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The following essay discusses a green jasper plaque inscribed for pharaoh Amenhotep II of Dynasty XVIII of Egypt's New Kingdom within the context of his historically documented love of horses. The plaque is significant because it is one of only two representations in the history of ancient Egyptian art which depicts a pharaoh actually hand-feeding his favorite steed.

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The following essay discusses a green jasper plaque inscribed for pharaoh Amenhotep II of Dynasty XVIII of Egypt's New Kingdom within the context of his historically documented love of horses. The plaque is significant because it is one of only two representations in the history of ancient Egyptian art which depicts a pharaoh actually hand-feeding his favorite steed.

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This green jasper plaque, sculpted on both sides in high relief, is pierced in such a way that it formed the swivel bezel of a finger ring (Figures 1-2). Such rings were first introduced during the course of Dynasty XII of the Middle Kingdom and featured scarabs.¹ The swivel design enabled its owner to turn the bezel so that s/he could determine which side was exposed for others to see. Swivel bezels in the form of plaques gained in popularity during the course of Dynasty XVIII (about 1554-1305 B.C.)² of the New Kingdom, as seen in an example in London's British Museum which is inscribed for pharaoh Tuthmosis III (1490-1436 B.C.)³ (Figure 3).

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¹ Carol A. R. Andrews, *Ancient Egyptian Jewellery* (London: British Museum Publications, 1990), 164.

² Jürgen von Beckerath, *Abriss der Geschichte des alten Ägypten*, Oldenbourg's Abriss der Weltgeschichte (München; Wien: R. Oldenbourg, 1971), 66. Please note that all dates are approximate. All of the dates in this essay are those suggested by Beckerath, *Abriss*, 66.

³ London, The British Museum 14349. Available from www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA14349. Accessed January 23, 2023.



Fig. 1. Side A. Tuthmosis III in a biga, a chariot drawn by a pair of horses, loosening arrows against the foe (Courtesy, Hindman Auctions, Chicago)



Fig. 2. Side B. Amenhotep II feeding one of his favorite horses (Courtesy Hindman Auctions, Chicago)



Fig. 3. A ring with a swivel bezel in the British Museum.

The bezel under discussion was reportedly seen by Peter Sharrer,⁴ an antiquarian based in New York City, in 1985 in Zurich, presumably with Heidi Vollmoeller, with

⁴ Per litteras 13 March 1996, courtesy Jacob Coley, Hindman Auctions, Chicago.

whom I myself examined the bezel in 1988⁵ (Figure 4). Ms. Vollmoeller informed me that the pharaoh in the biga is captioned with the cartouche, or royal ring, enclosing the hieroglyphs spelling the praenomen of Tuthmosis III.⁶ The figure of the seated pharaoh feeding his horse on the other side is inscribed with the cartouche containing the hieroglyphs spelling the praenomen of Amenhotep II (1439-1413 B.C.), his son and successor. Mr. Sharrer subsequently acquired the bezel and placed it on loan in the San Antonio Museum of Art, where it was on public view for the first and only time.⁷

The scene on side A is captioned in hieroglyphs:

nTr nfr (mn-xpr-ra) ptpt⁸xAst nb(t)

The good god, Men-keheper-re (the manifestations of the sun god Ra are enduring), the one who tramples every foreign land

Tuthmosis III is represented standing in his biga, a chariot, termed either *wrrt* or *mrqbt*,⁹ drawn by two horses, loosening his arrows against the foe. He appears to be wearing a kilt traditionally associated with pharaohs to the back of which is attached the expected tail of a bull, a royal attribute symbolically transferring the strength and power of the bovine to pharaoh.¹⁰ He wears the so-called Blue Crown, fronted by a *uraeus*, or sacred cobra, on his head. The crown, preferably called the Crown of Action,¹¹ developed from a cap crown during the course of Dynasty XVII (1650-1551 B.C.) where it is depicted in relief;¹² it was only during the reign of Amenhotep II that that crown was represented in sculpture in the round for the first time.¹³ The

⁵ALEA: Zurich, Galerie Heidi Vollmoeller inventory number 5848, Foto Winizki nos. 4463 and 4464; dimensions H 12mm, B 17mm, D 6.5mm.

⁶Andreas Johann Morvay, "Das Siegel des Pharaos Thuthmosis III," *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* 21/22 (March 1987).

⁷Gerry D Scott III, "Dynasties: the Egyptian royal image in the New Kingdom: San Antonio Museum of Art" (*Varia Aegyptiaca* 10 (1), 12, January 6, 1995-April 9, 1995), 24, no. 12.

⁸Coralie Schwechler, "Les registres de la langue entre égyptien et copte: les exemples des verbes ptpt/ΠΟΤΠΤ et xxr/ⲪⲐⲐⲐⲔ," (*Bulletin de la Société d'Égyptologie de Genève* 30, 2014-2015), 127-142.

⁹Ian Shaw, "Egyptians, Hyksos and military technology: causes, effects or catalysts?," in Andrew J. Shortland ed. *The social context of technological change: Egypt and the Near East, 1650-1550 BC. Proceedings of a conference held at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford 12-14 September 2000*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001, 59-71.

¹⁰Gustave Jéquier, "La queue de taureau insigne des rois d'Égypte," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 15, 1918, 165-168. Jéquier's observations are furthered by Quaegebeur 1971, 194 and note 3; to which add both Hendrickx, De Meyer, and Eyckerman, 2014; and Aufrère 1991, I: 221-222.

¹¹Betsy M. Bryan, "9. Head of Amenhotep III wearing the Kheperesh Crown," in Arielle P. Kozloff, and Betsy M. Bryan ed., *Egypt's dazzling sun: Amenhotep III and his world*, with Lawrence M. Berman and an essay by Elisabeth Delange. (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1992), 162-163.

¹²W. V. Davies, "The origin of the blue crown," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 68/1982, 69-76; Tom Hardwick, "The iconography of the Blue Crown in the New Kingdom," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 89/2003, 117-141.

¹³Christophe Barbotin, ed., *Les statues égyptiennes du nouvel empire: statues royales et divines*, 2 vols (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2007), 45.

strap of his long quiver is suspended over one shoulder and falls diagonally across his chest. He guides his chariot by tying its reins around his waist so that one of his hands is free to hold his 'self bow'¹⁴ while the other prepares to loosen its arrow against the foe.¹⁵ Scholars have suggested that the number of spokes exhibited by any given wheel of an Egyptian chariot may be used as a chronological indicator,¹⁶ but chariots with wheels exhibiting four spokes are first attested in the hieroglyphic inscription in the Tomb of Ahmose, son of Ebana, at Elkab, dated to the beginning of Dynasty XVIII (1580-1520 B.C.)¹⁷ and continue into the reign of Amenhotep II,¹⁸ as seen on the other side of this bezel.

Tuthmosis III is accompanied by a running, sword-wielding infantryman, who stands in the field in the upper right-hand side on his own ground line, recalling the composition of the sandal-bearer on the Narmer Palette.¹⁹ Although the representation of his sword is simplified in the extreme, its bulbous pommel and ribbing nevertheless recall the appearance of a dagger inscribed for pharaoh of Kamose of Dynasty XVII (1558-1554 B.C.), the design of which continued to be employed thereafter.²⁰ His uplifted hand is not a gesture of submission because he is an active combatant allied with the pharaoh.²¹ His gesture is perhaps better understood as apotropaic, symbolising protection.²² The presence of this infantryman suggests the type of hand-to-hand combat, *tmrhbn*, attested in

¹⁴ Ian Shaw, *Egyptian warfare and weapons* (Princes Risborough: Shire Publications, 1991), 36-37, with fig. 27.

¹⁵ Bonhême remarks that the mouth and spoken words of a king are likened to his bow and arrows. Marie-Ange Bonhême, "Appétit de roi," in *Hommages à Jean Leclant 2*, ed. Catherine Berger, Gisèle Clerc, and Nicolas Grimal (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1994), 49.

¹⁶ James K. Hoffmeier, "Observations on the Evolving Chariot Wheel in the 18th Dynasty," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 13/1976, 43-45.

¹⁷ Heidi Köpp-Junk, "Wheeled vehicles and their development in ancient Egypt: technical innovations and their (non-) acceptance in Pharaonic times," in *Contextualising ancient technology: from archaeological case studies towards a social theory of ancient innovation processes*, ed. Florian Klimscha, Svend Hansen, and Jürgen Renn (Berlin: Topoi, 2021), 165.

¹⁸ Peter Der Manuelian, *Studies in the reign of Amenophis II* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge 26, 1987), figure 44. (The Luxor Museum J.44.)

¹⁹ Mohamed Saleh and Hourig Sourouzian, *The Egyptian Museum Cairo: official catalogue* (Mainz: Zabern, 1987), CG 14716, no 8.

²⁰ Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium: F[rançois] d[e] C[allataÿ], "66: Dagger of Kamose," in *Beyond Babylon: art, trade, and diplomacy in the second millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York; New Haven, CT; London: The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Yale University Press, 2009), 118. F[rançois] d[e] C[allataÿ], "66: Dagger of Kamose." In *Beyond Babylon: art, trade, and diplomacy in the second millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans. New York; New Haven, CT; London: The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Yale University Press, 2009, 118.

²¹ Betsy M. Bryan, "'Just say 'no' - iconography, context, and meaning of a gesture," *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* 19/2015, 187-198.

²² Hartwig Altenmüller, "Thy beim Durchtrieb durch die Furt: Bemerkungen zu Gestalt und Funktion eines Gottes," in *Religion und Philosophie im alten Ägypten: Festgabe für Philippe Derchain zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 24. Juli 1991* ed. Ursula Verhoeven and Erhart Graefe (Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistiek 1991), 26; Julie Cayzac "Fringes textiles ou mèches capillaires? À propos d'un bas-relief d'Isis à Philae," *Revue d'égyptologie* 59/2008, 381-388.

contemporary military operations.²³ Tactics of warfare in the Bronze Age often paired swordsmen as infantry accompany charioteers.²⁴

Tuthmosis III is captioned *ptp²⁵ xAs.t nb(.t)*, the one who tramples every foreign land. It is a phrase which is repeated verbatim not only one side of the bezel in London (above) but also a wooden arm panel from a ceremonial chair inscribed for Tuthmosis IV in New York²⁶ who is represented as a sphinx trampling the foe. (Figure 5) The caption on the bezel under discussion may refer to the action depicting the two fallen foes beneath the bodies and hooves of the two horses.

The early career of Tuthmosis III and his relationship with Hatshepsut (1490-1468 B.C.), perhaps the best known of all women who served as pharaohs in their own right, are complex in the extreme, although an emerging consensus regards that relationship during their co-regency as mutually beneficial and decidedly not antagonistic.²⁷ He subsequently became sole pharaoh in his own right.²⁸ As commander-in-chief of the military he repeatedly emerged victorious in Nubia²⁹ to the south as well as in the ancient Near East,³⁰ where he seems to have confronted his opponents face-to-face after their defeat.³¹

The other side of the bezel is inscribed with the epithet and praenomen of Amenhotep II, *nTr nfr (aA-xprw-ra)*, translated as the good god, great-are-the-forms-of-Re. He appears to be both bare-footed and bare-chested, wearing a long skirt, belted at the waist, which may be fronted by an apron. He wears a multi-stranded broad collar (*wsxt*)³² and a striated wig, fronted by a uraeus, or sacred cobra. His lowered hand is raised, palm down and open, over his thigh. His raised hand offers floral forms, perhaps to be understood as sheaves of grain, to the mouth of his horse. The hieroglyphs in the field above the horse, *qn n aSA*, the strongest of many, may be either a description of the equid or possibly its name. Because Amenhotep II is seated on a traveling, folding stool comparable in design to the numerous examples

²³ David Klotz, "Emhah versus the tmrhtn: monomachy and the expulsion of the Hyksos," *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 39/2010, 211-241.

²⁴ Robert Drews, *The End of the Bronze Age. Changes in Warfare and the Catastrophe Ca. 1200 B.C.* Third ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 192-208.

²⁵ Schwechler, "Les registres," 127-142.

²⁶ New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art 30.8.45 a-b-c: see William C. Hayes, *The scepter of Egypt: a background for the study of the Egyptian antiquities in the Metropolitan Museum of Art II. The Hyksos period and the New Kingdom (1675-1080 BC)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1959), 150 and 152-153.

²⁷ Cathleen A. Keller, "The joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III," in *Hatshepsut: from queen to pharaoh*, ed. Catharine H. Roehrig, Renée Dreyfus, and Cathleen A. Keller (New York; New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Yale University Press, 2005), 96-98.

²⁸ Dimitri Laboury, 1998. *La statuaire de Thoutmosis III: essai d'interprétation d'un portrait royal dans son contexte historique* Aegyptiaca Leodiensia 5. Liège: C.I.P.L., 1998), 19-58.

²⁹ Anthony J. Spalinger, "Covetous eyes south: the background to Egypt" in *Thutmose III: a new biography*, ed. Eric H. Cline and David O'Connor (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 344-369.

³⁰ Donald B. Redford, *The wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III*, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 16 (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

³¹ Mohy-Eldin E. Abo-Elkaz, "Face to face: meetings between the kings of Egypt, Hatti and their vassals in the Levant during the Late Bronze Age," *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 48/2019, 9-10.

³² Andrews, *Ancient Egyptian Jewellery*, 119.

discovered in the tomb of Tutankhamun,³³ the scene is probably to be understood as taking place out-of-doors. There is a remarkably similar scene, but oriented to the left, on one side of a damaged, rectangular carnelian plaque in London.³⁴ The reverse depicts Amenhotep II in combat with a horned, African ruminant (Figure 5).

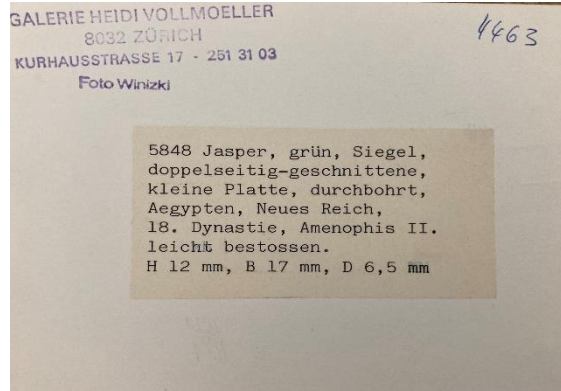


Fig. 4. The back of a photograph supplied by Galerie Heidi Vollmoeller as seen in 1988 (Courtesy, ALEA)



Fig. 5. The arm panel from a ceremonial chair inscribed for Tuthmosis III in New York

³³ Nicholas Reeves, *The complete Tutankhamun: the king - the tomb - the royal treasure*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990) 187.

³⁴ London, The British Museum 4074: H. R. Hall, 1913. *Catalogue of Egyptian scarabs, etc., in the British Museum, vol. I: royal scarabs* (London: British Museum, 1913) 161, no. 1640; Manuelian, *Reign of Amenophis II*, 198; Patrizia Piacentini, Christian Orsenigo, Éva Liptay, and Gabriella Dembitz ed. *II. Amenhotep és kora: a fáraó sírjának felfedezése / Amenhotep II and his time: the discovery of the pharaoh's tomb* (Budapest: Szépművészeti Múzeum, 2021), 328, no. 9 [listed by not illustrated]. This object was not included in the first iteration of this exhibition (Patrizia Piacentini and Christian Orsenigo ed., *Egitto: la straordinaria scoperta del faraone Amenofi II* (Milan: 24 Ore Cultura; 2017). www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA4074 <viewed 2023.02.05> Common license.

To these two examples should be added a third in Paris,³⁵ depicting Amenhotep II as an archer riding in a chariot loosing his arrows again the foe. On the other side he is engaged in combat against a lion whom he grasps by the tail.³⁶ This side is inscribed with a cartouche containing the praenomen of Amenhotep II³⁷ and an epithet, *qny*, the brave (Figure 6).



Fig. 6. A carnelian plaque in London inscribed for Amenhotep II depicting him feeding his horse; and in combat with an African ruminant.

³⁵ Paris, Musée du Louvre E. 6256: Manuelian, *Reign of Amenophis II*, 207-208; and Christiane Zivie-Coche, "Harbes, encore," in *Egyptian religion: the last thousand years. Studies dedicated to the memory of Jan Quaegebeur: part II* ed. Willy Clarysse, Antoon Schoors, and Harco Willems (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 1257. (After Manuelian, *Reign of Amenophis II*, 208, figure 45.)

³⁶ Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, "Un petit monument commémoratif du roi athlète," *Revue d'égyptologie* 7/1950, 38.

³⁷ *Ibidem* 37-39, correcting the earlier reading of this cartouche as that of Tuthmosis II.

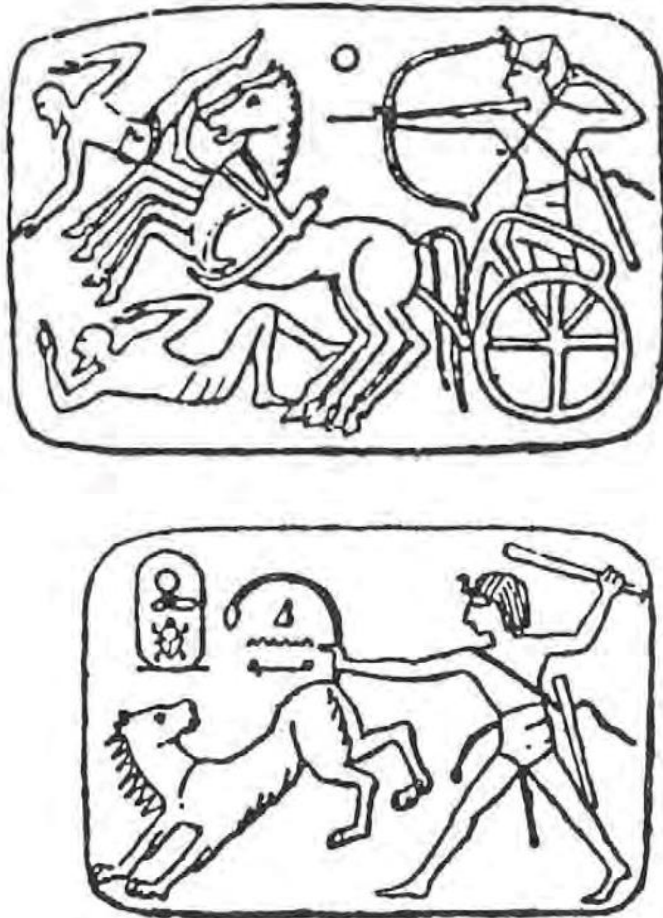


Fig. 7. The plaque in Paris depicting Amenhotep II in his chariot loosing arrows against the foe; and inscribed with his praenomen and an epithet in combat with a lion.

Both scenes on this, green jasper bezel must, therefore, be considered as an autobiographical statement within the horse-loving tradition associated with Amenhotep II.³⁸ The side bearing his praenomen celebrates that exceptional predilection of his.

Amenhotep II was the son and successor of Thuthmosis III,³⁹ but whether or not they shared the throne in a co-regency⁴⁰ is a contentious issue.⁴¹ It would be

³⁸ Piacentini and Orsenigo, *Egitto*, 32-34.

³⁹ Laboury, *Thoutmosis*, 1998, 57, suggesting that he was born during Regnal Year 36 of his father's reign.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, 52-54, *passim*.

⁴¹ Filip Taterka, "The co-regency of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II revisited," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 105 (1), 2019, 43-57.

academically perilous to regard this bezel, without an archaeological provenance, as an historical document supporting the claim of such a putative co-regency. It is preferable to regard the side containing the name of Tuthmosis III an homage being paid by Amenhotep II to his father, whose prowess in battle has already been passed in review. Those military campaigns laid the foundations for the so-called *pax aegyptiaca*, under Amenhotep III (1403-1365 B.C.), when Egypt held sway over virtually all of the Syria-Palestine region. The image of his father, Tuthmosis III, as a chariot-riding archer is doubtless a reference to Amenhotep II's own prowess because it serves as one of principal images,⁴² or leitmotifs, perhaps unabashedly to be characterized as an icon of his reign, namely Amenhotep II in a racing chariot piercing a copper ingot with his loosened arrows:⁴³ (Plate 6, figure a)⁴⁴

...[the] account of Amenophis's target shooting demonstration from a racing chariot is likewise unparalleled before his reign.⁴⁵

There are further considerations about the compositions of both sides of this bezel which must be addressed beginning with the material, jasper, and its colour. It is a given that the material and its colour from which an ancient Egyptian object was crafted further the meaning and/or the function of the object. Jasper⁴⁶ in certain contexts symbolically transfers concepts of intractability and power⁴⁷ to the object, characteristics which are enhanced by the colour green, associated with youth and vigour.⁴⁸ All of these characteristics further the themes on both sides of this bezel because they emphasise traits that a warring pharaoh and spirited steed should possess.

The degree of naturalism exhibited by the design of both horses on the bezel deserves comment. Although there is no consensus in the academic community about how naturalistic any given representation of an animal might be, we endorse conclusions recently reached that one cannot use an artistic rendition to identify taxa

⁴² Luxor, The Luxor Museum of Ancient Egyptian Art J. 129: Romano, *Luxor Museum Catalogue*, 68-69, no. 88.

⁴³ Wolfgang Decker, "Der Rekord des Rituals. Zum sportlichen Rekord im alten Ägypten," *Sport zwischen Eigenständigkeit und Fremdbestimmung. Pädagogische und historische Beiträge aus der Sportwissenschaft*, ed. Giselher Spitzer and Dieter Schmid (Bonn, Institut für Sportwissenschaft und Sport (at head of title: *Festschrift für Hajo Bernett*), 1986), 66-74. Also Wolfgang Decker, *Sports and games of ancient Egypt* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), for the context of such target shooting; and idem 1992, 17 and 46, where exercises in experimental archaeology suggest that such feats do not reflect reality.

⁴⁴Museum Luxor: Relief of Amenhotep II | Amenhotep II was well... | Flickr
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/manna4u/32134515936/in/photostream/>
 Creative Commons — Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic — CC BY-NC-SA 2.0
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/> <viewed 2023.01.31>

⁴⁵ Manuelian, *Reign of Amenophis II*, 210 {the bold highlight is his emphasis}.

⁴⁶ Andrews, *Ancient Egyptian Jewellery*, 45-46; and Thierry de Putter and Christina Karlshausen. *Pierres de l'Égypte ancienne: guide des matériaux de l'architecture, de la sculpture et de la joaillerie*, revised and expanded ed. Connaissance de l'Égypte ancienne 20. Brussels: Safran, 2022, 187-101.

⁴⁷ Hanna Philipp, *Mira et magica: Gemmen im Ägyptischen Museum der Staatlichen Museen, Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin-Charlottenburg*, Aufnahmen von Margarete Büsing (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern 1986), 13.

⁴⁸ Philippe Derchain, "La perruque et le cristal," *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 2/1975, 55-74.

if one does not have an actual specimen for comparison.⁴⁹ The caution advocated there has been echoed in an analysis of how Eurocentric prejudices have been projected onto interpreting the relative short stature of ancient Egyptian horses in relation to the height of human beings in the same vignettes. Such projections tend to identify equine representations in ancient Egyptian art as ancestral to Arabians, despite the fact that those representations are artifices intended to convey the concept of a horse and not a specific animal.⁵⁰ And these considerations must be understood in order to interpret properly the horses on this bezel.⁵¹ This conclusion is not obviated by the interpretation that the caption, *qn n aSA, the strongest of many*, might be the name of the horse. If that interpretation obtains, the name has simply been added to a generic representation of an equid because, as designed, that horse exhibits no discernible individual features which might distinguish it from others.

The virtual similarity between the subject of feeding the horse on the plaque in London and the bezel under discussion is remarkable. The two vignettes are mirror images of one another, but there are minute differences because the floral form on the example in London consists of three not four elements. This phenomenon of replication is increasingly being recognized in the architectural designs of temples and tombs as well as in their decoration, although the mechanics by which it was effected have yet to be clearly spelled out.⁵² In the case of the subject of feeding the horse on the carnelian and jasper objects, one can cautiously suggest that their varied similarity is due to their having been created in the same or related ateliers. Demonstration of this suggestion is provided by the varied similarity exhibited by the large number of calcite/travertine vases⁵³ as well as from the varied similarity of the designs of certain typologies of other objects from the tomb of Tutankhamun (1347-1336 B.C.).⁵⁴

The horse-feeding scene on one side of this bezel must also be considered within the emerging art historical concerns about the relationships between text and image

⁴⁹ Cairo, The Egyptian Museum CG 1742 [the geese of Meidum]: Guy M., Kirwan, Richard K. Broughton, Alexander C. Lees, Jente Ottenburghs, and Joseph A. Tobias, "The 'Meidum geese' revisited: early historical art is not a suitable basis for taxonomic speculation," *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 41 (article no. 103322); with the raging internet debate from March-April 2015 about authenticity.

⁵⁰ Loncke Delpout and Hylke Hettema, "Ancient Arabian horses? Revisiting ancient Egyptian equine imagery," *Current research in Egyptology 2019: proceedings of the Twentieth Annual Symposium, University of Alcalá, 17-21 June 2019*, ed. Marta Arranz Cárcamo, Raúl Sánchez Casado, Albert Planelles Orozco, Sergio Alarcón Robledo, Jónatan Ortiz García, and Patricia Mora Riudavets (Oxford: Archaeopress 2021), 168-182.

⁵¹ Loncke Delpout, "What makes a horse a horse? Configurational aspects of ancient Egyptian equines," *Cheiron: the International Journal of Equine and Equestrian History* 1 (1)/2021, 17-45.

⁵² Gabriele Pieke, "Remembering forward: on the transmission of pictorial representations in tomb decoration up to the New Kingdom," *Perspectives on lived religion II: the making of a cultural geography*, ed. L. Weiss, N. Staring, and H. Twiston Davies (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2022), 49-70.

⁵³ Lise Manniche, *The ornamental calcite vessels from the tomb of Tutankhamun* (Leuven: Peeters/Griffith Institute Publications, 2019) plates XVI-XXVII.

⁵⁴ Kamal El Mallakh and Arnold C. Brackman *The gold of Tutankhamen* (New York: Newsweek Books, 1978), plates 85. [the two daggers and their sheaths]; 98-100 [three pairs of earrings]; and 104-105 [the two band bracelets].

in ancient Egyptian art,⁵⁵ which has recently gained traction in the study of other ancient cultures as well.⁵⁶ One now recognizes that captions accompanying illustrations in ancient Egyptian art may sometimes be polyvalent in meaning, often transcending a mere verbal description of the subject matter portrayed. Taken at face value, the caption, *qn n aSA*, on this side of the bezel, the strongest of many, may indeed be understood as either a description of a salient characteristic of this particular horse or its name. On another level, the caption appears to rely as well on the use of a pun.

The caption is introduced by *qn* represented by a single ideogram, Gardiner's Sign List N 29.⁵⁷ That sign also represents *qn*, the plants of the field, which can be determined by Gardiner Sign List M 2,⁵⁸ replicated exactly by the plant held in the hand of Amenhotep II in the London example, with its varied similarity here. Accordingly, the caption may connote that pharaoh is feeding his horse the very best of grains. Consequently, these two depictions may be regarded as autobiographical rather than as genre scenes because of the way Amenhotep II freely offers the best grain to his horse,⁵⁹ in light of his well-known love of those animals. His gesture is in stark contrast to other depictions of the same subject, such as the representation on an Amarna Period talatat (1365-1347 B.C.) where the hand of a herdsman is forcefully thrust into the mouth of a tethered cow⁶⁰ (Figure 7).

Of the three attested small-scale intaglios inscribed for Amenhotep II, the subject of which is the celebration of his storied love of horses, this green jasper plaque is the only one featuring representations of a horse on both of its sides as well as an extended hieroglyph text on both of those faces. The two scenes may be understood as an autobiographical statement in which Amenhotep II lovingly cares for one of

⁵⁵ Inter alia, Ashley F. Arico, and Katherine E. Davis, "An ostrakon depicting a king at the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC 1920.255)," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 56/2020, 35-46; Matthieu Begon, "Note sur la tablette MacGregor," *NeHeT* 6/2018-2021, Revue numérique d'Égyptologie (Paris-Sorbonne - Université Libre de Bruxelles), 27-30; Horst Beinlich ed., *12. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Synergie und Divergenz. Zum Zusammenwirken von Bild und Text in ägyptischen Tempeln. Würzburg, Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft früher Hochkulturen* 3 (7); Akten der ägyptologischen Tempeltagungen (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2021); and Richard Bußmann, *Spuren der altägyptischen Gesellschaft: Festschrift für Stephan J. Seidlmayer*. "Kulturtheorie in der Ägyptologie zwischen Archäologie und Text," ed Richard Bußmann, Ingelore Hafemann, Robert Schiestl, and Daniel A. Werning (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2022), 351-368.

⁵⁶ Pascal Attinger, ed., *Text and Image: Proceedings of the 61e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale Geneva and Bern 22-26 June 2015* (Leuven: Peeters, 2018); and Nikolas Dietrich and Johannes Fouquet, ed. *Image Text Stone: Intermedial Perspectives on Graeco-Roman Sculpture* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022).

⁵⁷ Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Griffith Institute, 1969), 489.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 478.

⁵⁹ For comments on the breeding and training of horses during Dynasty XVIII, see Arielle P. Kozloff *Amenhotep III: Egypt's radiant pharaoh* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 159-165, *passim*; and Miriam A. Bibby (forthcoming), "'They shall henceforth be fed in my presence': observations on the training and treatment of chariot horses in ancient Egypt," *Studies in Honour of Joost H. Crowl on the Occasion of his 80th Birthday*, ed. Peter Raulwing, Stefan Burmeister, Kathryn M. Linduff and Gail Brownrigg (Oxford: BAR International Series, forthcoming).

⁶⁰ Brooklyn, The Brooklyn Museum of Art 60.197.4: Cooney 1965: 62. www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/3697 <viewed 2023.02.05> Common license.

his favorite steeds, while paying homage to his father, Tuthmosis III, whose victorious, military campaigns, effectively using chariots, ushered in an era of domestic tranquility which enabled Amenhotep II to pursue his leisurely athletic pursuits, justifiably earning for him the sobriquet, "the sporting pharaoh."⁶¹ And that characterisation was inextricably linked with his love of horses and his unabashed portrayal of his consummate equestrian skills.

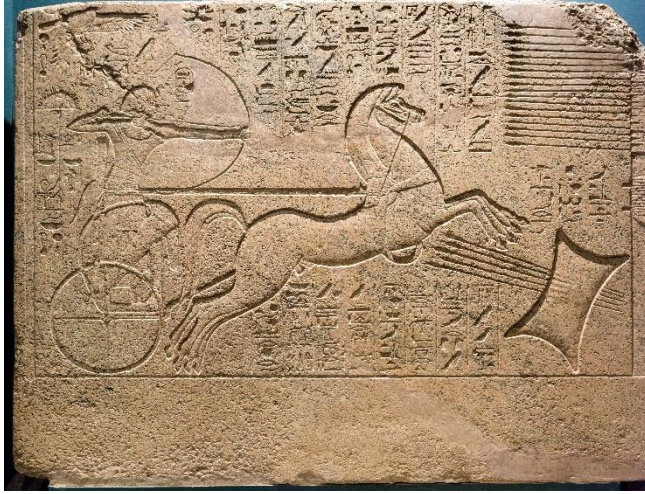


Fig. 8. Amenhotep II shooting arrows at a copper ingot used as a target.



Fig. 9. A herdsman feeding a tethered cow on a relief in Brooklyn.

⁶¹ Manuelian, *Reign of Amenophis II*, 191-214.

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