

Eski Mısırda Sopalı Dövüş veya Sopalı Eskrim Faaliyetleri ve Günümüze Yansımaları

Gülşah SEKBAN^a Osman İMAMOĞLU^b Hakan AKDENİZ^c Burhan BAŞOĞLU^d

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Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı eski Mısır'da sopalı dövüş veya sopalı eskrim benzeri faaliyetlerin günümüz sporlarına yansımalarının araştırılması amaçlanmıştır. Çalışmada eski Mısır'daki sopalı dövüş ve eskrim faaliyetlerini ve bu faaliyetlerin günümüz sporlarına yansımalarını araştırmak amacıyla kapsamlı bir literatür taraması yapılmıştır. Literatür taraması, MÖ 3000'den itibaren eski Mısır dönemine ait tarihsel belgeler, mezar resimleri, hiyeroglifler ve arkeolojik bulgular üzerine odaklanmıştır. Eski Mısır'da, sopalı dövüşler güreş sporu ile birlikte oldukça yaygın bir faaliyet olduğu görülmektedir. Antik Mısır'da sopalı dövüş, iki oyuncu arasındaki rekabetin olduğunu gösterirdi. Çubuk/Sopalı eskrim gösteri amaçlı dövüşler çok popüler bir cazibe merkezi olsa da bazen rakiple mücadele olarak görülmez, daha çok bir dans performans özelliğine sahip olduğu görülmektedir. Çubukları veya sopalı kullananların oyunlar esnasında maskeler taktığı söylenir. Eskrimciler, dövüşten önce seyircilere doğru eğilmek zorunda idiler. Daha sonra sopalı dövüşün çapraz konumda tutarları. Sopalı dövüşte bir puanlama sisteminin olduğu düşünülmektedir. Eski Mısırlılar dışında Eski Nubyalılar da sopalı dövüşü yaptıkları görülmektedirler. Eski Mısır'da sopalı dövüş veya çubuklarla akrobatik hareketler dans faaliyetleri gibi gösteri amaçlı olsa da savaş eğitiminin yanında günümüz eskrim sporunun orijinali de olabilir. Sopalı dövüş yapılan estetik hareket ve manevralar ile sporcuların maske takması günümüz eskrimine benzemektedir. Antik Mısır'da sopalı dövüşçüler sopalı eskrimciler olarak görülebilir. Afrika kültüründe ve Orta Doğu kültüründe sopalı dövüşü hala daha yaygındır ve geleneklere yansımıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Antik Mısır, Eskrim, Sopa Dövüşü, Spor

Stick Fighting and Stick Fencing in Ancient Egypt and Their Impact On the Present Day

Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of stick fighting or stick fencing-like activities in ancient Egypt on modern sport. In the study, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to investigate stick fighting and fencing activities in ancient Egypt and their impact on contemporary sport. The literature review focused on historical documents, tomb paintings, hieroglyphs and archaeological findings from the ancient Egyptian period from 3000 B.C. In ancient Egypt, stick fighting was a widely practised sport alongside wrestling. In ancient Egypt, stick fighting was a rivalry between two players. Although stick fencing is a very popular attraction for exhibition fights, it is sometimes not seen as a fight against an opponent, but rather as a

^a Doçent, Sinop Üniversitesi, Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi, gsekban@sinop.edu.tr ORCID:0000-0003-1403-5696 (Sorumlu Yazar)

^b Profesör, Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi, Yaşar Doğu Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi, osmani@omu.edu.tr ve ORCID:0000-0001-6671-6042;

^c Doçent, Kocaeli Üniversitesi, Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi, hakanakdeniz@gmail.com ORCID:0000-0001-8171-1821

^d Doçent, Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, Faculty of Sports Sciences, burhanbasoglu@nevsehir.edu.tr ORCID:0000-0001-9536-965X

dance performance. It is said that the stick or club wielders wore masks during the matches. The fencers had to bow to the audience before the fight. They then held their sticks in a crossed position. It is assumed that there was a scoring system for fighting with sticks. Although in ancient Egypt fighting with sticks or acrobatic movements with sticks were used for demonstration purposes such as dance events, this could have been the origin of modern fencing and combat training. The aesthetic movements and manoeuvres with sticks and the wearing of masks by the athletes are similar to today's fencing. In ancient Egypt, stick fighters can be seen as stick fencers. In African and Middle Eastern cultures, stick fencing is still widespread and is reflected in the traditions.

Key Words: Ancient Egypt, Fencing, Sport, Stick Fighting

Introduction

The temples built for the kings, the monumental tombs and the paintings, sculptures and hieroglyphs in these tombs occupy an important place in the foundation of art in Egypt from 3000 BC. Since the ancient Egyptians assumed that life after death would follow the general way of life on earth, they buried food, clothing, sailing boats, weapons of war, sports and play equipment for entertainment in their tombs. New sporting traditions were interwoven with the Egyptian civilization that began to emerge around 3100 BC. Over thousands of years, these traditions developed along with the civilization. In Egyptian civilization, sport traditions remained as part of the cultural integrity (Hamed, 2015). Due to the longevity of ancient Egyptian civilization, martial arts have developed for thousands of years, especially in Egypt. Among the most commonly practiced sports in Egypt, wrestling, stick fighting and to a lesser extent boxing were the most popular. The most famous stick fighting sport in Egypt consisted of hitting certain parts of the opponent with wooden sticks (Brian, 1998; Çetin & İmamoğlu, 2021). In ancient Egypt, kings, princes and statesmen enjoyed taking part in sporting competitions. Martial arts in ancient Egyptian civilization took four different forms, the best known of which were ancient Egyptian wrestling, stick fighting, boxing and jousting in water. Stick fighting, which was closely related to wrestling, was very popular in ancient Egypt (Joshua, 2017). There are fewer depictions of stick fighting. The period in which depictions of stick fighting occur is very short. The earliest evidence is found in tombs from the second half of the 18th Dynasty (ca. 1550 BC to 1292 BC). The most recent are depictions of "necropolis craftsmen" from Deir el-Medineh, which can be dated to the last part of Ramses' reign. In Ancient Egypt, necropolis meant a settlement built around a cemetery, a burial site. There were various forms of combat training to choose from in Ancient Egypt. Engravings from the Abusir burial sites. They show that everyone, from the unarmed to the armed, resorted to these fighting methods. Stick fighting was practiced in different ways in antiquity (Joshua, 2017).

Some of the preferred sports in ancient Egypt were stick fighting, wrestling and boxing (Koca et al., 2018). Hand and stick fighting and throwing sticks were also common in the 1st and 2nd Dynasties from 2800 BC (Koca & İmamoğlu, 2018). Groups of elegantly dressed spectators watching wrestling and stick fighting have also been found in Twentieth Dynasty reliefs (Mandell, 1984; İmamoğlu, 2023). Ancient Egyptians were very successful at stick fighting. Both in modern times and in antiquity, stick fighting was a martial art. Stick fighting has at least some aspects of martial arts and ceremonial. The ancient Egyptians practiced stick fighting as a gift to the pharaoh. Stick fighting was also practiced between the Ancient Egyptians and the Ancient Nubians. Stick fighting was widespread

in African and Middle Eastern culture and was practiced in different forms and with different systems of rules in the region. A common element is the use of the game to teach skills such as speed, strength and courage, which are important for a warrior, as well as the importance of the sport in religious festivals (Riddle, 2007; Çetin & İmamoğlu, 2021b; Bıyık & Yazıcı, 2023).

Reliefs, friezes, various tools and other archaeological documents from Egyptian temples and tombs (especially from the tombs of kings) as well as texts written in Egyptian script in other archaeological documents provide us with this information about Egyptian civilization at that time. In addition to wrestling, boxing and stick fighting were also practised in Egypt. Numerous wrestling figurines found in the tombs of Beni Hasan dating back to 2000 BC have survived to this day. The Ancient Egyptians also practised sports to prepare soldiers for war. Egyptian sources document the existence of three types of martial sports - wrestling, stick fighting and boxing - and there are depictions of battles involving stick fighting, particularly in the period from around 1550 BC to 1070 BC, the time of the New Kingdom. The Pyramid Texts do not refer to battles with swords, but with sticks and even plant stems. Fighting with sticks was very common in ancient Egypt. The earliest reference to fencing-like activities in the pyramid texts and rituals of the Middle Kingdom does not refer to swords, but to activities with fighting sticks, clubs and even plant stalks. During the New Kingdom, stick fighting became quite popular. During the New Kingdom, stick fighting (now fencing) seems to have been quite common (Hamed, 2015; Shinken, 2016; İmamoğlu et al., 2018; İmamoğlu & Koca, 2018). The study of stick fighting (fencing) in ancient Egypt, as depicted in some sources, shows that this art was not a living tradition and had real limitations with hieroglyphics. The number of hieroglyphs depicting stick fighting as a sport is very limited and represents only a small part of the sport of stick fighting, but even with this limited material, information could be gained by looking at some of the details of the drawings. One conclusion that can be drawn about the Egyptian martial arts is that the drawings, even in their limited size, can give a good idea of the structure as well as the positions used in the martial art. From this information, rules and techniques for the use of the stick during the performance can be reconstructed (Riddle, 2007).

Although ancient Egyptian stick fighting has been discussed by authors in sport historical studies, there have been no studies on the impact of the fighting on contemporary sport. The aim of this study is to examine stick fighting or stick fencing in ancient Egypt and its impact on contemporary sport.

Method

Research Model

Our study is a research paper entitled "Truncheon fights or truncheon fencing activities in Ancient Egypt and their reflections up to the present". The study examines a historical phenomenon, makes comparisons with the existing literature and investigates the reflections of this phenomenon up to the present day. In particular, it examines how stick fighting or fencing activities in Ancient Egypt are reflected in today's sports.

Literature Review

In this study, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to investigate stick fighting and fencing activities in ancient Egypt and their impact on contemporary sport. The literature review focused on historical documents, tomb paintings, hieroglyphics and archaeological finds from the Ancient Egyptian period from 3000 B.C. In addition, modern academic studies examining the impact and similarities of these activities on contemporary sports were also included in the investigation.

Criteria for Selection of Sources

Documents and finds from the period on which research focuses (3000 BC - 1070 BC).

Archaeological finds and visual material providing information on the sports and martial arts of the ancient Egyptian civilization.

Articles and books published in internationally recognised academic journals. Archaeological excavation reports and documents from museum collections.

Works by historians, archaeologists and sports scientists who are experts in their field.

Studies that deal directly with stick fighting and fencing activities in ancient Egypt.

Studies that examine the social, cultural and religious dimensions of ancient Egyptian sport.

Documents detailing the techniques of stick fighting, the equipment used and the educational aims of this sport.

Studies that examine the similarities between stick fighting in ancient Egypt and modern sports.

Academic studies of the origins and historical development of modern fencing.

Analyses of how stick fighting techniques and aesthetic movements are reflected in contemporary sports.

Criteria for Selection of Sources

Tomb paintings, hieroglyphs and engravings from ancient Egypt.

Articles and books on the sports culture of ancient Egypt published in international journals.

Modern academic studies on the similarities between modern sports and ancient Egyptian martial arts.

Reports on findings from archaeological excavations and museum records.

Literature Review Results

Stick fighting are already mentioned in pyramid texts from the Old Kingdom (around 2300 BC). However, the oldest evidence of stick fighting in ancient Egypt is the tomb of the "New King" in El Amarna, which is dated to around 1450 BC. The paintings on the walls show a contest with pre-Pharaonic warriors using papyrus stalks as weapons. This depiction is very simple. However, the information reviewed shows that fighting with sticks soon became popular and developed rapidly (Brian, 1998). Among the various types of single combat in ancient Egypt during the New Kingdom period, fighting with sticks attained greater importance, and the ancient Egyptian stick fighting based on the drawings show that the competition was between two players. In the usual system of fighting with sticks, each opponent was armed with a single stick in one hand and attacked the other with a

stick in the forearm or a wooden board. Some systems also used two sticks in each hand or two sticks in one hand. The usual materials were wood or reed. The wooden stick used was probably made of a soft wood and the sticks were either coated with paint or wrapped with adhesive tape to protect the athlete from damage in case the wooden stick could injure the athlete in a fight. The wrapping may also have been used to stuff the stick. As the head was protected along with the chin by a helmet with straps, the fight was probably aimed at avoiding death or injury and was probably a contest of skill; stick fighting was about landing a blow on the opponent's target area, with the area well protected from attack. As the head was protected and not the rest of the body, the target area could be the body and the contest a test of how much pain you could take. Injuries did occur during fights with sticks. The head was protected in case a wrong blow did not kill the athlete. No protection was worn on the face. Therefore, sensations in the face were possible, leading to openings in other parts of the body (Riddle, 2007). This simple fighting method has developed into a sporting discipline with modern rules and is a good example of an indigenous sporting tradition. The oldest evidence of fencing comes from Egyptian carvings. This evidence can be found in the temple of Madinet-Habu in Upper Egypt. The temple of Madinet-Habu was built around 1190 BC by King Ramses III. The carving here gives the impression of a fencing match between two people with sticks. The sticks used are well coated. It is also said that the stick bearers wore masks. You can see how similar this is to today's fencers. There is also a referee holding feathered sticks while being held on a piece of papyrus and even a place where spectators are said to have sat (Çetin, 2015; İmamoğlu & Koca, 2018). Although wrestling has also been found in other early civilizations - albeit not with similar intensity - stick fencing has only been confirmed for Egypt. Also in contrast to wrestling, there are relatively few depictions of stick fencing. Furthermore, the period in which depictions of stick fencing occur is very short: the earliest evidence is found in tombs from the second half of the 18th Dynasty (ca. 1550 BC to 1292 BC). The most recent are depictions of "necropolis craftsmen" from Deir el-Medineh, which can be dated to the last part of the reign of Ramses (Shinken, 2016). In ancient Egypt, stick fencing was a sport that ultimately arose in connection with the ideology of kingship. It is assumed that there are no figures of kings fencing with other kings in Egyptian art. It is a special type of duel for which there is only pictorial evidence from the time of the New Kingdom and which, it is assumed, was previously unknown in Egypt and only came later with other foreign customs and traditions. This game was found in the temple of King Ramses II and in the temple of King Ramses III in Medinet Habu. Here a figure shows the ceremony before the duel. In this example, the fighters (fencers) are bowing with sticks in front of high-ranking officials and spectators (Hamed, 2015). In the image depicting the scene of the celebration of the third Sed festival of Amenhotep III, various sports figures can be seen. The Sed festival, in which the pharaoh walks around revolving poles or beacons, has had an important place in art and architecture since the third millennium (Kyle, 2014). Fencing figures with sticks can also be seen among these figures. In the temple of Medinet Habu, there is a window indicating that King Ramses III was in his palace observing the ceremonies and symmetrically arranged scenes with the king's prisoners (Figures 1 and 2). The sporting scenes are in the center of the south wall of the first courtyard, under the window from the inside; three pairs of fencers and seven pairs of wrestlers. These ten pairs of fighters compete in wrestling and fencing matches in front of Egyptian (including royal children) and foreign spectators. The unusual thing is that each pair consists of one Egyptian and one foreigner (from the Middle East, Libya or Nubia), and all the foreigners seem to lose (Decker, 2017: 1-19). In the temple of Medinet Habu, sports scenes were drawn between the columns in the center of the wall in the southern part of the inner south wall,

which is referred to as the king's "viewing window". It is believed that the king sat at this window while presiding over the ceremonies in the palace (Figure 3).

Figure 1. Sports scenes, 20th Dynasty, 1100 BC, Medinet Habu temple/tomb (El Shereef, 2020)

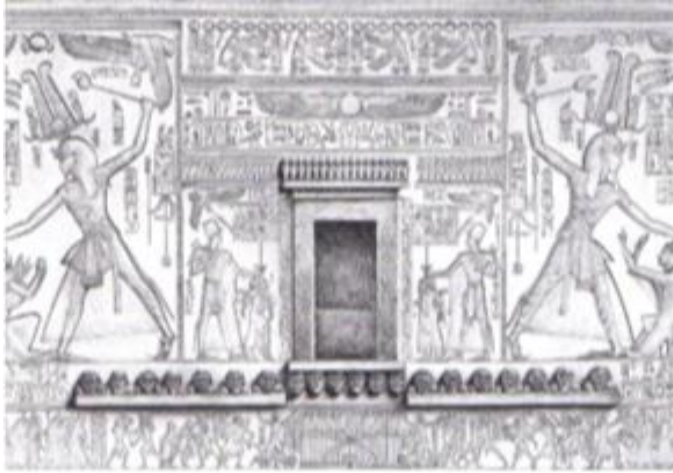


Figure 2. Medinet Habu temple/temple sports scene teda (Kornexl, 2011)



Figure 3. Window view, Habu Temple (Kyle, 2014)



In ancient Egypt, fighting or training with sticks could be associated with the ideology of the kingdom. These stick-fighting athletes were required to be strong people. There is a particular type of dueling that first appeared in the New Kingdom, but later reached other civilizations. Depictions of this type of dueling have been found in the mortuary temples of Ramses II and Ramses III. One scene shows the ceremony before the duel. It is assumed that the fencers are bowing to the audience, just as the oil wrestlers do (Figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4. Fencing with Sticks on Stone in Ancient Egypt (Fighting with Sticks) (Shinken, 2016)



Figure 5. Fencing with a Stick on a Dish Fragment (Shinken, 2016)

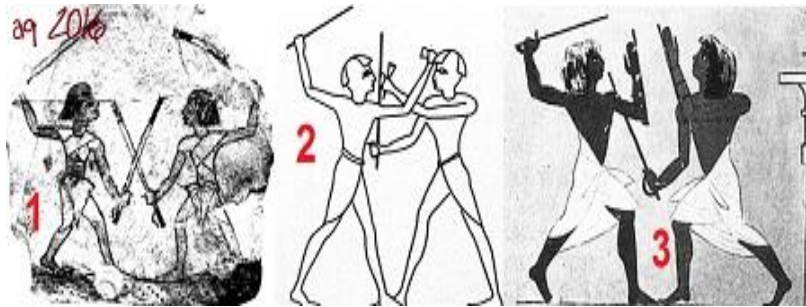


The hook-shaped structure of the handles on the ancient Egyptian sticks is very carefully constructed and the detailed drawings show that quite extensive equipment was used to make the matches. Fighting with these sticks can be described as stick fencing or stick fencing. The stick fencer's most important instrument was a striking or fencing stick about an arm's length long. Figure 6 shows the figures in the center as fencers with sticks. Judging by the observations of the hieroglyphs, the target area was most likely the head. Both the sticks and the protected arm were held in a high guard position. It is similar to the guard stance used in earlier versions of the single stick. The protected area is the head. The high guard was a common position for retreating fighters (Riddle, 2007).

Figure 6. Wrestling, Fencing with Sticks and Boxing Figures, Meryre II tomb, Tell -el Amarna, 18th Dynasty (Shinken, 2016)



Figure 7. Different Fencing Scenes (Shinken, 2016)



Sticks were used as combat weapons by Egyptian soldiers during the New Kingdom. Although these sticks are no longer considered fencing today, they were indeed used as combat weapons. Examples of such sticks were found in the tomb of Tutankhamun (Akkurt, 2020). The length of the fencing sticks with clubs found in Tutankhamun's tomb is around 100 cm, confirming the impression of the pictorial representations (Figure 7). Figure 7 shows two fencing soldiers on the left in an ostracon (on the front of the vessel), (figures marked 1), in the middle (figures marked 2), each holding a long stick. The figures on the right (marked 3) appear as swordsmen in the cult statue of King Tuthmosis III in front of a temple. Various examples of clubs were found in Tutankhamun's tomb. In the Battle of Kadesh, sticks were used by archers as a secondary weapon in addition to arrows (Förster, 2005; Hamed, 2015).

Fencing with sticks or canes was a popular attraction at exhibition fights. Sometimes it had more the character of a dance performance than a fight against an opponent. Before the fight, the stick fighters (fencers) had to bow to the audience. They then held their sticks in a crossed position, which may have been the starting position of the fight. A common theme in the hieroglyphs is the crossing of the sticks by the fighters. In the starting position of the fight, they stand at a certain distance between the two opponents and the common situation between them is to defend themselves through fair play (Riddle, 2007). After this traditional situation, the fight would begin. Everything can be thought of as rapidly changing scenes, similar to modern sword fencing (sport in Ancient Egypt. n.d.). The fight usually took place between two opponents who carried a stick (fencing club) in one hand as an offensive weapon and used the armored forearm in the other hand as a shield for defense (Figure 8). Obviously there were also other variants. For example, the sticks used as weapons consisted of two sticks that were used simultaneously with the right and left hand. In this case, it takes the form of a protective reinforcement on the forearm. Another variant shows a fighter with a stick in one hand while the other hand protects his forearm. His opponent used two sticks at the same time and, interestingly, this athlete also used both arms for defense, depending on the situation. The group of men depicted in the first indirect view of the fencer with a stick in the tomb of Tjanuni reveals the close connection to wrestling, as they not only carry a flag with the image of a wrestler on it, but also hold fencing sticks in their hands, thus drawing attention to the pair. In the artistically developed tomb of Kheruef, in the station of the erection of the DD column, there are depictions of fencing with sticks, which appeared in connection with the celebration of the anniversary of Amenhotep III. They did not use simple sticks as weapons, but heavy papyrus tree/plant stalks resembling clubs. Just like the Nubian apparition, i.e. the non-Egyptian athletes,

papyrus stalks are also said to have been used in the celebration of Amenhotep III (Figure 9). It is assumed that in the second half of the 18th Dynasty, i.e. at the beginning of the tradition of illustrated stick fencing, several fencing arts were practiced in Egypt, each with its own origin and unique characteristics. A clear indication of the complexity of stick fencing culture in Egyptian antiquity is provided by a resting place from a destroyed building of the Amarna period (14th-13th century BC). In addition to the aforementioned tongs, these not only differed significantly from the typical Egyptian fencing implements, but also had a decidedly different set of rules and required different fighting strategies (Decker & Michael, 1994; Bıyık & İmamoğlu, 2022).

Figure 8. Examples of stick fencing under Ramses III's "Window of Appearance" (or the place where Fravian fired a picture and took aim) (Shinken, 2016)



Figure 9. First indirect view of fencing with a stick in the Tjanuni tomb at Theben-West (Shinken, 2016)



The weapon consists of a single piece of wood. It is flat and the tip may be reinforced with a metal link (the upper end is sometimes reinforced with a metal brace). Some sticks have a protruding claw/hook to protect the fingers (Figure 10). Above the fingertips is a shield-like wooden board glued to the forearm to protect against painful blows. The club-wielding fighter was also protected by a

band, which was probably made of leather and covered the face, chin and forehead. The fighters usually wielded the club as a weapon in both hands. Most stick fighters (fencers) wore a soldier's suit. This also indicates that stick fencing supported military training (Wolf, 1987; Förster, 2005)

Figure 10. Fencing stick as part of royal grave goods (the circled part is thought to be for protection) (Shinken, 2016)

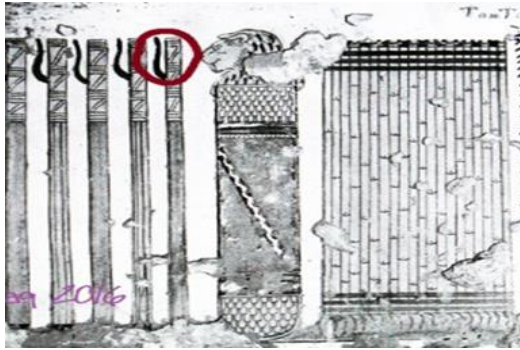


Figure 11. Magnified image of hand guard, examples of stick fencing under the "Window of Appearance" of Ramses III (Shinken, 2016)



Stick Fencing at the Temple of Ramses

On the inside of the first column is a small scene showing two Hittite spies being beaten in the camps during the Battle of Kadesh. The fighting with a stick here show less effort and enthusiasm than the wrestling scenes. The figures in the paintings appear more formal and balanced (Figure 12). In this painting, one of the fighting athletes is holding the other by the hair. However, if you look at the other's hand, it gives the impression of a shorter, out-of-round and wider stick, so it is more logical to say that the hand that is supposed to be holding the hair also has a short stick. This could mean that the fight was fought with a long stick in one hand and a short stick in the other. This short stick was probably held in front of the long stick and used for protection. This shows that there were different types of stick fighting with long and short sticks (Figure 13).

Figure 12. Pir part of the camp, Kadesh battle scene, first column, tomb of Ramses (Piccione, 1999; Riddle, 2007)

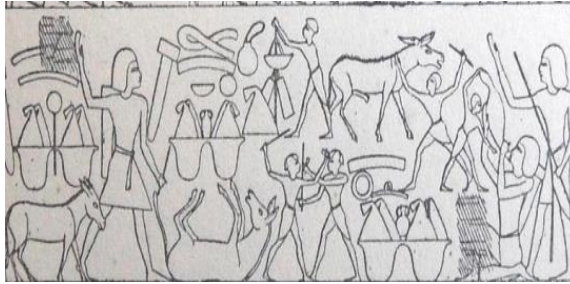


Figure 13. Stick fighting teda in Kadesh battle scenes (Riddle, 2007)



The reliefs in the Kheruef tomb depict Tiye, Amenotep III and Akhenaten (called Amenhotep) (TT192. n.d.). It is noticeable that this tomb also contains depictions of fencers, fighters with clubs (Figures 14-17). The sport depicted combat conditions, i.e. movements were not restricted to a linear system, but full use of the battlefield was allowed. Movements back and forth across a surface were permitted. The hieroglyphs show athletes with clubs, bent legs and raised heels.

Figure 14. Kheruef tomb, 18th Dynasty, 1500 BC, Luxor (El Shereef, 2020)

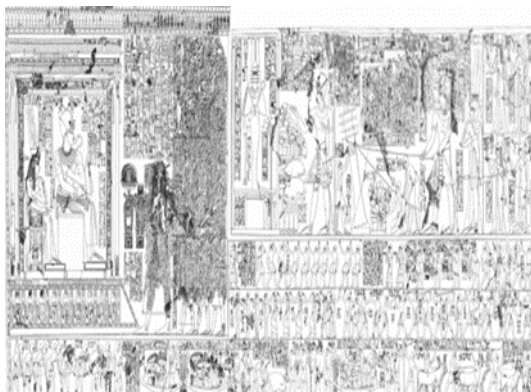


Figure 15. Today from the Kheruef tomb. Fighters with clubs are seen in the center column (Riddle, 2007)

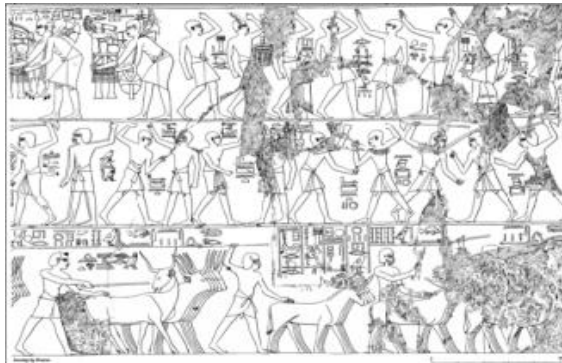


Figure 16. Famous scenes of fencing in Theban tombs (no. 192) "Kheruef", Fencing with sticks as a ritual to defeat enemies (Piccione, 1999)

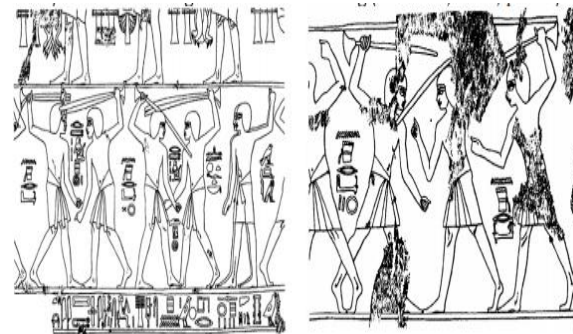


Figure 17. Petah Hotep tomb, 6th Dynasty, 2250 BC, Saqqara (Piccione, 1999)



Comments on Stick Fighting Rules

In stick fighting, some fighters carried a shield on their left arm and used a stick with a hand strap on the other arm. Other images show the use of other equipment, including head and chin protectors. Although the concept of stick fighting is simple, the art has evolved with the use of such sticks and the increasing skills of the fighters. There are also other variations of the basic stick fighting concept, featuring a stick fighter against a wrestler. In another, the fight is shown with two sticks against one stick fighter. These descriptions are complex and point to another aspect of progress in the art. The condition for winning a stick fight is difficult to understand, but there is some evidence of a scoring system from a table showing both hits and specific movements (Brian, 1998). In some of the drawings both knees are bent and in other drawings the back knee is straight. A straight back leg is very similar to a short lunge. This allows for quick movements. The position of the body is shown as standing sideways, but the hips turn slightly forward as both feet come forward. The feet

are shoulder width apart and the leg is pointed backwards, allowing for a powerful frontal attack and a balanced retreat. How much or for how many points the fighter fights is not recorded. Could it be an endurance contest, as in the ancient Egyptian wrestling system? How long can you hold out, like on a battlefield. Counting touches is another possible system. The average length of the forearm guard, about 19 inches through the ulna, was equal to the length of the forearm plus a few inches beyond the fingertips and in some cases beyond the top of the elbow. This allowed the fingers to be protected from a blow. The forearm guard could be used to parry or block an attack, leaving the armed hand free for a quick counterattack. The forearm guard also extended beyond the fingers, which could also be used to strike. The entire forearm was protected and attached to the wooden arm. A club was attached to the other hand, presumably to prevent a fight. The hand of the shield arm, open and with outstretched fingers, gripped the opponent's stick. The most common stance is the forearm bent at the elbow and the arm held at the shoulder. If the shield is worn on the forearm, the shoulder's freedom of movement is restricted. If the shield is worn on the forearm, the participants' freedom of movement during the fight is limited. All movements come from the elbow and shoulder. It is possible to use the forearm shield not only for defense but also for attack. Striking with the shield using punching or thrusting techniques could also be part of the game. Looking at the design of some sticks, it was probably allowed to pinch them. Some sticks had a curved or Y-shaped end. This allowed the arm, stick or shield arm to be pinched. This also made it possible to trip with the stick. Cutting or thrusting with the stick was permitted under the rules system. The ends of the stick, which were designed differently, could allow thrusting forces, provided the end was padded or at least blunt. If the sticks were only used for "touching", large, powerful movements with the shoulder and elbow were important. The combination with the bending of the hips, as indicated in the hieroglyphs, suggests that a lot of force could be exerted with this one blow. In some cases, a protective cloth strap was wrapped around the fingers and knuckles to protect the hand. The strap was attached to the fingers on the pole to prevent disarming. The uniforms worn were those of the soldier or warrior. The uniforms are adapted to the climate to allow good freedom of movement and offer a certain degree of protection against cuts. The position of the fighters is always on the right, and in this position they have the upper hand. It would not be a good tactic for a fighting athlete to lose balance and falling to the ground during a fight would mean defeat. Falling down in battle meant death. This is also depicted in many battle drawings where the pharaoh is on his knees and about to strike his enemy with a sword or club. The practice of stick fighting in ceremonies before the pharaoh, as in the Zulu tradition, also meant that it was the deciding factor in the selection of the army and was an exercise or training for the army (Coetzee, 2002). It is known that stick fighting is still practiced in modern Egypt. The fight is ceremonial, as in the ancient version (Riddle, 2007).

Figure 18. From the tomb of Merire II: El Amarna, c. 1350 BC (Piccione, 1999)



Figure 19. Thebes, Egypt, c. 1350 BC (Piccione, 1999)



Tahtib

In modern Egypt, stick fighting and stick dancing is called tahtib. Tahtib is the stick dance at wedding ceremonies and is particularly popular during Ramadan. The stick is a symbol of masculinity and a phallus. This is a dance for men only. Sometimes there are also women who dance this dance, dressed as men and with other women. Dancing with women means flirting and the cane is manipulated by the woman because it is a general symbol of masculinity. The stick is about four feet long and is called Asa, Asaya or Assaya or Nabboot. In some parts of Africa, many tribes fight with a stick, the donga is practiced among the Surma. Donga is only practiced among men. The sticks are six feet long and are individually carved by the owner. The aim is to knock the opponent down. Apart from body paint, no protection is worn. The ancient Nubians also practiced stick fighting. The stick fighter holds the stick in both hands and the height of the stick almost corresponds to the height of the fighter's figure. The stick fighter also wore the same type of belt as the wrestlers. A blocking stick is used by the Zulu. Some of the postures used by the Zulu resemble drawings of hieroglyphics (Riddle, 2007). Stick fighting in ancient Egypt was probably based on the actual combat systems used for fighting with shield and sword. It later developed into a system with its own rules and methods. The rules used by the ancient Egyptians were probably simple and few. The competition required endurance or skill. There is stronger evidence that it was a game of skill and that the aim was to hit the head. By teaching the soldiers stick fighting, the Egyptian army could be trained and kept ready for war. One of the games that is still played today... In this South African game, also known as "intonga" or "donga", each player has two sticks. One of these sticks is for defense and the other for attack. Nowadays, there are hardly any fatalities. The participants leave the game and regard their wounds as a medal of honor and courage. The Zulus select the best warriors from the bride and groom's families to play the game during wedding ceremonies. It is a sport played in many African countries and tribes (Piccione, 1999; Buzz, n.d.).

Conclusion

In ancient Egypt, stick fighting seems to have been a widespread activity, along with wrestling as a sport. Ancient Egyptian stick fighting shows a rivalry between two players. Although stick fencing was a popular attraction at exhibition fights, it was sometimes more of a dance performance than a fight against an opponent. The wielders of the sticks or clubs are said to have worn masks. The fencers had to bow to the audience before the fight. They then held their sticks in a crossed position. It is assumed that there was a scoring system for fighting with sticks. In addition to the ancient

Egyptians, the ancient Nubians also practiced stick fighting. Although stick fighting or acrobatic movements with sticks in ancient Egypt were for demonstration purposes like dances, it could be the origin of modern fencing and combat training. The esthetic movements and maneuvers with sticks and the wearing of masks by the athletes are similar to modern fencing. In ancient Egypt, fighters with sticks can be seen as fencers with sticks. Research has shown that stick fighting is still widely practiced in African and Middle Eastern cultures in the form of demonstrations on special occasions.

Research Ethics Committee Permission Information

This study did not require ethics committee approval.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors undertook that there was no conflict of interest in the data collection, interpretation of the results, and interpretation of the manuscript.

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