifted again, with the government moving to enhance production and profitability.[28] Along the Sinai land bridge, the number of significant scatters of Egyptian storage vessels and bread molds escalated abruptly in the Nagada IIIA or Early Bronze IB period.[29] Roughly 80% of the ceramics along the route were now Egyptian in style, and the finds of paired-falcon royal serekhs strongly suggest that the state had assumed direct responsibility for facilitating cross-Sinai trade. If so, as Eliezer Oren has pointed out, they would have anticipated by a millennium and a half or so the system of way stations that New Kingdom rulers erected when safe and efficient passage along the northern Sinai was a state priority (see Chapter 8).[30]

In Canaan as well, the change in policy had a dramatic effect on the archaeological record, leading to the establishment not only of Egyptian enclaves within Canaanite settlements (e.g. Tel Erani B, Tel Halif II, Tel Lod IV) but also to new settlements that exhibited a primarily Egyptian-style material culture (at 'En Besor III, Tel Ma'ahaz I, and Tell es-Sakan).[31] The pottery at both types of sites typically included significant quantities of imported Egyptian wavy-handled transport vessels as well as numerous Egyptian-style bowls and breadmolds fashioned in local clays. The assemblage strongly suggests a resident Egyptian population that oversaw a thriving Egypto-Canaanite commercial enterprise.[32] The percentages of Egyptian-style pottery at these sites varies between roughly 10 and 35% for the enclaves and up to 80–90% for the Egyptian-dominated settlements, yet even the more modest numbers are significant. Indeed, the Syro-Palestinian style pottery seen at Tell el-Dab'a during the Fifteenth Dynasty—when this site served as the capital of the Levantine Hyksos kingdom based in the Eastern Delta of Egypt—only hovered between 30 and 40%! Interestingly, such quantities of utilitarian Egyptian-style pottery would not again be discovered in southern Canaan until the Nineteenth Dynasty, when the area was under military occupation, as is discussed in Chapter 8.

In addition to the style and manufacturing techniques of much of the pottery, Egyptian influence on these settlements is evident in lithic technologies ('En Besor, Tel Erani, and Tel Lod), Egyptian-style architecture and masonry ('En Besor and Tel Erani), and sealing technology ('En Besor, Tel Erani, Tel Halif, and Tel Lod). Uniformly fashioned out of Canaanite clays, the mud used for sealing was either unimpressed or was impressed with designs or hieroglyphic signs typical of cylinder seals in Egypt. At the site of 'En Besor, for example, 90 such sealings were discovered—a huge amount for a site that consisted of a single building and only a dozen or so estimated inhabitants.[33]

Significantly, at all of the Egyptian sites and enclaves so far discussed, except the as yet poorly sampled Tell es-Sakan, serekhs of late Nagada III rulers were discovered etched onto Egyptian storage jars as well as their locally manufactured equivalents.

Egyptian activity in Early Bronze IB Canaan seems to have focused primarily upon two relatively large, fortified sites located along the southern coast: the "mother colony" of Tell es-Sakan, which was Egyptian-dominated and roughly 20–30 acres in size, and an enclave at the 62-acre site of Tel Erani. Tell es-Sakan, interestingly enough, was located at the juncture of Canaan's main north–south trunk route and an east–west route much favored by Bedouin that led toward mining districts to the east. These same factors accounted for the region's vital strategic importance in later times as well. Tell es-Sakan and Tel Erani were then in very close communication with a series of much smaller (1–10-acre) unfortified settlements, some of which may have served as trading posts, checkpoints, or provisioning stations. Other sites and enclaves, more functionally varied in scope, included among their populations Egyptian officials, potters, and even perhaps agriculturalists, based on the lithic evidence for Egyptian-style sickle blades.[34]

This phase of Egyptian-dominated trade is estimated to have lasted roughly a century, to have involved perhaps as many as several hundred Egyptians, and to have reached a peak of intensity in the reign of Narmer, whose serekhs have been identified on locally made and/or imported storage vessels at Tel Ma'ahaz, Tel Erani, Tel Arad, 'En Besor, Halif Terrace, as well as Small Tel Malhata, Palmahim Quarry, and Horvat Illin Tahtit.[35] Egyptian occupation of southern Canaan at this time is intensive enough that some scholars have suggested that the government actively colonized the region between the Besor Brook and the Yarkon River in the late Nagada III period.[36] Relying on martial imagery on the Narmer Palette as well as on somewhat ambiguous archaeological evidence, these scholars view Egypt's presence as established by force and maintained by military control—a textbook instance of informal imperialism.[37]

Other scholars, proponents of the "commercialization model," however, envision the relationship as having been peaceful and collaborative. Certainly the evidence seems to fit the model of a trade diaspora that Abner Cohen developed with respect to Hausa enclaves in Yoruba communities. He defined these settlements as

> interregional exchange networks composed of spatially dispersed specialized merchant groups which are culturally distinct, organizationally cohesive, and socially independent from their host communities while maintaining a high level of economic and social ties with related communities who define themselves in terms of the same general cultural identity.[38]

The arrival of foreigners with lucrative trade ties may thus have been welcomed, if profits from newly stimulated production and trade reached an unprecedented proportion of the local population. The intermingling of Egyptian-style and Canaanite ceramics likewise suggests a relationship of mutual benefit. Indeed on the basis of the distribution of Egyptian cylindrical jars and palettes in contemporary Canaanite settlements, Stan Hendrickx and Laurent Bavay have suggested that Egyptians imported oil for use in cosmetics and returned to Canaan a portion of the finished product. If so, this exchange of raw materials for manufactured goods would be paralleled in countless historical world systems.[39] In support of a model of cooperative co-existence, it has also been noted that the Egyptian-style lithic remains in southern Canaan consist largely of sickle blades, while arrowheads and other weapons are almost entirely absent.[40]

Oddly enough, within a few generations following Narmer's reign, Egyptian investment in these settlements seems mostly to have ceased. With the notable exception of 'En Besor, royal names postdating that of Hor-Aha are scarcely attested on sealings or as serekhs.[41] The rationale behind this large-scale economic withdrawal from Canaan is not understood. Like many governments that have established permanent outposts devoted to the procural (and sometimes production) of desired resources, the First Dynasty court may simply have come to the conclusion that maintaining such settlements represented an unnecessarily complicated and costly method of achieving their aims.[42] Grapes for wine, as it turned out, could be cultivated on the fringes of the Nile Delta, and rulers were quick to usurp such lands for royal domains. Likewise, even the most expensive Canaanite wine purchased for special occasions would represent a financial bargain if the cost of its production did not need to be underwritten!

From the mid-First through the Fourth Dynasties (c. 2950–2494), then, the Egyptians evidently preferred intensive contacts with far-off trading centers like Byblos and perhaps also Yam to relations with their nearest neighbors. In addition, as discussed in the following chapter, the court sponsored exploratory expeditions aimed at identifying mines, quarries, and other means of accessing wealth. By and large, however, the government's focus had shifted to a more direct harnessing of the human, animal, and agricultural resources of the Nile Valley.

Considering the near-simultaneous expulsion of the indigenous A-Group from Lower Nubia, however, it is important to note that the early First-Dynasty rulers may also have been invested in creating and maintaining depopulated buffer zones at their outer edges. Certainly it is notable that Egypt's abandonment of sites in southern Canaan coincided with what Eliezer Oren described as a "total abandonment" of Early Bronze Age sites along the Sinai land bridge.[43] While the steep drop in visibility for indigenous material culture is no doubt tied to the shift in trade patterns, documented campaigns against

Canaanite and nomadic populations in the First Dynasty may also have prompted local out-migration to regions beyond state control. Certainly, it is important to note that—as in Lower Nubia—a robust indigenous presence in the archaeological record of the North Sinai would not reappear until the Egyptian state showed signs of weakening in the late Old Kingdom (Early Bronze IV).[44]

Disrupt the Traditional Power Structures of Enemies

For the kings of Abydos, the first and most pressing task internally was to unify Upper Egypt under their rule. If we lack the scorched earth or mass graves that would unambiguously signal the political defeat of Nagada and Hierakonpolis sometime around the transition to the Nagada III period, other subtler signs betray the newly subordinate status of these polities. At Nagada, an economic downturn is evident throughout the mortuary record, and most dramatically in Cemetery T, which previously had been the burial ground of the town's rulers and their circle of intimates.[45] Although the cemetery continued in use, it no longer contained the type of opulent tombs that suggest an unmitigated access to power. The substantive shift from the South Town toward what would become the Dynastic town of Nubt may also have taken place at this period.[46] Analogously, the Painted Tomb cemetery at Hierakonpolis hosted no more painted tombs, and the center of gravity for the town as a whole shifted toward the floodplain. Although it has been suggested that the latter settlement shift was prompted by a series of low floods, it is worthwhile to note that, following the conquest of the powerful Nubian capital of Kerma in the early Eighteenth Dynasty, the older town was largely abandoned—its population having been transferred closer to the river.[47] Such mandatory evictions, as the Inca knew, acted to unsettle a vanquished population and to render it vulnerable.[48]

The loss of political autonomy at Nagada and Hierakonpolis, as well as at other sites in Upper Egypt, seems to have stripped much of the power from the traditional elites and much of the ambition from those who occupied the social strata just below. Certainly, at numerous sites in Upper Egypt the social competition that surrounded the fashioning and provisioning of tombs seems to have become much more muted, as if rank and status were no longer a matter to be decided locally.[49] What is notable in the late Nagada III and early First Dynasty, in fact, is the establishment of entirely new cemeteries or portions of cemeteries in which sizable mastaba tombs are for the first time found. The intrusive and extravagant mastaba tombs at Nagada, Armant, and Tarkhan, for instance, are representative of a burial style closely associated with the royal court, and their appearance seems to indicate that the occupants of these tombs gained their status by virtue of having been hand-picked by the Abydene kings. Whether or not these individuals bore any ties to the previous

elites, the shift in cemetery location, tomb type, and manner of provisioning abruptly and clearly signified that their closest connections were now with the court.[50]

Create Allies where Enemies had Existed Before

Defeating military rivals may have been the shortest of the many steps on the path to political unification. If the Abydene conquerors were to rule a stable realm, however, they required followers outside their own immediate circle—willing participants who were personally invested in the success of the venture. To convert enemies into allies is a delicate business and better accomplished with incentives than with threats. One of the classic strategies for new rulers eager to expand their authority, therefore, is to make at least a pretense of power-sharing. Courting the old elite and restoring back to them a portion of the power they had thought lost forever is one method for doing so. Another is elevating the fortunes of a new lineage or faction, perhaps one that had considered itself slighted under the former regime. Such freshly empowered collaborators are particularly valuable to a new government for their authority depends entirely on their patrons' success.

Something akin to this latter scenario may perhaps have taken place at Hierakonpolis. In the late Nagada II period, when Hierakonpolis was a major power in the region, its ruler was interred in a painted tomb close to the settlement. Following the site's demotion in the Nagada III period, however, burials of elites did not cease. Sumptuous sepulchres did, however, retreat 2.5 km back inside the adjacent wadi to the hallowed ground where the first rulers of Hierakonpolis had been buried in the late Nagada I and early Nagada II period. The new tombs not only consciously emulated the old but were indeed occasionally placed above or even inside these structures! Whether the new elite claimed a relationship of blood or only of ideological outlook with these earlier rulers is not known, but judging from the shift in cemeteries and perhaps also from a smashed life-size statue, this earlier line may well have been actively suppressed or neglected during much of the period that Hierakonpolis vied for paramountcy with its neighbors.[51] If a political alliance with Abydos allowed a rival faction to rise ascendant and (re)claim roots with the past, the new partnership may not have been unpalatable to at least some residents of the city.

Indeed, it appears likely that in the Nagada III period the Abydene rulers and the newly empowered elites of Hierakonpolis moved the religious center of gravity from the precinct at HK29A (which continued to function, albeit in a much more muted fashion)[52] to a newly built temple mount. Nothing remains of the structure erected there except the votive offerings that were later cached when the temple was rebuilt in the early Old Kingdom. What is fascinating,

however, is that this temple—intended to serve as the new spiritual focus of the city—was dedicated to the falcon god Horus. During the Nagada III period, while the rulers of Abydos were incorporating the falcon into their own names or titles, rival polities also drew upon falcon imagery to legitimize their own leaders. Thus, in entrusting to Hierakonpolis stewardship of the divine avatar of the rightful ruling king, the Abydene monarchs placed the city at the sacred core of the newly expanded kingdom, inextricably enfolding it into the royal project as a whole.

Indeed, the importance of Hierakonpolis's allegiance to the rulers of Abydos is showcased on the gigantic palette and macehead that Narmer dedicated to Horus of Hierakonpolis and deposited in his temple (see Figure 1.3a and c). On the macehead, Narmer sits enthroned under the protective wings of the goddess Nekhbet—another local deity of greater Hierakonpolis awarded elevated status as a divine protector of the king. Meanwhile, on the obverse of the palette, the king and Horus are depicted working together to subdue their enemies. On other Protodynastic votive objects and luxury goods, the gods of various regions—often depicted as anthropomorphized standards—fight beside the king, likely in visual acknowledgment of the crucial aid their followers had offered in battle.

Among the most tangible expressions of the king's gratitude to his celestial and terrestrial allies may have been the expensive gifts he donated to the temples of gods and to the tombs of men. At Hierakonpolis, the temple of Horus received a lion's share of prestigious royal gifts. Moreover, the precious materials deposited in the tombs of the town's leading citizens—such as the lapis lazuli, silver, gold, turquoise, obsidian, crystal, garnet, cornelian, and ivory objects discovered in tomb 11—suggest the largess of the apparently contemporary king of Abydos, owner of the far grander and more opulent tomb U-j. It is of more than passing interest, then, that "small sandstone carvings of birds, animal-shaped blanks, some with base sockets suitable for carrying on poles"[53] were also discovered within Hierakonpolis tomb 11. So here, with the remnants of this lord and his fetishes, we find the potent fusion of local religious and political authority marshaled in service to the state.

While the archaeological remains of the vast majority of early cult centers are long lost and parallels are thus difficult to come by for polities other than Hierakonpolis and Abydos, excavations in the environs of the Ptolemaic temple of Min at Coptos yielded three colossal statues of the city's patron deity that have been dated to the transition between late Nagada III and the early First Dynasty. If Bruce Williams is correct in reading Narmer's name etched into one,[54] it may be that the reward for the loyalty of Coptos to the new regime was an awe-inspiring set of cultic statues, each originally towering some 4 m tall and weighing in at roughly 2 tons. The fashioning of cult statues in Dynastic Egypt was a closely guarded royal prerogative and so important an endeavor that entire years could be named after the "birth" of a statue-god. The co-option

of such vital religious power and creativity by the Abydene kings was, of course, yet another important strategy to portray the institution of kingship as ideologically indispensable.

Before leaving the topic of how the early kings of Upper (and then Upper and Lower) Egypt gained the long-term support of local elites in conquered polities, it is worthwhile returning briefly to Nagada. This locale, which in Dynastic times was sacred to the god Seth, may well be represented by one of the two Seth animal fetishes on the Scorpion Macehead. Seth was rewarded as early as the First Dynasty in Egypt with a privileged position beside Horus as one of the "Two Lords" embodied on earth by the king. A former rival of Horus of Hierakonpolis, Seth of Nagada was transformed into his partner—his other half. Interestingly, the unease of this arranged détente is clearly revealed by the negotiations that took place in Egypt's Second Dynasty, when Seth briefly displaced Horus in the throne name of King Peribsen and then was placed alongside Horus in the name of his successor, King Khasekhemwy (lit. "The Two Powers Have Risen"). Given that Khasekhemwy claimed victory over numerous rebels, it is difficult to imagine that this struggle was not as political as it was religious.

In addition to the elevation of Seth as a patron of kingship, the town of Nagada may well have bestowed its Red Crown upon the Abydene king of Upper and Lower Egypt. The earliest-known depiction of a Red Crown, after all, ornamented a jar interred in a grave at Nagada from a period that long predated the ascendancy of Abydos.[55] Further, the town may also have provided this king with his first queen. Certainly, the palace-façade mastaba tombs of Queen Neithhotep (c. 3000) and her unknown near-contemporary discovered at Nagada suggest that the Abydene kings at the dawn of the First Dynasty saw fit to broker a diplomatic marriage with Nagada's post-conquest elite, thereby strengthening the ties of this group to the king. Significantly, this new elite apparently did not claim descent from the old guard elite whose burial ground had been Cemetery T. The close identification of both the Red Crown and the goddess Neith—who often wore it in religious iconography—with Lower Egypt and the Deltaic town of Sais, may have been a result of the Egyptian predilection for "symbolic geography"[56] whereby a dualism perhaps formerly relevant only to Upper Egypt (i.e. the "Lower" Kingdom of Nagada vs. the "Upper" Kingdom of Hierakonpolis) was transposed onto an entirely new political reality once Upper Egypt had united and imposed its rule on the Delta.

It is unknown whether the remaining First-Dynasty queens bearing theophoric names incorporating the goddess (Merneith and Herneith, for example) came from Nagada or from Lower Egypt (perhaps even from the lineage of the ruler Ny-Neith, who is as yet attested solely on a wine jar from Helwan[57]). A Lower Egyptian origin is not improbable, however, as the first kings of the First Dynasty cultivated the loyalty of former Lower Egyptian power centers in much the same way that their predecessors had courted the

elites of Hierakonpolis and Nagada. Thus, at the start of the First Dynasty, the cobra goddess of Buto gained a seat beside the vulture goddess of greater Hierakonpolis to become the second of the divine "Two Ladies" that protected and aided the king. Likewise, the Narmer Macehead seems to suggest that earlier—perhaps as a reward for its alliance with the Abydene kings—triumphal ceremonies took place at Buto, and that its shrine quite likely reaped a percentage of the booty Narmer accrued in his battles for control over the entirety of the Nile Valley (see Figure 1.3c).

Just what the relationship between Buto and the Upper Egyptian powers had been prior to this point would be fascinating to ascertain. Recent excavations have revealed the town's precocious engagements with Syrian traders, and archaeological evidence suggests that lucrative maritime connections may have prompted southern elites as early as the mid-Nagada II period to establish a commercial enclave at Buto.[58] Certainly by the time that the ruler of Upper Egypt was laid to rest in tomb U-j, the southern court and the same heron-topped shrine of Buto that Narmer would later honor for its collaboration were in close contact. Ivory tags from the tomb imply that the heron-shrine (or the polity it represented[59]) sent the deceased ruler parting gifts to take into the afterlife—though it is unclear whether these gifts imply a relationship of dominance and submission, of an enclave to its sponsor, or of diplomatic courtesy.

By the reign of Narmer, Buto had clearly become a key member of the Abydene alliance and found itself well remunerated. While the site's traditional heron-shrine seems to have received booty from Narmer, Thomas von der Way suggests that Narmer or Hor-Aha sponsored the construction at the site of an additional place of worship. Based on images of bulls found within, it may have been that this second cultic locus was dedicated to the king-as-bull, just as the Horus temple at Hierakonpolis honored the king-as-falcon.[60] Regardless, recorded visits of early First-Dynasty rulers to pay their respects to the gods of Buto and to Neith of Sais demonstrate that even in the aftermath of conquest Egypt's earliest kings viewed cultic alliances with vital political players as a keystone of their internal policy.[61]

Crush Resistance

Narmer's votive macehead, which touts his apparent largess toward his divine (and accordingly also earthly) collaborators in Buto, carries an attendant understanding: those who do not *receive* booty are in danger of becoming booty (see Figure 1.3c). At the bottom of the scene, next to the livestock being donated to the temple, is a depiction of a pinioned individual with the numeric notation 120,000 written out below. This number, like the even more exuberant totals for the cows and smaller livestock, must be viewed as an exaggeration

or perhaps as an assertion that all his erstwhile enemies now constituted chattel. Whether these conquered foes were Libyans, Lower Egyptians, Eastern Bedouin, or denizens of Canaan's southern coastal plain is uncertain and perhaps immaterial. By the reign of Narmer's successor, Hor-Aha, the Abydene kingdom had likely imposed its authority as far north as modern Tel Aviv and as far south as the Second Cataract in Nubia.

Polities do not typically cede their sovereignty lightly, even if they share a superficially similar material culture with their would-be overlords. As discussed above, the rulers of Abydos no doubt offered potential allies (and subjects) enticements or signing bonuses in order to economize on violence. Willing partners in the imperial venture would be acknowledged in official iconography and ideology as well as by gifts of booty and awe-inspiring divine images and accoutrements. Likewise by virtue of diplomatic marriages, elites from the most powerful polities might mingle their bloodline with that of the royal house. In other cases, however, when such carrots were refused (or withheld), submission could only be accomplished through violent means. Indeed, when opponents possessed walls to retreat behind or enjoyed the mobility to escape to regions beyond the control of the invaders, violence was almost inevitable. Certainly this seems to be the story told by much of the early imagery.[62]

It is an imperial truism that the more trouble a polity has caused a conqueror, the harsher the retribution afterwards. The wholesale elimination of particularly determined foes is in many ways a wise (if not a merciful) move, for it accomplishes many goals at once. Sieges, if difficult, are potentially demoralizing and debilitating for an army. The eminent Chinese strategist who penned *The Art of War* in the fifth century BCE advises,

> When you engage in actual fighting, if victory is long in coming, then men's weapons will grow dull and their ardor will be damped. If you lay siege to a town, you will exhaust your strength. Again, if the campaign is protracted, the resources of the State will not be equal to the strain.[63]

Machiavelli warned likewise: "worldly things are so variable that it is next to impossible for one to stand with his armies idle in a siege for a year."[64] At various points in Egypt's history, its armies did lay siege to cities, but this was generally undertaken only when deemed absolutely necessary, such as at the end of the Second Intermediate period (when the enemies were Hyksos) or else when the allied city-states of Canaan held out at Megiddo under the encouragement of the King of Kadesh, as will be discussed in Chapter 5. The walled city depicted on Narmer's Palette was no doubt also worth the expenditure of extraordinary effort, given that its defeat graced a gift fit for a god (see Figure 1.3a).

Following the successful conquest of a walled town, there are a number of particularly effective methods of dramatically reducing the chances of

backsliding and future sedition. The first is razing the city or fortress walls, a tactic Machiavelli and Philippe Maigret both found had much to recommend it.[65] The concerted destruction of city walls by the king's animal avatars is depicted in the Cities Palette (see Figure 1.3b). Although the images could simply depict the moment of breaching walls as the necessary prelude to victory, the notable lack of city walls in Dynastic Egypt suggests that—with the exception of state bastions of security (such as the newly erected southern border fortress of Elephantine and the "White Walls" of Memphis)—the new administration forbade their (re)construction. Analogously, when Egypt was to assume control of Canaan in the Late Bronze Age, the formidable defenses of most Middle Bronze Age polities were destroyed and the vast majority of cities remained unwalled until Egypt ceded control of the region in the early Iron Age.[66]

Because of the frustration that sieges entail, their aftermaths are famously bloody. In innumerable historical accounts, once an army gained entrance to a particularly recalcitrant city, wholesale slaughter ensued. After the victory depicted on the Narmer Palette, executions of prisoners may well have served psychologically to sate the army's frustration, yet the killing itself appears to have been methodical and controlled. Prior to their deaths, males had been tied up, with their arms pinioned behind their backs, and lined in a row. Following the quick stroke of decapitation, each man's head had been tucked between his legs. Surmounting one horror with another, the prisoners were apparently also castrated, and, in all but one case, each man's genitals were placed above his decapitated head—firmly denying the dead any chance of resurrection or regeneration.[67] Once so arranged, the palette implies that the corpses were viewed by the king, his court, and no doubt also by the army, the city's survivors, and numerous individuals from the surrounding countryside. News of the new regime's brutal treatment of enemies no doubt circulated widely and served its purpose as a cautionary tale, all the more memorable for its horror.

Assume Direct and Indirect Control over Large Quantities of Land and Labor

The fate of the women, children, and any remaining men of the defeated city is not publicized on Narmer's Palette, but given the scene depicted on his macehead (see Figure 1.3c), many prisoners may have been donated to regime-friendly temples, as they were to be in later times, to serve as a dependent workforce. Others, it is quite likely, were resettled in domains and royal estates of the type that were set up throughout the country—but particularly in the Delta—in Early Dynastic times. Such settlements, established by and for the state, moved people into areas where their labor could be harnessed for

productive purposes, such as farming uncultivated land, tending the many animals accrued by the state, engaging in massive building or agricultural reclamation works, or even simply (re)populating vulnerable frontier zones. Such efforts at internal colonization, undertaken at the dawn of the pharaonic state, molded it for millennia to come.[68]

Massive resettlement programs are typical of many imperial regimes, particularly in the aftermath of military activity. The Assyrian king Assur-dan boasted that he

> …brought back the exhausted [people] of Assyria [who] had abandoned [their cities (and) houses in the face of] want, hunger, (and) famine (and) [had gone up] to other lands. [I settled] them in cities (and) houses [which were suitable] (and) they dwelt in peace. I constructed [palaces in] the (various) districts of my land … (and thereby) [piled up] more grain than ever before.[69]

Resettlement programs have the virtue of accomplishing a variety of goals simultaneously. Resistant populations may be rendered dependent on the state if they are relocated far from their extended families and provided with previously uncultivated land that would take a few years to become profitable. During this time the population would be entirely dependent on the state for sustenance and supplies. The Inca recognized the benefits of this tactic and used it to great effect, relocating several million people in less than a century. The case of the Inca is remarkable only for its scale, however, for forcible relocation is a staple strategy of states and empires worldwide.[70]

So far as can be ascertained, Early Dynastic *ḥwt*-estates were large state-owned tracts of land that had been provided with a dependent population and livestock in order to provide revenue for the pharaoh and his administration. While some of the profits may well have been funneled back to the court in the newly founded capital at Memphis, much of the produce appears to have been stored locally and to have funded the travel expenses of court functionaries as well as numerous government initiatives such as alabaster quarrying.[71] The survival of this system throughout the entire Old Kingdom and the fact that Thutmose III emulated important aspects of it when he reorganized the administration of his northern empire—as will be discussed in Chapter 6—is evidence of its success.

Another category of state-owned land was the royal "domain," which was devoted to supplying the funerary equipment and perpetual cult needs of a particular pharaoh. Perhaps already evidenced in the provisioning of tomb U-j, royal domains survived throughout the Old Kingdom, though their functions seem increasingly to have been co-opted by those of "new towns" and "pyramid towns" as the era wore on.[72] Like *ḥwt*-estates, these purpose-built settlements ensured that potential laborers for state projects were centralized, that land

was brought into cultivation, and that a great quantity of produce was funneled from the peripheries into the coffers of the court. These eternal domains of the dead may also have been partially intended to provide collateral relatives of deceased pharaohs with a perpetual source of income so that their upkeep did not become a burden to the current ruler. Certainly, many of the officials that supervised such settlements were indeed descendants of the royal founder.[73] Situated on a different continent, thousands of years later, the Inca would also apportion royal mortuary estates to relatives of deceased rulers so as to provision and placate a noble class that swelled with each successive reign.

The Gebelein archive of papyri, which pertain to two related Upper Egyptian funerary settlements established in the Fourth Dynasty, is of particular importance for understanding this type of funerary domain. It contains corvée labor lists for the construction of a temple of King Snefru (c. 2613–2589), ration lists for grain and cloth, and a census which demonstrates that, while there were some officials and craft specialists resident within the settlement, the bulk of the population was made up of agricultural laborers, many of whom were classified as "servants" or "slaves" of the king (*ḫm-nswt*).[74] Significantly, the hieroglyphs designating both estates and domains depicted walled and occasionally fortified structures, while their administration—as well as that of "royal colonists"—was occasionally paired with the administration of watchtowers.[75] Flight from forced agricultural labor occurred throughout pharaonic history, as records from the Middle Kingdom and the Roman period attest.[76] Such evasion was no doubt especially acute, however, at a time when forced labor had not yet been naturalized by innumerable centuries of state imposition.

Erect an Infrastructure so that Resources may be Cultivated and Collected in an Orderly and Efficient Manner

Establishing direct ownership over land and labor in a conquered region is an effective strategy for securing a stable, steady stream of income to the imperial government. Regardless of how lucrative this method of resource extraction might be, however, empires and states typically aim also to impose taxes on the greater population as a whole. Broad-based taxation in goods and labor obviously vastly increases crown revenue, but it also serves the more insidious purpose of social engineering, such that conquered people become subjects of the state and excess income, which might have fueled personal ambitions, is siphoned off into the royal treasury.[77]

In order to requisition its share of surplus, a state relies upon intelligence, intimidation, and ideology. Conquering governments must quickly understand just who and what in their new realms can and/or should be taxed.

Likewise, unless they are comfortable encountering near-constant resistance, they must develop an ideology that legitimizes their extraction. One of the first moves typical of imperial governments is establishing a census to survey and document human and material resources in their realm.[78] Intimidation and ideology are, in effect, the stick and the carrot of resource extraction. Subjects must be made aware of the consequences of tax evasion, but they should ideally be convinced that in surrendering the profits of their labors, they derive benefit.

Although the evidence is frustratingly sparse, it seems that already in the Nagada III period, the Abydene kings had instituted a regular "royal progress" to address all three concerns, which is a tactic common to old and new world empires alike.[79] Royal annals and early year names demonstrate that every other year an event called the "Following of Horus" took place. Judging from its determinative, the travel occurred by boat, and the reference to Horus as well as the prominence of this event in the records strongly suggest the personal participation of the king. When attested in the Second Dynasty (c. 2890–2686) this progress could take place in conjunction with a "count"—sometimes specified as assessing fields or gold. The combination of these two events has convinced many scholars that the progress had always served in part as a census and/or resource assessment. As the government became naturalized, however, more of a state than an empire, the personal participation of the pharaoh appears no longer to have been deemed necessary, and the system was replaced at least in part by a biennial cattle count.[80] From that time on, highly ritualized royal journeys throughout the length of the country seem to have been undertaken primarily upon a ruler's accession to the throne.

Archaeological and textual information combine to form the impression that Egypt was highly centralized in its first four dynasties, such that power, high-density population, wealth, and awe-inspiring monumentality were all tightly localized at the new capital at Memphis, despite the southern origin of the kings. As in later times, certain court ceremonies periodically drew all the nation's elites (the most important of men and gods alike) to the center. Such ceremonies, which generally involved the reciprocal giving of gifts, enfolded local elites in a personal relationship with the king and situated their tribute within an ideologically charged ritual setting. The bulk of the nation's population, however, would never make this journey or form such bonds. Thus, in a time before the mass distribution of imperial propaganda, the best way to create an investment in the power of the ruler among the widely dispersed population of the countryside was to bring him to them in what may have been, perhaps, an ancient version of shock and awe.

One feature of territorial empires, such as those forged by the Inca and the Egyptians, was that, by and large, artistic and technological production was highly localized in the imperial center and its most vital outposts. The rest of

the country existed in much the same state as it always had.[81] To introduce the ornate, exotic, and richly dazzling pomp of the court into the provinces, then, was to create a study in contrasts. In First-Dynasty Egypt, where the government was especially invested in promoting the bold fiction that the pharaoh was a god on earth, the smoke and mirrors intended to create the atmosphere of otherworldly power must have been particularly intense.[82]

So the progress was a chance to exhibit the divine personage of the ruler before his people, and it was also a chance for the king and court to assess for themselves the wealth and loyalty of the provinces. Typically, on such journeys the king received gifts and thus augmented his treasury with whatever prestige goods could be mustered locally, but the progress also occasionally served an ulterior motive of simultaneously assessing and consuming local surplus. Receiving the king was a great honor, but it typically incurred fantastic expense for the host, as feasts fit for a king (and his elaborate retinue) needed to be assembled and prepared and ceremonial architecture fit to receive a king constructed. Thus, such visits were best spaced at least a couple of years apart, as was the Following of Horus, to give the provinces time to recover from the expenditure of the last royal visit and to accumulate adequate supplies for the next.[83]

The exploitative nature of such visits was recognized by European colonial officials in Africa, who—perhaps jealous of the profits being consumed by the indigenous kings—frowned on such royal progresses. British authorities in Uganda, for example, held suspicions

> …that the Mukama used them as a means of economizing on his palace expenses. They were also growing increasingly unpopular with the people, who were required to contribute labor and foodstuffs to support them, and saw little or no return for their efforts. But they were important traditionally, both in enabling the Mukama to keep an eye on the activities of his chiefs of all ranks in their areas, and also in keeping him in touch with trends in public opinion throughout the country.[84]

If the full-blown ceremonial that accompanied the Following of Horus eventually came to be seen by Egypt's population more as a burden than an honor, this may account for the fact that the custom is poorly attested following the First Dynasty. Indeed it is possible that the rulers of the Second Dynasty largely abandoned the custom of participating in the biennial progress—along with the even more egregious custom of retainer sacrifice—as part of a set of reforms intended to distinguish this dynasty from its predecessor. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, Thutmose III's annual armed visitation to Syria-Palestine in the New Kingdom bore many similarities to a royal progress, but it too would be abandoned in a relatively short time, presumably due to being deemed unnecessary, exploitative, and/or ineffective.

Conclusion

The two arguments presented here find cross-cultural parallels elsewhere. The notion that the flag follows trade is not at odds with the more famous reverse statement that trade follows the flag. It simply places emphasis not on the role of the colonies in trade but on the role of trade in inciting an acquisitive desire on the part of one polity to control the resources of another directly. Thus, the very prosperity that the Nubian rulers enjoyed as a result of trade with Upper Egyptian aggrandizers is what eventually brought Egypt's armies upon them. Likewise, trade between Upper and Lower Egypt resulted in an increasing drive on the part of the former to control not only Lower Egypt, but also, eventually, that region's trading partners in southern Canaan. Those polities that traded with Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries found similarly that military men followed quickly upon the heels of merchants. Indeed, innumerable examples of much the same phenomenon could be culled from ancient times up until the present day.

Regarding the second key argument of this chapter—that states often *follow* empire rather than precede it—Thomas Barfield has written,

> It could be argued that these definitions could be equally applied to large states, not just empires. This should not be surprising because from an archaeological perspective it appears that empires were the templates for large states, and not the reverse. Historically, empires were the crucibles in which the possibility of large states was realized. Indeed, it is difficult to find examples of large states in areas that were not first united by an empire.[85]

For most of its history, pharaonic Egypt stretched—at bare minimum—all along the Nile's floodplain from the First Cataract to the Mediterranean Sea. Yet at the dawn of the state there was nothing traditional about these borders, and neither was there any precedent for the rule of a single god-king over a nation. Local peoples and polities, it seemed, required persuasion before this particular ideological "truth" would be accepted as self-evident. As William J. Adams rather cynically summed up their project, Egypt's pharaohs, for the first several centuries they held power, "were chiefly engaged in consolidating the realm and subjugating their own people."[86]

The late Nagada III and Early Dynastic rulers employed many strategies besides those so far discussed to augment their power and incorporate their newly conquered territory into a functioning state. The Abydene kings, for example, moved into the newly conquered region—perhaps as early as the reign of Narmer's predecessor Ka—established a lavish and sacred capital, and administered their new country from its most strategic point.[87] Located at the juncture between Upper and Lower Egypt, Memphis remains even today

at the political heart of the country, absorbed into the sprawling megalopolis of Cairo. Moreover, as the thousands of tombs at Helwan attest, the Abydene court created and cultivated an efficient team of bureaucrats and nobles to share in their power and to aid in resource extraction. Whether the government as yet acted to ensure the allegiance of its most important officials by raising their children at court is uncertain, but this practice would be in place by the Fourth Dynasty.[88] Such youths—whose futures would either be glorious or cut quite short, depending on the behavior of their fathers—would be joined in the New Kingdom by the sons of Nubian and Syro-Palestinian vassals. This topic, however, is one that must await Chapter 7.

Thus, in addition to ensuring that the threat of force was always implicit and to moving their court so as to occupy the geographic lynchpin of their new realm, the first rulers proceeded to force their entry into pre-existing natural and cosmological systems by performing agricultural rites, founding and visiting temples, creating statues of gods, marshaling the most important gods in their retinue (on standards), and even by promoting themselves to the ranks of the divine. The fact that this ideology endured for well over three millennia testifies to the success of these early efforts in forging a nation. As the generations cycled and new governments attempted to extend their authority on various frontiers, some of these early strategies would be resuscitated and others amended. Still others were to be invented as circumstance demanded. Exploring these heavily creased imperial blueprints—rubbed raw with revisions and smudged by annotations—is, of course, the central project of the chapters that follow.

Notes

1 Fullerton 1913, 206.
2 Renfrew and Cherry 1986.
3 Sinopoli 1994, 159.
4 Carneiro 1970, 733.
5 Flannery 1999, 5–18.
6 For consistency's sake, all dates given are those provided in Shaw 2003. For a revised dating, see Stevenson 2016.
7 Mączyńska 2014, 199. In this technology, Lower Egypt was not far behind, as evidenced by a brewery dating to Nagada IIB at Tell el-Farkha (Adamski and Rosińska-Balik 2014, 23).
8 McGuire 1989, 50.
9 Linseele and Van Neer 2003, 7; Pieri 2011, 7–8.
10 Stevenson 2013.
11 Török 2009, 36–8; Roy 2014.
12 Adams and Friedman 1992, 321; Adams 1996, 5; Friedman 2003, 10; Mączyńska 2014, 194.

13 The nature of Egypto-Canaanite trade at Buto and Maadi in the Chalcolithic period is poorly understood (Mączyńska 2014, 184–8). For an overview of Early Bronze IA trade, see Harrison 1993.
14 Harrison 1993, 89.
15 Savage 1997.
16 Bestock 2017, 24–77.
17 McGuire 1989, 50.
18 O'Connor 1993, 21.
19 Williams 1986, 138–45.
20 Török 2009, 49–51.
21 Horvath 1972, 47; Smith 1991, 83.
22 For examples of societies that chose to withdraw from their homeland rather than to suffer oppression, see Sowell 1998, 44, 271, 299.
23 Tacitus, *Agricola*, chapter 30.
24 Anđelković 1995, 63; Hartung 2002, 446; Mączyńska 2014, 188–90.
25 Hendrickx and Bavay 2002, 72.
26 Braun and van den Brink 1998; Hendrickx and Bavay 2002, 66–7, 73–4.
27 Anđelković 1995, 57, 60; Hendrickx and Bavay 2002, 67.
28 Hartung 2002, 447–8; Braun 2014, 37.
29 Oren 1989, 393, 400–1; Miroschedji 2002, 43.
30 Oren 1989, 393, 402–4.
31 Braun 2014.
32 Porat 1992, 433–5.
33 Brandl 1992; Braun 2003.
34 Gophna 1987, 16–18; Schulman 1992, 410–11; Beit-Arieh and Gophna 1999, 197–8, 206.
35 Ben-Tor 1991, 8; Amiran and van den Brink 2001, 47; Miroschedji 2002, 44.
36 Braun 2014.
37 Doyle 1986, 143; Schulman 1992, 409.
38 Abner Cohen quoted in Stein 2002, 30.
39 Levy et al. 1997, 6; Hendrickx and Bavay 2002, 74.
40 Ben-Tor 1991, 5–6.
41 Schulman 1992, 410.
42 Stein 2005b, 152.
43 Oren 1989, 400, 403–4.
44 Yekutieli 2002.
45 Bard 1989, 240–2, 245.
46 Wilkinson 1999, 336–7.
47 Bonnet 1991, 114; Wilkinson 1996, 87–8.
48 D'Altroy 2003, 248–9.
49 For a discussion of this dynamic in Egypt and cross-culturally, see Morris 2006a.
50 Wilkinson 1996, 73, 86.
51 Adams 1996; Friedman 2005, 11–12.

52 Friedman 2009, 98.
53 Adams 1996, 13.
54 Williams 1988, 36–7.
55 Wainwright 1923.
56 Kemp 1989, 41.
57 Köhler 2004, 310.
58 von der Way 1992, 3–4, 9.
59 Wilkinson 1999, 317–19.
60 von der Way 1992, 7.
61 Wilkinson 1996, 8.
62 For a comprehensive survey of violent imagery from the period of state formation, see Bestock 2017, 40–77.
63 Sun Tzu, *Art of War*, chapter II, 2–3.
64 Machiavelli *Prince*, ch. X, 44.
65 Machiavelli *Prince*, ch. XX, 83, 86–7; Maigret 1747, 231–2.
66 Gonen 1992a, 218.
67 Davies and Friedman 2002, 244–6.
68 Wengrow 2006, 142–6; Scott 2017, 150–82.
69 Kuhrt 1995, 48.
70 D'Altroy 2003, 20; Scott 2017, 150–5.
71 Wilkinson 1999, 118, 123–4; Moreno García 1999, 233–8; Moreno García 2007, 317–18, 325.
72 Dreyer 1992, 296–7; Gillam 1995, 226; Wilkinson 1999, 118–22.
73 Breasted 1906a, 88–90; Troy 2003, 13–14; Muhs 2016, 16–17.
74 Troy 2003, 11; Posener-Kriéger 2004; Moreno García 2007, 320.
75 Strudwick 2005, 423; Moreno García 2007, 320.
76 Wilkinson 1999, 119–20; Williams 1999, 444–5, n. 35; Given 2004, 103–4; Moreno García 2007, 317.
77 See the discussion in Cromer 1910, 57.
78 Given 2004, 30, 37–40.
79 Hendrickx et al. 2012.
80 Wilkinson 1999, 113–14, 220–1; Muhs 2016, 15–16.
81 Trigger 1993, 10–11.
82 See Morris 2013.
83 For descriptions of such elaborate royal progresses, see Beattie 1971, 138–9; Wiesehöfer 2001, 40–1; Given 2004, 94.
84 Beattie 1971, 139.
85 Barfield 2001, 33. See Diamond 1974, 1, who asserted that the rise of state-based societies began with "conquest abroad and repression at home."
86 Adams 1984, 37.
87 Wilkinson 1996, 8.
88 Breasted 1906a, 117.