

## ANCIENT EGYPT TRADED WITH AUSTRALIA

In the mid-1980's I was talking with a Coptic Egyptian workmate, Nashat, and commented that the Egyptians had boomerangs, because there were drawings of them in the Pyramids. Nashat laughed and said the drawings simply told the story about where the boomerangs had come from. This was part of the Egyptian history he had been taught at school.

He then explained that the Phoenicians, a Semitic people around present day Lebanon, were a nation of maritime traders. They operated from ports in both the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. By 1500 BC they had established world-wide trade which included South America and Australia.

Egypt's ruler at that time was the female Pharaoh Hatshepsut, and more antiseptics like myrrh were needed for embalming mummies. Myrrh, often mentioned in the bible, was a type eucalyptus and the Phoenicians knew where there was plenty. All you had to do was head south from the Phoenician Red Sea port, head east to Sri-Lanka, then head southeast. Go past Java and you will end up at 'Big Java'.

This of course did not fit well with the history I had learned at school. Nashat was in effect saying the Phoenicians had circumnavigated the globe 3000 years before Magellan in 1522 and that Australia was not 'Terra Incognita'. So I started reading up on Phoenicia.

The Phoenicians were an amazing people who revolutionised the world with three inventions.

**First was the keeled hull on ships.** This meant that instead of sailing along coastlines in flat-bottomed boats, they could safely head off across open oceans and get places much faster.

**Second was the alphabet.** This meant that with symbols representing sounds, written communication became much more efficient. So this greatly enhanced both record keeping and business efficiency.

**Third was concrete.** The Phoenicians vastly improved the early Egyptian cements to make modern concrete, but when the Romans later conquered the Phoenician city of Carthage they pretended to have invented it.

This was one of the reasons Phoenicia slipped out of history. Rather than building a military empire and conquering others, they built a trading empire. It ended up lasting more than a thousand years from before 1500BC to after 500BC. However whilst I now admired Phoenician achievement, there was no evidence to support Nashat's claim of their trade with Australia.

That is, not until I heard a Boyer Lecture on the radio in 1986 by Eric Wilmot. Eric explained that a revolution had occurred in Aboriginal spear technology about 1500BC. Bi-facial spear technology, the same as used in Egypt at that time had been adopted across Australia in a

very short time, but the reason for the change was not known. I then began yelling at the radio that I knew why.

A few years later I was talking about this with a Sri-Lankan workmate Selva, who was most unsurprised. He said that the Dravidians were themselves great mariners and had worked with and for the Phoenicians more than 3000 years ago. These Dravidian merchants and sailors also often manned the far-flung Phoenician trading posts, which included Australia and South America. Selva had been taught this history at school.

The Dravidians had even solved one of the Phoenicians' greatest problems, which was that they always ran out of fresh meat on their long ocean voyages. Selva said that the Dravidians told the Phoenicians that the Indian Plains Wolf was easily domesticated and readily ate fish. So when you ran out of meat all you had to do was slaughter a wolf.

I immediately researched the Australian Dingo and sure enough, the Dingo is descended from the Indian Plains Wolf. On top of this, radio-carbon dating has revealed that the Dingo was introduced into Australia about 3,500 years ago. It seems that when the Phoenicians asked permission from Aboriginal people to harvest eucalyptus, agreement was reached with the exchange of some Egyptian spears and some dogs.

More support for the idea of ancient Phoenician world trade then suddenly came in 1992. A German scientist, Svetlana Balabanova, discovered traces of cocaine and tobacco in the bandages of a 3000 year old mummy. She was ridiculed, because cocaine and tobacco could have only come from South America, which of course wasn't discovered until the voyage of Columbus in 1492. But Balabanova's methodology and analysis proved unimpeachable and it vindicated what Nashat had told me nearly forty years ago.

Then in 2013 some DNA research emerged that vindicated what Selva had told me. It showed that some Northern Territory Aboriginals had Indian ancestry going back 141 generations. So I did my own maths. If you take a generation as 25 years, then 141 times 25 is 3,525 years ago, which is bang on 1,500BC.

So while the preceding anecdotal ramble would go nowhere near passing muster as a scholarly analysis, it nonetheless does make sense of a number of quite disparate facts.