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The votive chariots of Mérida and Almorchón

José María Blázquez Martínez

Two of the most important surviving Hispanic pieces are the bronze votive chariot discovered in the house of Meleagro, in Mérida, now in the Saint Germain Museum, France, and the bronze chariot found in Almorchón, near Cabeza de Buey, Badajoz. The first bronze (Fig. 1-4), reproduced for the first time in 1887 by Modesto La Fuente, was later frequently reproduced (1).

In 1932, the Strasbourg archaeologist R. Forret's study of the Hispanic piece provided him with an opportunity to study prehistoric chariots and their survival in the historical period (2).

The place of the find is the ancient Augusta Emerita; it seems that the house where it was found took the name of the piece, interpreted as

(1) M. Lafuente, *Historia General de España*, I, 947; P. Paris, *Essai sur l'art et l'industrie de l'Espagne primitive*, II, 228; Marqués de Lozoya, *Historia del Arte Hispánico*, fig. 123; L. Pericot, *Historia de España*, 397; Cossío - Pijoan, *Summa Artis*, VI, figs. 435-436; M. Gómez Moreno, *Mil joyas del Arte Español*, 30; M. Cardozo, in *AEArq.* 62, 1949, fig. 18; A. García y Bellido, *Ars Hispaniae*, fig. 410; J. Camón, *Las Artes y los Pueblos de la España primitiva*. Madrid, 1954, fig. 860; J. Maluquer de Motes, *Historia de España. Pre-Roman Spain*. Madrid, 1954, fig. 98, 173; J. Cabré, in *A.M.S.E - A E.P.* III, 1924, fig. 15, etc.

(2) R. Forret, in *Préhistoire*, I, 19-123,

as a representation of Meleager. The example, first kept in a private house in Badajoz, was acquired by R. Forret, who gave it to the French State in November 1930. The present study aims to explain the presence of a wild boar hunting scene on the Mérida chariot and of a horseman on the Almorchón chariot (Fig. 5-6.) (3).

Merida Trolley

The ensemble consists of a four-wheeled chariot, on the back of which rides a horseman accompanied by a dog in pursuit of a wild boar. A fourth figure, which was to the right of the hunter, has disappeared; the piece has not been preserved since it was found, as no reference is ever made to it; five cowbells were suspended from the back of the cart, of which only two have survived. Another one hangs from the lower lip of the horse. The length of the cart is 28 cm, its weight is 3'900 kg, and it rises 5 cm off the ground.

The four six-spoke wheels have an equal diameter of 9 cm. According to R. Forret, this parallelism in the dimensions of the four wheels is typical of prehistoric chariots and was unknown in Roman times. They are quite deteriorated; some pieces of them have disappeared. Despite their very small thickness (2 millimetres), they are very strong and the various elements of which they are made are cast in a single piece.

The wheels are thin and wide, as is common on pre-historic cars.

The same number of spokes appears on the chariot depicted on the Watsch situla, circa 750 BC (4); on several Etruscan chariots from the 6th-5th centuries

BC (5) and one found in Larnaca, Cyprus, dated 1100 and 1000 BC.

(6). The kinship between the Larnaca and Meridian wheels is more pronounced, as both have spokes ending in a disc on the inner side. In prehistoric times, the four-spoke wheel, which is the one represented in the Scandinavian petroglyphs of Back

(3) J. R. Mérida, in *Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Excursiones*, VIII, 1900; 173 f; Idem *Catálogo monumental de España. Province of Badajoz*. Plate XXXIII, 78-79; P. Bosch-Gimpera, *Etiología de la Península ibérica*, fig. 464; Idem in *op. cit.*, fig. 14.

(4) Cossío - Pijoan, *op. cit.*, fig. 247.

(5) G. Giglioli, *L'Arte Etrusca*, Tav. XCVIII, 2; C; CCXI; CCXXXVI.

(6) H. Bossert, *Alt-Syrien*, 1951, number 301, 88.

and Tanum; it is that of chariots painted on geometric pottery and that of a large number of votive pieces (Duplaj, Thundholm, Milavec, Skallerup, Peccatell, Szavarrossok). (7). The four-spoke chariot wheel is also known in Italy and its use dates back to the Roman Imperial period (8). In Spain, the votive chariot of Cabeza de Buey has four spokes.

The wheel of the cart wheel from Mérida belongs to type number 6 in E. Cuadrado's classification (9). The introduction into Spain seems to be European, via France, western Pyrenees, according to Cuadrado.

The radial wheel was born of the need to lighten the weight of the primitive wheels, without weakening them. From the solid, one-piece wheel, we moved on to the solid three-element wheel; from this, by lightening the mass, to the Mercurago type (10), fossilised today in the Galician wheel; by lightening this, to the diametral, with two sleepers, also fossilised today in the North of Spain, Basque Country and Santander. Of the spoked wheels, the oldest is the four-spoke wheel (type number 5, in E. Cuadrado's classification). Its most archaic representations have been found in Syrian carvings dating from 3000 BC. From there it would go to Phoenicia, Cyprus, Crete, the Aegean Islands and Mycenae. The wheels of the Almorchon chariot are very similar to those of a Phoenician bronze votive chariot. (Fig. 7.) With the Hyksos invasion it passed to Egypt and later to North Africa. From Greece, wheel number 5, in E. Cuadrado's classification, goes across the Ionian Sea to southern Italy, being the usual one among the Etruscans, in the 3rd century B.C., to whose lands it may have come directly from Asia Minor. The chariots depicted on the neck of the hydria recently found at Vix (end of the last quarter of the 6th century BC) have four-spoke wheels with the hubs extending outwards (11). The wheels of the Almorchon chariot, rather than resembling the Etruscan chariot from the 3rd century BC, are related to those represented on the hydria from Vix, due to the extension of the hubs. On the other hand, the wheels of the votive chariot found in the encacha-

(7) R. Forret, *op. cit.*, fig. 13.

(8) R. Forret, *op. cit.*, fig. 14, nos. 1-3, 8-9; fig. 15, no. 4; fig. 17, nos. 2-3. Pareti, *La lomba Regolini Galassi*, Tav. XXV and XXXIII.

(9) E. Cuadrado, *El carro ibérico*. Communication to the *III Congreso Nacional de Arqueología, Galicia, 1953*. Proceedings not yet published.

(10) J. Dechelette, *Manuel d'Archéologie*, 289 ff.

(11) R. Joffroy, *Le Trésor de Vix*, Paris 1954, Pl. IX-XII, XV, 49.

The four-spoke chariots from a tomb at Cigarralejo (Fig. 8) are similar to Etruscan four-spoke wheels, with no extensions of the wheels. The tombs, in one of which E. Cuadrado collected the piece, because of the Greek pottery found in them, are dated to the 4th century BC, a period which, judging by its characteristics, suits the chariot. The body of this chariot closely resembles those of modern chariots from the NW of the Peninsula, but it does bear a certain resemblance, quite closely, to that of an Etruscan bronze chariot (Fig. 9), the wheels of which are of the type used in Iberian sanctuaries, solid (12). This chariot is now in the Museo Villa Giulia in Rome. From Greece and Italy, it went to Central Europe (Bohemia, Albania) and to the North (Denmark), where it was used in cult chariots, generally made of cast bronze, and in votive chariots, miniatures of the former. From Switzerland and southern Germany it would enter France and through the western passes of the Pyrenees into Spain around 1000 BC, accompanied by type number 3 in E. Cuadrado's classification (diametral with cross-sections, which is the type represented in the paintings of Peñalsordo, Badajoz) (13). A Mediterranean current, which would have been served by Phoenician navigation, could have brought this wheel to the south of the Peninsula. (The most archaic piece that Cadiz has produced can be dated to the first half of the 7th century B.C., the oinochoe, today in the National Museum of Denmark (14).

These Syrian navigators would bring this remarkable advance, which had already been widespread in their homeland for several centuries (the Ras-Shamra gold wallet, on which is engraved a chariot with four-spoke wheels, can be dated to between 1450 and 1365) (15). The route of this current would be Cyprus, Crete, North Africa (Utica) and Andalusia (the Phoenicians did not trade with the Italic world at this date), bringing with it the solid wheel that survives in the Balearic Islands, the remains of which have been found in Montjuich (Barcelona). The solid wheel appears both in Etruria and in Iberian votive chariots (Fig. 10), which show a Phoenician or Cypriot structure in the body and wheels (16). Terracotta chariots have been found in Cyprus with

(12). A. García y Bellido, *Historia de España, España prerromana*, Madrid 1954, fig. 365-368.

(13) E. Breuil, *Les peintures rupestres schématiques de la Péninsule ibérique*, Pl. XVIII-XIX.

(14) P. Rus in *CHPH*, II, 1950, 120, Plate XVI.

(15) C. Shaeffer, *Ugarit II*, 1-48.

(16) J. Cabré, *op. cit.* figs. 10-12.

solid wheels, very long rims, as in the Merida (17).

The Mesopotamian wheel, with six spokes, became widespread among the Hittites, Cyprus and Egypt in the 2nd millennium, and was paired with the four-spoke wheel in Egypt. It was common in Assyria in the 9th century, and in the 8th century it shared its use with the eight-spoke, which was smaller than the height of horses. Its European fusion follows the Greek, Austrian and French line. The Mediterranean: Cyprus, Sicily, Spain (Tugia) (18). The Meridian chariot probably re-cibrated the wheel of the Mediterranean stream, through the Punic influence on the Peninsula. It is interesting to note that both the Merida cart and the Almorchon cart have been found in an area (Huelva, Seville, Extremadura) where the oldest pieces found on the Peninsula have been collected, some of them brought by Phoenician trade (the Aliseda treasure, the Carmona find, the bronze vase from Valdegamas and other pieces recently studied by A. Blanco. (19). Both the four-spoke wheel and the six-spoke wheel are used in European votive chariots. The four-spoke wheel, as was already mentioned in the chariots of Trundholmj and Skallerup (Denmark), Milavec (Bohemia), 1300 BC, and Stade (Germany), 1000 BC; Peñalsordo, around 1000-900 BC. A bronze wheel of a processional chariot from the 9th century BC, found in the palafitte of Cortaillod, Lake Neuchâtel (Switzerland), and a chariot from Burg-in-Sprewald (Germany), from the 7th century BC.

According to G. Childe (20), the wheeled cauldrons from the chief burial mounds of Milavec, Peckite and Skallerup belong to the Bronze Age D (Montelius III, 1300-1200). Full-size wheels are only preserved from the beginning of the Early Iron Age or Late Bronze Age (Period F, 1200-1000). They belong to hearses or ritual vehicles; they are cast, one-piece bronze wheels from four sites in France, one in Switzerland, two in Hungary and two in Germany. Each of these chariots had four wheels. Five chariots have four spokes, four have five, and one has six.

(17) H. Bossert, *op. cit.* 136-137; E. Gjerstad, *The Swedish Cyprus Expedition*, II, CCXXXIV; Idem III, Pl. CXVI.

(18) J. Dechelette, *op. cit.* 288 ff.; J. Cabré, *op. cit.* fig. 18; Idem in *AEAA*, 1, 1925, figs. 22, 92.

(19) A. Blanco, in *AEArq.* 88, 1959, 235-244.

(20) G. Childe, *The first waggons and carts, from the Tigris to the Severn*, 1951, Offprint.

With the full Hallstatt (around 750), cremation was replaced by inhumation and chariots by horse-drawn carriages, but the burials of chiefs were still carried out in chariots. With the Roman period, the number of spokes multiplied, generally to eight, and even more, the construction of the chariot was increased, and the structure of the wheel was different from that of the chariot of Mérida or Cabeza de Buey. The Roman four-wheeled chariot is tall and short (the length barely exceeds the sum of the diameters of the side wheels). The wheels are large in diameter and the side wheels almost touch each other. The floor of the body rests on a different system from that of Mérida or Cabeza de Buey.

The one depicted on the Umeritan Nymph's patera (21) is a typical Roman chariot and is a twin of those sculpted on the reliefs of the Gallias, Germania, or elsewhere in the Roman Empire (22). The Meridian chariot, in its general structure, resembles the Etruscan chariots of the 7th-6th centuries BC. The wheels are low and the sides are distant (23).

The votive chariot from Costa Figueira, dated by M. Cardozo to between the 4th and 2nd centuries BC, is also long and low (24). This date is perhaps the latest that can be assigned to the chariot from Cabeza de Buey, which, like the chariot from Mérida, has a wheel whose prototypes were supplied by the Mediterranean world. The date that can be deduced from the study of the wheel is the 6th-5th centuries BC (25).

Perhaps because of this phenomenon of conservatism, which appears frequently on the Peninsula on very many occasions, the date may be much later. The latest research on bronze vessels found on the Peninsula tends to admit, as a mere working hypothesis, the possibility, already suggested by P. Jacobsthal, that these pieces from the 6th century BC were made in Spain (26). J. Maluquer believes that the date of the bronzes studied by M. Cardozo, which belonged to the 4th-3rd centuries, may, according to the Portuguese scholar, be somewhat earlier (27). The

(21) A. García y Bellido, *Esculturas romanas de España y Portugal*, 467, ss.

(22) E. Esperandieu, *Recueil Général des Bas-reliefs, Statues et Bustes de la Gaule Romaine*, 4, 293, 618, 857, 2.325, 2.339, 2.862, 2.700, 3.232, 3.245, 3.030, 4.043, 4.157, 4.321, 5.192, 5.266, 5.268, 5.499, 5.201, 7.685, 7.725, 7.749, 6.079, 3.522; Idem, *Germania*, 4.041.

(23) Pareti, *op. cit.* Tav. XXXI, XXXIII.

(24) M. Cardozo, in *op. cit.*, figs. 1-2, 1-28.

(25) E. Cuadrado, in *CASE*, IV, 1948, 267-287; Idem, *Excavaciones en el Santuario ibérico del Cigarralejo (Muía)*, Murcia, 109-125.

(26) A. Blanco, *op. cit.*, 244.

(27) J. Maluquer de Motes, in *Revista de Guimarães*, LXII, 15.

The cart from Mérida and the one from Cabeza de Buey could be from this period, more or less contemporaneous with the Valdegamas vase.

The mallets of the bronze under study are made of a long, solid tube, 6 to 5 cm long, cast with the other parts of the wheel. The ends are fitted with runners, like the Judenburg chariot.

According to the aforementioned French scholar, this remarkable length of the maces is characteristic of the bronze wheel of Prehistoric and Protohistoric times, both in large chariots and in votive chariots. Indeed, the wheels of the chariots of Trundholm, Judenburg Bourg-sur-Sprec, Cortaillod, Stade, Burg-in-Sprewald, Milavec, Srettweg, the one depicted on the Watsch statuette, all the archaic Etruscan and Cypriot chariots of the 8th century BC have an outward extension of the maces.

The chariot of Monteleone (6th century BC), which depicts Helios driving the sun chariot, also has a large projection outwards from the hubs (28). The hubs of Roman wheels are flat. As E. Cuadrado insists. Cuadrado insists, the outward extension of the hubs is not a sufficient argument to suggest that the Meridian chariot wheel was influenced by European influences, as these extensions are also found on all archaic Etruscan chariots (29), which undoubtedly have their prototypes in the Mediterranean world. The Ox-headed chariot has wheels whose outward extensions are much smaller, and perhaps this fact indicates a date closer to the change of era.

The spokes are inserted in the Meridian chariot not at the extremities of the maces, as in the Roman, Middle Ages or Iron Age chariots, but in the middle of them, so that the layer is not very far apart.

The fact that the spokes are not inserted directly into the hubs, but into a round plate that rests directly on it, as seen on the Larnaca chariot, is a reason to think of a Mediterranean origin for the Meridian chariot.

The diameter of the axles is 7 millimetres, ending in a square, which is coupled to the frame, on which the box rests. The shafts

(28) A. della Seta, *Italia Antica*, figs. 317, 289; G. Richter, *Handbook of the Etruscan Collection*, figs. 58, 26; P. Rus, *Die Etruskische Kunst*, fig. 34; P. Ducati - G. Giglioli, *Arte Etrusca*, fig. 34; P. Ducati, *Storia dell'Arte Etrusca*, Tavs. 108, 286.

(29) U. Tarchi, *L'Arte Etrusco - Romana nell'Umbria e nella Sabina*. Tavs LXXXI-LXXXII.

do not cross the entire width of the cart, but there are four axles corresponding to the four wheels. The body of the cart, as indicated, rests on a frame, which is raised 5 cm. from the ground; it is, therefore, almost at the height of the mallets; the cart of Merida is really low, as are those of Trundholm, Judenburg and the archaic Etruscans (30). The one at Cabeza de Buey is equally low. The box on the one from Mérida is rectangular in shape and measures 28 x 105 x 2.5 centimetres. It has a frame fused to it, which is strong enough to hold the hunting group.

According to R. Forret, the length of the box is 28 cm.; it almost corresponds to the Phrygian foot of 27.75 cm. or the Italic foot of 27.5 cm. and not to the Roman foot of 29.57 cm., a fact that leads us to admit Mediterranean influences, brought by the Phoenicians in this piece. As for the total weight of the bronze, taking into account the deterioration that some of its parts have suffered, it would weigh 3'900 kg, which corresponds to ten Carthaginian mines weighing 392 gr. The French scholar deduces from this fact that the period of casting of the cart from Mérida corresponds to the last centuries of the change of era, in a period when the Carthaginian numismatic system and the technique of this people were in force among the Hispanic peoples.

At a short distance from the edges and parallel to them, tiny stamped circles decorate the box, matching those depicted on the rider and horse. On the back of the cart hangs, by means of a chain of three links with five rings, fused with the box in a block, as many cowbells, of which only two have survived. The Cabeza de Buey cart had another two, now lost, as do the chains from which they hung; the presence of two rings on the front part is an indication of this. The bells differ in their structure, both from the modern and the Roman ones; neither are they like those worn by the horses of Liria (31). They do not resemble those found in bronze in the Iberian settlement of La Bastida de les Alcuses (Valencia). (32). Those found in the Balearic Islands, except for one, do not resemble the bronze ones found in the Iberian settlement of Bastida de les Alcuses (Valencia).

(30) Pareti, *op. cit.*, XXXIII; C. Densmore, *Memories of the American Academy in Rome*, V, 292.

(31) E. Cuadrado, *Excavations in the Iberian Sanctuary of Cigarralejo*, fig. 28; *CVH Liria*, figs. 21, 119, 122.

(32) D. Fletcher, *La edad del hierro en el Levante español*, Madrid, 1954, figure 9.

are similar (33). The bells of the chariot from Mérida have one of the most primitive forms, which fits in well with the date we give to this bronze. On the other hand, they are quite similar to those worn, also on the neck, on the chariot chariot found in Cyprus (34). Perhaps the horses' wearing of cowbells was imitated by the Iberians from the Phoenicians. There are no known parallels in Spain to the piece from Mérida, except for the one from Cabeza de Buey, which, although with a totally different scene, is in the same direction. The wheels and the structure of the amibo-chariots are totally different from all the others found on the Peninsula. These two votive offerings belong to the Celtic area of the Peninsula. They are related, rather than to Iberian votive offerings, to various pieces from the west of the Peninsula, such as the cart from the Museum of Guimarães, the bronze from Castelo-do-Moreira and the votive offering from the Instituto de Valencia de D. Juan, Madrid, all of which represent complete scenes, processions, acts of sacrifice, cults and hunts; the Iberian votive offerings, on the other hand, are of a personal type, a reminder of a healing or special favour obtained or desired from the divinity. These latter votive offerings are analogous to those of the Greek, Sicilian and Etruscan sanctuaries (35). The two Extremaduran bronzes, like the tombstones from this area, lead us to a people with Central European origins. Bosch Gimpera already noted, when studying the Almorchón bronze, the difference between these two votive chariots and the Iberian votive offerings and their relationship with some pieces from Austria (36). However, some elements of these votive offerings show Mediterranean influence, undoubtedly due to Punic influence. Many Iberian votive offerings depict warriors with shield and spear; none have yet been found on chariots; on the other hand, in votive offerings from the European, non-Mediterranean area, on votive chariots (Strettweg), there are horsemen with spears in the same attitude as the Almorchón horseman.

Equestrian Group. The rider is a young, vigorous, beardless man. He has a brachycephalic skull, a pointed nose, a receding chin and a full face. He wears a deeply pierced helmet, a leather helmet worn by the Lusitanians (Str. III, 154), leaving only the sideburns and ears uncovered.

(33) A. Vives y Escudero, *Estudios de Arqueología Cartaginesa*, Lám. XVI, numbers 1-3.

(34) E. Gjerstad, *op. cit.*, II, Pl. CCXXXIV, 5.

(35) J. Maluquer de Motes, in *Revista de Guimarães*, LXII, 1952, 13-15, from the offprint.

(36) P. Bosch Gimpera, *op. cit.*, 512 f.

The bronze artist has succeeded magnificently, with the posture of the rider and the attitude of the horse, in producing the sensation of a race. The rider is leaning over the animal's neck, raised from the saddle, with his legs tucked in, his right arm thrown back to strike a blow at the beast, and his left arm at the level of the horse's ears, which are stretched forward and, like the dog and the boar, are stretched out in the attitude of the race. The group has great liveliness and movement. The rider wears a half-sleeved tunic, tightly fitted to the body, crossed at the chest and back by two ribbons in the shape of a cross, as in other pieces from the Iberian Levant (37); his feet are bare, like the horseman from the Tivisa pátera (38) and his legs are in gaiters, different from those worn by the men in Liria (39). These and the tunic are embroidered with small circles. The belt is tight around the waist, as is common in Iberian votive offerings (40). The spear and the bridles have probably been added in modern times.

The horse has an upright neck, a cropped mane and a half-open mouth; the eyes are large and marked with deep incisions. A cowbell hangs from the lower lip, a twin of those suspended in the chariot; the Levantine horses wore it on their throats, as can be seen in the paintings on Liria pottery (41). In the bronze from Mérida this object had no religious significance on the animal, but was simply a decorative motif. The horse from Cabeza de Buey did not have a saddle. The saddle is not a saddle as such, but a light saddle cloth, like those worn by the horses of the Cigarralejo (42). This type of saddle, similar to the "epiphion" of the Greeks, is probably earlier than the saddle itself, which appears on the horses of Liria, on the Palencia horseman and on footpieces that undoubtedly date from the Roman period, such as the little horse from the Pa-so de Bridas, in the National Archaeological Museum (43).

(37) F. Álvarez Ossorio, *op. cit.*, CLXIII; *CVH Liria*, fig. 20, 37.

(38) J. Serra Ráfols, in *Ampurias*, III, 1941. Lamps. V-VI, figs. 3, 26.

(39) *CVH, Liria*, figs. 43, 57.

(40) F. Álvarez-Ossorio, *op. cit.*, XXXVIII-XL; CXVII.

(41) E. Cuadrado, *Excavations in the Iberian Sanctuary of Cigarralejo*, Figure 26; *CVH Liria*, 119, 122.

(42) E. Cuadrado, *Excavations in the Iberian Sanctuary of Cigarralejo*, Figures 15-17, 110-118.

(43) A. García y Bellido, *Esculturas romanas de España y Portugal*, 488; for the chronology of Liria, which also seems to be a pre-Roman city, see *CVH, Liria*, XXX-XXXIV.

The fact that the horse wears a gualdrapa is an indication that the piece is pre-Roman; they were used on the Peninsula at least from the end of the 5th century BC, when the Iberian sanctuary of Cigarralejo was already in existence; P. Jacobsthal has dated a Schnabelkannen found in a tomb to that date.

(44). The saddle of Mérida, like that of the Cigarralejo, lacks stirrups and a saddle tree and has a flank; the saddle tree always appears in Roman pieces, as in the Cigarralejo, the edges of the saddle are embroidered, although with poorer ornaments, with small circles, probably a solar allusion, like the rosette nailed to the horse's chest.

The head is extremely simple; it lacks the neck and wings, parts which frequently appear on the heads of the Cigarralejo horses, on those of Liria, on the Cabeza de Buey cart and on those depicted on Iberian coins; it drags along the ground and does not descend close to the body, but is arched, making the animal very eye-catching. Hispanic artists worked with special care on the tails of their horses, probably because in reality this part was the object of special attention. The bristles are represented by a system of converging, parallel stripes in the form of a herringbone, which gives the impression that they are braided. At the tip, the bristles fall vertically. The mane, also indicated by a system of parallel stripes, matches the tail. It is very thick and abundant, with a convex edge, starts at the nape of the neck and dies at the withers. A tuft of hair falls between the ears, as is common in Cigarralejo horses (45).

The dog gives a good impression of fatigue, with his ears turned back and his mouth half open. The eyes are not as lively as those of the horse, which shine with a special liveliness in moments of fatigue. He wears a collar and walks at a short distance from the boar, not in a biting attitude, as might be expected from the short distance between them, but panting, as if after having chased the prey for a long time. The tail is held upwards. The type of dog depicted is probably a hunting dog; the paws are rather tall, like those of the dogs painted on Liria ceramics, which, because of the great height of their legs and the slenderness of their bodies, appear to be entirely greyhounds (46).

On the right side of the horse there are two square openings of a

(44) E. Cuadrado, in *APL*, III, 1952, figs. 3-4, 124 f.

(45) E. Cuadrado, *Excavations in the Iberian Sanctuary of Cigarralejo*, 143-146.

(46) *CVH*, *Liria*, 123.

centimetre apart, 6.5 cm. apart, are an indication that there were two accompanying dogs. The missing dog does not appear in Lafuente's reproduction, nor is it ever mentioned; it must not have been preserved. The two dogs and the horse are attached to the body of the cart by the legs, joined two by two.

The boar, 11 cm long and 5 cm high, marches first. With its tongue out and its mouth ajar, it produces the same sensation of can- taincy as the dog. The eyes are marked by deep incisions. The bristles are well marked, as are the bristles of its fellow Tivisa dogs, with parallel stripes, matching the decoration on the rider's legs, which may have been made from the skin of this animal. The tail is not curled, as is common in individuals of the same species, but stretched out. The front part of the carriage has been damaged, so that the boar's attachment to the box has disappeared; however, the existence of two square holes leaves no doubt as to the animal's primitive posture. As A. García y Bellido points out, the sculptures are clumsy in execution, but expressive and with a notable concept of the rounded bulk.

There can be no doubt that the chariot from Mérida and the one from Cabeza de Buey are votive objects consecrated to the sun. Votive chariots have often had this character since prehistoric times. Even in the Jewish world, sacred chariots are unanimously interpreted in this sense, and in the Holy Scriptures they are associated with the horse, an animal consecrated to the sun.

On the other hand, no votive chariot exists with a hunting group. In the Strettweg chariot (47), the presence of the deer can be explained by the fact that in the Germanic religion this animal is consecrated to the sun and is a substitute for the horse (48).

The subject, the hunting of a wild boar, could indicate that the object, in addition to being consecrated to the sun, had a funerary character, as this star is often associated with immortality (49).

F. Benoit has already put forward the hypothesis of a funerary significance for the

(47) M. Hoernes, *Urgeschichte der Bildenden Kunst in Europa*, Vienna 1925 507, 2.

(48) Almgrew, *Nordische Felszeichnungen als religiöse Urkunden*, 100-101, Bing, Mannus, X, 171; Idem, *Der Sonnenwagen von Trundholm*, 10 ff.; J. Dechelette, *op. cit.*, 314; P. Lambrechts, *Contribution à l'étude des divinités celtiques*, 73.

(49) On the significance of the sun see M. Eliade, *Treatise on the History of Religions*, 117-141.

the bronze from Mérida (50), an opinion already suggested by Forret (51). The hunting of the wild boar is a typical funerary composition for all the peoples of the Ancient World. This animal, in isolation, is often linked to beliefs from beyond the grave. Suffice it to cite one of the reliefs from the tomb of the Harpies, the sarcophagus of Clazomene, the tombstone, now in the Istanbul Museum (52) and another relief published by Malten (53). On the funerary tombstones of Capua, now in the National Museum of Naples, this animal is sculpted on the upper part of the tombstone. F. Cumont has studied the funerary symbolism of this theme, the hunting of the wild boar, on the basis of Roman tombstones; compositions of this type, with the same character, are also found in the Greek world (54). The footprints presented by F. Cumont are of very different origins, peoples and periods. This fact would prove a survival of the theme, always expressing the same concept. The horseman, accompanied by his dog and often by a servant, is represented in the Persian world, on the stele of Tshaoush-Kewi, as well as in Rhetia, Asia Minor, or on 6th century Christian sarcophagi, where, next to the face of Christ, marble sculptors have sculpted the hunt of this beast (55). This type of composition is a theme also known in Gaul (56), which has provided one of the strongest proofs that the wild boar was a funerary animal (57). It is the remains of a sepulchral monument, of which only four sculptures of wild boars and two of lions, seated, standing guard over the dead, have survived. In some sepulchral moments the funerary character is more accentuated by the presence of a severed head, a gorgon, the portrait of the deceased or a snake next to the boar (58). These pieces, or others that can also be adduced, have undoubtedly inspired F. Benoit to see in this animal a symbol of

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- (50) F. Benoit, in *Préhistoire*, X, 193; Idem *L'Héroïsation Equestre*, 80.
(51) R. Forret, in *op. cit.*, 116 and 118.
(52) R. Rus, *The Attic Reliefs of the Classical Period*, fig. 33, 75-76.
(53) Malten, in *Jahrb*, XXIX, 1914, Abb. 13. 220.
(54) Gonze, *Die Attischen Grabreliefs*, Taf. CDXLIX.
(55) F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains*, Pl. XLIV. 2, 436; fig. 92, 444 ff.; figs. 95-96, 453.
(56) E. Esperandieu, *Recueil Général des Bas-reliefs, Statues et Bustes de la Gaule Romaine*, 133. 267, 268, 1.648. 2.747.
(57) E. Esperandieu, *Recueil Général...*, 6.003.
(58) F. Benoit, *L'Héroïsation Equestre*, Pl. IX, 1. Pl. XXI. 2-3; A. García y Bellido, *Esculturas romanas de España y Portugal*, Lám. 346, 306.

death (59). The French scholar has rightly written: "Boar and lion are infernal beasts. If the latter has a long oriental tradition behind it, which survives in Greco-Etruscan art, the wild boar has the same value in the hunting scenes of the Achaemenid period and in the Italic provinces it was the infernal animal par excellence (60). From Spain, A. García y Bellido has published several plates on the subject of the hunting of this wild boar (61). Perhaps some of these plates with scenes of wild boar hunting indicate Iberian tombs or were made by Iberian artists, since on one of them the shield bearing the rider is a *caetra*, used by the Iberians in the 2nd-1st centuries BC; on another there is apparently an engraving of an Iberian letter, which is not strange, since a Roman tombstone bears an Iberian inscription (62). In addition, F. Cumont pointed out the funerary significance that the chariots often have (63). Gordon Child also recognises the funerary character that chariots often have, since according to the English scholar, large chariots, of which votive chariots are a transcript, were used to transport the remains of an important chief. In Iberian sanctuaries, boar votive offerings are exceptional; one of the pieces is an amulet, as it has suspension rings (64). F. Benoit has recently published some Hispanic fibulae from La Tène, in which the boar originally has a certain funerary character, since under the head of the beast there is a severed head, whose infernal character is clear and accepted by all researchers (65). In the *phiale* of Tivisa the boars almost certainly have a funerary character. In the Peninsula we know of a divinity, Endovellicus, whose character as an infernal god is certain, linked to wild boars (66). Among the ruins of Numantia, a ceramic pig or boar has been found; we do not know what type of pig or boar it was.

(59) F. Benoit, in *Préhistoire*, X, 193.

(60) F. Benoit, *L'Héroïsation Equestre*, 57.

(61) A. García y Bellido, *Roman Sculptures in Spain and Portugal*, 306-307, 365, 370, 375.

(62) A. García y Bellido, *Roman Sculptures in Spain and Portugal*, 372.

(63) F. Cumont, *Lux Perpetua*, 289-293; on hunting as an educational factor and on its funerary significance among the Romans see: J. Aymard, *Essai sur les chasses romaines des origines à la fin du siècle des Antonins*, 297, 323, 513-522, 574-575.

(64) F. Álvarez-Ossorio, *op. cit.* CXLII.

(65) F. Benoit, in *Ogam*, 35 1954, Pl. IX, 4.

(66) J. Lambrino, in *Bulletin de Études Portugaises*, 1952, 120-129, Figures 10--10. 11, 13.

The animal may have been a simple decorative object (67). A funerary vase has been found in the necropolis of Archena, depicting the chase of two wild boars by two horsemen, supported by three men on foot; four others have fallen victim to the attacks of the wild beasts and are lying on the ground. According to L. Pericot, the piece dates from the 5th century BC, more or less contemporary with the bronze from Mérida (68). It is perhaps safer to interpret the composition on the Archena vase as a hunting scene, with a funerary character, than as a war theme, since one of the wild boars flees with a spear stuck in it, and similar compositions, with the hunters on foot, are found in the classical world, François vase, etc. (69).

In the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, there is a fragment of a cist, probably Iberian, in which the artist has painted a hunting scene; this time the horseman is not chasing a wild boar, but a mountain goat (70).

In the Peal de Becerro urn, the paintings depicted various wild animals (71).

In Spain, there is a type of monuments little or not at all influenced by Mediterranean art, which represent bovids or pigs (72). Although attempts have been made to see them as funerary monuments, the most acceptable thesis is that they refer to local cults linked to livestock farming (73).

A. Álvarez de Miranda finds the hypothesis of the funerary nature of the bronze from Mérida tenable, although he does not lean towards it. In any case, it should be borne in mind that most of the time the divinities of telluric-vegetable fertility also become funerary divinities (74). It is not surprising that themes that are generally funerary appear in votive offerings of an agrarian nature.

The strongest argument against this thesis is provided by the cowbells hanging on the cart.

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- (67) A. García Y Bellido, *Ars Hispaniae*, 323.
(68) A. García Y Bellido, *Ars Hispaniae*, fig. 313; Idem *Historia de España. Pre-Roman Spain*, fig. 565; M. Gómez Moreno, *op. cit.*, fig. 2, 261.
(69) Lane, *Greek Pottery*, fig. 36.
(70) A. Blanco, in *AEArq*, XXIII, 1950, 199-203; Idem in *CASE VI*, 199 ff.
(71) A. García y Bellido, *Ars Hispaniae*, fig. 301.
(72) J. Ramón y Fernández, in *Ampurias*, XII, 1950, 55-72.
(73) A. Álvarez de Miranda, in *Archivos hispanoamericanos de Historia de la Medicina*, V, 1952, 324.
(74) M. Eliade, *op. cit.*, 331-333.

Various votive chariots are known in antiquity, from which hang a piece of chain with several links or different objects, the purpose of which was to make noise when the vehicle moved; these chariots are a faithful transcript of other larger ones that would be taken out in procession to impetrate rain.

In this respect, the most significant piece is the votive cart from Crannon in Thessaly, of which several reproductions on coins have survived. The object consists of a vessel mounted on a chariot with two ravens at the ends, which struck the vessel as the vehicle moved (75). A writer of the Hellenistic period, Antigonus of Caristia, wrote about this piece that in times of drought it was brought out in procession and it rained immediately:

"In Kranon of Thessaly it is said that there are only two ravens. For this reason, in public documents, the city's emblem which is inscribed on them (since it is customary to add them in the margin to all), consists of two ravens drawn on a bronze chariot, since they are never seen in greater numbers than this. And the chariot is placed there, at the side, for a similar reason. In truth, this too may seem strange. For them it is a votive bronze, which they set in motion when there is a drought, to pray for rain; and they believe that rain is produced. And Theopompus relates something even more particular than this; he says that the ravens remain in Kranon until the precise time when they hatch their young. This done, they leave their young and depart. In Ecbatana and among the Persians, Ktesias narrates some cases resembling these. But since he tells many lies, we leave this; and indeed, it seemed monstrous. Myrtilius, the Lesbian, says that on the mountain Lepetino there is a sanctuary of Apollo and a chapel to the heroes, in which, as in Kranon, there are only two ravens, and these abound in the neighbouring district". (Hist. Mirab., XV).

Furtwaengler thinks that the vessel was filled with water, but Hoernes and Forret believe that it was empty, so that the pecks of the metal crows would resound on it (76). The importance of this testimony is great; it is an indication that the votive chariots, with vessels and with objects to strike them, are associated with a request to the rainy sun, a fundamental element for both agriculture and hunting.

Vessel-carrying carts are numerous; their form indicates

(75) R. Forret, *op. cit.*, I, fig. 16, number 3; fig. 24, numbers 3-5,

(76) R. Forret, *op. cit.*, 108,

It is clear that this is a vessel for holding water and not for burning perfumes, like the Larnaca votive cart. There are nine votive carts with water containers: Skallerup (Denmark), Milavec (Bohemia), Szaszvarossek (Bohemia), Ystad (Sweden), Rome, Krannon (Tessalia), Strettweg (Austria), Stade (Hamburg),

In the Skallerup chariot, metal plates hang from the mouth of the vessel, which struck it as it moved. Exactly the same was true of the Strettweg cart, in which the vessel was lifted aloft by the goddess. In one of the votive chariots found in Rome (77), a three-link chain hangs, as in the bronze from Merida, from the back of the vehicle; In this example, the agricultural character of all these examples, which carry various objects to make noise, appears more clearly, as it depicts a man engaged in a typical agricultural task, such as ploughing the land; a scene of ploughing the land can also be seen on an archaic Etruscan cart (found in Bisenzio) (Fig. 13), which carries a pot, a potsherd, a jar, a jar of water, a jar of water, a jar of water, a jar of water, a jar of water, a jar of water, a jar of water, a jar of water, a jar of water, and a jar of water. 13), which carries a vessel surrounded by many hanging objects, which necessarily hit the vessel when the vehicle was set in motion (78). On a cart found in Campania, the discs are superimposed; above them are various human and animal figures; from the beaks of the ducks hang rings; from the upper disc eight chains ending in bags: in the centre of the lower disc, a man leads a pair of oxen (Fig. 14) (79). On the piece from Gross-Perschnitz, Silesia, the chain hangs from the beak of a swan, an animal whose lifestyle is closely linked to water (80). On the other hand, the wagons with containers without hanging objects could have been used simply to carry the lustral water (81). The fertilisation of the fields by the sacred chariots, of which these votive chariots would be a transcript, is a phenomenon observed at all times (82). The two Iberian chariots were consecrated to the sun with a particularly agricultural character, due to the presence of the cowbells. In the Cigarralejo chariot, the true element is certainly the

(77) R. Forret, *op. cit.* fig. 16, 5.

(78) P. Rus; *Die Etruskische Kunst*, Abb. 7.

(79) M. Hoernes, *op. cit.* p. 499.

(80) R. Forret, *op. cit.* fig. 17, 4.

(81) Kossack, *Studien zum Symbolgehalt der Urnenfelder und Hallstattzeit in Mitteleuropa*, 1954, Tai. 4, 6-7.

(82) E. Halm, *Demeter und Baubo*, 30 s.

The most interesting thing is not the chariot, or even the chariot and horses together, but the two equids. Some offerers, instead of giving the shrine votive offerings of horses alone, offered a votive offering of horses pulling a chariot. The remaining four chariots found in the sanctuaries of the Levant may have been chariots of war, as such they have been commonly interpreted.

(83). The war chariots of Cyprus, from the 8th century BC, have solid wheels; in these Cypriot pieces there is no doubt of their use, since the warriors ride on them with shields and daggers; the walls of the box, in the Iberian chariots, are not very high, as in the Cypriot ones, but low; perhaps this fact indicates another use: transport, journeys, etcetera. In any case, they are common votive offerings and no allusion to solar or agrarian cults, etc., can be seen in them. The Guimarães chariot is probably dedicated to the cult of the bull. A. Álvarez de Miranda sees in this piece and in the votive bronze from the Institute of Valencia de Don Juan and in its brother, the bronze made in Castelo-do-Moreira, a confirmation of the laconic text of Diodorus (IV, 18), which spoke of the sacredness of bovids in Spain. The divinity being venerated is represented as an altar.

It is unlikely that the hunting scene in the Mérida piece is related to the myth of Meleager, as R. Forret insinuates; nor is the interpretation of the group proposed by the Strasbourg archaeologist, a few pages earlier, certain (84). The sun draining the submerged lands or fighting the overflowing rivers; the horseman, the solar god, chases the boar, image of the moon and rain (85). Meleager is depicted in antiquity as a young man, but never on horseback (86).

Almorchón cart

It consists of a rider and the chariot. The rider is naked, wearing a helmet on his head like the hunter in the chariot of Merida. His left hand holds the reins; his right hand holds a short spear, which he raises high in a stance of attack. The horse has no saddle and is not in the attitude of running or marching, but appears to be standing with all four legs spread wide. The de-

(83) A. García y Bellido, *Historia de España, España prerromana*, 466.

(84) R. Forret, *op. cit.*, 116.

(85) R. Forret, in *op. cit.*, 121.

(86) R.E., see *Meleagros*, cols. 446-489.

The defects in this bronze are greater than those of the Mérida chariot. The horse's neck is excessively long and wide; the rider's legs are too short in relation to the body.

The two rings on one of the sides of the cart are for hanging cowbells, as in the Mérida bronze, and not for passing a rope through and pulling the cart, as J. R. Mérida claimed. One of the four wheels and a fragment of another is missing.

The bronze of the rider has a rough, yellowish-greyish surface. The patina of the chariot is bronze-greenish in colour. The dimensions of the piece are 0.145 m. high, 0.134 m. long and 0.100 m. wide. The wagon was preserved in 1925 in Cabeza de Buey.

Perhaps the safest interpretation of the Mérida hunting group is to explain it as a product of the environment in which this bronze was cast, without necessarily claiming that it expresses an allegory.

This would be the same phenomenon as in many paintings in Etruscan burial chambers, which depict scenes from the daily life of the Etruscan people, and which are not intimately connected with ideas of *ul- tratumba*, nor do they have an allegorical meaning. It is logical that the charioteers of Olympia should offer the gods votive offerings of horses, since their triumphs in the hippodrome depended on this animal (87). The passion that all the peoples of the Peninsula have always shown for hunting sufficiently explains the group from Mérida. On this votive chariot there is simply a scene from everyday life.

The passion of the ancient Spaniards for hunting was proverbial; the phrase in the *Historia Augusta* to express Zenobia's fondness for it is highly significant: "*Zenobia venata est Hispanorum cupiditate*" (88). Even the Romans who came to Spain were infected by this fondness, such as Sertorius, Tullius Maximus, etc. (Plut, *Sertorius*, 13; *CIL* II, 2660). J. Aymard, in his recent essay on Roman hunting, argues that the splendour of hunting under the Antonines is the work of the Spanish emperators and that the love of the Hispanic people for this sport explains the extent to which the subject is treated in the works of Seneca and Lucan. (89). Martial affirms his fondness for hunting and proudly writes that the

(87). E. Kunze, *Neue Meisterwerke Griechischen Kunst aus Olympia*, figures 7-11, 7-10.

(88) A. García y Bellido, *Ars Hispaniae*, fig. 313; Idem *Historia de España*.

(89) J. Aymard, *op. cit.* 87.

Iberian fauna is richer than the Italic (Mart. *Epigr.*, X, 37). As is clear from all the writers, it was very varied and abundant (Str. III, 4, 15; Mart. 1, 49, 23 ff.; Mart. X, 37; Plin. *NH.*, VIII, 117). Given the extent of the mountains in Hispania, this abundance is not surprising (Str., II, 137; III, 157; Plin. *NH.*, III, 161). Archaeology has fully confirmed these data provided by the literary sources; hunting scenes are abundantly represented in different pieces: vases from Liria, larnax from the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, vases from Archena, chariots from Mérida, etcetera.

The horseman of the votive chariot of Cabeza de Buey, due to his attitude, reminds us, more than of Iberian bronzes, which represent armed horsemen, of infantrymen with swords on their shoulders, of the votive chariot, today in the Museum of Guimarães, and of the figure of the warrior of Cerro del Berrueco (Salamanca), studied by J. Maluquer (90). Undoubtedly the warriors of the Guimarães votive chariot are in a cult scene (the profound meaning of which escapes us), probably the same as the Almorchon horseman. In the Strettweg bronze the horsemen surrounding the Great Goddess are in the same attitude as the Almorchon horseman, the only difference being that the latter does not carry a shield.

Among the Hispanic Celts there were probably cult scenes, in which warriors play an important role.

(90) J. Maluquer de Motes, in *Revista de Guimarães* LXII, p. 7 of the offprint; Idem in *Historia de España*, cit. 73.



Fig. 1.- Chariot of Merida. Saint Germain-en-Laye Museum (Courtesy of R. Lantier).

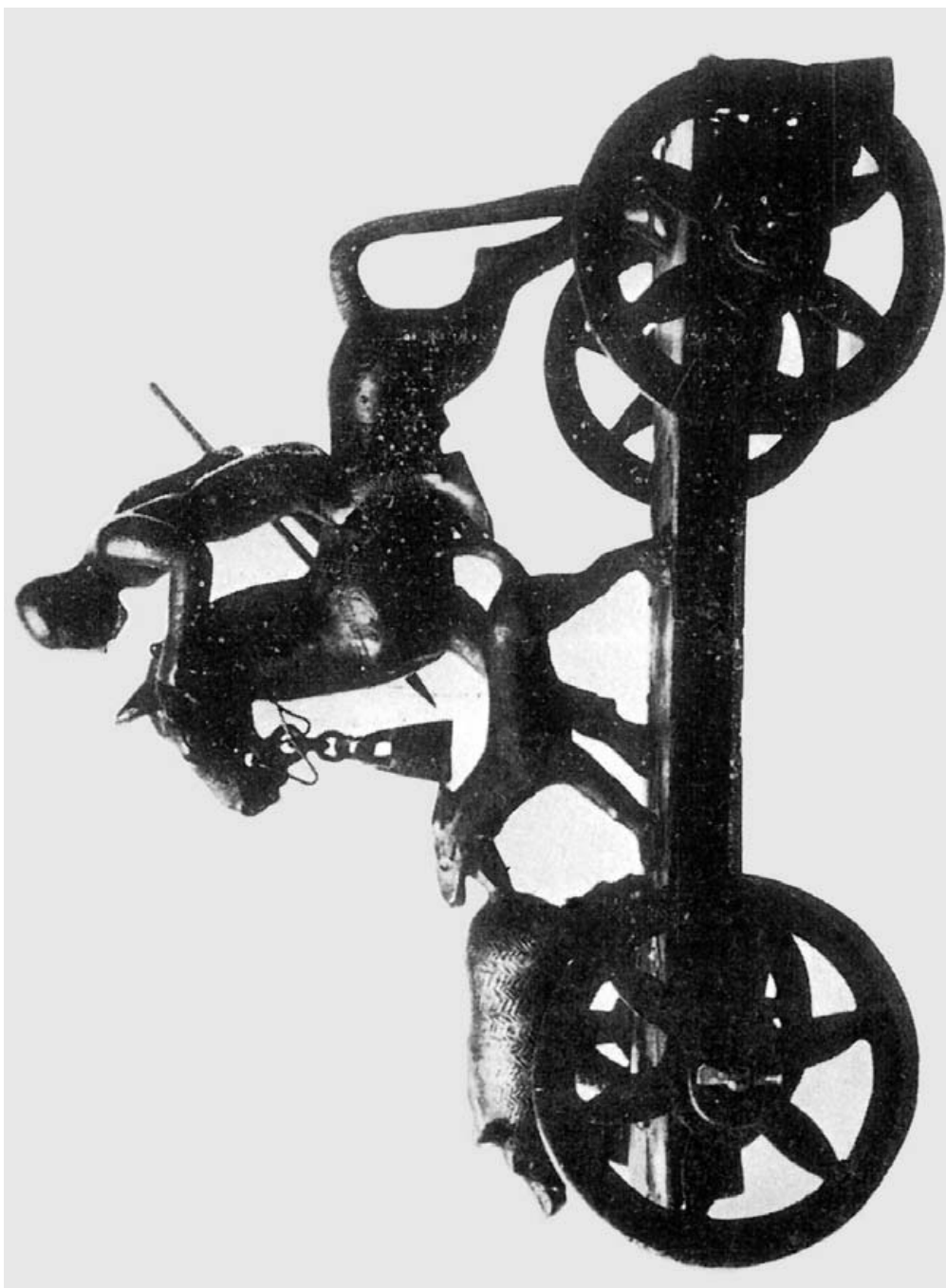


Figure 2.- Merida chariot. Side view (Photo. St. Germain Museum).



Figure 3.- Merida cart (Photo. Musée St. Germain).



Figure 4.- Merida cart (Photo. Musée St. Germain).

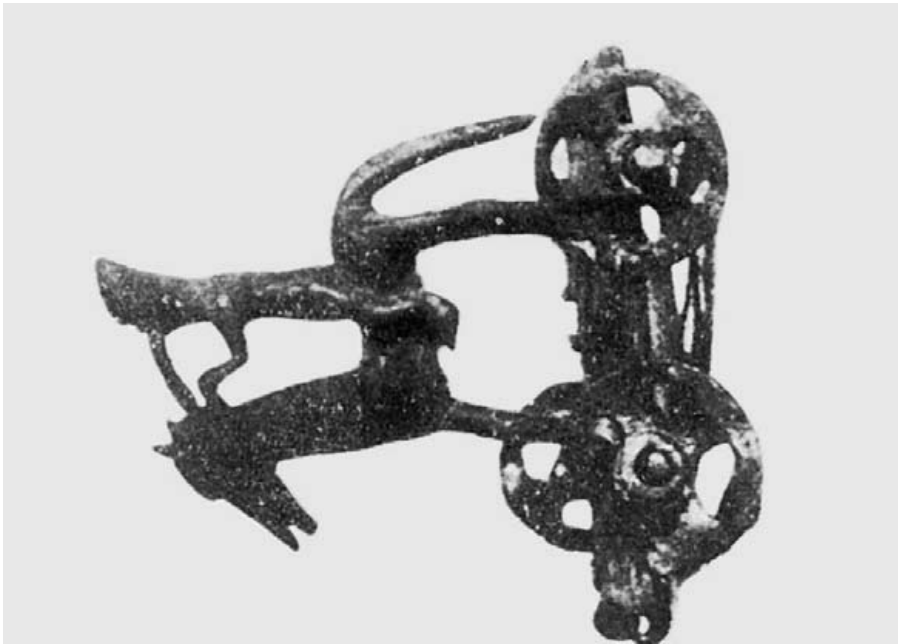


Figure 5.- Bronze trolley from Almorchón (According to J.R. Mélida)

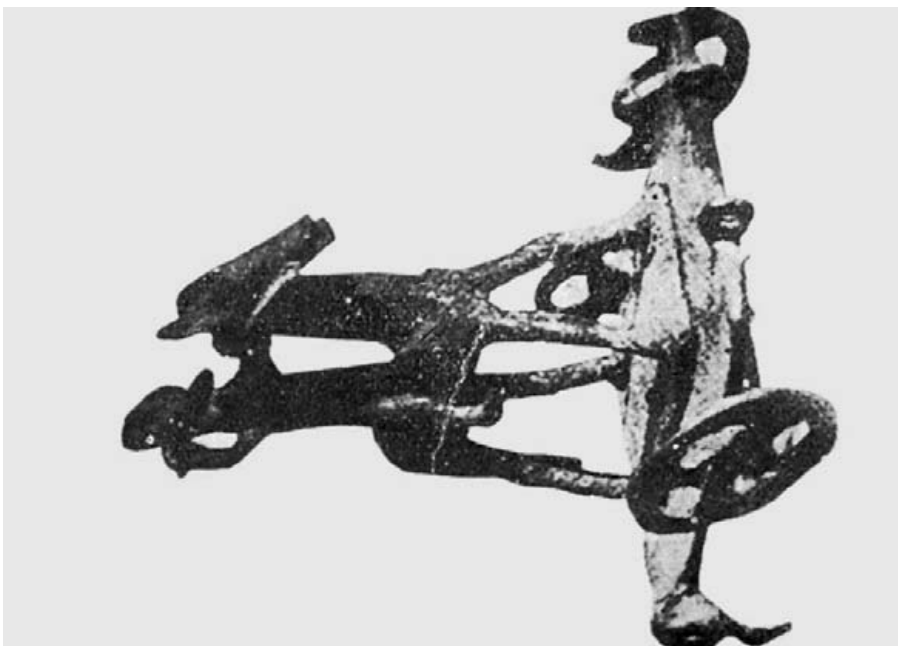


Figure 6.- Almorchón Cart (According to J.R. Mélida)



Figure 7.- Phoenician votive offering probably made in Syria (according to R. Forret).



Figure 8.- Iberian cart. Ex-voto from the Cigarralejo Sanctuary (Fot. E. Cuadrado).



Figure 9.- Iberian votive cart from the Sanctuary of Santa Elena (Photo M.A.N.)



Figure 10.- Etruscan cart of the Museum of Villa Iulia (Fot. Soprint. alle Ant. del'Etr.)



Figure 11.- Terracotta cart from Agia Irini (Cyprus). (According to Gjerstad).

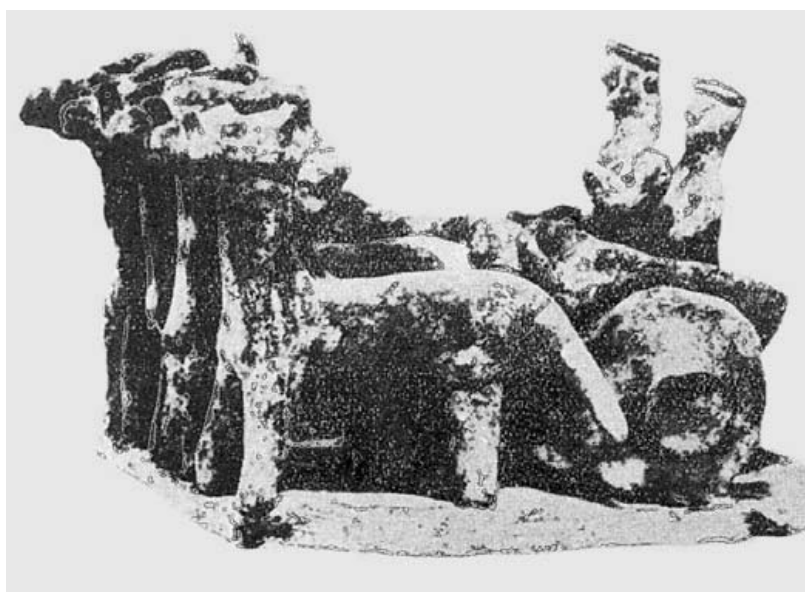


Figure 12.- Terracotta Chariot from Agia Irini (Cyprus) (according to Gjerstad).

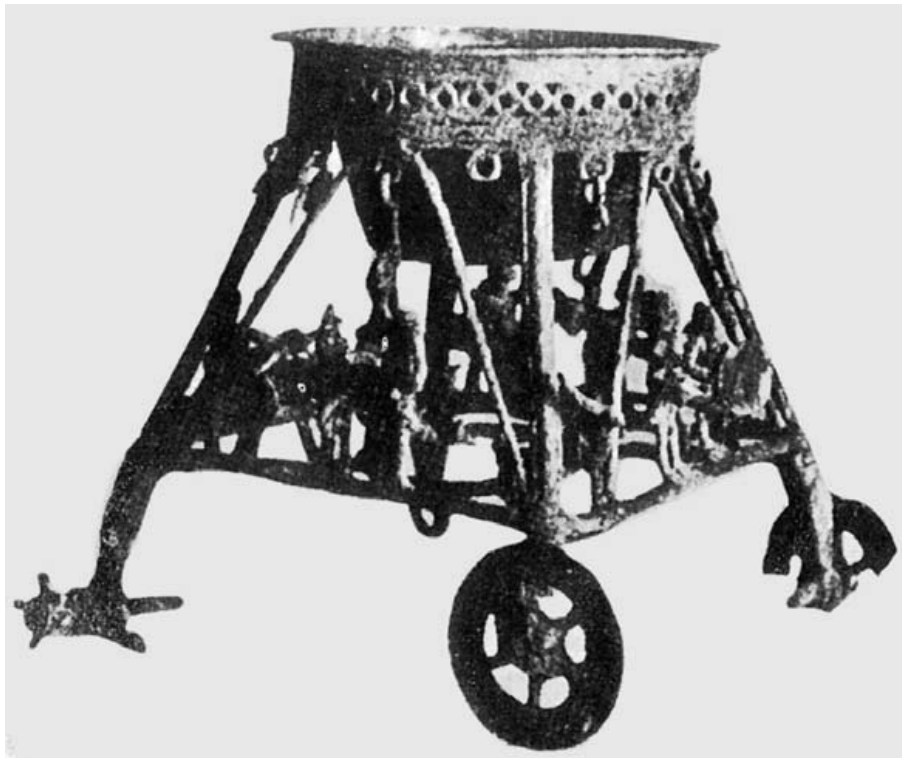


Figure 13.- Etruscan votive cart of Byzantium. Museum of Villa Iulia (according to P. Riis).

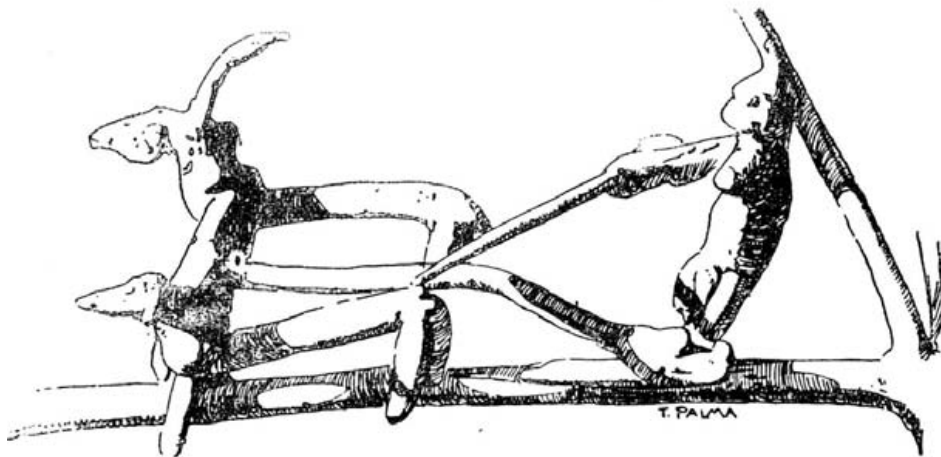


Figure 14.- Detail of the farming scene of the previous cart.



Figure 15.- Votive cart found in Campania (According to M. Hoernes)