

CHAPTER 3: FIGURINES IN CONTEXT

OUTLINE OF CONTEXT

For the purposes of this study, I use the word "context" in its broadest sense, that is to refer to the situation in which the figurines exist. This situation is three-fold: 1. the environmental context; 2. the cultural context; 3. the material or archaeological context.

The environmental context covers the general geography and climate of the late prehistoric and Predynastic periods along the region of the Egyptian Upper Nile, which we refer to as Upper Egypt. Bound on the north by Asyût, it stretches to the south just past Edfu (see Map 1), although the existence of a few more remote sites can extend it as far south as Elephantine. During Predynastic times, these boundaries defined Upper Egypt; during Dynastic times, Upper Egypt extended its borders as far south as Nubia. Rainfall and the behaviour of the Nile determined the viability and spread of settled life in Upper Egypt, and they varied over the few thousand years prior to Unification, c3100 BCE.

The cultural context in which figurines are situated also changed over time. First, some of the prehistoric Nile tribal peoples, with an influx of foreign pastoral and agricultural peoples, settled to become the egalitarian agricultural Badarian culture (Hoffman 1979: 78-102; 1989: 50). These settled communities gradually developed rank and wealth, and under the influence of trade and outside contact, evolved a complex mortuary culture with specialised trade and craft industries to service it (Hoffman 1989: 50). These changes led to the rise of a highly stratified society, which came under the authority of centralised rule, first with the probable development of independent states and then the unification of those states. Figurine use changed over this period of around 1000 years or more, beginning with the few samples from Badarian graves to the Early Dynastic ivory votive offerings at the temple of Hierakonpolis (Baumgartel 1948: 544-50).

The material context, or archaeological context, refers specifically to the findspots of the figurines and to any accompanying artefacts. As Predynastic culture evolved, so did grave culture. Grave goods came into and went out of style, and the size, shape, and structural materials of graves changed, as did cemetery layout. Distinctions between wealthy and poor graves become more obvious over time and are more pronounced in certain areas (Bard 1994; Castillos 1982a,b; S. Smith 1984). Hints at meaning can be gleaned from the particular grave, the particular cemetery, and surrounding artefacts which form the material environment in which any given figurine is situated. This kind of analysis can be tedious and technical, and perhaps for these reasons, most interpretations neglect specifics about the archaeological context beyond the obvious observation that the figurines, with two exceptions, come from graves.

By examining the figurines within broad and specific contexts, certain interpretations emerge as more plausible, more relevant to the pre-literate society under discussion. Other theories which do not consider context, in the general environmental, cultural, and the more specific archaeological senses, may be revealed to be a projection of general theories about a Mother Goddess or matriarchal societies and not a theory relevant to Egyptian Predynastic society, specifically the mortuary culture(s) of that society.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Prehistoric Forager, Pastoral, and Agricultural Culture in Egypt

Foragers

A large part of the origin of Egyptian culture is rooted in the lives of the prehistoric Nile foragers and hunters who depended on the seasonal inundation of the Nile to replenish the wild grains and tuberous plants they harvested. Unlike the Dynastic and Predynastic Egyptians, they also depended on the northern reach of the annual tropical monsoon, which, in prehistoric times (up to c5000 BCE), produced the natural pasture for the wild animals that formed an important portion of the prehistoric diet.

These early Nile dwellers, prior to domestication of plants and animals, were largely at the mercy of the vagaries of the Nile. Not only did the Nile produce unpredictable annual fluctuations, it also produced long-term variability to which the foragers had to adapt.

Annual variations follow an arbitrary pattern. Monitoring of the Nile inundation during the period 1873-1904 demonstrated an erratic variability in the level and timing of the inundation. While on average the Nile reached a peak of 7.8 metres in early September, during this time in other years it peaked at 6.2 metres and 9 metres, and the crest arrived as early as 10 August and as late as 17 September (12 days late). The duration of inundation was also erratic, sometimes lingering longer, sometimes subsiding earlier than normal (Wetterstrom 1993: 193-197).

These fluctuations meant the difference between plenty and famine for prehistoric Nile dwellers. For the early foragers, prior to the controls of irrigation and domestication, high and low floods caused havoc. High floods swamped the floodplain, leaving little dry land for wild animals to graze on. Plant foods, normally found around the Nile, would be inaccessible - drowned.

Exceptionally high floods destroyed regular supplies of plant food, leaving foragers with little with which to survive the hot, dry summer, until plant life could regenerate. These excessive floods, particularly if long-lingering, destroyed permanent food resources, such as acacia trees (Wetterstrom 1993: 195), which would not be restored simply by a return to normal conditions. Low floods, of course, dried up plant life and diminished wildlife, which depended on grazing and water.

Even in normal years, the Nile did not sustain a regular supply of food, for it flooded only once a year. As it subsided, fertile watered soil remained behind, from which new wild crops grew, and food gathered needed to be stored. "Summer", the period following the retreat of the Nile, lasted from mid-March to mid-August, and was accompanied by high temperatures, hot dry winds, brown grass, lean animals, toughened root foods, and declining fish stocks. A summer such as this after a low inundation would force the people even more to depend on their stores and the ubiquitous catfish which seemed to flourish in whatever water the Nile left behind (Wetterstrom 1993: 196).

For those living around the oases, a low inundation might deliver little or no fresh water to replenish the lakes. An abnormally high inundation meant for the oases, as well as for the Nile, drowning for people, plants, and animals, leaving little or no food to see the survivors through to the next harvest. While the Fayuum Lake Moeris went up and down with the inundation, it also magnified any extremes. A low inundation might not reach the oasis and a high one would stay longer, with limited drainage out of the lake. High evaporation rates also intensified the variability. As well, the Fayuum did not receive the benefit of the upper reach of the Monsoon. (Wetterstrom 1993: 186)

The Beginning of Farming

The beginning of farming, according to Wilma Wetterstrom (1993), and the arrival of Western Asian domesticates (wheat, barley, sheep, goats) must have been welcomed by the foragers, who possibly adopted the new strategies as a hedge against the uncertainties the Nile inflicted upon them. During lean times, they could rely on domestic animals when the wild ones migrated to better water and pasture. They could also plant and store crops to see them through the summers and bad seasons when wild plants were damaged or unavailable.

How Asian domesticates reached Upper Egypt is not known, but they first appeared in Egypt after a period of climate deterioration in the Levant (7600-6000 BCE), which forced farmers to migrate, some to the Sinai. These domesticates appeared probably around 6000-5000 BCE in Northern Egypt, and about 1000 years later in Upper Egypt (Hassan 1988; Wetterstrom 1993: 198). Cattle and some grains were probably domesticated in Africa (Mohammed-Ali 1984), but wild wheat, barley, sheep, and goats, not indigenous to Africa, must have arrived in domestic form.

Hassan (1988) suggested that domesticates came into the Nile Valley with the Saharan Neolithic migration during a drought. Prior to c6000 BCE, the Western Saharan desert was wetter and supported a Neolithic economy of stock herding (Close 1992) and barley cultivation (Hassan 1988: 144; Hoffman 1979: 218-221). From around 6000 BCE to 5000 BCE an extensive drought forced these people to move, either south to follow the retreat of the Monsoon, or east, closer to the Nile Valley where viable conditions prevailed (Close 1992: 178; Hassan 1988: 144). The archaeological record indicates a fusion of the Saharan Neolithic culture with the indigenous fishing culture (Hassan

1988: 145), supporting the proposition that at least some of the western Saharan pastoralists settled along the Nile.

Other archaeologists (Close 1992: 164-5; Muzzolini 1993a: 237; Wetterstrom 1993: 200) are not convinced that the evidence sufficiently places plant domestication in the Western Desert. The planting season in the desert was not compatible with the requirements of the West Asian wheat and barley, and besides, the evidence is restricted to a few grains of barley and one wheat blossom. Abundant evidence, however, indicates that these desert peoples did have domesticated cattle, sheep, and goats (Close 1992; Muzzolini 1993a; Wetterstrom 1993). Evidence also indicates that pastoralists living permanently in the playas (depressions which filled with water during the monsoon), took their animals to herding camps for grazing when the playas became uninhabitable. Their cattle may have been kept for milk and blood, rather than meat, and slaughtered only for sacrificial purposes (Close 1992: 164, 172-3; Wendorf & Schild 1998: 101), while the population still obtained most of its meat from wild animals (*ibid* 172).

Whether these people had both domesticated crops and animals, or simply their pastoral culture and domestic herds, climate change brought the Western Desert peoples into the Nile Valley, where they mingled with the indigenous foragers. It also brought other foragers and herders from affected areas. D.L. Holmes (in Kobusiewicz 1992: 214) identifies various cultural groups who originated from different oases and entered the Nile Valley during the mid-Holocene droughts.

Southwest Asian domestication may have come via the Fayuum, rather than down the Nile. Neolithic elements from Southwest Asia appear in the record at Merimda (Lower Egypt) and the Fayuum oasis. Around 6000 BCE as well, the Nile experienced a low period, no doubt the result of the general drought. During this time the Fayuum may have dried up (Hassan 1988: 143), and the Neolithic peoples living there probably moved into the Nile Valley. Having their ancestry in the foragers of the Fayuum, and continuing largely with a forager life-style supplemented by domestication (Wetterstrom 1993: 204-211), these people were well-equipped to cope with the fluctuations of the Nile, for their life in the Fayuum would have been similar, with the Fayuum lake expanding and contracting in synchrony with the Nile inundations.

With the migration of various peoples from the deserts, more concentrated populations of all types began to develop not only in the Nile Valley, but in the oases and desert spurs overlooking the Nile Valley (Baumgartel 1955, 1960, 1970b; Hassan 1988, 1992, 1993; Hoffman 1980; Rice 1990; Wetterstrom 1993). These adjacent areas contributed to the general Predynastic population. Therefore, the settled agricultural communities of the Upper Egyptian Predynastic were formed originally from at least four groups of people: the Nilotic forager peoples; the Saharan migrants, possibly herders and farmers; foragers living outside the Nile Valley; and the Fayuum farmers with their Levantine livestock and crops.

Physical anthropological evidence also supports this multicultural, multiethnic theory, identifying at least two skull types in the earliest Badarian levels, and these are closely related to the people of Nagada I and II (Baumgartel 1970b: 473). Also, for Badarian levels at Badari, Brunton and Caton-Thompson (1928: 20) documented varieties of hair colour, hair type, and style, plus a variety of facial distinctions, particularly for the nose. They comment that "these details ... give an idea of the diversity of type" (ibid) of the Neolithic peoples of Upper Egypt.

Lower Egypt

Lower Egypt tells a different story. The Neolithic culture here was markedly different from that of Upper Egypt. While foragers must have lived there prior to the introduction of domestication (Wetterstrom 1993: 214), Lower Egyptian Neolithic culture was largely influenced by the Levantine migrations mentioned above. House structure, burial patterns, and artefact collections reflect a Palestinian rather than an indigenous development (Hayes 1964; Hoffman 1979: 167-217), whereas Upper Egypt displays its own unique culture from the Badarian period onwards.

For Lower Egyptian Neolithic culture, domestic animals and grains were introduced into Egypt from the Levant via the Negev and northern Sinai. The typical diet of the semi-nomadic populations of the Delta had for a long time included sheep, goats, barley, and wheat native to the Levant but not to northeast Africa (Clutton-Brock 1993; Hoffman 1980: 188; Hassan 1988; Muzzolini 1993a; Wetterstrom 1993: 200-1). The same deterioration in climate in Lower, as well as Upper, Egypt,

probably explains both the appearance of Palestinian domesticates and the congregation of population closer to the Lower Egyptian Nile. The farmers of the southern Levant moved westward, some settling in the Nile delta, bringing their farming culture, plants, and animals with them. Some would say that farming originated in Egypt (Ehret 1993), but the general consensus is that the evidence is too slim and the Saharan climate too harsh (Close 1992; Muzzolini 1993a: 237; Wasylikowa et al. 1993; Wetterstrom 1993: 200).

Beginnings of Nile Predynastic Culture

The Importance of the Nile River

Evidence suggests that settled life began long before the appearance of permanent dwellings in Upper Egypt. A ceramic culture emerged about 5200 BCE (Hassan 1988: 14), and plant and cattle domestication followed shortly after (ibid 143). But since the material remains of a permanent culture do not appear until around 4000 BCE, archaeologists have chosen this later date as the beginning of the Predynastic and the characteristic Egyptian culture.

About 500 years (c5500 BCE) after the beginning of the drought, a period of high Nile floods occurred. The new arrivals to the Valley and the indigenous peoples who merged with them, probably built their homes and gardens close to the Nile, which had contracted during the drought. These new high floods would have devastated the communities living close to the river, and forced people to move their settlements further towards the desert just on the edge of the floodplain. Here, just on the edge of the desert, the known Predynastic sites are found today (Hassan 1988: 143; Baumgartel 1970b: 466), and archaeologists accept that other sites still exist underneath the present floodplain (Brunton 1929: 456; Hassan 1988; Hoffman in B. Adams 1987: 188; O'Connor 1993: 578), both in Upper and Lower Egypt.

Fortunately, as the earliest phase of Egyptian culture developed, the Nile Valley experienced some rainfall – about 50 - 100 mm per year (Hassan 1988: 146), unlike for the rest of its history. Today, some rainfall has returned, but mainly because of the climatic changes caused by the Aswan dam. This early period, called the Neolithic Sub-Pluvial or Makalian Wet Phase (c 5500-2500 BCE),

possibly allowed the continued existence of nomadic pastoralists in the wadis (Bomann & Young 1994: 29; Hoffman 1979: 247).²⁰

The relatively moist conditions created pasture for wild animals, later providing sport for the king and other members of the noble and ruling classes. Some stock herding probably still continued, with the animals not confined to their enclosures all year round. Particularly in the earliest phases of semi-settled life, the combination of horticulture, fishing, hunting, and herding constituted the economic life of the Nile dwellers – a life very similar to that of contemporary Sudanese Nilotic tribes, such as the Dinka, Nuer, and Atuot. These last vestiges of the monsoon gradually tapered off, ending about 3000 - 2500 BCE, with the onset of a dry climate and severely low floods (Hassan 1988: 139). As long as some rain came, the wadi run off would create some pasture, and to some extent, a limited pastoral life could continue, but the main source of food became the Nile.

Once the various groups settled near the Nile Valley, factors induced by climate change speeded up the development from a nomadic or semi-nomadic life to a Neolithic way of life. The degradation of surrounding land and species, previously unintentionally prevented by a nomadic and cyclical life style (Hassan 1980: 17), would have forced people to domesticate rather than forage. Those newcomers who already had domesticated plants and animals would make a vital contribution, for such technologies would not have to be invented "from scratch". This is possibly one of the main reasons for the rapid development of the Neolithic in Egypt – a process which took thousands rather than hundreds of years elsewhere in the Near and Middle East.

Support for their new settled life came from the Nile. The flood began in early July, arriving at the end of a long hot drought that withered the plants and parched the soil. The beginning of the Nile inundation marked the end of the drought and the beginning of a new year. The star Sirius, called "Sothis" by the Dynastic Egyptians, reappeared annually a week or two before the beginning of the flood after a 70-day interval of invisibility in the night sky and came to mark the Egyptian New Year.²¹

²⁰ The development of commemorative iconography in which the king smites the enemy may be an indication of threatening incursions of these nomads into the Nile Valley and its resources (Hoffman 179: 246-247).

²¹ Most general works on Egyptian religion mention Sothis and the Egyptian New Year, but for more detailed information, consult Neugebauer and Parker (1960, 1964, 1969), Neugebauer (1969), Krupp (1984, 1997).

The land remained flooded for three to four months, the water beginning to recede in October, until in early November, wet and fertile land appeared in its wake. The best time to sow, as during the entirety of Egyptian history, was in the first to third weeks of November, at the beginning of the planting season. Left too late, perhaps until December, the hot April weather would retard the crops, reducing yield as much as 50% (Hassan 1980: 17).

The pressure of survival forced these people to ensure reliable sources of food for an increasing population both in numbers and density. During the expansion of settled life along the Nile, progressively greater attention would be paid to the river, for in bad seasons it would be increasingly difficult to move camp.

The unreliability of the Nile produced unreliability of yield. One flood in every five was considered "bad" (Hassan 1984: 223; Hassan et al 1980: 33). In addition, crop diseases, pests, weeds, loss of soil fertility (Hassan 1988: 167), poor management, inexperienced farmers, and poor timing of sowing (Hassan 1980: 17) all contributed to the need for reliable food storage, co-operation, food sharing in hard times, and leadership to administer such organisation.

The "shrinking" of the Nile resulted in settlements becoming more crowded together, closer to the river. Pressured also by the drier climate, these clustered communities became nearly totally dependent on agriculture, both for their own food crops and fodder for their penned animals. Increased co-operation between neighbouring communities would be negotiated, creating positive cross-fertilisation of ideas and technologies, but also increased tensions and hostilities over land disputes and customs would inevitably develop, perhaps exacerbated by the disparate nature of the population.

The consequences of this interaction between human survival and a changing climate pushed the Egyptians towards an increasingly homogeneous way of life. A structured social organisation with negotiated rules; intergroup trade and exchange of ideas; increasing trans-group similarities in religious practices and beliefs; the development of a village life, technology, and a craft base which

were typical of Neolithic life around the world; and a system of trade which reached farther than the Nile Valley into Mesopotamia and Palestine, all resulted when a wide assortment of peoples gathered to find a stable life supported by the Nile River. Thus the Nile, rather than the weather, was the single largest environmental factor affecting the lives of the Predynastic Egyptians.

The Nile as Metaphor

The earliest Egyptians, from the prehistoric foragers to the settled agriculturalists, found their well-being and destiny intimately united with the Nile. Its unpredictable and often devastating behaviour pressed upon the people the need to diversify their food source and develop increasingly reliable food storage. Storage facilities feature in Fayuum, Delta, and Upper Egyptian sites, with the Upper Egyptian storage facilities becoming larger with increased dependency on domestication and permanent settlement. In fact, the scant remains of residences in areas of permanent settlement and the proliferation of well-built storage facilities in these same communities suggest that the early Predynastic Egyptians (Badarian and Nagada I) might have slept in the open, spending their architectural energy and ingenuity on storage (Wetterstrom 1993: 214-219).

One wonders why the early Egyptians, like the early Mesopotamians, did not worship storage and fish deities, for secure storage and catfish often feature in site remains. The most popular deities in prehistoric and early historic Mesopotamia were not the high gods An and Enlil, but the goddess of dates and the storehouse, Inanna, and the god of fresh water and fish, Enki. Dates and fish provided the foragers of the Mesopotamian marshes with enough food and materials for shelter and fuel (Oates & Oates 1976: 121), and the early Mesopotamians envisioned in these humble products the invisible numinous divine forces which governed their world (Jacobsen 1976: 17, 26). As the Mesopotamian culture grew into a complex, state-based culture, the storehouse, the *E-anna* (ibid 17), and the rituals surrounding the goddess who presided over it, became increasingly vital. On a practical level, the storehouse protected against famine and consolidated the wealth necessary to support a hierarchy of political and clerical specialists as well as the trade specialists who created the infrastructure and luxuries to keep and elevate them. On a more "spiritual" level, the storehouse expressed harmony between humanity and the gods, and every year, at the New Year festival, the Sumerians celebrated

this relationship with the marriage of the earthly king to the goddess Inanna, renewing the union of the spiritual and material.

Unlike the Mesopotamians, the early Egyptians chose not to deify the powers behind the storehouse, the grain in it, the fish in ponds or the river, but the spiritual forces which caused the rejuvenation of the vegetation: the power inherent in the inundation and the reborn vegetation. This power brought life to all who lived near the Nile: human, plant, and animal. What they called this "power" we will never know; we only know that it came to be identified with Osiris in the Dynastic period and appeared as the same power which ensured the immortality of the king as his *k3* (*ka*) and later, after the First Intermediate Period, the general population as well.

Although the *k3* has not been specifically associated with the spiritual power of the Nile River, perhaps the word *k3* comes the closest to describing such a force. As a root word, it forms the basis for a number of words whose meanings are associated with life and vitality: food (*k3w*), vagina (*k3f*), pregnant woman (*bk3f*), new construction (*k3f*), and bull (*k3*), as well as the vital, animating soul-like force which inhabits the *k3* statue (Budge 1978 <1920>; Gardiner 1957; Gordon 1996: 34).

Environment cannot be separated from culture; in fact, environment (climate and geography) has a formative influence on culture, including the religious beliefs, mythology, and legends, which constitute those "invisible" aspects of culture not found in material records. Within the environmental context of the Nile Valley, "a green, fertile strip inset like a narrow ribbon in a vast expanse of desert landscape" (Hassan 1988: 146), the Predynastic Egyptians found their source of life and possibly the inspiration for the increasingly complex mortuary culture in which the figurines played a part. Ritual, which mediated the harmony between the invisible spiritual entities governing the Nile and the manifest environment, ensured the seamless integration of spiritual and physical well-being.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

One highly significant fact about the archaeology of the Predynastic is the dearth of information on habitation sites compared to the plethora of information on grave culture. As mentioned above, the

very early farming habitation sites in Egypt, from the Badarian and Nagada I periods, consisted of simple reed huts, windscreens, and relatively elaborate storage facilities.

Upper Egypt does not consist of numerous tells or tepes swelling up from a flat landscape, concealing treasures and stories from hundreds or thousands of years of Neolithic occupation, as do Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and the Levant. The Neolithic cultures of the Near and Middle East have left a 5000-year legacy of settled living in mudbrick and stone villages. The reed dwellings of one thousand or so Neolithic years in Nilotic Egypt have long since decayed and blown away, leaving little for archaeologists to build their theories upon. We only have to look at the simple round reed and brush structures of contemporary African villages to conjure up the Badarian and very early Nagada villages, complete with cattle enclosures and mud hearths. Little has changed for the pastoral farming cultures of Africa since 4000 BCE.

Badarian Culture (c4000 - 3900 BCE)

From the beginning of the discovery of Badarian culture, archaeologists surmised that the Badarians lived in shelters perhaps of skins or matting stretched over a wooden frame, for only the stumps of poles remain (Brunton 1929: 461-2). The Badarians lived simply, cooking in the open air with only a hole in the ground for a hearth (Baumgartel 1970b: 467; Brunton 1929: 462-3). The Nile would not have been the cultivated plain it is today. It "was then an expanse of reedy swamps, filled with hippopotami and crocodiles" (Brunton 1929: 462), besides scorpions and snakes.

Their precarious life alongside the Nile perhaps did not inspire the people to create substantial architecture in light of its inevitable ephemeral life in the wake of a high flood, or perhaps the nearly rainless climate made it more sensible to sleep outdoors, as do the !Kung bush people of Southern Africa (J.E. Yellen in Wetterstrom 1993: 230). Rather than invest in permanent dwellings, perhaps the Badarians thought it more sensible to build solid storage facilities in order to protect their food from climate, thieves, and pests. Whether the Badarians were sedentary, nomadic, or semi-nomadic is still unknown (Baumgartel 1955: 23), and these early farmers might have taken their stock to seasonal camps, leaving the main settlement to its own luck, with their well-camouflaged grain stores

deep in the ground. On the other hand, light structures may have served them so well, that they felt little need to change. The twentieth-century Nilotic pastoralists of Sudan still live in round brush homes, despite the permanent, territorial nature of their culture. They feel no need to build in mud brick or stone (see Chapter 4).

Grave culture tells us more about the Badarian people than do their homes. Their graves display a keen interest and skill in personal adornment and pottery manufacture. People wore jewellery in death, as they did in life. Beads are found everywhere and in great numbers in all periods, and wear on the softer materials used for beads indicates that they were worn in life, not just in death (Needler 1984: 308). Necklaces, armbands, anklets, amulets, beaded girdles, and nose studs display a local manufacture supplemented by trade from at least the Red Sea coast, the source of the frequently found shells (Brunton 1929: 462-3). Some of the beads are of real turquoise (Baumgartel 1970b: 469) rather than ersatz turquoise – blue glazed steatite. The presence of turquoise indicates contact with traders from Asia, for the source of turquoise is probably the Sinai (Needler 1984: 311). Both men and women painted their eyes with green malachite, ground on a personal palette with a pebble. Again, wear on the palettes indicates that eye paint featured in daily life as well as in death, although palettes were seldom found in settlements and mainly in graves (*ibid* 319), indicating that people took their palettes with them rather than pass them on. Next to beads, palettes are the most common personal grave good (*ibid*); even the poorest graves contain palettes, grinding pebbles, and beads.

The Badarian grave culture displays some belief in permanency, at least in the "other world" if not in this one. It also points forward to the mortuary and general religious beliefs of the Dynastic Egyptians about 1000 years later. Two Badarian graves contain hippopotamus amulets (Baumgartel 1970b: 469), perhaps foreshadowing the protective hippopotamus goddess, Taweret. Besides human graves, those of cows and dogs (Baumgartel 1955: 22-3; Brunton 1929: 465) indicate that some animals may have been held "sacred" or symbolised a deity or concept of divinity. Such deities could be the predecessors of Hathor, Anubis, Khentamenthis, or Wepwawet, who appear in Dynastic records over 1000 years later.

A few graves contain anthropomorphic figurines. Ucko catalogued 5 figurines from the Badarian period (Ucko 1968: Figurines 1-3, 26,27), three of which come from Badari and are remarkable for their diversity. All are female. No male figurine is known from the Badarian period, but with such a small sample, no real conclusion can be drawn from this fact, which is probably just an accident of excavation and preservation. The ivory and ceramic figurines (Figs. 2.1a, 2.2a, 3.1), at least, demonstrate developed styles which must have antecedents, probably still buried under centuries of Nile mud. The river inundated the earliest communities when the Nile level rose after a period of low Niles, and many cemeteries and settlements, no doubt, still lie under the silt.

The three disparate figurines from Badari reflect the heterogeneous nature of early Nile culture, formed from a number of different influences during the mid-Holocene drought (c6000-5000 BCE). One of these figurines strongly suggests the later types of Nagada I and Nagada II. Made of unfired clay, this figurine was described by the excavator, Guy Brunton, as so "crude and clumsy" that it must therefore be a doll (Brunton & Caton-Thompson 1928: 29) (Fig. 2.2a). The figurine is "armless", has a beaked face, and is bent at the hips, making it unclear whether it is sitting or standing. It also ends in a wide peg tapering to a rounded end. As discussed earlier, these elements appear in some of the Nagada I and II female figurines, 37 of which have raised arms. The remaining two figurines from Badari – one of ivory and one of ceramic – bear no resemblance to later ones.

The other 2 Badarian figurines are from Mostagedda, near Badari (Map 1). One bends at the hips (Fig. 2.2b), like the Badari example, but the other (Ucko 1968: Figurine 26) is different again from the other 4, except for the facial projection, which may be a beak.

Judging from the grave culture and the distribution of grave goods across all known graves, Castillos (1982b: 31) came to the conclusion that Badarian society was:

relatively equalitarian, perhaps class-free ... [with]
a very high infant mortality rate and in which it seems
everybody was uniformly poor.

Badarian culture seems to have resembled in many ways the early forager society from which it emerged, with its egalitarian structure, economic use of perishable resources, and simple material

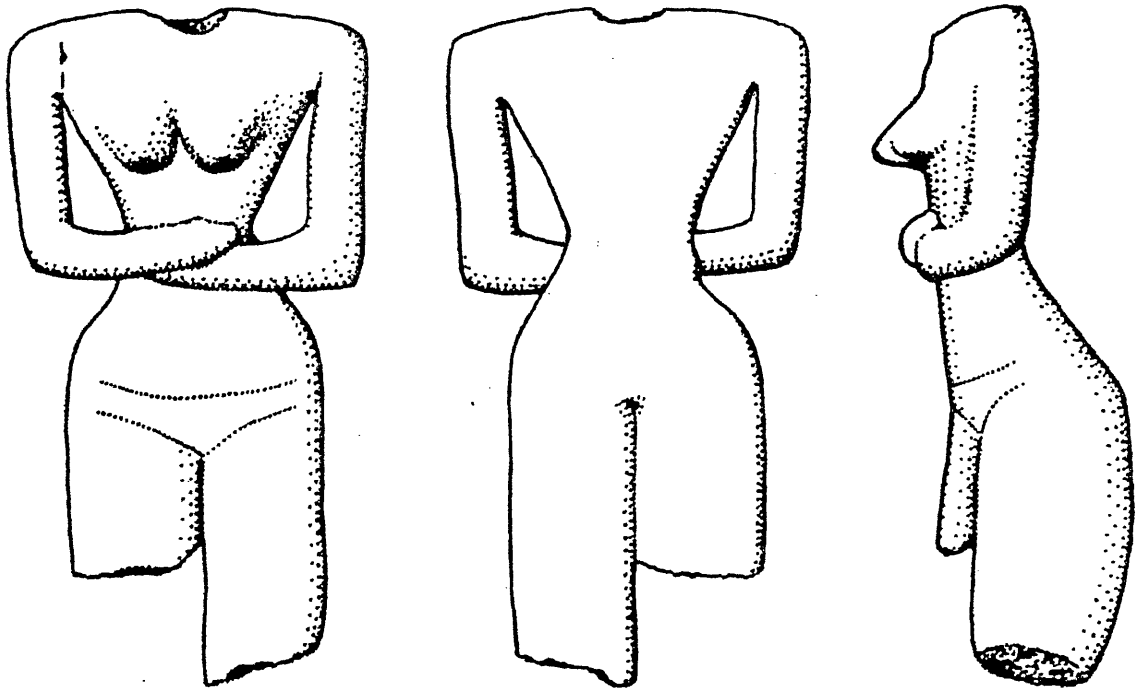


FIG. 3.1 Badarian ceramic female figurine from Badari.

life. Wealth, when possessed and demonstrated by the few rich Badarian graves (ibid 30), suggests a society of very few privileged members, who probably accumulated their wealth through personal achievement and respect rather than through inherited, genealogical rank and power (Bard 1994: 34).

Nagada Cultures (c3900 - 3000 BCE)

Nagada I (c3900 - 3650 BCE)

Nagada II (c3650 - 3300 BCE)

Nagada III (c3300 - 3000 BCE)

Nagada I culture followed the Badarian, and, like the Badarian, is named after its first location of discovery, Nagada, just inside the Qena bend and south of Badari. Like the Badarian, early Nagada I communities lived in small huts, the settlements comprising storage pits, animal enclosures, and refuse areas (Hassan 1988: 155). This way of life continued until about 3750 BCE, when the construction of mud huts began (ibid). Towards the end of the Nagada I period, c3750 BCE, material evidence changes, with the appearance of more permanent dwellings (Baumgartel 1970b: 475; Hassan 1988: 155) and a richer grave culture (Baumgartel 1955: 24-38). Influxes of migrants could have still influenced Upper Egyptian culture, perhaps from Nubia in the south (ibid 24) or remote sites within Egypt. Some Nagada II graves show an "unmistakable relationship with Nubia" through the inclusion of characteristic Nubian pottery with incised and impressed designs, while Nubian graves contain Upper Egyptian-style artefacts (Geus 1984; Nordström 1972), including pottery figurines displaying the characteristic bending at the waist (ibid 18, 22, 127).

In the Western desert, about 100 km west of Abu Simbel, near the Sudanese border, materials from the recently excavated site of Nabta Playa indicate contact with Egypt during the Badarian period (Wendorf et al 1997: 94-6). While Badarian culture shaped itself, the Nabta Playa people erected megalithic monuments composed of stone circles, menhirs, and specially arranged and modelled stone slabs (Malville et al 1998; Wendorf, Close & Schild 1992-3; Wendorf & Schild 1996, 1998; Wendorf et al 1997; Wendorf, Schild & Zedeno 1996). Presumably Nabta society had the hierarchical and complex structure necessary to complete major projects requiring organisation, specialised skill, and available labour, and it is possible that these achievements in social organisation influenced the transition from the Badarian culture to more complex Nagada culture

during periods of contact and subsequent migration when the Nabta site was deserted (*ibid*, especially Wendorf et al 1997). Nabta megalith construction skills, however, seem to have been lost, as their influence is not apparent in Predynastic or Dynastic Egyptian architecture.

As Predynastic dwellings changed from round, light structures to rectangular, mud structures (Petrie in Baumgartel 1970b: 476), so did the graves. Badarian graves are characteristically oval or round (98%), while Nagada I graves, particularly at the large site of Nagada, become rectangular (85%) (Castillos 1982b: 33, Table 1).

This change in grave structure appears at most, but not at all sites. For example, Matmar retained its oval grave tradition right through to the Early Dynastic period (90% of graves), while the overall trend in Upper Egypt moved towards rectangular graves – from 6% in Badarian times, 44% in Nagada I and II times, and 88% in the Early Dynastic period (Castillos 1982b: 34, Table 1 cont'd.).

As graves become more rectangular in the archaeological record, they also begin to differentiate in structure and size. Changes to grave patterns indicate a change in social structure. The poorer graves retain the oval form or adopt a small rectangular form, while the larger rectangular graves display increased signs of wealth (Bard 1994).

One method for determining the wealth of a grave divides the graves into three categories based on the number of objects found within them (B. Adams 1987; Castillo 1982b). Graves containing 0-10 objects are considered "poor", while graves containing 10-20 objects are considered "middle-class" by B. Adams (1987) and "wealthy" by Castillo. Graves with over 20 objects are considered wealthy by B. Adams, but not differentiated by Castillo. Castillo might not have differentiated because the more precious objects would have been stolen, making 20 objects and over too arbitrary a factor to indicate social difference.

This method presents several problems. Is a group of beads a number of separate articles or a single necklace? Does a grave with 11 common black-topped pots constitute a wealthier grave than one with 9 objects of gold, silver, turquoise, or other rare or imported materials? Also does a necklace of

carnelian, and chalcedony, or one with a lapis lazuli pendant? Alabaster, carnelian, chalcedony, diorite, garnet, haematite, limestone, serpentine, and steatite, although rarer than faience and pottery, could be obtained from the desert regions within reach of the Nile Valley, but shell from the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, turquoise from Sinai, and lapis lazuli from Afghanistan (Needler 1984: 308-311), would have been more costly to obtain. Silver (Baumgartel 1960: 6), porphyry, ironstone, and granite also constituted rare, imported materials. Therefore, materials would have varying values depending on how uncommon and difficult to obtain they were.

Kathryn Bard (1994) developed a methodology which accommodates the scarcity of the materials as well as the number of objects, and this is discussed below in the exploration of the material context of the figurines – that is, the graves they appear in and the artefacts they appear with. At this point, however, the analysis done by Castillos on Predynastic cemeteries (1982b) does demonstrate the increasing size and wealth of some graves over the Nagada I and II periods.

Castillos' Table 7 makes clear the progressive elaboration of tomb structure from Badarian to Nagada to Early Dynastic times. No grave of the Badarian period contains a wooden or pottery coffin, whereas a small percentage of those in Nagada I and II contain these more expensive structures, and up to 66% of tombs at Abydos in the Early Dynastic have them.

The people at Armant seemed to remain adamant in their adherence to their earlier tradition, with no wooden or pottery coffins at any stage. Bard, however, did find evidence for some differentiation at Armant. Some graves are rectangular (Bard 1994: 53), and during the late and terminal phases of the Predynastic, larger rectangular graves appear set apart from the smaller, oval ones of Nagada I and early Nagada II (ibid 55). At Armant, two Nagada III graves (1207 and 1208) are brick-lined. The largest (1208) contains internal mud-brick walls, dividing the grave into one large and six smaller compartments (ibid 57). The brick lining and internal divisions of these Nagada III graves are early examples of the typical tomb characteristics from the Dynastic period.

Bard concluded that, judging from the distribution of the grave goods and the relative similarity of the graves in size and structure, Armant did not have a highly differentiated élite (ibid 73), and therefore, it retained its earlier egalitarian structure similar to Badarian culture. The anomalous brick-lined tombs and their wealthy contents resulted from an intrusion of outside forces (ibid 73-4). I think it would be safe to postulate that the emerging political centralisation of Upper Egypt during Nagada III reached its powerful arm into the "sleepy, conservative" village of Armant.

The average number of objects per grave also increased over time, even at Armant (Castillos 1982b: 47 Table 8). Armant, however, still remains the poorest community during the Nagada I and II periods, judging by the number of grave goods, with only 6% of graves containing over 10 objects. Armant graves barely exceed the wealth of the earlier Badarian graves at Badari, where only 4% of graves are considered "wealthy". Castillo's figures support Bard's conclusions about Armant, despite Castillo's lack of differentiation between rare and common materials. Interestingly, the wealth of Abydos graves reached its peak in the late Predynastic (25% of graves) and declined to 7% of graves in the Early Dynastic, no doubt reflecting the changing fashion of the élite to build their tombs at Saqqara near the new capital of Memphis, instead of at Abydos, centre for the worship of Khentamenti, later associated with Osiris.

In the Nagada I and II periods, Mostagedda remained relatively "poor", with only 8% of graves considered wealthy, up from 3% in the Badarian period. Conversely, Matmar moved from 0% of wealthy graves in the Badarian period to 18% in the Nagada I and II periods. Matmar's 18% is high for Nagada standards²², exceeded only by Abydos, the richest grave centre of the Predynastic. Nagada, the centre of Upper Egypt at that time, demonstrates only 15% of its graves as wealthy.

The picture created of Armant as a conservative community, unchanging over centuries, contrasts effectively with the rest of Predynastic Egypt, moving quickly towards a complex social structure. As Armant slept, the rest of Upper Egypt became increasingly dominated and restructured by wealthy and powerful élites who ruled over the less wealthy and less powerful, largely agricultural

²² This anomalous percentage for Matmar is examined later in the discussion on the Matmar figurines. An examination of Brunton's register (Brunton 1948) suggests that Castillo's figurines may be in error, and the percentage may be closer to 4%.

communities. These communities, as well as those specialist groups who created and administered the artistic and architectural aspects of the élite world, worked to support their rulers. Together, these groups formed the cultural background of the emergence of the increasingly complex mortuary cult that eventually focused most intensely on the king.

During the middle to late Nagada periods (Nagada II and III), Nagada appears to have been the main centre of the Upper Egyptian world, perhaps because it was only 12 km from the entrance to the Wadi Hammamat, conduit for overseas and Red Sea trade. Information acquired from the four cemeteries at Nagada (NWest, NEast, T, and B) demonstrates an increasing social complexity with the rise of a local élite (Bard 1994). One cemetery in particular, Cemetery T, appears to be for those in political power, while the Cemeteries of Nagada East (NEast) and Cemetery B contain the commoners. The cemetery of Nagada West (NWest) is wealthier than NEast and B, and therefore represents a "middle-class", but did not necessarily serve those in authority (Bard 1994: 105).

At the end of the Predynastic, late Nagada III, Cemetery T shows evidence of a drop in status and wealth of the élite population. Archaeologists concluded from the material evidence that the centre of power at the beginning of unification moved from Nagada to Hierakonpolis (B. Adams 1987; Bard 1994; Friedman 1996; Hoffman 1976, 1979, 1982). Excavated in 1897 by J. E. Quibell and F.W. Green, Hierakonpolis, by the end of the Predynastic, contained a large ceremonial centre (Friedman 1996). The celebrated Painted Tomb with its symbols of political power (Avi-Yonah 1985; Case & Payne 1962), and the large "main deposit" of artefacts which yielded the famous Narmer and Scorpion maceheads and nearby, the Narmer palette (Hoffman 1979: 129), confirm the political importance of Hierakonpolis at the end of the Predynastic and beginning of the early Dynastic periods. The burial of the ruling class members moved from local cemeteries to Abydos and later to Saqqara.

As Upper Egypt moved in the direction of political and social stratification, the grave culture became increasingly elaborate. Standard grave goods, delineated already in Badarian times, still consisted of a number of pots, a palette with pebble and perhaps some malachite, and personal beaded adornments. Besides the figurines, which are extremely rare in graves, other ceremonial objects

enter the record, such as fish-tail knives, maceheads, amulets shaped like bull's or cow's heads, pairs of tusks (one hollow, one solid), and more hippopotamus figurines.

The fish-tail knives, named for their shape, are thought to be the precursors of the of the *pss-kr* instrument used in the ritual of the "Opening of the Mouth" ceremony during Dynastic times (Baumgartel 1960: 38; Needler 1984: 267; Roth 1992; van Walsem 1978-9). Maceheads, symbols of power or warfare, became ritualised in the later stages of the Predynastic with the Narmer and Scorpion maceheads, clearly for ritual rather than practical use. The cow's/bull's horns amulets are of uncertain meaning, but possibly the prototypes of the various bull gods in the historical periods or a cow goddess, who probably already existed in the Predynastic (Needler 1984: 317-8).

The hippopotamus imagery, known already from the Badarian period, may well be the precursor to images of Taweret or one of the other hippopotamus deities known from the Dynastic period. Small stone figurines of this animal begin to appear in graves of Nagada II times. Taweret was a goddess of protection, despite the fact that the hippopotamus was hunted fiercely in Predynastic and Early Dynastic times, not only for its meat and fat, but in defense against its destructive marauding of crops (ibid 359). Perhaps this fearsome aspect explains Taweret's association with the crocodile and the lion, which combine with the dominant hippopotamus form to create the Taweret image.

Birds also become a frequent theme in graves, from the appearance of the "double bird" palettes and the small stone birds which may be the precursors to the small stone representations of Horus in the Terminal Predynastic of Hierakonpolis (ibid 368).

In Nagada I and early Nagada II, concurrent with the development of the prototypes for Dynastic deities, imagery, and rituals, the grave figurines increased in use. The most noticeable of the figurines are those with their arms raised gracefully above their heads, with palms facing outwards and fingers pointing inwards. Most of these have beaked faces, as discussed in the previous chapter. Although they represent only a small part of the total complement, these particular figurines stand out, not just for their fine execution and beauty, but because similar figures decorate Nagada II pots (Decorated Ware) (Fig. 2.7), usually in association with boats.

This Nagada II ware, called D-class or Decorated Ware, occurs largely in a funeral context. Fragments are also found in settlements, including boat and human motifs (Brunton & Caton-Thompson 1928: 78, Plates LXX, LXXI), suggesting that they might not be exclusive to the funeral industry as commonly thought (Gilbert 1999: 30-33; Needler 1984: 232-7). From its earliest forms, D-class ware imitated the shapes and colourings of luxury stone vases, with swirling patterns mimicking the veins in the stone. This pottery style reached its peak in mid Nagada II (Needler 1984: 202), where it displayed various styles of decoration. Decorated Ware disappeared in Nagada III.

The most outstanding of these pots depict illustrations of female figures with raised arms. These figures do not have bird heads and are associated with boats, often with one or more cabins (Fig. 2.7). Either standing on the boats or nearby, they have been interpreted as "the fertility goddess" (Baumgartel 1970b: 480, 1950-51, 1955, 1960: 36, 145-6; Griffiths 1996: 12-16; Hornblower 1930a: 12), or more conservatively, as a figure in a common folk tradition, probably related to the grave figurines (Needler 1984: 206). Other human figures with no arms appear on the D-ware in the same context (El-Yahky 1981) (Fig. 2.6a & b), bringing to mind the large number of armless grave figurines.

General interpretations of the boat imagery on D-ware often place these boats in the prototypical funeral in which the deceased crosses the "Winding Waterway" to the eastern horizon and resurrection (for example *Pyr.*²³ 340, 343, 594-7, 1102, 2172) or to the Land of the Westerners, the place where the dead achieve immortality in the underworld. More practically speaking, the appearance of these boats in Predynastic art also indicates the increasing frequency of boat travel during the centuries of social change prior to unification. The more than thirty distinct standards recorded on the D-class Ware possibly represent the localities to which each ship belonged (Needler 1984: 205), and the increasing incidence of boat iconography probably reflects the frequent political, economic, and religious contact between these communities in a culture moving towards unification.

The cultural and political backgrounds of the middle and late Nagada periods differ markedly from the Badarian. A forager-like simplicity characterises the Badarian period and the earliest phases of Nagada I: impermanent dwellings, concealed storage, egalitarian social structure, and a paucity of

material remains resulting from an emphasis on perishable materials. The Nagada II and III evidence, on the contrary, displays the development of permanent mud-brick structures and towns, inter-regional trade, the rise of an élite ruling class and subordinate artisans and producers, the accumulation of and trade in luxury items, the increasing development of a religious system focused on mortuary beliefs, and the development of an official commemorative art focused on the state and kingship.

Throughout these changes, the grave figurine presence reached its zenith in the mid Nagada II period, but like other art forms, declined in the Nagada III period. This decline may be the consequence of a general impoverishment of the arts in a political and social climate of unrest prior to unification (Needler 1984: 239). Also, the rising élite may have attracted or appropriated the skilled craftspeople for their own aggrandisement, leaving the common people bereft of such skilled members (*ibid.*). For as the ruling élite rose, the grave culture of the general population declined (Bard 1994: 103).

In Nagada III, the period immediately prior to unification, while the number of objects continued to increase in the wealthier graves, some of the most notable items disappeared. The D-class ware disappeared along with the grave figurines, and even the prestigious W-class Ware (Wavy-handled ware) declined (Bard 1994: Figs 16 & 18). After unification, the tombs of the kings and nobles dominated the mortuary cult and established new forms of mortuary art.

For the Nagada III period, the decline of figurine use may reflect the general decline of grave objects or a change in religious belief, affiliation, or ritual. As unification approached, the energy and identity of individual village communities also became centralised, focusing increasingly on the élite, as did the material wealth. Whatever beliefs the figurines represented to the Predynastic Egyptians may have become transferred to the new leaders and ultimately to a single king, shifting the religious focus from ideas represented by the grave goods, including the figurines, to the divine person of the king. This idea is examined in detail in Chapter 6, after the preparation of more preliminary ground.

²³ The *Pyramid Texts* are abbreviated to *Pyr.* when citing specific passages.

To sum up, the origin and development of Egyptian culture in the Predynastic happened relatively swiftly. By 4000-3600 BCE in Upper Egypt, farming communities were established (Hassan 1992: 309). This period represents the Badarian and Nagada I periods. In the Middle to late Predynastic, or Nagada II - III periods (3600-3300 BCE), urban and cult centres developed in association with political organisations involving chiefdoms, small provincial states, and principalities (ibid). From Nagada III, the Terminal Predynastic or Dynasty 0 as it is sometimes called (ibid 310), the appearance of the first kings, such as Scorpion, indicate the development of regional kingdoms prior to the unification of the two major kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt in Dynasty 1. The period leading up to eventual union covered about 800 years, about 30 generations (ibid 309), meaning that the transition to a state society was an evolution rather than an overthrow.

MATERIAL CONTEXT: ANALYSIS OF GRAVE GOODS AND HIERARCHY

In the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, archaeologists excavated over 15,000 Predynastic and Early Dynastic tombs and graves (Castillos 1982b: 29). More have been excavated since, for example the 10,000 Early Dynastic graves excavated by Z. Saad at Helwan (ibid n.1). Predynastic graves continue to be uncovered, and the estimate now exceeds 15,000 (Hoffman 1989: 50). Of these many thousands of graves, only a few hundred contain figurines. Ucko's catalogue covers 232 of them, and isolated examples not catalogued by him number few.

Ideally, in order to determine the value of the figurines to the Predynastic peoples, the figurines should be assessed in the context of the grave as a whole. Relevant data includes: grave size relative to all graves in the area; location of the grave in relation to other graves; density of cemetery (i.e. how close together are the graves); sex of skeleton; position of the figurine in the grave; all other grave goods including pottery, jewellery, clothing, grave furniture; plant and animal remains; and all other grave items. From this information, one can determine: whether a figurine was placed in a poor or rich grave; whether the occupant was rich and/or of high status; whether the occupant may have been a religious specialist or ordinary person; and whether the figurines were associated with the ruling class, other sections of the population, or were part of a generalised mortuary cult enjoyed by all community members regardless of status or wealth.

Problems Hindering Interpretation

Unfortunately a number of factors hinder interpretation. Grave robbing was endemic even during the period in which the cemeteries were in use. Therefore "rich" tombs which have been plundered are harder to identify as rich than those left intact. Figurines, being made from clay, ivory, and vegetable paste, would not attract the same attention as artefacts made from gold, silver, and other precious or imported materials. A disturbed grave, empty but for some pots and a figurine, may once have contained items of gold, silver, or lapis lazuli.

Other destructive factors disturbed the body. Wind erosion, animal scavenging, the process of decomposition, and the confusing evidence left by secondary burials, in which the disturbed deceased were reburied in another grave, result in a grave that appears undisturbed, but with bones in disarray (Hoffman 1979: 111-114). Such discoveries inspired archaeologists in the past to speculate on ritual cannibalism or unconventional burial practices (ibid 115-116). The real story will never be known.

Another particularly unfortunate factor inhibiting analysis is the poor documentation and excavation procedures of early archaeologists. Although Petrie is praised for his meticulous documentation and excavation, even his techniques were not so rigorous as techniques are now, and objects of interest to the earlier archaeologist did not include many which are now vital to interpretation. For example, the sex and age of skeletons were overlooked (Bard 1994: 35). Plant and animal remains were often beyond available techniques of analysis, and small, seemingly insignificant artefacts were overlooked in favour of ones which would attract the attention of museums and, most importantly, funding for further work.

For the purposes of this study, one example is highly significant. Henry de Morgan, excavator of the graves at Ma'ameriah, where 16 of the 37 female figurines with raised arms were discovered, did not publish his data in detail (Bard 1994: 8). Only 2 of these figurines are detailed in his publications (Ucko 1968: 166). Needler (1984: 90-91) provided contextual details of the figurines from Ma'ameriah now in the Brooklyn Museum, but the scope of her work did not encompass the other graves, precluding a comparative analysis. De Morgan's own record (de Morgan 1912) covers only 25 of the 232 graves excavated. Also he did not record accurate counts of pottery numbers and

identification of pottery types. Without accurate information from the documented graves and comparative material from the rest of the cemetery, the relative wealth or status of the occupant of any grave cannot be determined.

Other archaeologists chose to document only those graves "of importance". The records of Ayrton and Loat (1911) and Maciver and Mace (1902) provide characteristic examples of this frustrating tendency in the documentation of Mahasna and El Amrah respectively. The incomplete accounts make the relative comparison of graves impossible.

Besides poor excavation and documentation techniques, at least by today's standards, grave plundering for the antiquities market removed objects from their archaeological context. While many of these artefacts are inaccessible, having found their way into private collections, many are held in museums around the world. Precise dating of artefacts is difficult without reference to other artefacts and grave location. Also, the profits to be made from trading in antiquities led to the rise of forgeries, making authenticity hard to determine. Ucko carefully assessed the authenticity of the figurines, and he chose only those he could say with confidence are genuinely Predynastic (Ucko 1968: 168-9; Ucko & Hodges 1963). Unfortunately for this study, Ucko did not publish the contextual details of the figurines, choosing instead to develop a typology based on observable traits of the figurines themselves.

Despite the numerous problems when applying the archaeological context to an interpretation of the figurines, enough data can be gleaned from what information still remains in order to offer an hypothesis. Data comes from what excavators have published and what later archaeologists have compiled from this data, for example Elsie Baumgartel's work on Petrie's Nagada excavations (Baumgartel 1970a), Joan Crowfoot Payne's appendix to Baumgartel's supplement (Payne 1987), and Winifred Needler's work on H. de Morgan's excavations (Needler 1984). Also, besides the proliferation of pottery remains, grave structure remains as well, and much can be understood from the size, shape, and material structure of the grave. As already discussed, small, oval graves are the oldest and gradually give way to rectangular graves (Bard 1994: 53; Baumgartel 1960: 67; Castillos

1982b: 29), while larger brick-lined or wood-lined tombs are the most recent and are considered the graves of the ruling élite (Bard 1994; S. Smith 1984).

From such sources, archaeologists are able to conduct statistical data analyses, often with the aid of specialised computer programs (Bard 1994, S. Smith 1984), which reveal any significant trends in artefact placement relative to grave size and location, sex of skeleton, and remnants of grave goods. The remnants even of plundered graves indicate that the larger graves, although nearly always robbed, still contain more "objects of interest" and more sumptuary goods than the poorer graves. These "sumptuary" goods consist of small beads of rare and/or imported materials, such as gold or lapis lazuli (Petrie and Quibell 1896: 10). Therefore, these remnants plus the remains of undisturbed graves combine to form the basis for an analysis of grave hierarchy according to wealth and status. The difference between wealth and political status must be kept in mind, however, for not all wealthy members of a community have access to power and the symbols and rare materials appropriated by those in authority.

The Importance of Pottery

Fortunately pottery, the most common grave good, was not considered valuable by plunderers, ancient and recent, who often left it behind in the grave or strewn about the gravesite. A good deal of information can be squeezed out of pottery remains. Petrie based his system of sequence dating (SD)²⁴ on his analysis of pottery remains. Until recently, SD was the only dating technique available to Egyptian archaeologists, and it laid the foundation for placing Predynastic Egyptian pots in a linear evolution from the common black-topped ware (B-class) through to the high prestige wavy-handled pots (W-class), found frequently in the graves of the rich and powerful in the final stages of the Predynastic (Bard 1994: 40-44).

Further work by W. Kaiser in the 1950s on pottery dating and categorising (seriation) confirms, adjusts, and refines Petrie's basic sequence numbers. It renames the specific individual sequences according to a system based on the development phases of the Nagada culture, found largely uniform

²⁴ For an explanation of Petrie's Sequence Dating see Petrie (1901: 4-12).

throughout the Upper Egyptian area (Bard 1988: 41; 1994: 44). Kaiser's modification of Petrie's system is as follows (Bard 1994: 44):

Nagada 1	=	SD 30-38
Nagada IIa,b	=	SD 38/40-45
Nagada IIc,d	=	SD 40/45-63
Nagada III	=	SD 63-80

The chronological sequence indicates that certain styles of pottery in the earliest Nagada I phase, such as black-topped ware (B-class) and the infrequent but startling Cross-lined ware (C-class), declined in use and others rose to take their places. Of particular interest to this study is the C-class ware of the Nagada I period and the Decorated Ware (D-class) of the Nagada II period. C-class disappeared in Nagada II, seemingly replaced by D-class. D-class use declined in the Nagada III period and disappeared before the historic periods, as did the Predynastic figurine types. The prestigious W-class, or Wavy-handled pots, emerged in Nagada II. C-class and D-class ware are important for this study because only these pots depict human representations and both can be linked stylistically to the figurines, which are contemporaneous. W-class is also important, but not for its painted decorations; it is a plain ware characterised by its cylindrical or globular shape and wavy handles. Associated with wealthy and high status graves, its occurrence or non-occurrence with the figurines or D-ware may be significant.

Method of Context Analysis

The following analysis of material context progresses cemetery by cemetery. Information and specific data on individual graves comes mostly from the original excavation reports, as secondary data and interpretive material are limited. The most reliable and thorough guide is Kathryn Bard's work on the Nagada cemeteries (1994). Using her conclusions as a guide to interpretation, especially regarding the relative value of certain pottery types and raw materials, I apply them to each cemetery in turn until a pattern emerges for the material context of the figurines.

The discussion and analysis begin with an elucidation of Bard's work on Nagada and then progresses to each cemetery containing figurines. Rather than only present the data as a table (as in Table

3.1²⁵), I discuss each cemetery independently in order to point out inconsistencies as well as consistencies in the general theory. This extra information subverts any attempt to overgeneralise about a disparate and complex community, and dispels any notion of absolute boundaries between various social classes and use of certain artefacts.

Table 3.1 documents by cemetery the contents of the individual graves containing figurines. This register includes: the sex of the skeleton, if known; the date of the figurine, if known; a breakdown of pottery types found during the Nagada period; Bard's "NewMaterials" categories for Nagada (Bard 1994: 89); the number of figurines per grave and their raw materials; the sex of the figurine, if known; an account of objects and rare and imported materials found in the grave (these may be significant for determining the relative wealth of the grave); and the number of the objects in the grave²⁶.

Objects of wealth include not only rare materials, but also finely-crafted ritual items such as fish-tail knives, presumed to be the early form of the *pss-*kf**, and animal amulets, presumed to be early representations of historic deities. Status may be indicated by the presence of maceheads or ivory tusks. These latter are often found in pairs, one full of an unidentifiable substance and one empty (Baumgartel 1955: 35-6). Presumably they have special significance, but no consensus has been reached on their meaning. Baumgartel suggested that they represent the female and the male principles (*ibid*).

The Nagada Cemeteries

The Nagada cemetery site is divided into four separate sections: Nagada West (NWest), Nagada East (NEast), Cemetery T, and Cemetery B. Working with the data collected by Petrie, and further supplemented by Baumgartel (1970a) and Payne (1987), Kathryn Bard (1994) analysed the Nagada graves according to size, position, and relative wealth. In short, she concluded that the cemeteries NWest and T contain the graves of the wealthier and élite members of the Nagada community. Cemeteries NEast and B are reserved for the poorer members (Bard 1988: 1994).

²⁵ For convenience, Tables 3.1-3.6 can be found at the end of this chapter.

²⁶ A group of separate beads is taken as one object and presumed to be a necklace or bracelet.

As discussed, Bard did not confine her criteria for determining the wealth of graves to the number of objects per grave, as did Castillos (1982b). She included the size and position of graves and particularly the raw materials of the grave goods (Bard 1994: 88-89). For the Nagada graves, she presented a system of six groupings of "NewMaterials" (meaning rare materials as opposed to organic substances or mud), categorised according to their rate of occurrence. Group 1 comprises the rarest materials, occurring only 1-3 times. The occurrence of Groups 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are 4-10, 11-20, 21-100, 101-999, and 1000+ times respectively. Group 6, consisting of fired clay, applies to nearly all graves, for pottery is ubiquitous. Ivory falls within group 5, still common but less common than clay – an important factor in analysing the figurines.²⁷

The Nagada system may not apply rigidly to all sites. Bard's analysis of the graves at Armant reveals a slightly different grouping of "NewMaterials" composed of 5 categories, with some materials appearing less or more rare than at Nagada (Bard 1994: 61). However, a general pattern of rarity can be seen between the two systems. Most of these materials are used for beads.

Other criteria consist of pottery types, with B-class the most common, especially in the early Nagada periods (Bard 1994: 44). Bard identified W-class, appearing in Nagada II (ibid) as élite ware (ibid 95), the design having been inspired by trade with Palestine and exposure to Palestinian designs (ibid 103-4; Needler 1984: 212).

Indications from the analysis of the Nagada graves also demonstrate that over time, the society became increasingly stratified, with élite emerging in Nagada II. Cemetery T, the most recent cemetery at Nagada, is largely restricted to élite burials and contains the few tombs of members of the highest political authority, with NWest containing the burials of the upper and middle classes (Bard 1994: 105). Bard's conclusions corroborate Castillos' (1982b) conclusions based on the increasing elaboration of grave and coffin structure over time.

²⁷ See Bard's breakdown of "NewMaterials" for the Nagada cemeteries on p. 89 of *From Farmers to Pharaohs* (1994).

The graves, numbered by Petrie (see Baumgartel 1970a), break down per cemetery as follows:

Cemetery	Grave numbers	
T	T1-69	(Bard 1994: 79)
B	B1-144	(ibid)
NWest	NW 56-499; 1200-1299	(ibid 87)
NEast	NE 500-1195; 1301-1953	(ibid)
Total graves	2043	(ibid 79)

Nagada Figurines

A total of 36 figurines have been excavated at Nagada, and of these 36, 25 are locatable by grave, with one in the fill of grave 1611 (see Appendix 1 and Table 3.1). Ucko documented most of these in his catalogue, but I add a few from Baumgartel's supplement (1970a) and Payne's appendix (1987).

Ucko (1968: 87-89) catalogued six figurines from grave T271, 5 in ivory, one in vegetable paste. Payne (1987) included an additional one, in clay. Three are probably female; the sex of others cannot be determined. Since Cemetery T graves cover only graves 1-69, I assume that a mistake has been made and the grave number should be 271, not T271, placing these figurines in NWest cemetery, not in Cemetery T. No figurines have been found in Cemetery T. These ivory figurines were found arranged in a row, standing upright in the sand. They carry water-jars on their heads, are without arms, and end in a peg (Baumgartel 1955: 35).²⁸

While 36 figurines from a total of 2043 graves cannot demonstrate a standardised, wide-spread mortuary practice for Nagada, the Nagada graves contain the single largest cache of figurines for one cemetery complex (see Map 1). This large group is not surprising considering that the Nagada cemeteries comprise the largest number of graves within one single location (Bard 1994: 77, 97).

Of the 25 stratified figurines, surprisingly²⁹, the majority (17) come from the poor cemetery of NEast and not from the "rich" cemeteries of T and NWest. However, none appears to come from the poorest cemetery, B (graves 1-144). Of those that come from the rich cemetery NWest, 7 come from

²⁸ Baumgartel's supplement (1970a) records only 3 ivory figurines from this grave. She obviously overlooked those outside the Petrie Collection, which Ucko included in his study.

one grave (271) and one from a nearby grave (273). According to Ucko's catalogue, the figurines from these two graves come from the Nagada I period. To apply Bard's conclusion, that the stratification of Nagada society did not really take hold until Nagada II (Bard 1994: 101, places these rich graves and their figurines in the less-stratified, more egalitarian earlier period.

Significantly, 6 of the 8 figurines from NWest are made from ivory; whereas 14 of the 17 figurines from cemetery NEast are either vegetable paste or clay (see Appendix 1 & Table 3.1). Although ivory is a common material (Bard 1994: 89), it is comparatively "wealthy" next to clay, suggesting that the wealthier figurine users of Nagada chose more precious material for their figurines. An alabaster and an ivory figurine come from an ordinary grave (1329) in NEast. Unfortunately, Ucko did not include this figurine in his catalogue, and the record comes only from Baumgartel's supplement, hence no physical details about this figurine are available.³⁰ An alabaster figurine is a rare find in Predynastic Egypt, even though alabaster comes low on the list of "NewMaterials" at Group 4 (Bard 1994: 89), and in this instance, suggests that "precious" materials for figurine manufacture were not restricted to the wealthy or élite.

A glance at the other "NewMaterials" accompanying figurines in the Nagada graves reveals another grave that stands out from the others. This is grave 1503 in NEast cemetery. While the presence of the most rare of materials, in this case lion claws, suggests a wealthy occupant, élite status is precluded by a noticeable absence of status-signifying objects. Since this grave also comes from the Nagada I period, the occupant may have been merely a wealthy member of the relatively egalitarian society of this period, and the lion's claws may have had personal rather than social significance. All other goods found in this grave are of a personal nature, perhaps indicating an individual of common status but having accumulated some wealth.

A closer look at the materials recorded in Baumgartel's supplement demonstrates that the NewMaterials found alongside the figurines do not include the prestigious imported materials such as imported ivory (as opposed to domestic ivory), obsidian, turquoise, ironstone, feldspar, granite,

²⁹ I say "surprisingly" because, as discussed below, the rarity of the figurines is assumed to reflect their status as precious élite goods.

porphyry (Bard 1994: 86), lapis lazuli, and silver (Baumgartel 1960: 6). These imported materials would be available only to those of the highest status in the community, who had the position and the means to engage in trade. Only members set apart according to political or religious power have access to an exclusive range of materials and objects, chosen for their symbolic and/or sumptuary nature.

The range of "NewMaterials" in Nagada graves suggests that the Nagada people using figurines in their mortuary ceremonies were not necessarily of the wealthy or élite class. In fact, most were very ordinary. Their graves, while occasionally wealthy, judging from the number of objects found within them, are noticeably devoid of imported materials and generally contain few rare materials. Their grave goods tend to be made from the less prestigious and more common locally available materials, such as domestic ivory, carnelian, steatite, and limestone.

Pottery, Stone Vases, and the Figurines

Archaeologists often assume that the rarer the item, the more prestigious it is. According to Ucko, archaeologists consider Egyptian graves rich if they contain figurines, as these artefacts rarely appear (Ucko 1969a: 222). Shelley Smith, in her analysis of the gender implications of the figurines (S. Smith 1984), concluded that the scarcity of the figurines proved their "special" and high value status (ibid 60). "Special", high value objects are rare, non-functional, and for ceremonial use (ibid 59). By inference, this category includes the C-class, W-class, D-class wares, and stone vases, as well as the figurines, for all of these items are uncommon.

This classification, however, could appear to place all "special" objects into the hands of the same group, which may be problematic when assessing who used the figurines. As has been demonstrated, the figurines are not associated with the precious and imported materials that indicate wealthy and/or high status graves. However, if they can be grouped with other luxury items, such as the wares listed above, an association with the élite can be made.

³⁰ It is part of the Ashmolean collection, number AM.95.131.

Associating the figurines with prestigious pots and vases could provide a clear picture of the wealth of the owner, since pots tend not to be plundered. Prestigious W and Stone wares found in any grave containing figurines could indicate status and wealth, even if all the objects of precious materials were stolen long ago.

W-class ware, as mentioned earlier, was inspired by Palestinian designs and adopted by the élite at Nagada. The style resembles the containers used by the Palestinians for imported goods, and therefore, to the Egyptians, probably represented the cosmopolitan background of status and wealth implied in foreign trade. It appears most frequently in the richer graves of NWest and Cemetery T.

Stone vases, while not associated with foreign trade, occur more often in the graves of the wealthy than of the ordinary people. Stone, a much more difficult material to locate, quarry, and work than clay, represents a greater investment of time, skill, and energy than do ceramic vases. Also the harder the stone, the more difficult it is to quarry and work and therefore, the more prestigious it is (Bard 1994: 91). Often the harder stones are imported, such as granite and porphyry; whereas the softer stones, such as alabaster, limestone, marble, serpentine, and steatite, are found within reach of the Nile valley.

While both soft and hard stone vases at Nagada appear in the poorer cemetery of NEast in early Nagada times (Nagada I), they increasingly became an élite grave good, and by Nagada III times, were confined to the richer cemeteries NWest and T (Bard 1994: Figs. 15,17,18). In the Nagada II record, stone vases present predominantly in the wealthier cemeteries, NWest and Cemetery T, (ibid Fig. 17), another indication of the development of social differentiation during the Nagada II period (Bard 1994: 101).

Decorated Ware, D-Class, another class of uncommon pottery, is scattered throughout the grave record. Emerging in the archaeological record during Nagada II times, it seems to displace the Nagada I decorated pottery, C-class or white cross-lined ware. Its scattered appearance led Bard to conclude that the D-class pots "do not seem to be a significant variable for differentiation" (Bard 1994: 95), as D-Ware appears in all cemeteries.

The motifs of D-ware (Figs. 2.6a & b, 2.7) include male and female imagery which seems to have its origins in the earlier C-class designs, despite the difference between the clays used for the pots (Bard 1994: 41). The male figures with raised arms on the C-class ware (Figs. 3.2a, b) prefigure the female with raised arms on the D-class ware. While Fig. 3.2a depicts a shorter, long-haired man spearing the taller man with up-raised arms, Fig. 3.2b does not indicate such hostility or sacrifice. The larger male figures with upraised arms and inturned fingers in Fig. 3.2b (comparable to the inturned fingers on the figurines) stand between two groups of two shorter men with long hair (Scharff 1928: 268-9). This illustration could imply high status for the larger figures, for in Dynastic times, larger iconographic figures indicated increased importance.

Looking closely at Bard's graphs for the incidence of pottery types, the earliest graves at Nagada (Nagada I in NEast and to a lesser extent B) slightly favour the C-class decorated pots (the precursors to D-Ware) compared to C-class in NWest graves (Bard 1994: Fig. 14). But unlike the stone vases, which shift dramatically from the NEast to NWest and T in the later Nagada periods, the D-ware distribution evens out over all cemeteries, including Cemetery B. This even distribution pattern would indicate that, unlike the stone vases, the D-ware did not become a predominantly élite artefact. Unlike the stone vases and W-class ware, D-ware, as does its precursor, C-ware, suggests mythological or religious beliefs in its painted designs. These beliefs, judging from the origin, appearance, and distribution of D-ware, could illustrate indigenous and local beliefs and practices, rather than new practices devised to suit the new upper classes or borrowed from foreign contact.

Decorated Ware

The scarcity of D-ware implies a luxury item, but its origin suggests otherwise. Smith's "special" category does not account for this distinction. While its figurative motifs may originate in the imagery on the C-class ware, its earliest decorative motifs are non-figurative – to reproduce the patterns on prestigious stone vases. Therefore, the earliest D-ware seems to be a substitute for the more expensive stone vases, a "poor man's" stone vase, and not necessarily an indication of wealth and status, but of pretensions to wealth and status. Petrie felt that all ceramic vases are substitutes



FIG. 3.2a

Nagada I White Cross-lined pot with anthropomorphic imagery



FIG. 3.2b

Anthropomorphic imagery on a Nagada I
White Cross-lined pot

for stone vases, since those graves with stone vases tend to have few or no pots (Petrie 1901: 18). Such a substitution seems to be particularly true for D-ware, in its attempt to replicate stone markings.

The human motifs on the D-ware make this class of pottery doubly significant. Any coincidence with the figurines would have implications for figurine use, that is, in answering the question of who uses the figurines and what strata of society they might belong to. But the greater significance lies in the resemblance of their human iconography to the class of figurines with upraised arms, for these figurines and the figures on the pots are assumed to represent the same concept or belief.

Since the Decorated class pots are found more frequently in burials than in settlements, Bard (along with others) concluded that they and their accompanying imagery of boats, standards, animals, and people, "may symbolize the funeral journey to the place of burial, and in a larger sense the journey in the afterlife..." (Bard 1994: 117). Gregory Gilbert (1999) challenged this assumption, referring to the incidence of D-ware with boat scenes in village sites. He offered the conclusion that the contents, rather than the decoration are more significant for mortuary ritual (*ibid* 30), but he still did not offer any explanation of the meaning of the D-ware illustrations and how they might fit into the daily village life of the Predynastic Egyptians.

The idea that the 2 figurines found in a village context might be intended for the grave could also apply to the broken village D-ware. The boat scenes painted on the wall of the late Predynastic Hierakonpolis Tomb 100, although found in a mortuary context, include scenes of hunting, trapping, combat, and a "royal" procession or investiture, as well as possible religious and funerary scenes (Avi-Yonah 1985; Case and Payne 1962). The boat scenes on the D-ware appear to be non-secular, involving ritual processions, and therefore, considering the motif choices available to the Predynastic artists, the evidence leans more in favour of a funerary, or at least a religious, meaning for the D-ware boat and human imagery, despite the fragments found in settlements. Until further evidence more convincingly tilts the explanation one way or the other, the subject remains open to debate.

Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this study to identify individual pieces of D-ware and examine them in the context of their individual findspots. Figure and boat motifs coincide rarely on D-ware,

and a study which isolates this style from the pots decorated only with abstract designs would be valuable in determining who used pots of this design. For the cemeteries investigated here (that is, those containing figurines), the distribution of D-ware with boat and human imagery is outlined in Table 3.2. The data comes primarily from the individual excavation reports and Petrie's *Corpus of Prehistoric Pottery and Palettes* (1921). Unfortunately Petrie's *Corpus* includes only two types of D-ware displaying human figures (Petrie 1921: PLS. XXXIV, XXXV), and these are not the examples most frequently used to illustrate this category of D-ware (Fig. 2.7).

Joan Crowfoot Payne made a significant start to the project of interpreting D-ware in her short article on the subject (Payne 1990). Using Baumgartel's supplement to Petrie's work at Nagada and Petrie's drawings of the various D-ware styles present in the Nagada complement, Payne collated a list of D-ware in Nagada cemetery NEast. Her collation includes the dating of each pot, the grave number, the pot type, and the present museum location and number. More importantly she provided drawings of all the types of D-ware found in NEast. Out of the 79 examples of D-ware for cemetery NEast, which I counted in Baumgartel's supplement, Payne catalogued 60 in 51 graves. Of these 60, 4 depict boat scenes, but not one depicts human figures. I have since found an additional pot with boat and female imagery from grave 454 in NEast (Baumgartel 1970a) and a mention in Gilbert (1999: Table 1) that boat imagery appears on a further 4 D-ware pots in NEast graves. All pots with boat scenes are from the later stages of the Nagada period, Nagada IIc and II d, according to Kaiser's system. Not one of these 5 pots is found with a figurine; in fact, not one figurine in Nagada NEast was found in the same grave as a D-class pot (see also Table 3.1). Only one D-class pot coincides with a figurine, and this was with an ivory figurine in an unremarkable NWest grave (273).³¹

The D-ware with the boat and human imagery could have replaced the figurines, for the figurines seemed to be "going out of style" at the time that D-ware emerged. The use of figurines declined in the mid-Nagada II period, overlapping to some extent the emergence of D-ware in early Nagada II. As early as 1929, Hornblower hypothesised the link between the figurines and this pot imagery:

³¹ The odd fact about this occurrence is that Ucko dates this figurine, and by implication the grave, to Nagada I, while the general theory is that D-ware does not appear until Nagada II. Because grave 273 would lie close to grave 271, the dating of 271 comes into question as well. If both are Nagada II graves, then they may be the exceptions to the rule which places figurines in the hands of commoners.

the jars are of a purely funerary character and there can be little doubt that these paintings of women simply replace the earlier figures in the round and provide the same service for the defunct. (Hornblower 1929: 36)

If the people using D-ware had pretensions to a higher status, and thus shunned the practices of the more ordinary classes, which would include figurine use, feasibly they could have used D-ware to retain important symbols and beliefs.

Payne's choice of NEast over the richer cemetery NWest raises the question: Is D-ware more associated with ordinary graves than rich graves? To answer this question, a count of D-class pots per cemetery (Table 3.3) demonstrates that, while more D-ware comes from cemetery NEast, the incidence of occurrence is only slightly lower in NWest (8.5% in NEast; 7.4% in NWest). In other words, since fewer graves exist in cemetery NWest, fewer pots are found. Payne's choice does not automatically imply that the poorer cemetery was significantly richer in D-ware. As Bard observed, D-ware is fairly evenly distributed, at least at Nagada.

To answer the question with greater precision and relevance for a wider range of Predynastic cemeteries, I present a count of W-class and D-class wares according to the wealth of the graves in the cemeteries containing figurines (Table 3.4). Following Castillos' and B. Adam's method of counting the objects in the graves, I divide the graves into three groups: 0-9 objects, 10-20 objects, and 20+ objects. As observed by Bard for Nagada, the wealthier graves tend to have a high incidence of W-ware – 40.8% of wealthy graves contain W-ware, while only 23% of wealthy graves contain D-ware. Incidence of D-ware is also more noticeably lower in the graves containing over 20 objects than is W-ware, and the highest incidence of D-ware (77%) occurs in graves of under 10 objects. While W-ware is far from exclusive to wealthy graves, Bard's conclusion on their prestigious status is borne out, particularly in contrast to D-ware.

These figures also support the observation that D-ware is not a luxury item but a "poor man's" luxury pot, as the least wealthy graves yield the majority. Further confirmation comes from an examination of the association of D-ware with W-ware, convincingly assigned to the wealthier class. If the D-ware found in wealthy graves also occurs alongside W-ware, then it could be assumed that the D-ware,

although not as popular, was also favoured by the wealthy. Conversely, a dissociation of D-ware with this known luxury vessel would further support the notion that D-ware might be an ersatz luxury item.

At Nagada, of the 105 graves containing D-ware, only 3 contain both D and W-wares, representing 6.9% of the graves with W-ware and 2.9% of the graves with D-ware (Table 3.5). The coincidence of W-ware and D-ware is particular low at Nagada compared to other sites (Table 3.5). Very clearly, from the Nagada data, the pottery record shows that D-ware did not form part of the practices of the élite class and may well be a substitute luxury vessel used by some well-off but mostly ordinary Predynastic Egyptians, at least at the principal site of Nagada.

D-ware with boat and human imagery

A combination of Gilbert's study (1999)³², Payne's analysis (1990), Baumgartel's supplement (1970a), Payne's appendix to the supplement (1987), and Petrie's *Corpus* (1921) demonstrates that a total of 15 Nagada graves contains D-ware with boat imagery (Table 3.2). Only one of these includes female imagery as well, and the figure on this pot is the familiar one with raised arms. One pot taken from Gilbert's Table 1 displays male imagery, but the illustration of this pot in his Fig. 1 does not clearly show the stance of this figure. Each of these 15 graves contains under 10 objects (Table 3.2), further associating the practices expressed by this D-ware and D-ware in general with the middle or lower status level of the population.

Conclusions on the Nagada Figurines

With such limited and occasionally contradictory information, drawing wide conclusions about figurine usage and material is difficult. However, this information displays a tendency that disassociates figurines from status and wealth, while not restricting it exclusively to the poorer members of the Nagada community.

³² Gilbert's study documents 13 Nagada graves with D-ware displaying boat imagery. I borrow 4 incidents of D-ware from his Table 1; however, he has not included those from Cemeteries T and B.

The clay and vegetable paste figurines, forming the majority of the figurines, are found in the poorer Cemetery NEast; with six of the ivory figurines and one vegetable paste figurine found in the richer Cemetery NWest, but with 5 ivories in one grave. This data could suggest that the wealthier members at Nagada tended to choose the more permanent and difficult material, but the alabaster figurine found in an ordinary grave of NEast complicates any conclusive theory.

The pottery and stone vase record corroborates the implications of the restricted use of luxury raw and imported materials for grave goods for Nagada figurine users. W-ware and Stone ware are not linked to people who used the figurines or the D-ware. Therefore use of D-ware and figurines seems to fall to similar, but distinctly different, classes of people of middle and lower status.

The Nagada data suggests that a number of possibilities can be eliminated. Religious beliefs were not imported from Mesopotamia or Palestine, despite the importance of these cultures in the technological development of Egypt in the Nagada II period (Spencer 1993: 34-62). Also, the restriction of figurine use to special groups, either the wealthy or the élite, cannot be maintained. Rather, the figurines appear to originate in rituals already practised by the earliest settled Egyptians, the Badarian people. These people are characterised as uniformly poor and egalitarian. Not until Nagada II did an élite class emerge, and this new social stratum did not seem to take up the practice of figurine use from its antecedents. Rather, the figurines continued to be used by ordinary people, mostly poor, but some with wealth, and a rare few with status. As Predynastic Egyptian culture moved towards unification, social changes reduced the use of figurines and D-ware until finally in the Nagada III period, or the protodynastic, both the figurines and D-ware disappeared. W-class ware, stone vases, and other objects of precious local and imported materials increased in use for the upper class, as would be expected, along with the increasing sophistication of grave structure, leading to the typical elaborate and well-furnished tombs of the Dynastic period. The graves of the lower classes, however, display a decline in the use of grave goods, possibly resulting from the appropriation of materials and skill by the more privileged.

The decline of figurine and D-ware use does not necessarily mean the disappearance of the beliefs and rituals behind them. Rather, "old wine in new skins" is the more likely explanation, with the

meanings behind the human and boat imagery finding their way into Dynastic religion, accompanied by a metamorphosis in iconography more suitable to the religious needs of the rising priesthood and ruling class. This transformation will be explored in later chapters, after further examination of figurine use at other cemeteries.

A brief examination of the figurines from other cemeteries tends to confirm the implications of the Nagada data. The results are condensed into Tables 3.1 and 3.3. Nagada, being the largest community, could have set the trend for the rest of Upper Egypt. Care must be taken, though, before drawing such a generalised conclusion. As the discussion of environmental and cultural contexts demonstrates, Predynastic Egyptian society began as a heterogeneous one and only gradually came together as one culture. Therefore, each site tells its own story of assimilation into a united Egypt.

Mahasna

Five figurines come from five Mahasna graves. Ayrton and Loat excavated one-half of the 600 graves found in the Mahasna cemetery (Ayrton & Loat 1911: 2), but considered only 104 of them to be "important" enough to catalogue (*ibid* 10). Ninety-seven of these are Predynastic. Ucko obtained his 5 Mahasna figurines from this sample. With only 97 graves to consider, and these selected from the 300 excavated graves, difficulties arise when attempting to draw any conclusions from such a limited and biased sample. A comparison, however, with the Nagada figurines, obtained from a large sample, can be instructive.

The most noticeable difference between Mahasna and Nagada is the incidence of *W*-class ware: 17.5% of Mahasna graves contain *W*-ware, whereas only 3.3% of Nagada graves do (Table 3.3). While this difference is probably caused by the bias towards documenting wealthier graves in the Mahasna sample, the number of *W*-class ware in the Mahasna cemetery is still very large compared with that of the Nagada cemetery. Mahasna's meagre number of catalogued Predynastic graves yields 35 *W*-class pots, whereas Nagada's 1317 graves yield only 52. Even if no more *W*-class pots were in the 196 uncatalogued but excavated Mahasna graves, the percentage of graves with *W*-class

pots in the Mahasna cemetery would still be higher than the percentage in the Nagada cemetery, for 17 graves out of 300 is 5.6%, whereas only 3.3% of Nagada graves contain W-ware.³³

The greater presence of W-class pots at Mahasna suggests a richer or higher status cemetery, but Ayrton and Loat specifically indicated that Mahasna is a poor cemetery (*ibid* 2). This conclusion is perhaps drawn from their observation that only a limited number of graves are considered worthy of documentation. The remaining 196 graves must be very poor.

Another factor distorting the record could be the long history of plundering, which could mask the original level of wealthy membership, rendering wealthy graves into apparently poor ones. Since pottery would have been left behind, the high proportion of W-class ware at this cemetery could indicate an originally higher level of wealth or high-ranking individuals in perhaps a cemetery reserved for such people.

Of the 97 documented Predynastic graves, W-class and D-class coincide only twice (H118 and H107), again suggesting use by different groups or that D-class substitutes for more prestigious ware, such as W-class or stone vases. No boat or human imagery decorates any of the 8 examples of D-ware.

Of the 97 graves, 25 contain "NewMaterials", as classified by Bard for Nagada, two of which appear very wealthy: H29 and H41. H29 was identified by Ayrton and Loat as the richest on site (Ayrton & Loat: 11); and Baumgartel singled out H41 as an exceptionally rich Predynastic Egyptian grave, standing out among the entire Predynastic complement (Baumgartel 1960: 67). These two graves contain items classified by Bard as rare; that is they include objects made of shell, diorite, silver, gold, resin, and haematite, as well as the more common ivory and slate objects, and beads of glazed steatite and carnelian (Table 3.1). H29 contains two bodies (Ayrton & Loat: 11), which halves the number of grave goods per person, but still allocates over 15 items per person, including some of rare materials. H41 contains 3 bodies, reducing the number of objects per person to less than 10.

³³ Nine undated W-class pots were uncovered (Ayrton & Loat 24), but since the excavators did not indicate which are Predynastic and which Dynastic, they cannot be included.

These two graves deserve singling out because each contains a figurine: H29 one of ivory and H41, one of clay (Table 3.1). Another particularly wealthy grave, H85, also contains rare materials plus fragments of red painted clay which Ayrton and Loat thought might have been a figurine (Ayrton & Loat: 19). The remaining 3 figurines from Mahasna, however, come from poor or ordinary graves, thwarting any generalised conclusion about the use of figurines by the wealthy in this community.

Also, grave H29, according to Ucko's catalogue, comes from the Nagada I period, bringing into question its possible élite status, despite the presence of a clay macehead. As Bard's analysis demonstrates, social differentiation is not so marked in this early Nagada period. The larger tomb and numerous grave goods could express the deceased's achievements and personality rather than a high position in a structured hierarchy. Therefore, the presence of a figurine in this rich grave does not necessarily represent an upper-class practice. Rather it could simply indicate that this wealthy individual participated in general community rituals.³⁴

Two important observations need noting with regard to the contents of Mahasna graves with figurines. While all contain pots, none contains any W-class ware, despite the high incidence of W-ware, and only one contains a D-class pot. Most of the pots from these 5 Mahasna graves fall into the common black topped (B-class) and polished (P-class) categories. The wealthy grave H29, does, however, contain two limestone vases, one at each skeleton.

Conclusions on the Mahasna Figurines

The Mahasna data suggests that figurines, found in both wealthy and ordinary graves, constitute part of a ritual not confined to rich or poor, but also not necessarily associated with rank. Again, as reflected by the Predynastic figurine complement as a whole, this rare figurine use denotes an infrequent practice. As reflected in the Nagada data, the minimal coincidence of figurines and prestige pottery also suggests the dissociation of high status with figurine use.

Ab'adiya and Hu (Diospolis Parva)

Nine figurines come from five graves at Ab'adiya and Hu. Two (B & U) of the 6 Predynastic cemeteries (A,B,C,H,R,U) record figurines: 7 figurines in Cemetery B and 2 in Cemetery U (Table 3.1). None of the graves with figurines, as catalogued by Petrie (1901), includes W or D-class pots; neither do any include stone vases.

Petrie's catalogue of the graves from Ab'adiya and Hu is not detailed enough to extract precise information on the inclusion of W-class and D-class pots in Predynastic graves. Plates XV, XVI and XX (Petrie 1901) indicate the presence of some D-class ware, but only a few of the illustrations provide grave numbers (ibid PL. XX). Plate XV (ibid) illustrates six types of W-class ware, but again, with no grave numbers.

Petrie catalogued only 26 of the 570 excavated Ab'adiya Cemetery B graves (Petrie 1901: 31-34). Several contain stone vases, but identification of all those with stone vases is impossible, because Petrie did not consistently identify vases by material and type. He identified only one D-class pot (grave 379), but no W-class ware.

Of the 26 Cemetery B graves, 6 qualify as "rich": B56, B83, B101, B109, B217, B323. All contain more than 10 objects and three (B83, B101, B109) contain figurines (Table 3.1). One of these three graves is also the largest in Cemetery B (B101). It holds several notable objects, including a large hippopotamus palette, 4 stone hippopotami figurines, 6 model ostrich eggs, and a "mass of pottery", as well as 2 figurines (Ucko says 3 figurines). Aligning this grave with a political élite is problematic, for as in other cemeteries, this rich grave with a figurine comes from the Nagada I period, prior to establishment of a significantly ranked society.

The other wealthy graves with figurines, B83 and B109, contain no rare materials, but B83 (from Nagada II) contains a model of a town wall with male figures looking over the side, and B109 (from Nagada I) includes a fish-tail knife. The model is unique and therefore defies definition. It raises

³⁴ No fast conclusion can be reached about this Nagada I grave, for social differentiation had to begin at some point, and the individual buried here may have been at the vanguard of this change.

questions about whether it functioned as a toy, a work of art, an illustration of martial strategy, or a cherished personal creation of little broad cultural meaning. The fish-tail knife, associated with rituals of the afterlife, at least in the Dynastic period, may indicate early Predynastic afterlife beliefs and rituals. The other two graves with figurines are largely unremarkable.

Of the 9 graves catalogued from Cemetery U (ibid 35-36), including one with a figurine, no pots or vases are indicated at all.

Conclusions on the Ab'adiya figurines

Like Nagada and Mahasna, the data from Ab'adiya and Hu suggests that figurines were used by both rich and poor in mortuary rituals, but not necessarily by a political élite. Again W-ware and D-ware are not associated with the figurines. Harder conclusions about the Ab'adiya and Hu cemeteries require a more precise catalogue in order to identify clearly the pot and vase types necessary for a characterisation of the graves.

Matmar

Brunton provides a good catalogue of 235 Predynastic graves (Brunton 1948: PLS. VIII-X). Only 2 contain figurines, and these total 5. D-class wares appear more frequently than W-class, as in most other cemeteries (Table 3.3), and, once again, they generally do not occur together, although they coincide much more often than at Nagada (Table 3.5).

For Nagada, 6.9% of the graves containing W-ware include D-ware, and 2.9% of D-ware graves include W-ware. But at Matmar, 26.3% of W-ware graves include D-ware, and 16.1% of D-ware graves include W-ware. Since the averages for all sites for these overlaps are 19.3% and 11.4% respectively, the Nagada figures appear uncommonly low, and the Matmar graves rather high.

Unlike the Mahasna catalogue, Brunton's catalogue of Matmar graves seems to be comprehensive, and the high rate of coincidence cannot be explained by the existence of a large group of

uncatalogued graves that could account for anomalies. The above-average overlap of the D-ware and W-ware users possibly suggests that, unlike the people of Nagada, the Matmar community assigned less status differentiation to grave goods. As at Armant (Bard 1994: 67-68), wealthier graves simply have more of everything and do not imply class distinctions between objects. Further comparisons with Armant can be drawn from the low incidence of wealthy graves at both cemeteries.

Brunton's register indicates that only 11 out of the 235 Predynastic graves at Matmar contain over 10 objects, despite Castillos' figure of 18% of wealthy graves for Matmar (Castillos 1982b: Table 8).³⁵ These 11 graves constitute a percentage of 4.7% of graves. This low percentage indicates that Matmar, according to Castillos' formula, is a very poor cemetery, poorer even than Armant at 6%. Like Armant, Matmar may have been an isolated "backwater" that did not have an élite until one was established there by centralising forces in the late Predynastic.

The few wealthy graves do not include the two graves containing the 5 figurines. These two very ordinary graves of few grave goods hold no W, D, or Stone wares either (Table 3.1). The 2 D-class pots with boat imagery both come from poorer graves (Table 3.2), and, as would be expected of such a poor cemetery with so few wealthy graves, the majority of both the D-ware and the W-ware comes from poor graves (Table 3.4). The nearly equal distribution of W and D-ware in graves containing over 10 objects (W-ware in 5 and D-ware in 6 wealthy graves) (Table 3.4) suggests a disregard for status differentiation.

Conclusions on the Matmar Figurines

If any conclusion can be drawn from the Matmar evidence, it is that figurine use, as usual, is extremely rare and unrelated to wealth. Predynastic W-class and D-class pots at Matmar were not necessarily associated with wealth and seemed to be enjoyed by both rich and poor. That D-ware could be enjoyed by both is predictable, but unusual for W-ware. Perhaps, as suggested, status is not so clearly defined at Matmar.

³⁵ As Castillo does not supplement his tables with raw data, how he arrived at 18% cannot be determined.

El Amrah

At El Amrah, 10 graves contain a total of 11 figurines (Table 3.1). Again, 19th century excavation techniques and data collection make it difficult to draw significant conclusions about the relative wealth of the graves catalogued and the distribution of pottery and figurines, as Maciver and Mace (1902) chose to catalogue only those graves they deemed significant:

Only tombs which contained objects or combinations of some interest are entered here. Those which yielded nothing more valuable than a few common and well-known pots, or perhaps one slate palette, do not merit any special description. (Maciver & Mace 1902: 15)

Table 3.3 delineates the figures for pottery and figurines at El Amrah as taken from Maciver and Mace's 1902 report *El Amrah and Abydos*. Percentages of pots and figurines in relation to absolute total graves are not represented because the total number of graves is not catalogued.

Of approximately 1,000 Predynastic and Dynastic graves in the El Amrah cemeteries (ibid 2), Maciver and Mace catalogued 153 Predynastic graves. They did not indicate how many Predynastic "unimportant" graves they left out. As a result, reading through the catalogue of graves gives the impression of a very rich community.

If ten objects in a grave demonstrate wealth, then El Amrah was a very wealthy community compared even to the wealthiest sector at Nagada. Of the 55 graves in El Amrah's Cemetery A, 24 contain more than 10 objects; of the 53 graves in Cemetery B, 31 contain more than ten objects. These counts are extraordinarily high, indicating that 43.6% and 58.5% of graves in Cemeteries A and B respectively hold more than 10 objects. Not even the wealthy Nagada II and III graves at Abydos, which record 25% of graves with over 10 objects (Castillos 1982b: 47, Table 8), exceed these percentages. We can only conclude that the El Amrah report exempts a very large number of poor and middle-class graves.

The graves with figurines at El Amrah, compared to other cemeteries, are wealthier as well. Six of the 10 graves containing figurines reach a count of 10 or more objects (Table 3.1). The richest

graves of the cemetery, however, do not include figurines. Thirteen graves contain more than 20 objects, and not one contains a figurine.

The 13 exceptionally rich graves are distributed unevenly across the cemetery. In fact, Maciver and Mace divided the cemetery into two sections, Cemetery A and Cemetery B, noting that the Cemetery B graves "proved to be of considerable size and importance" (ibid 3) compared to Cemetery A, as demonstrated by the percentages of graves with 10 objects. El Amrah, like the Nagada burial site, is divided into separate cemeteries for the rich and poor. Of these 13 very rich graves, 10 are found in Cemetery B. Of Maciver and Mace's catalogued graves, the average number of grave goods for Cemetery A is 10.6 objects and for Cemetery B, 13.8 objects.

Further supporting the observation that Cemetery A is poor relative to Cemetery B is the distribution of W-class, D-class, and Stone wares, delineated in Table 3.3. Indicators of wealth and/or status, W-class and Stone wares are more heavily represented in Cemetery B than Cemetery A. D-ware, understood to substitute for the more expensive stone vases and used more frequently by the less wealthy members than W-class or stone wares, is far better represented in Cemetery A than W-class, although still of higher incidence in Cemetery B than Cemetery A.

With the exception of one figurine, all come from the poorer Cemetery A graves (Table 3.1), and the one from Cemetery B comes from a grave well below average in grave goods. Also not one figurine coincides with a W-class, D-class, or stone vase. Therefore, as in other sites, real or pretended wealth or status does not accompany the figurines. Rather, with an average count of 10 objects per grave with a figurine, the figurines appear to be associated with the higher economic strata of the poorer class, also demonstrated by the minimal presence of rare materials and absence of imported materials (Table 3.1).

Two graves from Nagada I at El Amrah contain C-ware. Grave A90 may be that of a special individual for it contains 3 C-class pots and two maces, as well as a figurine. C-ware, the precursor to D-ware, may have special meaning, but its occurrence is too rare to determine a pattern. It appears only in the more egalitarian Nagada I period.

El Amrah D-ware displays the second highest number of boat illustrations of all Predynastic cemeteries (Gilbert 1999: Table 1, p.21). Nagada, with its very high number of graves, comes first with 15. Contradicting, however, the trend established in other cemeteries, the D-ware with boat and/or human imagery occurs in the wealthier Cemetery B (Table 3.2). Of the seven examples of pots with these motifs, 6 occur in Cemetery B, one per grave, while only one occurs in Cemetery A. Of these 7 graves, 5 are of above average wealth (Table 3.2). Grave A139 includes a pot with boat imagery along with rare lapis, calcite and gold covered beads – an unusual combination for a grave in a "poor" cemetery. Grave B230, with over 19 objects, includes lapis beads and an ivory-handled copper dagger – again a rare association of D-ware boat imagery with artefacts suggesting status.

The single D-class pot incorporating the iconography of a female figure with raised arms (Table 3.2, D46), though, comes from a poor Cemetery B grave containing only 7 objects, B225 (*ibid* 23) (Table 3.2). This association with a poorer grave may be significant if the illustrations of women on these vases share a meaning with the comparable figurines.

This contradiction in D-ware allocation can in part be explained by Maciver and Mace's observation that Cemetery A, while poorer than Cemetery B, is also older (Maciver & Mace 1902: 3; 16-30). As one works through their catalogue (*ibid* 16-30), organised chronologically according to Sequence Dates, the number of A graves decreases while the number of B graves increases until the section on the Nagada III period is reached, and all graves are found in Cemetery B. Cemetery A falls into disuse. That the D-ware with boat and human imagery should occur in more recent graves in Cemetery B makes sense since these types did not emerge until the second half of the Nagada II period (Nagada IIc) (Payne 1990). If Cemetery A contains mainly Nagada I burials, it could not be expected to accommodate the D-ware.

El Amrah displays a much higher coincidence of D, W, and Stone wares than do other cemeteries. Forty-two percent of graves containing W-class also contain D-class, and 26.7% of graves with D-class contain W-class as well (Table 3.5). All coincidences occur in graves of over 10 objects, and 5 in graves over 20 objects. All but 3 coincidences occur in the wealthier Cemetery B. As at Matmar,

all classes of society seemed to enjoy D-ware, unlike in the Nagada community, while W-ware use seems to fall predominantly to the wealthy sector, with only one poor member enjoying a W-class pot (Table 3.4).

Nagada III and Protodynastic graves at El Amrah

Maciver and Mace included in their catalogue graves from Nagada III and Dynasty 1. In support of observations on Nagada III graves thus far, the El Amrah graves contain no figurines and, judging from the remains, the El Amrah graves of Nagada III are "extremely poor" to "very poor, generally containing no objects" (Maciver & Mace 1902: 25). The Dynasty I graves are not wealthy either, and this decline in grave goods implies a shift of the focus of wealth and power to another centre, perhaps to Hierakonpolis. Alternatively, the élite at El Amrah might have chosen to bury their dead immediately to the north at Abydos, with the rise of a centralised mortuary cult for the ruling class.

Conclusions on the El Amrah Figurines

El Amrah stands out as an unusual cemetery with a high number of wealthy graves and more extensive sharing of W and D ware by all classes. The possibility comes to mind that El Amrah might be closer to the typical Predynastic cemetery, for perhaps it did not suffer the extent of plundering the others did, and hence only looks wealthier.

At first glance, El Amrah seems to break all the rules set by the other cemeteries: its inclusion of figurines in wealthy graves (although not in the wealthier cemetery); its high incidence of overlap between D and W wares, far more mutually exclusive in other cemeteries; and the high proportion of boat imagery.

But upon examining the data in context of the general distribution of wealth among the El Amrah cemeteries, despite the wealthy appearance of the cemetery, the figurines, as at other sites, occur in the graves of the ordinary people, some poor and some wealthy. Their presence in the earlier graves (ibid 16-17) of the poorer Cemetery A, their near absence from the wealthier Cemetery B, and their total absence from the Nagada III graves support the general thesis developed thus far. As usual,

supporting evidence also comes from the lack of coincidence of figurines with prestigious wares such as W-class, stone vases, and the ersatz prestigious D-ware.

Ma'ameriah³⁶

Again the lack of complete data stifles analysis. Like so many archaeologists of his time, Henry de Morgan documented only those graves he deemed "the most important and typical ones" (de Morgan 1912: 32). For Ma'ameriah, this choice means that only 25 of the 232 graves excavated are detailed, and, as in Petrie's documentation of Ab'adiya, specific information is lacking even for these 25 graves. However, out of these 25 graves, 4 contain a total of 20 figurines (Table. 3.1), making Ma'ameriah highly significant to this study.

Unfortunately, de Morgan appears to have been unaware of the development of pottery-types outlined in Petrie's report on Diospolis Parva (1901: 13-17). As a result, only the B-class ware can readily be identified from de Morgan's descriptions. W-class ware does not seem to fit any description from de Morgan's account of Ma'ameriah, and only one grave, 134, can be ascertained to contain a D-class pot, from the description of "a very interesting vase, decorated with birds" (de Morgan 1912: 12). One particularly frustrating entry covers 13 graves and only notes their contents as slate objects, painted vases, and B ware (ibid 37). The frustration comes from the realisation that the "painted vases" are very probably D-class ware, if not C-class ware, and the absence of specific grave numbers and account of other goods renders a conclusion about the distribution of these wares at Ma'ameriah impossible.

De Morgan, for some reason, clearly identifies stone vases and gives accurate counts. He treats ceramic pots, however, far more casually and frequently neglects to provide numbers of specific pots, even when he does allocate a grave number. For example, he often describes "some dishes and point shaped vases" (ibid 34), or "a few small vases in red clay" (ibid 37), making an accurate count of grave goods very difficult.

³⁶ H. de Morgan (1912: 30-38)

Despite all these difficulties in making use of de Morgan's data, a rough count of grave goods from the 25 graves reveals an unusually small number of objects per grave. Only 4 graves seem to contain more than 10 objects: graves 21, 36, 134, and 186 contain 13, 11, 13, and 32 objects respectively. Since de Morgan chose to document only the "important" graves, one must wonder at the paucity of goods in the poor graves, especially since the same choice on the part of Maciver and Mace at El Amrah produced a catalogue of exceptionally rich graves in comparative terms.

The near absence of any material that could be classified as rare or expensive, with the exception of the stone vases, stands out in de Morgan's account. As can be predicted, these stone vases appear more readily in the brick-lined tombs than the ordinary graves.

A number of possible explanations for the paucity of goods and rare materials come to mind:

1. Ma'ameriah is a poor cemetery.
2. Grave robbing of all kinds was very thorough.
3. De Morgan did not look for evidence of rare materials by sifting through the debris for small objects, such as gold, silver, turquoise, and lapis beads. Indeed, he rarely mentions beads, which are ubiquitous in all other cemeteries. It is unlikely that the Ma'amarians went unadorned, in contrast to their fellow Upper Egyptians.
4. All three of the above explanations apply.

Explanation number 4 seems the most reasonable, and the conclusion must be reached that de Morgan's record of the graves at Ma'ameriah is far too inaccurate to contribute data to a general analysis of wealth, status, and material culture at Ma'ameriah.

De Morgan does provide some useful information on burial types, dividing the graves into 3 types (de Morgan 1912: 31). Type 1 is particularly interesting because here the Predynastic Egyptians apparently dismembered the body before burial in a very small grave. The pottery is common and roughly made, indicating poor burials. For de Morgan, these burials brought to mind the dismemberment of Osiris and the collection of his parts prior to burial (ibid). That the arrangement of

bones and crania appears deliberate undermines the general assumption that animal scavenging is to blame.

Type 2 are later burials involving the use of larger tombs, more stone vases, more finely made pottery, brick-lining and slab covering (ibid). These sound like typical Nagada III tomb burials for the élite.

Type 3 constitutes the more familiar Nagada I and II burials. Typically these are oblong, without coffins or tomb linings (ibid 38). These graves contain "cream coloured vases with linear vegetable or animal decoration painted in red" (ibid), clearly D-class ware. De Morgan thought that these graves are later than Type 2 (ibid 31) because of the presence of flints and copper, but their description places them among the typical Nagada II graves preceding the brick-lined tombs.

The most useful information provided by de Morgan for this site is the description of the two graves containing figurines, graves 2 and 186 (Table 3.1). From de Morgan's descriptions, both are Type 3 burials, without coffins or brick lining. This description places them within the Nagada I or II period rather than any later period, confirming the confinement of figurines to the early and middle Predynastic periods. Ucko suspected that these graves belong to Nagada I, and he tentatively offered this date for the figurines in his catalogue (Ucko 1968: 99-101).

The figurines found in these two graves (2 in grave 2, 16 in grave 186) constitute the most unusual figurine form of all. These are the "dancing" figurines, which probably influenced the style of female figures on the Nagada II D-class ware. As described in the previous chapter, these figurines stand, sit, or lean with their arms raised above their heads, fingers turned inward, palms outward. Most often the heads of figurines with raised arms are beaked, and in the case of the Ma'ameriah figurines, they are all beaked. Two, however, have stump arms.

Grave 2 is quite ordinary, containing only 7 objects besides the 2 figurines. In contrast, Grave 186 is the most exceptional in the entire cemetery, containing 16 pots besides the 16 figurines. Typically, both graves offered no hint of W-class ware, D-class ware, or rare or imported materials.

De Morgan documented evidence for another figurine, not noted by Ucko. Grave 73, an ordinary grave containing 4 objects, yields a small ivory head. Possibly the grave contains more objects, as de Morgan was forced by the landowner to abandon the excavation of this grave, so the data might be incomplete.

Another figurine from Ma'ameriah turns up in Needler's account (Needler 1984). Neither Ucko nor de Morgan mentioned a possible male ivory figurine with perhaps a jar on its head from grave 47 (Needler 1984: 381-2, Figure 1). Needler provided no further information on grave 47.

Conclusions on the Ma'ameriah figurines

It is tempting at this point to go into interpretive explanations of these figurines because of their provocative stance and rarity. I, however, leave them to Chapter 6, after the investigations of Chapters 4 and 5 bring additional resources to the discussion. Too often cursory interpretations single out these figurines as evidence for the existence of a Predynastic Mother Goddess or dismiss them as mere dancing figures of uncertain meaning.

At this point, setting aside the unusual style and uniqueness, the figurines seem to conform to the pattern set by other cemeteries; that is, they occur in the graves of the rich and poor, but not in the tombs of the rising élite. They are not associated with symbols of power and wealth, such as rare and imported materials, W-class, or Stone wares. They seem to belong to the graves of ordinary Predynastic Egyptians.

Mostagedda

Mostagedda, which yields 7 figurines, is so badly plundered that Brunton felt "that very little information of any statistical value could be gathered" (Brunton 1937: 82). The poor condition of the Mostagedda graves could be responsible for the low incidence of "wealthy" graves containing over 10

objects. For the Nagada periods, wealthy Mostagedda graves constitute only 8% of the total (Castillos 1982b, Table 8).

Regardless of the general impoverishment of this cemetery, the data catalogued by Brunton and presented in a register of graves for the Predynastic period (Brunton 1937: Plates XXIX - XXXI) displays a remarkable conformity to the patterns already demonstrated in other cemeteries: a larger percentage of D-ware than W-ware (Table 3.3); a low coincidence of D and W ware (5 out of 204 graves) (Table 3.5); an even lower coincidence of D and S ware (1 grave); a very low incidence of figurines (1% of graves, Table 3.3); and no coincidence of figurines and prestigious wares (D, W, and S wares) (Table 3.1).

Mostagedda contains sites from the Badarian period, and three figurines are dated to this level: one from a "wealthy" grave containing over 11 objects, and two from village rubbish (the dating of one is uncertain. See note 20 for Table 3.1). A figurine in village rubbish is a rare find in Egypt – these are the only two. The rarity tempts the speculation that loss or breakage rather than village ritual placed them there. Brunton documented two additional figurines in his illustrations of grave objects (Brunton 1937: PL. XLII; Ucko 1968: Figurines 107, 108). These are surface finds from areas 11700 and 1800, and cannot be assigned to any particular period or graves.

Conclusions on the Mostagedda Figurines

A total of 7 figurines come from Mostagedda: 3 from the Badarian period; 2 from Nagada I and II; with the remaining 2 undated. As usual, no figurines come from Nagada III. Only one figurine, from Badarian grave 494, is associated with wealth, but not necessarily status, because of the egalitarian nature demonstrated for the Badarian period.

Because of the unusual locations of some of the Mostagedda figurines, and the poor condition of the cemetery, little can be said about who used the figurines. The Mostagedda data is valuable, though, for the possible significance of the figurines found in habitation sites.

Gender Implications

Before summing up the implications of this investigation into each cemetery and its figurines, an important but often overlooked contextual issue needs to be explored. This issue concerns the sex of the skeleton in relation to the sex of the figurines.

Often interpretations of prehistoric figurines as a whole rely on the use of ethnographic parallels, often with contemporary African peoples still practising a traditional life-style and religion. These parallels suggest a number of possible meanings for the figurines, from concubine figures, dolls, initiation figurines, shaman's agents, and ancestor figures. Ucko (1962, 1968) explored several of these possibilities. Often these categories require some relationship between the sex of the deceased and the sex of the figurine, either the same sex or the opposite.

Little work has been done on gender and prehistoric figurines, possibly because, only too often, the sex of the skeleton either cannot be determined, or usually, was not considered important enough to document in the early days of archaeology. Unfortunately, few Predynastic Egyptian skeletons have been sexed, making any analysis impossible (Bard 1994: 35). The paucity of data, however, did not stop Shelley Smith (1984) from investigating gender and material remains in Predynastic Egypt. A small section of her MA thesis focuses on the figurines, and her conclusions are considered here in the final chapter on interpretation. For the sake of that chapter, following is a brief discussion of what can be said about the gender context of the figurines.

Table (3.6) delineates the distribution of the sex of the skeleton in relation to the sex of the figurine. Only 18 graves containing a total of 25 figurines out of a total of 51 graves containing 88 stratified figurines (out of a total of 244 figurines) (Appendix 1) include a skeleton that can be sexed. Therefore information is so limited as to be insignificant. Also, out of these 18 graves, 8 contain figurines that also cannot be sexed. This fact is particularly disappointing because all but two come from the same cemetery, El Amrah (Table 3.1), in which the number of sexed skeletons is relatively high. If the sex

of the figurines could be determined, something significant about the gender implications could be said, at least for this cemetery.

From the data provided in Table 3.6, discounting the number of figurines that cannot be sexed, only 10 graves provide any information on the sex of the figurine versus the sex of the skeleton. The female to female category is the highest and constitutes just half of the skeleton sample, representing 6 figurines in 5 graves. They are made from various materials, but 5 have stump arms, with one of unknown arm style. If more examples were available, this small uniformity may point to something significant.

The other same sex category, male to male, constitutes only one example, with the male skeleton accompanied by 2 male figurines. A wider sample could tell whether such rarity is the norm, and if so, this fact would be significant.

The opposite sex categories constitute a small portion of the sample, with 2 female skeletons in conjunction with one male figurine each, and 2 male skeletons in conjunction with 6 female figurines, constituting 8 figurines, with illustrations available only for the 2 male figurines, both completely different (see Ucko 1968: Figurines 17, 52). Multiple figurines accompany both male skeletons: 4 and 2 respectively. Again, this could be significant if attested by a wider sample.

The sex correlations are so limited as to imply only that neither a same sex nor an opposite sex pattern dominates enough to suggest any interpretations that rely on one or the other pattern. One point can be noted: figurines with raised arms cannot be assigned to either male or female skeletons.

Conclusions on Material Context

Of the 154 locatable figurines (Appendix 1), 88 can be assigned to 51 specific graves. Table 3.1 accounts for 83 of this group of 88, representing 46 graves. Discounting the 16 figurines found in one grave, 26 figurines come from 14 graves containing more than 10 objects. This data indicates that

31% of the graves with figurines could be considered "wealthy" graves, at least in terms of number of objects. (I eliminate the 16 figurines from this statistic because of the atypical nature of the grave.)

A brief glance at the NewMaterials categories of Table 3.1 shows that, although just under one third of the graves with figurines contain a large number of objects, infrequently these objects are made from rare or expensive materials, and in only one case, an imported material (silver in grave H41 at Mahasna). Most often, the "large" number of objects constitutes pottery of common types, complemented by the occasional smattering of rare materials, such as in graves H 29 and H 41 at Mahasna and 1503 at Nagada East. A large number of grave goods could imply status, but the absence of luxury materials mitigates against this interpretation. Rather, several locally acquired grave goods could represent an accumulation over a lifetime, rather than high status in the community.

Seven of the 14 "wealthy" graves with figurines stand out as particularly rich, with over 20 objects each. Where specific dating can be determined, 5 of these come from the Nagada I period (a question hangs over one allocation - grave 273 at Nagada). As Kathryn Bard demonstrated, the Nagada I period, at least at Nagada, displays far less social differentiation than the Nagada II and III periods. She concluded that stratification developed after the relatively egalitarian Badarian and Nagada I periods. It becomes noticeable in the Nagada II record and continues through the highly differentiated Nagada III period, which culminated in the institutionalisation of a ruling élite. Therefore, assigning a political status to the wealthy graves of the Nagada I period is problematic, for no clear ruling class is evident from the material remains, although one can assume some incipient stratification in this early period.

Repeatedly, the individual analyses of most cemeteries with figurines demonstrate the same tendency: that the figurines are occasionally found in conjunction with wealth, but not with high status. This observation is suggested by the following:

1. An absence of imported materials, which the élite obtained by foreign trade and relations.
2. The near absence of rare materials, which are freely found in wealthy

and élite graves.

3. The near absence of prestigious items such as W-class and Stone wares.
4. The near absence of the quasi-prestigious ware, D-class.
5. Where wealth is indicated, often the grave belongs to a more egalitarian period of the Predynastic, prior to the appearance of a ruling class.

By no means does every cemetery conform completely to this pattern. Variations, particularly in the use of D-class and W-class wares and in the numbers of wealthy individuals buried with figurines, demonstrate the blurred edges of social class.

The upper class graves of Nagada with W-class ware do not include D-class as well. But the more privileged members of El Amrah and Matmar did not differentiate so markedly between the two wares, each with its own indication of status. At El Amrah, too, a higher standard of general wealth seems to be dispersed throughout the community; even the poorer cemetery displays a high number of grave goods. But still the highest-class members avoided the figurines, and this point remains the most consistent observation on the use of the figurines across all Predynastic cemeteries.

At times the conclusions could seem to result from working backwards towards the data from a premise derived from the analysis of only one site, Nagada. Bard (1994) concluded that social stratification and the rise of a ruling class radiated out from Nagada to the other Predynastic sites. Her conclusion is corroborated by similar analyses of material remains (B. Adams 1987; Castillos 1982b), which also demonstrate that changes in the material record first appear at Nagada and are repeated at other sites, to a lesser or greater degree. This material evidence, which places Nagada at the fore of social and economic change, would understandably be only partially reflected by other sites, as they gradually, and at different rates, changed from their earlier more egalitarian structures, towards the more highly stratified social structure reached at Nagada. Markers of their previous egalitarian society, such as wider access to material goods and less identification of status objects, would persist as their association with the wider Predynastic culture exposed them to new ideas, greater wealth, and trade goods. Perhaps the installation of representatives from Nagada, as

suggested by the appearance of Nagada-type tombs at Armant, finally ensured that only élite members in the various communities enjoyed certain wealth and privileges.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE CONTEXT OF THE FIGURINES

The earliest Predynastic Egyptians arrived in the Nile Valley c6000 BCE, probably in response to a drier change in climate which forced them to seek sustenance closer to the Nile. Before this time, these peoples lived in a variety of locations in the Eastern and Western deserts, playas, and oases. Arriving in the Nile Basin, and bringing with them their various ways of life, beliefs, customs, livelihoods, and technologies, they settled alongside each other with the indigenous fishing population already living close to the Nile River. Some may have even brought their figurine rituals with them.

Pressures of climate, population, and inter-group relations gradually challenged these disparate groups of people to evolve a more co-operative and homogeneous culture. By about 4000 BCE a distinct Upper Egyptian Predynastic culture had solidified into what we recognise as the Badarian period. The Badarians practised burial rituals, which involved the use of ivory and clay figurines, but no consistent tradition is evident.

These early Predynastic Egyptians formed a more-or-less egalitarian society, without the need for a structured ruling class. No doubt they had chiefs and religious leaders, but these came from the ordinary members of society and did not differentiate themselves by claiming exclusive access to symbols of power and wealth. If migrants from the socially stratified culture of the Nabta Playa (Wendorf, Close & Schild 1992-3; Wendorf et al 1997; Wendorf & Schild 1996, 1998; Wendorf, Schild & Zedeno 1996) were among these early migrants, their predilection for hierarchy does not appear to have impacted significantly on the earliest settled Predynastic Egyptians.

Social stratification developed later, during the Nagada II period, which saw the appearance of grave goods symbolic of status not accessible to all – W-class pots, Stone vases, and imported precious materials. The figurines, however, continued to be used by ordinary people, and as the Nagada II

period turned into the Nagada III period, the figurine rituals were not appropriated by those in authority.

As Predynastic Egyptian society moved towards unification, the ruling class, as demonstrated by Bard's analysis of Nagada, moved towards more elaborate and expensive tomb construction. Their burials began to be centralised, particularly at Abydos and later Saqqara, and the wealth of the country went to support the increasingly elaborate mortuary cult, which consumed both rare and imported materials, as well as the time and skill of the available craftspeople. With the shift of burial locations, the mortuary industry shifted location as well. Later, when the centre of power relocated from Upper Egypt to Memphis, the burial industry, with its appropriation of materials and skill, moved again, leaving Upper Egyptian mortuary culture bereft of its former diversity and richness.

This shift from localised rituals and beliefs resulted in the increasing centralisation and institutionalisation of Egyptian religion. Not only did the ruling class appropriate the materials and craftspeople, they probably selected from existing religious ideas those which supported the new system. As demonstrated in so many of the small villages of the Nagada period, by Nagada III, centralised rule established at Nagada and then Hierakonpolis extended its domination into outlying towns and villages. During their reign, they drew on the wealth of the community to support themselves, and in turn enforced a new religious structure composed of new and traditional elements. Hence, the locally inspired and manufactured figurines and D-ware gave way to more standardised beliefs and practices, focusing more and more on the wealthy tombs and the king rather than on the ordinary graves.

Along with the decline in grave goods for ordinary people, came the end of the grave figurines as we know them from the Predynastic. Ivory figurines and other votive objects began to be manufactured for temple worship, but the use of grave figurines seemed to disappear until the Dynastic period, when the Shabti figurines, some deity figurines (Frankfurter 1998: 134), and some clay figurines, often associated with requests for the birth of children, appear in graves (Baumgartel 1950-1; Quirke 1992: 124). Amulets continued to be part of mortuary ritual, some specifically representing a cow

deity, assumed to be the goddess Hathor (Bleeker 1973: 45), but the figurine styles of the Predynastic disappeared.

The figurines, therefore, arose from the beliefs and practices of the egalitarian communities of the Badarian and early Nagada periods. In order to understand what meaning(s) the figurines may have had for these early Egyptians, a study of the religion of twentieth century peoples living a similar life style could produce some significant and illuminating parallels with the religion practised by these early Nile dwellers. The following chapter examines the religions of twentieth-century Nilotes, the Nuer, Dinka, and Atuot tribes of Sudan, in order to understand the structure of their religion, their concepts of deity and soul, and the rituals and other practices through which they express their beliefs.

TABLE 3.1: REGISTER OF GRAVES WITH FIGURINES, INCLUDING SIGNIFICANT GRAVE GOODS¹

TOMB # (sex of skeleton) if known ⁵	DATE	POTTERY TYPE ²						STONE L VASES	PALETTES	NAGADA "NEWMATERIALS" ³						SIGNIFICANT OBJECTS and MATERIALS ⁴	FIGURINES	RELEVANT DETAILS	NO. OF OBJECTS	#	
		B	P	F	C	W	D			R	rare			common							
											1	2	3	4	5						6 ³
NAGADA WEST																					
271	Nag I	3					4	2			1	1		7	16	fish tail knife	5 ivory ⁴ 2F 1 V.P. F 1 clay ⁷	30+	271		
273	Nag I					1									8		1 ivory	9	273		
NAGADA EAST																					
1329 (F)			1	1				1						1	2	2	1 ivory 1 alabaster	5	1329		
1413				1							1	2	1	1	1	gold foil bead (2)	2 veg paste F	9	1413		
1488 (M)				1								1	1	1	1	pear mace head ivory tusk disc mace head	2 veg paste or clay ⁸	6	1488		
1503	Nag I		1	2			1				1	2	1	3	14	3	lion claws (1) bracelets, armlets beads, combs, hair pins, coral (2)	1 clay ⁹ 1 V.P. ⁹	grave goods all personal objects	32	1503
1611	Nag I																1 clay ⁹ F			1611	
1611				1											1	1	1 clay in fill			4	1611
1677 (M)				1											5	1	tusks,	1 ivory ¹⁰		7+	1677

¹ Since it is neither possible nor necessary to represent all grave goods, only those relevant to wealth and status are included, except in the column listing the number of objects.

² Number of pots are often indicated in archaeological reports. However, the classification of various pots is not evident and therefore, the number of pots per category will not necessarily add up to the number of pots in the grave. The pots important for this discussion, ie D-class and W-class, are always indicated as they are readily identifiable.

³ Number of ceramic pots.

⁴ Numbers in parenthesis refer to Bard's group number for NewMaterials. Only those of rare or imported nature are included.

⁵ F = female; M = male; C = child; A = adolescent

⁶ Ucko records 5 ivory and 1 V.P. figurine (Ucko 1968: 86-89), whereas Baumgartel records only those 3 ivories included in the Petrie Collection.

⁷ Payne 1987

⁸ Payne 1987

⁹ Not in Baumgartel's supplement so therefore no grave details are available.

¹⁰ Baumgartel (1970a: Plate LIV)

TOMB # (sex of skeleton) if known	DATE	POTTERY TYPE							STONE L VASES	PALETTES	NAGADA "NEWMATERIALS"						SIGNIFICANT OBJECTS and MATERIALS	FIGURINES	RELEVANT DETAILS	NO. OF OBJECTS	#
		B	P	F	C	W	D	R			L	rare	1	2	3	4					
Nagada cont'd																	20 pebbles				
1687		1	2					1						1	4		1 pottery		7	1687	
1705			1					1	1			1	1		2	horn harpoon (2)	1 veg paste frag		5+	1705	
1802																	1 clay		1	1802	
1895																	3 clay ¹¹ 1F			1895	
MAHASNA																					
H29 (F)	Nag I	4	3					2	2				+ ¹²	+	+	9	clay mace head ivory "wands", hippo bowl	1 ivory M associated with F skeleton	2 bodies, large square grave richest on site ¹³ not plundered	30+	H29
H33	Nag II	3	1													7		1 clay, red large	oval grave with ledge, plundered	8	H33
H41 (F)		8	1								2	2	3	1	+	9	diorite (1), silver (2), gold (2), clay gaming board clay rattles	1 clay, red F placed on F body	3 bodies rectangular grave very rich grave ¹⁴ figurine in burial position	20+	H41
H42		7	1						1							8		1 clay	circular grave	10	H42
H97	Nag I	2	1	1												4		1 clay head	oval grave	5	H97
AB'ADIYA & HU (DIOSPOLIS)																					
B83	Nag II																model of a town wall with male figures looking over	3 clay in fill 1F, 2M		15	B83
B101 (F)	Nag I			0	0				4						9	"masses"	hippo palette, hippo figurines, 6 model	2 veg paste F (Ucko says 3)	largest grave in cemetery	30+	B101

¹¹ Not in Baumgartel's supplement, therefore no grave details are available.

¹² Archaeological report indicates many items rather than a specific number.

¹³ Ayrton & Loat: 1911: 11

¹⁴ Baumgartel 1960: 67

TOMB # (sex of skeleton) if known	DATE	POTTERY TYPE										STONE VASES	PALETTES	NAGADA "NEWMATERIALS"						SIGNIFICANT OBJECTS and MATERIALS	FIGURINES	RELEVANT DETAILS	NO. OF OBJECTS	#
		B	P	F	C	W	D	R	L	rare				common										
										1	2			3	4	5	6							
Ab'adiya & Hu cont'd															ostrich eggs									
B109 (F)	Nag II?												I			+	fish tail knife	1 clay F		14	B109			
B119																	mace head, chisel, hoe	1 clay M		6	B119			
U96	Nag I																	2 clay M		2	U96			
MA'AMERIEH																								
2	Nag I	2															6	fishtail knife	2 raised arms F beaked face		9	2		
186	Nag I?	4															16		16 F all but 2 with raised arms, all with beaked face		32	186		
37																	3		1 ivory ¹⁵ M		4	37		
73		3															3		1 ivory ¹⁶	head only	4?	73		
ADAIMA																								
?																			1 clay beaked figure working at large pot. servant? ¹⁷					
MATMAR																								
2643																			1 clay		6	2643		
2682 (M)		2															2		4 ivory ¹⁸ F	in a box	6	2682		
EL AMRAH																								
A41 (F)		7	I														6	pottery box	1 clay M	Ucko says V.P.	9	A41		
A56 (M)	Nag II	6	I				2										9	clay boat, 2 pottery boxes, 4 clay cows	2 clay M		18	A56		

¹⁵ Needler 1984: 381-2, Plate 85, Fig. 1

¹⁶ de Morgan 1912: 34

¹⁷ Needler 1984: Pl.85 Fig. 3.

¹⁸ Brunton 1948: 14.

TOMB # (sex of skeleton) if known	DATE	POTTERY TYPE								STONE VASES	PALETTES	NAGADA "NEWMATERIALS"						SIGNIFICANT OBJECTS and MATERIALS	FIGURINES	RELEVANT DETAILS	NO. OF OBJECTS	#
		B	P	F	C	W	D	R	L			rare 1	2	3	4	common 5	6					
El Amrah cont'd																						
A57 (F)		4	3											1	7		1 ?		11	A57		
A67 (F)															3		1 clay		4	A67		
A72 (M)	Nag I	5			1			1							7		4 clay cows	1 clay	12	A72		
A74 (C)	Nag II	3	1							3				x	4			1 clay	13	A74		
A90 (M)	Nag I	4			3						1		1	7		diorite mace (1) limestone mace (4)	1 clay	10	A90			
A94 (F)	Nag II	5	1	1							1		1	7		large shell ?	1 V.P. M	9	A94			
A117 (A)	Nag II	1	2					3	1					1	8		1 clay	10	A117			
B202 (M)	Nag I	2													2		model wooden adze	1 clay	5	B202		
MOSTAGEDDA																						
494 (F)	Bad ¹⁹													x	2		steatite bead necklace shell bracelets & anklets leather bag	1 clay F	figurine broken before burial and scattered around the head and hands	11+	494	
X																		2 clay ²⁰ 1 F	found in village rubbish	X		
1832										1					2			1 ivory M		6	1832	
1872 (C)											1?		x				4 strings of beads, some some copper cylinder beads and limestone beads, Tortoise shell or horn bracelet	1 clay ²¹ F		6	1872	
X																		2 clay	cemetery surface finds	X		

¹⁹ Badarian grave, therefore the pottery categories do not apply.

²⁰ May be Badarian. Brunton says Badarian (1937: 56); Ucko says general Predynastic (1968: 103) for one, Badarian for the other (83).

²¹ Not clear if it belongs to this grave (Brunton 1937: 72)

TOMB # (sex of skeleton) if known	DATE	POTTERY TYPE							STONE L VASES	PALETTES	NAGADA "NEWMATERIALS"						SIGNIFICANT OBJECTS and MATERIALS	FIGURINES	RELEVANT DETAILS	NO. OF OBJECTS #			
		B	P	F	C	W	D	R			rare			common									
											1	2	3	4	5	6							
BADARI																							
5107	Bad ²²											x		x			3		I ivory F	6+	5107		
5227	Bad																3		I clay	4	5227		
5769 (A)	Bad																4		I mud	figurine found in pot	5	5769	
3740 (F)									I					I				limestone mace-head	I V.P. F	2 bodies. figurine on chest of female	5	3740	
X																			3 clay 2F	2 found in village rubbish 1 found in cemetery rubbish		X	
QAU																							
113	Nag II																		I clay	head only. grave caved in	?	113	
X																			I clay F	found in cemetery		X	

²² From the Badarian period, therefore the pottery categories do not apply.

TABLE 3.2: D-WARE BOAT AND HUMAN IMAGERY IN CEMETERIES WITH FIGURINES

Cemetery	Grave #	D-ware type	Imagery	# of objects & relevant details
NAGADA NEast	454	D45b	female figure raised arms, touching head. boat	9 all pots
	804	D41s D43b	boat	6+
	827	D40m	boat	4 all pots
	1536	D41/43	boat	4 horn comb
	1680	D45B	boat	3 2 D-ware 1 Stone ware
	1717	D41S	boat	1
	1723	D42T	boat	7+
	1852	D43a	boat	4
	1873	D45b	boat	2 both D-ware
	NWest	390	D40	boat
454		D45b	boat	6
1209		D47b	boat	3
1268		D40t	boat	2
Cem T	T3	D43c	boat	4
Cem B	B19	D41	boat	5
MATMAR	5102	Maciver & Mace PL.XII (12)	boat	4
	5130	ibid PL. XII (11)	boat	7

EL AMRAH	A139	D41b	boat	20+ lapis, calcite and gold covered beads
	B104	D51b	boat	4 lapis and gold covered beads
	B106	D50b	armless figure ends in peg, small waist no boat	17
	B107	D49	boat	24 1 W-ware
	B154	D41b	boat	23 6 D-ware
	B225	D46	boat, females with raised arms wavy handles	7 3 D-ware
	B230	D36a	boat	19+ 6 D-ware, lapis, carnelian & garnet beads; copper dagger in ivory handle

TABLE 3.3: NUMBERS OF SPECIFIC TYPES OF POTS AND FIGURINES BY CEMETERY AND NUMBERS OF GRAVES CONTAINING THEM.

Cemetery	W-ware	No. & % of graves	D-ware	No. & % of graves	Stone Vases	No. & % of graves	Figurines	No. & % of graves	Total No. of graves
NAGADA (Baumgartel 1970a)									
NWest	24	22 5%	33	33 7.4%	69	49 11.1%	8	2 .45%	443
NEast	18	13 1.7%	81	66 8.5%	53	46 6 %	17	11 1.4%	772
B	3	3 4.7%	5	4 6.3%	3	3 4.7%	0		64
T	7	5 13.2%	3	2 5.3%	20	7 18.4%	0		38
<hr/>									
Nagada	52	43 3.3%	122	105 8.0%	145	105 8%	25	13 1.0%	1317

Cemetery	W-ware No. & % of graves			D-ware No. & % of graves			Stone Vases No. & % of graves			Figurines No. & % of graves			Total No. of graves
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MAHASNA (Ayrton and Loat 1911)³⁹

Mahasna	35	17	17.5%	8	6	6.6%	3	2	2.1%	5	5	.2%	97
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AB'ADIYA (Petrie 1901)

Catalogue not detailed enough to provide information on pottery. Percentage of graves with figurines could not be determined as only a small portion of the graves were catalogued (26 out of 570 in Ab'adiya).

MATMAR (Brunton 1948)

Matmar (P.D.)	23	20	8.5%	33	29	12.3%	7	6	2.5%	5	2	.9%	235
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EL AMRAH (Maciver and Mace 1902)⁴⁰

Cemetery A (P.D.)	4	3	5.5%	21	13	23.6%	4	4	7.3%	8	9	16.4%	55
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³⁹ Only "important" graves are catalogued, therefore percentages of graves containing certain wares do not reflect wares in relation to the total number of graves. Rather, they indicate relative occurrence of various wares in relation to each other.

⁴⁰ Again, percentages indicate relative occurrence of wares in relation to each other, not in relation to the total number of graves. Only graves with grave goods were catalogued (Maciver & Mace: 15).

Cemetery	W-ware No. & % of graves			D-ware No. & % of graves			Stone Vases No. & % of graves			Figurines No. & % of graves			Total No. of graves
Cemetery B (P.D.)	24	16	30.2%	34	17	32.1%	13	7	13.2%	1	1	1.9%	53
Cemetery B (Nag III)	0	0		0	0		6	2	15.4%	0	0		13
<hr/>													
El Amrah Total	28	19	15.7%	55	30	24.8%	23	13	10.7%	9	10	8.3%	121

MA'AMERIAH (H. de Morgan 1912)

As for Ab'adiya, too few (25) out of the 232 graves excavated were detailed by de Morgan. Also, he did not classify much of the pottery, and did not provide accurate counts in each grave.

MOSTAGEDDA (Brunton 1937)

Predynastic graves	24	21	10.3%	32	30	14.7%	10	9	4.4%	2	2	1%	204
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Nag III -- Grave register (Plate XXXI) and general description (p. 93-94) did not include a clear categorisation of pot types. 13 graves were recorded.

TABLE 3.4: W-WARE AND D-WARE BY WEALTH OF GRAVES**W-WARE**

CEMETERY	No. of Graves	Number of objects			Total over 10
		0-9	10-20	over 20	
Nagada East	13	11	1	1	2
Nagada West	22	15	4	3	7
Nag Cemetery T	5	0	3	2	5
Nag Cemetery B	3	0	1	2	3
El Mahasna	17	12	3	2	5
Matmar	20	17	5	0	5
El Amrah A	3	0	3	0	3
El Amrah B	16	1	8	7	15
Mostagedda	21	17	3	1	4
<hr/>					
W-WARE TOTALS	120	71	31	18	49

Continued....

Table 3.4 continued.

D-WARE

CEMETERY	No. of Graves	Number of objects			Total over 10
		0-9	10-20	over 20	
Nagada East	66	57	9	0	9
Nagada West	33	31	2	0	2
Nag Cemetery T	2	1	0	1	1
Nag Cemetery B	4	0	1	3	4
El Mahasna	6	4	2	0	2
Matmar	29	23	6	0	6
El Amrah A	13	4	5	4	9
El Amrah B	17	8	4	5	9
Mostagedda	30	26	4	0	4
<hr/>					
D-WARE TOTALS	200	154	33	13	46
W-WARE TOTALS	120	71	31 25.8%	18 15%	49 40.8%
D-WARE TOTALS	200	154	33 16.5%	13 6.5%	46 23.0%

TABLE 3.5: COINCIDENCE OF W-CLASS and D-CLASS WARES

Cemetery	W-ware		D-ware	
	No. of D-ware/ No. of graves	%	No. of W-ware/ No. of graves	%
Nagada	3 in 43	6.9%	3 in 105	2.9%
Mahasna	2 in 17	11.8%	2 in 6	33.3%
Matmar	5 in 20	25/0%	5 in 29	17.2%
El Amrah	8 in 19	42.0%	8 in 30	26.7%
Mostagedda	5 in 21	23.8%	5 in 30	16.7%
<hr/>				
TOTALS	23 in 120	19.2%	23 in 200	11.5%

TABLE 3.6 SEX OF SKELETON vs SEX OF FIGURINE

skeleton	figurine(s)	total graves
F	6 F	5
F	2 M	2
M	6 F	2
M	2 M	1
F	5 ?	4
M	4 ?	4
<hr/>		
TOTALS	25	18