
Representation of deer in ancient Egyptian art

Marco Masseti*†¹

¹Department of Biology of the University of Florence (BIO) – via del Proconsolo 12, Italie

Résumé

Among the numerous representations of wild mammals in ancient Egyptian art only a few figures can be confidently identified as deer. These ungulates are not generally regarded as belonging to the original zoogeography of Africa, with the sole controversial exception of the Barbary red deer, *Cervus elaphus barbarus* Bennett, 1833, which still occurs in a restricted area on the northern border between Algeria and Tunisia. However, most of the representations of deer in ancient Egyptian art – comprised between the Predynastic period (Naqada III, 3100-2920 BC) and the mid-eighteenth dynasty (around 1400 BC) – display phenotypical characteristics which raise intriguing questions about the taxonomic identification of the animals portrayed. It cannot be ruled out that these images could be taxonomically assigned to an extinct species.

*Intervenant

†Auteur correspondant: marco.masseti@unifi.it