The Emergence of Pristine States

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ABSTRACT

In this article the emergence of the Pristine State will be considered. First, I will present an overview of the applied method. Then seven cases of – probable – Pristine States are described. This makes a comparative research possible. As the case studies have been described with the help of the Complex Interaction Model, the comparative part is also based upon this approach. From the comparisons it appeared that all cases developed in a situation of relative wealth. They were not a consequence of hunger or population pressure. Nor could the often mentioned role of war be established as crucial in the formation of these states. War, as far as it occurred, was rather a consequence than a condition of state formation.

1. PRELIMINARY REMARKS

In 1967, Morton H. Fried introduced the concept of the *pristine state* in *The Evolution of Political Society*, stating that 'all contemporary states, even those that seem to be lineally descended from the states of high antiquity, like China, are really secondary states; the pristine states perished long ago' (Fried 1967: 231). The pristine states were those that 'emerged from stratified societies and experienced the slow, autochthonous growth of specialized formal instruments of social control out of their own needs for these institutions' (*Ibid.*). The institutions grew and a leader – a priest, a warrior, a manager, or a charismatic person – came to the fore, and started to use his power. Gradually the organization of such a polity developed into an incipient early state (term in Claessen 1978, 2014). Fried suggests that the 'stratified-society-going-pristine-state' was (probably) surrounded by other societies, developing in tandem, so that

competition, trade, war, and communication played a role in its further development; as an early form of 'peer polity interaction' (Renfrew and Cherry 1986). Fried also suggests that such pristine states could overrun less well-organized neighbours and incorporate them within its own system as an inferior social stratum (Fried 1967: 232). Fried suggests Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, and the Yellow River Valley as possible sources of pristine states. He does not exclude the possibility that once, in an unknown past, pristine states developed also in Africa, but which completely disappeared since. Interestingly, he does not include an American case in his list.

The concept of the pristine state – and implied with that the origin of the state – received considerable attention. To mention a few of the scholars involved: Robert L. Carneiro[1] stated that the origin of the state was caused by circumscription and war. Julian H. Steward carefully analyzed the theocratic character of pristine states (Steward 1955: 182–185). In his analysis of the origins of civilizations Elman R. Service (1975) introduced Mesoamerica, Peru, and Polynesia as pristine states. Herbert S. Lewis and Sidney M. Greenfield (1983) emphasized decision making as a crucial aspect of state formation. Renée Hagesteijn (1985) analysed the development of the state in Southeast Asia (Ayudhya, Pagan, and Burma) and explained the instability of these states. Norman Yoffee (1993, 2005) fundamentally criticized the traditional evolutionary theories, and asserted that pristine states did not develop from chiefdoms, and finally Charles Spencer (2010), who assumed that pristine states were characterized by conquest.

I will discuss below the proposed cases – Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China, Mesoamerica, and Tonga – and add as an African case ancient Ghana. First, however, I will investigate what we can say about the evolution of these very first states with the help of the Complex Interaction Model (CIM).[2]

The CIM is a general model for the evolution of socio-political organization. It consists of three factors: 1. the *format of the society*, which refers to the number of people in relation to the means of production and the area of land available; 2. *domination and control of the economy*; and 3. the *ideology*.[3] A mutual, reciprocal influencing of each other causes changes in the factors (or groups of factors), in this way creating the conditions under which socio-

political organizations emerge, or trigger a more elaborate development. The emerging socio-political organization becomes the fourth factor in the model, which in its turn influences the other three and acts as co-determinant. When the structures which had thus been established alter structurally from those which had preceded them, evolution has occurred. One change evokes the other; a complex interaction has come into play (for literature see Note 2).

The CIM does not include the popular factors of *war* or *conquest*. In my opinion these are not independent factors, but are caused by disturbances in one of the factors of the model (Claessen 2006; 2010: 24).[4] The developments, explained with the help of the CIM are, generally speaking, peaceful and gradual. This is also more or less the line followed by Service (1975: 266 ff., 290 ff.), and later by Schaedel and Robinson (2004). To illustrate the working of the CIM, I will present a fictitious case. Imagine the situation in which population growth in a small community demands a larger production of food. This stimulates bringing more land under cultivation which changes the format of the society. Tensions between the number of people and the limited harvest might perhaps induce more fervour in the religious or ideological sphere, and the priest or priests will get more influence, demanding more offers, and occasionally a larger temple. Another solution might be found in the development of trade. Trade might also influence positively the affluence of the society, and certainly of some of its members and eventually leads to the introduction of new types of food. As a consequence the economy and its managers get more status and influence. The community, gradually increasing, becomes more complex, and thus needs a stronger and better educated leadership (*cf.* Johnson 1978, 1982; Hallpike 1986: 246). A corollary of the growth of the society is that an increasing number of people falls under the paramount leader. As it cannot be expected that everybody always agrees with his decisions, the leader has to cope with the problem of how to make his followers act according to the norms and values of the society – that is to say his norms and values. He has to combine adroitly consensus and coercion (*cf.* Claessen 1994: 41). Here the legitimacy of the leader comes into play. In many cases the leader of such a society is considered to be sacred, supposed to be a descendant of gods, spirits or forefathers; he is evidently blessed by the god(s), which appears from

the fact that his harvests usually are larger than those of other farmers.[5] This greatly enhances his position. He then starts to create an inner-circle of clients, priests, and servants. Stratification thus becomes more explicit in the society, and is considered as legitimate – the emergence of the state is near.

Until now there has been no mention of the term 'state'. When does one speak of a state? Numerous definitions of 'state' have been developed but they are hardly applicable in the research of the pristine state, for they have been developed either by anthropologists (Claessen and Skalník 1978a; Kurtz 2011, 2012; Grinin and Korotayev 2012), who base themselves on early states that had been observed in actual practice, or by archaeologists, basing themselves on remaining artefacts of earlier civilizations – and by lack of written sources are sometimes inspired by anthropologists (Van de Velde 1985; Champion *et al.* 1984).[6] Recently Dmitri Bondarenko analysed thoroughly the characteristics of the (early) state, concluding that its essential characteristic was the existence of a group of non-kin functionaries (Bondarenko 2014).[7] The problem with pristine states is that not much is known about them. In the often scanty archaeological record indications of state like characteristics are hard to find as are remaining traces of earlier forms of organization. This makes it difficult to establish if and when the pristine state emerged, and its predecessor ended. Already in *The Early State* (Claessen and Skalník 1978b: 621) we established that: 'many tendencies that are characteristic of pre-state phases (such as for instance, communal ownership of land, allegiance to family or clan heads), did not disappear after state formation.' Such situations – aptly called by Carneiro (1973): 'differential evolution' – make it difficult to ascertain the existence of a pristine state. Usually few of the characteristics of a state can be found; the best one can hope for is finding indications for the existence of a three-tier political organization, aspects of legitimacy, palaces, defence works, temples and priesthood, trade, prestige goods, *etc*. In the meantime one has to stay aware of the views of Radcliffe-Brown (1940), that the state is just 'a collection of human beings connected by a complex system of relations' (Radcliffe-Brown 1940: xiii, xxiii), and not something tangible.

An analysis of the conditions under which early states emerge shows that a number of specific conditions have to be fulfilled first,

before this can occur, and it seems reasonable to suppose that these conditions also have to be fulfilled to allow a pristine state to develop. These conditions are of a general character, and it can be assumed that several of them are found already in some form or another in the preceding stratified societies. It thus can be safely stated that 'Long before the state came into being people already lived in well-organized societies, and were accustomed to leadership, rules, tributes and military service' (Claessen 1994: 47; Claessen and Oosten 1996: 5; *cf.* Carneiro 1981; Earle 1991; Pospisil 1984). These conditions are the following (based on Claessen and Oosten 1996: 5; Claessen 2000: 188):

– a sufficient number of people to form a complex, stratified society;

– a large enough territory, over which control is exercised. In the long run such a territory is not necessarily sufficient for the maintenance of the population. In such cases conquest or trade are the obvious means to amend for its shortcomings;

– an economic system yielding a surplus to maintain the many specialists and the privileged categories. Such specialists may be political, religious and administrative functionaries, but also craftsmen, traders, *etc.*;

– an ideology which explains and justifies the existence of a hierarchical administrative organization and socio-political inequality. If such an ideology does not exist, or emerges the formation of a state becomes difficult, if not impossible (*cf.* Clastres 1974; Miller 1976).[8]

It should be added that the presence of these factors does not automatically result in a state. To come that far some triggering accident should occur (Claessen 2002). This can be a threat by a neighbouring polity, peer polity interaction (as described by Renfrew and Cherry 1986), hunger, war, a religious development, or matters of trade, such as protecting trade routes or market places (developments explained in detail by Tymowski 1981).

In the following section, I will present short summaries of the cases considered to be 'pristine states.'

2. CASE STUDIES

A. Egypt

For quite some time it was supposed that the state in Egypt began when the polities of the South and the North were united, and one

king, the *pharaoh,* ruled the whole. It has become clear, however, that long before this unification already stratified societies emerged in the South (the Nile Valley). In a detailed article Kathryn Bard (1994) points out that 'In the 4th millennium BC two different Predynastic cultures, both of which practiced agriculture, developed in Egypt: the Nagada culture in the south and the Maadi culture in the north.' In the South, where most of the archaeological evidence is from cemeteries, 'there is much greater evidence for the evolution of social hierarchies and complex societies' (Bard 1994: 1). 'Archaeological evidence for the Predynastic suggests that the early state had its cultural origins in the south' (*Ibid.*). This 'early state' then must have been the pristine state of Egypt.[9]

The evidence for the South is based mainly on the data from rich graves, which not only show the wealth of some persons or families, but also is indicative for a developed social stratification. This in contradistinction to the North, where the Maadi culture is known only from settlements with simple burials. The burials of the Nagada culture are symbolic of status display and rivalry, competition and the aggrandizement of local polities. Bard (1994: 8) suggests that 'the control of prestige goods would have reinforced the position of a chief among his supporters.' These goods mainly came from Nubia, a region with which the Nagada people had intensive trade connections. Proussakov (2004: 148 ff., 166 ff.) pays a lot of attention to the 'many oared boats,' and posits that these large boats not only were crucial in trade relations, but were used also in the extension of the power of the southern polities.

There were three major centres in the South during the fourth millennium: Abydos, Nagada, and Hierakonpolis. Nagada was excavated by W. F. Petrie in the beginning of the twentieth century, where he found indications for trade and exchange (Bard 2007: 94; Van Haarlem 2013: 29). The status burials on the cemeteries here were suggestive for headmen, or even kings. An urban centre, from which a central polity controlled the region was not found, however (Bard 2007: 97). The site of Hierakonpolis (also known as Nekhen, nowadays as El Kab) offered more data. Large cemeteries were found here, as well as a number of smaller settlements, and indications for 'industries' and temples (Bard 2007: 100). The presence of temples indicates the existence of a religious ideology. The presence of industries suggests the existence of craftsmen,

which were probably exempt from the food production. For their maintenance they were depending upon a redistribution of food by the headman which was collected possibly by a kind of taxation (Van Haarlem 2013: 32). Bard summarizes the Nagada culture as follows: 'Regional polities with increasing control over their economies (agriculture, craft production, regional and long-distance trade of goods and materials and human labor) were undoubtedly developing at Abydos, Nagada, and Hierakonpolis in later Nagada II times. And such polities were the precursors of the much larger state of Egypt which was forged in Nagada III times' (Bard 2007: 101). It should be pointed out, however, that Janssen (1978: 218), after a careful analysis of the available evidence, states that 'the origin of the state remains obscure.'

According to Bard, the pristine states had developed (or were developing) in the Nile Valley. This is an interesting establishment for two of the phenomena considered by Carneiro as crucial for the emergence of the state, were not found here: overpopulation and conflict or war (on Carneiro: Note 1). Already Butzer (1976: 84–89) pointed out that 'Pressure on land must have been low in Predynastic times' (see also Lankester 2014: 6). Land was used relatively extensively, and pastoralism still played a great role. Only gradually pastoralism and food gathering became of lesser importance. Land use became more intensified, and artificial irrigation made its entry (Butzer 1976: 86; Van Haarlem 2013: 30). Lankester (2014: 4) states that the cemeteries found near Hierakonpolis suggest 'very small populations.' It seems probable that in the farming villages some form of stratification developed, and success in farming gave prestige; it 'proved the headman's ritual power' (Lankester 2014: 4; see on this also Note 5). More important, it seems, was the increasing role of trade and markets (on markets: Janssen 1980). Headmen, and other prominent people competed for prestige goods (on prestige goods: Claessen and Van de Velde 1991: 13–16); wealth became a characteristic of the region (on the exchange of gifts: Janssen 1982; Proussakov 2004: 162). Yet, however, indications for conflict, or war, are lacking. Lankester (2014: 7–10; also Bard 2007: 107) discusses in some detail the meaning of a number of pictures suggestive of violence, and concludes that these are at least multi-interpretable; they do not prove the existence of war or conflict; neither do the walls, found near settle-

ments, whose goal was mainly protection against the water. Van Haarlem (2013: 30), however, thinks that such walls were also used for defence.

During Nagada II it seems that the village of Nagada gradually became eclipsed by Hierakonpolis and Abydos. Between these two a kind of alliance developed. Hierakonpolis became associated with the god Horus – symbolizing the living king – and Abydos with the god Osiris, representing the dead king (Bard 2007: 107; Romanchuk 2014). A development illustrative for the close connection between ideology and the political organization. Bard (2007: 106) with some caution, calls the centres of Hierakonpolis and Abydos 'confederacies,' elsewhere, however, she speaks of 'proto states.' There are, I think, reasons to use already the term 'states' here – probably 'incipient early states' (Claessen 1978, 2014; *cf.* Adams 1971: 14). This view is based on the fact that several of the characteristics, mentioned in Section 1, are found here. There certainly was peer polity interaction (which ended the prominence of Nagada), while Hierakonpolis and Abydos profited. Developments in the religion lead to an association of Abydos with the god Osiris, and Hierakonpolis with Horus. Trade was important over the Nile, and the political leaders took care that the trade routes were safe. Prestige goods played a serious role, and were used in the contacts with the Delta, too. The impressive burials of the notables showed not only their wealth, but also their high status. The existence of non-kin functionaries can be surmised from the existence of the many servants, helpers, soldiers, craftsmen, officials, and overseers. Between the two city-states a narrow bond grew, and finally developed into one Southern state. All in all, one may safely say that these developments clearly demonstrate the effect of complex interaction (CIM).

There is no reason to think that the polities of the South had sufficient man-power to conquer and dominate the North. To this goal they applied different strategies. According to Bard (2007: 105–106) a probable scenario is that over the years more and more traders from the South infiltrated the North, followed by colonists, who settled on strategic points. There are no indications for war between the North and the South. Most probably the greater cultural, economic, and organizational powers of the South simply absorbed the North. The unification thus was a rather peaceful occur-

rence. The capital was moved from Hierakonpolis to Memphis, and from there the rulers, the *pharaohs,* 'helped maintain a well-organized state over a very large territory – that might otherwise have quickly collapsed' (Bard 2007: 106). For thousands of years Egypt remained one of the dominant states in the Near East (see, *e.g.,* Cline 2014).

B. Mesopotamia

In the southernmost portion of the Tigris and Euphrates river valley area, some 7,000 BC, the first settlers lived mainly of hunting and gathering. When the climate changed and the weather became hotter and wetter, the population increased, and the beginning of agriculture became possible (Rhee 1981: 2). After several millennia food producing had wholly replaced the earlier hunting and gathering economy. The presence of the two great rivers made irrigation relatively simple, and a substantial agriculture had developed around 5,000 BC. This implied many new techniques and an increasing sedentism (Adams 1967: 40). The growing population settled in villages, and gradually some of the villages developed into small towns. Trade between the settlements became important. These developments stimulated 'territorial aggrandizement, political unification, and population concentration within the political unit' (Adams 1967: 46). In several places great walls were built, which at first were considered as fortifications, but recent research has made it likely that their first goal was protection against rising waters (Curvers 1993: 42).

Gradually the population of Sumer increased and as a consequence the production of more food became necessary. The irrigation works were enlarged, greater areas of land were regularly flooded, and from the nearby cities increasing pressure on the food producers was exerted. 'Slowly, bit by bit, community life became more complex, each new development affecting all the others, culminating in the institutionalization of various economic and administrative strata which then shaped a hierarchical structured society' (Rhee 1981: 6). It seems a reasonable assumption that the cities had grown out of those villages which were situated better, had more competent leaders, took part in interregional trade, succeeded in getting more or better food from the surrounding farmers – and especially were the location of one or more temples.

It is not very clear what type of social organization was found in the villages. Algaze (2013: 73) suggests that in the Ubaid period characteristics of chiefdoms were dominant, while in the later Uruk period the state level was reached; settlements in this period were found with three and four level organizations. The city of Uruk, the largest, had a surface of 70/100 hectares. Many other cities reached 40 or more. The population of the city of Uruk (also called Warka) is estimated at 40,000, while its surrounding area with small towns and villages is estimated at 80/90,000 people (Algaze 2013: 74). Adams (1967: 69) points in this respect to the fact that Uruk/Warka was not continuously built up within the walls, but included open areas and even cultivated gardens. If we accept the existence of village leaders or headmen, it seems probable that the socio-political leaders of the towns developed out of the leaders of the prosperous villages that lay at the basis of the larger settlements. It should be noted here that Yoffee (1993: 61 ff., also Yoffee 2005) strongly rejects the idea of chiefdoms laying at the basis of state formation.[10] He, in fact wholly rejects the notion of the neo-evolutionist 'ladder' of progress. In his view the basis for state formation lies within social and economic processes (Yoffee 1993: 65). Adams (1988: 24) emphasizes the 'elaboration of social hierarchies' as a basic condition.

In the cities significant innovations occurred in the socio-economic and the technological sphere – a general characteristic of emerging cities (Sjoberg 1960: 28). 'By the end of the Ubaid period and more widely during the Uruk period the fast wheel was introduced into pottery making, resulting in mass production of standard ware' (Rhee 1981: 7). Also the first monumental buildings emerged during the Uruk period, exemplified by the massive temple complexes of Uruk. The temple was an important organization to emerge within the Mesopotamian social structure, dominating not only the ideological domain, but also playing a great role in the economic and political fields. 'It served not only as a religious center but also as the center for the collection and exchange of goods and the redistribution of surpluses. The temple elite, in addition to their spiritual activities, administered the redistribution of goods for the region and, in many cases, they also supervised the production of foods and crafts; obviously they exercised enormous power' (Rhee 1981: 9; Maisels 1988: 344). It is not surprising thus,

that regularly great tensions developed between the palace and the temple (Yoffee 1993: 67). The many complex socio-economic activities made the development of an administrative system necessary – and from this developed the Sumerian writing system. Algaze (2013: 75) adds to the role of the temple, that people preferred to live in cities with a temple, for then they lived near the gods. For example, several temples existed in Uruk/Warka. They were dedicated to the head gods Inanna, and Enlil. The building of such temples was an enormous work. It is estimated that 1,500 men worked for five years at it. The building of such a large temple was a show of power, wealth, and organization (Algaze 2013: 79; *cf.* Curvers 1993: 124–128).

Gradually some of the cities developed into city-states, political entities, described by Adams (1967: 14) as 'hierarchically organized on political and territorial lines rather than on kinship or other ascriptive groups.' And, though originally most likely traditional village leaders had formed the city government, in later years the highest functions became monopolized by the most prominent officials. Most of the characteristics of a state can be identified in the Sumerian city-states: a complex stratified society, a definite territory, a sufficient economic system, and an ideology which legitimized the rulers. There were found also at least three administrative layers: the government, the citizens, and the villagers of the surrounding country (Yoffee 1993: 69; Wright and Johnson 1975: 271, 272). Several functionaries at the head of the state are mentioned: the *En*, the *Ensi*, and the *Lugal*. The Lugal was a member of the bureaucracy[11] entrusted with the army, and on this basis he in the course of time claimed kingship. The En had originally a ceremonial function: he accompanied the god or goddess of the city, and married the goddess ceremonially at the beginning of the agrarian cycle. This gave him a supernatural charisma, and from this position the En grew into a king in some cities. Elsewhere it was the Ensi, who absorbed this position. He was an official originally in charge of the agrarian interests of the city, who concentrated later on the political aspects of his function and left the ceremonial aspects to the En (Curvers 1993: 114–115; Rhee 1981: 17–22; Emelianov 2004: 181–184). These relations show the narrow bands between the cultic establishment and the political leaders (Yoffee 1993: 70).

The data presented thus far give the impression that the Sumerian city-states developed in a complex interaction of a number of factors: fertile soil, water for irrigation, plenty of food, settling in villages (some of which grew into cities), a number of technological inventions, the invention of writing, important trade between villages and cities along the rivers. The analyses of Wright and Johnson (1975: 276) demonstrate that there was no population pressure in the period before the development of the states. Algaze (2013: 80, 82) states that much more is known about the economy than about war. In this respect he points to the expansion of some city states between 3700/3600 and 3500/3400 BC. This was perhaps the way in which cities likr Uruk got the great number of workers to build the temples. Rhee (1981: 20–21) mentions some rulers of Uruk that have been warriors. Charvát (1981) refers to the rulers of Kish as having been rather warlike. The data on war all point to the period when interstate rivalry had become important; there are no indications, however, that the emergence of the city states was connected with war or population pressure.

C. India/Ganges Valley

In the time that Mesopotamia was developing, a complex civilization was flowering in Harappa along the Indus River in India (Ratnagar 1991, 1996, 2016). But its political organization did not yet qualify as a state (Erdosy 1995a: 77, 79; Thapar 1975: 29).[12] The state would emerge in a later period along the banks of the Ganges, thus not as Fried supposed the Indus, where the Harappan civilization was located. That such developments took place along the great rivers is not surprising, for large parts of India consisted of hot, humid and unhealthy plains (Scharfe 1989: 3–14). Archaeological research has shown that the Ganges Valley was well settled by the second millennium BC (Erdosy 1995a: 75). The settlers lived in small villages, larger places were absent. Romila Thapar describes the villagers as living in lineage societies, defined by her as 'corporate groups of unilineal kin with a formalized system of authority. It has rights and duties and accepts genealogical relationships as the binding factor' (Thapar 1984: 10). The basic unit is the extended family based on a three or four generation lineage controlled by the eldest male who represents it on both ritual and political occasions. The strong emphasis on kinship notwithstanding,

non-kin groups were sometimes allowed to labour the fields of the lineage. Rituals reinforced the system, particularly initiation rituals of the leaders and the public worship of ancestors, making the religious ideology one of the cornerstones of the social organization. 'Political stability often lies in the open frontier which makes migration possible so that tensions within the clans can be eased by the migration of some' (Thapar 1984: 11).[13] These lineage groups and their villages were the basis from which in later times towns, cities and states would emerge. The lineages were also the basis from which the social structure of the *varnas* would develop. The first indication of its emergence is found when non-kin people were allowed to work for a lineage – but remained considered as strangers, not as family.

An important form of work was livestock breeding and cattle herding. The grazing grounds were carefully guarded, for there was always need of such lands; moreover the capturing of cattle was a favourite sport, and success brought honour and wealth to the successful robbers (Thapar 1984: 24). Connected with this is the fact that wealth was counted in heads of cattle. In this situation the cow got a kind of religious sanctity and became a kind of totem animal (*Ibid.* 25). The booty of a successful raid was distributed among the clan members, an obligation of the leader towards his warriors, but which also bound the warriors to the leader.[14] It should be noted that next to cattle breeding, also agriculture played a great role in the lineage society. Though gradually the agriculturalists became subordinated by the pastoralists, there is no necessity to think of subjection. Scarcity of good soil may have played a decisive role in accepting the proximity of herders (Thapar 1984: 27). Interestingly, it is already here that a complex interaction between the societal format, the economy and the ideology can be noted, an interaction which lay at the origins of a more complex society. Slowly status differences among the members of the tribe (clan, group of lineages) became stronger. On the one hand, there were the notables – the senior lineages – out of which the *raja* was chosen, on the other, the lesser, the junior or cadet lineages which did not qualify for high positions, the *vis* (Erdosy 1995a: 85; Thapar 1984: 35).

The small polities began to 'fill a previously undifferentiated landscape' (Erdosy 1995a: 86). Till then there were still found during the tenth–sixth centuries BC wide belts of rural settlements

acting as buffers between evolving polities. The position of the political leader developed too: till then he was the leader in battle and entitled to tribute, but now he also ensured tilling, peaceful dwelling and prosperity in his realm (Thapar 1984: 35, 62). The socio-political organization of these mainly two level polities could be best characterized as chiefdoms. In these developments ideological considerations played a central part, especially in the ceremonies around the consecration of the raja (Erdosy 1995a: 87). The rising importance of the priests, the Brahmins, in the affairs of the polity created the belief that they were the source of the miraculous benefits (Scharfe 1989: 49). As a ruler, the raja belonged to the *ksatriya,* the most prominent of the varnas – the landowners and military. Between the ruler and his priest, the *purohita*, a Brahmin, existed a close cooperation. Under the *ksatriya* and the *Brahmins,* the two highest varnas stood the *vaisya*, playing a leading role in agriculture, trade, and markets. The lowest varna was those of the *sudras*, who were considered as economically insignificant; 'their lot was one of relentless drudgery' (Erdosy 1995a: 91; 1995b: 121; Thapar 1975: 39).

In the period after 400 BC, the size of many cities increased considerably, much of which was occasioned by agglomeration (Erdosy 1995b: 107). Population growth is sometimes mentioned as an explanation, but is insufficient as explanation. Also the incessant competition between the leading polities was an important factor. These developments were also connected with the developing economic life. In the villages agriculture and herding remained dominant, in the minor centres were found manufacture of ceramics, iron-smelting and markets, in the towns many manufacturing activities were found together, while in the capitals (as *e.g.*, Kausambi) the centres of political power were located (Erdosy 1995b: 107). In the course of time several of the smaller polities became attached to larger ones – either by submission, or by economic dominance. Erdosy is convinced that neither population pressure, nor social circumscription will ever be proven for these regions (Erdosy 1995b: 119). Regarding the political administration, Thapar (1984: 60) remarks that 'the raja was surrounded by persons performing specific functions and some of them were even in a sense his retainers but there was no administrative machinery and no system of delegating powers.' She also points to the fact

that several of these functionaries were non-kinsmen, contributing to the power of the raja.[15] The focus on the ruler led to connecting him with the gods. It was believed that the gods had intervened in his selection as raja (Thapar 1984: 62). In this situation the purohita, originally only the domestic priest of the chiefly family, grew out to a formal office entrusted with the inauguration of the raja (on the purohita: Scharfe 1989: 80 ff.). This privilege greatly enhanced the influence of the Brahmins.

According to Thapar (1984: 67) the lineage system, with its elaborated (and costly) rituals arrested the development of the state. The raja had it is true a high position, but he lacked the financial means to set up a supportive political organization. In order to come that far either the elaborated rituals had to disappear or the source of income had to be increased. These conditions could not be met in the western part of the Ganges Valley, but in the more eastward part conditions for development were more favourable: the ecological scene was different: fertile soil, more water, and trade did play a great role, which made the region wealthy. Here the ksatriya claimed greater power, and prestations were incarnated as taxes (Thapar 1984: 69). Not only the ksatriya became wealthy, but also the Brahmins profited greatly of the developments and received large tracks of land for their services. The vaisya finally profited of the breaking up of the lineage lands and became landowners (Thapar 1984: 87, 88). Monarchical systems soon developed amongst others in the cities of Kausambi, Kosala, and Magadha (Thapar 1984: 71; Erdosy 1995b: 115). Was this a consequence of peer polity interaction? (Renfrew and Cherry 1986) The headman became a hereditary ruler, and where he formerly based his position on leadership in war and the handing out of booty, he now became considered to be the protector of life and property, and the enforcer of sacred law. He also exercised coercive power for the efficient fulfilment of his duties, 'and this marks the transition from chiefdom to state' (Erdosy 1995b: 117; *cf.* Claessen 2005). The pristine state had made its entry in the Ganges Valley. Magadha lay at the basis of the great Maurya Empire (Seneviratne 1978: 381). With this achievement the long period, during which in a complex interaction of demographic developments, the extension of the arable surface, technological and economic developments, and the rise of ideological phenomena as the Varna system, the increas-

ing role of the Brahmins, and the development of kingship, came to an end. The pristine state had emerged, opening new possibilities and presenting new challenges.

D. China / Erlitou

The situation in China with regard to the emergence of political centralization is rather complex. On the one hand there is the problem that in several regions early state-like societies may have developed in the past, and on the other hand there is the question if the large archaeological settlement of Erlitou should be connected with the first Chinese dynasty, the Xia.

On the first problem I will follow the views of the Chinese archaeologist Yi (2012), who points to several regions where complex socio-political organizations emerged, such as the Changdu Plain (Sichuan Basin), where the large city of Sanxingdui was situated, which by some scholars is considered as being already a (pristine) state (Yi 2012: 123). Also elsewhere developments of complex socio-political organizations have been found. Here, however, the evolution did not occur in one place, for the social group(s) in question appear to have been moving during these developments. Their evolution occurred in open spaces; there was no matter of circumscription. Yi speaks here of dynamic developments. With growing population pressure and intensifying competition for resources, 'the environment was not tightly constricted, and therefore, the victor and vanquished were constantly moving from one place to another, trying to find better land; it was thus they left abundant sites of walled settlements in the basin of the Yangtze River and the Yellow River. Finally some of them arrived in Yanshi of Luoyang of Henan and built the famous walled city in Erlitou (*c.* 1900 – *c.* 1500 BC), which was considered as a state by most Chinese scholars' (Yi 2012: 125).

The statements presented thus far give a rather general picture of the development of more complex socio-political organizations. The acting human beings have more or less disappeared behind the generalizations, and yet, without their activities no developments had been possible. So, let us try to come to better grips with social reality. Our sources, however, are rather silent on the subject.

The population of China in the third millennium BC lived mainly in large kin-groups. Some scholars call these groups tribes,

others prefer terms such as lineages or great-families. To decide what kind of organization was dominant depends on the definition chosen (*cf.* Ter Haar 2009: 209, 222, 304–305; Blunden and Elvin 1983: 74). That large family groups did play an important role in the developments in China is clear. It is here that we detect traces of ideology: these groups had a hierarchical structure, in which some families exercised authority over the other members of the group. Perhaps, we can speak here best of lineages, a type of kinship organization in which such hierarchy is found.[16] In the course of time, when the groups grew larger, the social distance between the leading members and the great mass grew correspondingly (*cf.* Blunden and Elvin 1983: 74). So when Yi speaks about the moving of large groups of people, it will most probably have been this type of large kin-groups. The group that finally settled in Erlitou had lived before in different places, where they left walled cities. It is not so sure that walled cities are indications of war as is often assumed; there are no reports of burned cities, or great numbers of skeletons showing mutilations of war, nor destroyed villages, or remains of battle-fields.[17] Moreover, 'many walled settlements were occupied for quite short periods' (Yi 2012: 125). In view of these negative data on war, it is a bit surprising that Yi (2012: 125) speaks about population pressure and intensifying competition for resources leading to more intensive warfare. Yet, Yi adds 'the environment was not tightly constricted, and therefore the victor and vanquished were constantly moving from one place to another, trying to find better land' (Yi 2012: 125). It is thus very well possible that, without war, a growing population became too heavy a burden for its surroundings, and the group leaders decided to move to a better place. It should be noted in this respect that the 'Erlitou-group' moved mainly through the fertile loess region of east China, a region that produced large quantities of rice. The many rivers here made irrigation possible, and provided also easy transport for people and goods (Stover 1976: 48; Yap and Cotterell 1975: 18).

Finally, this group reached the Yi-Luo River basin in western Henan, where they founded the town of Erlitou. In the period between 1900 and 1550 BC the Erlitou culture flourished: 'Erlitou (400 ha in area) is the largest among all its contemporary sites in China, and sites containing the Erlitou material assemblages have been found over a very broad region' (Liu 2000: 1). Also the polit-

ical structure changed in these years from the coexistence of multiple competing polities to one in which a single large centre dominated smaller centres and villages over a very broad region. In the words of Sarah Allan: 'Although cultural diversity and local political authority remained, it was unlike the previous Neolithic cultures because it had no challenger in range or influence' (Allan 2007: 467). Among the important developments in Erlitou should be mentioned the extensive fabrication of bronze objects, mainly weapons and ritual vessels. These vessels 'were associated with a set of religious practices centred on ancestral offerings' (Allan 2007: 465). The bronze artefacts became status symbols, which contributed to the long-distance exchange of precious goods, many of which were used for grave goods in elite burials. There must have been a numerous elite in Erlitou, for the remains of several palaces and temples are found among the remains. The presence of numerous bronze workshops is also suggestive for the well-being many of its citizens. The organization of Erlitou shows indications of social and economic control. This comes to the fore amongst others in the indications for urbanism which explain the swift increase of its size from 75 to 400 ha. Also the ceramic styles and the bronze industry show an increase in craft specialization and standardization related to political centralization. These changes indicate the emergence of a state-level social organization, 'characterized by a centralized political and economic control in its core area, as well as expanded cultural contacts and influence over a broad region' (Liu 2000: 2). The presence of non-kin functionaries, as required by Bondarenko (2014) to demonstrate a state organization, is not improbable, but they were not found mentioned in the literature consulted.

From the data given above it is clear that the development of Erlitou is the outcome of a complex interaction of a number of factors (CIM). A large, settled lineage grows in number and exhausts the land inhabited. It decided to move away to a better place. These movements – for there were several – strengthen the position of the leading families; the social distance in the lineage increases. The large mass of its members remain poor peasants, the happy few are rich and become considered as nobles. Once settled in Erlitou, the economy grows in importance. Especially the developing bronze industry contributes to growing wealth and trade along the rivers. The bronze vessels play a role in religious ceremonies,

indicating the importance of a religion where such costly vessels were needed. The strong hierarchy contributed greatly to the thriving Erlitou culture. In short, the one development calls the next, so that in the course of time a relatively simple agrarian lineage could grow into the bearer of the rich Erlitou culture.

One problem remains to discuss: the possible relation between Erlitou and the Xia dynasty. Regarding this problem, the Chinese archaeologist Liu states 'it is commonly held by Chinese scholars that the Erlitou culture is equivalent to the Xia dynasty, and that the Xia and Shang were state-level societies which constituted large centralized political systems throughout their reigns. In contrast, many western scholars have been sceptical about the reality of the Xia, and believe that a pristine state did not develop until the late Shang' (Liu 2000: 1; Yi 2012: 125–126; *cf.* Ter Haar 2009: xiii, 21). Who shall decide where Doctors disagree? I will leave this question open. The connection is very well possible, but is still under discussion.

E. Mesoamerica / Monte Albán.

The many years of archaeological research in Oaxaca notwithstanding, there are still several questions with regard of its center Monte Albán. The most important of which are: why was Monte Albán founded, and by whom? To get some grip upon the developments in Oaxaca, archaeologists distinguish the following phases: Rosario (700–500 BC), Early Monte Albán I (500–300 BC), Late Monte Albán I (300–100 BC), and Monte Albán II (100 BC – AD 250) (Kowalewski *et al.* 1995: 95). During the Rosario phase the northern part of the valley was organized as a chiefdom with its capital located at San José Mogote, a small town with an estimated population of about 700 people. Also in other parts of the Oaxaca valley small towns developed during this phase. 'Surrounding these centers there were clusters of smaller communities' (Blanton *et al.* 1999: 42). Kowalewski (2003: 15) stresses the fact that the small communities were too small to have their own civic-ceremonial facilities; for these they were dependent upon the larger centres. These clusters were separated by large unoccupied areas. Some carvings on monuments in San José Mogote are suggestive of prisoners of war and human sacrifices (Blanton *et al.* 1999: 44). Spencer (2010: 2) points to the fact that there were at least three

chiefdoms[18] during the Rosario phase: in the northern sub valley Etla (with San José Mogote), in the southern sub valley Ocotlán-Zimatlán, and in the east Tlacolula. In the valley of Oaxaca a new regional political capital was founded at Monte Albán' (Blanton *et al.* 1999: 46). The reasons given for this foundation are not very clear. Blanton c.s. speak of 'the changing nature of the Mesoamerican world,' a 'changing social environment' and point to the fact that also elsewhere in Mesoamerica new towns emerged (*Ibid.*: 46). It is also possible that new, strong centres were needed, to integrate the whole valley into 'a single political system' (*cf.* Spencer and Redmond 2003). One may wonder who these far sighted politicians were that took this decision. In view of its location, the leaders of San José Mogote seem the most probable initiators of this step (Spencer 2010: 2; Flannery and Marcus 2012: 368–370). The development of Monte Albán, however, diminished the position of San José considerably, as appears from the maps in Blanton c.s. (1999: 74–75). So, why would these leaders do it? During Monte Albán I phase its influence reached Etla and the Central part, but during Monte Albán II phase the influence of the town covered the whole valley.

The choice for the site of the new capital remains surprising. By comparison with other parts of the valley the site was environmentally marginal for agricultural production. The rocky surroundings and the lack of water (river at 4 kilometres distance) must have been hardly attractive. Water, as well as food had to be laboriously carried up the hill (Blanton *et al.* 1999: 50). Yet its population increased greatly, which meant that Monte Albán's food must have been supplied by the surplus production of the villages and communities in the wide neighbourhood (Kowalewski and Finsten 1983). Blanton c.s. (1999: 53) estimate its population in phase Early I at 5,000, and in Late I at 17,000. But it seems improbable that only increased birth could have caused such a population growth. Migration in large numbers seems the better explanation.

As there was no military threat to the large town of Monte Albán, and there was no economic dominance, the question remains why was Monte Albán created? Blanton c.s. point to the possibility of raiding mountain dwellers, or raiding campaigns of chiefdoms elsewhere. As an alternative explanation they mention the possibility of the need for a disembedded-capital, intended to

overcome a number of local interests by founding a new center, apart from each of the participating polities (Blanton *et al.* 1999: 64–65). Spencer and Redmond (2003) see its military function of prime importance and interpret all hieroglyphs in this direction. Zeitlin and Joyce (1999), however, reject the idea of a military based Zapotec imperialism. They point to the limited number of inhabitants in Monte Albán, which made military conquests rather improbable, and instead suggest several more peaceful methods, such as handing out of prestige goods to local leaders, economic pressure, *etc*. as alternatives. Lack of written sources precludes a definitive answer to this question.

The large town of Monte Albán influenced all aspects of social life. The increasing number of people in the Oaxaca Valley and the growing number of settlements (towns as well as villages) demanded a more complex socio-political organization, The necessity of such a development was explained already by Gregory Johnson (1978, 1982), who analyzed the relation between increasing numbers of people and the development of more permanent forms of government (*cf.* Claessen 2014: 13). The more complex socio-political organization comes to the fore in the settlement hierarchy. The more functions and activities that take place in a settlement, the larger its population will be: 'a settlement's population size reflects its functional size. The civic-ceremonial hierarchy reflects levels of political control' (Blanton *et al.* 1999: 69). In view of the increasing number of mounds in the towns and villages, it seems possible to take the settlement with the highest number as the leading town, where the central government was located. The archaeologists arrived at a five level hierarchy for Monte Alban I (between 300–100 BC). This led to the conclusion that the level of the pristine state had been reached then (Blanton *et al.* 1999: 85; *cf.* Spencer 2014: 47, 48, 52). A richly illustrated image of Monte Albán is found in Sabloff (1997: 43–56). Interestingly, no names of rulers are known for Period I.

The emergence of the Zapotec state was certainly not a matter of political decisions only. On the contrary, many developments at different terrains took place, which in a complex interaction with the political developments made the formation of the state possible. It should be stated, however, that the incentive for many of the developments was occasioned in the first place by the political do-

main. Gradually individual wealth had been increasing, coming to the fore in larger and more complex house types and in burial customs. The once simple local agriculture had grown considerably; the increasing number of people made the production of more food necessary. This in its turn made necessary that the simple irrigation systems were enlarged, and this need grew even greater when the increasing population of Monte Albán used more and more maize. Even less productive areas of land in the piedmonts were then cultivated. The greater part of the production was concentrated in the surroundings of the capital. The continuing growth of the population of the valley, estimated in Late I at 55,000, made a continuing occupation of less productive areas necessary. The fact that more and more people were occupied in agriculture diminished the possibility to produce other necessities. This led to increasing networks in which craft products became exchanged. There are no indications that the citizens of Monte Albán suffered of food shortages. The exchange systems seem to have functioned satisfactory. Several settlements specialized in specific goods, as, for example, the production of mirrors in San José Mogote, or the manufacture of utilitarian goods as pottery. Some households even produced goods that were traded outside the Valley of Oaxaca. The majority of the craft goods were exchanged on local markets, in reciprocal exchanges, as gifts, or in barter. The development of special pottery made the production of tortillas possible. There is not much known about religion and ritual here. The religious ideology in the Oaxaca Valley held that 'the earth provided rain, and in return people had to make sacrifices' (Blanton *et al.* 1999: 105). These certainly included human sacrifices in the most important centers. Some role in the legitimation of the state system seems not improbable (*Ibid.*). Joyce and Winter (1996: 37), however go much further, and postulate the 'increasingly restricted association of ritual paraphernalia with indications of status suggests that elites manipulated the pre-existing ideology so that it was primarily they who administered religious affairs.' This might have been true, for it occurred also in other early states. For Monte Albán the necessary data to demonstrate such statements are lacking, however. The Zapotec state, once constituted, maintained itself for several centuries, with Monte Albán as its impregnable centre, till it lost its prominence in the eighth century AD.

F. Sub Saharan Africa / Ancient Ghana

The beginnings of the Ghanese kingdom are shrouded in myths and mists. A first problem is: when did this polity originate? Baumann and Westermann (1962: 392; orig ed. 1940) state 'Ce royaume remarquable a été crée vers 300 après J.-C.', and Margaret Shinnie (1965: 45) suggests that Ghana 'had been a power in West Africa for some time, perhaps ever since the Romans left North Africa in the fourth century AD'. Cornevin (1963: 243), however, says 'l'empire de Ghana est signalé dès le VIIIe siècle par les auteurs arabes.' The reference to Arab authors is important, for practically all we know about Ancient Ghana is based upon their writings. In the *General History of Africa* (1992, vol. 3: 69), De Medeiros states that during the first millennium AD 'a succession of organized societies in central and western Sudan developed into veritable states. Some like Kanem or Ghana became very powerful'. He adds that, contrary to the rumours which ascribe the formation of these states to white ancestors, its founders were black – which is confirmed by the descriptions of the Arab visitors, who all say that the rulers were black (De Medeiros 1992: 70; Awe 1965: 55–56). The inhabitants of Ghana belonged to the Soninke people. Ancient Ghana was situated in the west of present-day Mauretania, and the eastern part of Senegal, in the grassland zone, south of the desert, 'an area which afforded great opportunities for human movement and cultural elaboration' (Awe 1965: 56). There is not much left of the ancient glory of Ghana; archaeologists succeeded only in finding traces of what must have been its capital, Koumbi Saleh.

Nothing is known with certainty about the origins of Ghana. Most probably its origins were connected with caravan trade and economy. As could be expected several families dominated the caravan trade in the region and the most powerful of these vested some dominance over the others. Connah (1987: 114) suggests that 'a continuing process of the accumulation of social wealth and power led to the growth of the indigenous kingdom of Ghana already before the eight century.' This date would fit quite well with the suggestions of Cornevin and De Medeiros (quoted above). According to Bovill (1968: 55), generalizing about rulers of desert states, 'such empires had no precise boundaries, for the ruler was not interested in dominating territory as such, but in relationships with social groups upon which he could draw to provide levies in

time of war, servants for his court and cultivators to keep his granaries full.'

Levtzion (1973: 22) states that by the end of the eighth century Ghana was known in the Muslim world as 'the land of gold.' This gold was not won in the kingdom, but in the nearby region of Wangara, the people of which had a great appetite for salt (Shinnie 1965: 45). The gold was mined, but also obtained by sifting the silt of the rivers (illustration in Dapper 1667, II: 94). The rulers of Ghana controlled the trade in gold and demanded heavy taxes on its import as well as on its export; moreover, it was not allowed to export nuggets; only the gold dust. The nuggets were reserved for the ruler, who appeared during his audiences covered with gold (McKissack and McKissack 1994: 21; De Medeiros 1992: 21). The export of gold went by caravan trade. Large caravans, sometimes numbering more than thousand camels, went from Ghana to Taghaza in the north, where the gold was exchanged for salt, which was greatly needed in the desert climate. Gold as well as salt were the most important trade goods for Ghana. Apart from these there was also trade in slaves, textiles and foodstuffs. Much of the trade went to Sijilmasa in the north, where the gold was minted (Levtzion 1973: 22). Actually the caravan network was more extensive and complicated (see Devisse 1992b, chapter 14; Bovill 1968), but for a general idea of Ghana's trade this will do.

Koumbi Saleh was a large town, and the number of inhabitants is estimated from fifteen to twenty thousand people (Levtzion 1973: 24). In fact there were two towns here: the royal capital, and the Muslim town. In the large Muslim town the traders lived, and the town boasted of twelve mosques. About the royal town is not much known; it was surrounded by trees between which the priests of the ancient religion dwelled (Connah 1987: 105). What we know comes from the descriptions of Arab authors, such as al-Bakri,[19] who not only described the royal town, but also gave many details about the customs around the sacred king, customs which were not very different from those around African rulers elsewhere (McKissack and McKissack 1994: 31–32). Al-Bakri also gives details about the burial of the king. It is clear that a religious ideology played a serious role in Ghana. In later years a military force existed in Ghana these may have acted more as a kind of police officers, and some elite troops formed a kind of body guard (*Ibid.*: 34). Some military

force seems to have been necessary, to defend the kingdom against raiders from the desert, such as the Tuareg.

The government of Ghana was centred on the king and his court. Court life was elaborated 'with a panoply of ceremonials and rituals to bolster up his authority.' The king was also in control of the religious rituals of the state and was regarded as endowed with divine power (Awe 1965: 60). Apart from these traditional devices, the king also took advantage of new modes of government. 'He had Muslim interpreters, and most of his ministers and treasurers were Muslim' (*Ibid.*). Obviously these Muslim functionaries were non-kin, an essential characteristic of a state as established by Bondarenko (2014, see also Section 1 above). In theory the king's authority was absolute. 'He issued pardons, negotiated peace treaties, approved royal marriages, bestowed honors, and appointed governors. Behind the scenes he relied upon a team of judges, governors, generals, and counsellors to provide him with information, so he could approve a trade arrangement that would benefit the entire empire or handle a dispute between farmers' (McKissack and McKissack 1994: 30). Dominance of the gold trade was the most important aspect of Ghanese policy. In view of the importance of the town of Awdaghast on the trans-Saharan trade route Ghana tried to maintain friendly relations with this town, which was then under the jurisdiction of Berber tribes. Finally, in 992 Ghana captured the town and from that moment on it controlled the southern section of the trans-Saharan trade route (Awe 1965: 60).

Though the king of Ghana certainly was powerful, he actually ruled over a number of kingdoms (chiefdoms?) that had kings (chiefs?) of their own, so that he had to cope with considerable local powers. According to McKissack and McKissack (1994: 29) 'So long as they paid tribute, the local royalty were left alone to carry on their traditional ways of life under their own laws and customs.'[20] As long as the central ruler maintained his dominance, the local chiefs paid their dues, but as soon as signs of weakness became manifest, several of them rebelled and tried to regain their independence.

Power and prosperity of Ghana came to an end with the advance of the Almoravids, a most orthodox Muslim movement, which conquered great parts of the west Sudan in short time. The conquered peoples were offered the choice between conversion to the true and

pure Muslim religion, or death. After the conquest of Awdaghast in 1055, Ybn Yasin, the commander, decided to set an example to all eventual unbelievers, and 'lifted all restraint on his troops. The result was that the citizens were massacred and their women raped' (Bovill 1968: 73).[21]

As in most cases of pristine states Ghana's development was based on a complex interaction of a variety of phenomena. Its beginning is connected with the trade in gold and salt. Some families were more successful than others and gradually dominated the weaker traders. This dominance gradually developed into a political organization. The growth of the population of Koumbi Saleh stimulated food production and import of food – which in its turn enlarged the caravan trade. Moreover, more people require more (and better) government. The importance of the trade made protection of sources and routes necessary and the need for armed people grew, till finally there had developed an army – which acted mainly as a kind of police force, but also protected the kingdom against raiders from the desert. The arrival of more and more Arab traders made it necessary to develop the means to keep them under control and they were concentrated in a parallel town to the capital. Meanwhile, the growing government needed capable officers, for which literate Muslims were hired as ministers, treasurers and interpreters. With the help of a complex taxation system the king gathered the enormous riches, with which he maintained his organization, which had grown into a veritable state – a pristine state.

G. Polynesia / Tonga Islands

According to the archaeologist David Burley (1998: 351) the first settlers arrived at the Tonga Islands around 900 BC. The historian Campbell (1992: 1) takes 1600 BC as date of arrival, while Patrick Kirch (1984: 219) proposes 1200 BC. They agree, however, that these settlers belonged to the Lapita people. The Lapitas, described thoroughly by Kirch (1997), lived in small groups at the coasts of New Guinea and numerous islands in Melanesia. They lived mainly from fishing and gathering, and the size of their hamlets seldom comprised more than 15 to 20 households (*Ibid.*: 167). With regard to their social organization, Kirch (*Ibid.*: 189) hypothesizes 'that birth order was an important social criterion among Lapita peoples.' This might imply an 'early form of hereditary leadership, in which

rank or authority was passed from one generation to the senior off-spring of the next' (*Ibid*.; *cf.* Kirch and Green 2001: 226–235).

The Lapita phase in Tonga, characterized by the presence of decorated ceramics, ended within two centuries (Burley 1998: 352). The Lapita settlements were limited in size and can be characterised as hamlets; in many cases they have continued habitation into the present (Burley 1998: 354). Among the changes in the culture of the Lapitans, now becoming Tongans, belong the loss of pottery, and a gradual living of people inland, whereas they had hitherto remained shore-dwellers (Campbell 1992: 5; *cf.* Burley 1998: 354–55). Also from the Lapitans the Tongans received the idea of chieftainship. 'From the earliest times, Tongans have been ruled by chiefs who are chosen by birth. A man cannot become a chief: he must be born a chief' (Campbell 1992: 6).

There is not much known about the formative period in Tonga, which ended shortly before 1000 AD. The proliferation of burial mounds is an indication of a considerable growth of population. With a growing population also the number of headmen and chiefs increased. This can be inferred from the growing number of *faitokas*, graves of 'a chieftain, his family and his principal retainers' (McKern 1929: 30; Poulsen 1977: 12). Burley (1998: 367), basing himself on estimates by Kirch (1984: 222), states that 'all of the available agricultural land would have been under production and control no later than 800–1000 AD.' Such a full-land situation provided a context for inter-group competition, 'leading ultimately to assimilation of weaker groups by stronger and larger ones' (Kirch 1984: 223; also Kirch 1988: 423 ff.).

By using historical Tonga which was visited by European ships since 1643[22] as a point of reference it is clear that since the Lapita period great changes had taken place. Not only had the Tonga Islands become fully populated, its socio-political organization had become quite complex. 'Long accepted correlates for this complexity are the widespread appearance of monumental architecture and a clearly defined central place' (Burley 1998: 369). McKern, the first archaeologist to study the Tongan past, makes clear that the period of chiefs, characterized by burial in *faitokas,* was replaced by the period of kings, the Tui Tongas, buried in *langis* (McKern 1929: 33), large stone buildings, described and pictured by many European visitors (see *e.g.*, Campbell 1992: 11). The enormous tri-

lithon *Haámonga–a–Maui* erected near the residence of Lapaha (Burley 1998: 372; Claessen and Van Bakel 2006: 226) also belonged to the royal monuments. The construction of such huge monuments was only possible under a centralized power, with the means to have available a large number of men for quarrying, transportation and erection of these monuments. The royal residence was divided into the part of the Tui Tonga, and the part of the Tui Haa Takalaua (to whom will be returned below). Here was also the great *malae*, the lawn on which the Tui Tonga held his *kava* parties (McKern 1929: 92–95; Burley 1998: 369; Campbell 1992: 8).

According to the traditional history – based on oral traditions and genealogies – the line of the Tui Tonga was founded about AD 950. Gifford (1971 [1929]: 49–59) offers a thorough review of this dynasty and states that 39 generations can be distinguished. Taking this number of rulers, and estimating their average rule at 30 years, working back from the last Tui Tonga, who died in 1865, he finds that the first Tui Tonga, Aho'eitu, the son of a Tongan woman and the sky god Tangaloa,[23] must have begun his reign at about that date. Though Gifford has arguments to defend the 30-years rule, recently Phyllis Herda (1990: 23) severely criticised this assumption but presented no alternative. Burley (1998: 370) poses that a combination of genealogical dates with archaeological findings makes an exact dating less necessary. Campbell (1992: 7) points to the fact that 'the earliest evidence for the development of Tongan kingship is the legend of the origin of the Tui Tonga, or king of Tonga.' Therefore, he prefers a 25 years average (*Ibid.*).[24] The mythical origin of Aho'eitu makes him without doubt a sacred king, surrounded by numerous tapus. Among his rights belongs the *inasi*, the ceremonial offering of the first fruits. To what extent this was a fertility rite or just a form of taxation is not clear (Cook 1967: 148–149; Gifford 1971 [1929]: 102–103).[25]

Gifford (1971 [1929]: 50) presents what is generally considered the definite list of the thirty-nine Tongan rulers. Where possible he gives short descriptions of each ruler, and combines these with historical known facts. So, for example, he connects the eleventh ruler, Tuitatui, with the building of the great trilithon, at about 1200 (*Ibid.*: 51), and mentions Kauulufonua III as the one who was met by Tasman in 1643. In the course of time the rulers of the Tui Tonga line succeeded in extending their authority over Tongatapu, and

some of the islands in the Tongan archipelago. Though wars of conquest cannot be left out of consideration as a means to subdue neighbouring groups and islands, it seems more probable that the Tongans applied another means of expansion, namely 'strategic marriages.' This system is described by Elizabeth Bott (1981: 42 ff.). A younger son of a Tongan notable might travel to other communities – on Tongatapu, or in other islands – and marry the daughter of an important local title-holder. The son of the immigrant aristocrat and the chief's daughter succeeded to the leadership position of the old chief (*cf.* Claessen 1996: 348). It seems quite probable that the so-called Tongan conquest of Samoa was also achieved in this way. Goldman (1970: 245) speaks of war and subjugation, but neither the Samoan nor the Tongan traditions yield evidence which corroborates this view (Claessen 1988: 437). We should rather think of regions where Tongan influences for some time were strong. The same holds most probably also for the assumed Tongan sway over Uvea, which is ascribed to military conquest by Sand (1993). Campbell (1992: 13) stresses the fact that the founding of a 'Tongan empire' was practically impossible, for its military power was insufficient for conquests, and the possibility to control the distant parts from Tongatapu was non-existent. The best that could be done was to send a governor.

Governors were Tongan notables, appointed by the king. These positions were greatly coveted by ambitious *eiki*, as appears from the case study by Burley (1995) on the appointment of an *eiki* as governor of the Ha'apai Islands. The tasks of a governor were manifold. Among these belonged the organization of the offering of the first fruits to the Tui Tonga, the so-called *inasi*, which was a heavy obligation for the people. There were appointed several notables in such functions – which clearly indicates the presence of non-kin officers in the Tongan government. Gifford (1971 [1929]: 63) also mentions as non-kin functionaries the members of the *falefa*, a board of four notables, coming from outside the Tonga Islands.[26] The term *eiki* indicates the class of nobles to which the chiefs and the ruler belonged, the *matapule*, by Gifford indicated as 'chiefs' attendants' were the next in rank, and the commoners, or *tua* were the lowest group (Gifford 1971 [1929]: 108). Apart from these general categories, there were found among the *eiki* numerous different titles, belonging to functions or families.

The life of a Tu'i Tonga was not without risks. Several of them were murdered (Campbell 1992: 15) a fate that also hit the 23rd ruler, Takalaua, who ruled about AD 1450. His successor, Kauulufonua experienced radical innovations in government by having to accept that his temporal authority went to his younger brother who used the title of Tui Haa Takalaua (Campbell 1992: 16–17). From this time on several of the Tui Tonga spend long times at Samoa, while the governmental tasks were fulfilled by the Tui Haa Takalaua. For the king remained only his sacral aspects. Yet, this made him retain his privileges and honors as he enjoyed the best the land provided in produce and beautiful women (Gifford 1971 [1929]: 56). The position of the Tui Tonga remained necessary, for his sacred position guaranteed fertility, and his status as king legitimized the secular ruler, the *hau* – for in later years the Tui Haa Takalaua was in his turn pushed out of his position by a younger brother, the Tui Kanokupolu. Though the political power was practically absorbed by the Tui Kanokupolu, a lot of envy and tension remained between the representatives of the three highest titles, of which the Tui Tonga and the Tui Haa Takalaua did deplore the loss of their former status. James Cook, who visited Tongatapu in 1777, tried to understand this complex of jealousy and regret:

> Some have told us that the power of the King is unlimited… but the few circumstances that fell under our observation, made more against than for a despotic Government though we saw instances of both… On the other hand *Marriwaggi*, Old *Toobough* and *Feenough*, each acted as petty Sovereigns and frequently thwarted the measures of the King, of which he often complained. Neither is his Court more splendent than those of the two first, who are the most powerful chiefs in the island… (Cook 1967: 174–175; *cf.* Cummins 1977: 65–66).[27]

This delicate situation finally culminated in a civil war, during which the then Tui Tonga Paulaho tried to regain by force his former position, but lost against the Kanokupolu group, and had to leave Tongatapu. The last Tui Haa Takalaua died in these years, so that in the end only the Tui Kanokupolu remained, who, with the help of the Missionaries of the London Missionary Society (Wilson 1799) succeeded in creating a new, more modern form of government. The present kings of Tonga are his successors. A detailed

account of this turbulent period from 1777–1820 is given by Campbell (1992; 37–50; Kirch 1984: 223–229; Cummins 1977). The line of the Tui Tonga ended in 1865 with the death of Laufili-tonga (Gifford 1971 [1929]: 50).

As in the previous cases of pristine states, in Tonga the developments were mainly caused by a complex interaction of many factors (CIM). In an arbitrary order: there can be pointed to the hierarchical principles, inherited from their Lapita forefathers. This ideology structured from the very beginning the Tongan social organization. The gradual growth of population influenced deeply the societal format, which led to the formation of larger and more complex chiefdoms. These were about the year AD 1000 united under the rule of the Tui Tonga, which made necessary the foundation of a governmental centre, in which large burial monuments were erected. The leader had to cope with the problem of how to make his subjects act according to his norms and values, so he had to combine consensus and coercion. The population was divided into three classes: the *eiki* or nobles, the *matapule* the titled attendants of the nobles, and the *tua,* the commoners. To make some control over the large polity possible the king appointed non-kin governors to rule far away districts and islands. The king was entitled to the first fruits of the land. The ritual offering of these was called the *inasi.* In the fifteenth century the Tui Tonga was replaced by a younger brother as his 'deputy.' This deputy in his turn 'was replaced by also a younger brother as his 'deputy' – and so during Cook's visit in 1777 there were three more or less equally ambitious functionaries – a situation that finally led to a civil war in which two of the three competing lines lost their position. Only the Tui Kanokupolu remained and founded with the help of the Missionaries a more modern state of Tonga.

3. DISCUSSION

Since the analysis of the preceding case studies was based upon the Complex Interaction Model it seems logical to apply this same model in the comparative section. So let us thus start with the Societal Format – defined as the number of people in relation to the means of production and the area of land available. When looking for data about population in the seven case studies, I will pay special attention to matters of population growth, population pressure

and overpopulation. It will be evident that especially the two situations mentioned last might have had great consequences for the organization of the economy and the socio-political organization.

According to the data we found for Egypt for the time in which the formation of the pristine state took place there are no indications of population pressure or overpopulation. It is true there was growth of population in the north as well as in the south. The presence of the Nile made possible when needed the extension of arable land with the help of irrigation works. There seems to have been sufficient food for the population.

Also for Mesopotamia a growing population was identified. This caused no problem, however, for with the help of irrigation works this growth could be absorbed. Thus, there was some pressure on the production of food. Population growth led to a growth of sedentism. People from the desert came to the more fertile land along the rivers. The number of villages increased, and the first cities developed. It should be noted that even in the large city of Uruk not all land was in use: there were many open spaces left.

The situation for India, and in our case especially the Ganges Valley, shows a more or less similar picture. Population was generally concentrated in the river valleys. They lived in large family groups – often called lineages – led by the eldest branch. Numerous small villages were founded in the valley; between the villages large pieces of land were left open, which limited tensions between villages and made migrations possible. Locally there sometimes was some population pressure. As the volume of fertile land was relatively limited, several families began to breed cattle, which led to competition for land between agriculturalists and cattle breeders. The western part of the Ganges Valley was relatively narrow and less fertile; therefore, several groups migrated to the eastern part of the valley where more space and fertile land were available. Here they founded their settlements which in some cases grew into cities, out one of which grew the pristine state.

In China at the time the pristine state developed there was much open space. Growing groups of people – probably some kind of lineages – therefore were not confined to a certain limited space, but could easily migrate to new regions. Several groups travelled over large distances. When needed the many rivers provided transport and made irrigation possible. One of these migrating

groups finally founded the large city of Erlitou, the basis for the pristine state.

Regarding the societal format in Oaxaca, the four valleys here had a limited population. The general pattern was a small town which dominated some villages, such as was the case with San José de Mogote and the surrounding villages. The inhabitants of San José founded the large settlement of Monte Albán, situated in the centre of the four valleys. Strategically it was a good choice, but in terms of food production and water resources a poor selection. Yet, Monte Albán came to dominate the whole valley. The growing population of Oaxaca made the exploitation of even the poorest land necessary, so some population pressure certainly existed. In later times food also was imported from neighbouring valleys.

Ancient Ghana in West Africa was favourably located in the humid Grassland area, which implied a lot of space and a number of oases, which guaranteed sufficient food for the population. The flourishing camel trade enriched several of the trading families, from which the leaders of the community emerged. In later years a number of Arab (North African) traders settled also here.

The Polynesian Tonga Islands were settled by the Lapita people, which after some centuries became Polynesians. In the first centuries Tongatapu, the main island, was sparsely populated, but gradually the whole island was inhabited, which made it difficult for the inhabitants to move to empty places, so they had to accept the overrule of chiefs. An intensive agriculture developed; there are no indications for overpopulation. Under the later kings of the pristine state a first fruit offer was demanded, which the people felt as a heavy obligation.

With regard to the societal format one can conclude that in the period of the formation of the pristine state in the seven case studies, there was – with the possible exception of the Tonga Islands – no overpopulation and only in some cases indications of population pressure. Population growth could generally be absorbed by extension of the area of arable land, with the help of irrigation works. In some cases import of food was mentioned. The situation at Tongatapu can be characterized as circumscribed (see Kirch 1988: 424). This situation was favourable for the development of a strong form of government.[28]

The second characteristic of the Complex Interaction Model is the Domination and Control of the Economy. I will turn now to this phenomenon. Aspects such as trade, markets, building activities, technology *etc*. will be included here. It is evident that relations established here will be related to the data of the Societal Format formulated above.

For Egypt trade along the Nile was important. Precious goods were imported from Nubia, and were used as prestige goods in relations between the notables. This trade also was important for the numerous small markets in the villages and towns. So a considerable wealth was concentrated among the people of the Nagada culture who lived in the south part of the Nile valley. This came to the fore amongst others in the numerous grave monuments, which wealthy notables had erected. Gradually also some industry developed in the settlements, where mainly textiles and pottery were produced. The main form of livelihood was agriculture; success in this activity gave a lot of prestige.[29] In some places the leading notables started to tax the farmers. The large grave monuments and the building of temples – made possible by the great wealth – demonstrate that religion did play a great role in these communities.

As in Egypt, the rivers were good roads for trade and transport in Mesopotamia and many villages and cities participated. The food requirements of the growing population were easily absorbed by the available fertile land, enlarged by the increasing irrigation works along the rivers. In the cities many technological inventions were made – such as the fast wheel in pottery production – and the increasing production was traded at markets, which contributed to a growing wealth among the inhabitants. The growing complexity of the communities demanded a more developed system of government – the state – which in its turn made possible the building of the large temples. These temples soon became the centres not only of religious life, but even more so of economic life. The complex economic activities made some form of administration necessary, and this finally led to the development of writing.

In the Ganges Valley the population lived mainly in numerous small villages, led by the oldest male of the lineage. His role was not only political, but even more so religious. In the course of time the status of the village leader increased, and special ceremonies were developed for his installation according to the prescriptions of

their religion and some of them got the title of *raja*. Several villages grew into cities, between which a fierce competition developed. There was also a fierce competition for arable land between agriculturalists and cattle breeders. These tensions suggest population pressure, even though there were large open spaces between villages or cities.

There is no reason to assume population pressure in China, where large groups of people easily could migrate to better places. Also here the rivers provided the possibility for trade, transport, and irrigation. Large villages, and cities were characterized by numerous temples and palaces. These phenomena indicate the importance of religion, and also the wealth of the leading families. In many settlements bronze industries developed. The large masses of poor peasants provided the necessary labourers for the increasing trade and industries. The large regions with fertile loess made the production of great masses of food possible.

The Valley of Oaxaca, divided in three chiefdoms, was characterized by small towns, surrounded by a number of small villages. The main means of living was agriculture for which the better situated arable land was cultivated. As a consequence of population growth more and more land had to be cultivated, so that finally even the poorest stretches of the slopes were in use. The political leaders were clearly inclined to underestimate the difficulties of the valley for agriculture, for the large settlement of Monte Albán was founded on a strategically advantageous place, but food and water for the town had to be transported over large distances. The growing political influence of Monte Albán over the valley made a better political organization necessary. Between the several towns a settlement hierarchy emerged. Between settlements in and outside of the valley trade networks developed in which food as well as valuables were traded.

Ghana developed from the sixth century as a centre of caravan trade. Its site was economically very favourably situated between the desert in the north and the fertile coastal zone in the south. Moreover, its position in the Grasslands offered fertile land in the oases. One of its greatest assets was the neighbourhood of the gold mines of Wangara. The Ghanese traders exchanged salt for gold and kept the location of the gold region a secret. Part of the gold was exported to the north and another part was reserved for the

king, which made the ruler extremely rich. In the course of time many Arab (North African) traders came to the capital of Ghana. They had to live in a separate part of the town. During the struggles to keep a monopoly on the caravan routes the loosely organized family group grew into a pristine state.

The analysis of the Tonga Islands is based mainly on the developments at Tongatapu, the main island. Its fertile soil made the island very attractive, and many people settled there. This led to a political structure based on chiefdoms, the leaders of which erected large *faitokas* (grave monuments). Before AD 1000, the whole island was inhabited and the chiefs were replaced by the Tui Tonga, who ruled as a king the pristine state. The ruling family founded the village of Lapaha. Here they had built large burial mounds or *langis*. They also erected the enormous trilithon *Haámonga-a-Maui*. These buildings demonstrate the power and wealth of the Tongan rulers and their organizing capacities. As the large coral building blocks had to be imported from other islands, these buildings required a good infrastructure: boats, roads, and transport facilities – and a sufficient labour force.

This survey of the economic situation of the pristine states makes clear that, generally speaking, the polities – or rather their leaders – were prosperous. A sufficient amount of food was available because even when the quantity of arable land was insufficient the irrigation works, or eventually the import of food provided a solution. There are indications that in some cases population pressure occurred, but as far as our sources go, this did not occasion hunger or suppression. In most cases the wealthy and powerful ruling families built palaces, erected grave mounds, supported the building of temples, and obtained quantities of valuable goods. Even though their administrative organization was still rather limited, the rulers succeeded in gathering an important income. The erection of large buildings and monuments required designers, a good organization and a developed infrastructure: Building materials had to be transported, sometimes imported, and the labourers had to be maintained with food and drinks.[30]

This seems to be the place to introduce the aspects of ideology that were met in the analysis of the seven cases. Ideology will be taken here in the broad sense as indicated in the Introduction (Note 3), so

aspects of religion, ideas of kinship, and political organization *etc*. will be discussed.

In Egypt the building of large tombs is indicative for a belief in some form of afterlife. This belief was part of a more encompassing religious system, which comes to the fore in the building of many temples. Several gods played a role in the Egyptian religion. Between the two towns Hierakonpolis and Abydos a form of alliance developed: Hierakonpolis became associated with the god Horus – the living king – and Abydos with Osiris – the dead king. The leaders, and later the kings, were sacred rulers and as such had ritual power to influence fertility in a positive way – a quality ascribed to many sacred rulers. Certainly, for Egypt there is a reason to speak of 'Kingship and the Gods' to use Frankfort's felicitous phrase (1948). It goes without saying that the prosperous economy of these early polities contributed greatly to the development of the complex religion: the building of temples was possible. Numerous priests and assistants served in the temples – and they all had to be maintained, while the gods were honoured with costly gifts.

The large trade of the Mesopotamian cities produced great wealth, and this made the development of a complex religion possible, which appears from the many temples that were constructed in the cities. A large priesthood not only took care of the religious needs of the population, but the priests also dominated the economy and the temples became centres for the collection and exchange of goods and the redistribution of surpluses. The people preferred to live in cities with a temple, in this way living near the gods. One of the highest functionaries of state was the En. Originally he had a ceremonial function as he accompanied the goddess Inanna at her tours, and later married her ceremonially at the beginning of the agrarian season. This indicates a relation between religion and agriculture. The supernatural charisma ascribed to him, made the En king in several of the cities.

The population of the Ganges Valley lived in kin-groups, called by Thapar (1984) lineages. They lived in small villages, controlled by the eldest male, who represented it on both ritual and political occasions. The system was reinforced by the religious initiation rituals of the leaders, and the public worship of ancestors. In later years the lineages would develop into the *varnas*, which excluded non-kin people. Wealth was in many cases counted in heads of cattle, and this gave religious status to the cow. The more population in-

creased, the more the status of the leaders grew. This was made visible in the growing ceremonies around the consecration of the leader, the *raja*. At the same time also the position of the priests, the Brahmans, grew considerably, who created the impression that they were the source of miraculous benefits. After the beginning of state formation in the eastern part of the Ganges Valley, the position of the *raja* grew even more – but at the same time also the Brahmins profited of the developments and received large tracks of land for their services. In this way the foundations of the caste system were laid, which till today is still a dominating force in the social life of India (*cf.* Quigley 1999).

In China the population also lived in large family groups – probably a kind of lineages. These groups had a hierarchical structure in which some families exercised authority over the others. The more the groups grew, the more the social distance between the leaders and the followers increased. From the findings at Erlitou it appears that the elite were buried in large tombs. They made use of the bronze weapons and utensils which were also produced at Erlitou. The ritual vessels were associated with offerings in the ancestral cults. The early Chinese kings preserved the people by maintaining a proper relationship with the heavenly powers and promoted great irrigation works (Yap and Cotterell 1975: 18). In the city of Erlitou many temples and palaces were erected, testifying to the importance of religion and showing the great wealth of some of its citizens. These phenomena are indicative of the emergence of a state-level socio-political organization.

In the Rosario phase in Monte Albán small towns, surrounded by a number of tiny villages were found in the valley. These villages were so small that they did not have their own civic-ceremonial facilities but were dependent in these respects upon the somewhat larger towns. Large mounds suggest elite burials, demonstrating the affluence of this social category. Some carvings on monuments in San José Mogote are suggestive of prisoners of war and human sacrifices. Most probably the population made sacrifices to the gods to receive rain and prosperity. The probability of human sacrifices might be connected with these convictions. Some manipulation of the religious ideas by the elite to be recognized as legitimate rulers is not excluded.

Political power in Ghana was based on caravan trade. The families who dominated this trade became also the political leaders, and soon one of these families claimed the kingship. These kings were considered as sacred, and behaved as other sacred kings in Africa.[31] When numbers of Arab (North African) traders came to Ghana it was decided that they should live in a separate part of the capital, the Muslim town. In the other part, the Royal town, the king and his court lived, surrounded by priests, women, servants and guards. Here the many rituals of kingship took place. The king was in control of the religious activities of the population and was regarded as endowed with divine powers.

In the Tonga Islands from the very beginning birth order decided rank, and a hereditary leadership dominated the social organization. Also from the beginning, the Tongans were ruled by chiefs, who built, especially on the main island of Tongatapu, numerous burial mounds. Around AD 950 the rule over the island fell to a king, the Tui Tonga, and the government settled in the village of Lapaha, where they erected large burial tombs. The Tui Tonga was believed to be of divine origin, being the son of the god Tangaloa, and because of this he was a sacred king, to whom were ascribed supernatural powers. Yet, in the course of time, the Tui Tonga lost his influence; several of them were murdered, and he delegated his political position to a younger brother, the Tui Haa Takalaua, and sought refuge on the Samoa Islands. After some time he returned, but could not regain his former status, while the Tui Haa Takalaua lost his position to a younger brother (!), the Tui Kanokupolu. In the inevitable civil war that followed, the Tui Kanokupolu was the victor.

The Complex Interaction Model postulates that the mutual, reciprocal influencing of the three factors creates the conditions under which socio-political organizations either emerge, or trigger more elaborated developments. The subject of this study is to demonstrate the eventual emergence of the pristine state in seven cases. Summarizing the findings of the above analyses, allows the following conclusions.

In Egypt the relevant developments took place in the south of the Nile Valley, where towns as Abydos and Hierakonpolis grew into power. Between the two an alliance was formed, which grew into a narrow bond, which soon developed into one southern state – a pristine state. In later years the southern kingdom overruled the north-

ern parts, and from that moment on the large, unitary state of Egypt was formed.

The Mesopotamian cities along the Euphrates and the Tigris grew in number of inhabitants, economic prosperity, and complex organization. Large religious buildings were erected. The leaders of these complex stratified societies gradually assumed the characteristics of kings, and the largest of these cities became city-states.

Along the Ganges the settlements in the east part of the valley had the best chances for growth and development. The ever growing social organization led to characteristics from which the caste system later developed. The leaders, the *raja*, sacralised by the Brahmins, grew into kings and several of the cities grew into pristine states.

Data for China point to the large city of Erlitou, which dominated several smaller cities and villages in a broad region. A large, wealthy citizenry, a religious centre, and powerful leaders lay at the basis of the pristine state here, which was finally ruled by a former lineage leader.

In the Oaxaca Valley the large city of Monte Albán was founded, and gradually dominated for some time the towns and tribes of the whole valley. Its political, economic and religious dominance, made the rulers of Monte Albán the rulers of a pristine state.

The developments in Ghana started with trade. The Ghanese dominated the caravan trade, the gold mines, and the trade in salt. The traditional leaders of this trade became in the course of time also the political leaders. After some time the most important traditional leader was considered a sacred king, ruling the gold state of Ghana, which consisted of a number of cooperating chiefdoms.

Under the Tui Tonga the authority over the whole of Tongatapu, and later all Tonga islands, was united into this sacred king, who ruled over the pristine state of Tonga. Later the rule over the island kingdom fell to a junior branch, the line of the Tui Kanokupolu.

The idea of Fried (1967: 232) that the beginning pristine states would be surrounded by other societies 'developing in tandem' found confirmation in Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Ganges Valley and possibly China. In the cases of Oaxaca, Ghana, and Tonga Islands no competing societies, towns, or tribes were found. There are mentioned, it is true, some towns with which Ghana had trade connections, but to what extent these relations were decisive for its development is unclear.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the Introduction several scholars were mentioned who had written about the origins of the pristine state. Here it will be seen to what extent their views are supported by the findings in this article.

Carneiro (1970, 2012) postulates that in a circumscribed area a shortage of food causes tensions between the inhabiting tribes (peoples, villages *etc*.) that inevitably lead to a war of survival after which the defeated groups have to leave the region, or accept a subordinated position. The organization to suppress the defeated is the (pristine) state.

The findings in this article are hardly supportive for Carneiro's views (see also Claessen 2012). With the possible exception of Tongatapu there was not found a region with circumscription.

Neither the river valleys, nor Oaxaca, nor China, nor the Grasslands of Ghana show traces of it. It is very well possible that after the emergence of the pristine state in one or more of the regions, the population pressure increased, so that a struggle for survival might have occurred. This then, however, was not a cause of state formation, but a consequence. The conditions under which the pristine states emerged can all be considered as being of a relative prosperity, or even affluence. A fact to which Malcolm Webb drew attention already in 1988 (p. 455); and Jan Wisseman Chritie (1995) demonstrated the relation between trade and wealth and the emergence of early states in Southeast Asia.

The same negative judgement applies to the views of *Spencer* (2010, 2014), who holds that the emergence of pristine states was marked by conquest. He bases this view on the fact that in several of the regions in which pristine states emerged conquest played a role. In our comment to his 2012 article Renée Hagesteijn and I wondered whether the conquests took place before or after the formation of the (pristine) state (Claessen and Hagesteijn 2012: 1). In his 2014 article Spencer reacted by stating that state formation and conquest 'co-evolve through a process of mutual causation' (Spencer 2014: 50). The analysis of the seven cases has shown, however, that conquest does not appear at the beginning of state formation, bur occurred (as far as it happened at all) after their emergence.

My hesitation to accept war as a causative factor in evolution is criticized by *Leonid Grinin* and *Andrey Korotayev* (2009: 70), who consider the absence of the military factor in the process of state

formation 'an extremely rare exception' (Grinin and Korotayev 2009: 70). The analysis of the case studies is not very supportive of their approach, however, for war was hardly mentioned in the emergence of the pristine states (for a more general discussion of this problem: Claessen 2006; 2010: 24–25).

Julian H. Steward assumed that the development of agriculture lies at the basis of state formation (1955: 182).[32] All polities studied in this article – with the possible exception of Ghana – were based on agriculture. Steward then states that such small beginning states 'have been strongly theocratic, because the supernatural aspects of farming – for example, fertility concepts, the need to reckon seasons and to forecast the rise and fall of rivers, and the like – would have placed power in the hands of religious leaders' (*Ibid*.: 182). Though the case studies do not show the existence of 'strongly theocratic' governments, there are many and convincing indications for the existence of sacred kings (also in Ghana), the position of whom was closely connected with fertility and harvest. We thus think that Steward's views are confirmed by our findings.

In his *Origins of the State and Civilization* (1975) *Elman R. Service* presents a wide survey of early and primitive states. Especially his ideas about a relatively peaceful development – 'governance by benefit' – find confirmation in the findings in this article (Service 1975: 223). Fried, however rejects these views (Fried 1978: 38; *cf.* also Yoffee 1993). Instead of the African examples Service suggests I have chosen for Ghana, and though he doubts the statehood of Tonga, I have included the Tongan polity in my survey. Leonid Grinin rejects my preference of Polynesian examples of early states; they are in his eyes, too small (Grinin 2009: 105, 109). This is in fact a matter of definition. Service's study is a most stimulating review, though inevitably not all his pronouncements are nowadays convincing.

Lewis and *Greenfield* (1983) present a critical review of the traditional evolutionary theories, with which I can agree. Their emphasizing the role of decision-making seems to me a useful addition to theorizing about state formation. It should be added here that Philippe van Parijs (1981) also points to the importance of choice and selection of ideas. I have used his views in several articles (*e.g.*, Claessen 2000, 2010, 2014).

Renée Hagesteijn (1985) shows convincingly how legitimation and favourable surroundings can definitely influence the develop-

was added later. Also Grinin and Korotayev point to the disputable comment of Carneiro (Grinin and Korotayev 2012: 203, note 10).

[9] Sometimes influences from Mesopotamia on the developments in Egypt are suggested. There have been found indeed some cylinder seals, coming from Mesopotamia. There is, however, no reason to attach much weight to these finds as these never seriously influenced the Egyptian culture. This was demonstrated already in 1948 and 1951 by Henri Frankfort. See also Adams (1967: 20).

[10] Maisels (1988: 336) also doubts the possibility that states developed out of chiefdoms; the latter having a completely different social structure (*cf.* Claessen 2014; Grinin 2011).

[11] *Cf.* Bondarenko 2014 on bureaucracy. See also Note 7 above.

[12] Erdosy 1995a: 79 speaks of 'a complex society, which is comparable to state societies elsewhere.' Harappa probably qualifies as an early state analogue, a type formulated by Grinin (2004). See especially Ratnagar 2016, who defends the state aspects of Harappa.

[13] A similar phenomenon was found on the Polynesian Samoa Islands, where only a limited socio-political organization was found. The low population density made it easy for those who did not agree with their leaders to go to a neighbouring group where they would be always welcome (Claessen and Van Bakel 2006: 231–233, 254).

[14] A strong analogy of this custom is found among the medieval Vikings, where the booty was divided among the crews of the raiding ships (Winroth 2014: chapter 6).

[15] In Section 1, I referred to the recent study of Bondarenko (2014) in which he made a group of non-kin retainers as the characteristic of an (early) state. The way in which Thapar describes these Indian retainers makes them more resembling the retinue of a feudal lord or a Viking headman, than state officials (Ganshof 1961; Winroth 2014).

[16] The term lineage is often used by anthropologists to indicate large, hierarchical family groups. Some prefer the term ramage here, especially for Polynesian groups; see Claessen and Van Bakel 2006: 222, note 3. Others, however, such as Oliver 2002 prefer the term clan, eventual conical clan (Kirch and Green 2001).

[17] The walls were perhaps just protections against the recurrent floods – as was the case, for example, in Egypt (see above).

[18] Though the presence of chiefdoms in this region is not impossible, the author does not give specific data for the presence of this type of socio-political organization. Other authors prefer to speak about communities and leaders, village heads *etc*.

[19] Also written as el-Bekri. This author lived in Cordova in Spain and never visited Africa. He, however, collected all information he could gather, and wrote several geographical works, most of which have been lost (Shinnie 1965: 47; Awe 1965: 55).

[20] This political structure was found in many African states. See for this structure: Tymowski 1985, 1987, and 2009, esp. chapter 5.

[21] The Almoravid movement, and its introducing the *sharia,* shows many re-semblances with the present IS in Syria. See on IS: Pankhurst 2013. On the Almo-ravids: Bovill 1968; Levtzion 1973; Hunwick 1965; Devisse 1992a.

[22] In 1643 Abel Tasman visited Tongatapu and Eua. Schouten and Lemaire had reached already in 1616 some outliers of the Tongan archipelago and left short descriptions of their meetings with Tongan chiefs.

[23] Most probably a foreigner, passing some time at Tongatapu.

[24] Yet, he also arrives at a date in the late ninth century.

[25] According a statement in Mariner 1819: 351, 360, the then governor of the Vavau islands, Finau III, decided to end the *inasi* obligation, being too heavy a taxa-tion for his people.

[26] For a detailed list of higher and lower functionaries at the Tongan Court: Claessen 1970: 42–43.

[27] The 'King' was Tu'i Tonga Paulaho, Marriwaggi was (probably) the then Tu'i Haa Takalaua, and Old Toobough was (probably) the then Tuí Kanokupolu. Feenough was the governor (or: chief) of the Vavau Islands. On the intricate rela-tions between these three notables Claessen (1996: 349–350; 1988: 439–441; Cummins 1977: 64–69).

[28] On the nearby and related Samoa Islands the population was not so dense as in Tongatapu. There was sufficient space, and people who did not like the local or regional form of government easily could go to another village or district, where they were always welcome. As a consequence there did not develop a pris-tine state at Samoa, but instead the actual government remained at the village level. Claessen and Van Bakel 2006: 230–233, 254; Clark 1996; Holmes 1974; Davidson 1969; Bargatzky 1988. See also Note 13 above.

[29] Success in the food production led in many places to prestige, and to a po-sition of political power; sometimes even to a sacred status. See Claessen and Oosten 1996; Claessen 2014: 14–19.

[30] It should be noted here that not only the rulers of pristine (or early) states were builders of great monuments, but that chiefs all over the world excelled in building activities. For a survey: Claessen 2011: 11–14; see also Renfrew 1973; Bradley 1991; Steponaitis 1991.

[31] The king should not be touched by other people; he should not touch the earth with bare feet; he should not be seen eating or drinking; he should guarantee fertility; summarized from Claessen 2000: 178–186. See also Claessen 1970.

[32] In a recent article Nikolay Kradin established that only agrarian communi-ties could form states, for a stable supply of food was a necessary condition for building stable complex social organizations (Kradin 2015: 45).

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