

## Elasmosaurus? No, you goose ...

Carl Wieland

There are several excellent examples of ancient art and/or artefacts that unmistakably depict dinosaurs. In the evolutionary timeline, such creatures are supposed to have died out tens of millions of years before any human walked on Earth.<sup>1</sup>

Since such artwork dates back from a period well before there were any books illustrating dinosaurs from reconstructed fossils, it strongly suggests human encounter with living examples of these reptiles.

Past co-existence of dinosaurs with humans is a straightforward deduction from biblical creation. Thus, when



**Figure 1.** Top, general view of sarcophagus: British Museum EA 32—Princess Ankhneseferibre from Thebes, dated to the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Bottom, close up of the hieroglyph in question.

such examples are convincing, they serve as a useful reinforcement of (and evidence for) the truth of Genesis history.

Unfortunately, there is also a tendency for some overenthusiastic creationists to ‘see’ dinosaur images almost everywhere in ancient works, well beyond what the evidence warrants. One driver in this is the human tendency to see hoped-for patterns in randomness—e.g. the ‘face of Jesus’ or other ‘deities’ in clouds at sunset, or in the random dots on a cork flooring tile; even the image of the Virgin Mary on a piece of cheese toast—sold on Ebay for thousands of dollars.<sup>2</sup>


At other times, a drawing or figurine may give tantalizing hints of a dinosaurian creature, such that the verdict has to be that it is at least ‘possible’... but given the philosophical and spiritual importance of the whole creation/evolution debate, that should never be sufficient. It would seem far better to err a thousand times on the side of caution than to bring any aspect of biblical apologetics into disrepute. The good examples referred to are already powerful enough to silence any fair-minded critic.

But it is particularly inexcusable when someone makes a claim about an object without even basic checks on the item in question. An example of this was recently doing the rounds of the internet, based on a YouTube video that referred to an item in the British museum.<sup>3</sup> It is a series of Egyptian hieroglyphic symbols with one that looks like an *Elasmosaurus* (figure 1).

On receiving this, we asked creationist Egyptology expert Patrick Clarke to comment. He wrote:



**Figure 2.** The well-known stele from Meir Tomb III of the ‘goose-roasting’ scene

“The sign is known to Egyptologists by the Gardiner designation G54 ; it is pronounced *snḏw*. It is a trussed goose. The word goose is, in any case, written as *srw*, so there should be no confusion about context. There are only two contextual usages known:

1. as a determinative for goose (surprise, surprise)
2. where fear is involved.



“In this inscription, it is the fear context which applies, due to the sarcophagus and its association with death and its unknowns. *Snḏw* can act as a noun (fear), or as a verb (to be afraid of). Regarding this sarcophagus, which I know well, *snḏw* acts as a noun—thus the vertical text portion shown in the video reads, ‘he fears that which is in the Amy [duat—i.e. the underworld].’

“This is a normal funerary text for the period concerned. The use of this symbol for ‘fear’ makes intuitive good sense. The goose has reached a destiny to be feared; even in English we use the expression that someone’s ‘goose is cooked’ to mean that an unwelcome end, i.e. one to be feared, has come to them.”

Clarke also supplied a line drawing of an inscription on a stele from Meir Tomb III (figure 2).<sup>5</sup>

Commenting on this drawing, Clarke wrote:

“Translated the scene reads: ‘I have been roasting since the beginning of time—I have never seen the like of this goose.’

“The three vertically placed hieroglyphs (read top to bottom) in front of the man’s head and raised hand are the one form of the Egyptian for ‘goose’, i.e.  *srw* (see the three top to bottom). The other is .”

Note the similarity of the goose being roasted to the hieroglyph in question, including the alleged ‘flippers’; the head and neck are missing for obvious culinary reasons. And when the hieroglyph is viewed close up, the head looks more like that of a waterbird than anything else.

### References

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6. As illustrated in Collier and Manley, ref. 5 p. 6.

## Woolly and Columbian mammoths likely the same species

Michael J. Oard

The Bible says in Genesis 1 that animals and plants reproduce after their own kind. A Genesis kind is in most cases not the same as the subjective man-made category of *species*. A species is generally defined as an interbreeding unit that is reproductively isolated from other species, or in other words it does not or cannot interbreed with members outside its species.

Determining the boundaries of the Genesis kind is the subject of the creationist research initiative called baraminology.<sup>1,2</sup> It appears that many Genesis kinds are at about the family level in the Linnaean taxonomy.<sup>3</sup> One of the primary markers of a kind is the ability of different species to reproduce and have fertile offspring, such as the wolf and the domestic dog. So by this definition of ‘species’, the species that produce ‘hybrids’ should really be one species. On the other hand, the inability for two species or genera to interbreed does not necessarily make them separate kinds, since the reproductive system has been affected by the Curse in Genesis 3. Some animals do not normally interbreed because of behavioural characteristics but can have fertile offspring, and so would be in the same Genesis kind.

### The application of the kind to the number of animals on the Ark

Determining the average level of the kind has practical applications. One is determining the number of animals needed on the Ark, which critics claim are way too many for the size of the Ark. But if the average

kind is at the family level, there were probably no more than 2,000 animals on the Ark.<sup>4</sup> Woodmorappe was more conservative and assumed the average kind was at the genus level, and therefore 16,000 animals were required on the Ark. Both estimates show that there was plenty of room on the Ark for all the air-breathing terrestrial animals.<sup>5</sup> Critics should run their own calculations before speaking about the lack of room on the Ark or making any challenge to creationists for that matter.

### Woolly and Columbian mammoths interbred

Although there is a proliferation of names, mammoths have generally been classified into two genera within the order Proboscidea, which supposedly did not or could not interbreed.<sup>6</sup> One is the woolly mammoth, *Mammuthus primigenius*, which generally inhabited the high latitudes and continental interiors at mid-latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere. The second is the Columbian mammoth, *Mammuthus columbi*, which generally is found at mid-latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere but further south than the woolly mammoth. However, there is overlap in the ranges of these two mammoths.

The classification scheme is generally based on differences in their size, the height and shape of the teeth, number of ridges on the crown, and enamel thickness. Woolly mammoths are about 3 m tall at the shoulder while Columbian mammoths are very tall at about 4 m and are estimated to weight 9,000 kg (figure 1). The Columbian mammoth is thought to have evolved in North America while the woolly mammoth is believed to have entered North America from Siberia.

But these two ‘species’ are not distinct. There is a continuum between the two types of mammoths, making the designation of separate species suspect. Mammoth expert Gary Haynes states: