



Slaughtering Technique of Mammals in Ancient Egypt

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Abstract

All edible mammals were butchering with the same way throughout the ancient Egyptian periods, whether it would be presented as a diet for people, offering to the gods or to the ancestor dead. The slaughtered technique was varied according to the type of the animal. Archaeological evidence indicates that Egyptian meat diet have included large cattle, small animals, and hunting animals from the desert such as bulls, cows, goats, sheep, oryxes, gazelles, antelopes, ibexes, and pigs. The majority of slaughtering scenes depicted on the tombs and the temples walls focused on beef cattle. The act of butchering was carried out in the slaughterhouses or in the slaughter yards where animals were slain and prepared for consumption. Birds were captured by an arrow or by any other weapon, they were killed by strangulation or by twisting the neck to kill them, then would be eviscerated and plucked without any incision on the neck.

Introduction

The butchery scene is common in tomb decoration throughout the ancient Egyptian periods. Butchering animals started with choice the suitable one by specialists, care and rear them in pens attached to the temples till obtain suitable size¹. The slaughtering technique based on bringing the animal down to the ground, cutting the throat, severing the foreleg, flaying, gutting, and dismembering. Pictorial evidence of the slaughtering methods came from varied themes that depicted on tombs and temples, the wooden funerary models of Meketre dates to the Middle Kingdom, the painting on coffins such as the sarcophagus of Ashayet (JE47267) dates to the 11th dynasty, some textual references, Greek pottery vases (amphora) depicting the process, and cut-marks on bones bear evidence to the manner in which they have been butchered². Slaughtering

¹ J. ROSALIND and J. JACK, *Egyptian Household Animals*, *Shire Egyptology* 12, Aylesbury, 1989, p. 27-28.

² S. IKRAM, "Meat Processing", in P. Nicholson and I. Shaw (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technologies*, Cambridge, 2000, p. 656-671.

act could be done for secular purposes during the festivals, public event, and in the butchery shops, or for religious purposes that take part of the funerary ritual cults, and its essential role in the Opening of the Mouth ritual. The most common scenes in the Egyptian art are the cattle-butchery which appeared starting from late third or early fourth dynasties and continued throughout the Egyptian history.

- The butchery process *rxs*¹, *sft*²

Butchery cycle³ (fig. 1) would include choice the suitable animal, tethering the legs with a rope and throw the victim down to the ground to lay on its back or its side. The butchers are sharpening their knives and cutting the animal's throat. They are severing the front leg, removing the skin, extracting the heart, removing the entrails, cutting off the carcass into haunches and ribs, and collecting the blood in a large bowl⁴. The selected joints of meat would be presented as an offering to gods or to the deceased and the rest would hang in butcher's shops to dry before covering with salt. Representations of butchers in an association with meat shops are known from the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms. The slaughtered animal was examined by supervising official to certify its fit for human consumption. The official would smell the animal blood and pronounce "it is pure". These officials were the *wab* priests of the goddess Sekhmet⁵. Small animals are cutting off the throat and suspended on trees to skin and eviscerate. The Egyptian did not slaughter poultry as they did with mammals⁶.

During the Graeco-Roman period, the *thysia* (animal sacrifice) was the most basic sacrifice ritual to the gods (fig. 2). The type of the sacrificial animal is varied, usually a bull, goat, sheep, or pig⁷. The sacrifice process based on cleaning the animal, dressing up in ribbons, and taking in a procession to the temple. The sacrificing was performed in an open area where altars are always outside the temples. The animal would be placed on or beside the altar and poured by water, barley seeds and salt⁸. The priests recite spells, the sacrificing process started with the sound of flute or lyre in order to avoid any ill-omened noises⁹. The animal was executed by servants, once the assistant hits the animal's head with a hammer, the butcher slaughtered the animal by cutting up its throat. Some of the blood was retained in vessels, some flowed on to the ground. The entrails were examined by priests especially the liver to ensure that the animal is healthy and the offering is good. If the gods accepted this sacrifice, the ritual could proceed and would become a feast for gods and humans too. The long bones covered with fat and burnt on a

¹ WB, II, 448 slaughter, butcher, cut off

² WB, III, 444 cut up, slaughter, make sacrifice, cut up

³ W. GHONEIM, *Die ökonomische Bedeutung des Rindes im alten Ägypten*, Habelts Dissertationsdrucke 3, Bonn, 1977, p. 177-187.

⁴ D. BUSSMAN, «Sacrificial Slaughter», in L. Donovan, K. McCorquodale (eds.), *Egyptian Art: Principles and Themes in Wall Scenes*, PAS 6, Giza, 2000, p. 103.

⁵ P. HOULIHAN, *The Animal World of the Pharaohs*, Cairo, 1995, p. 14-15.

⁶ S. IKRAM, *Choice Cuts: Meat Production in Ancient Egypt*, OLA 69, Leuven, 1995, p.55-57.

⁷ M. H. JAMESON, *Cults and Rites in Ancient Greece, Essays on Religion and Society*, Cambridge, 2014, p. 198-213.

⁸ E. A. POLLARD, in *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*, Vol. 6, Oxford, 2010, p. 196-198 s. v. «Sacrifice».

⁹ G. EKROTH, *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults in the Archaic to the Early Hellenistic Periods*, *Kernos*, Supplément 12, Liège, 2002, p. 243-244.

fire as offering to the gods. The rest of the meat was left to the priests and worshippers to be consumed¹.

The sequence steps of butchering animals are:

- Choice the animal

The Egyptians had special employees to select the suitable animals for sacred and secular butchery. According to the secret rites, they examine the flesh for any marks of disease or impurity. The animal lays on the ground or on standing position to examine the tongue, the tail, and the whole body. If there is a single black hair within the animal's fur, the animal would reject. Preparation of these animals involved, being led to a stable, fattening them where nourishing food was brought to them by estate workers². The animal was adorning with a colorful ceremonial collar and being conducted to the slaughter site to kill, where the animal was tied to a limestone block in the paving stones³.

- Overthrowing the victim spHw⁴

The first stage of butchery is falling down the animal on the ground to be slaughtered (fig. 3)⁵. The technique of falling big mammal on its back aimed to immobilize it for slaughter. Several butchers were involved⁶. The animal was trussed three of its legs together with a rope. Some scenes show one man has a rope round the bull's head to force down the head⁷. The second one is making a slip knot over its free front leg. The rope is being thrown over the animal's back and pulled down by a third man. Another man holds the rope and puts one of his legs on the rear leg of the animal to prevent kicking. Additional pressure on the horns (fig. 4) forced the animal to be thrown on the ground on its back⁸. small mammals (goat, sheep, and gazelle) do not need a crew, one butcher or his assistant can bring the animal down to the ground to get full control of the victim⁹.

- Cut the throat and decapitation DAd¹⁰

Once animal is merely immobilized and laid trussed on its back, the butcher says a formula over the animal by way of consecration¹¹ "A sacrifice to N". He holds the throat to one side and cuts

¹ H. H. SCULLARD, *Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic*, London, 1981, p. 22-25.

² W. J. DARBY *et al.*, *Food: The Gift of Osiris*, London; New York; San Francisco, 1977, p. 114.

³ J. ROSALIND and J. JACK, 1989, p. 21, 27.

⁴ WB IV, 106

⁵ J. VANDIER, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne, Tome V, Bas-reliefs et peintures, Scènes de la vie quotidienne*, Paris, 1964, p. 145-146, fig. 79; P. MONTET, «Les scènes de boucherie dans les tombes de l'Ancien Empire», *BIFAO* 7, 1910, p. 41-65.

⁶ J. KAMIL, *The Ancient Egyptians, Life in the Old Kingdom*, Cairo, 1984, p. 173.

⁷ L. KLEBS, *Die Reliefs des alten Reiches, AHAW 3*, Heidelberg, 1915, p. 122-123.

⁸ C. EYRE, *The Cannibal Hymn, A Cultural and Literary Study*, Liverpool, 2002, p. 87-89.

⁹ A. EGGBRECHT, *Schlachtungsbraüche im alten Ägypten und ihre Wiedergabe im Flachbild bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches*, München, 1973, p. 5-15.

¹⁰ WB V, 527

¹¹ يسر صديق أمين، قرابين الأضاحي في نصوص ومناظر الدولة الحديثة والعصور المتأخرة في مصر القديمة، رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة، كلية الآثار، جامعة القاهرة، ١٩٨٧، ص ١٧٥-١٧٨.

the arteries of the neck by a deep cut through the windpipe, then the blood has spurted out¹ (fig. 5). The butcher makes another cut across the throat to speed up the bleeding². Another butcher is pumping the foreleg to force the blood to flow out from the neck. Pumping is the vital element used to empty the body from blood to prevent the meat be deteriorated³. This explains the importance of the foreleg for the ancient Egyptians even before it cut off and presented as an offering⁴. Some scholars claimed that in the earlier times the Egyptians used to strike their animal's head before slaughtering, but there is no evidence to support this claim⁵. During sever the neck, there is butcher's assistant holding a bowl by two hands to catch the first blood flowing out from the victim to test the purity or to keep the blood for later use. Sometimes wab priest is accompanying the scene to supervise all the process as is shown in Ptahhotep tomb (D64) at Saqqara. He smells the blood and examines the meat to be sure the purity and the health of the sacrifice, then he says "it is pure". Another Xry-Hb priests are pouring water on the incision and making incense to purify the whole process⁶.

The desert animals (ibex, oryx, addax, gazelle) are always being slaughter as offerings. They mentioned in the offering list. They are depicted in the same manner as cattle, lying on their back or side with protruding tongue on the ground, three legs are trussed together, and the throat was slain. Occasionally, is shown a standing oryx and a man holding its horns and cutting off the animal's head as it is shown in the tomb of Nefermaat and Atet dated to the 4th dynasty at Meidum⁷ (fig. 6). Similar scenes appeared in some Theban temples dated to the New Kingdom as well as other reliefs dated to the Late period. Modern butchers agreed that such a method of slaughter practically could be impossible. They explained that if someone want to kill a standing small animal such as sheep, goat or gazelle, it would be by riding the animal, grasping it firmly between one's legs, holding the head back by its horns or hair, then cutting the throat⁸.

There is no scenes of goats and sheep being butchered, they portrayed after cut off the throat, their appearance being hang the carcass by its rear legs on a branch of tree to be skinned, eviscerated, and dismembered⁹.

Decapitation the head DADA¹⁰ whether partial or complete was the normal method of killing the animal and symbolized death¹¹. Tomb decoration is not clear when the head is removed. It is frequently shown to be severed but attached to the body till the end of butchery procession. The head is shown on the heap of the offering table along with foreleg. The Old and the Middle

¹ L. KLEBS, *Die Reliefs und Malereien des mittleren Reiches*, AHAW 6, Heidelberg, 1922, p. 172.

² The same manner does in Egypt today.

³ S. IKRAM, 2000, p. 657.

⁴ M. HAMMAM, «Symbolism of the Foreleg (xpS) Amputation in Ancient Egypt as an Offering», *MFTH, Vol. 4, Issue (2/1), Dec. 2020*, p. 41-60.

⁵ E. OTTO, «An Ancient Egyptian Hunting Ritual», *JNES, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Jul., 1950)*, p. 164-177; R. DAVID, *Religious ritual at Abydos (c. 1300 BC)*, Warminster, 1973, p. 320.

⁶ J. VANDIER, 1964, p. 286, fig. 130(2); IKRAM, 1995, p.44-48; L. KLEBS, 1915, p. 123-126.

⁷ P. MONTET, 1910, p. 55.

⁸ S. IKRAM, 2000, p.658

⁹ J. SWINTON, «Food and Drink», in A. MCFARLANE, *Behind the Scenes, Daily Life in Old Kingdom Egypt*, ACER 10, Sydney, 2012, p. 35.

¹⁰ WB V, 530

¹¹ A. EGGBRECHT, 1973, p. 47-52.

Kingdoms scenes, the head is shown still attached to the carcass till the dismembering, although, practically the head should be removed in the early process. In the New Kingdom, few scenes provide the head was separated completely (fig. 7)¹. Probably it is back to the symbolic importance of the head², or this might be a particular style in the Egyptian art rather than an exact what happened³.

- Flaying/Skinning

After the animal was butchered, it was flayed. There are no detailed scenes show the processing of flaying an animal, although the themes of the butchery cycle show the skin hanging off the animal⁴. It seems that the artist wanted to clarify the flaying process by showing up the breastbones of the carcass after the skinning (fig. 8)⁵. Probably the ancient method of flaying has been made as in the modern Egyptian technique of flaying. After the animal was butchered and the blood was drained, a small incision on the right hindleg was made by the butcher with a small oval knife (fig. 9)⁶. The animal lays on its back with upraised hooves. A wooden stick pushed into the hole to separate the flesh from the skin. A butcher plumped into the hole till the carcass be as balloon. He started to beat the ballooning animal for two or three times in order to lose the skin to facilitate flaying. The butcher continues make an incision along the belly to separate all the skin. Small mammals like goats, sheep, and gazelles are flayed when they hung on a tree. A slit was made in the skin of the right hindleg and the flaying process would be as the same of the large mammals⁷.

- Foreleg xp5⁸

The foreleg is the first part removed from the animal after cut the throat (fig. 10)⁹. Severing the foreleg is more frequently depicted on the paintings of tomb and temple walls, as well as the wooden models. It is the primary joint of the offering, sometimes with the head symbolized the whole process of sacrificing and offering. The foreleg was removed as rapidly as possible once the flow of blood at the throat has ceased¹⁰. Sometimes the foreleg was removed before it had been skinned to preserve it from deterioration if it was used as temple foundation deposits or it was be offered after some hours¹¹. The butchered foreleg had a great religious and ceremonial importance since the early 4th dynasty till the end of ancient Egyptian history¹². It most frequently shows being offered to the gods and to the deceased. It mentions in several spells in the Book of the Dead (spells 28, 62, 106), and in the Coffin Texts (CT 279, 936)¹³. Cutting off the foreleg was an essential part in the Opening of the Mouth ceremony, due to its magical power

¹ J. VANDIER, 1964, p. 290-292, fig. 133 ; C. EYRE, 2002, p. 96-97.

² C. EYRE, 2002, p. 85.

³ S. IKRAM, 1995, p.48-49.

⁴ S. IKRAM, 1995, p.48, 129.

⁵ J. VANDIER, 1964, p. 288, fig. 131 ; ص ١٨٥-١٨٩.

⁶ P. MONTET, 1910, p. 58-59, fig. 10

⁷ S. IKRAM, 1995, p.48-49; A. EGGBRECHT, 1973, p. 75.

⁸ WB III, 268

⁹ P. MONTET, 1910, p. 58.

¹⁰ C. EYRE, 2002, p. 103.

¹¹ L. KLEBS, 1922, p. 173; S. IKRAM, 1995, p.51.

¹² M. HAMMAM, 2020, p. 42.

¹³ S. IKRAM, 1995, p.129.

which last for a short time, so the priest sometimes is accompanying the theme and a loudly say to the one who carry it to run quickly in order to let the life force in the still-pulsating limb transfer to the dead person¹.

- Mutilation of a leg from a live calf

In the New Kingdom some tomb scenes² and funeral papyrus³ depicting the amputation of the leg of alive standing untrussed calf accompanying his frightened mother (fig. 11)⁴. Sometimes two priests are shown hold a haunch of beef and the heart of an adult ox, due to its huge size comparing with the calf's size. Also, it is not logic that the heart and the foreleg had been cut from the standing calf while he is still alive⁵. This scene is derived from the Book of the Dead chapter one dated to the 18th dynasty⁶. The vignette appeared in several Theban tombs, especially in the Ramesside period⁷. It seems that the representation of a standing calf on his three feet after has been amputated the foreleg appeared within the Opening of the Mouth ceremony which is carried out in front of the funeral procession of the deceased accompanying the mourners who are wailing like the cow mother (fig.12)⁸. The representation had a symbolic unknown meaning since the text did not explain the vignette⁹. Besides, the butcher is depicted cut off the lower leg below the joint wHm of the calf, not the whole thigh xpS for the ox, which is necessarily needed for the Opening of the Mouth ceremony. The presence of the standing calf is however better explained as a manipulating in picture of the presence of the animal in both funerary procession and sacrifice rite¹⁰.

- Eviscerating/Gutting

The Egyptians were used to consumed the viscera of animals. They were aware of the different entrails and their locations in the body. In the tomb of Ramesses III (KV11)¹¹ is showing the entrails of the butchered animals hanging on a line with other cuts of meat¹².

The initial removal of the foreleg gave easier access to the main carcass. The body cavity was slit from the neck to the thigh to remove the internal organs. Due to the cattle weight, the butchers

¹ M. HAMMAM, 2020, p. 47.

² Theban tombs TT19, TT23, TT31, TT36, TT41, TT45, TT58, TT138, TT141, TT151, TT181, TT218, TT259, TT277, TT296, TT360A, TT409, Ptahmose tomb, Paser and Raايا tomb, and Hoy tomb; N. GUILHOU, «La mutilation rituelle du veau dans les scènes de funérailles au Nouvel Empire», *BIFAO* 93, 1994, p. 277-298; S. IKRAM, 1995, p.50.

³ Ani papyrus (BM 10470), Hounefer papyrus (BM 9901), Pakerer papyrus Lyden museum (no. T4), Iouf Ankh (Turin Museum 1791).

⁴ E. P. B. WEIGALL, «An Ancient Egyptian Funeral Ceremony», *JEA* 2, No. 1 (Jan., 1915), p. 10-12.

⁵ M. HAMMAM, 2020, p. 46.

⁶ R. O. FAULKNER, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, London, 1985, p. 38, 54; T. G. ALLEN, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, *OIP* 82, Chicago, 1960, pl. LIV-LV; J. H. TAYLOR, *Journey Through the Afterlife, Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, London, 2010, p. 93-95.

⁷ M. NEGM, *The Tomb of Simut Called Kyky, Theban Tomb 409 at Qurnah*, Warminster, 1997, p. 26-27.

⁸ عماد أحمد إبراهيم الصياد، طقسة بتر ساق العجل في مصر القديمة، مجلة الإتحاد العام للأثاريين العرب، العدد ١٧، فبراير ٢٠١٦، ص ٢٤٥-٢٦٣، شكل ١٠، Paser and Raايا tomb;

⁹ S. IKRAM, 1995, p.50- 51.

¹⁰ C. EYRE, 2002, p. 102-103.

¹¹ G. FARINA, *La Pittvra Egiziana*, Milano, 1929, p. 23, pl. clxxvi.

¹² S. IKRAM, 1995, p.137-144.

tend to extract the entrails when bulls are lying down on the ground and the butchery process began by emptying the carcass from the inside. The butchers are sharpening knives in preparation for cutting off limbs, extracting the ribs, heart HAty (WB III, p. 26), liver mist (WB II, p. 42), spleen nnSm (WB II, p. 276), and intestines mXtw (WB II, p. 135)¹. The heart² is the first and the important organ stripping out from the body to take part in the funeral rituals (fig. 13). Sometimes, the heart and the foreleg were extracting and were taken by the priests who quickly run to the mummy while the organs still warm with life to achieve the Opening of the Mouth ritual³. The physical removal of the liver organ is not shown. The liver was consumed and be offered. Sometimes found the butcher standing behind the animal's body and holding a piece of meat or it probably the liver in his hand (fig. 14)⁴. Spleen and lungs might have been consumed. Intestines and stomach were probably eaten by the commoners (fig. 15)⁵. Small mammals were hanging on a tree from its hind legs, after the skin was removed, the entrails were removed by making an incision from below the genitals all the way down to the belly, and pulling the viscera out of the body⁶.

- Jointing/Dismembering stp.t⁷

After the animal eviscerated, the carcass dismembered into several portions for consumption. Archaeological evidence of cuts of meat comes from artistic record, and faunal material including wall paintings, clay soul houses, butchery marks on animal's bones, wooden model of Meketre tomb (MMA20.3.10), and the offering tables such as the remarkable Neferuptah offering table dates to the 12th dynasty, where the cuts of meat had mentioned with specific names in the offering list (fig. 16)⁸.

As stated by the reliefs the foreleg was the first part removed, and is followed by the heart. The sequence steps of dismembering is unclear on the paintings, so probably it was practiced according to the actual Egyptian method. The second foreleg was cut, followed by the hindlegs, the lower part, then the upper portion of the ribs, and finally the bottom of the haunch. On the block of butcher is removing and separating the bones from the meat, leaving only the meat. The large portions were chopped off into small pieces⁹. Slaughtered cattle are providing portions for a thousand or more people that could hardly be consumed, so the meat was salted, dried¹⁰, and stored in pottery vessels including the fat¹¹. Also, the meat could be smoked by cutting up into strips and placed over a fire made from aromatic wood. Occasionally some of these triangular cuts of meat are shown hanging by a rope suspended between poles (fig. 17) or placed in piles of offerings.¹²

¹ P. MONTET, 1910, p. 85.

² L. KLEBS, 1915, p. 126-127.

³ J. ASSMANN, *Death and salvation in ancient Egypt*, London, 2005, p. 324; J. H. TAYLOR, 2010, p. 88.

⁴ J. VANDIER, 1964, p. 164, fig. 87(2,3).

⁵ P. MONTET, 1910, 57-59.

⁶ S. IKRAM, 2000, p.657.

⁷ WB IV, 338

⁸ S. IKRAM, 1995, p.113.

⁹ S. IKRAM, 1995, p.116-117.

¹⁰ For more details about the preservation process see S. IKRAM, 1995, p.145-169.

¹¹ S. IKRAM, 1995, p.183; J. ROSALIND and J. JACK, 1989, p. 27.

¹² J. SWINTON, 2012, p. 39.

- Hygiene and veterinary care

Cattle care was in the hands of herdsman, farmers, and some physicians who deal with disease of cattle and possessed veterinary skills (fig. 18). Some priests of the goddess Sekhmet were medical physicians *swnw* but specialized in cattle care. Besides, the *wab* priests, who were not *swnw* but they were “knew cattle” and shown in slaughtering scenes, supervising the whole procedure, smelling the blood, and pronouncing with its purity¹. A fragment of papyri roll found in Kahun and dated to the late of 12th dynasty has been described as a veterinary manual care of sick cattle. The preserved text relates three prescriptions for the medical treatment of domestic cattle².

- Slaughtering age

It seems that animals were butchered at a variety ages. This might have been due to the necessity when the meat was needed, or when the animals (specially the hunted desert animals) have to attained the appropriate size. Theoretically, the suitable age of slaughter animals is when most of its muscles are grown before gaining large quantities of fat, which differs from animal to animal. Domestic animals such as cattle is being slaughter under the four years, pigs by two years, sheep and goats in the eighteen months³.

Conclusion

- Depicting of the slaughtering scenes reveals that the artistic styles are varied over time even between several tomb at the same time and location. The difference details in the depictions similarly reflect the individuality of the Egyptian artist at any point of time. The essential elements of the butchery cycle are reproduced from the visual image of the artist.

- The scenes provide precious information about the slaughtering technique in ancient Egypt whether it was a symbolic, ceremonial, or secular in nature. The method of slaughtering and jointing of animal maybe had the same style especially since the majority of the meat from offerings was consumed by common people. Details of extracting the entrails are rarely shown except in Ankhmahor tomb and the head is shown still attached to the carcass till the dismembering. The selected animals for butchery were force-feeding for fattening to be suitable as a scarifies. Large animals were skinned, internal organs extracted, and dismembered, when they lay on the ground, while small ungulates like goats and sheep were hanging on a tree branch. The slaughtering scenes for cattle illustrate to the funerary and religious offerings, meanwhile the butchery scenes for small ungulates (goats and sheep) and dismembering the carcass by hanging them on trees illustrate to the secular activities made after the hunting pursuits by a common people to supply their need of meats.

- The slaughter scene that showing a man seizing a standing oryx by its horns in one hand, and cuts its throat with a knife held in the other hand. It does not represent a practical method of slaughtering animal of this size. It is unclear whether such a method of butchery it may have had a special symbolic significance, or this was an initial way of butchering medium size animal.

¹ W. J. DARBY *et al.*, 1977, p. 114; D. BREWER, *Domestic Plants and Animals, The Egyptian Origins*, Warminster, 1994, p. 87, 156-160.

² J. BOURRIAU, *Pharaohs and Mortals, Egyptian Art in the Middle Kingdom*, Cambridge, 1988, p. 83.

³ S. IKRAM, 1995, p.55-56.

- Some scholars believe that the slaughtering scenes depicted in the most of tombs and temple walls reveal a symbolic meaning deeper than daily activities of the Egyptians. Besides, the scenes could be interpreted on many different levels depending on the context. According to the Pyramid Texts (§399a,b,c,d, §400s,b), sacrificing of animal attributed to develop the theme of power and authority in the offering rituals. The uses of the motif of the slaughter processing and consumption of the butchered animal as a metaphor for the transfer of the various powers from gods to the deceased. The magic of the gods and their manifestations of power such as their *ba* and *akh* are transferred to the person. The power of the Bull of the Sky, whose head is not separated from its trunk, is asserted in the episodes of the slaughter and consumption of the offering from the sacrificial bull.

- Slaying of animal and presenting the fresh foreleg xpS to the deceased as a tool was very important action in the Opening of the Mouth ritual. The foreleg is called xpS and also translated as “power” or “strong arm”. It was a symbol of divine and royal strength which transferred the life-force of the bull to the deceased. Besides, it was the vital element in the butchery process because it helps to drain the body from blood to avoid the meat spoilage. Furthermore, sacrificing of animals to the gods have had a sacred meaning. The unleashed animal represents the chaos, the forces of nature, and the enemy of the god, king, and maat. By killing of the animal before the god means the victory over the chaos. By killing of the animal before the king means that a symbolic triumph over his enemies, so the slaughtering is primarily a symbol of the destruction of the enemies who threaten the deceased.

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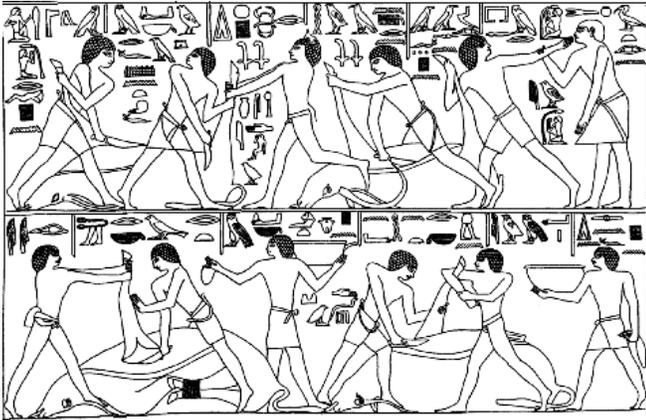


Fig. 1 The butchery process, Ptah-hotep tomb (D64)
5/6th dynasty at Saqqara
After, R.F.E. PAGET, 1898, pl. 36



Fig. 2 Scene of sacrifice, 4th century BC
Pennsylvania Museum no. (L-64-42)
https://www.penn.museum/sites/greek_world/votives.html

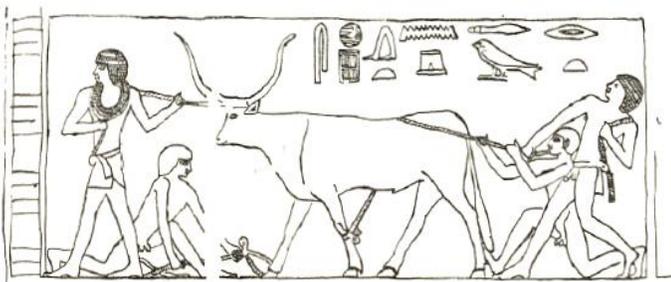


Fig. 3 Bringing the animal to the ground, Hetepherakhty
tomb 5th dynasty at Saqqara
After, H. T. MOHR, 1943, fig. 15.

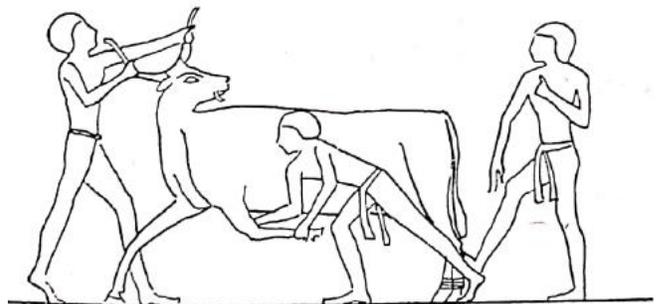


Fig. 4 Overthrowing the victim
After, J. VANDIER, 1964, fig. 80(4)



Fig. 5 Cut the throat and flow of blood during the
slaughter, Tomb of Iti, First Intermediate Period, Gebelin
Turin Museum no. 1435h



Fig. 6 Cutting the head of an oryx, Nefermaat and Atet tomb
(M16), 3/4th dynasties at Meidum
After, S. IKRAM, 1995, fig. 10.

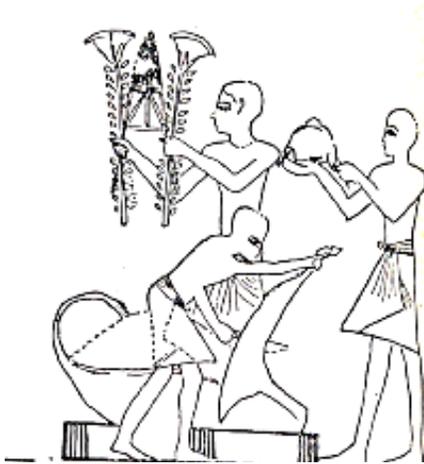


Fig. 7 Severing the head by a butcher and other man hold the removed head by his hands, Nebamun and Ipuky tomb (TT181), 18th dynasty at Thebes
After, J. VANDIER, 1964, fig 133 (2)

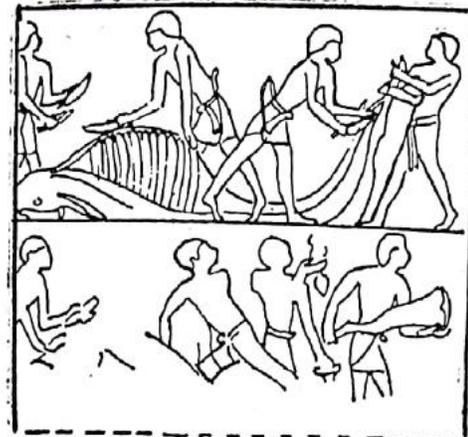


Fig. 8 skinning, tomb of Sekhemka, 5th dynasty, Saqqara
After, J. VANDIER, 1964, fig 77



Fig. 9 Make an incision for the skinning, Ankhmahor tomb, 6th dynasty at Saqqara
After, P. MONTET, 1910, p. 58, fig. 10

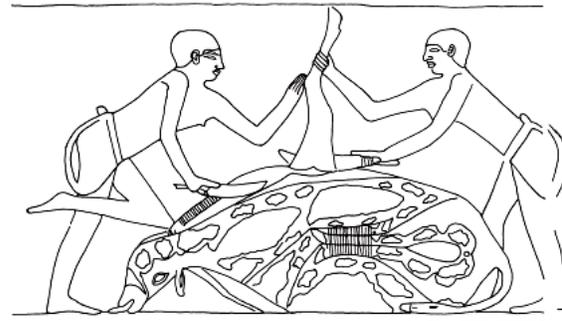


Fig. 10 Cutting the foreleg, Thetu tomb (G2001), 5/6 dynasty at Giza
After, L. EVANS, 2010, fig. 4-58 LB327

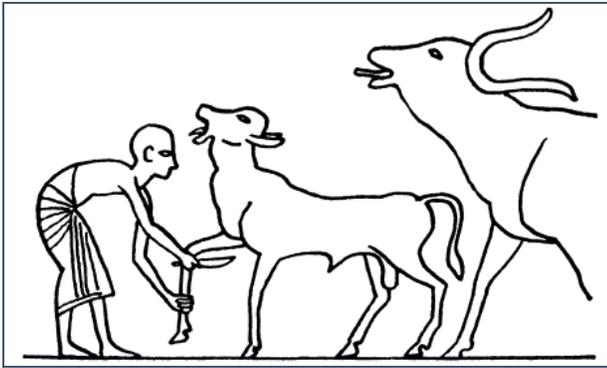


Fig. 11 Tomb of Ptahmose, 19th dynasty, Cairo Museum, No. 396 After, E. P. B. WEIGALL, 1915, fig. 1.

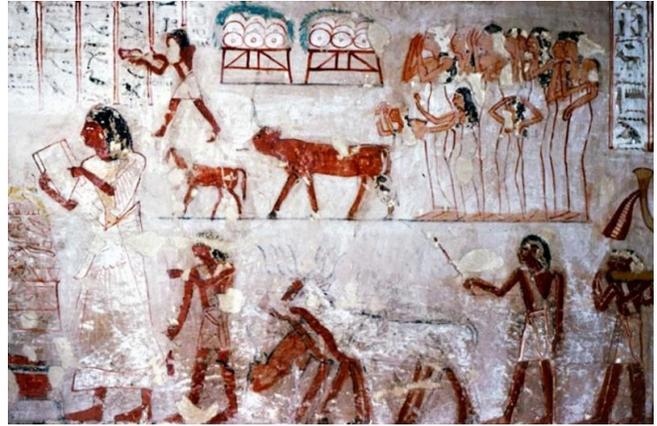


Fig. 12 Tomb of Simut called Kyky TT409, 19th dynasty at Assasif, After, M. NEGM, 1997, pl. 25



Fig. 13 Extracting the foreleg and the heart, Rekhmire tomb After, J. VANDIER, 1964, fig130 (5)



Fig. 14 Extracting the liver, Ibi tomb (S8), 6th Dynasty at Deir El-Gebrawi After, J. Vandier, 1964, fig. 87 (3)

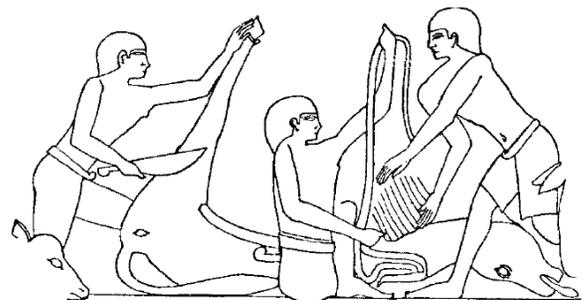


Fig. 15 Extracting the intestines, Ankhmahor tomb, 6th dynasty After, P. Montet, 1910, fig. 9



Fig. 16 Joints of meat are labelled in the offering table, Neferuptah tomb, 12th dynasty at Hawara Egyptian Museum no. (CG28792) After, S. IKRAM, 1995, fig. 27.

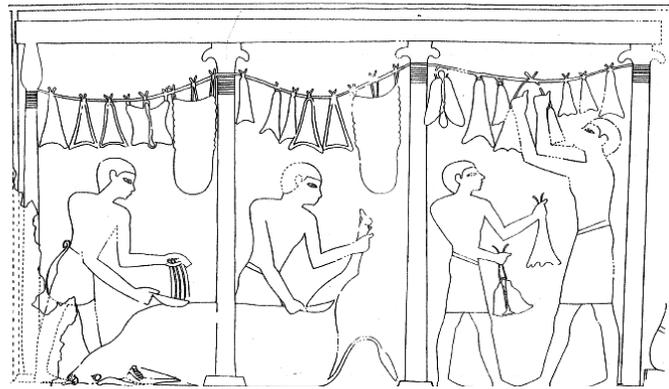


Fig. 17 Triangular cuts of meat hanging on lines, Antefoker tomb, 12th dynasty at Thebes

After, N. DE. G. DAVIES, 1920, pl. XVII.



Fig. 18 Herdsmen are treating sick animals (oryxes and goats), Baqet tomb, 11th dynasty at Beni Hassan After, J. G. WILKINSON, 1878, fig. 487.

تقنية ذبح الثدييات في مصر القديمة

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الملخص بالعربي

كانت جميع الثدييات في مصر القديمة الصالحة للأكل تذبح بطريقة واحدة نوعا ما سواء كان سيتم تقديمها كغذاء للأفراد أو تقديمها كقرابين للآلهة والأسلاف. اختلفت طريقة الذبح حسب نوع وحجم الحيوان. فتشير الدلائل الأثرية إلى أن النظام الغذائي للحوم عند المصريين القدماء قد اشتمل على الماشية الكبيرة والصغيرة وحيوانات الصيد من الصحراء مثل الثيران والأبقار والماعز والأغنام والمها والغزلان والظباء والوعول والخنازير. كما تركز غالبية مشاهد الذبح الموجودة على جدران المقابر والمعابد على ذبح الماشية. وكانت عملية الذبح تنفذ في المسالخ أو في ساحات الذبح الملحقة بالمعابد حيث يتم ذبح الحيوانات وتجهيزها للاستهلاك.

وتعد مشاهد الجزارة شائعة في زخرفة المقابر طوال العصور المصرية. وتبدأ بأختيار الحيوان المناسب للذبح من قبل المختصين ثم رعايته ووضعها في حظائر ملحقة بالمعابد حتى الحصول على الحجم المناسب. وتعتمد تقنية الذبح على سقوط الحيوان المكبل بالحبال على الأرض ثم قطع الرقبة بالسكين بواسطة القصاب ثم السخ ونزع الأحشاء. جاءت الأدلة التصويرية لأساليب الذبح من خلال المناظر المصورة على جدران المقابر والمعابد والنماذج الجنائزية الخشبية المكتشفة في مقبرة النبيل ماكت رع والتي تعود إلى عصرالدولة الوسطى وبعض المزهريات الفخارية اليونانية التي تصور العملية ، وايضا وجود بعض العلامات المكتشفة على عظام بعض الحيوانات تحمل دليلاً على الطريقة التي تم بها ذبحها.