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# The Evolution of Libyans' Identity Markers in Egyptian Iconography. The Tjehenu Example

Elena Panaite

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# CAENL 6

## TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION IN ANCIENT EGYPT

ANDREA KAHLBACHER – ELISA PRIGLINGER (EDS.)



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IN ANCIENT EGYPT

ÖSTERREICHISCHE AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN  
DENKSCHRIFTEN DER GESAMTAKADEMIE, BAND LXXXIV

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Egypt, Nubia and the Levant

CAENL

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**Volume 6**

ANDREA KAHLBACHER – ELISA PRIGLINGER (EDS.)

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IN ANCIENT EGYPT**

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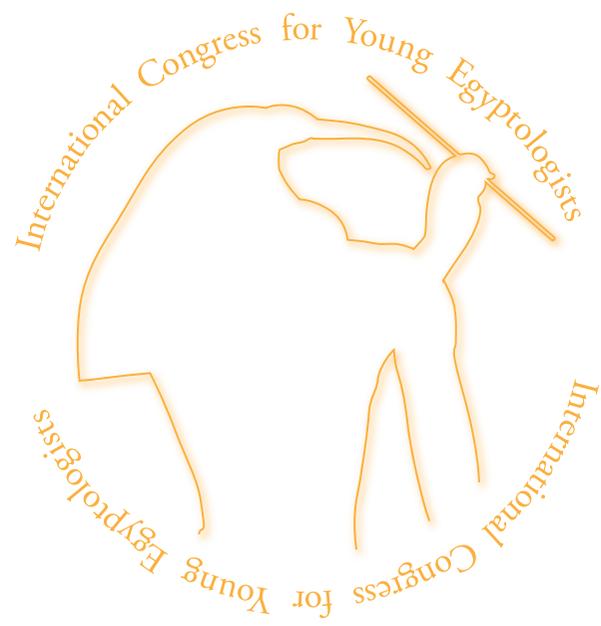
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# THE EVOLUTION OF LIBYANS' IDENTITY MARKERS IN EGYPTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

## The Tjehenu Example\*

Elena Panaite<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper presents some insights into the diachronic evolution of the Libyan's identity markers, focusing mostly on the first attributes worn by the Tjehenu in the Egyptian iconography. The starting points are the reliefs from the OK funerary temples which show Libyans wearing different specific items. Major changes occurred in the NK, when new Libyan tribes threatened the Egyptian border several times. Therefore, the NK war reliefs display different types of Lib-

yans, some of them having old markers mixed together with new garments and hairstyles. Whereas in the NK the term *Tjnw* must refer to inhabitants of Libya in a geographical sense, without regard to their ethnic identity, the Tjehenu attributes are still pictured. Crossbands, belts and phallus sheaths are also worn by the new Libyans, but the OK Tjehenu with their specific identity markers are also still pictured in some precise kinds of scenes.

### INTRODUCTION

The three main traditional enemies of Ancient Egypt, Libyans, Nubians and Asiatics, can throughout Egyptian history be well-distinguished by clothing and appearance. The iconographical sources show all of them with specific attributes, which make their identification rather easy. The generic term 'Libyans', still used today *lato sensu*, in fact includes several nomadic tribes encountered west of the Nile. The Egyptian language points out different designations: *Tjnw*, *Tmhw*, *Rbw*, *Mšwš*, for the most known. Among these, the Tjehenu are the oldest and the first historically recognisable Libyan people, known from Predynastic times.<sup>2</sup>

Since indigenous archaeology is undocumented,<sup>3</sup> all that can be known about their physical aspects comes from the Egyptians' sources, both textual and iconographic.<sup>4</sup> Spalinger recently discussed the concept of alterity and icons in the Egyptian NK war reliefs, providing a visual parallel to Loprieno's work

about the *topos* and *mimesis*, the conventional vs. the profane image.<sup>5</sup> The research subject of this paper is thus exclusively anchored in the official sphere, dealing with the Libyan *topos* in terms of physical appearance. It is divided into three sections. The first takes a close look at the various attributes of the earliest Libyans pictured in the Egyptian sources, mainly on wall reliefs. The second section highlights the trend changes which have occurred in the NK. Finally, the last section reconsiders the first Tjehenu's attributes employed in this period. The main purpose of this paper is an attempt to examine whether or not, or to what extent, the identity markers contribute to a better understanding of the historical events, underlying the ideological conceptions.

### The Characteristic Features of the Tjehenu People

The earliest instance of the Tjehenu people figured with their complete attributes is to be found on the

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<sup>2</sup> The first image of the Tjehenu people is on a small ivory cylinder of Horus 'Narmer', Ashmolean Mus. E 3915. They are figured naked with short hair and beards, cf. KAPLONY 1963, pl. 5, fig. 5.

<sup>3</sup> SNAPE 2003, 95–97; HOPE 2007. Although there is still a lack of data on the Libyan side, the recent development of archaeological research in the Egyptian Western Desert, up to the Sudano-Libyan border, as well as on the western

fringes of the Delta, sheds new light through the human interaction which took place in these areas. Depicted until now as pastoral nomadic tribes who threatened Egyptians borders from time to time, Libyans seem to be much more involved in economic activities, being rather active partners in Northeast Africa exchange networks. For a recent review of this evidence, see MORENO-GARCÍA 2014.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed account of Libyan attributes, see BATES 1914, 118–141 and HÖLSCHER 1955, whose presentations remain the reference today, although dated around one century ago.

<sup>5</sup> SPALINGER 2011; concerning the Egyptian attitudes towards foreigners, see LOPRIENO 1988; BAINES 1996; O'CONNOR 2003 and recently ROTH 2015 for only visual aspects.

reliefs from the OK mortuary temples.<sup>6</sup> Some of the blocks show the king victorious over several ethnic groups, neighbours of Egypt, including the taking of captives and animal booty. They decorated the causeway to the pillared courtyard of the high temple located against the main pyramid. Here, the motif of the king as a sphinx trampling over his enemies and killing the Tjehenu ruler in front of his ‘family’, a woman and two boys, is mentioned for the first time.<sup>7</sup> The first detailed illustration of the Tjehenu’s distinctive attributes comes from Sahura’s pillared courtyard: a sophisticated necklace, a collar which surrounds the neck, crossbands on the chest, a waistband with a kind of loop on one side, a phallus sheath and a long tail hanging down from the belt (Fig. 1). They have pointed chin-beards and long hair falling down the back with a broad unplaited tress hanging from behind the ear in front of the shoulder. They wear a small appendage on their brows, different from the Egyptian royal uraeus. According to Bates, it was simply a part of the head-cloth which covered the whole head.<sup>8</sup> Since no other mark tends to support this, it could very well have been a part of the fringe coiffed like that, a simply feature of their headdress.

The crossbands and the collar surrounding the neck seem to have the same pattern, therefore they were probably made of the same fabric.<sup>9</sup> Both were most likely made of strings of beads. Besides, some colours maintained on one fragment from Pepy I’s temple of the valley, show that the beads used for both the crossbands and the collar were green.<sup>10</sup> Different patterns are recognisable on the reliefs from the OK.<sup>11</sup> In the main scene of the tribute’s presentation from Sahura’s temple, the crossbands worn by all the subjects are made of three lines, the two exterior ones having a decoration with little circles, while the middle one is ribbed. These people are not prisoners, they raise their arms as a sign of humble adoration (forcibly or not), bringing their cattle to the



Fig. 1 Sahura Temple, Abusir, ÄM 21782  
(photo by the author, courtesy of Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection Berlin)

pharaoh.<sup>12</sup> The crossbands’ decoration is different on the presentation of the prisoners’ relief. Here, the Tjehenu with three other foreign enemies are held by a rope by other divinities, their arms tied. The three lines of the crossbands are ribbed. Slid under the crossbands,<sup>13</sup> the Tjehenu wear a long necklace, which reaches to the navel and was probably made of beads, oblong or circular in shape. It ends with a kind of fringe.

Further down on the body, a large belt goes around the waist, on which an animal’s tail is fastened on the back and a phallus sheath in front. Being part of the belt, a kind of loop appears to be

<sup>6</sup> BORCHARDT 1913; JÉQUIER 1938, 1940; BORCHARDT 1984; LABROUSSE 1977; LECLANT 1980. Userkaf might have had similar reliefs, cf. LABROUSSE and LAUER 2000, Vol. 1, 111–113, 156–160, Vol. 2, 76–77, figs. 228–232.

<sup>7</sup> Until today, fragments of this scene have been found in the mortuary temples of the kings Sahura, Nyusera, Pepy I and Pepy II, even if it is highly likely that the other rulers from this period must have resumed the motif as well. It has also been reused by Taharqo during the 25th Dynasty, cf. MACADAM 1949, pls. 9, 49. For the discussion, see STOCKFISH 1996, 315–325; RITNER 2008, 305–306.

<sup>8</sup> BATES 1914, 134.

<sup>9</sup> This is evident on the only well preserved block I was able to examine directly, Berlin ÄM 21782.

<sup>10</sup> LECLANT 1980, 51; other colours from the NK have survived, see BATES 1914, 126, 132 for the references.

<sup>11</sup> For the difference, see BORCHARDT 1913, pls. 1, 6.

<sup>12</sup> The Tjehenu chief killed in front of his family also wears the same crossbands, although this picture must be seen separately, BORCHARDT 1913.

<sup>13</sup> One exception is to be found on Tutankhamun’s footstool JE 62048.

more an ornamental appendage<sup>14</sup> than a functional item, as has been suggested before.<sup>15</sup> It was only on one side, as a bronze statuette from the NK shows.<sup>16</sup>

The phallus sheath is slid under the belt. It is worn both by men and women, the children being the only ones figured without it.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the wearing of the sheath may be related to the age of the person, perhaps worn after a kind of rite of passage, or directly linked to the hunt, used to protect from physical or magical harm.<sup>18</sup> This item is not particular to any people or period, being known in Egypt from Predynastic times and still used by some people in Africa nowadays.<sup>19</sup> Ucko identifies four different types from Predynastic Egypt,<sup>20</sup> whereas the Libyan one also has a specific shape. The sheath narrows to the end, where it widens again in a triangular form.<sup>21</sup>

The shape of the animal's tail is different from the one worn by the Egyptian king and it shows that it was manufactured, not solely cut from an animal and fastened to the belt. In the excavated material coming from the mortuary temple of Pepy II, a wooden tail was found. The form of which is very similar to the Libyan one and its size shows that it would belong to a life-size figure.<sup>22</sup> The excavations of the 5th and 6th Dynasty pyramid complexes of the Egyptian kings revealed a large number of life-size statues of bound enemies, probably placed in rows along the sides of the causeway.<sup>23</sup> In this way,

the statues accompanied the reliefs, adding more value and life to the representations.

The ostrich feather is worn by Libyans in two different ways, reflecting the message they wished to express. On the head, the feather is the insignia of their power, the distinctive mark of a victorious warrior. Held in the hand, it evokes a submissive attitude.<sup>24</sup> This usage may have already been practiced in the OK. Some fragments from Nyusera's mortuary temple were part of the well-known scene of the pharaoh smiting the traditional enemies of Egypt.<sup>25</sup> Three daggers of Asiatic style and two feathers can be seen. The latter may belong to the Tjehenu, since in this kind of later representations each enemy has his own symbol: the Asiatic is depicted with a dagger, the Nubian with a bow and the Libyan with a feather.<sup>26</sup> However, the ostrich feather is undoubtedly linked to the Tjehenu people from the MK, appearing on two blocks from the chapel of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Gebelein.<sup>27</sup> The first one portrays a procession of subjugated people, culminating with the king smiting the enemy.<sup>28</sup> The last three figures are kneeling and are preceded by legenda bearing their names: *St3.w*, *Stty.w*, *Tjhmwy.w*. The last two, Asiatics and Libyans, are portrayed with a feather on their head. The second block reproduces the smiting scene where the king holds the enemy by the hair and is about to club him.<sup>29</sup> The Libyan captive holds a feather in his right hand and is referred to as *h3ty-ꜥ Tjhnw*.

<sup>14</sup> HÖLSCHER 1955, 14.

<sup>15</sup> BÉNÉDITE 1903, 130.

<sup>16</sup> Louvre E 10874, cf. BÉNÉDITE 1903, pl. 10.

<sup>17</sup> Until now, the only sources are Sahura's tribute scene and the so-called portrayal of the 'Libyan family'. WAINWRIGHT noted that he saw a number of photographs of a tribe from Mali showing their women with such appendages, cf. WAINWRIGHT 1962, 91, n. 6.

<sup>18</sup> There is no evidence to support a link between the wearing of the phallus sheath and circumcision, cf. MAROCHETTI 2010, 60, n. 54. Moreover, ethnological studies have shown that confinement of the penis is found both amongst tribes who practise circumcision and those who do not, cf. UCKO 1969, 36. However, there is more evidence to believe that Libyans (at least some of them) were not circumcised, see HÖLSCHER 1955, 43–47; GRIMAL 1981, 176; MH I, pls. 22, 23, 27, 75.

<sup>19</sup> UCKO 1969; BAINES 1975.

<sup>20</sup> UCKO 1967, 353.

<sup>21</sup> Apart from the Libyan's representations, this kind of sheath appears on one relief from Satet's temple on Elephantine Island, representing perhaps two priests embodying the Upper and Lower Egypt's divinities by the flooding waters, cf. EDEL 1976, pl. 12. It is also comparable to a kind of sheath seemingly worn by some divinities, e.g. CG 38068.

<sup>22</sup> JE 51263, cf. JÉQUIER 1940, 36, fig. 18.

<sup>23</sup> SHAW 2000, 310.

<sup>24</sup> The same gesture is expressed by the determinatives of some foreign people and of the messengers *hwwtj.w* who hold out the feather as a 'white flag' as proof of their goodwill, cf. CLERE 1958, 41.

<sup>25</sup> AM 16110/11/15, 17921, 17922, cf. BORCHARDT 1984, 86, fig. 64; SWAN HALL 1986, fig. 18.

<sup>26</sup> Examples collected in SWAN HALL 1986, figs. 29, 36, 46, 55, 63, 70. On the 1st pylon in the Medinet Habu Temple, the Libyan is figured holding a bow with a single curvature, thus different from the Nubian's doubled-curved bow, cf. SWAN HALL 1986, figs. 64, 65. This is not surprising, since bows and arrows are the typical Libyan weapons in the NK, cf. O'CONNOR 1990, 57.

<sup>27</sup> A small fragment from the OK shows the upper part of a man's head with two ostrich feathers, one rising from the forehead, the other fixed horizontally at the hairline. Because of a long object, probably an arrow, sticking in his head, it was presumed that the man might be a Libyan enemy. However, the stick may have been a part of a bow, and the feathers were worn as an archer, as for the *msꜥ* sign which sometimes displays two or more feathers, cf. GOEDICKE 1971, 142, no. 87, to be compared with no. 43.

<sup>28</sup> Cairo TR 24/5/28/5.

<sup>29</sup> Cairo TR 1/11/17/10.

In this period, the reliefs from the OK mortuary temples may have been copied by at least Nebhepetra Mentuhotep and Senusret I. On two blocks from Mentuhotep's mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahari only the torso and the head is preserved, showing the crossbands and the necklace.<sup>30</sup> Although the workmanship seems more careless and imprecise, one can note a little earring on the first block. A relief from Senusret's mortuary complex at Lisht shows, on the contrary, only the lower part of the body with the phallus sheath, the tail and the loop on one side, the belt being lost.<sup>31</sup> Another fragment from the king's pyramid causeway shows an individual wearing the *Tḥnw* necklace and crossbands, mingled with a wristband and a kind of open overcoat which ends above the knees. The upper part covers the right shoulder and is held by the Libyan with his right hand.<sup>32</sup> Libyans dressed with long overcoats and topped with feathers are probably figured in Khnumhotep's tomb at Beni Hassan, although their precise identity remains unknown.<sup>33</sup>

We notice right away that almost all the distinguishing markers are also found among the Egyptians: crossbands, animal's tail, phallus sheath and ostrich feather. The crossbands on the chest are to be found on some Egyptian dignitaries, on Nubian mercenaries, women dancers and swimmers.<sup>34</sup> The animal's tail is part of the king's ceremonial dress, while the phallus sheath is mostly well represented at the beginning of the Egyptian state. The ostrich feather is typical of archers, be they soldiers or hunters. Thus, not only are these items not particular to any people or period, but they also

have different shapes. It is indeed their combination which is specific to Tjehenu people and which makes their identification easier. Striking enough are, therefore, their lightweight garments,<sup>35</sup> related perhaps to their way of life, where only the phallus sheath could have had a real protective function.<sup>36</sup>

### Changes in the New Kingdom

The 18th Dynasty marks an important change in the Libyans' image.<sup>37</sup> Leaving aside the analysis of the military reliefs, including both historical and artistic meanings, a topic which has been already vastly studied,<sup>38</sup> this section will focus only on the Libyans' physical appearance. O'Connor pointed out the difficulties to establish which specific features are new, especially when the database from earlier periods is quite small.<sup>39</sup> The NK iconography, however, provides enough evidence to paint an overall picture, in the hope that further new findings will improve our understanding. Regarding the Libyans, first of all the hairstyle changes completely (Fig. 2). The new one is short to the nape of the neck with a fringe on the forehead and a sidelock. The rules of Egyptian iconography show the latter only on one side of the head, as well as the sculptures in the round,<sup>40</sup> although sometimes when the head is turned to the front, the lock of hair appears on both sides.<sup>41</sup> It is usually in front of the ear, seldom behind.<sup>42</sup> The shape and size also vary. The lock can be more or less thick, plaited or not and wound to the tip, exceptionally smaller<sup>43</sup> or longer<sup>44</sup> than its regular size down to the shoulders. Quite often it shows a different, round

<sup>30</sup> NAVILLE and HALL 1913, pl. 13, nos. 2, 3.

<sup>31</sup> MMA 09.180.50.

<sup>32</sup> FISCHER 1961, 71, fig. 10b. This fragment and another where only the wristband is visible, discovered during the 1912–13 season of the Metropolitan Museum's Egyptian Expedition, were not accessioned. I kindly thank Dr. D. Arnold and Dr. M. Hill for providing me with photos of both of them.

<sup>33</sup> NEWBERRY 1893, 85, pls. 45, 47; identified as *Tmḥw*, cf. HÖLSCHER 1955, 33.

<sup>34</sup> Romion pointed out an interesting parallel in North Africa today amongst the Tuareg people, cf. ROMION 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Remembering Bate's first sentence of the chapter dealing with the Libyans' dress and ornamentation: "The Eastern Libyans in general appear to have been but scantily clad", cf. BATES 1914, 118.

<sup>36</sup> One of the distinctive features of the nomadic Libyans, who used razzias as economic resources, is that they do not wear sizeable, bulky clothes. Diodorus said of them that "they carry neither sword nor helmet nor any other armour, since

their aim is to excel in agility both in pursuit and again in withdrawal", cf. DIODORUS SICULUS III, 49. Even though these Libyans have cattle and thereby seem to be more pastoral nomads, both ways of subsistence may have existed within the same group, cf. COLIN 2000, 39. For the nomadic Libyans see RITNER 2009.

<sup>37</sup> For the Libyans in the NK see the compiled articles in LEAHY 1990; SNAPE 2003, 93–106.

<sup>38</sup> Refer to general recent studies and their bibliographies HEINZ 2001; SPALINGER 2011; JANZEN 2013. They all provide useful comments about the Libyans' image in the NK.

<sup>39</sup> O'CONNOR 2003, 159.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. CG 42152 (JE 37175); JE 37625; Vienna inv. no. ÄS 44.

<sup>41</sup> E.g. from Rameses III's mortuary temple on a polychrome tile (JE 36440) or in the battle reliefs, MH I, pl. 18.

<sup>42</sup> In Merire I's tomb, cf. DAVIES 1903, pls. 10, 15. On one talatat from the Amarna Period (MMA 65.100.1), the lock of hair covers the ear.

<sup>43</sup> Vienna inv. no. ÄS 6048.

<sup>44</sup> RICKE, HUGHES and WENTE 1967, pl. 11; Karnak IV, pl. 32.



Fig. 2 Libyan in the scene of the “four races of mankind”, Seti I Tomb (KV 17) (© Cédric Larcher)

motif at its base, suggesting that either an adornment was fitted onto the hair or hairdressing was applied to the lock itself. The fact that sometimes the hair around the lock was shaved, may serve that purpose.<sup>45</sup> Occasionally, a double sidelock is seen on some Libyan chiefs, suggesting that the tress might have a rank or office signification.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, the pointed beard is still systematically present. The ear rings are bigger and have more elaborate various forms.

The tattoos are other distinguished marks which appear to be worn by Libyans in the NK.<sup>47</sup> One of the models looks like the goddess Neith sign, which made scholars think that the cult of Neith was widespread among the Libyan tribes,

perhaps the survival of a common culture which filtered down in the customs of both the Egyptians and the Libyans.<sup>48</sup> The connection might have already existed since the OK, since one block from the *sed* festival of king Nyusera shows the estate of a Neith of Tjehenu.<sup>49</sup> Bates pointed out similarities between Neith and the Ausean goddess, worshipped in the district around Lake Tritonis.<sup>50</sup> In addition to this, different patterns are recognisable, most often dots, dashes and occasionally some vegetable species. One of these is smaller and very similar to the *T3-mhw*-sign.<sup>51</sup> One might wonder whether the Egyptian artists had understood an original Libyan motif in their own way, making it look more closely to the well-known Egyptian sign.<sup>52</sup> Another plant consists of a lower part once again quite similar to the *T3-mhw*-sign from which a long stem (around 15cm) protruded with a kind of leaf on both sides.<sup>53</sup>

The characteristic Libyan dress from the NK is a long robe open from top to bottom, clasped across one shoulder or knotted at the front on the chest. It is garnished with a variety of colours and patterns. Another form has sleeves and fringes at the sides, as seen in the scene of the “four races of mankind” in the tomb of Sety I (Fig. 2). Eight different versions from this scene from the Book of Gates are for now known.<sup>54</sup> The legend names them all *Tmhw*, although they do not all look the same. For instance, in the tomb of Sety I, the Libyan has a phallus sheath under the dress, whereas in Rameses III's scene he is wearing a kilt instead. However, at Rameses VI's tomb, the Osireion and the sarcophagus of Sety I there is no difference between the ‘four races’. Egyptians, Asiatics, Nubians and Libyans all have the same appearance, short dress and hairstyle, the identity makers thus being absent.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>45</sup> It is worth mentioning Herodotus' remark about the Maxyes, book IV, chap. 191: “They let the hair grow long on the right side of their heads, and shave it close on the left”; HÖLSCHER 1955, 34.

<sup>46</sup> PETRIE 1887, nos. 84–85; RICKE, HUGHES and WENTE 1967, pl. 11; Karnak IV, pl. 28; as stated by BATES 1914, 137.

<sup>47</sup> BATES 1914, 137–140; KEIMER 1948, 45–47, pls. 26–29; POON and QUICKENDEN 2006, 130.

<sup>48</sup> DAVID 1982, 145.

<sup>49</sup> KEES and VON BISSING 1923, pl. 7, fig. 17.

<sup>50</sup> BATES 1914, 206–207.

<sup>51</sup> Visible on a Libyan's from the tiles of Medinet Habu, cf. MÜLLER 1964, 101, no. A139. The same pattern is probably on the chariot of Tutankhamun, JE 61989. Note that Champollion drew the *T3-mhw*-sign several times on the Libyan

figured on a relief from the temple of Abu Simbel (CHAMPOLLION 1835, pl. 17), even though this detail is absent on Wreszinski's plate (WRESZINSKI 1935, pl. 182).

<sup>52</sup> This reinterpretation might also have been inspired by geographical settings.

<sup>53</sup> MH I, pl. 1; KEIMER 1948, 47 suggested an identification with *cyperus papyrus*, a plant well-known on the bank of the Nile. The motif is, however, strikingly similar to an actual Berber tattoo design, a stylised depiction for the palm tree, used by women and symbolising the mother-goddess, source of wealth and security, cf. BROUSSE 2012, 70. Even if the length of time between both representations does not allow for a direct parallel, it still gives an interesting issue for reflection.

<sup>54</sup> HORNUNG 1980, 134–137.

<sup>55</sup> PLANKOFF 1954, pl. 46.

The phallus sheath has a new shape, different from the one known in the OK. It carries an ornamental ball, probably a bead, near the lower end and seems to be less tough.

The ostrich feather becomes a relevant Libyan marker. NK evidence provides many depictions of Libyans wearing one or two feathers on the head.<sup>56</sup> It seems that this insignia is always lying horizontally on the top of the head among the *Mšwš*, whereas the *Rbw* are adorned with upright feathers.<sup>57</sup> It is the symbol of their power and prestige and its loss signifies beyond any doubt the ruler's defeat. In the Merenptah's records of his 5th year campaign against the Libyans, the *Rbw*'s defeated chief has to run away with no feather on his head (*bn mh.t hrt-p=f*).<sup>58</sup> The Piankhy Stela shows an original image of this idea. The Delta dynasts of Meshwesh origin (*wr ʕ3 Mʕ*), overthrown by Piankhy, are depicted in a submissive position lying on the floor, knees bent, with their feathers lying horizontally on their head as well.<sup>59</sup>

The little lock of hair on the forehead of the OK Tjehenu is much more occasional. The item is absent in all military scenes. It is, however, visible on several similar reliefs of southern enemies depicted on the 6th pylon of Thutmose III at Karnak.<sup>60</sup> A representation of the world, depicted on a sarcophagus of the 30th Dynasty, sketch the Tjehenu people as written symbols (Gardiner A 40) with an ostrich feather and the lock of hair.<sup>61</sup> Later, one can find it in a cartouche fortress on a Darius statue from Susa where the name of the country, *t3 Tmhw*, is personified by an individual with the open cloak with clearly visible fringes, the hair cut short, a beard and this kind of little lock of hair on the forehead.<sup>62</sup> It is also worn by two enemies depicted on a pair of mummy soles from the Ptolemaic Period, suggesting that the artist intended to picture Libyan enemies.<sup>63</sup>

If only the generic term 'Libyans' has been used so far, this is because in the NK iconography the differences between the Libyan groups are hazy. The new tribes that emerged in the Egyptian sources, *Rbw* and *Mšwš*, are often mentioned together with the *Tjhnw* and the *Tmhw*, the last two becoming generic geographical terms for western regions.<sup>64</sup> Tjehenu are mentioned as an ethnic group in both Medinet Habu war reports. The 5th year campaign, presented at the beginning against *t3 Tmh*,<sup>65</sup> specifies a few lines later that the *Tjhnw* are going to move forwards (*tfy*) because they made a plot together (*iry.w šdt.t*), namely *Rbw*, *Spd* and *Mšwš*, against Egypt.<sup>66</sup> The preposition *m* which introduces this sequence suggests that *Rbw*, *Spd* and *Mšwš* are considered to be *Tjhnw*. Thus, in the NK the latter seems to refer to inhabitants of Libya in a geographical sense without regard to their ethnic identity, just like in later times the expression *οἱ ἀπὸ Λιβύης* will be used.<sup>67</sup>

Returning to the war-reliefs, at first glance there is no clear differentiation between the garments and accessories worn by the different Libyan tribes. A first example is to be seen on the northern outside wall of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, where Sety I depicted his victorious military campaigns against the Asiatics and the Libyans tribes. The legend names them specifically *Tjhnw*.<sup>68</sup> On the battlefield they wear the overcoat tied by a knot in front, with the characteristic belt and the phallus sheath underneath. In one battle scene, the Libyan chief, gripped by the king's bow, has two sidelocks as well as two feathers on his head.<sup>69</sup> The prisoners brought to the gods keep their feathers on the head.<sup>70</sup> One should bear in mind the same look, as previously seen, in the tomb of Sety I where the Libyans are named *Tmhw*. Moreover, those garments are depicted in the military accounts showing the second Rameses III's Libyan war in his mortuary temple in Medinet

<sup>56</sup> In the NK, the rulers of the Nubians also wear feathers on their head, although theirs are smaller and straight. Sometimes they wear the ostrich feather, but in this case its use emphasises a distinction between the chiefs and other Nubians wearing the feather of a hawk, e.g. DAVIES 1926, pl. 23.

<sup>57</sup> YOYOTTE 2012, 28.

<sup>58</sup> KRI IV, 14, 10.

<sup>59</sup> GRIMAL 1981, pl. 5.

<sup>60</sup> PM II<sup>2</sup>, 88 (238); the Aegeans from the NK also have a similar strand on the forehead, yet it seems that there is no link between those types, VERCOUTTER 1956, 232–235.

<sup>61</sup> CLERE 1958, 32, fig. 2.

<sup>62</sup> VITTMAN 2003, 17, fig. 8.

<sup>63</sup> Eton College: ECM 1322, cf. BEDMAN and MARTIN VALENTIN 2005, 214.

<sup>64</sup> SPALINGER 1979, 127; O'CONNOR 1990, 30.

<sup>65</sup> KRI V, 11, 3; KRI V, 12, 6.

<sup>66</sup> KRI V, 12, 3. The other mention from the 5th war does not provide further clarification (*dh~n hps=j Tjhnw*), KRI V, 17, 6; the same goes for the 11th war which mentions *7hnw* in a royal epithet (*ntr nfr sm3=k Tjhnw*), KRI V, 47, 2.

<sup>67</sup> COLIN 2000, 142, n. 487. The Libyan Campaign's account of Psamtek I includes the *Tmhw*, with the *Mʕ*, among the *Tjhnw*, cf. RITNER 2009, 586.

<sup>68</sup> KRI I, 22, 9, 23, 11.

<sup>69</sup> Karnak IV, pl. 28. For a Libyan with two locks of hair on one side of the head, see also RICKE, HUGHES and WENTE 1967, pl. 11.

<sup>70</sup> Karnak IV, pls. 31–32.

Habu. This campaign aims explicitly at the *Mšwš*, whereas the first one is assumed to be fought against the *Rbw*. As they are not dressed in the same way, an attempt to identify each of them by dress and appearance has been done previously.<sup>71</sup> The *Rbw* wear the open cloak, clasped across one shoulder, and a kilt under the dress that comes above the knees, whereas the *Mšwš* have the phallus sheath instead of the kilt. They are both of the same physical type and have the same hairstyle, cut short with the sidelock, a clearly indication that they share a common culture. The ostrich feather appears here as one of the *Mšwš* attributes, while it is never shown in the reliefs with the *Rbw*. The reverse occurs in the illustration of the second campaign of Rameses III's temple in Karnak. The war was carved on the exterior west wall and displays Libyans of the *Mšwš* type on the battlefield.<sup>72</sup> However, the prisoners brought to the Theban triad have the *Rbw* characters with only one ostrich feather on their head.<sup>73</sup> One rather gets the impression that the Egyptian artists had a kind of a list of all the Libyans' identity markers from which they randomly picked some of them. Moreover, the legend designating them as *Thnw* leaders, maintains once again the generic sense of this term.

This may be the reason why from the NK onwards, the Tjehenu is the only group chosen to represent the Libyans in the lists of the so-called Nine Bows people.<sup>74</sup> The term thus includes all Libyan characters, from all periods mixed together. For instance in the tomb of Kheruef, the Tjehenu has the short hairstyle with the sidelock.<sup>75</sup> In Anen's tomb, he also has short hair, with two ostrich feathers on his head, and he is wearing the open cloak.<sup>76</sup> However, the specific sidelock is absent. His arms and forelegs are adorned with dotted lines. The Tjehenu may, therefore, be considered as the "generic Libyans", which O'Connor is talking about.<sup>77</sup>

Inasmuch as the term's meaning has been at that time established, additional data from iconography can be gathered. Indeed, the ancient Tjehenu's way of dressing did not disappear and was still used in

parallel with the new one. The last part of this paper questions when and how the items considered are used from the NK onwards. In order to simplify the description, two situations called type 1 and type 2 are first defined. Type 1 shall be the Libyan looking exactly like his ancestor from the OK, with the garments studied before (necklace, crossbands, belt, phallus sheath, animal tail), but also with long wavy hair, whereas type 2 shall be the Libyan from the NK, with the new short hairdressing and the sidelock, wearing at least the distinguishing belt and the phallus sheath.

### Tjehenu's Identity Markers During the New Kingdom

Libyan enemies of type 2 are figured on several objects from Tutankhamun's tomb. For example, on the ceremonial footstool decorated with the nine traditional enemies of Egypt, the Libyan wears crossbands, necklace, phallus sheath and the characteristic hairstyle with two ostrich feathers on his head.<sup>78</sup> On the king's chariot, he additionally has varied tattoos on his arms and legs.<sup>79</sup>

We find this type again in Sety I's war-scenes seen previously (Fig. 3). The chief beaten by Sety I has the same items of clothing, but instead of the necklace he wears the open cloak knotted in front of the chest.<sup>80</sup> It should be stressed that among all the Libyan warriors depicted on these reliefs, he is the only one wearing the crossbands. He is present in one particular type of scene, the *topos* of the king alone with two Libyans, one stretched out on the floor, another standing but ready to be killed. Heinz gathered and compared all known examples of this motif, namely three copies belonging to Sety I, Rameses II and Rameses III.<sup>81</sup> Rameses II reproduces this scene in the Abu Simbel Temple.<sup>82</sup> It is not a faithful copy, however, since the feathers are missing, and only one band on the chest is visible, the dress covering almost the entire torso. The Libyan chief from Rameses III, pictured on the exteri-

<sup>71</sup> WAINWRIGHT 1962.

<sup>72</sup> Karnak II, pl. 116.

<sup>73</sup> Karnak II, pls. 119–120.

<sup>74</sup> For the Nine Bows, see UPHILL 1965/1966; VALBELLE 1990; ROTH 2015, 160–162. If *Thnw* are in all foreign people lists, it is also because the latter were reproduced and updated after older ones, cf. VERNUS 1995, 158.

<sup>75</sup> NIMS et al. 1980, pl. 1.

<sup>76</sup> MMA 33.8.8.

<sup>77</sup> O'CONNOR 2003, 155.

<sup>78</sup> JE 62048.

<sup>79</sup> JE 61989.

<sup>80</sup> Karnak IV, pl. 32.

<sup>81</sup> HEINZ 2001, 69–73.

<sup>82</sup> WRZESZINSKI 1935, pl. 182; The war-scenes from the temples of Rameses II at Abu Simbel and Beit el-Wali correspond with the same events recorded by Sety I at Karnak, being carved at the beginning of Rameses' reign, cf. SPALINGER 1980; 2011, 28–38. For the localisation of the Libyans' scenes in all the Rameses II's Nubian temples, see McCarthy's maps in MCCARTHY 2003.

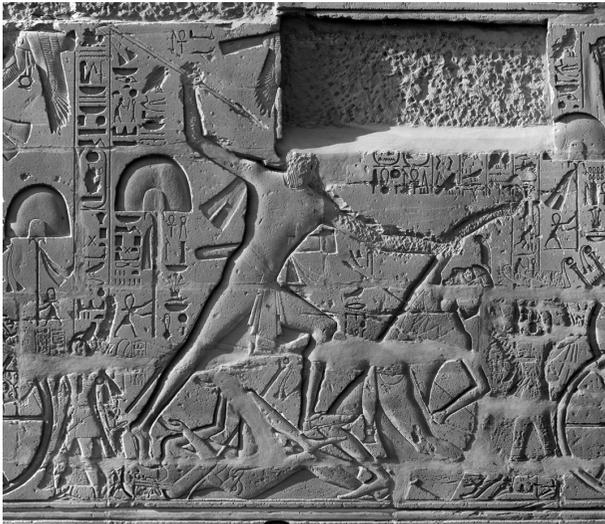


Fig. 3 Seti I, north wall of the Hypostyle Hall, Karnak (© CNRS-CFEETK / A. Chéné)

or west wall of his temple at Karnak, has the same garments as the Abu Simbel one, although the relief is too damaged and does not reveal if he also wears the crossbands or not.<sup>83</sup> The same *topos* of the king with two Libyan opponents was also carved in the scene of the battle at Satuna in the Luxor Temple.<sup>84</sup> Here, there is one major difference compared with the initial example, namely that the king is in his chariot and his horses attack the Libyan foes directly. The standing Libyan has two feathers on his head, but no open cloak is visible. Actually, none of the enemies is wearing it, unlike in Sety I's depiction, being dressed only with the belt and the phallus sheath and some of them with two ostrich feathers. One may ask, therefore, why some pieces of clothing were sometimes removed. Spalinger noted that the reliefs in Luxor do not intend to provide a truthful visual account, but are rather more symbolic 'snapshots' of geographic, cultural and historical locations.<sup>85</sup> However, the phallus sheath must have

been a strong enough marker of the Libyan identity so that all other garments could be left aside. This *topos* from the NK – the king alone with a Libyan chief, while trampling another – recalls the OK motif of the sphinx-king striking the Libyan chief (*h3ty-ꜥ*) while trampling two other foes. The resemblance is striking enough to establish a link between both illustrations. Moreover, there is a physical connection between the king and the Libyan chief. In the NK pictures the king grasps the Libyan's arm and in the OK images the sphinx puts its paw on the Libyan's body.<sup>86</sup> This event, originally depicted in the OK (or perhaps even earlier), which is for Vernus the "fait particulier",<sup>87</sup> has been established as a stereotype and historicised. Following the same idea, Spalinger stated that "the military images (...) act to negate history by means of reducing events either to the repetition of archetypes or actualising those archetypes".<sup>88</sup> Thus, the Egyptian artists reproduced the *topos* by changing some details. Moreover, there is another way to smite and trample one enemy at the same time. On the southern wall of the Medinet Habu Temple, Rameses III has the usual posture of smiting the enemy by grasping the left arm of the Libyan.<sup>89</sup> The latter is on his knees, with his back to the king but the head and right arm turned towards him. His legs are unusually long, thereby enabling the king to put his right foot on them. Hence, the king is smiting and trampling the Libyan foe all at once. The scene is certainly a different version of another *topos* of the king alone with the foe, involving a type 2 Libyan.<sup>90</sup> The motif can nevertheless be traced to the MK on one of Mentuhotep's blocks from Gebelein seen previously.<sup>91</sup> In the same scene from the Beit el-Wali Temple, the Libyan wears the belt and the phallus sheath.<sup>92</sup> Only one band is visible on his chest, as in the relief of Abu Simbel, although not on the same side. On the same wall is another Libyan without any crossbands, figured bound with Asiatic prisoners.<sup>93</sup> The second smiting scene

<sup>83</sup> Karnak II, pls. 80–82.

<sup>84</sup> WRESZINSKI 1935, pl. 67; this scene was initially wrongly filled out with Libyans, and was later rectified by transforming the Libyans into Asiatics, cf. BORCHARDT 1913b, 106–109; SPALINGER 2011.

<sup>85</sup> SPALINGER 2011, 490–491.

<sup>86</sup> Clearly evident on a magic ivory MMA 15.3.197.

<sup>87</sup> VERNUS 1995, 155.

<sup>88</sup> SPALINGER 2011, 5.

<sup>89</sup> HÖLSCHER 1941, pls. 32A, 35C.

<sup>90</sup> E.g. with the Libyans HEINZ 2001, 73–75, for further examples of this scene, reproduced also among Egyptian soldiers on the battlefield. It also recalls the binding scene, where the king or soldier binds a prisoner while putting his foot on the enemy's leg, cf. HEINZ 2001, 155–157.

<sup>91</sup> Cairo JE TR 1/11/17/10.

<sup>92</sup> RICKE, HUGHES and WENTE 1967, pl. 14.

<sup>93</sup> RICKE, HUGHES and WENTE 1967, pl. 11.



Fig. 4 Rameses III, Medinet Habu (photo by the author)

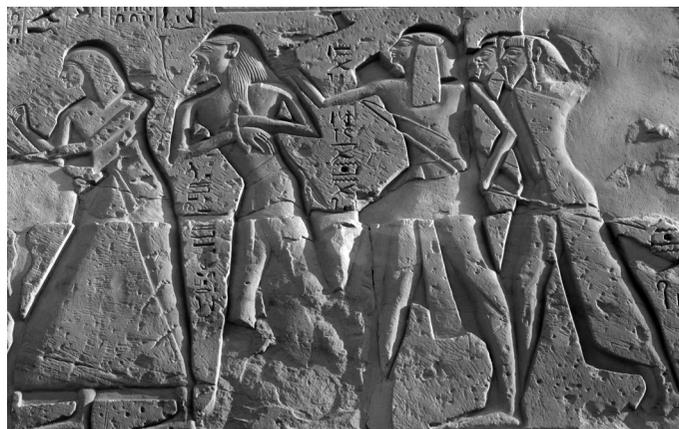


Fig. 5 Rameses III Temple, Medinet Habu (photo by the author)

displays a type 1 Libyan pictured on the east side of the columned hall.<sup>94</sup> It recalls the triumphal scenes from Karnak and Abu Simbel, although here he is alone with the king. Indeed, in the NK both types are pictured quite close to each other.

More data can be derived from Rameses III's records. In the reliefs of Medinet Habu, the Libyan leader, Meshesher, is depicted with the Tjehenu's physical appearance of type 1. On the battlefield, Meshesher in a chariot, stands out from the crowd facing the Egyptian king. The latter is stretching the bow whose arrow points directly to the Libyan's head. Here, he is wearing the crossbands and the ostrich feather<sup>95</sup> (Fig. 4), while in the second similar relief, he is wearing the open cloak.<sup>96</sup> The legend

written in front of him marks his affiliation (*Wr Mššr s3 K3pwr n(y) M*).<sup>97</sup> Defeated, he leads the prisoners' row.<sup>98</sup> He keeps the ostrich feather on his head, but the crossbands are no longer visible on his chest. When Rameses III reviews the Libyan prisoners and the spoils, Meshesher wears the belt and the phallus sheath with an unusually short tail (Fig. 5).<sup>99</sup> Keper himself is depicted in the lower register of the same scene, additionally wearing the open cloak. Sometimes, the two types are figured side by side.<sup>100</sup>

These scenes made Wainwright conclude that the Meshwesh were led by Tjehenu people.<sup>101</sup> Other scholars claimed that the NK Libyans had displaced or absorbed the earlier Tjehenu and preserved only some marks or that some Libyan rulers of the later

<sup>94</sup> RICKE, HUGHES and WENTE 1967, pls. 24, 28.

<sup>95</sup> MH II, pl. 70.

<sup>96</sup> MH II, pl. 72.

<sup>97</sup> KRI V, 50, 1.

<sup>98</sup> MH II, pls. 74, 77, 78.

<sup>99</sup> MH II, pl. 75.

<sup>100</sup> MH II, pls. 68, 118.

<sup>101</sup> WAINWRIGHT 1962, 92.

NK deliberately adopted traits they discovered from the Egyptians to be characteristic of ancient Tjehenu so as to increase their prestige, or in some way, these traits might have been imposed upon them by the Egyptians.<sup>102</sup> However, what emerges from all these reliefs is that only the leaders have the complete attributes of the Tjehenu's costume.<sup>103</sup> Thereby, these garments have become the hallmarks of the Libyan leaders. It is, however, difficult to state whether or not this fact has a core of historical actuality or was an artistic convention adopted by the Egyptian artists of these times.

Several ceramic tiles, portraying the foreign enemies of Egypt, also show the type 1 Libyan.<sup>104</sup> They have a black beard and red hair. It seems that the long characteristic unplaited tress hanging in front of the shoulder can be removed, perhaps in order not to interfere with the body's position. Moreover, the crossbands' motif is much the same as the one from the OK reliefs.

Furthermore, the type 1 Libyan is always present in one specific kind of representation, the so-called 'Smiting the Enemy' scene where the king smites a group of enemies. As an icon of kingship, this *topos* most often shows multiple superimposed captives, representing all enemies of Egypt, Asiatics, Nubians and Libyans, their arms raised in identical supplication to the king. The Tjehenu is wearing the well-known attributes, especially the crossbands, belt and phallus sheath and long wavy hair.<sup>105</sup> In Rameses II's temple at Derr, one triumphal scene from the east wall of the first pillared hall raises questions.<sup>106</sup> Here, one of the foes has a long sidelock, however, the precise ethnic identity of all of them is difficult to determine.

One may also wonder if Thutmose III's smiting scenes on the south face of the 7th pylon at Karnak include a Libyan or not.<sup>107</sup> Here, the king celebrates his victory at Megiddo. On the western side, includ-

ing a northern people list, the first enemy figured is clearly an Asiatic. Slightly behind him, an enemy in a frontal view wears the Libyans' attributes, crossbands, necklace and belt. The eastern side comprises the southern people and, as a mirror, reflects the same smiting scene. Only the belt with the loop on the hip has been preserved. If the answer is not certain, it is because during the NK Asiatic people are figured in Egyptian iconography wearing some of the identity garments belonging to the ancient Tjehenu. Those are only the crossbands, the specific necklace and the loop on one side which is situated on top of a kilt.<sup>108</sup> In her study on the Aegeans, Wachsmann pointed out this phenomenon and called it 'hybridism'.<sup>109</sup> Objects or subjects may be composed in Egyptian art by uniting elements originally belonging to two or more separate entities. In the NK, Libyans and Asiatics are considered as two people both from the north, contrary to the Nubians from the south. It is therefore not surprising if their items mixed together. Note however that even the 'hybridism' must observe certain rules, namely that only some specific Libyan markers can be reused. Wachsmann suggested that the hybrids may represent the Hittites,<sup>110</sup> a people which appear later in the Egyptian pictorial record and were barely known by the time of Thutmose III.

The pictorial record shows this kind of illustration in later times as well. For example in the Greco-roman temple at Medinet Habu, the Tjehenu is well-defined in front of all other enemies (Fig. 6).<sup>111</sup> The motif, although corrupted, has also been taken up in the Meroitic Period, on the tablet of prince Arikankharer (c. first century AD).<sup>112</sup> The relief portrays the prince, with his purely Nubian costume, in a traditional pharaonic pose of smiting a group of bound captives. The first prisoner, depicted in full face, wears crossbands on his chest. In the Philae Temple, the smiting scene includes an original representation.<sup>113</sup> Two enemies,

<sup>102</sup> O'CONNOR 1990, 74.

<sup>103</sup> We cannot fail to notice a parallel between this unplaited lock of hair of those Tjehenu known from the OK with the one worn by the Libyans from the NK, both of them being one main trait of their hairstyle.

<sup>104</sup> BM EA 12337; MÜLLER 1964, 101, no. A 139; also ÄM 15729 conserves only a head with red hair. For these faience objects, see JANZEN 2013, 102–105 and HAYES 1937.

<sup>105</sup> E.g. Karnak IV, pls. 15, 17.

<sup>106</sup> BLACKMAN 1913, pls. 10, 21 (1). The north lateral wall preserves a presentation scene of prisoners, although Blackman noted that the reliefs are too eroded to recognise their identity, cf. BLACKMAN 1913, 7, pl. 5.1.

<sup>107</sup> PM II<sup>2</sup>, 167 (496–497).

<sup>108</sup> E.g. RICKE, HUGHES and WENTE 1967, pl. 12; MMA 30.4.13 (Puiemre' tomb TT 39).

<sup>109</sup> WACHSMANN 1987, 4–11. Note her assumption of particular interest, that "... hybrids must be studied in depth before any conclusions concerning their historical value can be made...".

<sup>110</sup> WACHSMANN 1987, 8.

<sup>111</sup> HÖLSCHER 1939, pl. 31.

<sup>112</sup> Worcester Art Museum 1922.145.

<sup>113</sup> PM VI, 214 (75).

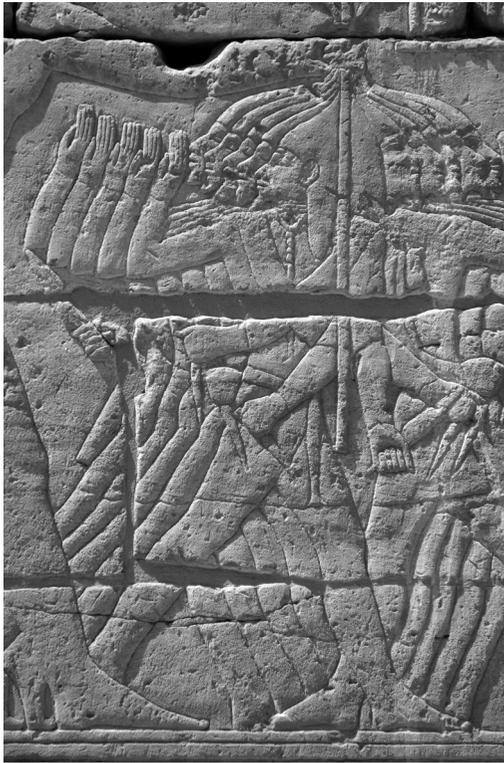


Fig. 6 Small Temple, Medinet Habu (photo by the author)

stretched out under the traditional gathering of foes, wear ostrich feathers on their heads. Whether or not the artist intended to portray particular Libyans is difficult to say, but they must represent western foes.

#### CONCLUSION

In order to emphasise the role of the Libyans in the royal ideology of Egypt, the evolution of their identity markers have been explored through a diachronic analysis, focusing on the Tjehenu identity markers. It looks like the Tjehenu correspond to the epitome of the perfect Libyan as represented by the Egyptians and their attributes are used according to some specific rules that all Egyptian artists must have known. Following our description, it could be argued that the type 1 Libyan may be the *topos*, whereas the type 2 would be the *mimesis*, both having Tjehenu characters. This paper has, therefore, merely highlighted a few specific points about their

distribution in the Egyptian iconography, knowing that it is difficult to estimate to what extent the pictorial account is true. Moreover, perhaps the different contexts dictated specific approaches to the foreign people. A unique evidence of considerable interest to our purpose is the sketch on a papyrus from Tell el-Amarna which shows three Libyans killing an individual who looks like an Egyptian.<sup>114</sup> They have the new hairstyle with the sidelock and wear only the open cloak, knotted on one shoulder. Yet, they are naked underneath, with no kilt or phallus sheath being drawn. As O'Connor stressed, representations on papyri could belong to different spheres of activity and interest, namely for instance depicting more realistic situations.<sup>115</sup> The multiple *topoi* in the narrative pictures of war indicate that the illustrations are not realistic or truthful reproductions of historical events.<sup>116</sup> They are not perfect replica either. The copies are never entirely similar, but are rather new original illustrations. The artistic conventions should allow a certain freedom, without ignoring the simple human error, taking into account that Egyptian artists might have never met the strangers they represented.

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<sup>114</sup> PARKINSON and SCHOLFIELD 1993, 34–35.

<sup>115</sup> O'CONNOR 2003, 170. Note, however, the few Libyans pictured naked under the open cloak in Rameses III's account of his 5th war, cf. MH I, pl. 18.

<sup>116</sup> HEINZ 2001; SPALINGER 2011.

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**ANCIENT AUTHORS**

DIODORUS SICULUS

*Diodorus Siculus II*, translated by C.H. Oldfather, London  
1967.

"Tradition and Transformation in Ancient Egypt" presents papers from different fields, linked through the discussion of (dis)continuity of traditions and consequent cultural transformation. The main aim of the conference was to stimulate research and exchange ideas as well as to build bridges for a variety of sub-disciplines within Egyptology.

The first impression given by the ancient Egyptian culture is that of continuity and long-lasting stability. In fact, we can observe very different kinds of transformation processes alongside enduring tradition. These changes are visible in all areas of society: politics, art, language, economy, religion, etc. This volume gives an insight into current research on this topic and the results of various discussions following the 5th International Congress of Young Egyptologists.

In the study of ancient cultures and civilizations, the questions about what remains and what is changing are always of great importance. A primary goal is to get a deeper understanding of the life and thinking of our ancestors. Cultural changes are dynamic processes and can be caused by developments in technology, political and religious ideas or substantial experiences with diverse societies or environmental factors.

Because of this sheer panoply of possible causes, one seeks to understand transformation in ancient Egypt by asking a series of essential questions: what is the nature of a particular change, when and where did it come about, through what agency, for what purpose, which parts of Egyptian society did it affect, and how lasting were its consequences. In order to be able to answer these questions, as many cultural aspects as possible must be included and considered in detail.