The emergence of civilization in Egypt: Predynastic Egypt

Egypt: The setting

- The Nile
  - Flows NORTH (up on the map)
  - Water flows downhill, towards the Mediterranean Sea
  - so the UPPER Nile is to the SOUTH (down on the map)
  - and the LOWER Nile is to the NORTH (up on the map)
- The Nile starts far south of the areas we will study
- In general, the Nile flows through a very long, very narrow valley
  - only 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) wide in many areas
  - 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) wide is typical
  - maximum 22 km (13 miles) wide
  - but some 1,500 km (900 miles) long!
    - although we will look at “only” the lower 2/3 of the Nile valley (1000 km, or 600 miles long)
- this long, narrow strip is the Upper Nile
  - In the Upper Nile, virtually all the habitable land is in the narrow floodplain of the river
  - settlements tend to be small, since not much land is available at any given point
  - the valley is entrenched, that is, the river and floodplain are significantly below the surrounding desert
    - this makes it difficult to get water out of the valley to irrigate additional land
    - so farming was restricted to the narrow valley floor for the entire time period that we will consider here
  - north of Cairo, the valley opens up into a wide, triangular, green delta: the Nile Delta
    - criss-crossed by shallow waterways
    - the Delta plus a little of the narrow valley adjacent to it are called the Lower Nile
      - geographically, ecologically, and culturally distinct from the Upper Nile
  - In general, the natural resources along the Nile are plentiful and redundant
    - settlements along the Nile didn’t lack basic materials like stone for building and carving, the way Mesopotamian sites did (although wood would have been somewhat scarce)
    - most of the Nile valley has about the same agricultural, mineral, etc. resources
    - so there was little ecological need for internal trade up and down the Nile in agricultural products or locally available materials
  - exception in the Upper Nile
    - some places, like Hierakonpolis, have easier access by overland routes along “wadis” (dry ravines or streambeds) to mineral sources well away from the Nile valley itself
      - such as silver and gold ores in the hills between the Nile and the Red Sea
      - these wadis would also have been routes followed by nomadic herders, who may have been long-distance traders from early times
        - they would not necessarily have to be “civilized” to do this…
so places near these wadis may have been favored once long-distance trade and use of metals became important

− eventually, some places specialized in making certain kinds of goods that were traded up and down the Nile
− but this must have been based on social factors, rather than better access to resources
− maybe some places had more specialists or larger workshops
− and/or some places developed reputations for certain goods ("brand name" sources)

− Nile provides easy transportation
− the sections we are looking at are relatively flat and navigable
− the current runs from south to north, into the Mediterranean Sea
− the prevailing wind blows from north to south
− so travel along the Nile is easy
− you drift downriver (north) with the current
− and sail upriver (south) with the wind
− since the valley is so narrow, everyone in the Upper Nile lives right on the freeway
− facilitates cultural uniformity
− and political unity
− compared to Mesopotamia, with towns scattered over a plain
− The same is true of people in the Delta, but to a lesser extent
− Because everyone is surrounded by a network of navigable streams, canals, and lakes
− archaeological evidence suggests that Nile population overall was well below the valley’s carrying capacity until recent times
− suggesting that population pressure probably was not an important factor
− although concentrations of population in larger towns or cities might have put a strain on resources in the that particular part of the valley

− Temperatures
− in the Delta: temperate year ‘round
− in middle part of Upper Egypt (Hierakonpolis): comfortable in winter, very hot in summer
− Almost no rainfall
− 1.5” per year in Cairo (the Delta, or Lower Nile)
− virtually 0 at Aswan in the south (Upper Nile)

− Floods
− the Nile floods regularly, every year
− or did, until first Aswan dam was built
− but the flood was somewhat variable in date and height
− July through October (that is, summer)
− the floods were convenient for farmers
− they cover the farmland with fertile silt
− farmers plant in the mud as the water recedes
− and keep the fields wet with small-scale systems of ditches, retaining ponds, and shadufs (a counterweighted pole arrangement for lifting potfuls of water a few feet)
the floods were controlled prehistorically by building levees between areas of fields and breaking them as needed
- but the flood level was unpredictable, so sometimes big floods wiped out the levees
- so there was no point in building big canal or levee systems
- natural flooding plus simple systems were adequate for the entire valley floor
- but irrigating outside the valley was effectively impossible
- any big canal or levee project would run frequent risks of being destroyed, anyway
- so, they did have to do some irrigation, and they did have to coordinate levee layouts and breaching within any given area, but these projects were relatively small-scale works that often had to be rebuilt after high Nile floods
- floods enforced several months of “free” time every year
- good for craft production, pyramid building, etc.

Sources of information:
- Lots of archaeological evidence, but it is skewed towards cemeteries
  - due to incredible preservation of cool stuff
  - also because it is hard to miss grave markers like the pyramids!
  - also because archaeology developed out of a tradition of looting and collecting
    - leading to huge museum collections of nice artifacts that were mostly from burials of nobles and rulers
  - also due to where cemeteries and towns are located
    - cemeteries are located in dry, elevated desert outside the valley floor
      - preservation is excellent
    - towns were mostly in or near the floodplain
      - close to the river and farmland
      - now often buried under silt and below the water table
      - people have lived at many of these places from ancient times up to today
        - so remains were disturbed by constant rebuilding, digging, etc.
        - and are now under modern towns
    - hard to find
    - poorly preserved
    - very expensive and difficult to study
  - this means we don’t know as much about towns, cities, administration as we would like
    - except indirectly from the graves of rulers and nobles
- We have some written sources on early Egyptian history (there are lots for later periods):
  - During the New Kingdom (1552-1070 BC), monuments were decorated with lists of past kings and a few words about their achievements, going back to the Old Kingdom (2686-2250 BC)
  - Which is near the end of what we are interested in, like the Early Dynastic in Mesopotamia
  - These lists include kings who reigned up to 1500 years before the lists were made!
  - A similar list on papyrus (the Turin papyrus) is fragmentary, but gives durations of reigns in the Old Kingdom
  - Palermo stone: a much earlier king list, made late in the Old Kingdom (in the 5th Dynasty)
briefly records the principal achievements of the kings of the first 5 dynasties
Largest piece is at Palermo, thus the name
some additional pieces in other collections (Cairo, Petrie museum in London)
but most of the stone is missing
we happen to have portions about the kings of the 1st and 2nd dynasties
Manetho, an Egyptian historian of the 3rd century BC (2,200 years ago!), used documents like these to compile a history of kings and events
but with many errors due to being almost 3000 years after the fact!
Yet, an amazing amount stands up to excavated evidence.
He must have had access to documents and monuments that are now lost, while we may have some that were buried or unknown to Manetho
These records provide a chronological framework starting very early
but don’t say much about life and society until later periods
unlike Mesopotamia, where early documents are accounting records
which initially don’t help much with chronology or history
but do shed some light on economic activities and occasionally other aspects of life
Chronology chart
The early time periods on the chart are known only from archaeology
they are largely based on changes in pottery styles
Starting with the Early Dynastic (also called the Archaic period), they are based on historical lists of kings, verified and adjusted by archaeological evidence, some of which can be pinpointed in time by references to astronomical events
Note: the Early Dynastic period in Egypt is completely different from the Early Dynastic period in Sumer.
These dynasties are supposed to be literally family lines of kings
when the family line was broken (no heir, palace coup, etc.), a new dynasty started
there was probably a lot of fudging for political expedience
31 generally recognized dynasties, covering about 3000 years of history.
That is a LONG TIME
compare to the USA, now just 231 years old; or England, just under 1000 years old…
historians have lumped these dynasties into a sequence of “Kingdoms” (periods of political unity) and “Intermediate Periods” (periods of political fragmentation)
this is for convenience only; people at the time would not have recognized these periods
Predynastic period: from the adoption of farming around 5000 BC up to the start of Egypt’s Early Dynastic Period (starting around 3050 BC)
Predynastic is a general term that includes the Badarian period and Naqada I, II, and III
Naqada II and III, and their culmination in the 1st Dynasty, are when complex society really developed and established itself
so we will focus on this stretch of time and what led up to it
Early Dynastic (or Archaic) period (3050-2686 BC) (Dynasties 1 - 2)
The first dynasties of kings who ruled a unified Egypt
Old Kingdom (2686-2250 BC) (Dynasties 3 - 6)
Building of the great pyramids
Our coverage ends here, but you should know that Egyptian history continued…

First Intermediate period (Dynasties 7 - 10)
- Dynastic kingship broke down, local rulers fought each other
- Middle Kingdom (2035-1668 BC) (Dynasties 11 - 13)
  - A vigorous vizier seized power and rebuilt the strength of the Egyptian kingship
  - trade and influence expanded out to the Levant, south up the Nile, and to Crete
  - revived the tradition of pyramids (but much smaller than in the Old Kingdom)
- Second Intermediate period (Dynasties 14 - 18)
  - A second collapse of centralized rule
- New Kingdom (1552-1070 BC) (Dynasties 18 - 20)
  - the Egyptians drove out invaders and reunited Egypt
  - for the first time, Egypt expanded out along the Mediterranean coast and the Levant to conquer and control a larger empire
  - royal and noble burials were in deep, rock-cut tombs, rather than under pyramids
    - King Tutankhamun’s is the only one of these known that wasn’t looted in antiquity
- Late periods (lumped together here) were marked by conflict and decline (Dynasties 21 - 31)
- Ptolemaic (Greek) period (332-30 BC)
  - Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, bringing it into the Greek (and later Roman) world
  - we will focus on just the early part of this sequence

The Predynastic period
- Early settlement in the Paleolithic
  - many sites of Paleolithic foragers known in Egypt back to 100,000 BC
  - Around 7,000 BC, the climate changed a bit, allowing plants and animals to flourish in what is now the Sahara desert
    - presumably attracting human foragers, too
  - The Sahara apparently dried out again around 5,550 BC, pushing foragers into the Nile valley, where they started cultivating in order to support their higher population density
  - Note that this is much later than in the Levant
- Neolithic period
  - Neolithic in Lower Egypt:
    - In the Fayum depression, by 5,000 BC: the Fayum culture (also Fayyum, Fayuum)
      - mobile or semi-sedentary foragers who came to certain areas to do some farming on occasion, maybe seasonally
      - sites seem to be temporary camps
      - mixed agricultural, hunting, and fishing subsistence
      - cultivated emmer wheat and barley
      - stored it in pits or “silos” made by setting baskets about 1 m diameter and 30 to 100 cm deep into the ground
      - harvested with sickle blades set into wooden handles, with sickle gloss
      - made fine baskets and crude ceramics
    - In Mesopotamia, the ‘Ubaid period had started 600 years earlier, around 5600 BC
      - by this time, ‘Ubaid people had settled towns and small temples
At Merimda and elsewhere in the western delta, a related but different Neolithic culture
also around 5000 BC or maybe a little later, to maybe 4100 BC
simple, perishable pole and thatch houses
some changes late in the sequence (maybe 4300 BC):
some houses were dug partially into the ground
storage “granaries” associated with individual houses
grinding stones
sites up to 20 ha (8 acres)
site populations up to 1,300 to 2,000 people
suggests heavy dependence on cereals
broadly similar to late Natufian and PPNA settlements in the Levant, but much later
simple graves within villages, without goods, unlike in upper Egypt
social stratification: no evidence; burials at Merimde all roughly equivalent in wealth
Neolithic in Upper Egypt:
very different from the Neolithic in Lower Egypt
Badarian culture, also started around 5000 BC
that is, during the Mesopotamian ‘Ubaid period (5600-3900 BC)
as in Lower Egypt, small farming villages, maybe only semi-sedentary
settlements:
perishable pole-and-thatch houses, hearths
basketry-lined “silo” pits
subsistence:
Lots of sheep/goat droppings suggest herding
wheat, barley, lentils
hunting, fishing
material culture
more technologically sophisticated than lower Egypt
pottery much finer, better made than in lower Egypt
burial tradition was quite different from lower Egypt
burials were located at the edge of the desert, in cemeteries separated from the areas
where people lived
bodies dressed in skins or linen cloth
with varied grave goods
stone tools
strings of shell beads as anklets, bracelets, necklaces
blue-glazed steatite beads
steatite is a stone that can be made to develop a glassy glazed surface by heating
ivory and bone beads, pins, needles, awls, combs; needle cases; animal figurines
female figurines made of bone
stone palettes for preparing eye paint (especially malachite green)
some stained green from use
beginning of a long Upper Egyptian tradition of palettes
General patterns in adoption of agriculture
Egyptian agricultural settlements started later than in Mesopotamia and remained much more ephemeral. Compare to Eridu in the ‘Ubaid period, roughly the same time:
- definitely a town, if not a city; maybe 5,000 people by 4500 BC
- suggests that in Neolithic Egypt, accumulation of wealth was limited and society was less stratified
- large-scale irrigation was not necessary until much later

Naqada I (also called Amratian) period 4000-3600 BC (400 years long)
- contemporary with Early Uruk (3900-3600 BC)
- Naqada I in general:
  - small settlements, probably with chiefs and some social status differences, but not much
- Naqada I in Upper Egypt
  - no clear break from Badarian, rather a gradual evolutionary change
  - villages of 50 to 250 people in pole and thatch houses (around Naqada)
  - continued and expanded customs of burying in cemeteries with extensive grave goods
    - shallow pits, roofed with branches, probably covered with a pile of gravel
  - material culture gradually changed in minor ways
    - in style of pottery, palettes, stone vessels, ceramic female figurines
  - minor use of copper (probably native copper?)
  - disk-shaped stone mace heads in burials
    - many are too small, or have holes too small, to have been functional
    - several known with impractical ivory or horn handles
    - could have been models specifically for funerary use
      - an idea that became common later in Egypt
    - apparently were symbols of status or power based on the idea of force
      - but not necessarily the actual use of it?
  - Upper Egypt at this point seemed to be relatively isolated from Mediterranean and Near Eastern traditions
- Naqada I in Lower Egypt: no great changes
  - Town of Merimde continued
  - Town of El-Omari, similar, contemporary with late Merimde

Naqada II (also called Gerzean) period 3600-3200 BC (400 years long)
- This is when things really started to change
  - some have suggested that the change was so drastic that it implies the arrival of a new group of people from some foreign place
  - who became the ruling class
  - this is highly debatable, though; the majority of archaeologists now reject this idea
  - there was some outside influence, without a doubt. We’ll look at the evidence later…
- Contemporary with Middle Uruk (3600-3400 BC) and Late Uruk (3400-3100 BC)
  - interesting that this is just when urbanism, technology, the power of the temple, etc. really picked up in Sumer, too
- Naqada II in Upper Egypt (3600-3200 BC)
  - significant changes in material culture
in general: the development of elaborate, specialized crafts
  - especially the appearance of pots with painted designs, usually showing boats
  - the boats often have features thought to be a “standard” or “emblem” similar to the standards that later identified regions
  - many changes in the styles of other artifacts, often well made and decorated
    - shape of mace heads changed from disk-shaped to pear-shaped
    - cosmetic palettes changed shape and size, often finely made in animal shapes
    - some very small ones must be models
  - the “signature” objects of Naqada II: incredibly fine flint knives
    - blade first ground to shape
    - then long, parallel flakes chipped off of one face only (“ripple flaking”) 
    - small flakes, also chipped off the same side (“retouch” flakes), perfected the shape
    - sometimes with carved ivory handles
    - must be the work of highly skilled specialists
    - clearly for show, not use
  - increasing (but still rare) use of copper, very rare silver and gold
    - copper adzes, axes, daggers; knives, spearheads, harpoons, fishhooks, needles, finger rings, small tools, ornaments
    - copper casting and forging
    - silver and gold for thin wire, tiny beads, sheathing on other materials, jewelry
  - social implications:
    - rise of highly skilled specialists making elaborate display goods
    - implies a high-status clientele able to support this work
    - many of these objects were apparently destined for show and/or burial, not use
    - maybe competition to make ever more elaborate burials encouraged division and specialization of labor, concentration of wealth, increasing social complexity
    - or maybe the burials just reflect those changes, which could have been caused by something else
  - House style changed from round, semisubterranean, with pole and thatch superstructure, to rectangular, aboveground, mudbrick with walled courtyard as in Mesopotamia
    - Late Naqada II clay house model illustrates this
    - rectangular, with door at one end and two windows at the other
    - half roofed, half an open courtyard
    - similar to houses still used today
    - does this shift in house shape mean something interesting? Kent Flannery's suggestion:
      - round houses arranged in a circle around an open space are typical of small farming and herding societies
      - in which food production and consumption is shared among the whole group
      - this plan cannot expand to a very large size, or the circle gets impractically large
      - so if the group gets large, some members tend to bud off into a new group
grids of rectangular houses are typical of larger societies in which productive activities are less shared and communal
made up of many relatively independent productive units, typically families
this plan can easily grow to accommodate more families without budding off
so Flannery argues that rectangular houses suggest a shift from smaller, communal, simply integrated society to larger-scale, more impersonal, fragmented society of economically independent families
they might be interdependent in terms of specialization and exchange, but they no longer form a single functional economic unit
of course, there are many exceptions, and not everyone is convinced by this
a few large towns or small cities developed
possibly just two or three in Upper Egypt
not nearly as generalized a phenomenon as in Mesopotamia
the vast majority of Egyptians were still rural, as they remained throughout Egyptian history - there was never any hyper-urbanism in Egypt
These few large towns were probably the centers of chiefdoms that each controlled a nearby stretch of the Nile farmland and its population
Hierakonpolis (also called Nekhen)
became a major urban center
a “population explosion” at this site around the beginning of Naqada II
at 3800 BC (middle of Naqada I), it was a village of several hundred people
by 3400 BC (middle of Naqada II), it had 5,000 to 10,000 residents
this could reflect population increasing the in area
but it more likely reflects people moving from the countryside into the town
that is, people concentrating into one place, rather than a big increase in numbers of people in the region
this would have put pressure on the food production capacity right near the town
may have encouraged taxation or other control of production from the surrounding hinterland
densely packed rectangular mudbrick houses, similar to Mesopotamia
with a range of sizes, suggesting differences in wealth or status
apparently was the residence of important chiefs or kings
probably much smaller than Uruk at this time, but at least in the same league
economy:
subsistence based on wheat and barley, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs
apparently already a major pottery production center for Upper Egypt
because ceramics from Hierakonpolis were widespread in Upper Egypt
implies specialization, organization of workshops, concentration of capital, probably specialized traders
probably some people getting wealthy while others worked for ceramic workshops or merchants
Hierakonpolis also produced vases, maceheads, palettes, other stone goods
suggests considerable specialization, differentiation, complex division of labor…
big constructions were built at Hierakonpolis between 3400 BC and 3200 BC
second half of Naqada II
an oval retaining wall of sandstone blocks, almost 50 m across, maybe a platform for a monumental building
dating is rough, but probably in Naqada II
a thick mudbrick wall around part of the town, presumably for defense
with an extensive cemetery
including some rich burials that suggest wealthy, powerful leaders
Naqada (a settlement; where Naqada I, II, III pottery styles were identified)
similar layout of rectangular mud-brick buildings
by the beginning of Naqada II, the town was enclosed by a mudbrick wall
presumably for defense
very important cemetery
containing some large, rich burials comparable to the richest at Hierakonpolis
This (a site called “This”), near Abydos
a poorly known town that was probably the center of another regional chiefdom
pottery from just a few clay sources was traded up and down the Nile, suggesting specialized mass production
gold, malachite, other minerals were probably collected or mined from the desert highlands east of Hierakonpolis and Naqada
this may have involved organization that could reinforce status differences
that is, leaders in these places may have been able to use their access to mines, trading routes, and manpower to exploit them to further build their wealth and power
burial practices for the highest-status people got increasingly elaborate, suggesting increasing status differences
moderate-status burials were still in oval pits, with a modest quantity of goods
example moderate-status grave lot: a necklace of gold, turquoise, garnet, and malachite beads, some common ceramics, two small decorated pots, and a crude flint knife
highest-status burials began to be placed in rectangular chambers with mudbrick walls
maybe echoed the shift to rectangular houses
highest-status burials started to have “mastabas”, or bench-like rectangular mounds built over them
looting was already a problem in Naqada II
“secondary” burials in some tombs are thought to be attempts to set things right after a grave was robbed.
the “painted tomb” at Hierakonpolis
the largest, most elaborate Naqada II tomb known
presumably the tomb of an Upper Egyptian chief or ruler
unfortunately looted before excavation in 1899, only a few artifacts remained
walls and floor of brick
a light wall divided the tomb into a burial chamber and a space for offerings: a pattern that would be elaborated later
the walls are painted (the only known example from this period) and show:
boats similar to the ones on the pots
men thought to be hunting animals and/or fighting each other
– one seems to hold three captives tied by a rope
– another seems to hold a figure upside down, ready to hit it with a long stick
– but these are ambiguous, since some of the “victims” are clearly animals
– also, one seems to hold two animals, much like the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh
  suggests two things
  – first, Mesopotamian influence
  – second, maybe the painting does not describe real Egyptian events at all…
– this is evidence for an emerging elite or ruling class
– albeit not nearly as marked as in the following periods
– it might be evidence for the elites’ connection to warfare -- or it might not…
– it might be evidence for the elites’ having some sort of connection to Mesopotamia,
  maybe ethnic, trade, religious, or…?

– Naqada II in Lower Egypt (3600-3200 BC)
– again: contemporary with Middle and Late Uruk
– Unfortunately, it is more difficult to tell what happened in Lower Egypt, due to sites
  being located in the Nile delta, where early evidence is mostly deeply buried under silt
– As in Upper Egypt, a few large towns developed
– extensive trade with the Levant, maybe Mesopotamia
– But lower Egyptian culture evolved gradually, without the fairly abrupt changes seen in
  Upper Egypt at the start of Naqada II
– town of Ma’adi (3650 BC - ~2700 [through Early Dynastic])
  – up to 18 ha (about 1 and 1/2 Çatal Hüyüks)
  – continued Lower Egyptian traditions
    – plain pottery
    – oval houses, some semi-subterranean, pole and thatch roofs
    – relatively simple burials, both in the town and in cemeteries, with some variation in
      richness
    – but now added extensive trade with Levant and possibly Late Uruk and Jemdet Nasr
      cities of Mesopotamia
  – domesticated donkeys (Equus asinus: ass) present; used for trading expeditions?
  – possible trade with Upper Egypt (debated)
– storage was not only in individual houses in town, but also in segregated areas around
  the edge of the town
  – one of these areas contained underground, roofed “cellars” for storage of goods
  – another had rows of large storage jars set into the ground
  – one contained stone vases and carnelian beads
  – jars, grains, animal and fish bones, lumps of asphalt, flint tools, spindle whorls etc.
  – such large quantities of goods must have been for exchange, rather than the use of
    any one family or group
  – this storage was NOT centralized, as at Mesopotamian temples, but dispersed
  – maybe controlled by various different families or other institutions?
– considerable evidence of craft production
– copper smelted and worked on site
  – ore possibly brought from Sinai
  – apparent workshop areas for stone production
  – specialized craft producers making goods for exchange?
– Buto
  – poorly known due to being deep under water table
  – but evidently a large town
  – its location suggests that it could have been a port for trade with the Mediterranean
    and the Levant
  – we’ll see more evidence for this in a moment…
– Some evidence suggests contact between Egypt and Mesopotamia
  – whether this contact involved a significant number of people, and whether it had any
    significant effect on Egyptian culture, is highly debated
  – while Egypt picked up many ideas from Mesopotamia, Mesopotamia does not seem to
    have picked up any from Egypt; the influence seems one-way
– Mesopotamian influence in Lower Egypt
  – Lower Egypt was clearly part of the Uruk expansion
    – Mesopotamian Uruk period pottery, cylinder seals, and other items are found at
      Buto and elsewhere in Lower Egypt
    – at Buto, locally made “clay cones” for wall mosaics - a Mesopotamian style
      – implies at least one important building in Mesopotamian style, probably the
        presence of Sumerian people, some trade…
  – clear evidence of goods exchanged from Mesopotamia
    – from Syria, Uruk, even Susa
– Mesopotamian influence in Egypt in general
  – locally made cylinder seals may be imitations of Mesopotamian models
  – paneled “palace-façade” mudbrick architecture appeared in Egypt in Naqada II
    – no known local antecedents in Egypt
    – very similar to buttressed architecture of Mesopotamia
  – some artistic motifs (and myths or events that they represent) that appeared during
    Naqada II seem to have come from Mesopotamia
    – Ivory knife handle of Gebel-el-Arak
      – Mesopotamian Gilgamesh-like (or Enkidu-like) figure holding two lions
      – battle scene with Naqada II style boats and Mesopotamian style boat!
      – suggests that the “influence” may not always have been peaceful
    – The motif of a person holding two animals also appears in the Naqada II tomb
      painting in the Painted tomb at Hierakonpolis
      – you remember that this was a Sumerian motif
      – not likely to have been invented coincidentally by the Egyptians
    – Intertwined serpent-necked animals (“serpo-felines”) appear in Egyptian art by the
      end of Naqada II
      – slightly later example on the palette of Narmer (Naqada III period)
– Generalizations about Naqada II
Upper and Lower Egypt were still very different

- Upper Egypt
  - large, rich tombs at Hierakonpolis and Naqada suggest big differences in wealth and status
  - weapons in burials, fighting shown in the Painted Tomb, and walls around towns all suggest that high status had a military component
  - although exploitation of mineral production, craft production, and trade could also have been important

- Lower Egypt
  - only minor variation between burials found so far
  - even so, specialized production, trade, and storage of lots of valuable goods at Ma‘adi make it likely that people and families developed different degrees of wealth and status
  - any status differences probably were based on specialized production and trade, that is, economic success

- Upper Egypt seems to have been organized into regional chiefdoms with capital cities and obvious rulers
  - who had to wall their towns for self-defense

- Lower Egypt did not show signs of regional polities, obvious leaders, or militarism
  - although the absence of evidence in Lower Egypt might be due to poor preservation and little data

- relationship between Upper and Lower Egypt in Naqada II
  - Upper Egyptian goods and styles began to appear in Lower Egypt late in Naqada II, getting to the Delta town of Buto
    - suggesting increasing contact, trade, and desire in Lower Egypt for Upper Egyptian goods (and ideas?)
  - Delta towns like Ma‘adi may have been trade centers that moved Upper Egyptian goods to the Levant, and goods from the Levant to both Lower and Upper Egypt

- this relationship began to change towards the end of Naqada II, as we will see next time...