

Comparison and Contrasting of The Bull Leaping fresco of Crete with the Egyptian fresco of Nebamun, the Fowling Scene.

The Bull-leaping (Toreador Fresco) and The Fowling Scene frescoes have in common many of the same characteristics. Both of them show extraordinary efforts to present movement and also have stylized human figures and are highly animated. They both suggest elasticity and moving beings. These frescoes depict many aspects of the life of the subjects and their respective Minoan and Egyptian societies and of nature.

The scene showing the official Nebamun hunting birds in the marshes accompanied by his wife and child. Originally this scene was balanced by a similar one showing Nebamun spearing fish, and part of the spear can still be seen at the left-hand corner of the fragment, cutting across the bottom of the papyrus clump to impale a tilapia fish (World Book).

One of the main differences between these two frescoes is the method of construction. The Minoans used a wet or true fresco method, which required rapid execution and skill in achieving quick, almost impressionistic effect, whereas the Egyptian used the fresco secco method (Gardner's Pp. 104–105).

Nebamun as the most important person, is the largest figure and occupies the center of the scene. His wife, drawn on a smaller scale, is placed behind him in the space beneath his upraised arm. The still smaller child occupies the area between Nebamun's spread legs that would otherwise be left empty. The large almond eyes set a slight slant; the full lips and fleshy lower part of the face are typical of the reign of Amehotep III (The British Museum).

Fowling scenes like this one go back to the Old Kingdom and were repeated in many tombs' chapels with endless variation. The genius of Nebamun's artist or artists lies in the fresh perception and depiction of the elements that are essential to this type of scene

The Bull Leaping fresco presents us with the scene of a young man jumping over the full length of a bull. He somersaults the bull in a dangerous and difficult acrobatic maneuver. The force of the charge of the bull is suggested by the elongation of the bull's facial features and by the position of the head, in addition to the galloping movements of the rear legs (www.greatbuildings.com).

As a whole the scene is drawn abstractly according to the principles of Egyptian two-dimensional art, and it is not intended to be naturalistic. No cat could balance on two papyrus stems, holding a bird in its mouth, one in its front paws and another in its back paws, all at the same time; nevertheless, this detail is remarkably effective structurally (The British Museum).

Although the elements of the scene are put together in a non realistic manner, individually the wild birds, the goose on the prow of the boat, the cat and butterflies have all been carefully observed and drawn with their natural colorings and markings, so that each animal can be recognized. The same effect is noticed in the Bull Leaping fresco. The male and female figure is noted with a different color and the bull is painted in his natural colors.

The painters of these scenes were, in addition, masters of texture, richly evoking the downy softness of the goose's neck and breast feathers or the short, soft fur of the cat, in contrast to the harder, unyielding scales of the fish.

The elegance of the human figure was a familiar convention in Egypt and Mesopotamia, however the distinctive human warmth of the Cretan figures distinguishes them from all other early figure styles. The rigid and stiffness of the figures seen in Egyptian wall paintings is modified in the curving Minoan style that

insinuate the elasticity of the living and moving being.