

1971: V, 259 (*twt*); Lesko 1989: 75-76 (*twt*); Junge 2005: 358): ‘everyone is gathered at the sight of him’, suggesting a crowd assembling as the king processes past (on horseback).

^bThe signs, as they appear in Beinlich and Saleh, are in a somewhat unusual order, but in the original context (arranged vertically) it is more clear that this is simply honorific transposition.

ES

Notes on the content of the texts

The Carter cards (Carter: [50ss](#)) summarise the text as ‘titulary and epithets of Tutankhamun’ but highlight one phrase, translated by Gardiner as ‘appearing on horse(back) even as when Rē^c arises, everyone is pleased at the sight of him’. It is not entirely clear why this is emphasised, but perhaps this tells us where the designation of ‘whip’ originated.

ES

Object description

50ss is an ivory stick with bands and inlays of varying materials. The stick is broken at one end, supposedly at the ‘thong-hole’ (Carter: [50ss](#)), where a strip of leather would have been attached to complete the whip (if indeed this is the correct interpretation of the object). The other, unbroken end is a round knob which bears a small loop through which may have been threaded a tassel, either for decoration or to wrap around the wrist of the holder. This material no longer exists, but is drawn in and labelled by Carter (Carter: [50ss](#)). Carter organises the decorative pattern using an annotated drawing with accompanying list, as follows (Carter: [50ss](#)):

17.5cm from the unbroken end has alternating bands of decoration:

- a. Gold with stone or glaze inlay
- b. Gold band with narrower silver(?) band superimposed
- c. Bright red gold base, with squares and granules soldered on, of yellow gold
- d. Band of electron or gold
- c.
- d.
- c.
- d.
- c.
- d.
- c.
- d.
- c.
- d.

This is followed by 26.5cm of ivory, upon which the inscription appears in black paint.

The final 6cm until the broken end consists of:

- d.
- c.
- d.
- c.

At each point where there is a band of electron or gold (pattern d.), the material is raised, thereby on the handle creating something akin to a grip.

It is also worth noting that Hoving (1979: 186) inexplicably wrote that it was made in wood covered in leather, its ivory handle carved in the form of a horse; these details are not visible nor mentioned by Carter.

ES

Notes on the object type

The large number of sticks found within the tomb of Tutankhamun is well-known. However, 50ss is unusual in that it is one of only four sticks which were labelled by Carter as whips, or parts of whips, the others being 122u ('Part of whip, of wood covered with thick sheet gold, from chariot 122'; Carter: [122u](#)), 135cc ('Wooden whip handle'; Carter: [135cc](#)) and 333 ('Chariot and whip'; Carter: [333](#)). Numbers 122u and 333 are (tentatively) associated with chariots with which they were found and 333 is the only other to bear an inscription, naming its owner the 'king's son and chief of the troops, Thutmose', suggested to be the son of Amenhotep III or even of Thutmose IV (Carter: [333](#)). 50ss, 135cc and 333 have very similar handles, all bearing multi-layered designs and a round knob; like 50ss, 135cc has a small loop on this knob (see Decker 1982: 922 for a description of the whips of this time period). As such, 135cc and 333 might be used to suggest a reconstruction to the broken end of 50ss – pierced just before the end (the 'thong-hole') and a point made of metal, perhaps bronze like 333 (for a brief, general description of Egyptian whips, see Rommelaere 1991: 110). All of the supposed whips in the tomb are of a similar length (50-60cm), or can be assumed to be where they are now broken. The total length would have been augmented with the straps once threaded through the pierced end (see below for further discussion of length).

As suggested in the above 'Notes on the content of the texts', the designation of a 'whip' for 50ss may have derived from its inscription, which mentions horses, as well as its similarity to others in the tomb which are more closely associated to the chariot groups. Although Beinlich and Saleh only dub 50ss a 'Stock', 333 is indeed referred to as a whip, precisely 'Peitschenstock' (Beinlich and Saleh 1989: 167). However, for reasons that will be given below, it seems that this designation is correct.

The representations of and references to whips in Egyptian sources are manifold. At a basic level, the biliteral *mḥ*-sign represents a stick with hanging cord, or a length of several twisted cords, such as might be used to drive donkeys or sheep (Gardiner Sign List V22-23 (whip); Borchardt 1897: 106; Decker). Though this sign itself is not used for words meaning 'whip', there may be some etymological connection to *mḥ*, 'hold, seize, capture' (Gardiner 1957: 569; Faulkner 1962: 113; Erman and Grapow 1971: II, 119; Lesko 1982: 231-232; Junge 2005: 335).

References to whips in Egyptian textual evidence are most likely to be those used for punishment. Indeed, an Egyptian word for 'whip', *smi*, (Gardiner 1957: 590; Faulkner 1962: 227; Erman and Grapow 1971: IV, 130) shares a stem with the words *smi*, 'to report, complain, accuse', and *smi*, 'to chastise, punish, beat'. The determinative used is Gardiner Sign List F27 (cow's skin), presumably a reference to the materials used for the whip-strap or -straps. Sticks as well as whips could be used in this regard, as indicated, for instance, by a Ramesside text in which men accompany a tax-collecting scribe, bearing sticks to beat an unwilling tax-payer (Gardiner 1941: 19-20, 22-25). In the earlier Tale of the Eloquent Peasant the protagonist, in the course of his third petition, is subject to a beating, but here whips are specified:

‘Then he had two guards go to him with whips (*smi.w*), and they thrashed (³*g*) all his limbs’ (Lichtheim 1975:177 (line 187); for hieroglyphic transcription, see Parkinson 1991: 31 (line217, old 187))

Another term for whip exists in the New Kingdom, however, which may be more relevant in the context of Carter numbers 50ss, 122u, 135cc and 333, being *ispr* /*isbr* (Faulkner 1962: 30; Erman and Grapow 1971: I, 132; Lesko 1982: 54 (note the probably related word *isbr*, one translation being ‘reeds’); Junge 2005: 325). Several whips with this designation appear in wall-paintings of the tomb of Kenamun, amongst military equipment including sticks (Davies 1930: 29-31 (nos. 84, 110 and 121), pls. XVIII and XXII; Helck 1956: 1393), and reference is also made to a whip of this kind in p.Anastasi I (British Museum EA 10247.15), in the context of repairing a chariot where it is said that *mtyw*, strips (of cloth?), are tied on (p.Anastasi I, 26, 8, see Fischer-Elfert 1983: 149). Here the determinative for *isbr* is a branch (Gardiner Sign List M3 (branch)), referring not to the straps but to the main body of the whip.

The use of whips upon animals, such as donkeys and cattle, certainly existed and indeed, this appears to have been the original type of whip (Decker 1982: 921-922). Numerous types of sticks and whips being used in this agricultural context can be seen from the Old Kingdom onwards. For instance, dynamic agricultural scenes from the mastaba of Ti at Saqqara show workmen driving donkeys, cattle and sheep, using sticks against the former two groups of animals, and what appear to be true whips (solid handle with a cloth or leather strip) against the latter (Vandier 1978: pl.X). A scene from the Eighteenth Dynasty tomb of Nakht shows the use of what looks like a two-tailed, flail-like whip against cattle during ploughing (facsimile in Metropolitan Museum of Art, MMA 15.5.19b) and similarly in the Nineteenth Dynasty tomb of Sennedjem, TT1, the tomb-owner can be seen ploughing, also carrying a flail-type whip, here the handle of whip being in the form of the *hm*-sign (Gardiner Sign List U36 (club used by fullers in washing)), indicating some reference to servitude, and more specifically has been suggested as indicating servitude to Osiris (Bruyère 1959: 38-39, pl. XXVII). Such plough scenes are also represented in the round, an example being a Middle Kingdom painted wooden model whereby the workman drives two ploughing cows with a stick in his right hand (Metropolitan Museum of Art, MMA 36.5). Nonetheless, the use of the whip in this form of animal husbandry will not be dealt with further here; the types of whip in the tomb of Tutankhamun are almost certainly the equestrian type, in other words, riding crops, which were used to encourage horses to move, facilitate manoeuvres and to punish a disobedient animal (Rommelaere 1991: 109).

Following the introduction of horses into Egypt in the Second Intermediate Period (Störk 1982: 1009; Rommelaere 1991: 22-23), whips in the sense of riding crops were shown in scenes with riders on horseback or charioteers, many during battle scenes of the New Kingdom. The emergence of such an accessory, different from the agricultural type, has also been seen to be directly related to the introduction of the chariot (Decker 1982: 922). Whilst many battle scenes involving the pharaoh show him with his bow raised and drawn, one register on a stela of Amenhotep III reused in the mortuary temple of Merneptah (CG 34026; Lacau 1926: 59-60, pls. XX-XXI) shows the pharaoh, in a mirrored scene, on a chariot, both hands holding the reins and one holding a bow, with the other holding a whip. This whip is a straight stick approximately the length of his forearm, with a single strip of cloth or leather, held by the hand in ‘une position «de repos»’ (Rommelaere 1991: 110), of apparently greater length. In fact, Rommelaere (1991: 110) estimates from surviving examples and from various representations that Egyptian whips had a handle of around 50cm in

length (a suppositions which agrees with those from the tomb of Tutankhamun) and a whip-strap of around 75cm. Nevertheless, with regard to this last approximation the aforementioned whips represented in the tomb of Kenamun show straps of approximately equal length to the stick. Incidentally, the straps on two of these whips are shown attached to the pointed end; on the rest it is attached a short distance from the end, similar to Tutankhamun's whips. Also, whilst the knob on the handles of Kenamun's whips seems much larger, the shape of the knob, the banded decoration, the pointed end and, on three of them, the loop on the knob, are directly comparable to the whips of Tutankhamun. This would suggest that the designation of 'whip' given to the Tutankhamun examples is indeed correct.

Returning to the appearance of whips as held by the pharaoh, another example can be seen dating to the time of Amenhotep II (Zayed 1985: 8, pls.I-II). Amenhotep is shown in his chariot, holding in his right hand a whip with a very short strap, not long enough to hold back. One further example is dated to the Amarna period, in the tomb of Panehesy, east wall (Davies 1905: pl. XIII, XV and XVI). Akhenaten, his family and a military entourage are shown, including many chariots. The pharaoh holds his whip down, in a position 'de repos', like the Amenhotep III stela mentioned above. Nefertiti, in her own chariot, holds her whip behind her, and although her arm position is relaxed, the strap hangs free as if she were about to use it on the horses. Further chariots with the princesses and their servants follow, all with at least two people in the chariot, only one of which holds the whip and reins; once again the whips are not being used, though the bent body positioning of some of the figures is dynamic.

Schulman provides several examples where horsemen (without chariot) bear whips: a relief from Memphite tomb of Horemheb, Bologna No. 1889 (Schulman 1957: 265); a late-Eighteenth Dynasty relief fragment, Edinburgh Royal Scottish Museum No.1955.81 (Schulman 1957: 264, 265, fig. 1); Kadesh reliefs at Abu Simbel and Luxor Temple (Schulman 1957: 267-268); a Ramesside Deir el-Medina ostrakon, Cairo (Vandier 1937: no.2159, pl.19; Schulman 1957: 268); and an ostrakon in a private collection of Prof. Edgerton (Schulman 1957: 268, fig. 7).

It is notable that the equestrian whip is almost never shown in use (the example of Nefertiti above is rare), either on the horses or on enemies, even in the heat of battle (Rommelaere 1991: 110). However, a stela from the Ramesseum broadly dated from the Nineteenth to Twenty-second Dynasties shows in the upper register a horse and rider wearing the *atef*-crown, who has been suggested to be the warrior goddess Astarte, or perhaps Anat who shared similar warrior iconography: 'a Syrian goddess on horseback, perhaps Asit' (Quibell et al. 1898: 20, pl. XXVII). The rider brandishes a stick with the right hand above his or her head, possibly a whip (though for a potential depiction of Astarte on horseback carrying a shield and spear see Petrie 1897: pl.VIII, 1; Schulman 1957: 264, 265). This position is reminiscent of the 'smiting the enemy' pose exhibited by the pharaoh most recognisably on temple façades (Ritner 1993: 115-116).

This last example, if the item held is understood to be a whip, demonstrates most vividly the symbolism of power and affluence which is encompassed within a whip: not only is any form of stick often a sign of superiority (see the corresponding article contained within fact-sheets for sticks and staves), but a riding crop has the association with horses, themselves an expensive luxury (see also Decker 1982: 922 on the whip as a status symbol). The whip as a device with which to strike people also imbues its holder with authority. Additionally, the *nh3h3*-flail carried as insignia of kingship and divine authority, with the *hq3*-sceptre, has been interpreted either as a fly-whisk or alternatively, a shepherd's whip (Lurker 1980: 52).

It is not surprising, given the quantity of sticks in the tomb of Tutankhamun, that whips are included in their number. However, their relevance in the tomb is heightened due to the presence of the chariots and chariot-parts, and perhaps also in light of several representations of the pharaoh on his chariot in battle, such as those on the painted wooden chest (Carter: 21), and in reliefs allegedly from his now-destroyed mortuary temple, which show similar scenes (Johnson 2010). The chest itself includes another image of a whip, here held by one of the king's followers in the top left (upper register) of one of the long sides, shown the same dynamic pose as those seen in the Amarna examples. Of the four whips from the tomb, only 50ss can be assumed with some certainty to have been a personal possession of Tutankhamun because of its inscription naming him; 333, with its reference to the prince Thutmose, seems not to have belonged to Tutankhamun originally, but it is possible that it was a family heirloom. The whips were included in the tomb, not just as personal belongings, but also as a necessary accessory to the chariots if Tutankhamun was to exact the same punishments upon his enemies and to exude the same authority as he had in life.

ES

Bibliography

- Beinlich, H. and Saleh, M. 1989. *Corpus der Hieroglyphischen Inschriften aus dem Grab des Tutanchamun*. Griffith Institute: Oxford.
- Borchardt, L. 1897. 'Beiträge zu Griffith' Benihasan III', *ZÄS* 35: 103-107.
- Bruyère, B. 1959. *La tombe no.1 de Sen-nedjem à Deir el Médineh*. IFAO: Cairo.
- Carter, H. and Mace, A.C. 1923. *The Tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen, Volume I*. Cassell: London.
- Carter, H. Object 21 <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/021.html> [18 May 2014]
- Carter, H. Object 50ss <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/050ss.html> [3 May 2014]
- Carter, H. Object 122u <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/122u.html> [12 May 2014]
- Carter, H. Object 135cc <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/135cc.html> [12 May 2014]
- Carter, H. Object 333 <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/333.html> [12 May 2014]
- Davies, N. de G. 1905. *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna, part II: The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II*. Egypt Exploration Fund: London.
- Davies, N. de G. 1930. *The Tomb of Ken-amūn at Thebes*. Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York.
- Decker, W. 1982. 'Peitsche', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf. *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, vol. IV, 921-922. Otto Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden.
- Erman, A. and Grapow, H. 1971. *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache*, 5 vols., Akademie Verlag: Berlin.

Faulkner, R.O. 1962. *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. Griffith Institute: Oxford.

Fischer-Elfert, H-W. 1983. *Die satirische Streitschrift des Papyrus Anastasi I*. Otto Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden.

Gardiner, A.H. 1941. 'Ramesside texts relating to the taxation and transport of corn', *JEA* 27:19-73.

Gardiner, A.H. 1957. *Egyptian Grammar*. Griffith Institute: Oxford.

Helck, W. 1956. *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie, Heft 18*, Akademie Verlag: Berlin.

Hoving, T. 1979. *Tutankhamun: The Untold Story*. H. Hamilton: London.

Johnson, W.R. 2010. 'Warrior Tut'. *Archaeology* 63.
<http://archive.archaeology.org/1003/etc/tut.html> [18 May 2014]

Junge, F. 2005. *Late Egyptian Grammar: An Introduction* [translated by D. Warburton]. Griffith Institute; Oxford.

Lacau, M.P. 1926. *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du musée du Caire, Nos. 34065-34186: Stèles du Nouvel Empire*. IFAO: Cairo.

Lichtheim, M. 1975. *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms*. University of California Press: Berkeley and London.

Lurker, M. 1980. *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*. Thames and Hudson: London. [trans. B. Cummings, from *Götter und Symbole der Alten Ägypter* (1974)]

Parkinson, R.B. 1991. *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*. Griffith Institute and Ashmolean Museum: Oxford.

Petrie, W.M.F. 1897. *Six Temples at Thebes*. Bernard Quaritch: London

Porter, B. and Moss, R.L.B. 1964. *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings, I. The Theban Necropolis: Part 2. Royal Tombs and Smaller Cemeteries* [second edition]. Clarendon Press: Oxford.

Quibell, J.E., Spiegelberg, W. and Griffith, F.Ll. 1898. *The Ramesseum and the Tomb of Ptahhetep*. Bernard Quaritch: London.

Ritner, R.K. 1993. *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*. Oriental Institute: Chicago, Il.

Rommelaere, C. 1991. *Les chevaux du Nouvel Empire égyptien*.

Störk, L. 1982. 'Pferd', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf. *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, vol. IV, 1009-1013. Otto Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden.

50ss

Vandier, J. 1937. *Catalogue des ostraca figures de Deir el Médineh*. IFAO: Cairo.

Vandier, J. 1978. *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne, tome VI: bas-reliefs et peintures – scènes de la vie agricole à l'Ancien et au Moyen Empire*. Éditions A. et J. Picard: Paris.

Zayed, A-H. 1985. 'Une représentation inédite des campagnes d'Aménophis II', in P. Posener-Kriéger (ed.), 5-17. IFAO: Cairo

Authors

Eleanor Simmance [ES]

Reference

Simmance, E.B. 2014. Carter Object No. 50ss: 'Handle of whip (?) in solid ivory'. In E.B. Simmance, N. Adderley and L. Doughty (eds.), *Tutankhamun's Texts*. Birmingham Egyptology: University of Birmingham.
<http://birminghamegyptology.co.uk/tut-project>