



The Iconography of Animal Musicians in Deir el-Medina and other Related Objects

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Dier el-Medina
Musicians
Ostraca
Monkey
Fox
Double-flute
Harp

ABSTRACT

The artisans of Dier el-Medina during the 18th to the 20th Dynasties produced thousands of sketches on ostraca. Most of these drawings were out of the conventional depiction of animals in ancient Egypt. Its illustration figured animals imitating or parodying human activities. This paper studies these ostraca during the Ramesside period, along with papyrus from London and Berlin. However, the subject of animal musicians was part of a wide range of drawings representing animals behaving like people. Although some of these drawings were an imitation of tombs' reliefs by replacing humans with animals. Musicians like monkeys and foxes were the wider motifs depicted on these ostraca. Moreover, the double flute and the harp were the most common musical instruments used by these animals. Generally, the purpose of these ostraca varied from a training sketch, and a tool for passing the time of the workmen. Moreover, it was also considered a satire of officials, and an expression of the discontent of the artisans of Dier el-Medina. to a mere fable story transferred orally without a written text. The multiplicity of opinions is a clear indication of their ambiguity, and conclusions are often speculative and a matter of continued controversy.

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1. Introduction

The role of animals in ancient Egyptian culture and religion was evident, for instance, in hieroglyphic script. Almost 176 in Gardiner's sign list refer to the animal kingdom. Nowhere in the world have animals been drawn, painted, or otherwise

represented so frequently and in such variety as in Egyptian art (Te Velde, H., 1980: 76). Moreover, the ancient Egyptians were fun-loving people who appreciated a good laugh, and animal images were a frequent vehicle for expressing what was considered funny (Houlihan, P., 1996: 210). The artists of Dier el-Medina produced thousands of sketches on ostraca with a wide variety of subject matter

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and functions. Some are related to tomb and temple decoration (J. Robins, 2008: 192). These drawings date to the flourishing period of the community of Deir el-Medina from the 18th to the 20th dynasties, and mostly belong to the Ramesside period, (Houlihan, P., 1996: 211-212).

Animals making music are often represented alone or as a part of the animal band. However various animal musicians usually depicted like a human in an upright position. Sometimes these animals wear clothes and play different instruments. Such music-making animals have been documented since early Egyptian history (Braun, N. S., 2020: 196). These sketches depict a topsy-turvy world of animals behaving like people (Malek, J., 1999: P. 334). They are usually shown dressed in linen kilts or performing activities against their nature. (Babcock, J., 2014: 5; Houlihan, P., 1996: 212). Scenes of this type were drawn or painted during the second half of the New Kingdom, and they seem to have been produced mainly at Thebes (Russmann, R.R., 2001: 167). These animals are depicted in a variety of activities that are familiar to the tomb and temple walls. Part of these illustrations involves the reversal of role between natural predators and their prey. Others simply portray animals behaving like humans, which has no parallels in the official art (Flores, D., 2004: 233: 252; Houlihan, P. F., 1991: 30). Some of these materials have more entertaining themes which include bands of animal musicians (Houlihan, P., 1996: P. 215). The tendency of the artist toward humor or satire must be as old as the art itself. So, the Egyptian draughtsman was no exception to the rule (Peck, W. H., 1978: 49).

The objective of the study

The paper aims to focus on the drawings of different musician animals, which imitate human activities and were depicted mostly on Ostraca and other materials. The study uses descriptive-analytical and statistical





methods. It depends on 32 illustrated objects distributed among ostraca, papyri, cylinder seal, scaraboid, temple relief, and finally a palette.

2. Literature review

Many studies have been done about the topsy-turvy world or animals behaving like humans. Most of these studies concentrated on the ostraca of Deir el-Medina from the 18th to 20th Dynasties, alongside London and Berlin papyrus. Some of these studies were done by (Brunner-Traut, E., 1979; 1956; 1998), alongside three volumes of studies by D'Abbadie J, V., 1937; 1946; 1959) highlighting figures drawn on ostraca, likewise, (Wilber, D. N., 1960), and (Babcock, J., 2014), in addition to the narration of Egyptian art by (Kantor, H. J. 1957), beside the study conducted about fable stories (Brunner-Traut, E., 1959, 1955), and a book chapter by (Houlihan, P., 1996). Moreover, a work by (Omlin, J. A., 1973) about the Berlin papyri 55001. None of these previous references were dedicated to animal musicians, but generally, they were part of a wider context of animals imitating human activities.

2.1- Monkeys Playing Double-Flute

Monkeys make their appearance in Egyptian reliefs even before the First Dynasty. They continued to be an important motif until the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Moreover, they were appreciated for their comic appeal, especially in imitating human activity. (Houlihan, P., 1996: 105). When the Egyptian draughtsman was amused by drawing animals behaving like humans, they make the fox or the monkey make music by a double flute between their hands (Manniche, L., 1988: 195). On the other hand, several people at Deir el-Medina seem to have kept monkeys, and even, in one case, a baboon. Due to their tendency to imitate human behavior. Monkeys would have provided their owners with amusement and good company, as they are considered very sociable animals (Sweeney, D., 2015: 801).

Therefore, in the ancient Egyptian language the word *kiry*  refers to an unidentified animal imported from Nubia. The *kiry* could dance and be taught to recognize speech and the like, such as the 'dancing red monkey' (Wb. V, 166. 9-10; Wassell, B. A., 1991:76). It is worth mentioning here the word *kiry* was written without a  determinative, where monkey determinatives are also uncommon. For example, it was occurring in the word *qnd*  (Wb V, 56,16, 57, 2; Wassell, B. A., 1991:79) which has been compared with Arabic *kird* 'monkey', or *kiw*  (Wb. V, p. 110, 4) without any qualification like the word *kiry* refers to. As early as the Old Kingdom, two monkeys playing flutes are known from cylinder seals of the 5th Dynasty (fig. 1-2). Both were represented squatting, holding a flute by their forelegs. Musical monkeys reappear in limestone figurines of the Middle Kingdom both in statuettes and ostraca of later dates, initially as harpists, and then as performers on different tools. It may be added that the popularity of this subject continued into classical times and was taken up in Europe during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (Fischer, H., 1959: 252, 254. Fig. 20; Brunner-Traut, E., 1955: Abb.2-3; 18 Junker, H., 1934: Abb. 2; Flores, D., 2004: 245, pl. 15a). One ostrakon from the Louver Museum (E.25309), shows a monkey standing and playing the double flute (fig. 3). In front of him is a dancing young naked figure with a heart amulet as a pendant (D'Abbadie, J, V., 1959:184, CXVII/2845; Peck, W. H., 1978, fig. 72; Flores, D., 2004: pl. 15c). The monkey was executed more carefully than the smaller human figure that accompanied him, which suggested a later addition with less care. (Braun, N. S., 2020: 270, fig. 161, Peck, W. H., 1978: 143). A similar representation of ostrakon shows an upright nude monkey playing a double flute, holding it by his foreleg (fig.4). (D'Abbadie J, V.,

1959:184, CXVII/2846; Flores, D., 2004: pl. 15d; Peterson, B.E.J., 1973; Pl. 57 /109).

Two other ostraca show a monkey playing double-flute (fig. 5) (Peterson, B.E.J., 1973: 98, 99, Pl. 59/111, 112). According to the line on their back, one of them seems to be sitting. Moreover, the Metropolitan Museum of Art ostrakon is drawn on a blue glazed bowl and shows a standing monkey playing a double flute (fig. 6), leaning forward as if walking (Flores, D., 2004: Pl. 15b).

Some ostraca revealed that monkey sometimes plays for the benefit of the dancer. Such as an illustration of a monkey from the Munich collection (no. 1540). The monkey plays a double flute and wears a narrow strip around the waist which forms a loop over the base of the tail (fig. 7). The cord around the body of the monkey indicates the act of a tamed animal. Because tamed monkeys with instruments were seen in daily village life in Egypt. Another band was attached to the monkey's neck. Often a Nubian leads a monkey on a leash, but it is always tied to the body, not around the neck like here (Brunner-Traut, E., 1956: 99-100, pl. III, Braun, N. S., 2020: 270-271, fig. 162; Flores, D., 2004: 245, pl. 15b). A similar ostrakon from the Munich collection (no.1541), depicted an upright monkey playing the double-flute (fig. 8), and a child dancing to the rhythm standing before him (Flores, D., 2004: 245, pl.16b). Likewise, a broken ostrakon shows a monkey walking to the right playing the double flute (fig. 9). Behind him, a child with a shaved head, adorned with three black locks (D'Abbadie J, V., 1936: 10, pl. VII/2045). The Musée Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire in Brussels had an ostrakon, showing a monkey dancing with his arms raised, waving the hooked batons usually seen in the hands of monkey-keepers (fig. 10) (Flores, D., 2004: 245, pl. 16c). Braun ruled out a narrative story in these drawings, but a real everyday life scene (Braun, N. S., 2020: 270-271, fig. 162-163). Although there are a great number of ostraca that depict monkeys playing the double flute, they are never shown engaged

with any other animal musicians or animals that are humanized (Babcock, J., 2014: 5).

2.2- Monkeys Playing Harp

Three ostraca figured out monkeys as musicians playing the harp. One ostrakon shows a monkey sitting on a seat covered with a cushion. He plays the harp. Before him bows a child, whose shaved head is adorned with only three locks (fig.11). (D'Abbadie, J, V., 1937: 57–58, Pl. XL/2281; Flores, D., 2004; pl.14a). The second ostrakon (fig. 12), also from Deir el-Medina, depicted a monkey playing with a standing harp and a girdle circling his waist (Flores, D., 2004; pl.14b). Similarly, the third from the Medelhavsmuseet Stockholm (MM 14047) shows a monkey playing the harp in front of a seated mouse (fig. 13). This is one of the rare scenes in which a monkey serves another humanized animal. (Peterson, B.E.J., 1973:101, pl. 66/127). A comparable scene with the same combination of mouse and harp-playing monkey has not yet been documented (Braun, N. S., 2020: 237, fig.118).

The role of the musician seems to have been favored by monkeys. Many figurines dated to the Amarna period show a monkey playing the harp (Flores, D., 2004: 244; Frankfort, H., & Pendlebury, J.D.S., 1933: pl. xxxi, 3, 7). Numerous figures of playful monkeys have been discovered in private houses at El-Amama. These have been interpreted either as parodying human behavior or as mere toys. In the early Old Kingdom, dancers and musicians were shown in the company of monkeys who played the part of comic entertainers (Bosse-Griffiths, K., 1980: 74). Houlihan argues that during the Old Kingdom, possibly even earlier. These primates were trained to dance, sing, and play wooden flutes, and they were imitating human concerts (Houlihan, P., 1996: 106). Moreover, Brunner-Traut stated that the monkey himself could have been trained to make music. Apart from the double flute, he plays the harp or plays the lute, which in

principle is just as possible as blowing (Brunner-Traut, E., 1956: 99).

These images may reflect the behavior of the house pets of the upper class, which presumably were allowed to move freely, playing with the instruments set aside by musicians hired for banquet entertainment. However, the images of the ostraca seem to contradict this supposition. The animals are depicted as if they were playing instruments. This is true for monkey harpists as well as for those depicted playing the flute (Flores, D., 2004: 245). But Sweeney refuted this possibility since recent research shows that non-human primates do not seem to be particularly musical. Although monkeys can detect the presence of rhythm, they cannot follow a beat. Some types of monkeys are not particularly affected by music, while others may find it stressful. On the other hand, other types of monkeys seem to prefer silence, while others seem to find music soothing (Sweeney, D., 2015: 804). Sweeney also see the drawings of monkeys making music are therefore probably satirical, or representations of monkeys playing around with musical instruments, whose failed attempts to make music were considered amusing. Sometimes these drawings are even parodies of scenes of musicians at banquets. (Sweeney, D., 2015: 804-805).

2.3- Fox playing Double-Flute and Harp

The figure of the fox playing music seems to be very old in Egyptian art since as early as the predynastic period (fig. 14), (D'Abbadie J, V., 1946: 76, figs. 33, 37; Brunner-Traut, 1979: fig. 6). This figure on the Oxford Palette is thought to be the earliest example of a fox playing a double flute, whether he is a real fox, a masked hunter disguised as a fox (Cialowicz, K.M., 2001:18; Wolf, W., 1957: 82, fig. 42; Davis, W., 1992:82; Petrie, W. F. M., 1953: 13), or he may be a fable animal (Vandier, J., 1952: 853; Capart J., 1905: 233). Furthermore, it remains unclear whether this scene is from an unknown myth or an animal story that has not been handed

down in text, or the depiction of a motif from the religious domain (Braun, N. S., 2020: 197). Some ostraca from Deir el-Medina contain several drawings of foxes playing double-flute or harp and are often accompanied by other animals.

Like the Louver Museum's ostrakon depicted a fox standing on his hind legs (fig. 15). He carries a bag on his back and plays the double flute to make a goat, or an ibex before him dance (D'Abbadie J, V., 1937: 60, Pl. XLIII/2294; Brunner-Traut, E., 1976: 124, fig. 42; Braun, N. S., 2020: fig 192). This illustration would be an Egyptian fable from which the Aesopic fable of the wolf and the goat derived from it (Van de Walle, B., 1969: P. 20, fig. 2; Malek, J., 1999: 244). Brunner-Traut and others suggested that the goat may be asked for the little dance as a last favor, to lure comrades for help, because the predator has threatened to kill it. The hyena, or fox, likes to play the role of the musician in Egyptian fairy tales, while the goat is considered a skilled dancer. Papyri and ostraca often show both together (Brunner-Traut, E., 1998: 86, fig. p. 87; Ollivier-Beauregard, G. M, 1894: Pl. N 28; Wright, T., 1875: fig. 5). It is not certain whether specific scenes on the ostraca illustrated popular stories and fables, but it seems likely that this was the case concerning the British papyrus (Smith, W. S., 1990: 382). However, in most cases, goats often represented dancing and were accompanied by animal musicians (Brunner-Traut, E., 1959: 131, fig. 5). Peck and Flores think the principal drawing of this ostrakon is of a fox playing on the double flute. Secondary to it is a sketch of a goat with curved horns, added later in the available space left (Peck, W. H., 1978: 173 fig. 73; Flores, D., 2004: 240).

Furthermore. A group of three animal musicians was depicted on an ostrakon from Deir el-Medina (fig. 16). On the left is a standing fox, dressed in a long-pleated dress, his head surmounted by a lotus flower. Maybe he is singing or keeping time by clapping his hands. On the right, another

standing fox, wearing only a skirt, plays the double flute. He wears a necklace, and his head is adorned with a lotus flower. The two animals are turned towards the upright goat standing between them, she is represented from the front, and it seems to play the drum or a lyre (Morenz, L. D., 2012: Abb.8; D'Abbadie, J, V., 1959: 183-184, pl. cxvii/2844; Braun, N. S., 2020: 270, fig, 160; Flores, D., 2004: 246, pl. 18a). This scene is familiar with many tomb paintings depicting human musicians, where animals imitate the actual postures and gestures of human beings who perform the same activities. (Peck, W. H., 1978: 142 fig. 71).

The subject and the full-frontal representation of the animal are similar to the scenes in the Tomb of Nebamun (TT146), in which there are two female musicians whose faces are also depicted facing forward. (Babcock, J., 2014: 66-67). Flores suggests that this musical ensemble may be imitating some sort of official procession (Flores, D., 2004: 246).

Another group of animals is depicted on an ostrakon in the Brussels collection (E 6379). it shows a reception apparently by a mouse (fig. 17). Behind him, an unspecified animal with a short kilt takes care of him, and in front of him is a naked, upright cat and a hyena (or a fox) who wears a short kilt and brings gifts. On the right edge of the picture, a fox is playing a standing harp. The mouse is probably entertained by the music (Braun, N. S., 2020: P. 235, fig. 117; Flores, D., 2004: 246, pl. 14c).

Furthermore, there is a representation of two gazelles playing a double-flute on an Ostrakon from the collection of the Museo Egizio in Turin (no. 6299), on the left, a fox before them playing the standing harp (fig. 18). On the other hand, non-detailed animal dances to the music (Braun, N. S., 2020: 269, fig. 159). An echo of the previous motifs of animals behaving like people, can be found on a painted papyrus in the British Museum dated to the 19th-20th Dynasty (fig. 19). It shows various animals engaged in human

activities. A flute-playing fox herds a small group of goats, imitating a goat herd depicted on the wall of the 19th Dynasty tomb at Thebes. The leader fox had a shepherd's feeding bag with a stick rested upon his shoulder, while the other fox was walking behind the herd, also carrying a feeding bag supported on a stick, and playing double flute (Brunner-Traut, E., 1998: 85; Flores, D., 2004: 240, Pl. 9a; Peck, W. H., 1978, fig. 74; Wilber, D. N., 1960, Fig. 21 Malek, J., 1999: fig. 203; Ollivier-Beauregard, G. M., 1894: pl. N 28; Wright, T., 1875:7, pl. 5; Omlin, J. A., 1973: XX; Braun, N. S., 2020: 308, fig. 192).

Part of the scene's appeal lies in the inappropriate mingling of predator and prey. The artist has drawn the predators with oversized eyes (Robins, J., 2008: 192, fig.232). In this scene, the animals imitate human activities, but in a topsy-turvy world where they act against their instincts (Russmann, R.R., 2001, 167, fig. 78).

2.4- Other Musician Animals

Other animals are illustrated on ostraca, papyri, and other objects, such as one scaraboid and a cylinder seal beside a temple relief. A scene on one ostrakon from the University's Museum of Art and Archeology of Missouri (no. 63.6.3), consists of four animal figures (fig. 20). In the center is a goat who plays a barrel drum. The larger animal on the left was a goat or a gazelle playing the double flute. The object that hangs from its foreleg may represent the case used by professional musicians to transport the flute. To the right are the foxes' dancers (Podzorski, P. V., 2015: P. 21-22, fig. 3; Braun, N. S., 2020: 268, fig.158). Wilber identified the dancing animals on the left as wolves (Wilber, D. N., 1960: fig. 17), while Podzorski suspected the large dancing animal on the right was a hyena, because hyenas depicted with stripes, rather than spots, are not unknown in ancient Egyptian ostraca (Podzorski, P. V., 2015: 22).

A seated lion is depicted on another ostrakon playing the lyre by his foreleg (fig. 21). Likewise, a New Kingdom or later frog-backed scaraboid, now in the Louvre Museum (no. 6950), shows a seated donkey playing a large standing harp (fig. 22) (D'Abbadie J, V., 1959, pl. cxviii/2847; Flores, D., 2004: P. 246 fig. 3a-b; Braun, N. S., 2020: 197-198, fig. 76-77). A similar motif in the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels (no. E.6853), is depicted on a seal belonging to the Hyksos period (fig. 23). It shows a donkey plays a standing harp. Before him, an unidentified animal adorned with feathers and accompanied by a singing winged lion. A snake, a crocodile, a bird, a hedgehog, and a gazelle can also be seen on the seal's surface (Braun, N. S., 2020: 202, fig. 82; Brunner-Traut, E., 1955: 18, fig. 6). A relief from the 25th Dynasty temple of Medamoud (fig.24), which belongs to the "God's Wife of Amun", Shepenupet III, the daughter of the Kushite king Pianchi. Now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (JdE 58924). The scene depicted the crocodile playing on the lute and a human harpist playing in front of an enthroned mouse (Kantor, H. J. 1957: pl. 16; Morenz, L. D., 2012: 94; Babcock, J., 2014: 116, pl. 55; Omlin, 1973: Pl. xxiiiib). Both humans and animals acting like humans appear to be involved in a ritual banquet accompanied by music. This relief from Medamoud is unique and therefore difficult, if not impossible, to interpret (Flores, D., 2004: 248, pl. 21a). it is not clear whether these temple reliefs represent a moment in a larger narrative or not, but it is possibly related to the New Kingdom ostraca and papyri (Babcock, J., 2014: 116). In Turin papyrus, the crocodile is playing the lute between the animal ensemble and shares his music with various instruments (fig. 25), a donkey plays a standing harp, a lion sings to the lyre, a standing crocodile plays the lute, and a monkey plays the double flute (Omlin, J.A., 1973: pl. XIV; Babcock, J., 2014. pp. 66, 78, 80, pl. 4; Bresciani, E., 2001: fig. p.117; Brunner-Traut, E., 1976: 125, fig. 45;

Braun, N. S., 2020: fig. 186a; Murray, M. A., 1984: 142, Pl. lxxix, 1; Braun, N. S., 2020, 199, fig. 78).

The animal ensemble pictured on the Turin papyrus most resembles the band commonly depicted in the official art. Even the same instruments as the harp, lyre, lute, and double-flute are pictured (Flores, D., 2004: 246, pl. 17b; Wilber, D. N., 1960: pl. 22; Ollivier-Beauregard, G. M., 1894: 150, pl. N 21). The Satirical Papyrus, as it is called, shows creatures engaged in activities that belong to the tomb scenes. But this time, mocking what was essentially a very important matter. Many of Deir el-Medina's discarded ostraca bear little vignettes of a similar kind to those painted on this papyrus (James, T.G.H., 1986: P. 60). Due to the similarities between the drawing of Turin papyrus (no.55001), and the ostraca of Deir el-Medina, Bierbrier confirms that it belongs to Deir el-Medina artisans (Bierbrier, M., 2004: 77). This drawing, also, is reminiscent of the temple reliefs from Medamud (Morenz, L. D., 2012:104). However, the tables below categorize animals based on the number of musical instruments used by them, and also the number of animals illustrated on ostraca and other objects (table 1-2).

Table 1: Numbers of Musical Instruments used by animals.

| Animal | Numbers of Musical Instruments | | | | |
|------------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | Double-Flute | Harp | Lyre | Lute | Drum |
| Monkey | 11 | 3 | - | - | - |
| Fox /Hyena | 4 | 2 | - | - | - |
| Goat | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Gazelle | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| Lion | - | - | 2 | - | - |
| Donkey | - | 3 | - | - | - |
| Crocodile | - | - | - | 2 | - |
| Total | 16 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

The previous table indicates that sixteen illustrations show animals using a double flute, eight for a harp, five for a lyre, two for a lute, and one for a drum. Accordingly, it

reveals that monkeys were represented playing the double flute more than any other animals (69%). At the same time, the double flute was frequently used by other animals (53%). Then (27%) animals were represented playing the harp. Only a few drawings depicted the lute and the drum (Chart 1). Usually, monkeys and foxes were the favorite motifs in these illustrations. In addition, the double flute and harp were widely used among animals.

Table 2: Number of animals illustrated in different Platform.

| Animal | Platforms | | | | | | Total |
|------------|-----------|--------|---------------|-----------|----------------|---------|-------|
| | Ostraca | Papyri | Cylinder seal | Scaraboid | Temple reliefs | Palette | |
| Monkey | 11 | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | 14 |
| Fox /hyena | 5 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 7 |
| Goat | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| Gazelle | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Lion | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Donkey | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 3 |
| Crocodile | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 2 |
| Total | 21 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 32 |

This table indicates that 66% of the whole animals are represented on ostraca, and 16% of them are illustrated on papyri (chart 2). Meanwhile, 79% of monkeys and 71% of foxes/hyenas are depicted on ostraca while the rest of the animals are represented in the other objects. It reveals that ostraca were the favorite platform used by the artisans of Deir el-medina to execute drawings. Maybe because of their availability and within reach. Meanwhile, both monkeys and donkeys were the only animals who appeared on multiple objects. While the lion and the crocodile were less represented on all objects. A study conducted by Podzorski revealed that the overwhelming majority (70%) of animals depicted playing the double flute were monkeys. In the remaining 30% of the sample, were foxes and hyenas playing the double flute and slightly more common goats and gazelles (Podzorski, P. V., 2015: 22).

Chart 1: Musical Instrument Using by Animals

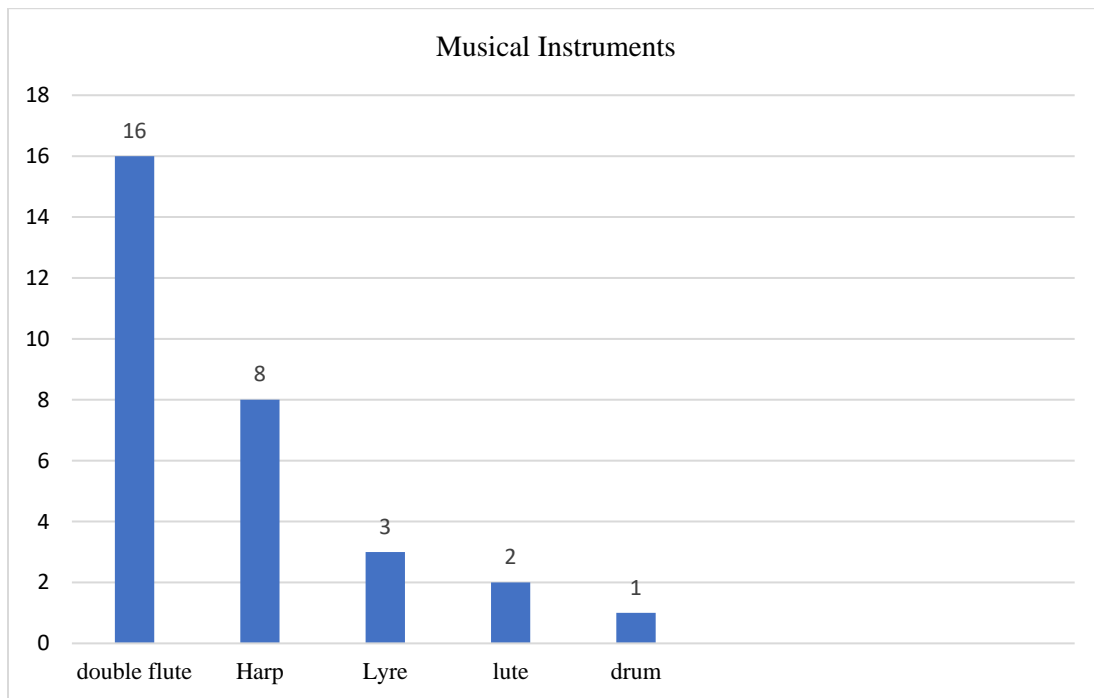
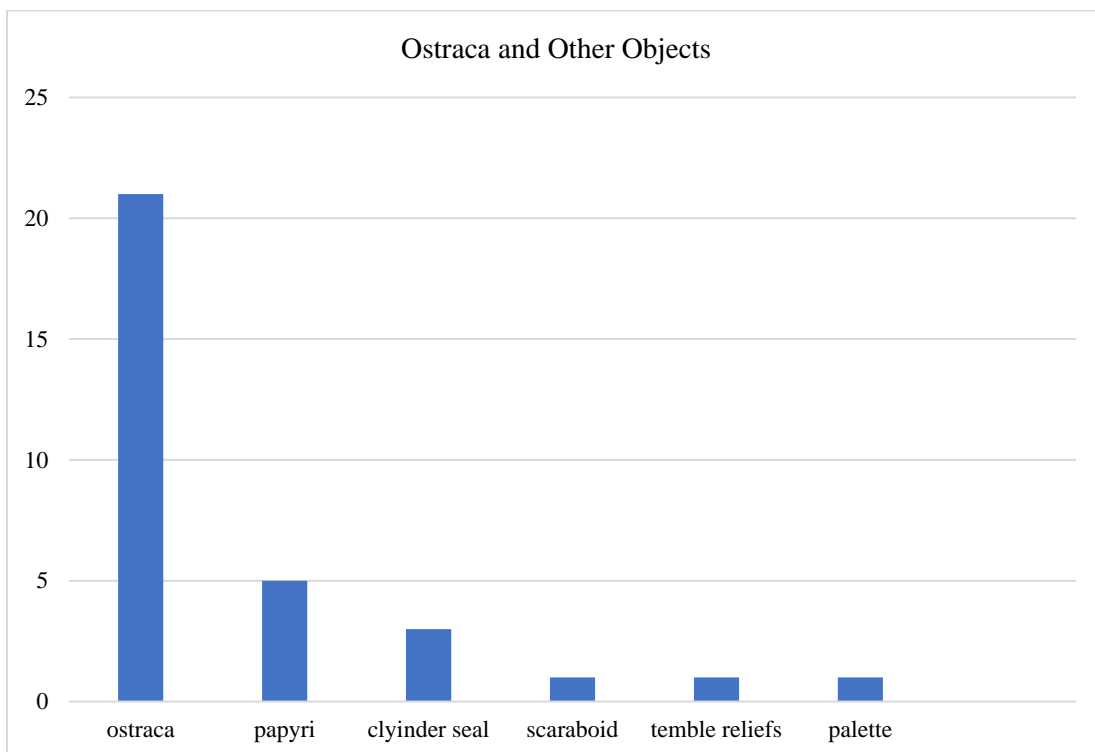


Chart 2: Platform of Drawings



3. The Purpose of the Drawings

The ostraca of Deir el-Medina presented a rather different picture of the interests of Egyptian artists than that presented by the tomb paintings. Illustrated papyri should also be cited at this point (Smith, W. S., 1990: 382). Animal musicians, in general, must be placed within the larger context of animals behaving like humans, from which the artisans of Deir el-Medina were produced. While no one can deny the amusing side of these illustrations, their precise meaning remains somewhat uncertain, owing to the absence of detailed explanation in accompanying texts (Houlihan, P., 1996: P. 216; Russmann, R.R., 2001: 167; Robins, J., 2008: 192; Flores, D., 2004: P. 252). Furthermore, official art rarely exhibits such scenes (Brunner-Traut, E., 1979:11). Therefore, many interpretations have been done to verify the meaning behind these drawings, which were made by the artisans of Deir el-Medina.

The highly skilled artisans of the royal gangs of workers used ostraca as notepads for sketches, memorandums, letters, and copies of literary works, among many other things (Houlihan, P., 1996: 211). Moreover, the unusual poses of the dance and the gestures of the musicians would have required more practice, and the result was that more trial pieces exist on these subjects than on other aspects of daily life (Peck, W. H., 1978: 48). Therefore, it may represent an initial draft of a scene, or a training copy of a finished scene (Robins, J., 2008: 192). The illustration gets a glimpse of how artists were trained through copying and practice. The vast majority of sketches depicting animals are drawn freehand without a grid (Robins, J., 2008: 192; Babcock, J., 2014: 3). Others are reminiscent of banquet scenes, in some cases, including musical entertainment. This suggests that many may be domestic scenes, placing them in daily life, rather than a funerary context (Flores, D., 2004: 238). Some of these illustrations may be trial sketches for larger works of art, or it has been

identified as practice pieces used in the education of the upcoming generation by draftsmen from ancient Egypt (Flores, D., 2004: 233; Coony, K. M., 2012: 145, 158; Bierbrier, M., 2004: 78). However, Coony stated that the notion of trial sketching alone cannot account for the creation of so many figured ostraca (Cooney, K.M., 2012: 159).

Other scholars went for explaining these scenes as a wit of humor where drawings were quickly sketched while workmen were resting. They parody the formal scenes in tombs or caricature real people. Probably, when the ostraca were passed around, few were ignorant of whom the animals and their behavior mimicked. (Malek, J., 1999: 224). Many were made for the artisans' amusement and pleasure, perhaps to pass the time between jobs (Houlihan, P., 1996: P. 212). A large number have been interpreted as sketches solely for the amusement of the artist and his friends. Many of them are humorous images that appear to parody scenes from the official art by replacing the human actors with animals (Flores, D., 2004: 233; Bresciani, E., 2001:117-118). However, the Egyptians found it amusing to show animals performing human functions, often in reverse to their normal relationship (Bierbrier, M., 2004: 77: 78). These images may even have been passed around to fellow workers on the job site, perhaps to share a laugh, then simply thrown away (Houlihan, P., 1996: 212). So, the quality of most ostraca drawings indicates that the figures were usually executed relatively quickly for transitory purposes (Podzorski, P. V., 2015:17).

On the other hand, Flores sees the depiction of animals in odd situations or behaving contrary to their natures as not necessarily mimicking man (Flores, D., 2004: 233: 252). This led to another explanation where many drawings, particularly those in which animals play the roles of human beings, may have been illustrations for folk tales or fables, now lost (Peck, W. H., 1978: 50; Houlihan, P., 1996: 216). These animal stories aimed at an

illiterate portion of the population, and they had the widest circulation for their amusements, because they transferred animals into the world of men, for the expression of criticism by the lower ranks of society (Brunner-Traut, E., 1979: 11; Flores, D., 2004: 252). It is possible that the ancient Egyptians, like many other peoples, had an oral tradition of satirical or moralizing tales in which animals acted in human ways (Russmann, R.R., 2001: 167; Robins, J., 2008: 192). Malek defunct the opinion of calling these illustrations an oral fable story, and see it as unsatisfactory (Malek, J., 1999: 224).

So, another opinion calling for the appearance of a relief carved on a sandstone block from a temple at al-Medamud, which dates from the 25th Dynasty, may have some sort of mythological link (Houlihan, P., 1996: P. 217, fig. 153). Other reliefs, like the column at Philae where monkeys play lute and the Oxford palette, showing a jackal playing flute, are exceptions, from the illustration from Deir el-Medina and other papyrus (Brunner-Traut, E., 1979: 11, 13). Because the animal fable scenes were carved on temple walls, may contain religious symbolism (Russmann, R.R., 2001: 167; Houlihan, P., 1996: P. 216).

Furthermore, some of these illustrations may also reflect the hardship that Egyptian society was experiencing at the close of the 20th Dynasty (Houlihan, P., 1996: P. 216), where the artisans of Deir el-Medina went on strike several times because they had not received the food and other supplies with which they were paid. (Russmann, R.R., 2001: 167). Therefore, the Satirical papyrus addresses the problems within Egyptian society during the late Ramesside Period and sometimes uses animals to make certain points about these problems. (Netzley, P. D., 2003: p. 260; Flores, D., 2004: 236). Cooney suggested that these drawings gave an unsatisfied community a narrow avenue for the venting of emotions of discontent (Cooney, K.M., 2012: 160). However, these illustrations fall

outside the traditional Egyptian art, revealing an unfamiliar side of Egyptian artists, who may fun at distinguished figures or convey the notion of discontent, and the best choice is to choose animals in place of humans (Germond, P., and Livet, J., 2001: 210, fig. 277).

4. Conclusion

The most outstanding features of these ostraca, papyri, and other related objects were animals behaving like people as musicians. Monkeys and foxes were the wider motifs depicted on these ostraca, they always represented standing, sometimes dressed like a human, and playing the double flute. On the other hand, the figure of a fox playing a double flute was older in ancient Egyptian art. In some instances, the fox was depicted wearing a long gown and a short skirt.

The majority (66%) of animals were represented on ostraca, while (53%) of these animals were represented playing double flutes, among them (69%) were monkeys. Meanwhile, 27% of different animals were represented playing the harp (table 1, chart 1). Moreover, 16% of the animals are illustrated on papyri, and 79% of monkeys and 71% of foxes/hyenas are depicted on ostraca, while the rest of the animals are represented in other different objects (table 2, chart 2).

On the other hand, the crocodile was represented only playing the lute, with a rare appearance of lions and goats with lyre. Meanwhile, all animals are represented standing on their hind legs parodying human posture. Fox is never shown sitting like other animals. While monkeys are rarely shown with any other animal, foxes are seldom represented alone.

However, these drawings could be a training sketch of the artisans in the community of Deir el-Medina for later use on tomb walls, or they could be a simple joke sketches passed between the artisans to pass the time. Furthermore, it appears to embody a fable

story that is passed down orally but is unfounded in texts. On the other hand, these illustrations could be a satirical expression of the discontent that characterized the second half of the 19th Dynasty. Accordingly, there is no clear identification behind these illustrations, due to the lack of written texts clarifying these drawings on ostraca and other materials. The multiplicity of opinions is a clear indication of their ambiguity.

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Figures

Figs. 1-2 Monkeys playing flute on cylinder seals

Fig. 1



Fischer, H., 1959: fig. 20



Fig. 2



Junker, H., 1934: Abb. 2

Figs. 3-4 Two standing monkeys playing double flute

Fig. 3



fig. 4



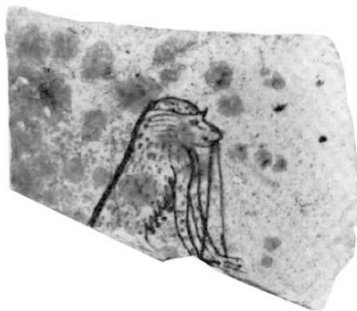
D'Abbadie J, V., 1959:184, CXVII/2845,184, CXVII/2846

Fig. 5 Sitting monkeys with flute fig.



Peterson, B.E.J., 1973; pl. 59/ 111,112

fig. 6 a blue glazed bowl of a monkey



Flores, 2004: Pl.15b

Figs. 7-8 Munich Collection of monkeys playing flute and a dancing figure.

Fig. 7

fig. 8



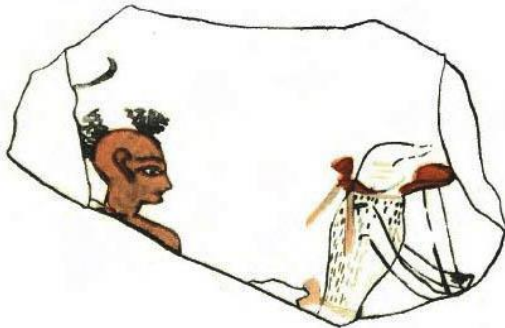
Brunner-Traut, 1956: pl. III

Fig. 9 a musician monkey with a shaved boy



Flores, 2004: Pl.16 b

fig. 10 a monkey dancing to the music



D'Abbadie J, V., 1936, pl vii/2045



Flores, 2004: Pl.16c

Figs. 11-13 Ostraca of monkeys playing harp.

Fig. 11

fig. 12

fig. 13



D'Abbadie, 1937: Pl. XL/2281



Flores, 2004; pl.14b



Peterson, 1973:pl. 66/127

Figs. 14-16 Foxes playing double-flute with other musician's animals.

Fig. 14



Fig. 6

Brunner-Traut, 1979: fig.6

fig. 15



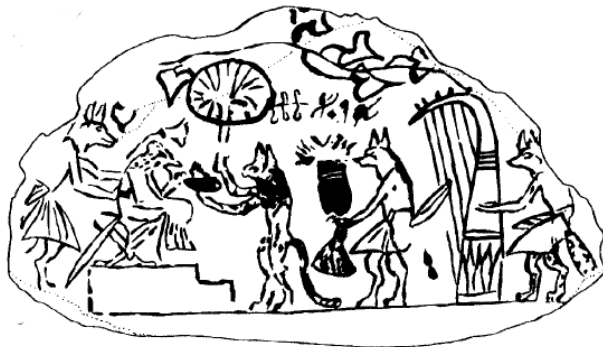
Van de Walle, B., 1969: fig. 2

fig. 16



Morenz, L. D., 2012: Abb.8

Fig. 17 a mouse entertained by a fox playing harp fig. 18 a fox with two gazelles playing music



Flores, 2004: 246: pl. 14c



Braun, N. S., 2020: fig. 159

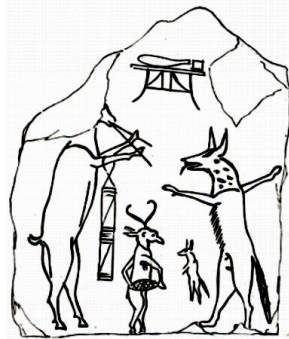
19-22 animals playing different musical instruments.

Fig. 19



Peck, W. H., 1978: fig. 47

fig. 20



Podzorski, P., 2015: fig.3

fig. 21



Braun, N. S., 2020: fig. 76-77

fig. 22



Fig. 23 monkey playing harp on a seal fig. 24 a relief from the temple of Medamoud

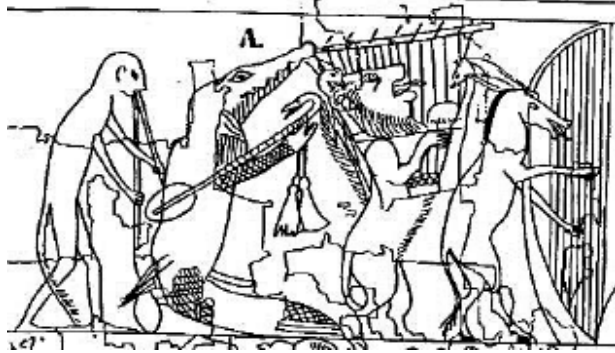


Brunner-Traut, E., 1955: fig. 6



Kantor, H. J. 1957: pl. 16

Fig. 25 different animals on Turin papyrus playing musical instruments.



Braun, N. S., 2020: fig. 186a