

The Nile Mosaic of Palestrina (photo Museo Nazionale Prenestino).

THE NILE MOSAIC OF PALESTRINA

Early Evidence of Egyptian Religion in Italy

BY

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Section 7, upper part (fig. 14)⁵⁸

In the seventh section we see a bear with the inscription ΔPKOC, apparently standing for APKOC. The bear does not live in Africa in natural circumstances but Syrian bears were occasionally imported into Egypt⁵⁹. Next to it is a pair of cheetahs with the inscription TIFPIC. The hunting leopard or cheetah was common in Africa and had from ancient times been brought to Egypt by the Nubians as tribute. *Tigris* may originally have been a name for the cheetah⁶⁰. A large snake coils around a rocky outcrop, and a doun palm may be recognised by its characteristic forked trunk⁶¹. Another monkey, possibly an Anubis baboon, sits below it. On the Dal Pozzo copy it is accompanied by the inscription CATTYOC, probably for *satyros*, which has not been preserved in the mosaic⁶². At the bottom of this section there is a strange animal sitting on a rock. It has the body of a reptile and a square dog-like head. Below it is the inscription KPOKOΔIAOCXEPCAIOC, land crocodile. It seems to be a desert monitor⁶³.

Section 9, upper part (fig. 16)⁶⁴

Section 9, which probably joined the left edge of section 10, contains two animals in the top half, while in the bottom half we see a building complex. We shall describe the latter part together with the scenes belonging to the lower part of the mosaic. On the left-hand side of the upper half of the section we see a white rhinoceros on a rocky outcrop and below it the inscription PINOKEYΩC. The African rhinoceros lived in the southern Sudan (see fig. 32). Its existence was vaguely known to the Egyptians and became known to the classical world when a specimen appeared in the Procession of Ptolemy II. It is described by Agatharchides and some early attempts to depict it are found in the Marissa frieze (figs. 61, 63). The first time a live rhinoceros appeared in Rome was presumably during the games of Pompey in 55 B.C.⁶⁵. To the right of the rhinoceros we see a piece of ground with another animal on it. Below it there is the inscription XOIPOHΘIK, usually completed as *choiropithekos*, meaning hog-monkey. It probably represents a river-hog, which lived in the southern Sudan⁶⁶.

Section 10, upper part (fig. 17)⁶⁷

The upper part of section 10 fits onto the lower part of section 6. We shall describe the scenery of the lower part of this section together with the bottom half of the mosaic. On the right-hand side there is another hunter kneeling in front of the rocks and aiming his bow to the left. In the upper left-hand corner there are two wart-hogs. These Sudanese animals are described by Agatharchides as boars with horns, presumably because of their large tusks⁶⁸.

Section 11, upper part (fig. 18)⁶⁹

The upper part of section 11 fits onto the lower part of section 7. We shall describe the lower part of this section together with the lower half of the mosaic. Immediately below the desert monitor in section 7 there is another reptile with the inscription KPOKOΔIAO ΠΑΡΑΑΙC, which is apparently a Nile monitor⁷⁰. Below this five more hunters appear, two of them emerging from behind rocks. They look agitated and are pointing to the left. They are dressed in ragged white *exomides*, one of which is so wide that it completely covers the man's upper arm. The hunters are armed with oval or round shields and bows⁷¹.

Section 21 (fig. 15)⁷²

Section 21 was not copied by the Dal Pozzo copyist. It may have remained at Palestrina, together with section 20, until it was incorporated into the 1640 reconstruction, but we cannot be sure of its original position. The animals represented in it are typical of the Nile fauna and there are no inscriptions, so it may have belonged to the fauna of the lower part of the mosaic. However, we shall describe it together with the upper half of the mosaic because it contains only animals⁷³. A mongoose and a cobra are seen facing each other. The deadly rivalry between mongooses and snakes was a popular motif in Nilotic scenes⁷⁴. On the right there is a dog which turns its head to look back. Dogs also figure among the Nilotic fauna⁷⁵.

Having described the sections in the upper part, which contain mainly Sudanese animals and negroes hunting them, we may continue with the lower part, which shows more complicated

granite rocks and sandstone table-top hills, alternating with sandy plains, is indeed reminiscent of lower Nubia (cf. fig. 89).

While discussing the various animals, we have seen that only some of these had appeared in ancient Egyptian hunting scenes, which apart from occasional lions mainly show gazelles and buffaloes. Typically Sudanese animals like monkeys, leopards and giraffes appear in scenes which show Nubians bringing tribute; most of the animals, and especially characteristic Sudanese animals, such as the elephant and the rhinoceros, appear only in a painted frieze in a tomb at Marissa in Israel, which represents a hunting scene⁴. In that frieze the name of the location, Aethiopia, is also indicated. It is, therefore, of interest to consider this frieze more closely (figs. 56–65)⁵.

Marissa was under Ptolemaic control from 274 to 175 B.C. and the tomb decoration in question may certainly be dated before 196 B.C., and probably to the last quarter of the third century. The hunting scene appears on a frieze which runs along the two sides of a rectangular room above a row of *loculi*. We will begin with the right hand side of the right wall as seen from the entrance.

The frieze starts with a man blowing a long trumpet (fig. 57). He is dressed in a short sleeved chiton and *embades* and wears a wreath. Above him there was an inscription which possibly read *CAΠΠΓΚΤΗC*, 'trumpeter'. On his left there is a hunter sitting on a prancing horse. He is dressed in a short chiton, white cloak and dark red tight-fitting breeches. The horse has a rich saddle-cloth. Above the horseman there is an inscription which perhaps read *ΙΠΠΟC ΛΙΒΑΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΙΠΠΑΡΧΟΥ*, 'the horse of Libanus the cavalry-commander'. Below the horse there is a hound with pointed ears and a collar⁶. The hunter points a long lance at a leopardess, which is in the act of springing at the hunter but has been hit in the chest by an arrow, and is being attacked by other hounds. Above her is the inscription *ΠΑΡΔΑΛΟC*. Behind the leopardess is a palm tree⁷. Behind the tree we see an animal which, as the mane and the plain yellow skin show, must be a lion in spite of the inscription above it which reads *ΠΑΝΘΗΡΟC* (fig. 58). The next part of the frieze was damaged by the enlargement of a niche and only a small part of the decoration remains. This includes a small piece of the hindquarters and long sweeping tail of a feline creature, again painted yellow, which suggests that this animal too was a lion⁸. It is followed by a large buffalo,

which is lowering its head to a snake with a spotted skin (fig. 59). The snake is coiled up in front of the bull and seems to have bitten him since blood is flowing from the buffalo's head. Above the buffalo there are the letters *ΑΥΚΟ*, possibly deriving from *tauros*⁹. Behind the snake stands a giraffe with the inscription *ΚΑΜΕΛΟ-ΠΑΡΔΑΛΟC*¹⁰. In front of the giraffe stands a large boar¹¹. Behind the boar is depicted a griffin with the inscription *ΓΡΥΨ* (fig. 60)¹². To the left of the griffin there is a scimitar-horned oryx with the inscription *ΟΡΥΞ*¹³. Then follows another palm tree. Behind the tree there is a bulky rhinoceros, presumably a white one (fig. 61). It has two horns, a large one at the front and a very small one behind. Above it comes the inscription *ΡΙΝΟΚΕΡΩC*¹⁴. Next to the rhinoceros we see an elephant. It has a large saddle-cloth on its back so must be tame. Above it we see the inscription *ΕΛΕΦΑC*¹⁵. To the left there is a negro facing the elephant and carrying a large axe over his shoulder. He stretches his right arm out towards the elephant, as though he were the elephant's keeper¹⁶. There are also traces of a figure represented in frontal view with flowing robes, possibly a female. Above it is the inscription *ΑΙΘΙΟΠΙΑ*, so this figure was probably a personification of the country¹⁷.

The frieze on the left wall starts on the left with a different type of tree, followed by a huge lion whose face looks vaguely human (fig. 62)¹⁸. It has a long mane and pointed ears and above it are the letters *Η C*¹⁹. The next animal is a caracal, as is clearly indicated by the exaggerated ear-plumes and the inscription *ΛΥΝΞ*²⁰. Behind the caracal is a porcupine accompanied by the inscription *ΥCΤΡΙΞ* (fig. 63)²¹. It faces another animal which looks vaguely like a rhinoceros because of the large horn on its nose, but has a rather lightly built body. Only *ΕΑΟCΑ* remains of the inscription above it. Perhaps it represents a black rhinoceros²². Behind it appears another animal which is turning to look backwards (fig. 64). Only the letters *ΙΥΟΑΙΕ* remained of the inscription. Its dog-like appearance, striped skin, and exaggerated tuft of hair between the ears make this creature reminiscent of an hyena²³. The next animal, with the inscription *ΟΝΑΓΡΙΟC* above it, is a wild ass. It is sitting on its hindlegs and striking a spotted snake with its forelegs, while at the same time tearing it apart with its mouth. Red blood flows from the snake. A hippopotamus faces the wild ass²⁴. Behind the hippopotamus there is a crocodile, also facing left, with the inscription *ΚΡΟΚΟΔΙΑΟC* (fig. 65). On its

Casa di M. Lucretius Fronto and Casa della Caccia Antica); bears appeared in the games at Rome as early as 169 B.C. (Toynbee 17).

⁶⁰ See Appendix 4. The *tigris*.

⁶¹ For pythons see above section 1, n. 12. Schmidt 28 correctly identifies the palm with the doum palm, which is the only palm whose trunks fork naturally into several branches and which grows more frequently in the south. See further *LÄ* IV, 658 f., s.v. *Palme*; Germer 234; Täckholm 763, no. 125.2. It is mentioned as an Egyptian tree and described by Theophrastus IV ii, 7. It is also represented in the Marissa frieze (see below Ch. IV, n. 7, fig. 57).

⁶² The inscription appears in this form in the Dal Pozzo copy, but has not been included in the restoration (see Whitehouse 15, fig. 7 b). Barthélemy 533 f., was the first to recognise it as a mis-spelling for *satyros*. The satyr monkey was one of the kinds of monkeys or apes which were distinguished in antiquity (see above n. 19); it is first mentioned by Pliny *NH* VIII 58, 216; see for it in general Keller I, 10; Phillips 162 f. Because of the semi-human character which the name suggests it is usually identified with the chimpanzee (Keller I, 10; McDermott 284; Steinmayer 63). The chimpanzee, however, lives in Central and West Africa and not in Aethiopia; moreover, since it is an ape it has no tail (cf. Haltenorth, Diller, pl. 57), whereas the animal represented in the Nile Mosaic has a long tail, is rather heavily built and has a brownish grey colour. This appearance could be suggestive of another kind of baboon which may have lived as far north as Aethiopia, i.e. the Anubis baboon, which may be olive green or brownish in colour (see Haltenorth, Diller 241, pl. 50.4). Still, there are strong arguments against identifying the satyr monkey with a baboon. Pliny, *ll.c.* speaks about the family of sphinxes (i.e. a kind of guenon, see above n. 19) and satyrs, and stresses their gentleness in comparison with the *cynocephalus*. The satyr monkey, therefore, must have been very similar to the guenon. Since only guenons and baboons exist in Aethiopia it must actually have been a variety of the guenon (see above nn. 9, 19, 20, 24). Guenons were imported from Nubia to Egypt, where they were popular as household pets and were trained in all kinds of human activities, including dancing, making music and drinking wine (Drenkhahn 115; *LÄ* I, 83 ff., s.v. *Affe*, cf. Diod. III 35, 4). Trained guenons will have been distributed throughout the ancient world (cf. H.A.G. Brijder, *Apish Performances in the 6th cent. B.C.* in (J. Christianse, T. Melander, eds.) *Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium on Ancient Greek and Related Pottery, Copenhagen 1987* (1988) 62 ff.), and it is this ability of the guenon to imitate human behaviour which will have given the satyr monkey its name (cf. Diod. I 18.4). It is not certain if Pliny's distinction between sphinxes and satyrs corresponds with the two Aethiopian guenon varieties, viz. the red and the green monkey, which are both represented in the Nile Mosaic, see nn. 19, 24. The red monkey shows a large variety of colour-tones, so any distinction in antiquity would have been rather arbitrary (see above n. 24). So it seems that the inscription which originally appeared in the Nile Mosaic has been displaced. It would fit better the green monkey in section 2 (see n. 24), which has a similar greenish colour (contrasting with the yellowish colour of the other monkeys); and there may thus have been a confusion between the green monkey and the greenish Anubis baboon.

⁶³ For the inscription see *IG* XIV, 1302 n. In spite of the somewhat fantastic appearance of the animal, due primarily to its strange head, the authenticity of which is confirmed by the Dal Pozzo copy, the inscription 'land-crocodile' clearly identifies it with the desert monitor (cf. Herodotus

IV 192, who refers to land-crocodiles three cubits long; *RE* XI, 1957, no. 6; Steinmayer 66, fig. 24; Grzimek 329; Boessneck fig. 194; and in general *LÄ* I, 1204 s.v. *Eidechse*. It must not be confused with the much smaller skink, as it was and sometimes still is (cf. Phillips 145; Keller II, 277 f.; Pliny *NH* VIII 38; XXVIII, 30; Grzimek 251 ff.).

⁶⁴ For this section see Whitehouse 16, no. 9, figs. 9a-b; Windsor drawing no. 19209; Gullini 1956, pl. XXI; Aurigemma 82, 17, fig. 44; Charbonneau, fig. 184. For the connection with section 10 see Ch. I, n. 27. For the description of the lower part. see p. 26.

⁶⁵ For the inscription see *IG* XIV, 1302 r. See for the African rhinoceros in general L. Störk, *Die Nashörner* (1977), and idem in *LÄ* IV, 351 f., s.v. *Nashorn*; Keller I, 383 ff.; *RE* XVI, 1785 ff.; L. Keimer, *Note sur le rhinocéros de l'Égypte ancienne*, *ASAE* 48 (1948) 47 f.; W. Gowers, *The Classical Rhinoceros*, *Antiquity* 24 (1950) 65 ff.; 25 (1951) 155; Phillips 157 ff., 208 ff.; Toynbee 125 ff. Two kinds of the rhinoceros exist in Africa, the white and the black rhinoceros (see Haltenorth, Diller, 103 ff., pl. 22, 2 and 3). The white rhinoceros is larger, it has one large horn and a small one, or just a stub, behind it, and a large bump behind its head. It eats grass and consequently holds its head low. Nowadays it is found only in Central Africa to the west of the Nile. The black rhinoceros has two horns which differ less in size, and lacks the bump behind its head. It feeds on leaves and branches of shrubs and trees and thus holds its head higher. It lives in East Africa. The rhinoceros in the Nile Mosaic seems to be a white rhinoceros as indicated by the low position of the head (Gowers 68). There is no evidence that these two kinds were distinguished in antiquity, nor were they distinguished from the Indian rhinoceros. Any author or artist who wanted to describe or depict a rhinoceros simply took a specimen which he happened to have in mind, regardless of its origin (cf. Gowers 66 ff., thus an Indian rhinoceros appears in the great hunt mosaic at Piazza Armerina, see Toynbee 127; Mielsch 1987, 462). In antiquity the rhinoceros lived in the southern Sudan and Abyssinia (cf. e.g. Scholz 88, fig. 104) and its existence was only vaguely known in Egypt (see *LÄ* IV, 351 f.). The rare representations of it are rather unrealistic, but mostly seem to show a white rhinoceros, indicated by the one conspicuous horn and the low position of the head (see Boessneck 52, fig. 74; Gowers, *o.c.*, 1950, 70 f.; the rhinoceros reproduced in R. Mond, O.H. Myers, *Temples of Armand* (1940) 26 pl. IX, is perhaps a badly depicted black rhinoceros, see Störk 286 ff.; Boessneck 53). The rhinoceros depicted in the Punt relief, our fig. 32, is perhaps also a black rhinoceros (Störk, *o.c.*, 1977, 221 ff.). The existence of the African rhinoceros became known to the Greeks only in the Ptolemaic period. An Aethiopian rhinoceros figured in the Procession (Athenaeus V 201 c; Rice 98). Agatharchides mentions the rhinoceros among the Aethiopian animals and seems to describe a specimen of the white rhinoceros (Woelk fr. 71; Diod. III 35.2). The rhinoceros in the Marissa frieze, the earliest classical attempt to depict the animal, also seems to represent a white rhinoceros, in spite of its fantastic appearance; the low position of its bulky head confirms the identification (see fig. 61; Ch. IV, n. 14). In the same frieze there is another animal which has one large horn on its nose and thus must also represent a rhinoceros. Its build is much lighter than that of the white rhinoceros and it holds its head higher, so it seems to be a rare if inaccurate attempt to depict a black rhinoceros (see fig. 63; Ch. IV, n. 22). For the rest most pictures of rhinoceroses from antiquity seem to represent the white rhinoceros. This is understandable because the white rhinoceros is more placid than the black one, so could be caught more easily and imported to Europe

(see Gowers 1950, 69 f.). It has been assumed that the modern distribution of the white and black rhinoceros, found respectively to the west and east of the Nile, in Central and East Africa, applied also in antiquity (Gowers 63 f., 66). This would imply that all white rhinoceroses brought to Europe in antiquity were caught to the west of the Nile and were transported to Egypt either along the difficult Nile route (as certainly seems to have happened occasionally, cf. the rhinoceroses at Armand and in the Procession, which presumably took place before the exploration of the Red Sea, see n. 43 and Ch. IV, n. 44) or along a long route through the eastern Sudan to the Red Sea coast, where they were shipped, which was the more common practice for Sudanese animals (cf. Störk 374 f.; our Ch. IV, n. 44). In both cases a long journey over land was involved. This problem would be solved if in antiquity the white rhinoceros still lived in East Africa as it had done in the prehistoric period (cf. Störk 66 f., 93 ff.). In the Marissa frieze we find a white and what seems to be a black rhinoceros beside each other, which examples may indeed suggest that they lived in the same area (see Ch. IV, nn. 14, 22). We should perhaps not put too much trust in the artist's accuracy in matters of distribution of the white rhinoceros, but it seems not impossible that in antiquity the white rhinoceros still lived in East Africa, otherwise their comparatively large number imported into Europe would be difficult to explain (cf. Störk 66 f., 373). In Italy the Aethiopian rhinoceros must have become known rather early because Lucilius already refers to it, comparing someone's nose to that of an Aethiopian rhinoceros (*Sat.* III 109 f.; IV 184; 2nd half 2nd century B.C.). The first time a live rhinoceros was shown in Rome was in the games of Pompey in 55 B.C. (Pliny *NH* VIII 29, 71). Although it has been assumed that it was an Indian one (Jennison 34; Toynbee 126 ff.) it seems more probable that it was Aethiopian because it was shown together with other Aethiopian animals, such as a spotted hyena and baboons (see Gowers 67, and above n. 49, App. 2, n. 16).

⁶⁶ See Appendix 5. The *choiroptihkos*.

⁶⁷ For this section see Whitehouse 16 f., no. 10, figs. 10 a-b., Windsor drawing no. 19210; Gullini 1956, pl. XVIII; Aurigemma 84, 86, no. 18, fig. 46. For the connection with sections 6 and 9 see Ch. I, n. 27. For the lower part see p. 27.

⁶⁸ Because of their large size and fearful tusks they are clearly wart-hogs, which live in the Sudan (see Haltenorth, Diller, pl. 1, 3; Steinmayer fig. 22). Above (n. 55) we have suggested that the inscription *ephalos* may be reconstructed as *choirelaphos*, horned boar, and connected to the wart-hog and that it is identical with the horned boar which Agatharchides mentions among the Aethiopian animals (Woelk fr. 79, Aelian *NA* V 27). A large boar in a position similar to that of the right-hand wart-hog is represented in the Marissa frieze (see Ch. IV, n. 11, fig. 60). For a boar-hunt in Mithraheh faience, see Parlasca 141, fig. 6; Lunsingh Scheurleer 102, n. 41; for the hunter see nn. 57 and 71.

⁶⁹ For this section see Whitehouse 17 f., no. 11, figs. 11 a-b., Windsor drawing no. 19211; Gullini 1956, pl. XX; Aurigemma 86, no. 19, fig. 47. For the lower part see p. 27.

⁷⁰ For the inscription see *IG* XIV, 1302 q. This name is known only from the Nile Mosaic but it clearly fits the appearance of the Nile monitor, which has a spotted skin (cf. *RE* XI, 1957, no. 7; Phillips 144; Steinmayer 66, fig. 25; Grzimek 329 and 318 fig. 2; Boessneck fig. 194, and in general Keller II, 275 f.; *RE* Lc; *LÄ* I, 1204 f., s.v. Eidechse.

⁷¹ For the hunters, their dress and arms see above nn. 16, 30, 57.

⁷² For this section see Gullini 1956, pl. XIV; Aurigemma 57, no. 3, fig. 10; Romanelli col. pl. 30; and below n. 73.

⁷³ It was not copied by the Dal Pozzo copyist, perhaps because it had remained at Palestrina or because it was only a very small isolated piece (cf. Ch. I, n. 10). Gullini 1956, pl. XIV, shows the fragment as joining directly with section 8, but Aurigemma fig. 10, indicates a narrow gap between them. There is indeed one row of modern tesserae between the two scenes but nevertheless the two parts seem to fit at this point. In Whitehouse's reconstruction there was no place for its present position. She therefore shifted it somewhat to the right (Whitehouse 74, fig. 20). However, this is not necessary in our reconstruction and I have preserved its actual position (see Ch. I, n. 34, fig. 8). The animals depicted in it are typical of Nilotic scenes (see nn. 74, 75). There are no inscriptions and the animals are smaller in size than the Aethiopian animals in the upper part. So the fragment indeed seems to have belonged to the lower part. However, because it contains only animals, we will describe it here.

⁷⁴ For the mongoose see Keller I, 158 f., *LÄ* III, 122 ff., s.v. Ichneumon; Boessneck 30, figs. 67-69; Haltenorth, Diller 185 ff., pl. 35, 7. For the snake, which seems to be a cobra, i.e. the famous *uraeus* (and not a horned viper as is supposed by Schmidt 30) see Keller II, 295 ff.; *LA* V, 644 ff.; Grzimek 431 ff.; 430, fig. 2. The mongoose was a typical Egyptian animal and its habit of fighting snakes was a popular theme, see J. Aymard, *La querelle du cobra et de la mangouste dans l'antiquité*, *MEFRA* 71 (1959) 227 ff.; Phillips 171 ff., 203 ff.; figs. 25-28; J. Balty, *Le cobra et la mangouste dans les mosaïques tardives de Proche-Orient*, *JbÖByz* 25 (1976) 223 ff.; Kádár 105, 115, pl. VII; Lancha 256, figs. 1, 2, 9; Rosen (o.c. in n. 46) 182 f., pls. 22 D, 23 A; H.E. Hinton, A.M.S. Dunn, *Mongoose* (1967) pl. VI; Spatharakis (o.c. in Appendix 2, n. 19) 37 ff.; for an example from the Iseum of Pompeii, see De Vos 1980, 61, n. 139, pl. XXXIX, 2; *Alla ricerca di Iside* 55, no. 1, 65. Mielsch 1986, 752, points out that in early representations the mongoose is correctly represented with its tail held low (cf. the Nilotic frieze from the Casa del Fauno with a very fine cobra, Ch. II, n. 71; our fig. 28), whereas from the Augustan period onwards its tail is usually turned upwards and forwards, seemingly in order to protect its nose, a fairy tale which has been preserved in Pliny *NH* VIII 36, 88, and later authors like the Ps. Oppian (see Spatharakis o.c. 37). This posture is, however, found already in the mongooses which appear as a control-mark on Roman coins in 79 B.C. and 64 B.C. (see Crawford, pls. LXVII, 122, LXIX, 141; below Ch. V, n. 23). De Vos 1984, 133, suggests that the fight between a mongoose and a snake symbolised the victory of Horus over Apophis, of good over bad, according to an Egyptian story which is reported by Bolos of Mendes c. 200 B.C. (see E. Brunner-Traut, *Altägyptische Mythen in Physiologus*, *Antaios* 10 (1969) 184 ff.). Such a symbolic meaning may have existed but the motif was also a realistic aspect of life along the Nile and is very common in Nilotic scenes. One may ask, therefore, if and in how far a symbolic meaning was generally understood (compare the motif of the killing of hippopotami and crocodiles, which may refer to the victory of Horus over Seth, see Ch. IV, nn. 169, 170).

⁷⁵ A dog appears also in a Nilotic frieze at Naples which among other things depicts a similar mongoose and cobra group, and a crocodile (see Lancha, figs. 2, 8). The way the dog looks around in the Nile Mosaic seems to be a fine illustration of Aelian *VH* I, 3, who tells us that dogs drink from the Nile while running alongside it and regularly raising their head to look out for animals which might attack them (see Marucchi 1895, 33 ff.; 1910, 149; Aymard (o.c. in n. 74) n. 32; Lancha 271 f. For dogs in Egypt in

the Casa di Romolo e Remo (our fig. 29, not visible; Mielsch 1986, fig. 10) and in the great hunt mosaic at Piazza Armerina (Mielsch 1989, 463 f.; Carandini, fig. 129).

¹³ See Peters, Thiersch 25, pl. IX. The large scimitar-shaped horns clearly indicate that it is a scimitar-horned oryx, a kind of antelope which was common in northern Africa (see Haltenorth, Diller pl. 11.3; Keller I, 292 ff.). The red spots on its skin in the Marissa frieze must be an embellishment such as occurs elsewhere in the frieze; cf. e.g. the hippopotamus (see nn. 5, 25). The animal was known in Egypt and it is found in many hunting scenes, see *LA* I, 319 ff., s.v. Antelope; III, 222 s.v. Jagd; e.g. Davies, pl. XLIII. Several oryxes appeared in the Grand Procession, see Rice 88 f. A scimitar-horned oryx is represented among the African animals in the wall-painting in the Casa di Romolo e Remo at Pompeii, fig. 29. It is not certain that in antiquity the scimitar-horned oryx lived also in Aethiopia. Nowadays, however, the only species living there is the East African oryx, which is distinguished by its long straight javelin-like horns (see Haltenorth, Diller, 58 f., pl. 11.1). Rice *l.c.*, assumes that the oryxes which figured in the Procession included both kinds. This may have been so, but one may wonder whether the Greeks recognized the two kinds of oryxes as varieties of the same family. Not only the shape of their horns is very different but also their colour, they are respectively very light brown-white and brown-grey. Athenaeus mentions the oryxes together with various kinds of antelopes and with *onelaphoi* (meaning ass-deer or horned ass). The latter name is otherwise unknown. Rice *l.c.* (following Jennison 32) assumes that this was just another kind of wild ass (cf. the *onagrios* see n. 24), but one may wonder how an ass could be called horned and why it should be named together with other horned animals (cf. also the *choirelaphos*, see Ch. III, n. 68). The East African oryx is a large antelope which in build and colour looks not unlike the Somali wild ass which also appears in the Marissa frieze (see n. 24). I would suggest therefore that the *onelaphos* was actually the East-African oryx. If this assumption is correct we would here have another example of an ass-name given to a newly discovered animal, like the onocentaure (see Appendix 1).

¹⁴ See Peters, Thiersch 26, pl. X. Because of the bulky forehead and the way it holds its head low, it can be identified as a white rhinoceros (cf. Ch. III, n. 65; Haltenorth, Diller pl. 22, 2). For the rhinoceros see further above *l.c.*, and below n. 22.

¹⁵ See Peters, Thiersch 26, pl. X. For elephants see Ch. III, n. 51. Tame elephants with rugs on their backs are represented in reliefs in the Lion Temple at Musawwarat es Sufra near Meroc, see *Kush* X (1962) 180, fig. 6, pls. 1.11, 1.1a. For war elephants on Mithraic faience see Lunsingh Scheurleer 99 f., 102, fig. 1, 2. For the history of the hunting of African elephants see p. 49, n. 44, 46, 47.

¹⁶ See Peters, Thiersch 26, pl. X. The keeper carries a long-handled axe with a broad-edged blade. Agatharchides (Woelk fr. 56; Diod. III 26-27) reports that a savage Aethiopian tribe called the *Elephantophagoi* killed elephants with axes and that Ptolemy, who wanted elephants alive, therefore had to look for other hunters to catch them. These he may have found among the Meroites who must have been accomplished elephant hunters, given the importance of the elephant in their culture, see Rice 92, n. 195; cf. above n. 15. In this case the negro does not seem to be an elephant hunter, but the keeper of the tame elephant. The axe was an Aethiopian weapon (cf. Strabo XVII 1, 54) and may also have become a trademark of a mahout (cf. Achilles Tatius IV, 4 ff., describing an Aethiopian mahout, whose elephant

fears and obeys its master not least because of his iron axe). For the axe see further Ch. III, n. 163. For terracotta figures of negroes armed with axes see P.G.P. Meyboom, Een Alexandrijnse terracotta van een neger, *VerAmstMeded* 43 (1988) 11 ff., esp. n. 8.

¹⁷ See Peters, Thiersch 26, pl. X. The outline of this figure was incised in the wall but the negro was then painted over it, evidently because of a change of plan. The inscription *Aithiopia* would better fit a female figure than the negro hunter. For personifications of African countries see below n. 148, fig. 91.

¹⁸ See Peters, Thiersch 28, pl. XV. The tree with its many branches seems to be a tree of considerable size which is crammed into the limited height of the frieze. This and the animal standing beside it, which is presumably a lion (see n. 19), are reminiscent of the persea and the lioness in the Nile Mosaic (see fig. 13). The persea was a large and characteristic Sudanese tree, see Ch. III, n. 48.

¹⁹ See Peters, Thiersch 28, pl. XV. Perhaps one can read on the plate H.CA.OC but neither reconstruction can easily be related to the animal. Perhaps the original word was *pantheros*, cf. the lion inscribed *pantheros* in fig. 58, above n. 8. Phillips 212 f., suggests identifying it with the *manticora*, man-eater, a fabulous Indian animal which seems to have been inspired by early accounts of the tiger, see Ch. III, n. 60. Avi-Yonah 790, calls it a lion with a human face and a beard and suggests that it is a version of the Assyrian *Lamassu*, a fabulous creature with a lion's body, eagle's wings and a human face. However, a lion's head represented frontally can sometimes be quite suggestive of a human face, cf. e.g. a lion in a wall-painting from Ostia (see R. Calza, M. Fioriani Squarciapino, *Museo Ostiense* (1962) 109, no. 14), which appears above a Nilotic landscape with pygmies fighting cranes and crocodiles. At all events, the animal depicted looks very much like a large lion with a bushy mane, cf. Haltenorth, Diller pl. 39, 1 and 3. For the supposed existence of various kinds of lions see above n. 8. For the lion in general see Ch. III, n. 52.

²⁰ See Peters, Thiersch 28, pl. XV; Haltenorth, Diller pl. 43, 1; Avi-Yonah 790, wrongly calls it a rat. For the caracal see above Ch. III, n. 56. The unusual spelling with *n* instead of *g* is also found in the Nile Mosaic. Keimer (*o.c.* in Ch. III, n. 56) noted the traditional belief that the lynx followed the lion to feed on the remains of its prey.

²¹ See Peters, Thiersch 28, pl. XIV. For the porcupine see Keller I, 207 ff.; *LA* V, 1232 f., s.v. Stachelschwein; Haltenorth, Diller 140, pl. 25.5. L. Keimer, Le porc-épic dans l'Égypte ancienne, *ASAE* 49 (1949) 393 ff. Porcupines appear regularly in Egyptian desert scenes (see *LA* III, 222 s.v. Jagd) and were also hunted in the Ptolemaic period (cf. Callimachus, *Hymn* III 94-97).

²² See Peters, Thiersch 28, pl. XIV. Peters, Thiersch read ΑΟΦ On their plate it seems, however, as if the correct reading should be ΕΑΟΑ. They suggest *hulophagos*, wood-eater, for its reconstruction. Agatharchides (Woelk fr. 60; Diod. III 24) mentions the *hulophagoi* as a negro tribe in Eritrea, who eat the young shoots of shrubs (cf. *RE* IX, 1, 126). H. Thiersch, in *AA* (1908) 411, reconstructs it as (*ai*) *lou(ros)*, weasel, which bears, however, no relation to the animal depicted. Avi-Yonah 790, says that it is similar to a tapir with a horn on its snout. If anything, however, the horn on its snout makes the animal look like a lightly built rhinoceros. The ears also resemble those of a rhinoceros. In fact the rhinoceros appears in very similar form in some ancient Egyptian representations (cf. above Ch. III, n. 65, Störk, *o.c. ib.*, 201). We have already seen that two kinds of the rhinoceros exist in Africa, the white and the black rhinoceros. The white rhinoceros was better known in

antiquity than the wild black rhinoceros, but no distinction may have been drawn between them (see above Ch. III, n. 65; Haltenorth, Diller 103 ff., pl. 22). The other rhinoceros in the Marissa frieze (see n. 14) and the one in the Nile Mosaic are white rhinoceroses. The black rhinoceros can be distinguished especially by the fact that it holds its head straight in front of it, and by the fact that it does not graze but feeds on leaves and branches of shrubs and trees (even occasionally rearing against a tree trunk). The single horn, a feature which might suggest a white rhinoceros, and its light build are characteristic of young or female specimens. So this rhinoceros could well be a black rhinoceros, which is here distinguished from the white one. Its striking habit of feeding on branches may explain the denomination *hulophagos*, if that reconstruction is correct. So this picture could be a rare representation of the black rhinoceros (see further Ch. III, n. 65).

²³ See Peters, Thiersch 27, pl. XIII. The inscription is visible on their plate but they read IYIA and suggest restoring it as AYKOC, wolf. Although the real wolf is not indigenous to Africa various kinds of wild dogs live there, cf. Haltenorth, Diller e.g. pl. 20, 2 and 6. But the tuft of hair between the ears is unexplicable, unless it refers to the hair on the neck of a hyena (cf. Steinmayer fig. 14; Haltenorth, Diller pl. 38, 3, 4). For the striped and spotted hyena see Ch. III, nn. 14, 38, where we have seen that the spotted hyena was believed to be a cross-breed between a wolf and a cheetah. Another possibility would be that it was some kind of feline, such as a wild cat, a lynx or a serval; cf. Avi-Yonah 790: wild cat; Rice 97: animal resembling a lynx; cf. Haltenorth, Diller pl. 42, 3, 4 and 41, 1; and Ch. III, n. 56. In that case the tuft of hair between the ears remains inexplicable.

²⁴ See Peters, Thiersch 27, pl. XIII. Because of its large hairy ears it can be identified as a real Somali wild ass in contrast to the onager which is depicted in the Nile Mosaic (see Ch. III, n. 53; Haltenorth, Diller pl. 20, 1). The skin of the ass is of a light brown colour and is also striped, which makes one wonder if the animal could not be a zebra (cf. Haltenorth, Diller 100 ff., pl. 20, 4 and pl. 21, 1-2). The zebra, *hippotigris*, was not unknown to the ancient world (cf. Ch. III, n. 7; Toynbee 167, 286 f.; Mielsch 1986, fig. 14). However, since most of the animals in the Marissa frieze have striped or spotted skins, it seems better to assume that it represents the real *onagrios*, the Somali wild ass, which has stripes on its forelegs. The combat with the snake is a variant of that between the buffalo and cobra represented also in the Marissa frieze (see n. 9; fig. 59; and in general R. Ettinghausen, *The Snake-eating Stag in the East, in Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honour of A.M. Friend Jr.* (1955) 272 ff.; Mielsch, 1986, 752, nn. 14-16). Large vipers especially were known to exist in Aethiopia; and this was reported by the explorer Nymphis as quoted by Aelian *NA* XVII 39, cf. Ch. III, n. 12. For the hippopotamus see in general Ch. III, n. 114.

²⁵ See Peters, Thiersch 27, pl. XII. For the crocodile, which is painted red, see Ch. III, n. 116; and for ibises Ch. III, n. 122. One might assume that the crocodile, the ibis and the hippopotamus (see fig. 64) represent Nilotic fauna in general, but Strabo XVI 4, 14, after describing the other Aethiopian animals, mentions them especially as living in Somaliland: "between Deire on the straits of Aden and the promontory of Pytholaos there are two lakes of fair size, one of which has salt water and is called a sea, whereas the other has fresh water and supports both crocodiles and hippopotami and has papyrus round its borders; the ibis is also to be seen in this place". So the Marissa painting here seems to follow strictly an ancient tradition which has also been preserved in Strabo. Agatharchides mentions the richness of this area in wild animals, such as elephants, rhinoceroses,

buffaloes, lions, and hogs (Woelk, fr. 84, Diod. III 41, 3). Strabo XVI 4, 15-16 also ascribes all the other Aethiopian animals to the Somali coast, so Strabo's passage about the sweet water lake with its fauna may also derive from Agatharchides, and ultimately from a 3rd century B.C. source.

²⁶ See Peters, Thiersch 26, pl. XI. They describe them as fishes with an elephant snout with tusks and a trunk and a tapir-like snout. Avi-Yonah 790, describes them as having an elephant's head and a rhinoceros's head and suggests that they are legendary creatures based on a belief held by some Greek scholars that a correspondence existed between land and marine animals. It seems, however, more probable that they are somewhat exaggerated representations of real Nile fish, namely specimens of the *mormyridae*, an African fish family which has representatives in the Nile, distinguished by their long tubular mouths and barbels. The left-hand fish may be a specimen of the elephant-snout fish, which is common in the Nile and frequently appears in Egyptian fishing scenes; it was sacred in the town of Oxyrhynchus (see Gamer-Wallert 29 ff., 91 ff.; pls. III, 5-7, IX, 2; Boessneck 128). If the fish on the right is not of the same genus (Peters, Thiersch state especially that it has tusks beside its snout, which may be barbels) it might be a loose representation of the *synodontis batensoda*, which has a large head and several barbels, and which is again common in the Nile and frequently represented in works of art (see Gamer-Wallert 34 f., 52, pl. V, 4; Boessneck 130). For Nile fish in general see also *LÄ* II, 224 ff., s.v. Fische, profan.

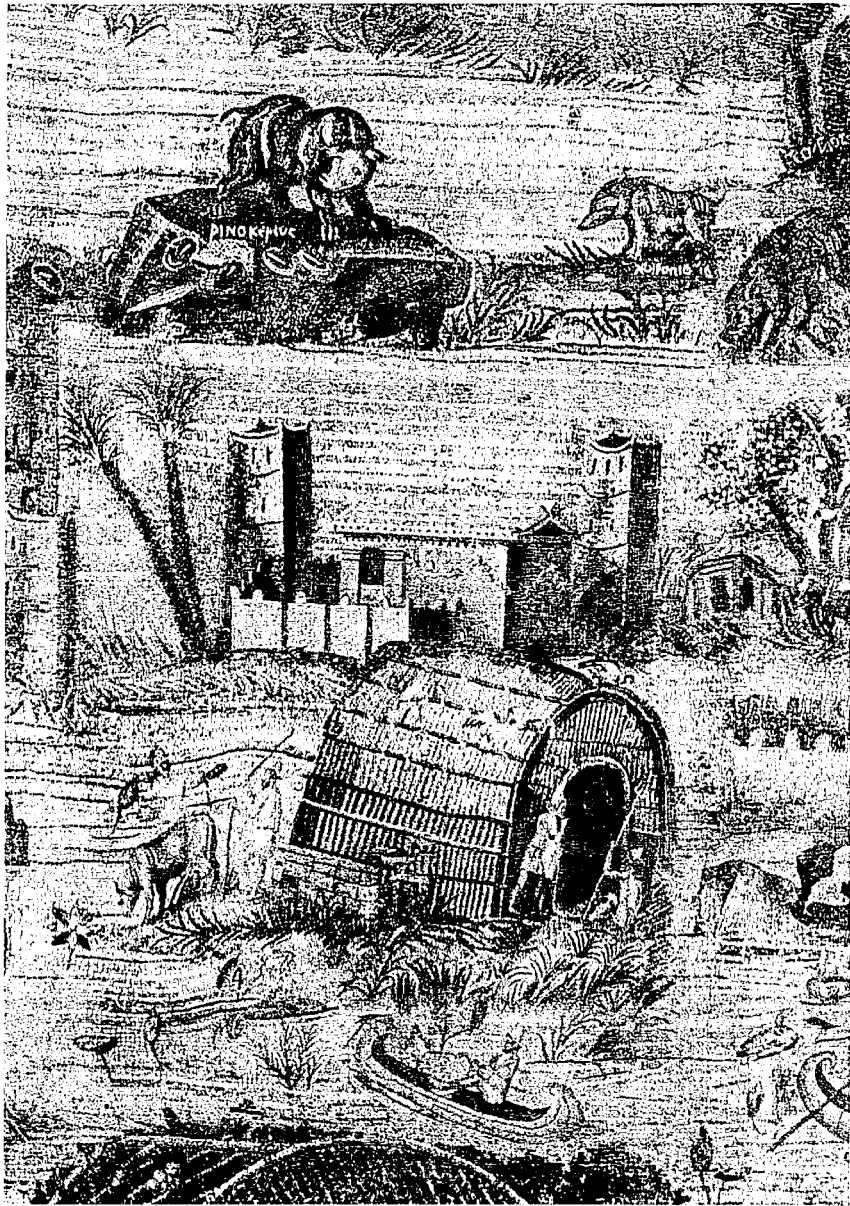
²⁷ Cf. the description of a Ptolemaic hunting party by Agatharchides (Woelk fr. 78; Diodorus III 1; above Ch. III, n. 12;). The presence of hunters with bows and arrows, as in the Nile Mosaic, is suggested by the arrow which has hit the leopard (see fig. 57). For the inscription *Aithiopia* see n. 17.

²⁸ The lioness in the Nile Mosaic has the correct inscription *leaina* but the lion in the Marissa frieze has the wrong one *pantheros* (see Ch. III, n. 52 and above n. 8). The hyena has the inscription *krokottas* in the Nile Mosaic and an incomprehensible one at Marissa, if indeed the same animal is represented there (see Ch. III, n. 38, above n. 23). The Nile Mosaic has the *tigris* inscription and possibly had the *choirelaphos* inscription, while the wart-hog at Marissa has no inscription (see Ch. III, nn. 38, 60). The Marissa frieze has the *pardalos*, *onagrios*, *krokodilos* and *ibis* inscriptions and also incomprehensible ones with the large lion and the black rhinoceros (see nn. 7, 25, 19, 22). The Nile Mosaic has the cheetah with the inscription *tigris*, and the Marissa frieze a leopard with the inscription *pardalos* (see Ch. III, n. 60 and above n. 7). The Marissa frieze has a caracal with the inscription *lynx*, but the Nile Mosaic represents a wild cat or a serval (see n. 20 and Ch. III, n. 55). The Marissa frieze correctly has a Somali wild ass with the inscription *onagrios* while the Nile Mosaic has an onager without inscription (see n. 24 and Ch. III, n. 53). In the Nile Mosaic the giraffes are depicted more successfully than in the Marissa frieze and so are the two kinds of hyenas (see nn. 10, 23 and Ch. III, nn. 42, 38, App. 2). Animals which appear only in the Marissa frieze are the scimitar-horned oryx, the porcupine, the buffalo, the black rhinoceros and the griffin (see resp. nn. 13, 21, 9, 22, 12). In the Nile Mosaic we find the onocentaur and the rock pythons (see Ch. III, nn. 7, 12), in addition to a number of smaller animals such as monkeys, birds, lizards and amphibious animals like otters and turtles.

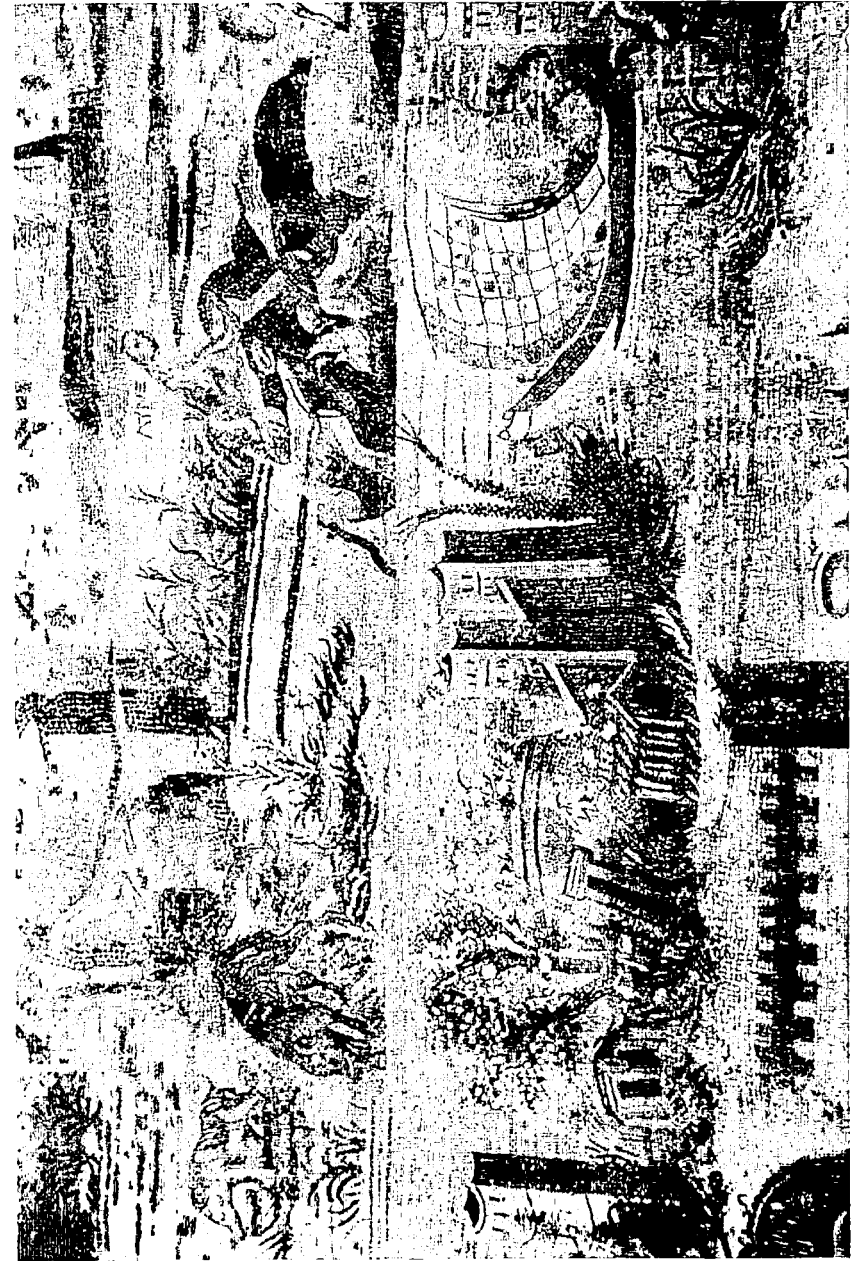
²⁹ See below n. 37.

³⁰ See above n. 25.

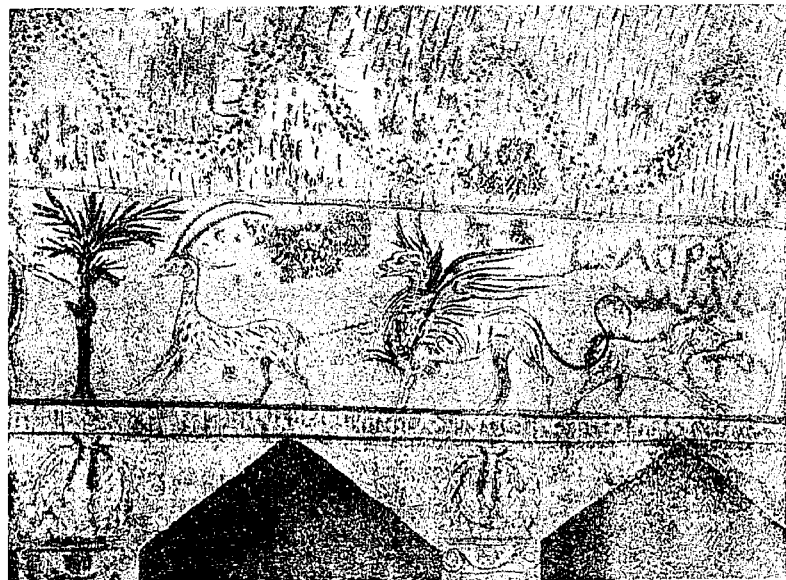
³¹ For the style of lettering see Ch. III, n. 59. The similarity is striking in several cases, as in the rhinoceros inscription, see fig. 16 and fig. 61. In



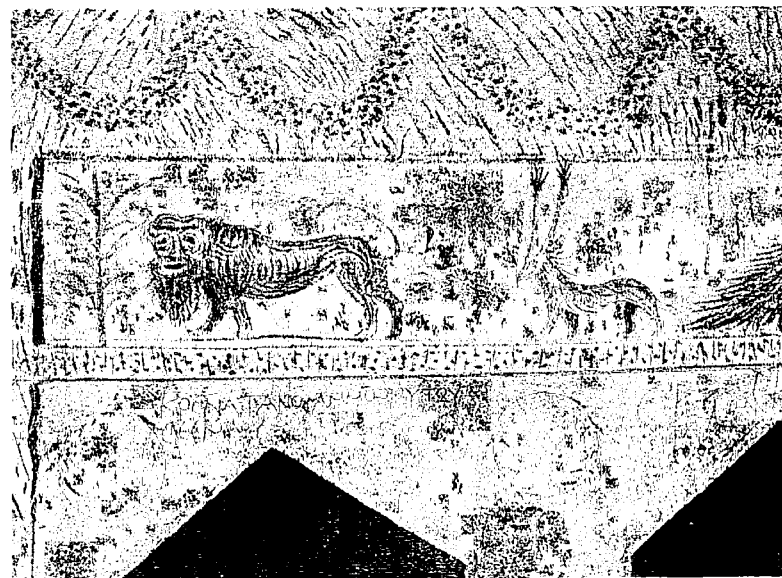
16. The Nile Mosaic, section 9 (photo P. Jongste; see pp. 26, 29).



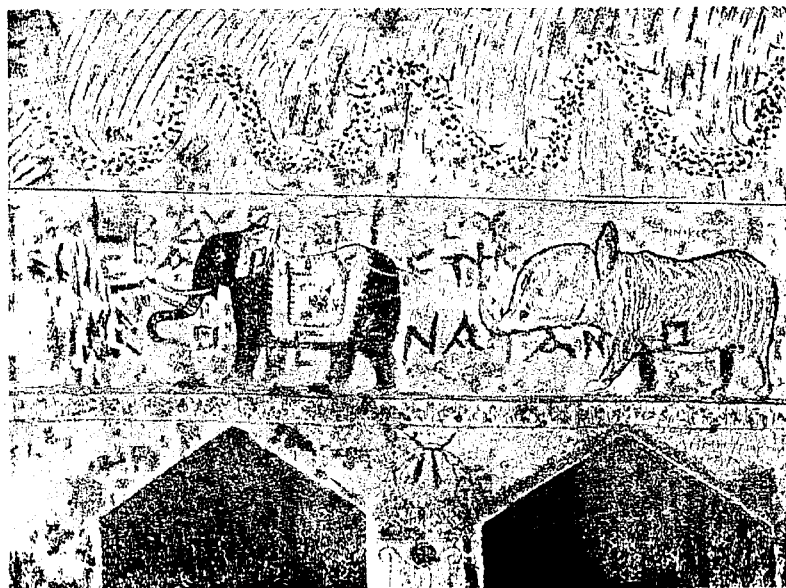
17. The Nile Mosaic, section 10 (photo P. Jongste; see pp. 27, 80).



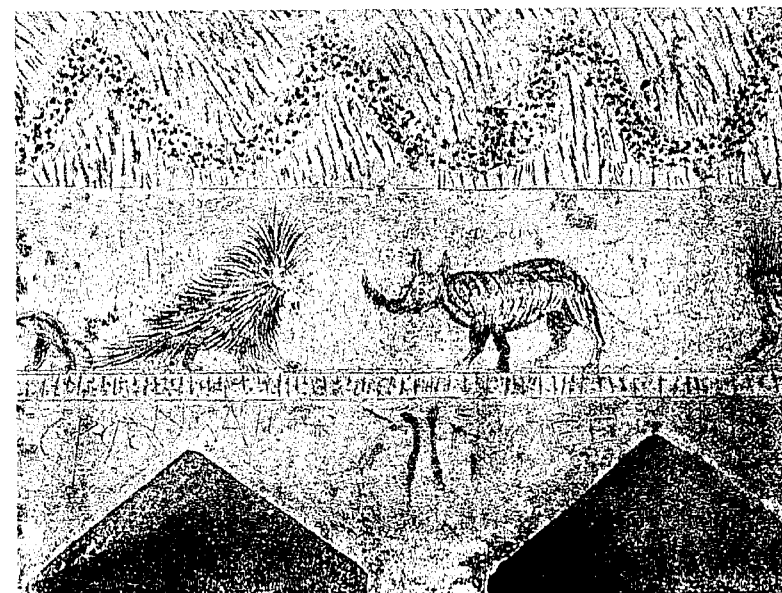
60. Section of the Marissa frieze (after Peters, Thiersch, pl. IX; see Ch. IV, nn. 12-13).



62. Section of the Marissa frieze (after Peters, Thiersch, pl. XV; see Ch. IV, nn. 18-20).



61. Section of the Marissa frieze (after Peters, Thiersch, pl. X; see Ch. IV, nn. 14-17).



63. Section of the Marissa frieze (after Peters, Thiersch, pl. XIV; see Ch. IV, nn. 21-22).