

## **Scenes and Minor Arts of the Playful and Naughty Monkey in Ancient Egypt**

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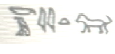
### **Abstract:**

Monkeys were prominent animals in ancient Egypt not only because they were considered sacred but also because they were widely kept as pets or trained animals, playing significant roles in the daily lives of the ancient Egyptians.

This study focuses on non-religious depictions of monkeys, which aims to illuminate the playful and naughty moments featuring monkeys in ancient Egypt. The depictions of these scenes were compiled from private tombs across Egypt, spanning from the Old Kingdom to the New Kingdom. Notable locations include the tombs of Meidum, Giza, El-Kab, Saqqara, Al-Qurna, and the tombs of Abu Al-Naga. Additionally, the research seeks to examine the minor arts that portray the naughty and playful nature of ancient Egyptian monkeys. The research relies on the analytical descriptive approach, which explains the scenes depicted on the walls of the tombs of the ancient Egyptians. The methodology of this research relies on descriptive data and meticulous analysis to achieve its objectives

**Key words:** Scenes and minor arts; Playing Monkeys; Naughty Monkey; Ancient Egypt.

### **Introduction:**

One of the ancient Egyptian monkey species is referred to as *kj.t* <sup>1</sup>, and evidence from animal necropolises and wall scenes suggests that ancient Egypt was home to five distinct types of monkeys: the Sacred Baboon (*Papio hamadryas*), the Olive Baboon (*Papio anubis*), the Green or Vervet Monkey (*Cercopithecus aethiops*), the Red Monkey (*Cercopithecus patas*), and the Barbary Ape (*Macaca*). Notably, the Hamadryas Baboon and the Green Vervet Monkey were the most prevalent among these species and played significant roles in ancient Egyptian civilization<sup>2</sup>.

The ancient Egyptians regarded monkeys as sacred symbols, as evidenced by the discovery of statues and mummies of monkeys in their tombs. Monkeys were considered partners in daily life and envisioned as companions in the afterlife, symbolizing a connection to the animal world<sup>3</sup>. This belief is vividly depicted in scenes and inscriptions on the walls of tombs, both in noble and royal tombs,

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<sup>1</sup>*Wb VI*, p. 110

<sup>2</sup>Pio, H., *Baboons in ancient Egyptian Art: The significance of the Baboon motifs* (Stellenbosch University, 2018), p. 33

<sup>3</sup>Evans, L., *Animal behaviour in Egyptian Art: representations of natural world in Memphite tomb scenes* (Oxford: Aris and Philipps Ltd, 2010), 1.

showcasing activities such as hunting, land irrigation<sup>4</sup>, crop collection, entertainment parties, music<sup>5</sup>, and assistance in law enforcement, including catching criminals<sup>6</sup>. The ancient Egyptians were not only acquainted with monkeys but also domesticated two types. The first type, known as "auspicious" or "Qarduh," had a green coloration and a dog-headed appearance. The second type was characterized by a yellow hue.<sup>7</sup> Domesticated baboons were actively involved in various tasks, such as assisting in grape squeezing,<sup>8</sup> fishing, and participating in hunting scenes.<sup>9</sup>

## I. Depictions of Playful and Naughty Monkeys in Ancient Egyptian Tombs: Scene 1 (Fig .1)

In the Tomb of Nefermaat  $\text{𓏏𓏏𓏏}$  "Nfr-m3t"<sup>10</sup> and Atet "3jt" at Medum, dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the Old Kingdom, there is a notable scene crafted from colored limestone. This depiction features two vervet monkeys, each tethered with leashes, engaged in playful interactions with their keeper.<sup>11</sup> In the scene, a lively monkey holds a boy by his hand, while the boy reaches out to touch another monkey walking ahead. Simultaneously, the latter monkey playfully interacts with the tail of a nearby crane, capturing a delightful moment of interaction and amusement.<sup>12</sup>

## Scene 2 (Fig .2a, b)

Scenes from the tomb of the priestess Hetepet "Htp.t"<sup>13</sup>, dating back to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty of the Old Kingdom, reveals intriguing insights into the roles of playful monkeys in ancient Egyptian society. One of the most prominent and amusing aspects uncovered by the tomb is the utilization of monkeys for tasks such as fruit collection and musical accompaniment.<sup>14</sup> The tomb showcases the varied roles of monkeys; in one scene, a monkey is depicted engaged in the collection of fruits (Fig. 2a).<sup>15</sup> Another scene portrays a dancing monkey positioned behind a human orchestra. The monkey is shown kneeling, its right arm outstretched with the palm up and flat,

<sup>4</sup>Houlihan, P. F., Harvesters or monkey business? *GM* 157 (1997),p. 31

<sup>5</sup>Houlihan, P.F., *The Animal World of the Pharaohs*, Cairo, 1996, pp. 106, 107.

<sup>6</sup>Houlihan, P.F., *The Animal World*, p.111-112; Strouhal, E., *Life of the ancient Egyptians*, Cairo, 1992, p. 116-117.

<sup>7</sup> سليم حسن, موسوعة مصر القديمة في مدينة مصر وثقافتها في الدولة القديمة والعهد الأناسي, الجزء الثاني, 2017, ص 95

<sup>8</sup>Strouhal, E., *Life of the ancient Egyptians*, Cairo, 1992, p.106, fig111.

<sup>9</sup>Anderso, B. J., *Egyptian art Principles and themes in wall scenes*, prism Archaeological Series 6, 2000, pp. 114, 115; Vandier, D. J., "Catalogue des Ostraca Figurés de Deir el Médineh", *DFIFAO* 2.2(1937), pp.57, 58.

<sup>10</sup>Ranke, H., *Die ägyptischen Personennamen. Verlag von J. J. Augustin in Glückstadt*, 1935., p. 196

<sup>11</sup>**Tomb of Nefermaat and Atet** at Medum was discovered by archaeologist Mariette in 1871; Petrie, W.M.F., *Medum, mastaba of Nefer-Maat and Atet*, London,1892, p.25, pl.XVIII

<sup>12</sup>Petrie, W.M.F., *Medum*, p.115, fig.121.



<sup>13</sup>Ranke, H., *Die altägyptischen Personennamen*, 260 (13)

<sup>14</sup>**The tomb of the priestess Hetepet**, which was discovered in 2018, in the western necropolis of the pyramids, includes tombs of senior officials from the Old Kingdom, who were found by previous archaeological missions that have been to the necropolis since 1842; see more; Woods, A., Swinton, J., Chronological considerations Fragments from the Tomb of Hetepet at Giza, *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 24(2013), p 127.

<sup>15</sup>Woods, A., Swinton, J., *BACE* 24(2013), p 127.

while sitting in the background. Three kneeling Egyptian men play musical instruments and sing. In the register below, four female musicians are depicted dancing, contributing to a lively musical ensemble (Fig.2b). This tomb provides a captivating glimpse into the multifaceted roles that monkeys played in the daily lives and cultural activities of ancient Egyptians during this period.<sup>16</sup>

### **Scene 3 (Fig. 3)**

A scene from the tomb of Niankhkhnum <sup>17</sup> and Khnumhotep <sup>18</sup> at Saqqara, dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, offers a fascinating glimpse into ancient Egyptian law enforcement practices.<sup>19</sup>

In this depiction, a police officer is shown apprehending a thief in a bustling marketplace, aided by a trained monkey. The most surprising aspect is the unconventional use of trained baboons as police animals.<sup>20</sup> The trained monkey, likely a baboon, is depicted restraining the thief by the leg, enabling the approaching officer to make an arrest. This unique representation on the tomb walls reflects the incorporation of trained animals, specifically baboons, in law enforcement during ancient Egyptian times. The scene not only captures a moment of crime prevention but also serves as a vivid portrayal of daily life, offering a glimpse into the societal roles and interactions of the time. The vivid details include a nude man struggling to keep the baboon at bay with his left arm, while a second man, clad in a short kilt and wielding a whip, guides a female baboon carrying a baby. Traces of color on the scene add an additional layer of realism and vibrancy to this ancient depiction.<sup>21</sup>

### **Scene 4 (Fig. 4)**

In a scene depicted on the tomb of Nuneter at Giza, dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the Old Kingdom, a unique portrayal unfolds. The scene captures a vervet monkey, constrained by a rope looped around its waist and neck, positioned on all four limbs beneath the chair of the deceased.<sup>22</sup>

### **Scene 5 (Fig. 5)**

In a scene on the tomb of Inumin *Jnw-Mnw*<sup>23</sup>, dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the Old Kingdom, a lively and playful dynamic is portrayed. Underneath Inumin's chair, a naughty monkey and a dog engage in a spirited interaction. The dog is depicted crouching and looking backward, while the playful monkey is shown leaping over the

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<sup>16</sup>Lyon, R. A., *current literature Magazine of record and review*, vol 21, New York, 1897, pp.370 - 371.

<sup>17</sup>Ranke, H., *Die Ägyptischen Personennamen*, p. 171

<sup>18</sup>Ranke, H., *Die Ägyptischen Personennamen*, p. 276.

<sup>19</sup>Altenmüller, H., Kloth, N., *studien zur altägyptischen kultur*, band 37, Hamburg, 2008, p.365

<sup>20</sup>*PM III*, 2, p. 641-44.

<sup>21</sup>[https://www.osirisnet.net/mastabas/niankhkhnum\\_khnoumhotep/e\\_niankhkhnum\\_khnumhotep\\_01.htm](https://www.osirisnet.net/mastabas/niankhkhnum_khnoumhotep/e_niankhkhnum_khnumhotep_01.htm) (8/7/2020);

محمد أنور شكرى، الفن المصرى القديم منذ اقدم عصوره وحتى نهاية الدولة القديمة، القاهرة، 1976، شكل 57، ص 118

<sup>22</sup>Junker, H., *Giza X Der Friedhof südlich der Cheopspyramide Westteil*, Wien, 1951, p.44-45; *PM III*, p. 217

<sup>23</sup>Kanawati, N., *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara viii, The Tomb of Inumin*, *ACER* 24(2006), p.11

back of the dog. This lively depiction offers a charming glimpse into the playful relationships between animals.<sup>24</sup>

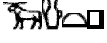
### **Scene 6 (Fig. 6)**

In a scene from the tomb of Idu, dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the Old Kingdom at Giza,<sup>25</sup> a naughty monkey is depicted under the chair of the deceased. In this unique portrayal, the monkey stands over a dwarf's head, holding the dwarf's stick.<sup>26</sup>

### **Scene 7 (Fig. 7)**

A scene from the tomb of Meir, dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, portrays a vervet monkey engaging in playful antics. The depiction captures the naughty monkey playing and jumping over the backs of two dogs, while also interacting with the face of its caretaker.<sup>27</sup>



### **Scene 8 (Fig. 8)**

A scene from the tomb of Khnumhotep  "hnmw-ḥtp" at Beni-Hassan, dating back to the Middle Kingdom, depicts three monkeys on a fig tree engaging in playful activities. In this representation, the monkeys are assisting two men in collecting figs from the tree.<sup>28</sup>

### **Scene 9 (Fig. 9)**

A scene from Raia's tomb at Saqqara, dating back to the Ramesside period, illustrates a naughty monkey beneath a chair. In this playful depiction, the monkey is engrossed in eating figs and grapes.<sup>29</sup>

### **Scene 10 (Fig. 10)**

A Scene from the tomb of Paheri  "Pz ḥrj" in El Kab , dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the New Kingdom, a representation unfolds in the scene featuring Paheri and his wife Henuterneheh "hnwt-ir-nhh" seated. Paheri is adorned in a loincloth and a long, transparent skirt, with a meticulously detailed wig atop his head. He holds a piece of folded material in his hand, and a large necklace adorns his chest. His wife, Henuterneheh, is depicted in a close embrace, wearing a tight-fitting linen dress with straps. Beneath the seat, a tame and playful little monkey is portrayed.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Kanawati, N., "The Teti Cemetery, *ACER* 24(2006), p.42, pl. 2

<sup>25</sup>*PM* III, p.185-186

<sup>26</sup>Junker, H., *Giza VIII. Der Ostabschnitt des Westfriedhofes. Zweiter Teil*, Wien, 1947, p. 35.

<sup>27</sup>Blackman, A. M., *The rock tombs of Meir, Part 4, The tomb-chapel of Pepi 'Onkh the middle son of Sebkhotepe and Pekhernefert*, London, Egypt Exploration Society, 1924, no 2, pl. 17.


<sup>28</sup>Singer, C., *A History of Technology I*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1954, 545, fig 362.

<sup>29</sup>Martin, G., *The Hidden Tombs of Memphis: New Discoveries from the time of Tutankhamun and Ramesses the Great*, London, 1991, p. 25, fig.83.


<sup>30</sup>The depictions of the tomb owners' chairs unveil a plethora of objects beneath them, which can be classified into distinct groups. The initial category comprises animals associated with the owner, such as dogs, cats, and monkeys. The second category features items like containers, mirrors, receptacles, floral arrangements, and various artifacts. The third category portrays individuals connected to the tomb owners, encompassing their partner, offspring, attendants, and even those held captive. See more

The monkey sits with some fruits on its head, one leg straight and the other bent under, as it eats a fruit taken from a bowl in front of it.<sup>31</sup>

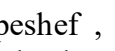
### Scene 11 (Fig.11)

In a scene from the tomb of Menkheperreseneb,  "mn hpr r snb" in Sheikh Abdul Qurna<sup>32</sup>, dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the New Kingdom, Menkheperreseneb and his wife are depicted sitting. Behind them, the grandfather and grandmother are also seated. Notably, a playful and naughty monkey is tied to the leg of the grandmother, engaging in affectionate behavior by caressing the leg of the wife in the graveyard.<sup>33</sup>

### Scene 12 (Fig.12)

In a scene from the Tomb of Vizier Rekhmire,  "rh mi r" TT.100<sup>34</sup>, in Sheikh el-Qurna, west Thebes, dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the New Kingdom, Nubians are portrayed bringing a giraffe and long-horned cattle as tribute. Notably, a playful monkey is depicted climbing up the neck of the giraffe in this lively representation.<sup>35</sup>

### Scene 13(Fig.13)

In a scene from the tomb of Mentuhirkhepeshef,  "mntu hr hps. f"<sup>36</sup>, located in Dra' Abu al-Naga, TT20, dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the New Kingdom, Montukherkhopshef and his wife are seated on a chair. Beneath the chair, a playful monkey and a pampered dog are depicted. The playful monkey is shown pulling a rope tied around the dog's neck, causing the dog to turn back in this engaging portrayal<sup>37</sup>.

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El-Kilany, E., Mahran, H., What Lies under the Chair: A Study in Ancient Egyptian Privat Tomb Scenes, part 1, *JARCE* 51 (2015), pp. 253-256.

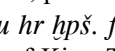

<sup>31</sup>Taylor, J. J., *The Tomb of Paheri, The Offices of the Egypt Exploration Fund*, London, 1895, pl.v; [https://www.osirisnet.net/tombes/el\\_kab/pahery/e\\_pahery\\_04.htm](https://www.osirisnet.net/tombes/el_kab/pahery/e_pahery_04.htm) (4/8/2020).

<sup>32</sup>Tomb of Menkheperreseneb in Sheikh Abdul Qurna TT.112; the great priest of Amun, was employed during the reign of King Thutmose III 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The tomb was razed during the reign of the Ramses. The importance of this cemetery is due to its inscriptions on the walls of the cemetery, which explain the Relationship between mother and father, grandmother and grandfather; see Rice, M., *Who's in Ancient Egypt.*, London, 2003, p. 108-109.

<sup>33</sup>Rice, M., *Who's Who in Ancient Egypt*, 2003, p.108-109

<sup>34</sup>*PM* I, p. 206 - 214; Davies, N. de G., *The tomb of Rekhmire at Thebes*, New York, 1943, pl.20.

<sup>35</sup>Strouhal, E., *Life of the ancient Egyptians*, Cairo, 1992, p.116-117, fig.122.

<sup>36</sup>*The Tomb of Mentuhirkhepeshef*  mntu hr hps. f was the mayor of Busiris the modern city of Atfih  TpjHw " Tepihu, in the reign of King Tuthmosis III, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty see more; Berlandini, J., and Memphitica, V., *Monuments de la chapelle funéraire du gouverneur Ptahmès, Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 82(1982), pp.85-103, pl. viii

<sup>37</sup>Gomaa, F., *Die Besiedlung Ägyptens während des Mittleren Reiches*, Teil 1, Wiesbaden 1986, pp. 380-383; Hannig, R., *Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800 - 950 v. Chr.)*, Mainz, 2006, p. 1202; *PM* I, p 34-35

### **Scene 14(Fig.14)**

In a scene from the tomb of Userhat  $\overline{\text{𓄏𓅓}}$  TT 56<sup>38</sup>, dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the New Kingdom at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, two daughters of the mentioned couple, *henut neferet*  $\overline{\text{𓄏𓅓𓄏𓅓𓄏𓅓}}$  and *Nebet tawy*  $\overline{\text{𓄏𓅓𓄏𓅓}}$ , are seated side by side. Facing them is a young girl, likely the daughter of one of the sisters, who offers them a goblet of wine over the table of offerings. The wine is poured from a container held in her left hand. Under the chair, a small playful monkey is depicted, nibbling on a nut from the dum palm, which it has taken from the basket in front of him.<sup>39</sup>

### **Scene 15 (Fig. 15)**

In a scene from the tomb of Enen at Luxor, dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the New Kingdom, a lively depiction unfolds. The scene portrays a playful monkey beneath the throne of King Amenhotep III and Queen Tiy. The naughty monkey is shown in a dynamic movement, jumping over a cat and a goose, adding a vibrant and animated element to the representation.<sup>40</sup>

## **II: Minor Art Depictions: Playful and Naughty Monkeys**

### **Doc.1 (Fig.16)**

Limestone statuette depicting a monkey playing the harp, dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the New Kingdom. This charming artifact was unearthed in Tell El-Amarna, near the royal palace, and is currently on display at the Egyptian Museum Nr. JE.55457.<sup>41</sup>

### **Doc.2 (Fig.17)**

A small green faience amulet from the New Kingdom is currently exhibited at the British Museum. This charming artifact depicts a seated naughty monkey, portrayed as a household pet. One hand is extended, holding a ball, while the other hand playfully interacts with its tail.<sup>42</sup>

### **Doc.3 (Fig.18)**

A blue-glazed figure of a naughty monkey, depicted as a household pet, is showcased in the Brooklyn Museum Nr. 48.181, dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the New Kingdom. The naughty monkey is seated on an ovoid base (5.4 x 2.8 x 4 cm), with its body in the round, head at right angles to shoulders, pierced ears, and extended hands holding a ball or piece of fruit. The figure is supported by one foot and rests on the base.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *Userhat*  $\overline{\text{𓄏𓅓}}$ , was the Royal Scribe, Child of the Royal Nursery, during the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty king Amenhotep II. His tomb TT 56 is located in Sheikh Abd el-Qurna. It forms part of the Theban Necropolis, situated on the west bank of the Nile opposite Luxor.

<sup>39</sup> *PM I*, p. 111-113; Seeber, B. C., Shedid, A., *Das Grab des Userhat (TT 56)*, Mainz, 1987, pl.1 p.45.

<sup>40</sup> Davies, N.de G., *The Egyptian Expedition 1922-1929: The Graphic Work of the Expedition. Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art 25*, (1930), no.11 fig.1, 6, p.25

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/526287906433918709/> (3/7/2020).

<sup>42</sup> Houlihan, P.F., *The Animal world of the Pharaohs*, Cairo, 1995, p.111.

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/3524> (7/8/2020).

**Doc.4 (Fig.19)**

Crafted from painted sandstone, this exquisite toy features three monkeys engaged in playful activities on a chariot. Unearthed at Tell El-Amarna and dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the New Kingdom, this charming artifact is currently on display at the Egyptian Museum Nr. JE 53021. The depiction showcases three naughty monkeys, positioned on a chariot with four wheels; two on the left side and one on the right. The monkeys extend a robe above the horses' heads, creating a delightful scene. It is speculated that this toy might have been used for play by the daughters of King Akhenaten.<sup>44</sup>

**Doc. 5 (Fig.20)**

This wine bowl, adorned with the portrayal of a female lute player, originates from the illustrious 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the New Kingdom. Meticulously fashioned from a lustrous deep blue glazed faience, this exceptionally rare piece measures 4.5 x 14 cm and is currently showcased at the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden.

The depiction of the female lute player on the bowl stands as a singular and remarkable example within the realm of Egyptian ceramic art. Seated gracefully with her right leg folded beneath her and the left subtly elevated, she demonstrates her musical prowess as she skillfully plays the lute. The artistry extends to the portrayal of her nudity, artfully revealing the slender contours of her form, with a glimpse of a breast, the gentle curve of her hips, and the subtle hollow of her navel.

Enhancing the allure of this scene is a splendid belt, likely crafted from pearls, adorning her waist. To add a touch of charm and whimsy, a small playful monkey leans forward towards her lower back, exuding both charm and amusement, seemingly eager to reach for her embellished belt.<sup>45</sup>

**Doc. 6 (Fig.21)**

A limestone fragment, discovered in Deir el-Madina, dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the New Kingdom, is currently on display at the Egyptian Museum Nr. JE 63799. This fragment depicts a naughty monkey standing beside a granary, illustrated in red and black. The naughty monkey, standing on its hind legs and facing right, is depicted in the act of eating from a mound of grain placed next to the building. Remarkably, the scene includes the monkey conducting what appears to be an inventory of a substantial pile of grain situated in front of it.<sup>46</sup>

**Doc. 7 (Fig.22)**

Ostraca from Deir el-Madina dating back to the New Kingdom, unveil a charming scene. Depicting two naughty green monkeys, intricately bound with ropes, engaged in playful antics as they ascend a date palm. Not only do these whimsical creatures

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<sup>44</sup> <http://www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/detail.aspx?id=15587> (1/9/2020).

<sup>45</sup> [https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/wine-bowl-with-female-lute-player-unknown/FwECzUhBjoxqlQ\(1/9/2020\)](https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/wine-bowl-with-female-lute-player-unknown/FwECzUhBjoxqlQ(1/9/2020)).

<sup>46</sup> Philippe, G., Livet, J., *An Egyptian Bestiary: Animals in Life and Religion in the Land of the Pharaohs*, New York, 2001, p.87.

entertain, but they also appear to be lending a hand to the inhabitants of Deir el-Madina in their daily tasks.<sup>47</sup>

### **Doc. 8 (Fig.23)**

Ostraca from Deir el-Madina, dating back to the New Kingdom, portray a delightful spectacle. This scene captures two vivacious vervet monkeys engaged in a playful rehearsal for a dance, accompanied by a young boy. Another naughty monkey adds to the festivity by skillfully playing a flute, enticing both the onlookers and fellow dancers to join in the joyous celebration.<sup>48</sup>

### **Doc. 9 (Fig.24)**

The Sculptor's Model, dated to the Late Period-early Greco-Roman era and showcased at the Walters Art Museum, USA (Nr. 22.57), is a captivating piece. Unearthed in Memphis, this limestone creation, measuring 10.16 × 10.8 cm, features a man accompanied by a playful monkey and an Ibex.

In this intricate sculpture, a naughty monkey sits perched upon the man's shoulder, engaging in playful interactions. The monkey playfully dips on the man's head, demonstrating a charming camaraderie as it fondles and interacts with its human companion. The scene exudes a delightful sense of intimacy and connection, providing a glimpse into the playful dynamics between man and primate during that era.<sup>49</sup>

## **Analysis**

Ancient Egyptians used monkeys, particularly playful ones, in tomb decorations to highlight moments of joy and fun in daily life. Playful naughty monkeys, often accompanied by other pets like cranes (Scene 1 Fig .1), dogs (Scene 5 Fig. 5), giraffes(Scene 12 Fig.12), cats, and geese (scene 15 Fig. 15), were prevalent in scenes and minor arts, contributing to the pleasure of ancient Egyptians (Doc. 9 Fig. 24).

Playful monkeys weren't exclusive to royal tombs; they appeared in the tombs of officials and priests, reflecting their significant role across various societal classes from the Old to New Kingdom.

Beyond agility, playful monkeys participated in music concerts, playing instruments like the harp (Doc.1 Fig.16) or joining orchestras, capturing joyous moments(scene 2 Fig.2b), (Doc. 5 Fig. 20), (Doc. 8 Fig. 23).

Playful naughty monkeys, particularly baboons known for their somewhat violent traits, played a role in capturing thieves, showcasing their diverse functions in ancient Egyptian life (scene3 Fig .3). These naughty monkeys contributed to recording moments of happiness during harvesting through their agile movements and small

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<sup>47</sup>Vandier, D. J., *Catalogue des Ostraca figures de Deir el Madineh*, 2001, pl. CXVII no.2845,2846; D. Kessler, Monkeys and baboons in ancient Egypt, *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of ancient Egypt 2* (2001),pp. 522-532

<sup>48</sup>Vandier, D. J., *Catalogue des Ostraca figures de Deir el Madineh*, 2001, pl. CXVII no. 2845,2846

<sup>49</sup>[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Egyptian\\_-\\_Sculptor's\\_Model\\_of\\_a\\_Man\\_with\\_an\\_Ibex\\_and\\_a\\_Monkey\\_-\\_Walters\\_2257.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Egyptian_-_Sculptor's_Model_of_a_Man_with_an_Ibex_and_a_Monkey_-_Walters_2257.jpg) (17/11/2020).



size, whether climbing trees (Doc. 6 Fig. 21), (Doc. 7 Fig. 22) or displaying interesting eating habits in various scenes. (scene 8 Fig.8), (scene 9 Fig. 9), (scene 10 Fig. 10), (scene 14 Fig. 14), (Doc. 6 Fig. 21).

## **Conclusion**

The examination of scenes featuring playful and mischievous monkeys sheds light on the prominence of the vervet monkey, renowned for its lively antics and spirited behavior. Identified as the savannah or olive monkey, its distinguishing long tail surpasses the length of its body, compensating for its relatively slender physique with remarkable agility and physical prowess.

These depictions suggest a multifaceted role for playful monkeys in ancient Egyptian society. While they were engaged in practical tasks such as tree climbing, fruit gathering, and aiding in security efforts, they were also depicted participating in musical performances, both as soloists and members of orchestras. Additionally, the motif of the "monkey under the chair" held particular significance, symbolizing virility and prosperity for men.

Throughout different historical periods, monkeys maintained their role as entertainers and sources of joy for ancient Egyptians. Their portrayal evolved over time, with distinct shifts observed between the Old and New Kingdoms. In the Old Kingdom, monkeys were commonly depicted as pets beneath the chairs of male tomb owners, often tethered with collars or belts. Conversely, during the New Kingdom, they were frequently depicted under the chairs of female figures, restrained with belts.

These playful monkeys, adorned with various accessories such as collars, belts, bracelets, and anklets. Their depictions on tomb walls showcase a range of lively interactions, from engaging with household children to mischievous encounters with other animals.

Moreover, monkeys, regarded as symbols of good fortune, were prominently featured in daily life through various artifacts, including children's toys and amulets crafted from materials such as faience, glass, and bronze.

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**Figures:**



**(Fig.1)** scene from the Tomb of Nefermaat and Atet at Meidum, dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of the Old Kingdom. The depiction features two vervet monkeys, each tethered with leashes, engaged in playful interactions with their keeper  
After: Strouhal, E., *life of The Ancient Egyptians*, Cairo, 1996, fig.121



**(Fig.2a)** a monkey is depicted engaged in the collection of fruits. The tomb of the priestess Hetepet, dating back to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty of the Old Kingdom  
After:[http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctarabic/2018/ttxw/201802/t20180205\\_800116512.html](http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctarabic/2018/ttxw/201802/t20180205_800116512.html)



**(Fig. 2b)** The monkey is depicted dancing with a full band from the tomb of the priestess Hetepet, dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty- Old Kingdom.  
After:[http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctarabic/2018/ttxw/201802/t20180205\\_800116512.html](http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctarabic/2018/ttxw/201802/t20180205_800116512.html)

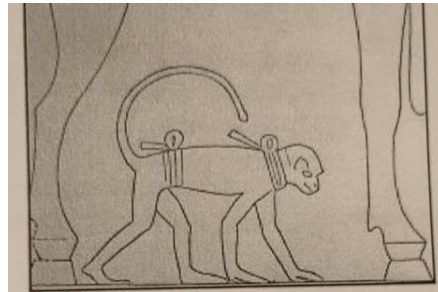


**(Fig. 3)** The trained monkey, likely a baboon, is depicted restraining the thief by the leg, enabling the approaching officer to make an arrest. The tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep at Saqqara dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty- Old Kingdom.

After:

محمد أنور شكرى, الفن المصرى القديم منذ أقدم عصوره وحتى نهاية الدولة القديمة, القاهرة, 1976, شكل 57, ص

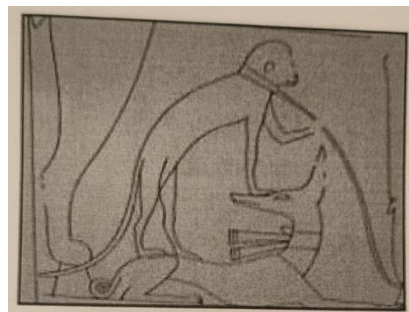
118



**(Fig. 4)** a vervet monkey, constrained by a rope looped around its waist and neck, positioned on all four limbs beneath the chair of the deceased.

Tomb of Nuneter, dated to the Old Kingdom

After: Junker, H., *Giza x Der Friedhof südlich der Cheopspyramide Westteil*, Wien, 1951, fig.45



**(Fig. 5)** Underneath Inumin's chair, a naughty monkey and a dog engage in a spirited interaction. The dog is depicted crouching and looking backward, while the playful monkey is shown leaping over the back of the dog. The tomb of Inumin *Jnw-Mnw*, dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty- Old Kingdom.

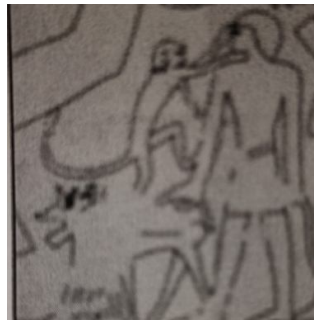
After: Kanawati, N., *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, vol.8, The Tomb of Inumin, *ACER* 24(2006), pl. 26





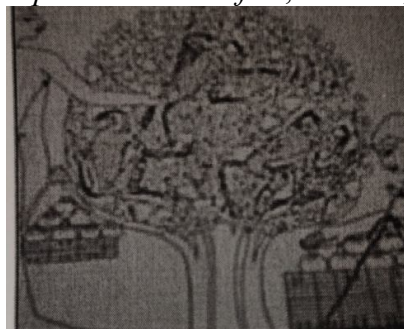
**(Fig. 6)** A naughty monkey is depicted under the chair of the deceased. In this unique portrayal, the monkey stands over a dwarf's head, holding the dwarf's stick, the tomb of Idu, dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty of the Old Kingdom

After: Junker, H., *Der Ost abschnitt des Westfriedhofes*, Teil II, Wien, 1947, pl.35



**(Fig. 7)** A vervet Monkey playing and jumping over the backs of two dogs, while also interacting with the face of its caretaker. The tomb of Meir, which dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty

After: Blackman, A. M., *The Rock Tombs of Meir the Tomb chapel of Pepi Onkh the Middle Son of Sebkhoteb and Pekhernefert*, London, 1924, pl.17



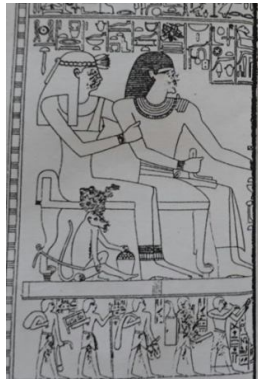
**(Fig. 8)** Three monkeys were on a fig tree. The monkeys are assisting two men in collecting figs from the tree. Tomb of Khnumhotep, Beni Hasan, dated to the Middle Kingdom.

After: Singer, C., *A History of Technology I*, Oxford, 1954, fig 362



**(Fig. 9)** A monkey under the chair playing with figs fruits and grapes,  
Tomb of Raia- Saqqara dated to the New Kingdom.

After: Martin, G., *The Hidden Tombs of Memphis New Discoveries from the time of Tutankhamun and Ramesses the Great*, London, 1991, fig 83



**(Fig.10)** beneath the seat, a tame and playful little monkey is portrayed. The monkey sits with some fruits on its head, one leg straight and the other bent under, as it eats a fruit taken from a bowl.

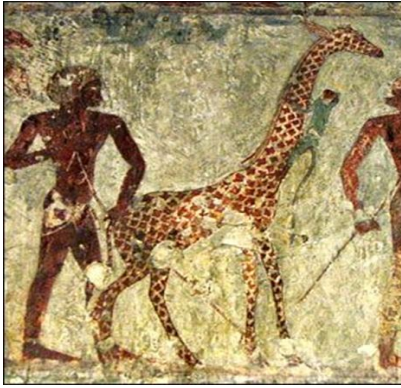
Tomb of Paheri- El Kab dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty- New Kingdom.

After: Tylor, J. J., *The Tomb of Paheri, The Offices of the Egypt Exploration Fund*, London, 1895, pl. v



**(Fig. 11)** Menkheperreseneb and his wife are depicted sitting. Behind them, the grandfather and grandmother are also seated. Notably, a playful and mischievous monkey is tied to the leg of the grandmother, engaging in affectionate behavior by caressing the leg of the wife in the graveyard

After: Davies, N.de G., the Tomb of Menkheperre seneb, south wall-east side, pl.xxiv.



**(Fig.12)** a playful monkey is depicted climbing up the neck of the giraffe in this lively representation.

Tomb of Rekhmire- Shekh el-Qurna dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty- New Kingdom.  
After: Strouhal, E., *life of The Ancient Egyptians*, Cairo, 1996, p.116-117, fig 122



**(Fig .13)** Montukherkhopshef and his wife are seated on a chair. Beneath the chair, a playful monkey and a pampered dog are depicted. The playful monkey is shown pulling a rope tied around the dog's neck, causing the dog to turn back in this engaging portrayal. Tomb of Mentuhirkhepeshef Dra' Abu al-Naga, TT20, dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

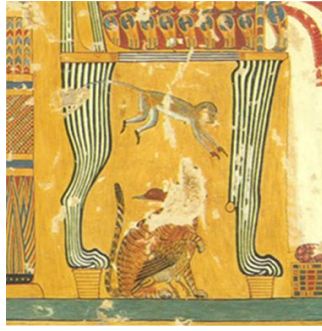
After: Davies, N.de G., *The tombs of Menkheperresonb, Amenmosa and another*, pl. IV



**(Fig.14)** Under the chair, is a small playing Monkey nibbling a nut from dum palm which he has taken from the basket in front of him. Tomb of Userhat TT. 56 at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna dated to the 18th dynasty- New Kingdom.

After: Christine, B.S., Abd el Ghaffar, Sh., *Das Grab des Userhat (TT 56)*, Mainz, 1987, p.45





**(Fig.15)** The scene portrays a playful monkey beneath the throne of King Amenhotep III and Queen Tiy. The monkey is shown in a dynamic movement, jumping over a cat and a goose, adding a vibrant and animated element to the representation. The tomb of Enen at

After: Davies N. d. G., *The Egyptian Expedition, The Graphic Work of the Expedition Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 1930, fig.1

## **II: Minor Art**



**(Fig.16)** Limestone statuette depicting a monkey playing the harp, dated to the 18th Dynasty of the New Kingdom. The Egyptian Museum JE 55457, dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty – New Kingdom.

After: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/526287906433918709/>



**(Fig.17)** a seated monkey, portrayed as a household pet. One hand is extended, holding a ball, while the other hand playfully interacts with its tail.

After: Houlihan, P.F., *The Animal world of the Pharaohs*, Cairo, 1995, p.111



**(Fig.18)** The monkey is seated on an ovoid base with its body in the round, head at right angles to shoulders, pierced ears, and extended hands holding a ball or piece of fruit. The figure is supported by one foot and rests on the base.

The Brooklyn Museum Nr 48.181 dated to 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty – New Kingdom.

After: <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/3524>



**(Fig.19)** The depiction showcases three monkeys, positioned on a chariot with four wheels; two on the left side and one on the right. The monkeys extend a robe above the horses' heads, creating a delightful scene, 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty –New Kingdom. The

Egyptian Museum Nr. JE 53021

After: <http://www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/detail.aspx?id=15587>



**(Fig. 20)** a small playful monkey leans forward towards female lute player lower back, exuding both charm and amusement, seemingly eager to reach for her embellished belt

After: <http://www.rmo.nl/english/collection/highlights/egyptian-collection/female-lute-player>



**(Fig. 21)** This fragment depicts a monkey standing beside a granary, illustrated in red and black. The monkey, standing on its hind legs and facing right, is depicted in the act of eating from a mound of grain placed next to the building.

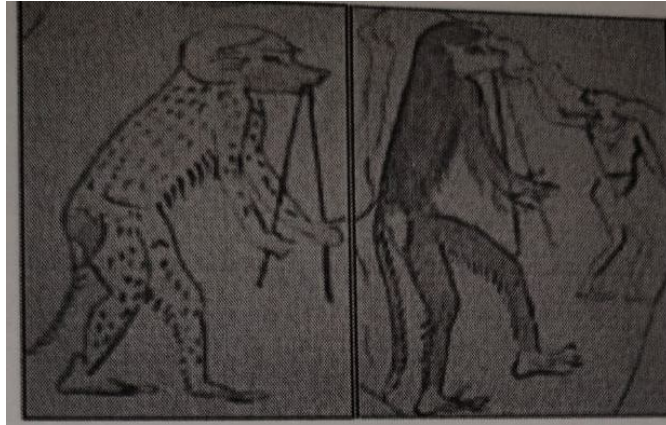
The Egyptian Museum Nr.JE 63799, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty-New Kingdoms

After: Vandier, D. J., "Catalogue des Ostraca Figurés de Deir el Médineh", *DFIFAO* 2.2(1937), Cairo,1937, no 2283, pl.40.



**(Fig.22)** Ostraca from Deir el-Medina dating back to the New Kingdom, unveil a charming scene. Depicting two naughty green monkeys, intricately bound with ropes, engaged in playful antics as they ascend a date palm.

After: Vandier, D. J., *Catalogue des Ostraca figures de Deir el Madineh*, 2001, pl. CXVII no.2845,2846



**(Fig.23)** Ostraca from Deir el-Medina, dating back to the New Kingdom, portray a delightful spectacle. This scene captures two vivacious vervet monkeys engaged in a playful rehearsal for a dance, accompanied by a young boy. Another monkey adds to the festivity by skillfully playing a flute.

After: Vandier, D. J., *Catalogue des Ostraca figures de Deir el Madineh*, pl.CXVII no.2845, 2846



**(Fig. 24)** The Sculptor's Model, dated to the Late Period-early Greco-Roman era and showcased at the Walters Art Museum, USA (Nr. 22.57), is a captivating piece.

Unearthed in Memphis, this limestone features a man accompanied by a playful monkey and an Ibex.

After: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Egyptian\\_-\\_Sculptor%27s\\_Model\\_of\\_a\\_Man\\_with\\_an\\_Ibex\\_and\\_a\\_Monkey\\_-\\_Walters\\_2257.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Egyptian_-_Sculptor%27s_Model_of_a_Man_with_an_Ibex_and_a_Monkey_-_Walters_2257.jpg)

## المناظر والفنون الصغرى للقرود الشقى اللعوب فى مصر القديمة

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### الملخص:

كانت القرد حيوانات بارزة فى مصر القديمة ليس فقط لأنها كانت تعتبر مقدسة ولكن أيضًا لأنه تم الاحتفاظ بها على نطاق واسع كحيوانات أليفة أو حيوانات مدربة، ولعبت أدوارًا مهمة فى الحياة اليومية للمصريين القدماء. تركز هذه الدراسة على التصويرات الغير دينية للقرد، والتي تهدف إلى إلقاء الضوء على اللحظات المرحية والشقية التي تتميز بها القرد فى مصر القديمة. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على مناظر القرد الشقى اللعوب فى مصر القديمة. دراسة وتحليل المناظر الخاصة بالقرد اللعوب الشقى فى المقابر الخاصة من عصر الدولة القديمة وحتى الدولة الحديثة مثل مقابر ميدوم، الجيزة، سقارة، الكاب، القرنة، ومقابر ذراع أبو النجا. كما يهدف هذا البحث لدراسة الفنون الصغرى التي تصور القرد الشقى اللعوب عند المصري القديم. يعتمد البحث على المنهج الوصفى التحليلي الذي يوضح المشاهد المصورة على جدران مقابر المصريين القدماء. وتعتمد منهجية هذا البحث على البيانات الوصفية والتحليل الدقيق لتحقيق أهدافه

**الكلمات الدالة:** المناظر والفنون الصغرى - القرد الشقى - القرد اللعوب - مصر القديمة