Migration of elites in early egypt

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ABSTRACT:

A study of the variations in social inequality of Egyptian predynastic cemeteries provides evidence for what can perhaps best be interpreted as migrations by local elites to the contemporary political and economic centres at the time, where they enjoyed better prospects of advancement at the service of the regional royal administrations and later on, of the centralized monarchy at the time of the unification of the country under the first pharaohs. The study of eight sites, six of which show a remarkable level of agreement, point at the time in which such migrations could have taken place. Two others do not contradict this picture but rather hint at a probable earlier migration.

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Post-processual critics of the so-called neo-evolutionary approach in archaeology in order to justify their rejection often emphasize diversity in broad and local geographic contexts as well as within the communities themselves[2].

This should add to the general picture and make us aware of such complexities but that same overdiversified approach tends as well to make us lose sight of the relevant process in each case that introduced the significant social, economic and political changes that led to increasing social inequality and stratification towards the appearance of powerful rulers and of the state, wherever it did take place[3].

If this process was sometimes thwarted by external or internal factors or by the inability of some members of the line of emerging hereditary leaders, it does not necessarily mean that the development in that direction never happened or that seeing it as a process underway is an inadequate interpretation.

In the case that I am going to discuss here these remarks may be relevant to understanding the evidence and the direction in which it points according to the writer and perhaps other scholars as well, without any prejudice emerging from preconceived attitudes as to the likelihood and real occurrence of internal migrations at this time.

Migrations have been a constant since our very beginnings as a species. According to the current state of our knowledge, homo sapiens originated in Africa and from there spread all over the world replacing earlier varieties of the homo genus[4].

From then on constraints of an environmental, demographic or other nature have pushed individuals, groups and sometimes whole nations onto lands that seemed to offer them better chances of prosperity or mere survival[5].

The subject of migrations as an interpretation for changes in the archaeological record has a long history, with ups and downs according to the evolution of the paradigms at the time and the criticism that such inferences received, mainly due to the validity of the arguments used to support them[6].

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[2] D. Bolger and L. Maguire, Introduction: The Development of Pre-state Communities in the Ancient Near East, in the book by the same title of which they are the editors, Oxford, 2010, 1-2.

[3] Similar development to the one that seems to emerge from the mainly funerary archaeological evidence and which I suggest for early Egypt was also detected in early Mesopotamia, for example, M. Frangipane, Different models of power structuring at the rise of hierarchical societies in the Near East: Primary economy versus luxury and defence management, in D. Bolger and L. Maguire, (eds.), The Development of Pre-state Communities in the Ancient Near East, Oxford, 2010, 79-82.

[4] I. Tattersall, The World from Beginnings to 4000 BCE, Oxford, 2008, 90-91.

[5] In the case of ancient Egypt see B. Kemp, Ancient Egypt, Anatomy of a civilization, London, 2006, 37-46.

[6] D. Anthony, Migration in archaeology: The baby and the bathwater, American Anthropologist 92, 1990, 895-914; The Bath refilled: Migration in archaeology again, American Anthropologist 94, 1992,

For the detection and evaluation of migrations the most reliable method seems to be the measurement of the content of strontium isotopes in skeletal remains to determine if they match the local signature, if not, we would be in the presence of migrants[7].

However, other variables in funerary data such as tomb size and wealth, this last variable expressed in a number of different ways, have been considered satisfactory to determine social inequality in early Egypt and their variations through time as indicating changes within each predynastic community. Some of those changes have been interpreted as the result of migrations.

Migrations have also been internal within nations readjusting the distribution of their population, usually in the direction from the villages and small cities to the political and economic centres where better living conditions and prospects of social advancement seemed to be available for those willing to break away from their ancestral abodes[8].

Another example of migrations that were part of attempts to control trade with neighbouring areas can be obtained from Southern Palestine where already from the middle of the Fourth Millennium BC there was a permanent Egyptian colony established there which probably canalized the export of Canaanite and other goods to Egypt. The Egyptian settlement was surrounded by walls which were initially 1.5 m thick and then were expanded to about 4 m thickness. This colonial expansion lasted several centuries and ended abruptly just before the First Dynasty, when Egypt was involved in its process of political unification. After some time the southern Palestine site was reoccupied by Canaanites who built 8 m thick walls around their settlement[9].

In ancient Egypt during pharaonic times those who wanted to prosper in the service of the state could either wait in their villages to be discovered by important officials or by Pharaoh himself or more realistically migrate to the capital at the time to display their skills and ability and put them at the service of the royal administration[10].

174-176; Prehistoric migration as social process, in J. Chapman and H. Hamerow (eds), Migrations and invasions in archaeological explanation, Oxford, 1997.

[7] T. Price et al., Residential mobility in the prehistoric southwest: a preliminary study using strontium isotope analysis, Journal of Archaeological Science 21, 1994, 315-30.

[8] For migrations of elites elsewhere, J. Miksic, Chinese ceramics and the economics of early Southeast Asian urbanisation, 14th to 16th centuries, Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association Bulletin 26, 2006, 147-153; S. Subrahmanyam, Iranians Abroad: Intra-Asian Elite Migration and Early Modern State Formation, The Journal of Asian Studies 51, No. 2, 1992, 340-363; A. Slusser, Discerning migration in the archaeological record: A case study at Chichén Itzá, Orlando, 2008.

[9] P. de Miroschedji and M. Sadek, Gaza et l'Égypte de l'Époque Prédynastique à l'Ancien Empire: premiers résultats des fouilles de Tell es-Sekan, Bulletin de la Société Française d'Égyptologie, 152, 2001, 28-52.

[10] M. Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdom, London, 1975, 17, Inscription of Nefer-Sheshem Re, Dyn. 6: "I have come from my town, I have descended from my

At the very beginning of state formation in Egypt, elites emerged in various parts of the country. Those of Upper Egypt set in motion the changes that paved the way for the appearance of hereditary chiefs, later on of regional kingdoms and then of the single monarchy that pushed its way towards the north and unified Egypt at the time of the First Dynasty and the beginning of ancient Egyptian civilization[11].

This push to the north might have involved the migration of population that contributed to consolidate the adoption by Lower Egypt of Upper Egyptian practices[12] although there is also the contrary opinion which would make such migration unnecessary to explain the changes that took place in Lower Egypt[13].

More recent studies admit that the interactions between Upper and Lower Egypt were complex and protracted, but population movement has been an important feature of human behavior and ought to be considered[14].

During the last phase of this transition in Upper Egypt the local elites had the choice of staying where they had developed their power bases or migrate to the political and Economic centres at the time that offered them better opportunities for social advancement since the early kings needed capable and experienced individuals to run the emerging bureaucratic administration that was being set up during this stage of state formation.

There is archaeological evidence that seems to point in this direction, mainly from cemeteries dating to this period.

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nome, I have done justice for its lord, I have satisfied him with what he loves"; 24, Autobiography of Harkhuf, Dyn. 6: "I have come here from my city, I have descended from my nome, I have built a house, set up its doors, I have dug a pool, planted sycamores. The king praised me, my father made a will for me".

[11] J. J. Castillos, The development and nature of inequality in early Egypt, British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan 13, 2009; J. J. Castillos, Cómo surgieron los faraones, Montevideo, 2009.

[12] D. Wengrow, The archaeology of early Egypt, Cambridge, 2006, 88.

[13] Ch. Köhler, The State of Research on Late Predynastic Egypt: New Evidence for the Development of the Pharaonic State?, Göttinger Miszellen 147, 1995, 85; Interregional contacts between Upper and Lower Egypt: A view from Buto, in L. Krzyzaniak, K. Kroeper and M. Kobusiewicz, Interregional contacts in the Later Prehistory of Northeastern Africa, Poznan, 1996, 220.

[14] A. Stevenson, Ethnicity and migration? The Predynastic cemetery of el-Gerzeh, in B. Midant-Reynes et al. (eds.), Proceedings of the Second International conference on Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt, Leuven, 2008, 550-552, 559.

For instance, quantitative estimations of inequality at Armant[15] based on the changes of tomb size expressed as volume indicated a steady decline, with only one temporary interruption, from Naqada Ic to Naqada IIIa[16].

Some attempts have been made to explain the archaeological record in this regard from several sites at this time as a loss of power by local elites. But how could this have happened? A sort of revolution perhaps that deprived the wealthy and influential members of the community of the means to display their status and brought about a more egalitarian social organization? This would be an occurrence without further examples all through later ancient Egyptian civilization, local communities rising against their leaders? Or maybe other circumstances led to the impoverishment of such communities which affected the status and the opportunity for the elite to display their wealth in the contemporary cemeteries? But then, if that were the case, the more reason for members of the elite, used to a certain standard of living, to seek elsewhere at the service of rising bureaucratic structures the means to continue to enjoy a privileged way of life.

Naqada	Ic	IIa	IIb	IIc	IId	IIIa	IIIa+IIIc2
Gini	0.38	0.33	0.24	0.32	0.25	0.19	0.76
n	17	14	18	29	24	12	17

Table 1 – Inequality at Armant (size of the tombs as volume) (Griswold)

The sharp increase in inequality in the last stage of development at Armant in Naqada IIIa to IIIc2 (First Dynasty) may imply a change originated from outside as Armant became part of a unified country under central administration.

My own research on quantitative estimation of social inequality involved a large number of predynastic cemeteries in Upper and Lower Egypt, using several standard

[15] R. Mond and O. Myers, Cemeteries of Armant I, London, 1937.
[16] W. Griswold, Measuring inequality at Armant, in R. Friedman and B. Adams (eds.), The Followers of Horus, Oxford, 1992, 193-198.

methods besides Gini, and including not only the size of the tombs, also expressed as volume, but their extant wealth in funerary offerings as well[17].

This research confirmed the above results obtained by the pioneer work carried out at the end of the last century and provided similar evidence from other contemporary sites in predynastic Upper Egypt, namely at Matmar, Mahasna and to some extent, at Naqada.

	n	Gini	Volume	Theil	AD
Naqada I	14	0.41	0.83	0.28	1.02
Naqada II	78	0.33	0.63	0.18	2.19
Naqada III	10	0.19	0.36	0.06	1.55

Table 2 – Inequality at Armant (size of the tombs as volume) (Castillos)

	n	Gini	Volume	Theil	AD
Naqada I	21	0.52	0.96	0.49	4.95
Naqada II	101	0.44	0.86	0.36	6.20
Naqada III	11	0.38	0.70	0.26	11.20

Table 3 – Inequality at Armant (extant wealth of the tombs in objects) (Castillos)[18]

For Armant we can see from the above tables that the results obtained by two lines of research, in the more recent study using several methods and more than just one variable, show a remarkable agreement.

[17] J. J. Castillos, Inequality in Egyptian predynastic cemeteries, Revue d'Égyptologie 49, 1998, 25-36, where a complete description of the methodology used by the author (choice of variables, methods and other necessary clarifications) based on quantitative sociology is given as well as the results of its application to all predynastic cemeteries in both Upper and Lower Egypt where the published data allowed me to carry out this work.

[18] J. J. Castillos, Wealth evaluation of predynastic tombs, Göttinger Miszellen, 163, 1998, 27-33, provides a justification for the choice of this variable as it was conceived for this study.

When we attempt to evaluate changes in inequality as expressed by data from the archaeological record we should be very careful as to take into consideration the absolute values of the variables, which the standard quantitative methods tend to ignore or minimize, otherwise we could draw quite wrong conclusions. Our AD (Average Difference) calculations provide such necessary evidence.

For instance, in the predynastic cemetery U at Abydos the evolution of inequality measured according to the standard methodology shows the following picture:[19]

	n	Gini	Volume	Theil
Naqada I	17	0.43	0.80	0.32
Naqada II	27	0.41	0.77	0.28
Naqada III	31	0.28	0.52	0.13

Table 3a - Size evaluation of inequality at Abydos cemetery U (standard methods)

	n	AD
Naqada I	17	3.7
Naqada II	27	10.3
Naqada III	31	14.6

Table 3b – Size evaluation of inequality at Abydos cemetery U (with absolute values of the variables, that is, what I call the level of inequality)

In cemetery U at Abydos the average size of the tombs went from 2.7 cubic metres in Naqada I to 8.0 in Naqada II and then to 17.1 in Naqada III, a very marked increase through time which indicates an uninterrupted development. But how does this agree with the also marked decrease in inequality from Naqada I to Naqada III?. The explanation is

[19] J. J. Castillos, Predynastic cemeteries at the Abydos area, Göttinger Miszellen, 199, 2004, 23-29.

that as cemetery U became increasingly an elite cemetery, inequality decreased here because the tombs were becoming increasingly equally large and rich, the picture shown by Table 3b.

We still lack unfortunately detailed and comprehensive published cemetery data from Hierakonpolis, the other large Upper Egyptian political centre, to carry out a similar quantitative study of the variations in inequality from Naqada I to Naqada III but as at Abydos, there seems to have been at Hierakonpolis a similar uninterrupted development towards the appearance and consolidation of a powerful elite[20]. Both Abydos and Hierakonpolis were the centres at the time to where the elites of more marginal communities seem to have migrated at different times during the predynastic.

The following tables all correspond to the research I carried out on other predynastic cemeteries where the published information made it feasible.

	n	Gini	Volume	Theil	AD
Naqada I	21	0.30	0.61	0.15	0.79
Naqada II	106	0.46	1.28	0.45	2.54
Naqada III	66	0.39	0.85	0.28	1.49

Table 4 – Inequality at Matmar (size of the tombs as volume)

	n	Gini	Volume	Theil	AD
Naqada I	24	0.44	0.85	0.33	9.98
Naqada II	134	0.36	0.81	0.23	6.66
Naqada III	76	0.30	0.54	0.14	5.61

Table 5 – Inequality at Matmar (extant wealth of the tombs in objects)

[20] R. Friedman, Excavating Egypt's early kings: Recent discoveries in the elite cemetery at Hierakonpolis, in B. Midant-Reynes and Y. Tristant, Egypt at its origins 2, Leuven, 2008, 1157-1194.

In the case of Matmar[21] the general agreement between the two sets of data is also quite remarkable and consistent with a situation similar to that at Armant.

	n	Gini	Volume	Theil	AD
Naqada I	12	0.48	1.14	0.43	6.58
Naqada II	42	0.38	0.79	0.25	2.27
Naqada III	28	0.44	0.97	0.35	2.77

Table 6 – Inequality at Mahasna (size of the tombs as volume)

	n	Gini	Volume	Theil	AD
Naqada I	15	0.51	1.23	0.48	17.40
Naqada II	48	0.46	0.98	0.37	12.20
Naqada III	37	0.37	0.74	0.24	7.23

Table 7 – Inequality at Mahasna (extant wealth of the tombs in objects)

At Mahasna[22] Table 6 calculated from the size of the tombs does not clearly show the decline during Naqada III exhibited by other predynastic cemeteries of marginal communities, but Table 7 involving tomb wealth does show a very similar trend to that observed at Armant and Matmar.

	n	Gini	Volume	Theil	AD
Naqada I	38	0.31	0.84	0.21	4.50
Naqada II	93	0.34	0.66	0.19	4.03
Naqada III	37	0.42	0.86	0.30	5.65

Table 8 – Inequality at Naqada (size of the tombs as volume)

[21] G. Brunton, Matmar, London, 1948.
[22] J. Garstang, Mahasna and Bet Khallaf, London, 1903.

	n	Gini	Volume	Theil	AD
Naqada I	108	0.43	0.84	0.31	8.50
Naqada II	231	0.53	1.20	0.49	15.80
Naqada III	78	0.47	0.96	0.38	14.20

Table 9 – Inequality at Naqada (extant wealth of the tombs in objects)

Again at Naqada[23] the inequality data considering the size of the tombs does not show decline during Naqada III, which is however registered in Table 9. If we bear in mind the possibility that in such a decline the wealth of the contemporary elite and its ability to endow their dead for the afterlife was more affected than the resources to dig larger or smaller graves, then we can include Naqada, as well as Mahasna, in the group of migrating elites.

More recently, at Adaïma[24], although the published report lacked the required information for quantitative evaluations of social inequality, the authors reached a similar conclusion as to a migration of the local elite ("fuite des élites") at the end of the Predynastic, perhaps to the nearby large city of Hierakonpolis.

At Diospolis Parva[25], where I had no reliable data as to the size of the tombs, the results from their wealth point to a period of maximum social inequality during Naqada I and a very significant drop during Naqada II which may also imply an episode of migration of its elite. As in other sites, inequality rose again in the last stages of the Predynastic, perhaps as part of changes coming from outside due to the development of the central royal administration, but according to most of the results, never to the level reached during Naqada I.

[23] W. Petrie, Naqada and Ballas, London, 1896; E. Baumgartel, Petrie's Naqada excavation: A supplement, London, 1970, besides data obtained by the author from Petrie's original notebooks kept at the Petrie Museum, for Naqada as well as for other sites incompletely published by Petrie such as Diospolis Parva. I must posthumously thank Barbara Adams for her help in securing this information by making Petrie's notebooks available to me while she worked at that museum.
[24] B. Midant-Reynes, N. Buchez, E. Crubézy and T. Janin, Adaïma, Cairo, 2002, I, Économie et habitat, 575; II, La nécropole prédynastique, 490.
[25] W. Petrie, Diospolis Parva, The cemeteries of Abadiyeh and Hu, London, 1901.

	n	Gini	Volume	Theil	AD
Naqada I	23	0.51	1.22	0.48	16.60
Naqada II	96	0.30	0.56	0.15	6.96
Naqada III	56	0.40	1.29	0.38	9.20

Table 10 – Inequality at Diospolis Parva (extant wealth of the tombs in objects)

The other Upper Egyptian sites included in our study, Mostagedda[26] and Badari[27], present some problems.

Table 11 – Inequality at Badari (size of the tombs as volume)

	n	Gini	Volume	Theil	AD
Naqada I	26	0.42	0.95	0.32	6.49
Naqada II	103	0.32	0.62	0.17	5.20
Naqada III	63	0.30	0.59	0.15	3.23

Table 12 – Inequality at Badari (extant wealth of the tombs in objects)

In the case of Badari we could be in the situation found at Mahasna and Naqada, where tomb size did not reveal the drop in inequality that took place in Naqada III but Table 12 makes very clear the decline in inequality according to all the methods employed here to calculate such a change.

Summing up, a body of clear evidence can be brought forward to prove a drop in social inequality between Naqada I and more significantly, between Naqada II and Naqada III, in several Upper Egyptian predynastic communities such as Matmar, Badari, Mahasna,

[26] G. Brunton, Mostagedda and the Tasian culture, London, 1937.
[27] G. Brunton and G. Caton-Thompson, The Badarian civilization and prehistoric remains near Badari, London, 1928.

Naqada, Armant and Adaïma which I can only satisfactorily explain as the result of the migration of the elites of such places to the great political centres that were developing during the final part of that period.

	n	Gini	Volume	Theil	AD
Naqada I	41	0.38	0.81	0.25	0.91
Naqada II	56	0.32	0.72	0.19	1.37
Naqada III	30	0.46	1.17	0.43	5.74

Table 13 – Inequality at Mostagedda (size of the tombs as volume)

	n	Gini	Volume	Theil	AD
Naqada I	49	0.41	0.85	0.29	4.54
Naqada II	71	0.26	0.48	0.11	4.35
Naqada III	35	0.42	1.30	0.41	10.60

Table 14 – Inequality at Mostagedda (extant wealth of the tombs in objects)

The only site that shows all through the Predynastic a very consistent picture as to size or wealth but differing from our other results is Mostagedda, which sets it apart from most of the other cemeteries considered here, that with some degree of variation tell us basically the same story. Diospolis Parva, however, as far as the published data allows us to decide, approaches Mostagedda on this.

But if we look more carefully at the results for Mostagedda we can see that there is a marked drop in social inequality between Naqada I and Naqada II which could very well register as at Diospolis Parva, an earlier migration of its elite than in the other cases studied here, the final increase in Naqada III being due to changes coming from outside.

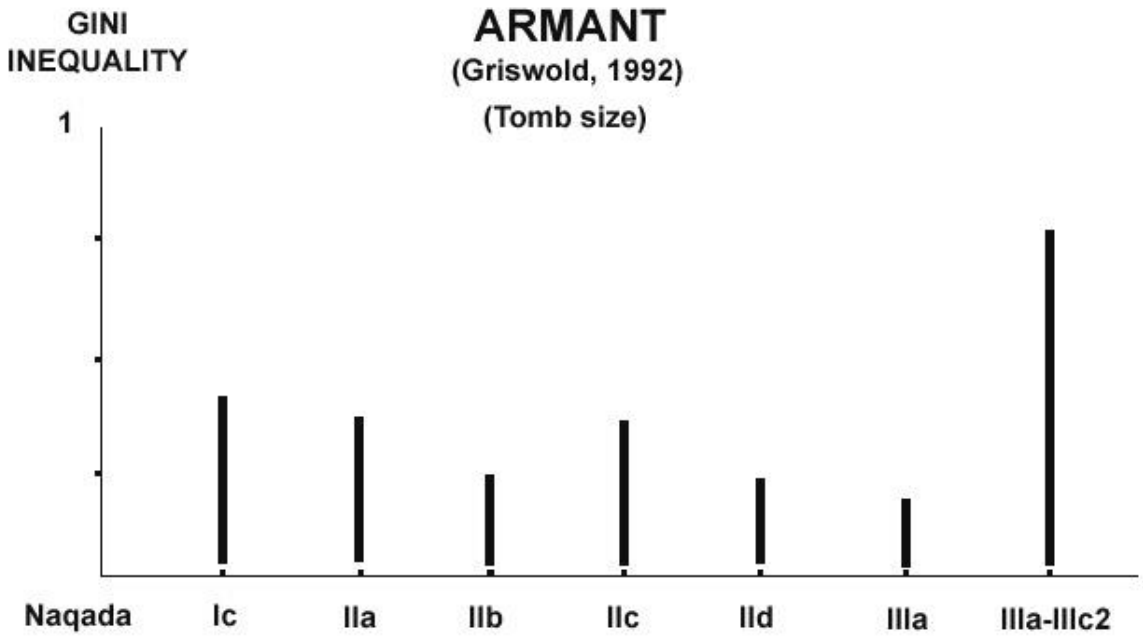
Other possible explanations for these results such as changes in access to material and ideological resources and shifting networks of exchange which would involve the concomitant disenfranchisement of others do not seem convincing since the power base of the elites in declining large or smaller communities in predynastic Upper Egypt was surely

based on more important economic factors than networks of exchange, which undoubtedly played a part in the development and consolidation of elites but not the major role.

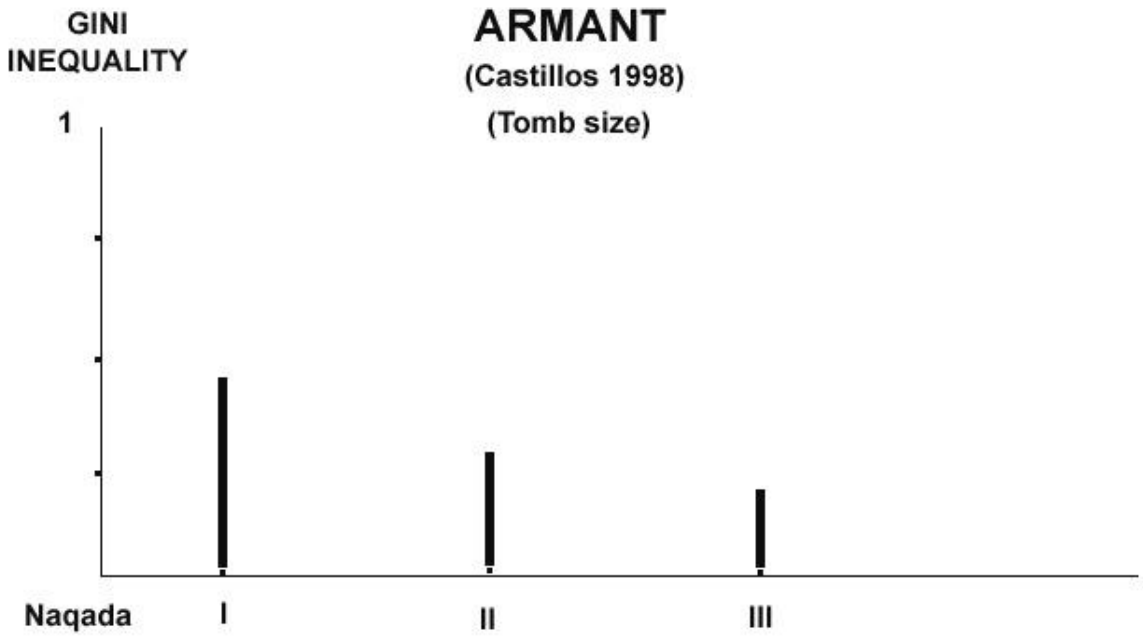
As I see it, there are only three possible interpretations for the decline in inequality I and others have detected in the archaeological record. One would be that in each of these sites the local elite was replaced by another coming from outside as a result of the expansion of the growing political centres at the time, but in that case there would not have been any decline in inequality, one elite being replaced by another. The second would have to accept a sort of internal revolution in each of these several mostly marginal communities that deprived the local elite of its power, but in that case where is the archaeological evidence in the relevant sites for the violence and disruption this would have brought about since no elite anywhere ever willingly relinquished its power? This leaves the interpretation of migrations of some of these elites seeking to occupy positions of power in the administration of the growing political centres in Upper Egypt who could use the experience and ability of the newcomers for their own purposes.

Scholars who have dealt with this subject, as I pointed out above (Griswold, 1992, Midant-Reynes et al., 2002), have mentioned migrations as a likely explanation for the situation at Armant and Adaïma.

I do not postulate continuously mobile elites at the time but what I suggest, as others have also pointed out, is that a migration by elites in several locations at certain times, can provide a satisfactory explanation, in the absence so far of other reasonable interpretations, for the drop in inequality I and others have detected in the archaeological record.



Graph 1



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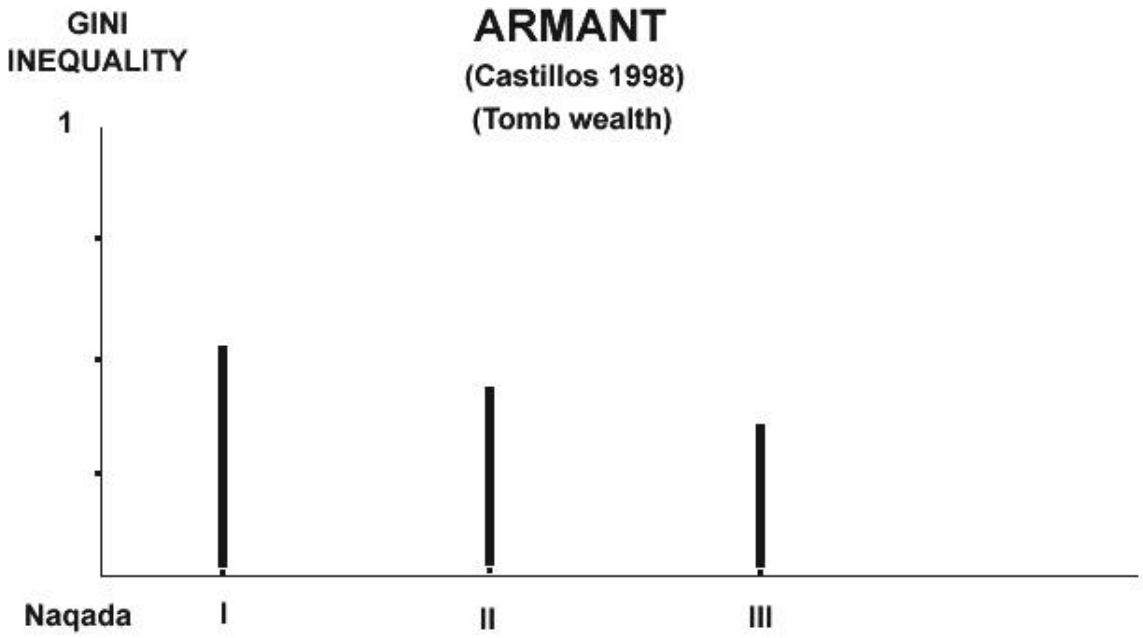

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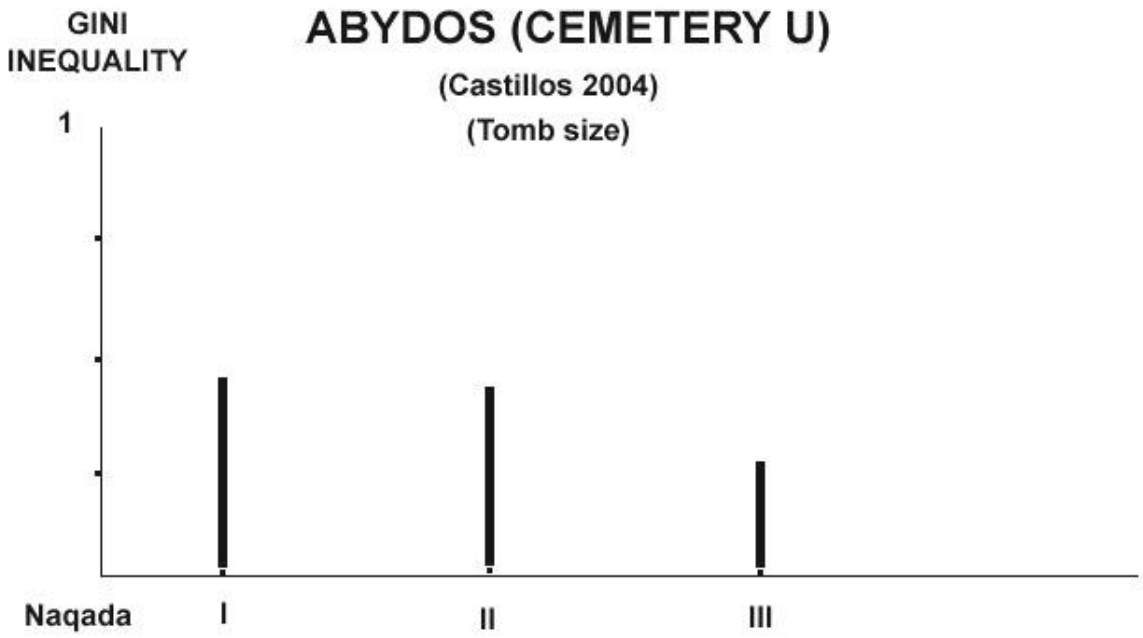

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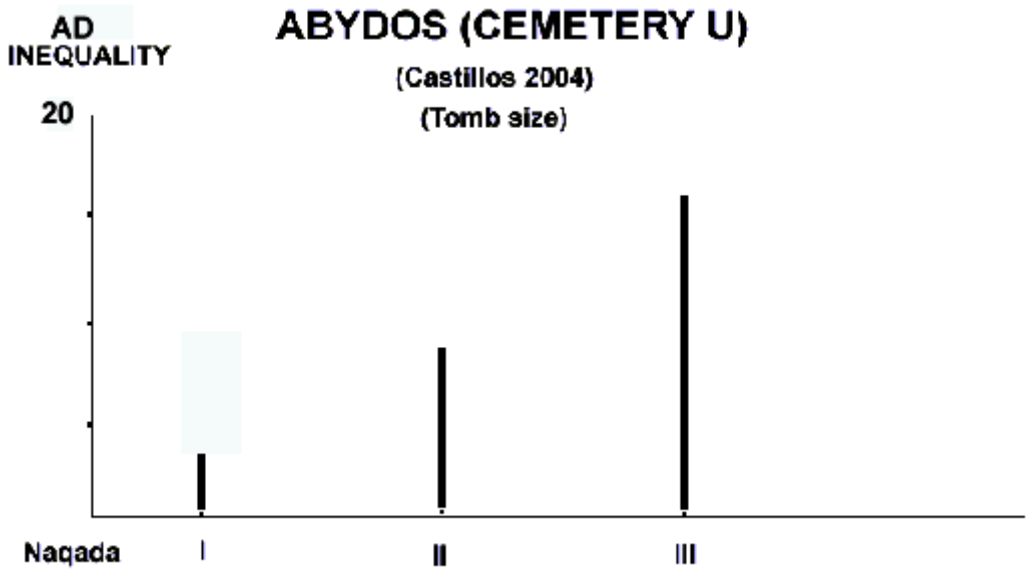

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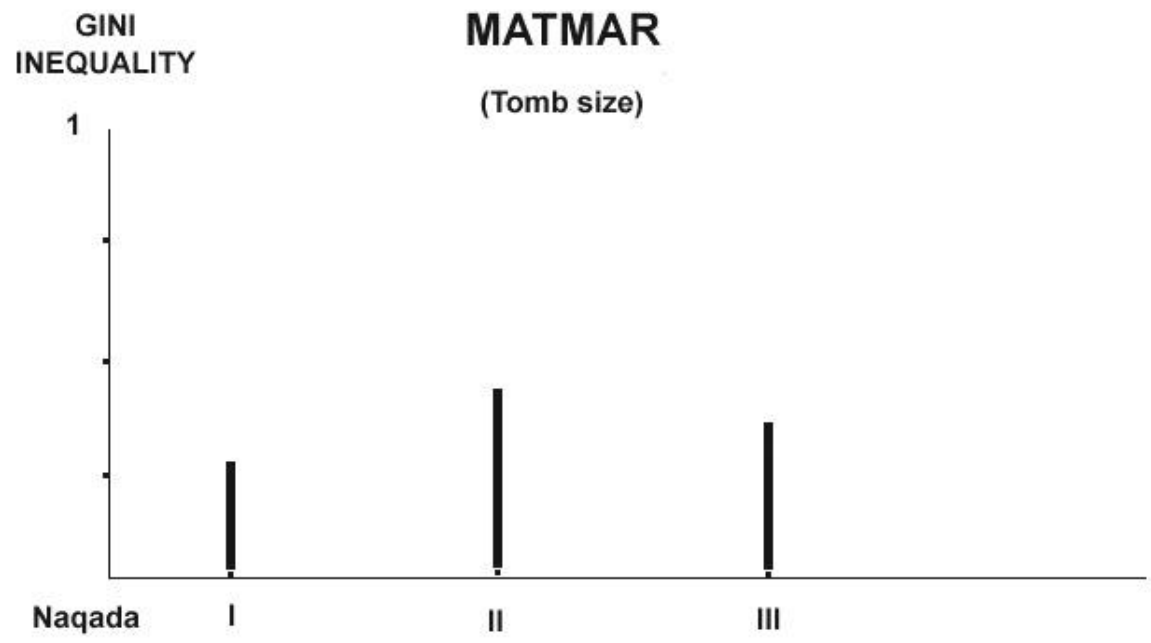

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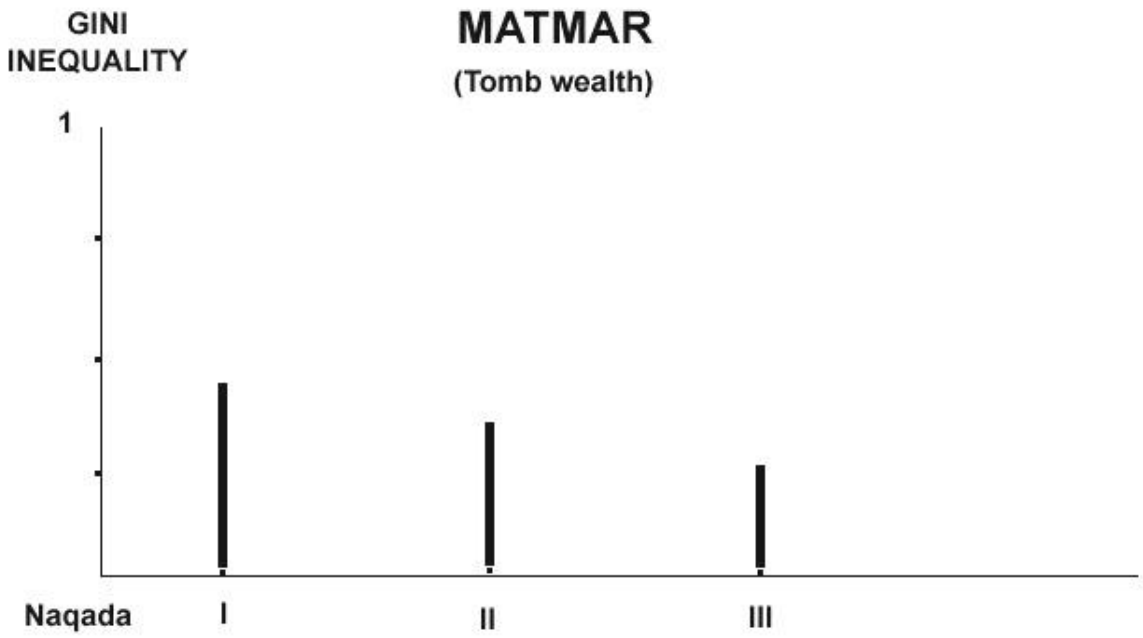

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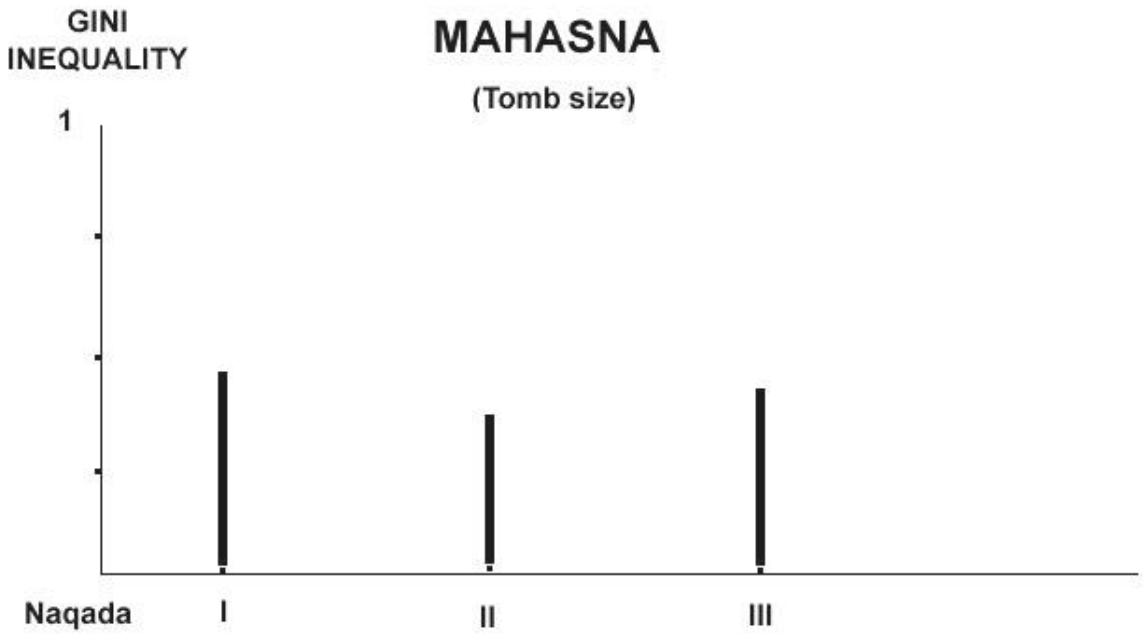

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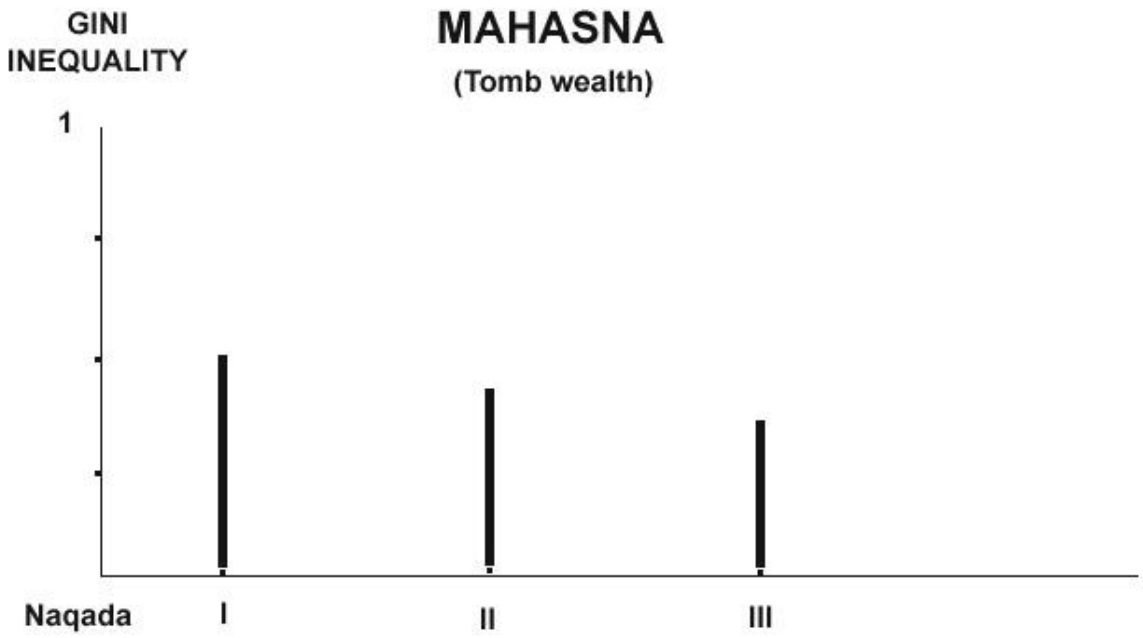
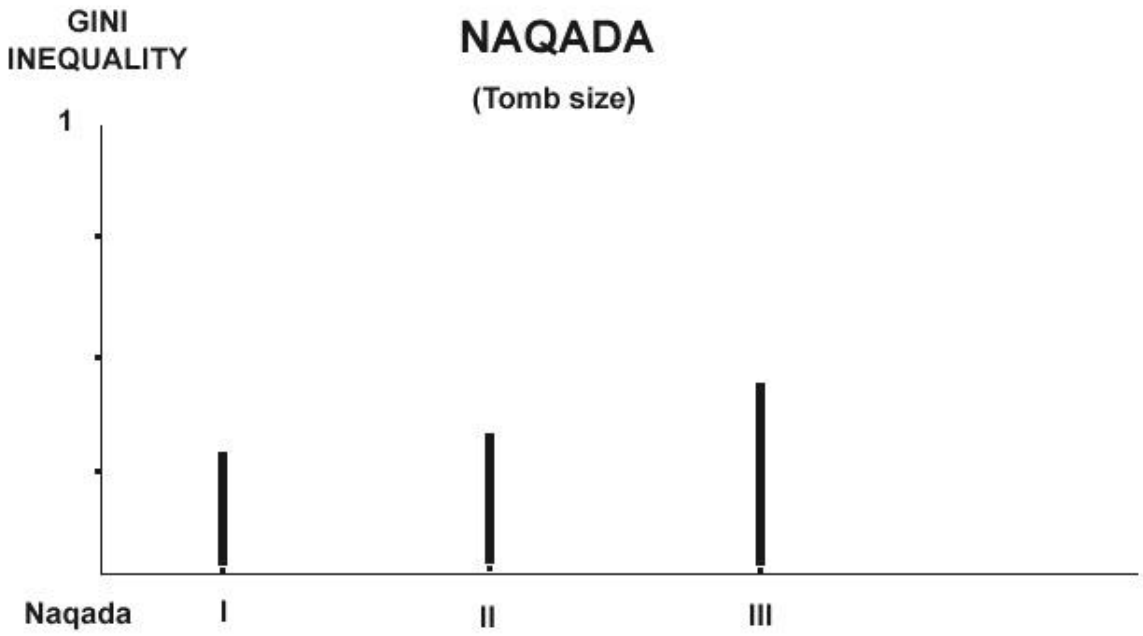
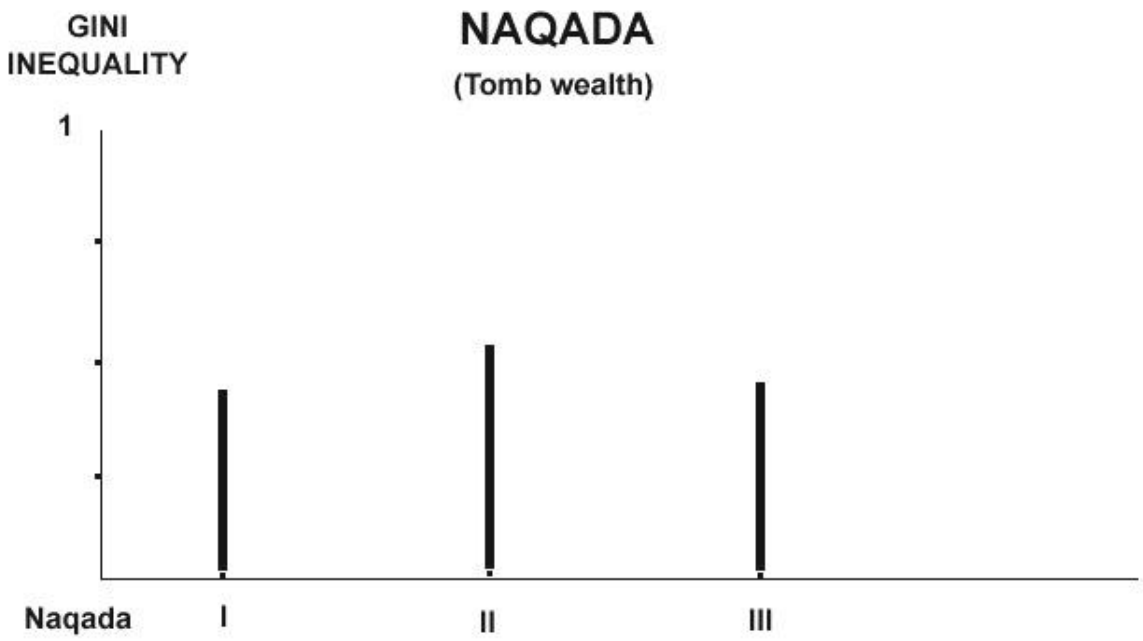


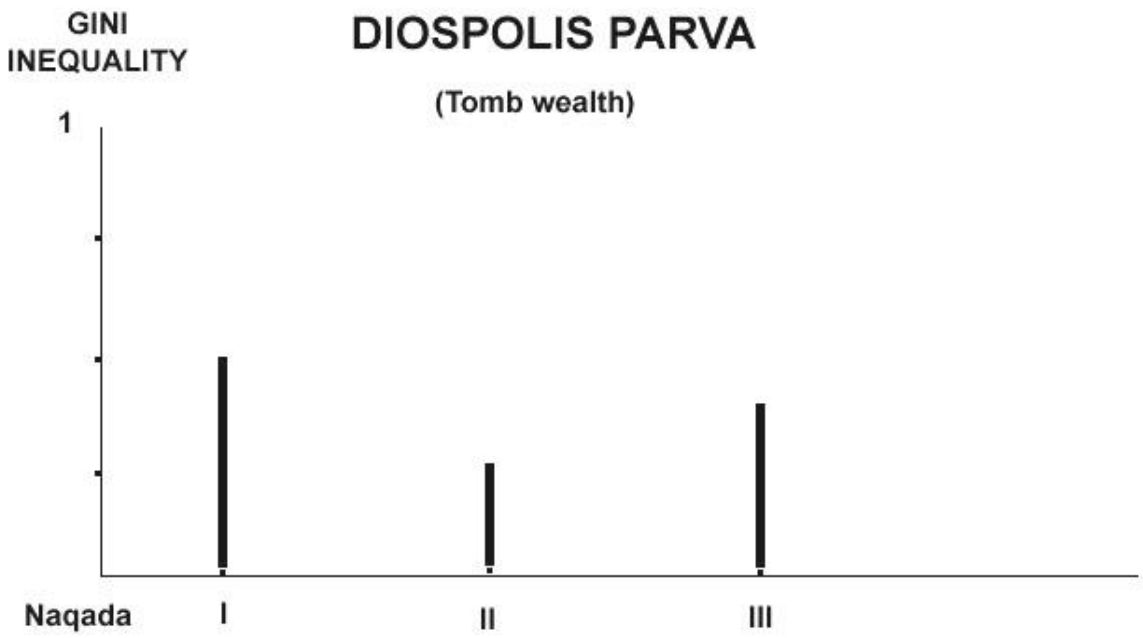
Graph 9



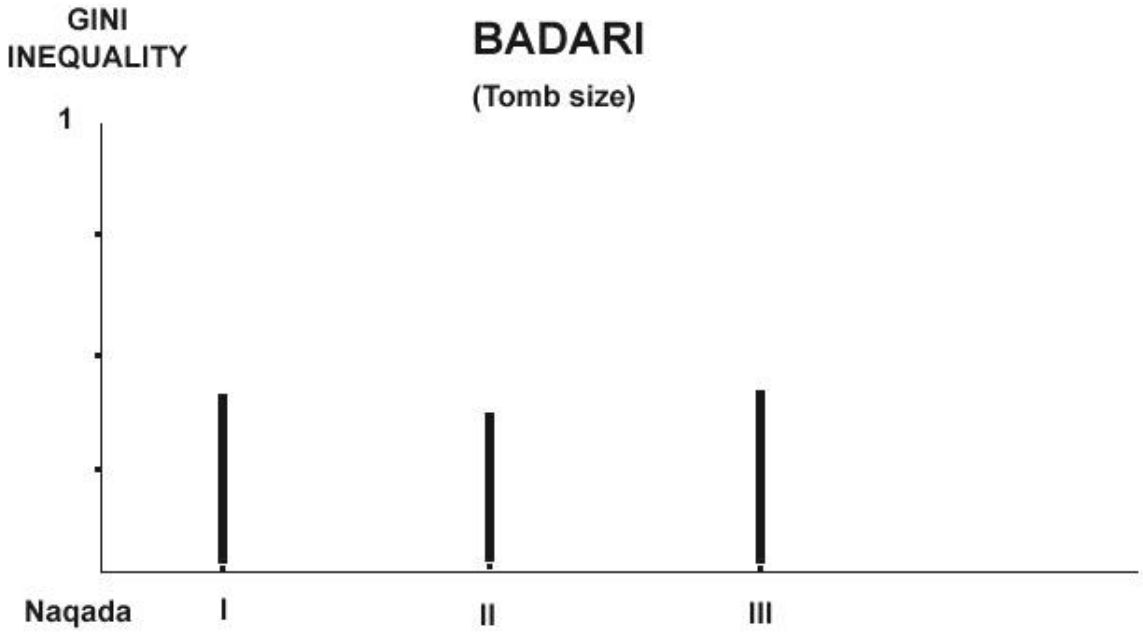
Graph 10



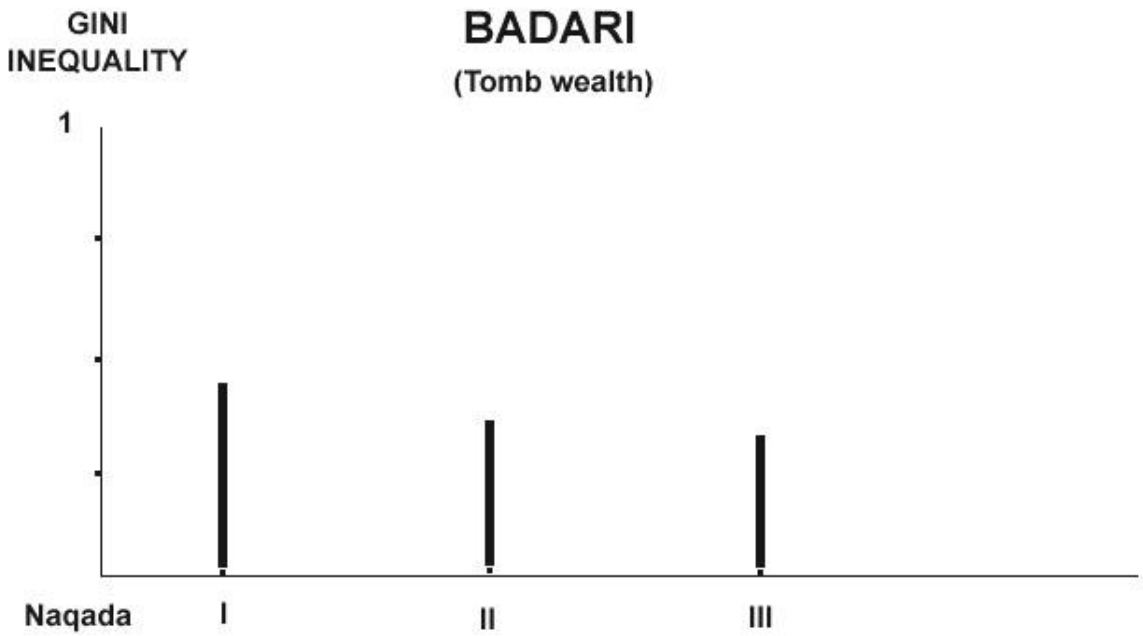
Graph 11



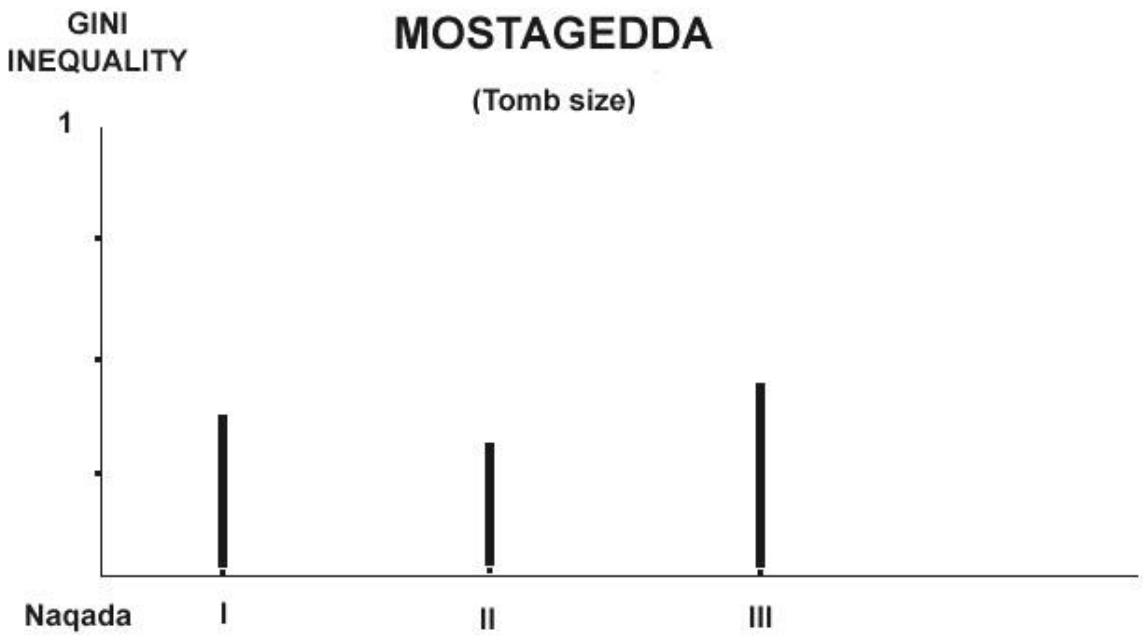
Graph 12



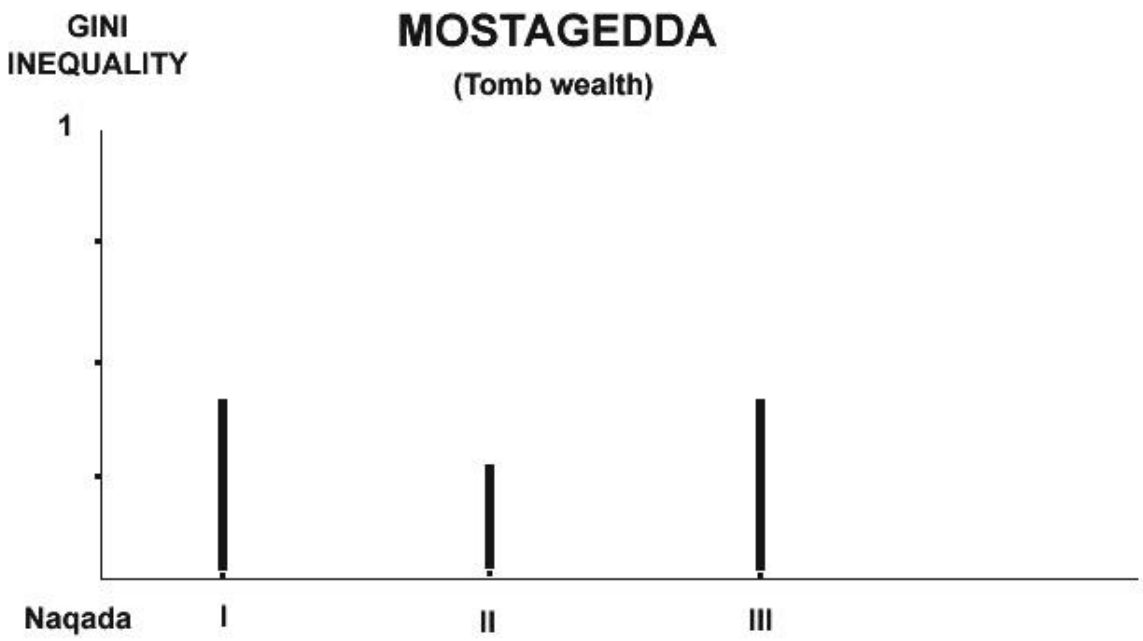
Graph 13



Graph 14



Graph 15



Graph 16

APPENDIX

Comments by an anonymous colleague:

Firstly you appear to be confusing "migration" with "nucleation".

Evidence for increasing nucleation (concentration of population at important centers or 'proto-kingdoms') during the PD has been collected and commented on before (notably by Barry Kemp).

Secondly, the basis for assessing relative wealth must be included in a treatment such as yours; a simple reference to the 1998 GM article is felt not to be sufficient: Quantifying diversity and relative value of tomb assemblages is tricky and I find it surprising not to include references to the two best attempts to carry out such an analysis in this paper: Janet Richards (for the MK) and Kathryn Bard (for the PD period).

In particular, Bard reached the same conclusions regarding social stratification over the course of the PD long ago, and noted then that it is interesting that there seems to be less 'inequalty' during NIII than during NII. However, her work is not referenced at all in your treatment.

Finally, a comment that the writing style is not easy to follow, and some work should be done in this area.

Suggestion: that you may wish to re-focus your discussion in the evidence relating to actual migration during the PD, which forms but a short part of your paper, but is an area that truly deserves further analysis.

My reply:

Thank you for your interesting comments.

I am afraid there is here a misinterpretation of the main point of my paper, drawing mistaken conclusions and trying to steer me into fields I decided not to go into at this time.

There are at least three areas of 'migration' that are getting confused here.

The nucleation you mention was indeed very important when the rising chiefs and early regional kings were setting up their power bases for further expansion, perhaps my subject was part of this process but only a small part of it.

Larger migrations could have resulted in the late Predynastic large stratified communities in Lower Egypt and elsewhere, but that was quite another subject I just briefly mentioned in this paper. A subject that is not the one I approach this time.

Then there is my subject here which is very limited in the sense of providing evidence for SOME members of the elite of CERTAIN settlements migrating (moving) to the growing power centres at the time, perhaps in order to seek better fortune there, which I think is reflected in the examples I quote of variations in quantitative inequality data.

Because the quantitative inequality methodology I use in this paper taken from modern quantitative sociology has been as far as I know used to some extent by only one other colleague (Griswold) I can hardly make reference to others' research within egyptology, although I mention that at least some made comments (which I mention) in the same direction of my conclusions (Griswold and Midant-Reynes).

And as to wealth assessment I have found other approaches like the one by Bard, Wilkinson, Hendrickx and others as quite subjective or too selective and in the paper I mention (GM) I have shown that my approach considering number of artifacts still extant in tombs seems to agree quite consistently with the evidence from intact tombs in several cemeteries among the best published ones in Predynastic Egypt.

The statement about less inequality in NIII by Bard is quite another matter and my paper in RdE 1998 shows the opposite, only in some cases inequality appears as decreasing in NIII but like in the example I quote in this paper, it is because as some cemeteries were increasingly reserved for the elite, the tombs became more equally large and rich (decreasing inequality) but certainly not in the sense of decreasing elite power, quite on the contrary.

So, I am quite satisfied with the paper as it is, although some may try to find in it what they would like to see discussed by others or would like to make me go into other fields I do not want to enter at this time.

I have a strong suspicion that for some reason you fail to grasp the scope, extent and meaning of my aim in this paper which is understandable since my methodology in this case is different to others used by colleagues working on predynastic Egypt.