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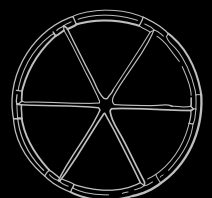


CHASING CHARIOTS

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL
CHARIOT CONFERENCE (CAIRO 2012)

EDITED BY

ANDRÉ J. VELDMEIJER & SALIMA IKRAM



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DEPICTIONAL STUDY OF CHARIOT USE IN NEW KINGDOM EGYPT

Lisa Sabbahy

INTRODUCTION

The chariot appears in Egypt by the end of the Second Intermediate Period (1650-1549 BC), when the Theban kings of the 17th Dynasty have begun to battle the Hyksos ruling in Lower Egypt (Schulman, 1980; Shaw, 2001). Once the chariot is introduced, it is used extensively throughout the period of the New Kingdom, particularly by the king. Its use is initially limited to military purposes, but eventually high officials also use chariots in both official capacities and hunting. By the time of the later 18th Dynasty (1549-1298 BC), during the Amarna Period, royalty, both male and female, use chariots in processions to and from palaces and temples. Female use of chariots, both as driver and occupant, is extremely restricted, however, and, for the most part, limited to the Amarna Period. By the later New Kingdom, the Ramesside Period (1298-1069 BC), chariots are limited to royal scenes of warfare and hunting.

DEPICTIONS OF HUNTING AND WARFARE

The earliest chariot evidence is textual, such as in the autobiographical inscription of Ahmose son of Ebana, who mentions “following the chariot of His Majesty”, in the reign of Ahmose (1549-1524 BC; Sethe, 1961: 3,6). Representational evidence is more limited, however. There are fragments of battle scenes from Ahmose’s temple at Abydos, but it is

not clear from the fragments of bridled horses and chariots whether or not the chariots belong to the Hyksos or the Egyptians (Harvey, 1998: figs. 76-79). There are also similar fragments of scenes, for example, horse hooves and a chariot wheel, from the funerary temple of Thutmose II (1491-1479 BC), either built or finished by Thutmose III (1479-1424 BC) on the West Bank of Thebes (Bruyère, 1926: pls. II-IV). But again, it is not clear that these are Egyptian chariots, rather than those of the foreigners that they are fighting.

A fragment of a hunting scene is preserved in the Theban tomb of User (TT21), reign of Thutmose I (1503-1491 BC; Davies, 1913: pl. XXII). The fleeing animals, shot with arrows, are preserved, but only part of the wheel of the chariot pursuing them is. The first complete hunting scene is that in the tomb of Userhet (TT56), reign of Amenhotep II (1424-1398 BC; Beinlich-Seeber & Shedid, 1987: pl. 12). Userhet stands in the chariot, reins tied around his back, shooting arrows at the fleeing desert animals.

Userhet’s stance in his chariot is modeled on that of king Amenhotep II. On a red granite block from Karnak, now in the Luxor Museum (J. 129), the king is galloping in his chariot, while shooting arrows at a copper ingot, with the reins tied around his waist (Romano, 1979: fig. 53). A close parallel to Amenhotep II’s target shooting scene is the later scene showing king Ay (1333-1328 BC) shooting at a similarly shaped target (Davis, 1912:127). This scene is on a small piece of gold foil, found in the Valley of the Kings and now in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (JE

57438), and may have originally decorated the end of a quiver. In the scene, the target is on the top of a pole, which has two foreigners tied to it, and two more are kneeling in front with their hands up in adoration of the king. Ay is in the chariot alone, pulling back his bow, with the reins tied around his waist.

After Amenhotep II, the next known hunting scenes are those of king Tutankhamun (1335-1325 BC). For the most part his hunting scenes are on objects from his tomb, but there are also two blocks found in the 9th Pylon at Karnak preserving parts of a bull-hunting scene attributed to Tutankhamun (Lauffray, 1979: pl. 120; Sa'ad, 1975: pl. 34), and other blocks possibly show a desert hunt (Eaton-Krauss, 1983; Johnson, 1992: 17). Both the obverse and reverse of Tutankhamun's bow-case depict the king in his chariot, reins tied behind his back, shooting at fleeing desert game (McLeod, 1982: pls. 9 and 14). One side of Tutankhamun's fan (Carter Number 242) represents him shooting ostriches in the same manner (Houlihan, 1986: fig. 1), and on the other side he drives his chariot behind the bearers taking back the kill (Edwards, 1978: 110-113). The lid of his painted box (Carter Number 21) has two parallel scenes of hunting game in the desert. The king is again alone in his chariot, shooting with the reins tied behind his back (Edwards, 1978: 76-77).

After Tutankhamun's hunting scenes, the next known royal scenes of hunting from a chariot are those of king Ramesses III (1185-1153 BC) at Medi-

net Habu. He is shown shooting desert game, with the reins tied around his waist (Epigraphic Survey, 1932: pl.116). The king spears the lions and bulls, again with the reins tied around his waist. In the lion-hunting scene the torso and arms of the king are twisted around to spear behind him, while his bottom half and the reins stay in place, facing front (Epigraphic Survey, 1930: pl. 35). In the bull-hunting depiction, as the king spears the bulls, he steps over the front rail of the chariot with his left leg, putting his foot down on the chariot pole (Epigraphic Survey, 1932: pl. 117), still with the reins around his waist.

It has been suggested that tying the reins around the waist is merely artistic license so that the king can be shown alone in the chariot; no one could actually drive a chariot in this position. But as seen in Userhet's tomb, he is also shown this way. Did royal artistic license extend to the elite as well? Looking at other chariot scenes with archers gives further evidence.

In the Battle of Qadesh, two men are shown in each Egyptian chariot; there is a shield-bearer and an archer (figure 1). The shield-bearer holds the shield with one hand, and holds onto the chariot with the other. Occasionally his free hand reaches out and holds the reins that are tied around the archer's waist while he is shooting. Another scene from the Qadesh battle shows the royal princes arriving in chariots. Each prince drives the horses while also holding his bow in one hand. A shield-

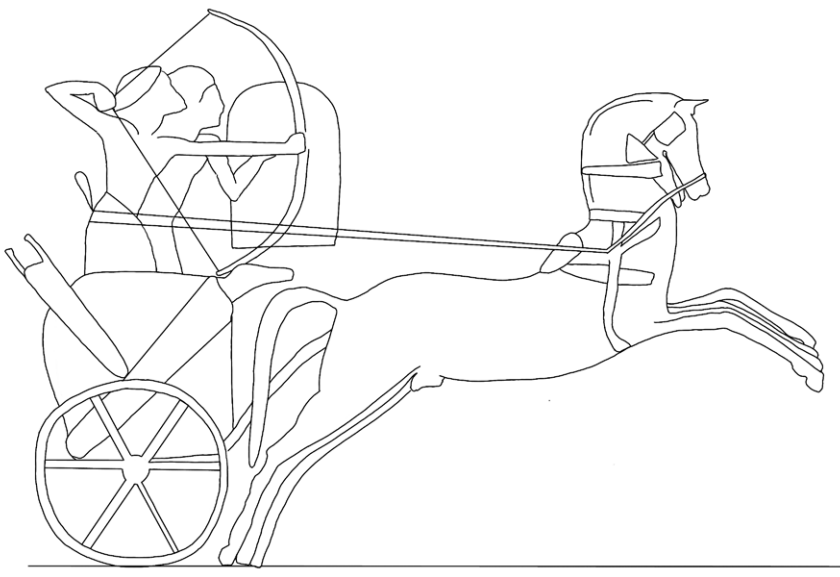


Figure 1. Shield-bearer and archer. Abu Simbel Great Temple. After: Oriental Institute P2345, Photographic Archives, Nubia. Drawing by L.D. Hackley.

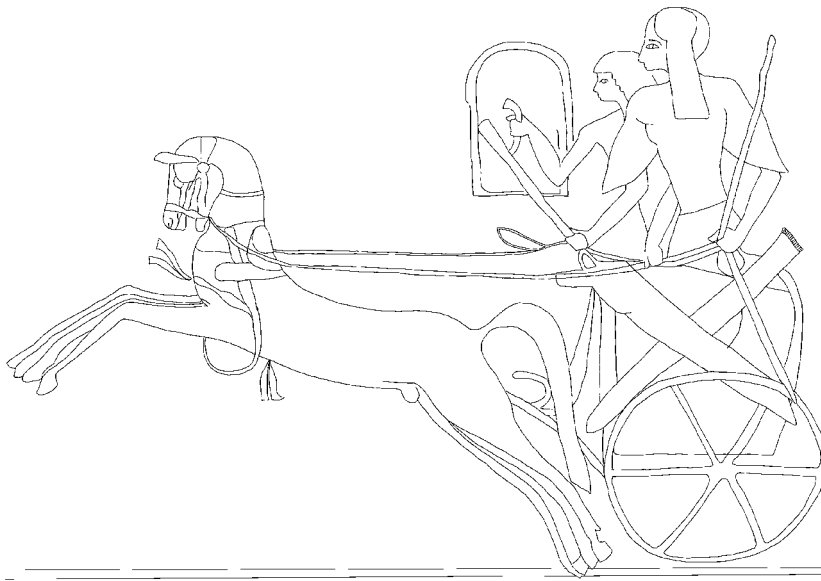


Figure 2. Prince following Ramesses II into battle. Abu Simbel Great Temple. After: Oriental Institute P2419. Photographic Archives Nubia. Drawing by L.D. Hackley.

bearer is also with each prince in the chariot, and helps with the reins (figure 2).

In the poem about the battle, Ramesses II refers several times to his charioteer and shield-bearer (Lichtheim, 1976: 68-70). In the action described in the poem, it is clear that wielding the shield to protect the king is this man's main responsibility, but obviously, he could help drive as well. In all of these examples, the archer drives the chariot, but when busy shooting, ties the reins around his waist. This would not only keep the horses steady, but would help the archer balance, and prevent him from falling out of the back of the chariot (Crouwel agrees with this, Personal Communication, 2012). It seems possible, therefore, that an archer hunting in a chariot, could do so alone with the reins tied around his waist.

CHARIOTS WITH BOUND CAPTIVES

The upper part of a granite block in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (JE 36360) depicts Amenhotep II victorious, presenting tied up captives to the god Amun (Zayed, 1985: pls. 1-2). It was found in the 4th Pylon of Karnak in 1904, and may have come from the same monument as the granite block in the Luxor Museum that depicts Amenhotep II target shooting, discussed above. In the lower part of the scene, the king ties up captives, and then,

mounted on a chariot, leads them away. The king also has three captives on the back of his chariot horses, two tied to the front of the chariot and one tied on his back on the chariot pole (figure 3).

A very similar scene is found on a limestone stela from the mortuary temple of his grandson, king Amenhotep III, which was later reused in the mortuary temple of king Merenptah (1212-1201 BC; Petrie, 1896: pl. X). The upper and lower parts of the stela are each divided in half by the scenes. In the top half, figures of Amun stand back-to-back in the center of the stela, while the king on one side offers a figure of Maat to him, and on the other side, jars of wine. Below, there are two back-to-back figures of the king in a chariot. On the viewer's right, the king drives over foreigners from the south, although the lower part of this scene with the horses' legs is missing. On the left he drives over foreigners from the north, although the body of the chariot, and those of the horses are broken away. It is clear on the right side, however, that four captives are tied and seated on the chariot horses, while another is tied kneeling on the chariot pole. A sixth face can be seen protruding from the bottom front of the chariot (Saleh & Sourouzian, 1987: Obj. No. 143).

Figures tied to royal chariots are not seen often after this. Johnson (1992: 29) suggests that the depiction of prisoners on the chariot horses was somewhat awkward, and so the scene was 'discontinued'. There are some Ramesside examples, but they only have

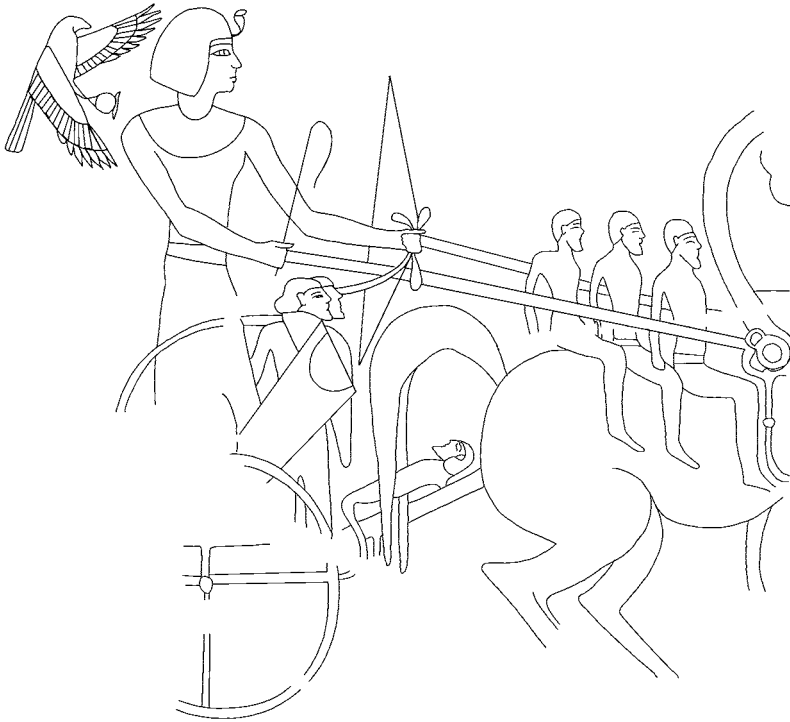


Figure 3. Amenhotep II with captives. After: Abdel Hamid Zayed, in: Posener-Krieger (1985: pl. 1). Drawing by L.D. Hackley.

figures tied under the chariot, not on any other parts. A good example of this is the triumphal return of Ramesses III from his Libyan campaign. Three Libyans are tied under the base of his chariot, heads facing to the back (Epigraphic Survey, 1930: pl. 77). Many more bound captives walk in front of, and beside the king's chariot, but only these three are actually attached to the chariot.

DEITIES AND CHARIOTS

The present author had expected to find a fair number of chariots depicted in association with deities,

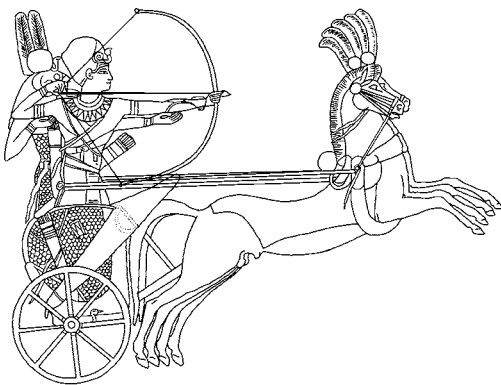


Figure 4. Thutmose IV and Montu. After: Carter, in: Carter & Newberry (2002: pl. 10). Drawing by L.D. Hackley.

but actually these scenes are quite rare. The most famous is undoubtedly the scene on the right exterior side of the chariot of Thutmose IV (1398-1388 BC), found in his tomb in the Valley of the Kings (Carter & Newberry, 1904: pl. 10; see also Calvert, this volume). The king is shown driving his chariot, reins around the waist, and shooting arrows into a mass of dead and fleeing enemy chariots. Beside the king in his chariot, and helping him shoot, is the god Montu, hawk-headed and wearing a disk and feathers on his head. The god is placed just behind the figure of the king, but set a bit farther back, so that the figures overlap. The king is in front and also taller, so it is clear he is the main figure. The inscription in front of the king states that he is 'beloved of Montu' (figure 4).

There is an interesting detail on the body of the chariot. The head and neck of a small duck or goose (see Calvert, this volume) is shown at the very bottom of the side of the chariot, just above the spoke of the wheel that is parallel with the base of the chariot. There is at least one other example of some type of small figure in that position. Part of a limestone block from the Great Temple at Amarna in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (1927.4087) depicts a chariot wheel with a small kneeling, captive figure in the same position at the bottom of the body of the chariot, just visible above and in front of the axel

(Whitehouse, 2009: 75.). There might be another example of this type of kneeling figure on a talatat block from Karnak (Ertman, 1998: 59-60). Tutankhamun's chariot A1 seems to have had a bronze snake attached to the lower right corner of the chariot, and it might have been a similar type of object such as the duck or bound figure, with an amuletic or protective purpose (Littauer & Crouwel, 1985: pl. XII). Crouwel agreed with this interpretation at the conference, although this is still debated (Salima Ikram, Personal Communication, 2013; see also Calvert, this volume). These small figures are perhaps related to small heads of foreigners, which can be found as decoration on the top of the chariot's linchpins, and again serve as symbolism of the king's destruction of the enemies of Egypt (Ritner, 1993: 130-131). This type of decorated linchpin appears first in the Amarna Period, on a talatat from the Great Aten Temple at Amarna (Aldred, 1973: 151). They are common on chariots in the royal military scenes of the 19th (1298-1187 BC) and 20th Dynasties (1187-1069 BC; Epigraphic Survey, 1986: pls. 5, 10, 22, 35; Epigraphic Survey, 1930: pls. 21, 30, 31). The small head can also be shown being bitten by a lion whose head is on top of it (Epigraphic Survey, 1930: pl. 17).

Another deity depicted in a chariot is the god Shed, the 'protector' or 'savior', who is known beginning in the 18th Dynasty (Brunner, 1983: 547-9).

A small limestone fragment from the Amarna Period preserves the figure of a nude young man with a side lock, in a chariot with reins around his waist, pulling back a bow (Brooklyn Museum Acc. No. 36.965). Brunner (1984: 49-50) has identified the figure as Shed, rather than as a young prince, such as Tutankhamun. Indeed, there are other depictions of Shed from Amarna on stelae from the tomb chapels east of the Workman's Village (Peet & Woolley, 1923: 97, pl. XXVIII).

The only other association of a deity with a chariot is the standard of Amun set up in a chariot leading Ramesses III's campaign against the Libyans (figure 5). The chariot is driven by one of the royal princes, and the king follows along behind, driving his own chariot. The two chariots are exactly the same size, and the king and the god's standard are exactly the same height. The inscription accompanying the standard's chariot reads in part: "Words spoken by Amon-Re, king of the god's: Behold, I am before you, my son...I open for you the ways of the Tjemehu" (Epigraphic Survey, 1930: pl. 17).

AMARNA PERIOD CHARIOT SCENES

In the Amarna Period a number of new and unusual chariot scenes appear. In the talatat blocks

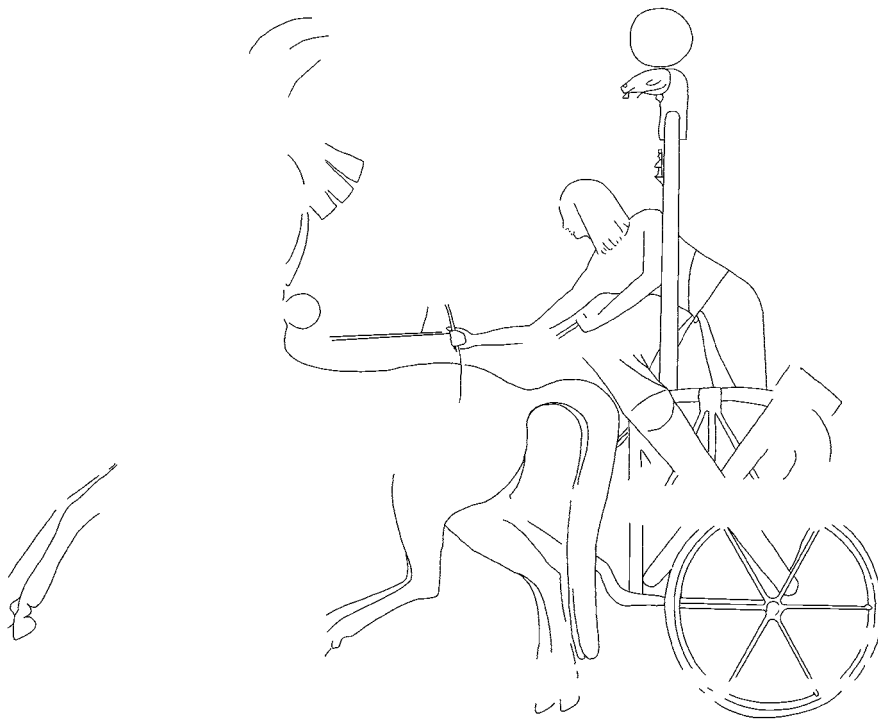


Figure 5. Standard of Amun in a chariot. After: Epigraphic Survey (1930: pl. 17). Drawing by L.D. Hackley.

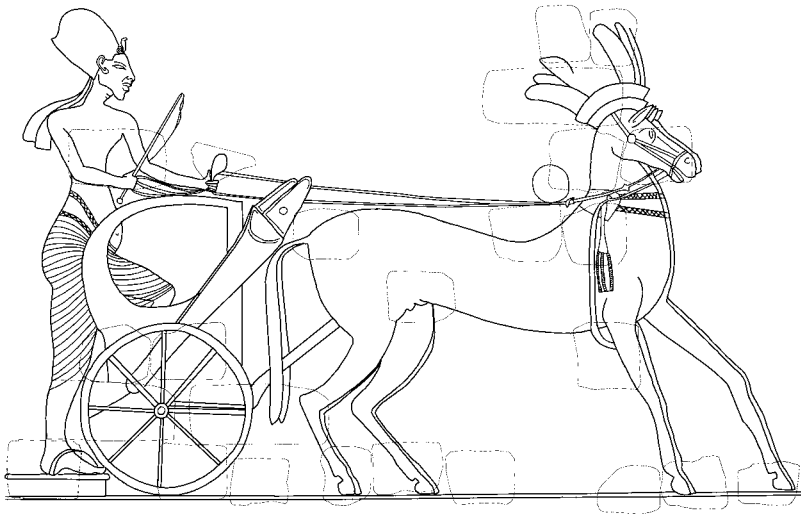


Figure 6. Akhenaten with stepping-stool. After: D.B. Redford, in: Redford (1976: pl. 12). Drawing by L.D. Hackley.

from Karnak, a partially restored scene depicts king Akhenaten (1352-1335 BC) stepping into his chariot with the help of a stool (figure 6). This is the first known scene of a king mounting his chariot, and one that will be repeated numerous times in Ramesside temple relief scenes of the king setting off on campaign (Epigraphic Survey, 1930: pl. 16), and returning in victory to Egypt (Epigraphic Survey, 1986: pl. 35).

Another development in the Amarna Period is the appearance of female members of the royal family in a chariot with the king, or else in their own chariot accompanying him. Although this type of scene appears in the Karnak talatat, it is much more common in Amarna tomb scenes depicting royal processions in the city. In a reconstructed scene based on Karnak talatat blocks TS 1465 and TS 1441, the king, in a large chariot, is followed by the queen, driving alone in a chariot, about 40% of the size of the king's (Hoffmeier, 1988: pl.18). If the restoration is correct, this is the "first example in art of a queen driving a chariot" (Hoffmeier, 1988: 36). In another scene, the king and queen are together in a chariot. The king is driving, followed by three small registers of attendants in chariots. An interesting detail is that the queen's right hand holds onto a handle on the side bar of the chariot (Redford, 1988: pl. 37). Chariot handles for passengers only seem to be depicted in the Amarna Period (Hoffmeier, 1988: 39), the same period in which females are often seen in chariots, so perhaps handles and female use of chariots are related (see also Manassa, this volume). There is at least one instance in the

Amarna Period, however, of a male holding onto a handle; see the discussion of the stela of Any below.

In the rock cut tomb of Ahmes (T3) at Amarna, there is a badly preserved scene depicting Akhenaten, Nerfertiti and one of their daughters, together in a chariot driven by the king (Davies, 1905c: pl. 35a). There is no evidence of royal daughters associated with chariots in the Karnak talatat, so this is the earliest example of a royal daughter in a chariot. The king faces forward, and the queen, slightly in front of him and on his far side, turns to face him. The Aten is directly above them, and one ray holds an ankh-sign between their faces. The princess stands in the very front of the chariot with just her head over the bar, while her left arm rests on the quiver.

The tomb of the Aten priest, Meryre (T4), has a procession scene with the king driving a large chariot, and the queen behind driving a much smaller one. Behind that, two much smaller registers show their daughters and attendants in chariots (Davies, 1905a: pl.10). The first group in each of the two small registers is a chariot with two princesses. One drives, holding the reins and whip, while the other stands beside her, right hand grasping a handle on the bar of the chariot, and left arm around her sister. Behind each chariot with the princesses are three chariots with attendants. Each chariot is driven by a charioteer, who is depicted on the far side of the chariot, hunched over as he protrudes from a kind of cabin, separating him from the two attendants. Each attendant holds a tall feather fan in her right hand, and holds onto a handle on the chariot with her left hand.

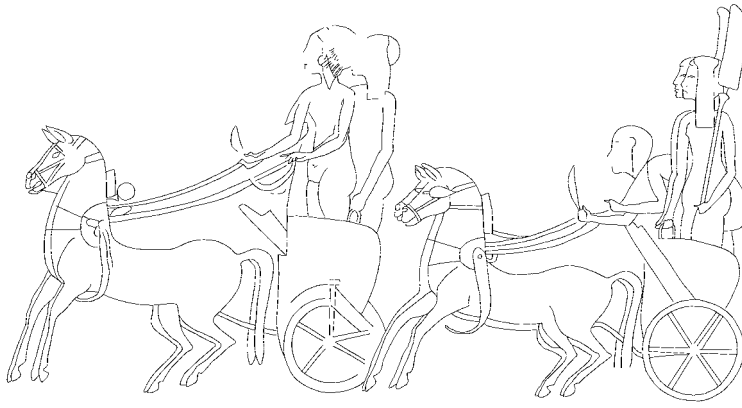


Figure 7. Princesses and attendants. After: Davies (1905b: pl. 15). Drawing by L.D. Hackley.

The partition separating the driver from the other occupants of the chariot is not depicted in other scenes of attendants. A somewhat similar processional scene is in the tomb of Panehsy (T6). This time one small chariot with princesses, and attendants following, is behind the queen, and another is in the register just below her chariot (figure 7). As in the tomb scene just discussed above, one princess drives and another stands beside and behind her. The attendants are two to a chariot, and the charioteer is hunched over driving, but clearly not separated by a partition. A talatat block found at Hermopolis has a similar grouping of attendants (Cooney, 1965: 57), with the driver leaning forward on the far side, but clearly there is no partition separating him from the attendants.

In the Ramesside Period young princes are also depicted in chariots with attendants. In the scenes of Ramesses II at the temple of Beit el-Wali, dating to the 13th year of the reign of his father Seti I (1296-1279 BC), and carved while Ramesses was still prince, his first born son, Amenherwonemef, and his fourth son, Khaemwaset, are shown in two small registers behind their father's large chariot, as he drives into and shoots fleeing Nubians (Ricke *et al.*, 1967: pl. 8). The princes both stand holding on to the side and front of the chariot, while a charioteer drives. The older of the princes must have been five years, and his younger brother four years old at the time (Kitchen, 1982: 40).

ELITE CHARIOT USE FOR OFFICIAL PURPOSES

High officials of the New Kingdom are depicted making use of chariots for important occasions in

their professional life. One such occasion is that of the king rewarding them with a gold collar. Scenes depicting this in private tombs are known from the reign of Thutmose IV in the 18th Dynasty to the reign of Ramesses IX (1123-1104 BC) in the 20th Dynasty (Binder, 2008). Twelve tombs, from the Amarna Period to the 19th Dynasty, include the official's use of a chariot as part of the occasion.

During the Amarna Period, rather than a single scene of the gold collar being given by the king to the official, the occasion becomes a sequence of scenes. The rock cut tomb of Meryre II (T2) at Amarna contains a good example of the scene sequence in the rewarding of the gold collar (Davies, 1905b: pl. 33). Meryre is standing under the Window of Appearance while king Akhenaten leans over and hands him down a gold collar. Other gold collars are already around his neck. In the register just below this, Meryre, greeted by cheers, returns to his waiting chariot. Then in the lowest register, Meryre is driven home in his chariot amid a jubilant crowd. Meryre stands in the chariot holding the side and front of the bar of the chariot, while a charioteer drives.

A much simpler version of the scene is depicted on the stela of Any, found at Amarna (Freed, 1999: 173). Any is shown being driven by a charioteer. He stands, wearing four gold collars, holding a handle on the left side of the chariot, and resting his right hand on the bar of the chariot. In the inscription above him, it states: "I come in peace as the favored one of the king".

The Collar of Gold scene in the Theban tomb of Neferhotep (TT49), dating to the reign of king Ay near the end of the 18th Dynasty, is perhaps the most interesting of all these scenes.

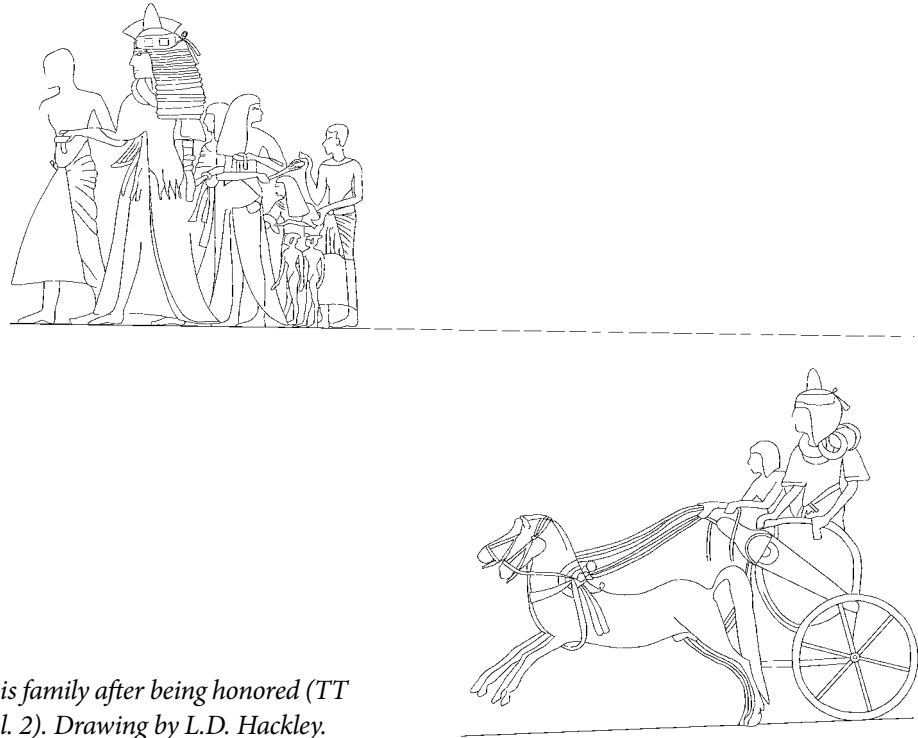


Figure 8. Neferhotep and his family after being honored (TT 49). After: Davies (1933: pl. 2). Drawing by L.D. Hackley.

It gives us an example of the fact that, although royal females used chariots, when a chariot was the conveyance of choice, its use does not seem to have extended to non-royal females. Neferhotep is seen below the Window of Appearance, having been given the collar of gold (Davies, 1933: pl.1). Then he is seen driving away in his chariot, in the same pose as Meryre II, with a charioteer doing the driving. In the scene in the registers above this, the queen gives Neferhotep's wife a gold collar from her own Window of Appearance. The wife turns to go, and is escorted away by an attendant who takes her arm. She does not share her husband's chariot, nor does she have her own (figure 8). In fact, the present author has not been able to find any depiction of a non-royal female in a chariot.

Officials also used chariots in their work. The earliest complete, surviving New Kingdom scenes featuring chariots are actually non-royal and non-military. The tomb of Renni (T7) at El Kab, dating to the reign of Amenhotep I (1524-1503 BC), shows Renni's chariot parked in the field, as part of a harvest scene (Tylor, 1900: pl. II). Beginning in the reign of Amenhotep I, in the early 18th Dynasty, there are scenes of a chariot standing empty in the fields, often with a

servant, probably the chariot driver, either holding the reins, or sitting in the chariot, waiting. This type of chariot scene appears in tombs of officials connected to grain, such as that of Nebamun, probably from the reign of Thutmose IV, who was the scribe of the grain accounts of Amun. There is a beautiful fragment from his tomb in the British Museum, London depicting two chariots waiting by a sycamore tree (Parkinson, 2008: 110). Nearby, although not completely preserved, officials are measuring the fields of grain.

In other work scenes the official is actually in his chariot. For example, in the Theban tomb of Amenmose (TT89), who had a long career spanning from the reign of Thutmose III to that of Amenhotep III, he is depicted with his soldiers, leaving the shore of the Red Sea where the Pun-tites have brought him exotic goods (Davies *et al.*, 1941: pl. 25). His figure is broken away, but the horses and chariot are preserved. The Chief of Police at Amarna, Mahu, is depicted in his tomb taking part in the capture of three criminals, and having them taken to the vizier (Davies, 1905d: pl. 26). He drives up on his chariot, reaching out with his left hand to pull on the reins along with his charioteer (figure 9).

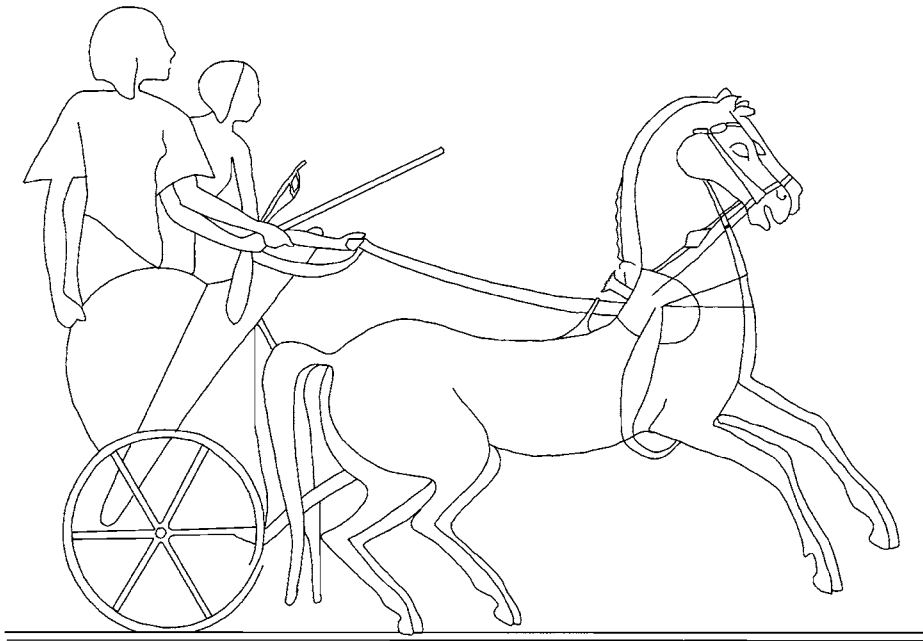


Figure 9. *Mahu chasing criminals.* After: Davies (1905b: pl. 26). Drawing by L.D. Hackley.

RAMESSIDE VARIATIONS IN ROYAL WAR AND HUNTING SCENES

In the extensive military scenes on mortuary temple walls in the Ramesside Period, a number of new details appear in chariot scenes. One is the motif of the smiting king, stepping over the front bar of the chariot and onto the chariot pole. The earliest evidence known for this is in the scenes from the reign of Seti I of the 19th Dynasty. In his battle against the Libyans depicted at Karnak Temple, Seti has caught a Libyan by the neck with his bow, and is stepping and swinging with his *khepesh* sword (Epigraphic Survey, 1986: pl. 28).

There is a similar scene in the temple of Beit el-Wali, carved in year 13 of Seti I, while Ramesses

was still crown prince. Ramesses II steps onto the chariot pole while grasping his bow and the hair of two Bedouins in one hand, swinging his *khepesh* with the other (Ricke *et al.*, 1967: pl. 13). The latest known example of this scene is on an ostrakon from the reign of Ramesses IV (1153-1146 BC) of the 20th Dynasty (Heinz, 2001: 323). The king is stepping onto the chariot bar while grasping foreigners with his left hand. His right arm is down by his side, and it is not clear if he is holding anything in it.

Another type of scene that first appears in the Ramesside Period is that of the king watching the “counting of the hands” after a battle. One way in which the king can be depicted in such a scene is sitting backward in his chariot (figure 10). The first completely preserved example of this is Ramesses II after the Battle of Qadesh (Desroches Noblecourt

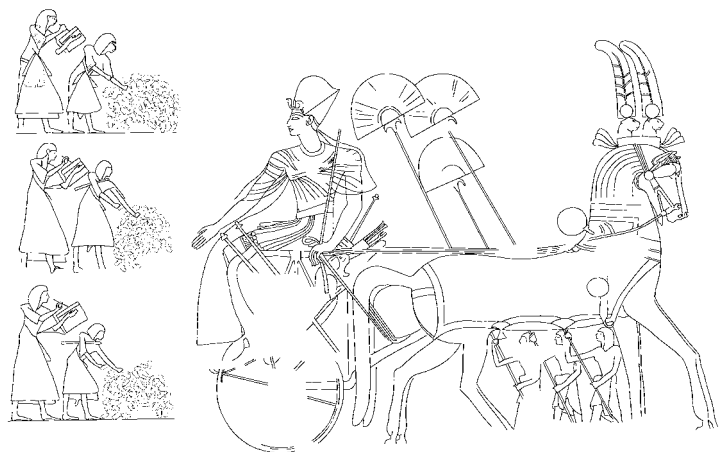


Figure 10. *Ramesses III seated backwards in a chariot, counting trophies.* After: Epigraphic Survey (1930: pl. 76). Drawing by L.D. Hackley.

et al. 1971: pl. III, d). The king sits backward in his chariot, while piles of hands are counted in front of him (see also Calvert, this volume). There is also a fragmentary scene like this from Abydos, but only the chariot wheel with the king's feet can still be seen in front of the piles of hands (Naville, 1930: pl. 21). The latest depiction of this scene appears to be that of Ramesses III after his first Libyan battle (Epigraphic Survey, 1930: pl. 23). On the south wall of the second court, Ramesses III sits backward in his chariot in front of four registers: three with prisoners and piles of hands, and one with prisoners and a pile of phalli (figure 10).

CONCLUSION

The use of the chariot in ancient Egypt, other than by chariot divisions in the army, was limited to royalty and nobility. Chariots were expensive. They were made by specialists from partially imported materials (Littauer & Crouwel, 1985: 92-95; see also Herslund, this volume), and were pulled by horses that had been specifically trained to do so. For these reasons, chariots were a status item owned by a limited few. Kings of the New Kingdom used chariots and were depicted doing so. With few exceptions, only in the Amarna Period were royal females shown in and also driving chariots. In the 18th Dynasty nobility were shown in chariots, but their female relatives never were. Afterwards, in the Ramesside Period, elite tombs were decorated only with religious scenes, so we do not have much pictorial evidence for non-royal chariot use at that time. In conclusion, chariot use in the ancient Egyptian New Kingdom extended to royalty and nobility, but only among royalty, and their attendants in the Amarna Period, did females use the chariot.

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