



Mansoura University
Faculty of Tourism and Hotels

Bears in Ancient Egypt

By

Dalia Mohamed Soliman Abdel Meguid Omar

Lecturer in Touristic Guidance Department -
Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotels- King
Marriott Academy

RESEARCH JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY OF TOURISM AND HOTELS
MANSOURA UNIVERSITY
ISSUE NO. 11 (PART 4), JUNE. 2022

**Representation of Ptolemaic Kings in cloaks
on the walls of the Egyptian Temples**

الدببة في مصر القديمة

الملخص

على الرغم من أن الدببة كانت تعتبر من الحيوانات غير المحلية في مصر القديمة ، إلا أنها قد ظهرت في كثير من المناظر بسبب ولع المصريين القدماء بالحيوانات الغريبة النادرة . قام الملوك المصريون منذ عصر ما قبل الأسرات بإستيراد الدببة أو استقبلوها كجزية من سوريا واحتفظوا بها داخل الحدائق الملكية الخاصة . لقد تم العثور على أقدم دليل على وجود دب في جبل الطارف بالقرب من أبيدوس من عصر ما قبل الأسرات ، حيث صور دب على مقبض سكين عاجي . تعتبر مناظر الدببة المصورة بالمعبد الجنائزي للملك ساحورع في أبوصير من أشهر مناظر الدببة في مصر القديمة . تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة الدببة في اللغة والأدب والفن المصري القديم من عصر ما قبل الأسرات وحتى نهاية العصر المتأخر . يسلط هذا العمل الضوء على السمات المميزة وقدرات الدببة . بالإضافة إلى إستعراض كيف تم استخدام الدببة كأداة لإظهار الهيمنة السياسية والعسكرية لمصر القديمة على الدول الأجنبية .

Abstract

Although bears were considered among the non-native animals in ancient Egypt, they were represented in various scenes because of the ancient Egyptian obsession with exotic animals. Since the pre-dynastic period, Egyptian kings had imported bears or received them as tributes from Syria and kept them inside the royal menageries. The earliest evidence of a bear is found on an ivory knife handle, which was found at Jabal al-Tarif near Abydos from the Pre-dynastic period, while the earliest occurrence of importing a foreign bear comes from the court of King Sahure mortuary temple at Abusir. This study aims to examine the origin of bears and how they were entered to Egypt, in addition to their mention in ancient Egyptian language and literature. This work sheds light on the characteristic features of bears and their representation in

art from the Pre-dynastic period until the late period. It explains how bears were used as a tool to display the ancient Egyptian political and militaristic mastery over foreign lands.

Key words

Bears, Tribute, Offerings, Exotic animals

Introduction

Bear as one of the exotic animals in ancient Egypt

Ancient Egyptians have been fascinated by exotic animals; they were imported rare creatures from distant lands into Egypt as marvels to stir wonder and pleasure. Some of these extraordinary animals were introduced to Egypt by ships as political gifts or tribute from rulers of neighboring lands.¹

Scenes of unusual fauna are occasionally represented in hunting and tribute scenes during the Old and Middle Kingdoms.

New Kingdom kings were keen on collecting exotic animals especially as the Egyptian kingdom expanded southward into Nubia and northward into the Levant. They

¹ Sowada, k, Hidden Exports: A Likely Early Bronze Age Exchange in Egyptian Cattle to the Levant, *The Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 26, (2018), 75.

began to send expeditions to foreign lands to bring exotic flora and fauna.

From the Old Kingdom onwards, The Egyptians began to be concerned with trade with the African land of Punt. The commercial exchange with punt is best-known during the Eighteenth Dynasty famous expedition of Queen Hatshepsut. Scenes of this expedition are shown on the walls of the southern half of the middle colonnade of her mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahari. The strange animals and birds of Punt which were brought to Egypt from this voyage contained giraffes, rhinoceros, baboons, cattle, donkeys, birds, and some fish.²

After his Syrian campaigns in Megiddo during the Eighteenth Dynasty, king Thutmose III has commemorated his military victories with a series of paintings carved in what is known nowadays as the "Botanical Garden". It is a unique building consisting of two chambers placed at the back of his festival temple at Karnak. Thutmose III had recorded some of the flora and fauna he brought while returning from his military expedition. Rare plants and

² Houlihan, P, A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East. (Ed.) Billie Collins, (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 126: 128.

animals are shown on the walls such as: the darter, diver, great spotted cuckoo, and gazelle.³

Like his predecessors, king Ramesses II was interested in exotic wildlife. A scene of the unique animals' importation into Egypt is pictured on his rock-cut temple at Beit el-Wali. The king Ramesses II is represented in front of a procession of tribute bearers carrying some Nubian tributes including cattle, lion, giraffe, monkey, oryx, ostrich, cheetah, leopard, and some valuable animal products.⁴

Kings, high officials, and members of the privileged classes were famous for possessing rare species of animals and plants from foreign countries. It seems probable that these rare fauna and flora were kept in special menageries for display. For that, menageries were found near the royal residences and temples, certainly since the Old Kingdom. The function of such menageries was not only to provide leisure and entertainment, but also to produce food to sustain life and afterlife as the imported unique plants and seeds were cultivated there. Perhaps these menageries were displayed rare animals as exotic wonders to visitors and

³ Beaux, N, *Le Cabinet de Curiosites de Thoutmosis III: Plantes et Animaux du "Jardin Botanique" de Karnak*, (Leuven: Peeters Press, 1990), 298.

⁴ Ricke, H and Hughes, G and Wentz, E, *The Beit el- Wali Temple of Ramesses II*, (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1967), 7: 9 .

relatives of the royal family, high officials, and nobles. Non-native animals inside menageries received care and training by specialized workers on the great estates of the king or the nobles.⁵

For the Egyptian kings, such rare animals were not involved in any attempts at domestication, but the most important motivation for keeping such zoological creatures was to symbolically display the political and militaristic dominance of Egyptian kings over remote foreign countries by possessing their exotic animals. They were living proof of a king's power, authority and a matter of considerable royal prestige. Because of the ultimate power and the successive military victories of Egypt during the New Kingdom and particularly the Eighteenth Dynasty, the procession of exotic animals entering the Nile Valley was from far foreign lands.⁶

The first public zoo as we know it today dates back to the Ptolemaic Period. It was an enormous collection of African fauna and other wildlife established by Ptolemy II Philadelphus in Alexandria.⁷ The animals in this zoo

⁵ Shaw, M, *The Aegean Garden*, AJA 97 (1993), 663.

⁶ Anthony, F, *Foreigners in Ancient Egypt: Theban Tomb Paintings from the Early Eighteenth Dynasty*, (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 70.

⁷ Houlihan, P, *The Animal World of the Pharaohs*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1996), 197: 198

included African and Asian elephants, goats, antelopes, oryxes, ostriches, horses, camels, mules, dogs, parrots, peacocks, sheep, cattle, bears, leopards, cheetahs, giraffes, and rhinoceros from Ethiopia. The Ptolemies were concerned with exotic creatures and paid attention to the study of their habits and behavior. There were also attempts to breed some of these animals.⁸

The origin of bears in ancient Egypt

Bears are regarded as not indigenous animals in ancient Egypt. They were imported from the Near East and Syria since the pre-dynastic period.⁹ During the New Kingdom, bears and other exotic animals were introduced to Egypt as political gifts or tribute from rulers of other countries.¹⁰ In addition to bears, other rare animals such as: giraffes, rhinoceros, elephants, horses, ibex, and bulls were brought to Egypt as tributes from different foreign lands.


⁸ Houlihan, P, *The Animal World of the Pharaohs*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1996), 208.

⁹ *Scientific Correspondence, Mammoths in Ancient Egypt*, *Nature* 2, Vol.369, (1994), 364.

¹⁰ Germond, PH and Livet, J, *an Egyptian Bestiary*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001).

The earliest occurrence of importing a foreign bear comes from the court of King Sahure mortuary temple at Abusir. This scene is a part of an expedition sent by King Sahure to the Levant to bring cedar wood. On their way back, Egyptians brought several Syrian bears, represented wearing collars and tethered to the ground. Sahure has commemorated this voyage because of the exotic creatures that he brought with him.¹¹


Bears in ancient Egyptian language and literature

There was no definite designation for bears in the ancient Egyptian language. The word  *ḥtmt* which means **Destroyer**,¹² or **a Syrian wild animal**¹³, was mentioned next to the lion and the leopard. By comparing the scene of Ramses II from Luxor temple (Fig.9) regarding

¹¹ Foster, K, "Garden of Eden: Exotic Flora and Fauna in the Ancient Near East", Bulletin Series of the Yale School of forestry and Environmental Studies 103, (1998), 325: 326.

¹² Faulkner, R, A concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 180.

¹³ Erman, A and Grapow, H, Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache, Vol. III, (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1929), 198.

the Satuna battle, it can be concluded that the word
 *htmt* means bear.¹⁴

Bears were mentioned in the ancient Egyptian literature in different papyri such as Anastasia papyrus I, Turin papyrus, Sallier IV papyrus, Sallier I papyrus, Leiden demotic papyrus I.

According to Anastasia I papyrus from the reign of the king Ramses II, there was a story revolves around an advice given by Hori to his friend Amenemope to avoid the idea of crossing an unknown dangerous country. Hori mentioned a story from the Satuna battle which appeared on a scene at Luxor temple, the story about a man trying to escape from a wild animal called "*htmt*" by climbing a tree.¹⁵

According to the story, Hori tells his friend Amenemope about the bear:

¹⁴ Gardiner, A, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica, Vol.I, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 193.

¹⁵ Boessneck, J, Die Tierwelt des alten Agypten, (München: Verlag C.H.Beck, 1988) 52.



gmi.sw t3 htmwt m hnw p3 bki

"(When) he found the bear on the interior¹⁷ of the balsam tree"¹⁸

There is another mention of a bear from Turin papyrus from the reign of the king Ramses II reads as follows:



gmi.k t3 htmwt

¹⁶ Gardiner, A, Egyptian Hieratic Texts-Series I: Literary Texts of the New Kingdom, Part I, Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1911), Lit. Texts 35.

¹⁷ Interior here means on the branches not inside the trunk of the tree.

For more information: Posener, G, La mésaventure d' un Syrien et le nom égyptien de l' Ours, Orientalia 13, (Roma,1944) , 195.

¹⁸ Gardiner, A, Egyptian Hieratic Texts-Series I: Literary Texts of the New Kingdom, Part I, Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1911), Lit. Texts 25.

¹⁹ Posener, G, La mésaventure d' un Syrien et le nom égyptien de l' Ours, Orientalia 13, (Roma,1944) , 195.

"(When) you find the bear" ²⁰

Bears were also mentioned in the Sallier IV papyrus (nineteenth dynasty), wherein we are told that a battle between god Horus and god Seth took place on the twenty sixth day of the month Thoth. Horus and Seth fought in the form of two men, but later they transferred themselves into two bears, and they remained for three days and three nights in this form.²¹

There is a text from Sallier I papyrus (twenty first dynasty) that describes the dangers which might face the Egyptian soldiers on their way to Syria as follows:



Tb rh.f r iw dr mt ʿnh mdt mʿiw ḥtmwt

**"He no longer distinguishes between death and life
because of the lions and bears"**

²⁰ Posener, G, *La mésaventure d' un Syrien et le nom égyptien de l' Ours*, *Orientalia* 13, (Roma,1944) , 195.

²¹ Budge, W, *The Book of the Dead: The Papyrus of Ani* (London: Harrison and sons, 1895), 51.

Bears have been mentioned in Leiden demotic papyrus I (fourth century C.E). The Demotic story is known as The Myth of the Eye of the Sun (Leiden Dem. Pap. I 384) narrates that goddess Tefnut the daughter and "eye" of the sun god Re, had left Egypt and lived in Nubia after a fight against her father. Later, the god Re had sent Thoth to bring goddess Tefnut back to Egypt and calm her down. On their way back to Egypt, Thoth decided to entertain Tefnut with fables. Among the fables is the fable of "The Lion in search of Man", which occupies pages 17/9-18/34 of the Leiden papyrus. According to this fable, one day a lion met some animals including a bear whose claws had been removed and whose teeth had been pulled by a man. The lion asked the bear: "Is man stronger than you?" He said: "That is the truth. I had a servant who prepared my food. He said to me: "Truly, your claws stick out from your flesh; you cannot pick up food with them. Your teeth protrude; they do not let the food reach your mouth. Release me, and I will cause you to pick up twice as much food!" When I released him, he removed my claws and my teeth. I have no food and no strength without them! He strewed sand in my eyes and ran away from me." ²²

²² Lichtheim, M, Ancient Egyptian Literature, Vol. III: the Late Period, (California: University of California Press, 2006), 157: 158.

According to the previous papyri, the *htmt* is a large predatory animal that inhabits Syria, either in mountainous or forests, accompanied by lions.

The Torah mentioned both lions and bears with each other in an equal way, and therefore the word *htmt*, which means the destroyer,²³ came from the word *htm* meaning to destroy, as the bear is an animal that causes a lot of destruction because of its huge size.²⁴

According to ancient papyri and texts, bears were regarded as a great danger to any person, like the crocodile, and they were mentioned in curses. Bears were usually mentioned together with other dangerous beasts such as lions, leopards, and panthers.²⁵

The characteristic features of bears

Bears are fat mammals with round ears, huge dog-like heads, long legs, plantigrade feet with long claws, short

²³ Faulkner, R, A concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 180.

²⁴ Posener, G, La mésaventure d' un Syrien et le nom égyptien de l' Ours, *Orientalia* 13, (1944) , 203.

²⁵ Wassell, A, Ancient Egyptian Fauna: A Lexicographical Study, Vol. I, Unpublished PhD theses, (Durham University, 1991), 46.

tails and rounded buttocks. The height of their shoulders is about 82 cm, the length of their head with the body is about 155 cm, the length of their tail is about 35 cm, and the ears are about 10 cm.²⁶

Bears are capable of climbing trees, rocks, and all kinds of high altitudes for obtaining food. They are excellent swimmers; characterized by their ability to cross long rivers searching for food and for cooling themselves during the hotter months of the year.²⁷

Bears were brought to ancient Egypt from the coastal mountains of the Eastern Mediterranean and Syria. The Syrian bears in pale yellowish or grayish-white color were the most popular species that were introduced to ancient Egypt.²⁸

In wall scenes; bears are usually shown leashed and in a small size, just reaching the men's knees. The leashes indicate that these wild animals has been predominated by

²⁶ Osborn, D and Osbornova, J, *The Mammals of Ancient Egypt*, (Warminster: Aris and Phillips LTD, 1998), 81.

²⁷ Wood, J, *The Illustrated Natural History: Mammalia I*, (London: Routledge and Sons, 1865), 395.

²⁸ Osborn, D and Osbornova, J, *The Mammals of Ancient Egypt*, (Warminster: Aris and Phillips LTD, 1998), 81.

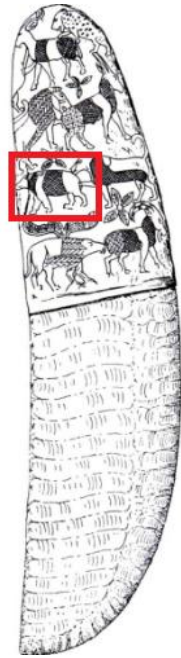
ancient Egyptians and their small size makes them easier to control.²⁹

The representation of bears in ancient Egyptian art

- The earliest evidence for the existence of a bear in ancient Egypt dates back to the pre-dynastic period. A bear was represented on an ivory knife handle, which was found at Jabal al-Tarif near Abydos. Perhaps, it was an early import from Mesopotamia (Fig.1). The bear is characterized here by some black lines that express its fur.³⁰

²⁹ Anthony, F, *Paintings of Foreigners in 18th Dynasty Theban Tombs, 1550-1372 BCE*, Published PhD Thesis, (Faculty of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies, Emory University, 2014), 57, 67.

³⁰ Asselberghs, H, *Chaos en Beheersing: Documenten uit Aeneolithisch Egypte*, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1961) ,276.



(Fig.1) An ivory knife handle

Found at: Jabal al-Tarif

Dating: Naqada II

© Davis, W, Masking the Blow: the Scene of Representation in Late Prehistoric Egyptian Art, (Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), Fig 20.

- A statue of a small bear with a short tail dates back to the first dynasty was found at Abydos, showing the usual attitude and characteristic features of this animal (Fig. 2).³¹



(Fig.2) Clay statue of a bear

Found at: Abydos

Dating: first dynasty

© Petrie, F, Abydos, Vol. I, (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1903), pl II, 15.

- Another evidence for the existence of bears in ancient Egypt comes from Mostagedda (an archaeological site in Asyut). Some amulets of seals dating from the fourth to the eleventh dynasties were found. On one of the amulets an animal was shown, it was described by **Osborn** as it is a four legged

³¹ Petrie, F, Abydos, Vol. I, (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1903), 24.

animal with short ears and nose and the shape of the foot suggest that this animal is a bear.³² (Fig. 3)



(Fig. 3) A bear is depicted on an amulet

Found at: Mostagedda

Dating: Fourth to the eleventh dynasties

© Brunton, G, Mostagedda, (London: B Quaritch, 1937), pl LX, 6.

- Another firm evidence of the Egyptian interest in the bear as a peculiar animal is found in a scene from the Fifth Dynasty mortuary temple of King Sahure at Abusir, now preserved in Berlin museum. This scene is a part of an Egyptian maritime expedition to Byblos on the Phoenician coast. On their way back to Egypt, the expedition returned with some unusual flora and fauna

³² Brunton, G, Mostagedda, (London: B Quaritch, 1937); ³² Osborn, D and Osbornova, J, The Mammals of Ancient Egypt, (Warminster: Aris and Phillips LTD, 1998), 82.

including some Syrian bears "Ursus arctos syriacus: a species of a bear which characterized by light yellow fur".³³ Three bears are shown with Syrian jars characterized by tall necks and single handle. These magnificent bears were represented wearing collars and held on leashes by foreigners. These bears were probably booties, or obtained after exchanging some Egyptian goods with Asiatics. This scene was accomplished with exceptional skill and one of the greatest masterworks of the ancient Egyptian fauna. The ancient Egyptian artisan was an excellent observer of such living species; he focused on the massiveness, stocky structure and distinctive posture which mark these bears. The artisan wanted to attract the attention of the viewer towards bears, so he concentrated on the facial expressions on their faces, which seem to betray the slightest grin. **Rice** suggests that this scene may be related to fantasy or humour, rather than a depiction of an ordinary animal.³⁴ (Fig. 4)

³³ Helck, W, "Bär" , In: Lexikon der Ägyptologie, Vol. I, Wolfgang Helck, Eberhard Otto (Eds.), (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975), 600.

³⁴ Rice, M, *Swifter than the Arrow: The Golden Hunting Hounds of Ancient Egypt*, (London: I.B.Tauris and Co.Ltd, 2006), 91.



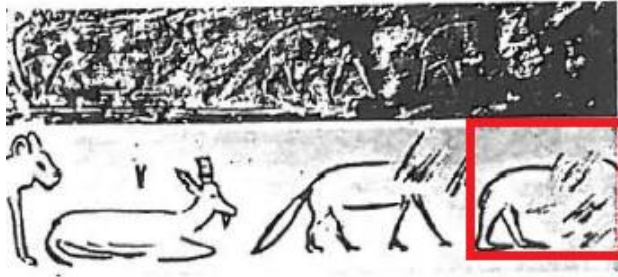
(Fig.4) Three Syrian Bears

Location of the scene: North wall of the court in the mortuary temple of King Sahure at Abusir

Dating: Fifth Dynasty

© Houlihan, P, The Animal World of the Pharaohs, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1996), Fig. 133.

- On the northern wall of Unas causeway at Saqqara, there is a well executed hunting scene of the king. Some specious of native and rare animals are represented in a procession such as: antelopes, gazelles, oryx, sheep, antelopes, wild goats, lions, leopards, desert hares, hedgehogs, foxes and hyenas. There is a bear depicted among the animals characterized by its long, flat-footed legs, short tail, and circular buttocks. This bear is similar to the bears represented on the temple of Sahure (Fig. 5).³⁵



(Fig. 5) A bear among other animals

Location of the scene: The northern wall of Unas causeway
at Saqqara

Dating: Fifth dynasty

³⁵ Hassan, S, The causeway of Wnis at Sakkara, ZAS 80, (1955), 138.

© Osborn, D and Osbornova, J, *The Mammals of Ancient Egypt*, (Warminster: Aris and Phillips LTD, 1998), Fig. 7-64.

- There is a pottery statue dating back to the twelfth dynasty or thereabout was found at Abydos representing two bears. This statue is another piece of evidence for the existence of bears in ancient Egypt between the Middle Kingdom and the First Intermediate Period (Fig. 6).³⁶



(Fig. 6) A pottery figure resembling a bear and cub

Found at: Abydos

Dating: Between Middle Kingdom and the First
Intermediate Period

³⁶ Garstang, J, *El Arabah*, (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1989), 6.

© Garstang, J, *El Arabah*, (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1989), pl. IV, 251.

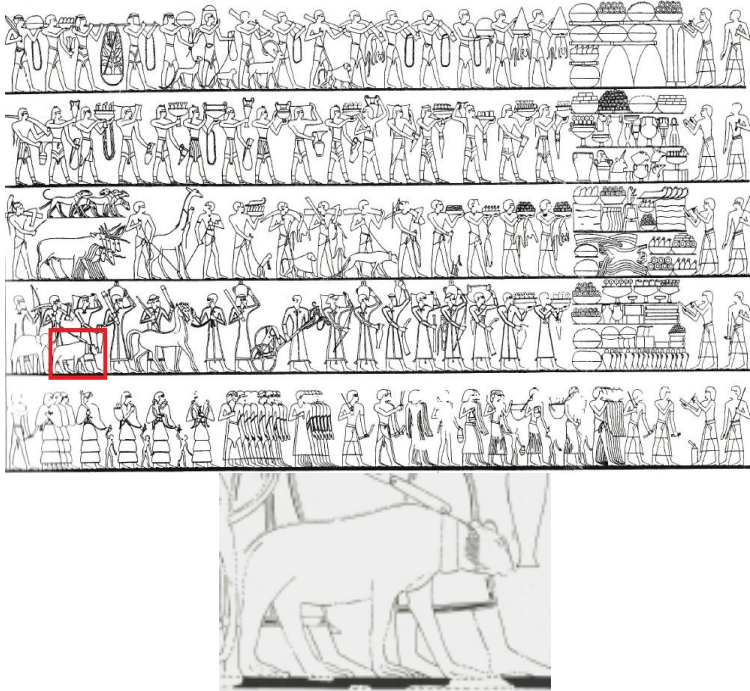
During the New Kingdom, Syrian bears wearing collars and tethered by leashes to the ground are most often painted on the walls of Theban tombs.³⁷

- As Rekhmire was a vizier under the reign of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II, he was responsible for receiving tributes from foreign countries. There is a scene showing Rekhmire in front of a number of Nubian and Syrian tributes including animals inside his tomb. The fourth register of the west wall of the transverse hall is devoted to the inhabitants who represented the culture of the North-Eastern Mediterranean.³⁸ This register shows Syrian tribute bearers bringing some exotic flora and fauna from their country; they are wearing long white dresses, decorated with colorful strips with long sleeves. Some of them have short red hair and wispy beards, and the others bound the hair by headbands. The second man to the far left side of this register leads a yellowish-brown

³⁷ Houlihan, P, *The Animal World of the Pharaohs*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1996), 195: 196.

³⁸ Davis, N, *The Tomb of Rekhmire at Thebes, Vol. I*, (New York, 1944), 18:19.

Syrian bear, wearing a collar and held on a leash, in addition to an elephant collared and leashed.³⁹ (Fig.7)



(Fig.7) A bear in a tribute scene

Tomb of Rekhmire(TT 100), Sheikh Abd el- Qurna, 18th dynasty.

³⁹ Donovan, L and Mccorquodale, K and others, Egyptian Art: Principles and Themes in Wall Scenes, (Giza: Prism Publication Office, 2000), 84:85.

Location of the scene: West wall of the transverse hall.

© Donovan, L and Mccorquodale, K and others, Egyptian Art: Principles and Themes in Wall Scenes, (Giza: Prism Publication Office, 2000), Fig. 2.1.

- There is a tribute scene from the tomb of Amunedjeh at Thebes, which shows Syrians bringing booties. Among the tribute, a bringer is a man holding a bear on a leash. The bear is executed with outstanding accuracy. The Syrian man leading the bear is depicted with cropped hair and wearing a white long gown, his hair is of a black, bushy-haired type.⁴⁰ (Fig.8)

⁴⁰ Davis, N, Syrians in the Tomb of Amunedjeh , JEA 27, (1941), 97.



(Fig.8) A Syrian man leading the bear

Tomb of Amunedjeh (TT.84), Sheikh Abd el-Qurna,
Eighteenth Dynasty

Location of the scene: West wall of the front hall

© Davis, N, Syrians in the Tomb of Amunedjeh, JEA 27,
(1941), Pl. XIII

- There is a scene of a headless bear from the tomb of Ineni (TT.81) which dates back to the reign of king Tuthmosis III. The bear is a part of a tribute scene from

Syria. It has been identified as a bear by its features, and it is clear that the head has been demolished.⁴¹ (Fig.9)



(Fig.9) A headless bear

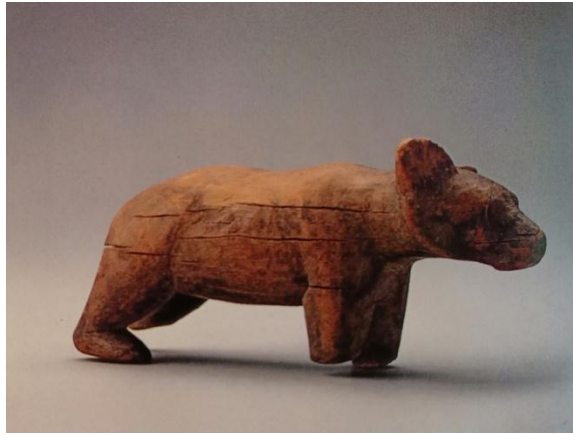
Tomb of Ineni (TT.81), Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, Eighteenth
dynasty

© Osborn, D and Osbornova, J, *The Mammals of Ancient Egypt*,
(Warminster: Aris and Phillips LTD, 1998), Fig. 7-97.

- There is a well carved wooden statue of a bear that dates back probably to the New Kingdom in Boston museum. The sculptor has succeeded in capturing the heavy mass of the bear. This statue was designed for the amusement of adults and children because of its simple shape and robust design. There are several examples of

⁴¹ Osborn, D and Osbornova, J, *The Mammals of Ancient Egypt*, (Warminster: Aris and Phillips LTD, 1998), 82.

such toys in ancient Egypt: the clay model of a donkey with a load of sacks; a running dog whose lower jaw can be moved by a lever, or a cat whose jaw can be opened by a pull cord. However, the figure may belong to the group within the New Kingdom that served no other purpose than amusing adults and children. ⁴² (Fig.10)



(Fig.10) wooden statue of a bear

Dating: Probably New Kingdom

⁴² Eggebrecht, E and Eggebrecht A (Eds.), *Ägyptens Aufstieg zur Weltmacht*, (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1987), 176.

© Eggebrecht, E and Eggebrecht A (Eds.), *Ägyptens
Aufstieg zur Weltmacht*, (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern,
1987), 176, Fig. 93.

- In Luxor Temple, there is a scene depicting the battle of Satuna carved on the west wall of room XXIII.⁴³ This scene was not yet accessible, as the antiquity service had covered the scene and still working on it.⁴⁴ Ramses II is represented here attacking a Syrian fortress at Satuna (between Syria and Palestine)⁴⁵, while a Syrian Prince was trying to climb a tree to escape from a starving wild bear that has already caught his ankle.⁴⁶ The prince has managed to draw his dagger, while a soldier in the tower of the castle that is under siege is

⁴³ Porter, B and Moss, R, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings*, Vol. III, Part .2, (Oxford: Griffith institute, 2003), 333.

⁴⁴ Burchardt, M , *Die Einnahme von Satuna*, ZAS 51, (1913), 106.

⁴⁵ Posener, G, *La mésaventure d' un Syrien et le nom égyptien de l' Ours*, *Orientalia* 13, (1944) , 196.

⁴⁶ Smith, W, *Interconnections in the Ancient Near East*, (London: Yale University Press, 1965), 174.

depicted about to shoot an arrow at the bear.⁴⁷ This kind of art was unusual in the Egyptian art especially in temple scenes.⁴⁸ (Fig.11)



(Fig. 11) A Syrian prince trying to escape from a wild bear

Location of the scene: West wall of room XXIII- Luxor temple- 19th Dynasty.

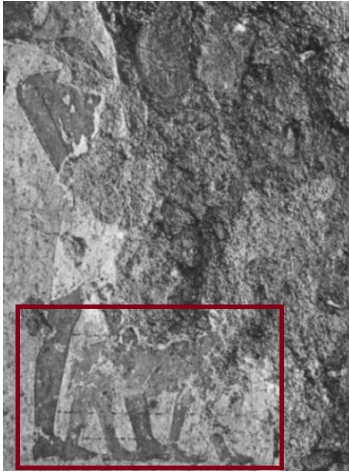
⁴⁷ Walle, V, *L'humour dans la Littérature et dans L'art de L'ancienne Égypte*, (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1969), 10.

⁴⁸ Houlihan, P, *Wit and Humor*, (London: Rubicon Press, 2001), 59: 60.

© Houlihan, P, Wit and Humor, (London: Rubicon Press, 2001), Fig. 59

- There is a scene from Ibi tomb of Asiatics bringing tribute to Egypt including a man leading a bear, probably from Lebanon. The bear is not shown perfectly, as the most characteristic part, the head, has been demolished. The bear is depicted with a bluish grey or rather light slate-blue color, which is not the usual color of the Syrian bears in the Egyptian art.⁴⁹ According to the researcher, the bluish grey or light slate- blue color of this bear may be related to the origin of this bear because it was brought from Lebanon, so it may be of a different breed from the Syrian bears. (Fig.12)

⁴⁹ Müller, W, *Egyptological Researches*, (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1906), 19.



(Fig.12) A man leading a bear

Tomb of Ibi (TT 36), El- Assasif, Twenty-fifth dynasty

Location of the scene: Location of the scene: West wall of the hall

© Müller, W, Egyptological Researches, (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1906), Pl. 10.

Conclusion

- Ancient Egyptians had been interested in collecting exotic creatures and rare animals including bears from foreign lands since the pre-dynastic period.

- Bears were a source of immense astonishment because of their huge size; they had the same attitude as wild animals such as lions and leopards.
- According to a scene from the northern wall of Unas causeway at Saqqara, the king is represented in front of a number of exotic animals including a bear, in addition to some national Egyptian fauna. This is an indication that the ancient Egyptians generally stocked their menageries with Egyptian and foreign animals as well.
- The Syrian bear "*Ursus arctos syriacus*" is the most popular species of bears found in ancient Egypt. It is characterized by yellowish- brown color and light yellow fur. The Lebanese bear was depicted once inside Ibi tomb; it is characterized by bluish grey or rather light slate-blue color, which is different from the usual color of the Syrian bear.
- In literature: Bears were described in papyri as wild animals, related to battles, a source of danger, and cause a lot of destruction.
- Bears are always shown walking, their forelegs and the hind legs being parted. Their four feet are represented placed on the ground at once.

- Bears are usually shown in a procession among other exotic foreign animals. They were represented in a very small size, just reaching the men's knees (unlike their real size) to make them easier to control.
- Although, bears were non-native in ancient Egypt, the ancient Egyptian artist had the ability to draw a creature unusual to him.
- In addition to their representation on tomb walls and temples, the ancient Egyptian sculptor succeeded in carving statues of bears showing their huge mass such as the above-mentioned clay and pottery small statues and the New Kingdom wooden statue of the bear preserved in Boston museum.

References

1. Anthony, F, Paintings of Foreigners in 18th Dynasty Theban Tombs, 1550-1372 BCE, Published PhD Thesis, (Faculty of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies, Emory University, 2014).
2. -----, Foreigners in Ancient Egypt: Theban Tomb Paintings from the Early Eighteenth Dynasty, (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

3. Asselberghs, H, Chaos en Beheersing: Documenten uit Aeneolithiseh Egypte, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1961).
4. Boessneck, J, Die Tierwelt des alten Agypten, (München: Verlag C.H.Beck, 1988).
5. Brunton, G, Mostagedda, (London: B Quaritch, 1937).
6. Budge, W, The Book of the Dead: The Papyrus of Ani (London: Harrison and sons, 1895).
7. Burchardt, M , Die Einnahme von Satuna, ZAS 51, (1913), 106: 109.
8. Davis, N, Syrians in the Tomb of Amunedjeh, JEA 27, (1941), 96: 98.
9. -----, The Tomb of Rekhmire at Thebes, Vol. I, (New York, 1944).
10. Davis, W, Masking the Blow: the Scene of Representation in Late Prehistoric Egyptian Art, (Oxford: University of California Press, 1992).
11. Donovan, L and Mccorquodale, K and others, Egyptian Art: Principles and Themes in Wall Scenes, (Giza: Prism Publication Office, 2000).
12. Eggebrecht, E and Eggebrecht A (Eds.), Ägyptens Aufsteig zur Weltmacht, (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1987).

13. Erman, A and Grapow, H, Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache, Vol. III, (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1929).
14. Faulkner, R, A concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).
15. Foster, K, "Garden of Eden: Exotic Flora and Fauna in the Ancient Near East", Bulletin Series of the Yale School of forestry and Environmental Studies 103, (1998), 320:329.
16. Gardiner, A, Egyptian Hieratic Texts-Series I: Literary Texts of the New Kingdom, Part I, Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1911).
17. -----, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica, Vol.I, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974).
18. Garstang, J, El Arabah, (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1989).
19. Germond, PH and Livet, J, an Egyptian Bestiary, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001).
20. Hassan, S, The causeway of Wnis at Sakkara, ZAS 80, (1955), 136: 139.
21. Helck, W, "Bär" , In: Lexikon der Ägyptologie, Vol. I, Wolfgang Helck, Ebberhard Otto (Eds.), (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975).
22. Houlihan, P, The Animal World of the Pharaohs, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1996).

23. -----, Wit and Humor, (London: Rubicon Press, 2001).
24. -----, A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East. (Ed.) Billie Collins, (Leiden: Brill, 2002).
25. Lichtheim, M, Ancient Egyptian Literature, Vol. III: the Late Period, (California: University of California Press, 2006).
26. Müller, W, Egyptological Researches, (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1906).
27. Osborn, D and Osbornova, J, The Mammals of Ancient Egypt, (Warminster: Aris and Phillips LTD, 1998).
28. Petrie, F, Abydos, Vol. I, (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1903).
29. Porter, B and Moss, R, Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings, Vol. III, Part .2, (Oxford: Griffith institute, 2003).
30. Posener, G, La mésaventure d'un Syrien et le nom égyptien de l'Ours, Orientalia13, (Roma, 1944), 193: 204.
31. Rice, M, Swifter than the Arrow: The Golden Hunting Hounds of Ancient Egypt, (London: I.B.Tauris and Co.Ltd, 2006) .

32. Ricke, H and Hughes, G and Wentz, E, The Beit el-Wali Temple of Ramesses II, (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1967).
33. Scientific Correspondence, Mammoths in Ancient Egypt, Nature 2, Vol.369, (1994).
34. Shaw, M, The Aegean Garden, AJA 97 (1993), 661: 685.
35. Smith, W, Interconnections in the Ancient Near East, (London: Yale University Press, 1965).
36. Sowada, k, Hidden Exports: A Likely Early Bronze Age Exchange in Egyptian Cattle to the Levant, The Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology 26, (2018), 71:78.
37. Walle, V, L'humour dans la Littérature et dans L'art de L'ancienne Égypte, (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1969).
38. Wassell, A, Ancient Egyptian Fauna: A Lexicographical Study, Vol. I, Unpublished PhD theses, (Durham University, 1991).
39. Wood, J, The Illustrated Natural History: Mammalia I, (London: Routledge and Sons, 1865).