



VIOLENCE AND POWER IN ANCIENT EGYPT

IMAGE AND IDEOLOGY BEFORE
THE NEW KINGDOM

LAUREL BESTOCK

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN EGYPTOLOGY

ROUTLEDGE



Violence and Power in Ancient Egypt

This book is a significant contribution to the study of Egyptology and ancient art history, delivering the results of cutting-edge research in an area of central importance. Its essential focus is violence in Ancient Egypt, which is a topic of increasing interest in current historical and cultural studies, and discusses a large corpus of images of great value, recognizing the need for a more theoretical approach to the study of Egyptian artistic expression, and emphasizing the critical importance of context in evaluating the function of representations. Throughout, the analysis shows a healthy awareness of the problem of evidence—or lack thereof. The book has a valuable cross-cultural dimension that makes it relevant not only to the Egyptological community, but also to art historians, ancient historians in general, and anthropologists. The result is a study that breaks much new ground and forces the reconsideration of entrenched views.

Dr Alan Lloyd, Swansea University, UK

Violence and Power in Ancient Egypt examines the use of Egyptian pictures of violence prior to the New Kingdom. Starting with the assertion that making and displaying such images served as a tactic of power, related to but separate from the actual practice of violence, the book explores the development and deployment of this imagery across different contexts. By comparatively utilizing violent images from a variety of other times and cultures, the book asks that we consider not only how Egyptian imagery was related to Egyptian violence, but also why people create pictures of violence and place them where they do, and how such images communicate what to whom. By cataloging and querying Egyptian imagery of violence from different periods and different contexts—royal tombs, divine temples, the landscape, portable objects, and private tombs—*Violence and Power* highlights the nuances of the relationship between aspects of royal ideology, art, and its audiences in the first half of pharaonic Egyptian history.

Laurel Bestock is an Associate Professor of Archaeology and Egyptology at Brown University (USA). She received her PhD in Egyptian Archaeology and Art from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University (USA). She directs excavations in Egypt at the site of Abydos, where she investigates early kingship. In the Sudan, she co-directs excavations at the Egyptian fortress of Uronarti, seeking to understand lifestyles and cultural interactions in a colonial outpost from nearly 4,000 years ago. For her next project, she hopes to work on a book focused on food and culture at Uronarti, both in antiquity and in the context of a modern excavation team camping in tents along the Nile.

Routledge Studies in Egyptology

Available titles:

**Women, Gender, and Identity in Third Intermediate Period Egypt:
The Theban Case Study**

Jean Li

Ancient Egyptian Temple Ritual: Performance, Patterns, and Practice

Katherine Eaton

Science in the Study of Ancient Egypt

Sonia Zakrzewski, Andrew Shortland, Joanne Rowland

Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures

Edited by William Carruthers

www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-Egyptology/book-series/RSEGY

Violence and Power in Ancient Egypt

Image and Ideology before the
New Kingdom

Laurel Bestock

First published 2018
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2018 Laurel Bestock

The right of Laurel Bestock to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Bestock, Laurel, author.

Title: Violence and power in ancient Egypt: image and ideology before the New Kingdom/Laurel Bestock.

Other titles: Routledge studies in Egyptology.

Description: Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2018. | Series: Routledge studies in Egyptology | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017015115 | ISBN 9781138685055 (hardback: alk. paper) | ISBN 9781315543505 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Art, Egyptian. | Art, Ancient—Egypt. | Violence in art. | Egypt—Antiquities.

Classification: LCC N5350.B39 2018 | DDC 709.32—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017015115>

ISBN: 978-1-138-68505-5 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-54350-5 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Swales & Willis Ltd, Exeter, Devon, UK

For Lutz



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xvi
<i>The chronology and contexts of scenes of violence from Egypt through the Middle Kingdom</i>	xviii
1 Picturing violence	1
<i>The structure of this book</i>	5
<i>Themes</i>	9
2 The origins of violent imagery	14
<i>The earliest images of violence in Egypt</i>	16
<i>The evidence from early Egypt: Naqada I</i>	18
<i>The evidence from early Egypt: Naqada II</i>	24
<i>Order and chaos</i>	33
3 The violence inherent in the system: imagery and royal ideology in the period of state formation	40
<i>Violence in Egyptian art in the period of state formation</i>	41
<i>Continuity and discontinuity</i>	74
4 To live forever: the decoration of royal mortuary complexes	85
<i>The Old Kingdom</i>	90
<i>The Middle Kingdom</i>	127
<i>Interpreting imagery of violence from royal tombs</i>	143
5 Uniter of the two lands: images of violence in divine temples	154
<i>Egyptian temples as a context for imagery</i>	156

6	The preservation of order: images in the landscape	172
	<i>The Early Dynastic Period</i>	175
	<i>The Old Kingdom</i>	179
	<i>Reading rock carvings of smiting</i>	193
7	Out and about: images of violence on portable objects	201
	<i>Images of triumph on portable objects</i>	203
	<i>Images of captivity on portable objects</i>	209
	<i>Movement and meaning</i>	216
8	Who is who? Private monumental images of war	222
	<i>The Old Kingdom</i>	225
	<i>The First Intermediate Period</i>	232
	<i>The Middle Kingdom</i>	235
	<i>Inscriptions and images in private tombs</i>	252
	<i>Interpreting private images of war</i>	255
9	Violence, power, ideology	264
	<i>Bibliography</i>	269
	<i>Index</i>	285

Figures

Note: dimensions are given in captions so as to allow the reader to gauge the size of any object while viewing it. Dimensions given are those published. Copyright information can be found in the Acknowledgments and in the endnotes associated with each image.

1.1	Belgian €2.5 coin issued to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo	2
1.2	Line drawing of the reliefs showing Ramses II triumphant at the Battle of Qadesh, Ramesseum, Thebes	8
2.1	“Skirmish” scene, painting on rock face, near Deaf Adder Gorge, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia	14
2.2	White Cross-Lined Ware vase with possible captivity scene. Provenance unknown. Brussels, E. 3200	19
2.3	White Cross-Lined Ware vase with possible captivity scene. Provenance unknown. University College London, Petrie Museum	19
2.4	White Cross-Lined Ware vase with possible captivity scene. Abydos, Umm el-Qaab, tomb U-239 vessel 1. Cairo JdE 99072	20
2.5	White Cross-Lined Ware vase with possible captivity scene. Abydos, Umm el-Qaab, tomb U-415 vessel 1. Abydos SCA storeroom	20
2.6	White Cross-Lined Ware vase with possible captivity scene. Abydos, Umm el-Qaab, tomb U-415 vessel 2. Abydos SCA storeroom	21
2.7	Naqada II Decorated Ware pot with boat scene	25
2.8	Detail of the fragmentary Gebelein textile showing boats and a possible bound captive	26
2.9	Watercolor facsimile of Hierakonpolis Tomb 100, southwest wall, paint on mud plaster	28
2.10	Detail of the lower left corner of the southwest wall of Hierakonpolis Tomb 100; smiting	29

2.11	Detail of the lower part of the southwest wall of Hierakonpolis Tomb 100; possible combat	30
2.12	Detail of the upper left of the southwest wall of Hierakonpolis Tomb 100; royal ritual (?)	32
3.1	The Battlefield Palette	45
3.2	The Libyan Palette	47
3.3	The Bull Palette	50
3.4	Line drawing of the Oxford knife handle showing bound prisoners	51
3.5	Line drawing of the Metropolitan Museum knife handle 26.241.1	51
3.6	The Gebel el-Arak knife	52
3.7	Detailed view of the two sides of the Gebel el-Arak knife handle	53
3.8	Line drawing of the relief image on the Scorpion Macehead	56
3.9	Three ivory cylinders, perhaps from a handle, from the Hierakonpolis Main Deposit	58
3.10	Ivory macehead from the Hierakonpolis Main Deposit	59
3.11	Three figurines from temple deposits at Tell el-Farkha, possibly showing captives	60
3.12	Figurines from Tell Ibrahim Awad, possibly showing captivity or submission	61
3.13	Line drawing of the rock carving at Gebel Sheikh Suleiman	63
3.14	Line drawing of the Narmer Palette	65
3.15	Maceheads from the Hierakonpolis Main Deposit	69
3.16	Line drawing of the relief scene on the Narmer Macehead	69
3.17	Line drawing of the ivory cylinder of Narmer from the Hierakonpolis Main Deposit with the king's <i>serekh</i> smiting	71
3.18	Line drawing of ivory tag of Narmer with the king's name smiting	72
4.1	<i>La Liberté guidant le peuple</i> , oil on canvas, Eugene Delacroix	85
4.2	Sahure pyramid complex plan	87
4.3	Relief of bound captive, detail. Giza, pyramid complex of Khafre	91
4.4	Relief fragment showing archers firing in unison, probably from the pyramid complex of Khafre at Giza, Fourth Dynasty	92
4.5	Line drawing of relief showing the Libyan Family Scene, pyramid temple of Sahure at Abusir, Fifth Dynasty	95
4.6	Line drawing of relief showing bound prisoners, causeway of the pyramid complex of Sahure at Abusir, Fifth Dynasty	97
4.7	Detail of row of prisoners from the scene of bound prisoners, causeway of the pyramid complex of Sahure at Abusir, Fifth Dynasty	98

4.8	Relief fragment showing an Asiatic beard from a trampling scene, causeway of the pyramid complex of Sahure at Abusir, Fifth Dynasty	99
4.9	Detail of relief with archers taking target practice, causeway of the pyramid complex of Sahure at Abusir, Fifth Dynasty	100
4.10	Line drawing of relief showing Sahure as griffin trampling, valley temple of the pyramid complex of Sahure at Abusir, Fifth Dynasty	101
4.11	Line drawings of relief fragments from smiting scenes, pyramid temple of Niuserra at Abusir, Fifth Dynasty	104
4.12	Line drawings of relief fragments from trampling scenes, causeway of the pyramid of Niuserra at Abusir, Fifth Dynasty	105
4.13	Line drawing of relief fragment showing an arm wearing a bracelet with a smiting scene, valley temple of Niuserra at Abusir, Fifth Dynasty	107
4.14	Line drawing of a relief fragment showing smiting, pyramid temple of Unis at Saqqara, Fifth Dynasty	108
4.15	Line drawing of a relief fragment showing a bound captive herded by a god, pyramid temple of Unis at Saqqara, Fifth Dynasty	108
4.16	Line drawing of a relief fragment showing bound prisoners, pyramid temple of Unis at Saqqara, Fifth Dynasty	109
4.17	Line drawing showing the reconstruction of a possible trampling scene from the causeway of Unis at Saqqara, Fifth Dynasty	110
4.18	Line drawing of a relief fragment showing battle against Asiatics from the causeway of Unis at Saqqara, Fifth Dynasty	111
4.19	Line drawing of a relief fragment showing battle against Asiatics from the causeway of Unis at Saqqara, Fifth Dynasty	112
4.20	Relief fragment with an axe-wielding Egyptian, from the causeway of Unis at Saqqara, Fifth Dynasty	113
4.21	Relief fragment with combat, from the causeway of Unis at Saqqara, Fifth Dynasty	114
4.22	Relief fragment with possible combat, from the causeway of Unis at Saqqara, Fifth Dynasty	115
4.23	Line drawing of partial relief showing the Libyan Family Scene, pyramid temple of Pepy I at Saqqara, Sixth Dynasty	116
4.24	Line drawing showing the reconstruction of a Libyan Family Scene from the pyramid temple of Pepy II at Saqqara, Sixth Dynasty	117
4.25	Line drawing showing the reconstruction of a smiting scene from the pyramid temple of Pepy II at Saqqara, Sixth Dynasty	118
4.26	Line drawing showing bound prisoners and the crown of Seshat from the pyramid temple of Pepy II at Saqqara, Sixth Dynasty	119

4.27	Relief with three prisoners from the pyramid temple of Pepy II at Saqqara, Sixth Dynasty	120
4.28	Line drawing showing the reconstruction of two trampling scenes from the causeway of Pepy II at Saqqara, Sixth Dynasty	121
4.29	Line drawing showing the reconstruction of two trampling scenes from the causeway of Pepy II at Saqqara, Sixth Dynasty	122
4.30	Line drawing showing the reconstruction of the presentation of prisoners from the causeway of Pepy II at Saqqara, Sixth Dynasty	123
4.31	Line drawing showing the reconstruction of a smiting scene from the valley temple of Pepy II at Saqqara, Sixth Dynasty	124
4.32	Sculptures of bound, bearded captives from the pyramid complex of Pepy II at Saqqara, Sixth Dynasty.	125
4.33	Sculpture of a bound prisoner—an Egyptian?—from the pyramid complex of Pepy II, Saqqara	126
4.34	Relief fragment with yellow-skinned, arrow-shot victims tumbling next to a ladder, mortuary complex of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahri, Eleventh Dynasty.	129
4.35	Relief fragment with victims of combat, mortuary complex of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahri, Eleventh Dynasty	130
4.36	Relief fragment with an archer shooting, mortuary complex of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahri, Eleventh Dynasty	131
4.37	Relief fragment with archers firing in unison, mortuary complex of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahri, Eleventh Dynasty	132
4.38	Relief fragment of combat, mortuary complex of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahri, Eleventh Dynasty	133
4.39	Relief fragment of combat, mortuary complex of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahri, Eleventh Dynasty.	133
4.40	Relief fragment with mixed troops, mortuary complex of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahri, Eleventh Dynasty.	134
4.41	Relief fragment with combat and captivity, mortuary complex of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahri, Eleventh Dynasty.	135
4.42	Relief fragment with a dark-skinned archer firing his bow, mortuary complex of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahri, Eleventh Dynasty	136
4.43	Relief fragment with a victim, mortuary complex of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahri, Eleventh Dynasty	136
4.44	Relief fragment with a woman and child being herded by an archer, mortuary complex of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahri, Eleventh Dynasty.	137
4.45	Relief fragment from a smiting scene from the pyramid complex of Senwosret I at Lisht, Twelfth Dynasty	140

4.46	Relief fragment with a foreigner throwing a spear from the pyramid temple of Senwosret I at Lisht, Twelfth Dynasty	141
5.1	Line drawing of relief. Late Classic Maya Stela 11, Yaxchilan, Chiapas Mexico	154
5.2	Line drawing of an architectural relief fragment from Hierakonpolis, reign of Khasekhem, Second Dynasty	158
5.3	Limestone statue of Khasekhem from Hierakonpolis, Second Dynasty	160
5.4	Line drawing of the front of the base of a limestone statue of Khasekhem showing apparent combat casualties, from Hierakonpolis, Second Dynasty	161
5.5	Line drawing showing Nebhepetra Montuhotep smiting an Egyptian on a relief fragment from Gebelein, Eleventh Dynasty	162
5.6	Line drawing showing Nebhepetra Montuhotep smiting a Libyan on a relief fragment from Gebelein, Eleventh Dynasty	164
5.7	Line drawing showing Nebhepetra Montuhotep smiting an abstract emblem from Denderah, Eleventh Dynasty	166
6.1	Relief of Hormizd II, Naqsh-e-Rustam, Iran	172
6.2	Naqsh-e-Rustam, Iran	173
6.3	Line drawing of a relief with the <i>serekh</i> of Djer smiting, Wadi Ameyra, Sinai, First Dynasty	175
6.4	Line drawing of a relief of Den smiting, Wadi el-Humur, Sinai, First Dynasty	177
6.5	Line drawing of a relief of Den smiting, Wadi el-Humur, Sinai, First Dynasty	177
6.6	Line drawing of a relief of a king in the Red Crown smiting, Wadi el-Humur, Sinai, First Dynasty	178
6.7	Line drawing of a relief of Netjerikhet (Djoser) smiting, Wadi Maghara, Sinai, Third Dynasty	180
6.8	Line drawing of a relief of Sekhemkhet smiting, Wadi Maghara, Sinai, Third Dynasty	181
6.9	A relief of Sekhemkhet smiting, Wadi Maghara, Sinai, Third Dynasty	183
6.10	Line drawing of the second relief of Sekhemkhet smiting, Wadi Maghara, Sinai, Third Dynasty	183
6.11	Fragment of relief of Sanakht smiting, Wadi Maghara, Sinai, Third Dynasty	184
6.12	Line drawing of a relief of Snefru smiting, Wadi Maghara, Sinai, Fourth Dynasty	186
6.13	Line drawing of a relief of Snefru smiting, Wadi Maghara, Sinai, Fourth Dynasty	187

6.14	Double-panel relief with Khufu smiting, Wadi Maghara, Sinai, Fourth Dynasty	188
6.15	Line drawing of relief showing Khufu smiting, Wadi Maghara, Sinai, Fourth Dynasty	188
6.16	Line drawing of relief showing Sahure smiting, Wadi Maghara, Sinai, Fifth Dynasty	189
6.17	Line drawing of relief showing Niuserra smiting, Wadi Maghara, Sinai, Fifth Dynasty	190
6.18	Line drawing of relief showing Djedkare Izezi smiting, Wadi Maghara, Sinai, Fifth Dynasty	191
6.19	Line drawing of relief showing Pepy I smiting, Wadi Maghara, Sinai, Sixth Dynasty.	192
7.1	Ivory armband from Benin showing warriors	201
7.2	Line drawing of an ivory tag with a smiting <i>serekh</i> from the tomb of Aha at Abydos, First Dynasty	204
7.3	Ivory tag showing Den smiting, from his tomb at Abydos, First Dynasty	205
7.4	Top: gold and inlay pectoral with symmetrical images of Senwosret III smiting. Bottom: gold and inlay pectoral with symmetrical images of Amenemhat III smiting. Both from the tomb of Mereret at Dahshur, Twelfth Dynasty	208
7.5	Ivory rod, possibly for gaming, with a relief carving of a bound prisoner. From the tomb of Qa'a at Abydos, First Dynasty	210
7.6	Clay execration figurine with schematically rendered bound arms, Saqqara, Twelfth Dynasty.	212
7.7	Line drawings and photograph of mud stamp sealings from Nubian fortresses showing captives and captors, Twelfth Dynasty	214
8.1	The Alexander Mosaic from the House of the Faun, Pompeii	222
8.2	Line drawing of an attack on a settlement from the tomb of Khaemhesy at Saqqara, Fifth Dynasty	226
8.3	Line drawing of an attack on a fortified place from the tomb of Inti at Deshasha, Fifth Dynasty	228
8.4	Painting from the tomb of Setka at Aswan showing dark-skinned bowmen in combat, late Old Kingdom (?).	231
8.5	Line drawing of a fragmentary scene from the tomb of Iti-ibi at Asyut, First Intermediate Period	233
8.6	Line drawing of fragmentary figures from the tomb of Ankhtifi at Moalla, First Intermediate Period	234
8.7	Watercolor facsimile of the attack on a fortified place, tomb of Intef at Thebes, Eleventh Dynasty	236
8.8	Line drawing of three boats with soldiers brandishing weapons, tomb of Intef at Thebes, Eleventh Dynasty	240

8.9	Line drawing of Beni Hasan Tomb 15, belonging to Baqt, east wall of the main chamber, showing a complex battle scene, early Middle Kingdom	243
8.10	Line drawing of Beni Hasan Tomb 17, belonging to Khety, east wall of the main chamber, showing a complex battle scene, early Middle Kingdom	245
8.11	Detail of the fortress and its defenders from the east wall of the tomb of Khety at Beni Hasan, early Middle Kingdom	245
8.12	Line drawing of scenes from the damaged east wall of Beni Hasan Tomb 14, belonging to Khnumhotep I, early Middle Kingdom	246
8.13	Line drawing of Beni Hasan Tomb 2, belonging to Amenemhat, north half of the east wall of the main chamber, showing a complex battle scene, early Middle Kingdom	248
8.14	Detail of the attack on the fortress shown in Amenemhat's tomb, Beni Hasan, early Middle Kingdom	249
8.15	Line drawing of Beni Hasan Tomb 2, belonging to Amenemhat, south half of the east wall of the main chamber, showing a complex battle scene, early Middle Kingdom	250
8.16	Detail of the combat in the tomb of Amenemhat, Beni Hasan, early Middle Kingdom	251

Acknowledgments

I am grateful for the intellectual and personal support of many people during the process of writing this book. Foremost among them is Luiza Silva, whose help editing the manuscript, tracking down sources, gaining image permissions, and generally being a model of both organization and critical thinking has been essential. I quite literally could not have finished the book without her. I am fortunate in my students, and others also served as research assistants at critical periods: thank you Kathryn Howley, Simon Hochberg, and especially Jessica Tomkins, who first imposed order on my chaos. Three reviewers of the book proposal gave comments that shaped the project, and I would particularly like to thank Alan Lloyd, who not only gave very constructive criticism but also signed his review. Adela Oppenheim generously gathered and then discussed with me unpublished relief fragments from Middle Kingdom pyramid complexes, for which I am thankful. The larger group of my colleagues and students at Brown has been so long supportive and is so numerous that I will not name you all, but thank you—and particularly to the participants in the seminar on violence in Egyptian art in the Spring of 2015, during which many of the ideas in this book were tested. I would be remiss not to mention, too, the two different classes of Egyptian Warfare that I have taught at Brown University—you guys did marvelous reconstructions of the Battle of Qadesh, and teaching you helped me realize how much I wanted to write this book. The Howard Foundation generously supported a sabbatical semester during the beginning stages of research for this project, and further support from the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World and the Department of Egyptology and Assyriology at Brown University has also been helpful. Finally, some friends and family have been so consistently supportive that I wish to mention them particularly. David Sherry, Ralph Bestock, Donna Bestock, Simon Sullivan, and especially my daughters, Rose and Norah, thank you.

It was clear to me from the first that this book could not work without thorough illustrations, and the process of getting them has not been easy. Ben Tyler and Ann Caldwell at the Rockefeller Library at Brown University scanned images when files could not be obtained elsewhere; most of the drawings and photographs illustrated here from old excavations are thanks to their help, which was considerable. Jessica Porter's assistance with logistics of image acquisition was also critical. Endnotes for images that come from texts give their citations. A large number

of figures were given by scholars and artists, and I would like to thank them and acknowledge the copyright for the following (figure numbers given after names): Paul Taçon: 2.1; Stan Hendrickx: 2.2; Royal Museums of Art and History: 2.2, 7.6; Barbara Adams: 2.3; Daniel Polz and the German Archaeological Institute Cairo: 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.4, 3.18, 8.7, 8.8; Günter Dreyer and Christiana Köhler: 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.5, 3.18; Metropolitan Museum of Art: 2.7, 4.4, 4.46; Museo Egizio di Torino and the photographer Pino Dell'Aquila: 2.8; British Museum: 3.1, 4.34, 4.35, 4.38, 4.39, 4.40, 4.41, 4.42, 4.44, 6.11, 7.1, 7.3; Ashmolean Museum: 3.1, 3.8, 3.16, 5.3; Jürgen Liepe: 3.2, 7.4; The Louvre Museum: 3.3, 3.6, 3.7; Krzysztof Ciałowicz: 3.11; Willem van Haarlem: 3.12; Barry J. Kemp: 3.14; Miroslav Bárta: 4.8, 4.9; Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale: 4.14, 4.15, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18, 4.19, 4.23, 4.24, 4.25, 4.26, 4.27, 4.28, 4.29, 4.30, 4.31, 4.32, 4.33, 6.3, 8.6; Peabody Museum of Natural History: 4.36; Egypt Exploration Society: 4.37, 4.43, 6.7, 6.10, 6.12, 6.13, 6.14, 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, 6.18, 6.19, 7.2, 7.5, 8.9, 8.10, 8.12, 8.13, 8.15; Los Angeles County Museum of Art: 5.1; Elisa Fiore Marochetti: 5.5, 5.6; Pierre Tallet: 6.4, 6.5, 6.6; American School of Oriental Research: 6.8; Francis Lankester: 6.9; Josef Wegner: 7.7; Ann McFarlane: 8.2; Naguib Kanawati: 8.3; Deborah Vischak: 8.4; Jochem Kahl: 8.5; Brigitte Jaroš-Deckert: 8.7, 8.8; Linda Evans: 8.11, 8.14, 8.16.

Laurel Bestock

The chronology and contexts of scenes of violence from Egypt through the Middle Kingdom*

	<i>Mortuary triumph</i>	<i>Mortuary battle</i>	<i>Divine temple</i>	<i>Landscape</i>	<i>Object</i>
Naqada I (c.4000–3500 BCE)					
Naqada II (c.3500–3200)					
Naqada III (c.3200–3000)					
Early Dynastic Period (c.3000–2686)					
First Dynasty					
Narmer					X
Aha					X
Djer				X	
Djet					X
Den				X	X
Semerkhjet				?	
Second Dynasty					
Khasekhem(wy)			X		X
Old Kingdom (c.2686–2160)					
Third Dynasty					
Djoser				X	
Sekhemkhet				X	
Sanakht				X	
Fourth Dynasty					
Snefru				X	
Khufu				X	
Khafre		X			
Fifth Dynasty					
Userkaf	?				
Sahure	X	X		X	

Niuserra	x			x
Djedkare Izezi				x
Unis	x	x		
Sixth Dynasty				
Pepy I	x			x
Pepy II	x			
First Intermediate Period (c.2160–2055)				
Middle Kingdom (c.2055–1650)				
Eleventh Dynasty				
Nebhepetra	?	x		x
Mentuhotep				
Twelfth Dynasty				
Senwosret I	x	x		
Senwosret III	x	x		x
Amenemhat III				x

* Only those kings from whose reigns we have images of violence are listed. The chart shows the contexts within which we find those images, excluding private tombs as those are often difficult to date precisely and the imagery is quite different. Question marks indicate uncertain readings or scant evidence. The purpose of this chart is to show relative chronology within Egypt and to track changes in use of violent imagery in the historic periods. Dates given are approximate and based on Shaw (2000); that the chronology of the earlier Naqada should be significantly shortened has been convincingly demonstrated by Dee et al. (2014).



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

1 Picturing violence

This is not a book about violence. A reader could be forgiven for thinking it so; a flip through its pages will give numerous images of soldiers firing arrows, of kings preparing to bash in the heads of opponents, of fortress walls being stormed. But this is a book about pictures of violence, and where and why Egyptians made them for the first half of pharaonic history. Many societies made or make images of or related to violence, and their use is often complex. An example from our own time, and another not much older, serve to demonstrate some of the ways in which such images can function, some of the reasons why it is important to distinguish pictures of violence from the practice of it, and thus some of the questions that will structure the examination of Egyptian pictures of violence that follows.

2015 was the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. To commemorate the battle, Belgium, where Waterloo lies, decided to issue a coin with a schematic image of the battlefield on its reverse (Figure 1.1). The most prominent visual component of the scene is the lion-topped commemorative mound erected on the site; the dirt for the mound was excavated from what had been a key position during the battle. Represented schematically against this on the coin are the roads and troop positions of the battlefield from a contest in which a coalition composed primarily of British and Prussian troops decisively defeated Napoleon Bonaparte and put an end to French ambitions for European hegemony.

Belgium is part of the eurozone. Countries in the eurozone issue their own coins, which may be decorated with images of national significance, but the coins are legal tender throughout the zone and so become dispersed. While the importance of Waterloo for shaping European history is universally acknowledged, the emotional relationship to that battle is different in different places, and has itself changed over time. No better understanding of the changes in emotional impact of the battle can be achieved than by recalling the celebration of its 100th anniversary. There was no celebration. 1915 was not a good time for any of the parties involved to recall a battle in which combined English and German troops kept Europe from being overrun by a violently expansionist France. In 2015, conversely, the shaping of modern Europe could be celebrated, if not without some ambivalence.

The coin itself proved to be a point of more than ambivalence—it became a point of active anger. The first issue struck was a €2 coin. France, which is a



Figure 1.1 Belgian €2.5 coin issued to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, in which a British and German coalition defeated the armies of Napoleon. The reverse of the coin shows the monument erected at the battlefield and the field itself, with dotted lines indicating the position of troops.

member of the eurozone and so a place where the coin would be legal tender, was insulted and required the withdrawal of the issue as a matter of national pride.¹ In the end, a commemorative €2.5 coin was issued. This, as an irregular denomination, is legal tender only within Belgium (which did not exist in 1815). Rather than a European piece of money that commemorated an event of international significance, the coin became national and almost entirely symbolic, as well as much more limited in distribution. It was packaged in a cardboard sleeve decorated with a reproduction of a painting of the battle and sold for more than its face value.

Several points raised by the Belgian coin picturing the Waterloo battlefield help us question the relationship between images and violence more generally. At its most basic, what constitutes an image of violence? No overt violence is shown on the coin itself, though the sleeve in which it was sold was more direct, but even the reference of the schematic image is to an extremely violent event. Without the historical knowledge of what Waterloo was, would we interpret this as an image of violence at all? When are we looking at pictures of violence, or pictures about violence, and how can we tell where the boundaries are when we lack specific knowledge?

Another issue raised by the coin is that of authors and audience. One point of concern in revoking the first issue was that viewing the coin would not be voluntary, but would rather be forced on the audience by its circulation. France itself has issued commemorative images of the 200th anniversary of Waterloo, so in this case it was a combination of the author and audience that was toxic: for Belgium to force the French to be confronted with an image that elicited memories of French defeat was more of a problem than the French-controlled commemoration of that defeat. This not only suggests that we need to pay attention to who makes and who sees images referring to violence, but also that we should be alert to restrictions placed on viewership. That states are directly concerned with the ideological import of circulating such images is also clear in this case.

In the case of the coin, it is not the image itself but rather, as already suggested, the relation of that image to a real and historically well-attested event that is effective. The image tells us nothing of the event. If it were not labeled, it is unlikely that any but a select audience of military history enthusiasts would recognize it. The image does not say anything about who won, or even who fought. It works only in a context where its audience has other means of understanding what happened at Waterloo and what that meant. As such, while the image relies on a relationship to an actual event, it does not show a picture of that event or directly communicate through visual means any information about it. How can this help us approach Egypt?

In part because we lack the same kinds of detailed historical records for Egypt that we have for Europe, we generally cannot know if we have an image that refers to violence unless it directly shows it. Nonetheless, many of the questions raised above are relevant to a study of the fairly large number of remaining pictures from Egypt that do directly show violence. The first question raised by the coin, that of “what is an image of violence?” is a good starting point. From Egypt, I have identified two basic types of images that I am confident speak about violence: triumph scenes that either show the king smiting an enemy with a weapon or, in the form of a fantastical beast, trampling him; and battle images, which show troops in combat. These categories are not necessarily intrinsic to the material, and we must recognize that there may have been additional visual references to violence that we now cannot see as such. Furthermore, even though the pictures that we can study as images of violence are overt in their imagery, can we really use them as the basis of an understanding of royal actions, weapons and battlefield organization, friends and foes, specific campaigns, and booty? Or are their

4 *Picturing violence*

references as oblique as the battlefield image on the €2.5 coin? The temptation to read Egyptian imagery of violence as a direct report on the practice of violence has been strong in scholarship, for the understandable reason that if these pictures do not answer questions about historical violence, we have very little evidence to answer them at all.²

An argument against giving in to this temptation of expecting violent imagery to communicate clearly and directly about war and the practice of violence can be advanced on two fronts. This whole book will offer a sustained discussion of specificity and what we might call reliability, and will show time and again that there are internal details of the images, either present or deliberately left out, that make reading them as 1:1 reports on actual events impossible. This does not make them entirely divorced from history, as we will repeatedly see, only unreliable guides. But beyond this, even if real events were pictured, though perhaps not with total accuracy, an attempt to understand them primarily as historical documents misses an essential point. The act of picturing violence is necessarily an act of recasting that violence, of making it tell a story that fits a bigger narrative, one that is ideologically driven rather than true to history—even if we were to assume something so simplistic as the existence of *a* history. The €2.5 coin—with its depeopled imagery and surrounding political kerfuffle—demonstrates one way in which an image could be caught up in conflicting ways to remember and interpret a war, but a further example serves to demonstrate that issues of reinterpretation, context, audience, and reference to reality are present even with pictures that more realistically and directly present acts of violence.

In the 1880s, there was a craze in America (and elsewhere) for cycloramas showing various battles of the American Civil War. These enormous panoramic canvases were painted on the basis of photographs, displayed in cylindrical halls built for the purpose of making an audience feel immersed in the experience of the battlefield, and augmented by the presence of artifacts—even dummies of dead soldiers—carefully arranged before the canvas. They were the nineteenth-century precursor to IMAX. No “realer” art of war has ever existed. Yet, as Yoni Appelbaum has written,

[Their] stunning rendition of a battle utterly divorced from context appealed to a nation as eager to remember the valor of those who fought as it was to forget the purpose of their fight. [Their] version of the conflict proved so alluring, in fact, that it changed the way America remembered the Civil War.³

Only 20 years after it had been fought, with Reconstruction a demonstrable disaster, many Americans wanted to remember a different war than had happened. They wanted it to have been a shared national traumatic birth in which the valor and bravery of both sides shone—not the moral opposition it was largely understood to be at the time. With an exodus of black Americans leaving the still-repressive south, the role of slavery in the war was actively erased. The memory of the war was simplified and cleansed and images of Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg could be refashioned into a moment—a single moment to represent a bloody four

years!—of valor and courage that failed, but in failing birthed a new era for the prosperous emergence of America on the world stage. The most visually realistic imagery could be employed to tell a story different from the one understood by the protagonists at the time. Pickett hated that his name was attached to the charge, about which there had been serious disagreement among the Confederate generals.⁴ Meade and Lee did not do battle to give rise to rampant industrialized capitalism. But the context and audience for the display of this image, much more even than what it particularly depicted, drove home the new message.

The coin and the cyclorama together illustrate the starting point behind this study: committing violence and making pictures of it are fundamentally different tactics of power, regardless of the “realism” of the image. Both can be used as means of control. They can be exercised at vastly different times, and by very different people, to widely different ends. Even when exercised by the same people at the same time, they function differently and produce different outcomes. Pictures, even realistic ones, are so prone to manipulation and are so context-dependent in their meaning that they must be approached in their own light rather than as direct evidence of the practice of violence. Pictures can show violence differently than it happened. Pictures can show violence that never happened. Violence that did happen is also certainly not always turned into a picture. As such, studying the images left to us from Egypt allows us to better understand one tactic of pharaonic power: that of imaging it. These images do not give us reliable insight into the practice of violence itself any more than the coin tells us about Waterloo or the cyclorama lets us understand Gettysburg. This is first surprising, then disappointing. But, once accepted, it frees us to consider the images and their power on their own.

The structure of this book

I have gathered and present here all extant images of violence from Egypt that I know of dating prior to the New Kingdom. One goal of this book is that it be a sourcebook for anyone else who wishes to address how and why Egyptians visualized violence, and this is the reason I have striven both to include as much evidence as I know to exist and to illustrate as much of it as I could. The inclusion of images themselves is critical to allowing the reader to accept or challenge my own observations of each piece and the interpretations I suggest. Dimensions given are those published. Every piece for which I could obtain permission to publish is illustrated, and all, including the few I was not able to illustrate, are described.

Because my goal is not to illuminate historical events but rather to examine how pictures of violence in Egypt communicated what to whom, I have chosen to organize this material primarily by context. It has become clear to me that the same image could work differently in different places—that the king smiting an Asiatic on the walls of his tomb does something else than the same picture on a rock face in the Sinai. Context and audience were deeply entwined and often heavily regulated in ancient Egypt. “Where,” or perhaps more precisely “on what,” was thus the guiding principle followed in organizing this book.

6 *Picturing violence*

The material of pharaonic date is divided into contextual chapters, addressing the royal tomb; divine temples; the landscape; portable objects; and private tombs. The chapters are of wildly uneven length because these contexts are represented by vastly different amounts of material. The kings of the first half of Egyptian history spent much more time and effort on decorating their tombs with violence than anywhere else. The variety as well as the number of violent pictures from royal tombs is overwhelming even in its very fragmentary current state.

That a contextual organization makes sense can be seen from a simple chart, such as the chronological table in the front matter. Trends of scene type by context are very consistent and support the argument that the relationship between image and context was meaningful and controlled. For instance, battle scenes are known only from tombs, both royal and private. Smiting scenes are found in all contexts except private tombs. Smiting is the only scene type found in the landscape., etc.

While I thus thought the Dynastic material would be best organized contextually, the issue of the origin of violent imagery is not easy to treat in the same way. This is in part because the types of contexts on which we have violent imagery—the contexts arguably more than the images themselves—changed fundamentally both during the period of state formation in the late fourth millennium and between that period and the Old Kingdom. Consequently, the first two chapters of the book are organized chronologically and present the early occurrences of themes of violence and domination in Egyptian art. The most significant suggestion I have made on the basis of this material is that we cannot observe a coherent development of such imagery with a defined relation to nascent power structures prior to the very late Predynastic Period.⁵ The reign of Narmer at the start of the First Dynasty is the reign from which we have the greatest variety and number of such pictures, and it is only with his reign and perhaps the generations immediately preceding it that we see the kinds of specificity and historicity combined with general statements that we expect from later violent images. I do not think this is an accident; I think both kingship itself and visual means of depicting and upholding its ideology underwent a very rapid growth and transformation, and that pictures of violence are a good illustration of how exceptional this period was. The pivot between a chronological and a contextual discussion is thus the reign of Narmer, whose imagery looks more like that which followed but whose contexts for using it were more like those of his predecessors. Still, there is no neat dividing line and the inclusion of First and Second Dynasty material in the contextual chapters has often been awkward, though I felt it to work better than attaching it to the chronological chapters.

Another point of structure is the opening of each chapter with a comparative image. I have tried to use these as I have used the coin and cyclorama here in the introduction: to raise questions about the ways in which violent pictures, or pictures of domination in some cases, could work. In no case have I attempted to write an interpretation of the comparative image itself, nor to be comprehensive in citing bibliography about it. In the end, some of these comparisons have proved more useful than others, but they all at some point made me stop and step back from assumptions I was making about how Egyptian images must have functioned.

Two major omissions, both intentional, must be explained: I have not dealt with texts in much detail, and I have not included New Kingdom or later material. The decision to leave out texts would be insupportable if this were a book about violence, rather than a book about pictures of violence. But texts can communicate differently, sometimes to different audiences and in different contexts than images, and my primary aim has been to ask how the imagery functions. When images and texts are together and I am confident they rely upon one another to communicate, I have usually noted the text. This primarily means image captions where those are present. In a handful of instances where texts about violence and images of violence are found in the same context but not directly together, I have brought in quotes from these texts. However, in these cases it has usually seemed to me that the texts and images are demonstrably different in intent, and this has supported rather than undermined the decision to consider imagery separately. For instance, in the most completely considered example, the private tomb of Amenemhat from Beni Hasan has both an autobiographical account of his participation in military campaigns and an image of troops attacking a fortified place (Chapter 8). They do not match; the picture is not an illustration of the text. The text can be read, to oversimplify a bit, as an indication of the close relationship between the king and his trusted official Amenemhat, and as a celebration of Amenemhat's personal qualities. The image is doing something else entirely, and not only does it not include the king, but it also does not even include Amenemhat. This type of mismatch itself helps us understand what both the texts and the images were intended to do; here my focus is on the images, but a similarly contextual examination of texts that speak of violence would complement this study.

The decision to consider only the first half of pharaonic history has three bases, one of overwhelming importance and the other two not negligible. The smaller reasons are simpler: later Egyptian imagery has been quite extensively studied, including from the perspective of power and ideology;⁶ it also would have made the book much too long. But the most important reason is that I do not think it belongs in the same study. The material from the New Kingdom is much richer but it is also quite different, both in terms of content and in terms of context. This makes it on the one hand very tempting to use it to explain the earlier material, since it is much better understood, and on the other dangerous to do so. By way of an example we can look at the famous Qadesh reliefs of Ramses II (Figure 1.2),⁷ which show the king triumphantly riding his chariot and firing his bow, personally snatching victory from the jaws of defeat as his army reels in chaos during a massive battle against the wily and well-organized Hittites.

Superficially, this image has a great deal in common with what will be examined in this study. Here we have a scene of violence from the royal mortuary temple, which shows the king acting in unique splendor and the chaos of a battlefield. But neither in context nor in content are the similarities as close as they appear. The outside of a pylon, where the Ramses image is located, is a more or less public space, visible to everyone. The inside of a mortuary temple, where reliefs of violence in the Old and Middle Kingdoms are located, had a

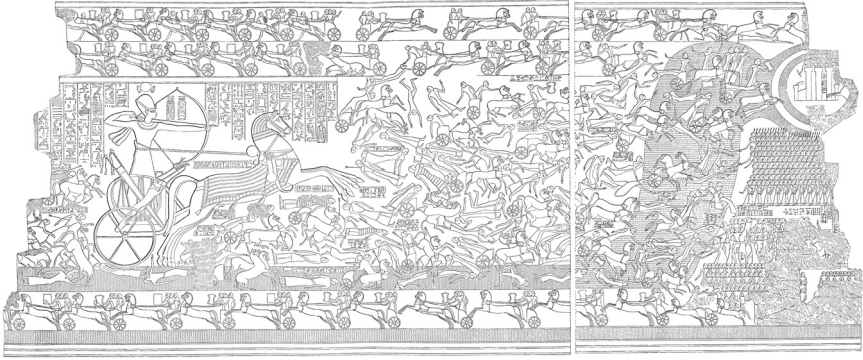


Figure 1.2 Ramses II of the New Kingdom rides his chariot and fires his bow in attacking the Hittites at Qadesh, Syria. From the second pylon of his mortuary temple at Thebes.

much more restricted audience. Qadesh scenes were also carved for Ramses in divine temples—a context that is so ill-represented prior to the New Kingdom that Chapter 5 of this book cannot come to any reasonable conclusions at all about how or even if images of violence regularly worked there. The Qadesh scene combines royal action and the battlefield; this is not known from earlier imagery, where icons of royal violence appear to have been separated from war itself and where battle was not utilized to demonstrate personal valor of the king or anyone else. For Qadesh, elements of landscape are present—a sense of place is given. This is never true in earlier imagery. This image tells a story: it does so itself, and it does so in combination with extensive texts. The image is not a perfect illustration of the story, but the two are very closely tied and are explicitly related to actual events—they say so, and we have other documentary evidence for the events. We may laugh about how “true” the picture is, how heroic Ramses really was or if he really won, but that it purports to represent a series of actual events is unquestionable.

Earlier images are much less obviously narrative and do not have this relationship to texts, as suggested above. In part because of this, they also have a much less direct interest in appearing historical. We will find specificity and historicity regularly as elements of earlier images, but no attempt—and I think even a deliberate avoidance—to claim that a picture is a report in the way Qadesh claims to be. The coin and the cyclorama were used to suggest that it would be a mistake to use any image as a straightforward report on an event, and indeed no scholarship of the scenes of Qadesh fails to make the point that this is not pure historical reporting. But if we cannot use scenes of Qadesh as a simple report on Qadesh, it is equally true that we cannot use them as a simple guide to understanding earlier images of violence in Egypt. Some visual elements of violent imagery were incredibly static over time, particularly the so-called smiting scene, in which the king prepares to bash an enemy on the head with a weapon. Because of contextual changes,

however, we should not assume that even such an icon—which like Qadesh could appear on the pylons of New Kingdom temples—had a static function over the whole course of Egyptian history.

Themes

Several themes appear across different contexts with images of violence from Egypt. First and foremost is scene type; this is limited, and has already been noted above, with due caveats about our creation of categories. It was noted that explicitly violent imagery, in which a person or people are shown in the act of damaging other persons or people, can be grouped into two categories in this material: triumph (smiting, trampling) and battle. Triumph in our periods is exclusively the province of the king. Trampling is accomplished by the king in the form of a mythical animal. Smiting, in which he clubs one or more prostrate prisoners with a mace, is performed usually by the king in human form but very occasionally, in early periods, by the king's name. Is this a moment of violence or a preparation for violence, given that the mace has not yet hit the head, and is that distinction meaningful? Battle scenes include both hand-to-hand combat and ranks of soldiers attacking in unison. Often, including in all completely preserved cases, the battle occurs outside the walls of a fortified place. There is, as noted above, no evidence that battle and triumph were closely linked scene types during this period, though they became so in the New Kingdom.

Given differences in their use and apparent meaning, and remembering the questions raised by the €2.5 coin, we must question if these categories or even the category “images of violence” are inherent to the material or our own. Even the boundaries of the category as thus defined are difficult to find. Aside from the explicit images, there are several cases of imagery showing bound captives who are not being actively damaged that I have included in this study; these could be used beside images of violence or independently. I have not attempted to gather such images comprehensively. Images of captivity are included here when I have felt that they can help us understand either the presence or the absence of explicit violence in specific contexts.

The theme of the relationship between depiction and event is one that is inherent to the topic, and while I used two more recent images above to show how problematic it would be to assume a one-to-one correspondence between the two, “reality” also cannot be avoided entirely. If I have tried to not be trapped by an expectation that real events are depicted realistically, I have not tried to avoid thinking about what might have actually taken place as well as how images might relate to that. Here it is important to recognize that images might influence future events as well as reflect past events. This is abundantly clear with figurines of bound captives used ritually to damn potential enemies, but might also be a factor with other types of imagery. When is an image intended to show, and perhaps recast, what has happened, and when is it intended to influence what will happen? In fact, the relationship of such images to time seems particularly critical to me. If I were to accord them a

single overarching purpose, I would say that they take events, real, ritual, or imagined, past, present, or future, and cast them timelessly, so that they tie the practice of violence to a theory or an ideal.

Another constant theme already mentioned is that of audience. I argue that most of the contexts in which we find violent imagery before the New Kingdom were highly restricted, meaning that in most cases these pictures spoke to a selected audience. This is particularly true for triumph scenes, which would have been seen, I think, by a limited number of largely divine and perhaps priestly eyes. To such an audience, such images are reassuring rather than threatening; it is an audience that is supported rather than hurt by royal violence. The opposite may be true of the same image when deployed in the landscape; there it might have been seen by a broader audience, including people who were threatened by its promise. It is worth remembering, too, that images in ancient Egypt were often considered to have considerably more agency than we are used to according them. It may have mattered not only who could see an image, but also what the image itself could have seen and what it could have done in response to what it saw. Images as audiences themselves would likewise have played different roles in different contexts.

Related to the theme of audience is that of transmission of imagery. The smiting icon in particular is so entirely canonical from so early in pharaonic history that we can be certain it was known and seen even in periods from which we have no extant evidence. Those periods can be significantly long, such as the entire Second Dynasty. Someone in some context must have seen images of smiting that we do not have during these reigns, and made new ones. I have tried to show in Chapter 7 why I think portable objects are unlikely to have been the main carriers of such imagery, as I think they themselves were quite restricted in circulation, but I remain uncertain of what filled the gap. The one place where mode of transmission may be reasonably reconstructed is the landscape, where the images were available to be seen and could be copied directly from one another, but this is also in many ways the least typical context we have and it seems unlikely that it had a larger role in the process of transmission.

A final theme that comes up repeatedly is that of the visual representation of stereotypes of groups of people. It is a difficult topic to treat for several reasons. That there are visual ethnic stereotypes is so abundantly obvious, from all periods of Egyptian history, that it is easy to simply accept them as present, identify “peoples,” and move on. But in the nitty-gritty it is much more complicated, in terms of which attributes are static and which change, which attributes belong to which peoples, and which peoples play what roles. Furthermore, that there was an element of ideology to identifying others is clear, and some of the mismatches between visual attributes, texts, and what we know of “foreigners” on the ground may result from a different rate of change between ideological markers and actual interactions between peoples.⁸ Identifying “who” is thus not straightforward, particularly early on when visual stereotypes were in greater flux, and in fact I am not so confident that ambiguity was always meant to be absent; plurality and differentiation mattered more than accuracy. Even if the Egyptians did mean to

designate static and bounded groups of people with these visual stereotypes, it is not so clear that they are meant to be representative of places, or that we should understand them territorially.⁹

Despite real misgivings about terminology and a recognition that the issue is more complex than I had originally thought, I have used the terms common in scholarship to refer to broad groups of people: Libyans, Asiatics, and Nubians. To avoid them seemed more complicated than to use them. All deserve more attention and qualification than I can give, and many issues will be raised within discussions of individual depictions, but a few observations here will help the reader navigate what follows. “Libyans” are by far the most consistent of the visual depictions but are also the hardest to identify with a people, polity, or place known from other sources for the period considered here—an interesting combination. “Asiatics” are a group within which there are subgroups that are sometimes specified in texts and perhaps in imagery as well. Notable here are the *Mentiu*, a group of Asiatics who are named in inscriptions in various contexts and are the only named group of people in the images in the landscape, which themselves are restricted to the Sinai. We may see here a very deliberate and pointed reference to a particular ethnicity instead of the “all” common in other contexts. “Nubians,” who are also frequently differentiated into subgroups in texts, surprised me the most. I expected and did not find a static visual representation for people from the south, and I expected southerners to be common. This was not the case. I remain uncertain of how and when Egyptian imagery of violence includes Nubians, and which Nubians. They do not seem ever to be the victims of attack in battle in the periods under study here. A final critical note about the “who” of ethnicity is that Egyptians were given visual stereotypes, too, and that people with Egyptian stereotypical features could appear as victims in all types of scenes of violence, though they are less common than “foreigners.” Whatever else these stereotypes are doing, they are not creating a binary world in which Egypt is the good and foreigners the evil. If there is a binary at all, it is that the Egyptian king is in power and everyone else is, at least potentially, violently subject to him.¹⁰

I have tried to keep ethnic stereotypes from taking over the book, and I have not at all tried to be comprehensive in tracing the rise of visual stereotypes or including all iterations of them; like captivity, they are here only if and when they contribute to our understanding of active scenes of violence.

In the end, scenes of violence may not be straightforward historical documents, but they are rich sources for helping us understand the ways in which their contexts functioned and the ways in which ideal kingship was conceived. The ideology expressed in this imagery seems to me quite simple. Theoretical Egyptian kingship required that the king be violently physically dominant over everyone. Events, whether ritual or not, were cast in line with this theory and displayed in contexts that helped to maintain this ideal of kingship. The king’s right, even requirement, to be shown smashing heads was exclusive to him. Much less exceptional was the imagery of war, which—perhaps surprisingly—does not seem in these periods to have been closely tied to royal ideology at all. If triumph was exclusive and