



Sound of Music in Egypt

The Musicians of Ancient, Greco- Roman and the Byzantine Egypt A Comparative Study

Engy M. Y. El-Kilany, Nagoua Zoair and Enjy Eshak

=====

Tourist Guidance Department Faculty of Tourism's Minia & Fayoum Universities

=====

Abstract

Music is a global language in the world and one of the most important indicators of the degree of civilization and development of a nation. This study aimed to shed light on musicians in ancient times. Through a comparative study of those talented people concerning their status, instruments, groups, clothes and their titles as well. This paper is divided into three parts, musicians in ancient Egypt, musicians in Greco Roman Egypt and musicians in Byzantine Egypt. The findings of this study highlighted the differences and similarities between those periods concerning musicians which was obvious at many points such as the relationship between religion and music, musical competitions specially at the Greco-Roman period, the different regards to musicians according to the instrument they played or to the musical group they belonged to, musical educational classes, and the fashionable clothes they wore. The most important result of this study is to prove that the origin of Symphonia is ancient Egyptian not Greek.

©2011 World Research Organization, All rights reserved

Key Words: Music, musicians, Greco-Roman, Byzantine.

Citation: Engy M. Y. El-Kilany, Nagoua Zoair and Enjy Eshak, (2011): Sound of Music in Egypt The Musicians of Ancient, Greco- Roman and the Byzantine Egypt - A Comparative Study, No.17 -2(2) 44 - 69.



Introduction

Music is a global language in the world and one of the most important indicators of the degree of civilization and development of a nation. Many studies have dealt with the topic of music and musical instruments, however, few of them have mentioned the people who played and composed this music. That is why the researchers wished to shed light on those talented people in Egypt in ancient times. Although numerous studies have covered the topics of music and musical instruments in Egyptian history, few have focused on the people who played and composed the music. **The goal of this study was to present information regarding the life of musicians** in different eras of Egyptian history, namely, ancient Egypt, Greco-Roman Egypt and the Byzantine period. A descriptive and analytical methodology was followed to exhibit the social status, clothes, instruments, honorary titles, wages, contracts, and gender composition and number of members of the different types of musical groups in different eras. This fascinating aspect of Egyptian history will enable tour guides to offer a more interesting rendition of life in those times.

The sources of the data collected differed according to the period of history that was being covered. Wall painting scenes were the main source of information on this topic during the ancient Egyptian period, while literary sources were the main source of data during the Greco-Roman period. This shift may be due to the disappearance of large private tombs which were replaced by group tombs, in addition to the change in the religious outlook of the Greco-Roman period as portrayed in their painting scenes. Literary resources were the main source in the Byzantine period in addition to some artistic evidence and that may be due to the shortage of sources of knowledge concerning that period in particular.

This study follows a descriptive and analytical methodology and is divided into three main parts: the musicians in ancient Egypt, the musicians in Greco-Roman Egypt and finally, the musicians in Late and Byzantine Egypt.

1-Musicians in Ancient Egypt

Introduction

The sound of music was everywhere in ancient Egypt and was an essential part of life. Musicians were depicted in scenes of festivals, agricultural fields (fig.1), daily life and in military scenes as well. Ancient Egyptians enjoyed life to its fullest and no celebration in would have been complete without music and dance. At parties, singers and dancers performed to the music of harps, lutes,



drums, flutes, cymbals, clappers and tambourines. Probably the best indication of the ancient Egyptian's enjoyment and value of music and dance is a comic papyrus (Museo Egizio, Turin) that portrays an ass playing a large harp, a lion with a lyre, a crocodile with a lute, and a monkey with a double oboe.

Examining scenes depicting musicians from the tombs dating back to the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms of ancient Egypt will be the main source of data collection at this part of the study.

Music was closely related to religion in ancient Egypt. This is evident in that fact that temples and royal palaces were the largest employers of musicians. There are numerous scenes depicting musicians at funerary processions and at the festivals of gods or kings. Many musicians from the Fifth Dynasty had religious titles such as Nufer and Kaha. Gods were represented with musical instruments such as the gods Bes, Ihy and goddess Hathor. Bands of musicians were attached to temples in all period of ancient Egyptian history.

Banquet scenes clearly illustrate the importance of music to ancient Egyptians. Banquets were frequently featured in Egyptian tomb decorations, starting in the late Old Kingdom and continuing into the New Kingdom. The Old Kingdom banqueting scenes, such as the one found in the Sixth Dynasty tomb of Kahif at Giza, as well as the Middle Kingdom scenes, tended to show elaborate family gatherings; their New Kingdom equivalents show both family and friends enjoying the feast.

There were two types of musicians in ancient Egypt, the amateur and the professional. The amateurs are represented as the wife, son and daughter of the deceased who plays on their instruments for their own amusement such as in the tombs of Pepyankh-heryib at Meir (fig.2) and in the tomb of Meryrouka at Saqqara. This type is clearly represented in the Old and Middle Kingdoms, but can hardly be found in the New Kingdom. Professional musicians are depicted in the tombs of nobles, especially the famous of them such as, the tomb of Nikaure from the Fifth Dynasty. They are also represented at banquets scenes such as the tomb of Rekhmera and Nakht.

Musicians and dancers were usually represented together as a source of entertainment throughout the history of ancient Egypt. Most representations of banquets in the Old Kingdom had dancing as the main subject and music as the secondary one. At the time of the Middle Kingdom, there was usually a separation between dancers and musicians, however, at the time of the New Kingdom, music was the main subject and dance came in second place.

There is no representation of music and dance classes at the time of the Old or New Kingdom. However, in the Middle Kingdom, the scene in the tomb of



Khesower at Kom el-Hisn (fig.3) from the Eleventh Dynasty, and the tomb of Ukh-hotep, son of Ukh-hotep, at Meir from the Twelfth Dynasty, depict music and dance classes.

Musical instruments played by musicians in ancient Egypt varied from one time to another. In the Old Kingdom, the harp and flute were the main musical instruments being played. The representation of the sistrum in the hand of musicians rather than dancers was found for the first time in the Middle Kingdom. In the New Kingdom, professional musicians played numerous kinds of instruments including stringed instruments with a round or oval sounding box, for example, lutes, lyres and all different types of harp; wind instruments (fig.4) such as, flutes as well as single and double oboes; percussion instruments including drums, clapsticks and the sistrum. It is interesting to note that the double oboe and the rectangular frame drum are restricted to female musicians while the trumpet is played by men only.

The composition of musical groups in ancient Egypt changed over time. In the Old Kingdom, the orchestras were composed of only men. There was no actual representation of female musicians until the second half of the Fifth Dynasty. In the tomb of Nikaure at Saqqare, we find what is considered to be the first illustration of a female harpist and singer in the Old Kingdom, Heknu and Irti (fig.5) Here By the second half of Fifth Dynasty, musical groups were composed of both genders (fig.6). Nevertheless, the number of male singers and instrumentalists exceeded the number of female performers. Most of these representations depict men on one side and women on the other side, or separate the genders into two registers; rarely are the sexes seen mixed together. There is also depiction of solo harpist or with vocalist. In the Middle Kingdom, there are many small ensembles found with male and female performers (fig.7). In some cases, they are a duo, trio or quartet, as seen in many scenes in the tombs of Beni-Hassan (fig.8). The groups were both single sex and mixed.

During the New Kingdom period the traditional orchestras were replaced by the banquet scenes. These scenes indicate that female bands were preferred over mixed gender groups or male only bands. Moreover, many changes took place at the grouping system and at the performance itself. All musicians were represented seated or standing except the harpist who always represented seated during the Old and Middle Kingdoms while during the New Kingdom there are many depiction of standing harpists. Groups of musicians were accompanied by clappers who originally used to be depicted with dancers in the Old Kingdom, but since the end of the Old Kingdom to the end of the New Kingdom they usually accompanied the musicians. Additionally, musicians were



accompanied by a chironomist, who was the one responsible for doing signals by hand and fingers, directs the music player by singing and to fix the measure, the metrical time and tones. Scenes from the Old and Middle Kingdoms depict male and female chironomists as seen in the tomb of Nekawra in Saqqara from the Fifth Dynasty, and the tomb of Antefokr in Thebes from the Twelfth Dynasty. By the beginning of the New Kingdom, the chironomist had vanished and been replaced by professional singers. It is interesting to note that blind musicians and singers were included in the musical group as portrayed in the famous scene in the tomb of Meryra in Amarna.

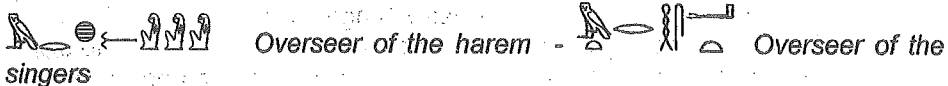
The costumes of musicians in ancient Egypt were a reflection of their position in society. During the Old Kingdom era, female musicians wore the traditional long, tight, white dresses with broad shoulder straps. They had their hair cut very short with one or two exceptions when a woman's long hair falls over their shoulders. Male musicians were bare-chested and wore a kilt-like garment to cover the bottom half of their body. Short cut hair was the common hair style for men at the time. In the Middle Kingdom, the female dressing style continues to be the same as the Old Kingdom. The hair style differed slightly in that the hair was longer. Ornaments were worn like bracelets, necklaces and anklets are widely spread at that period. While male musicians wear different clothes varied from only a kilt to a robe with one strap reaches the knee length.

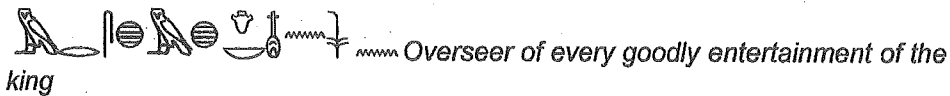
At the time of the New Kingdom, the dressing style has changed completely. At times, female musicians were almost nude wearing only broad collars, bracelets, armbands and a girdle slung around the waists. Some of them are represented with the popular New Kingdom flowing transparent dress. Others, especially the harpist, still have the traditional tight white dresses. On their heads, some women would put cones of scented fat; the scented fat would melt and perfume their wigs as shown in the tomb of Nakht in Thebes, 18th Dynasty. The fashion is so elegant and rich, which is a reflection of the prosperity and welfare in that period. Male Musicians at that time were depicted with different styles of garments which cover the upper part of their body as depicted in the scene at the tomb of Amenemhat in Thebes (fig.8).

The titles of musicians in ancient Egypt expressed the highly appreciated rank they enjoyed. There are many titles that appear for high ranking officials of musicians in ancient Egypt. Those titles are overseer of singers, director of singers, instructor of signers, and teacher of singers. The different role of every title is not clear, however, Munnich has suggested that the titles of instructor and teacher of singer may refer to technical role as they should be active musicians themselves who were teaching groups of musicians the technical side of their profession. The titles of overseer and director of singers may have



been purely referring to an administrative role. Although both men and women held the title of overseer of singers, there is no firm evidence that a woman was an overseer over men as she usually has this title over other woman only. Female musicians held many important positions and titles such as:

 Overseer of the harem - Overseer of the singers

 Overseer of every goodly entertainment of the king

Social status of Musicians in ancient Egypt were very distinguished. Musicians were highly appreciated and honoured in Egyptian society. In the Old Kingdom, many musicians were honoured through the inclusion of their names on the tombs of the nobles such as the previously mentioned tomb at Giza of the judge Nikawre. This was considered to be a rare and coveted form of appreciation at that time. Furthermore, many scenes are found depicting the wife, the daughter or the sister of the owner of the tomb entertaining him by playing music. This indicates that the playing of music by the family of the deceased is something he/she was proud of. Notably, dancers are not given this type of honour. Moreover, the location of Old Kingdom tombs of musicians near the royal pyramids in Giza also suggests that musicians were highly honoured and appreciated. Music was a profession considered prestigious enough to be carried on by several generations, as indicated by many scenes such as, the scene of Meir and of Amenemhat in Thebes (father and daughters). In the tomb of Nufer and Kaha, it is mentioned that the son, the father and many members of the family had musical occupations and titles. Although male musicians at the time of the New Kingdom were very few in number according to their depictions in the tombs, they were still regarded as belonging to a distinguished class. There was a great difference in social status among female musicians in that some of them were highly appreciated and others were of a low social standard. For example, many females that played the lute are represented almost naked while females with a lyre appeared with the tattoo of the God Bes on their thighs (according to Munnich, they may be regarded as prostitutes as well). Other female musicians that belonged to the upper class and the royal family served in temples and palaces and were highly



regarded. At that time of the New Kingdom, musicians were categorized according to the instrument they played. The harp was the master among ancient Egyptian instruments, and then came the other instruments.

2- Musicians in Greco-Roman Egypt Introduction

The Greeks were passionate about all kinds of music, both vocal and instrumental; they considered it as a kind of science reserved for philosophers and mathematicians. Music played an important role in all aspects of life from small and personal events to religious festival and victory ceremonies. It was considered as a tool that strengthens the social relationships between individuals. During the reign of Pericles, Athenian citizens had to take part in singing and playing the lyre in the social banquets. Even in the death, playing music was a part of the Greek funeral, or *kōdeia*, as indicated in many scenes that are depicted the *ekphora* in the Greek pottery: the flute-player attend playing what is obscurely referred to as Carian music. It follows that apprenticeships on how to play music were an essential part of Greek education. According to Plato, three years was a reasonable period of time for Greek boys, at thirteen years of age, to learn to play music especially, the *aulos* and lyre instruments.

This passion for music found a fertile land in Greco-Roman Egypt. The multiple ethnicities that mixed during that time had an effect on the world of music and musicians. Alexandria, on the periphery of Egypt, was a musical foyer in the Hellenistic and Roman World. In the royal court during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, there were some musicians whose reputation was known all over the Hellenistic World, for example, Glauce of Chios who was famous for her versatility and her beauty. She was mentioned by certain classical writers as a composer of music using wind instruments and a lyre-player for the King according to Pliny. Theocritus stated that when she played the *aulos*, she made the muses intoxicated (*Idyll* 4.31). Plutarch and Aelian testified that Glauce was a player of cithara and her sound was a model of musicality. The citizens of Alexandria had a great love for music; they have the reputation of being the connoisseurs of music, especially that of cithara, who's their judgment is considered to be decisive. In the *Chora*, the public, whatever their classes, express their passion to the music during the unlimited number of festivals that held in Egypt. For studying the musicians' world in Greco-Roman Egypt, there are many sources despite the absences of the scenes of musicians that were widely represented in the private tombs of the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms. We have an unlimited number of archaeological finds (terracotta, textiles,



musical instruments, stela, lamps...etc) and written sources, especially, papyrus. These different sources present a clear image of musicians in Greco-Roman Egypt including their social classes, their categories, their instruments, etc.

The musicians in Greco-Roman Egypt were gathered into two main kinds of corporations according to the papyri: musicians of *the synodos* and musician of *the symphōniai*. The casual bands which formed by a main dancer or artist who hired other performers from companies but such these bands are rarely mentioned in the papyri.

The musical *synodos* is an official association that gathered the *Elites* or the professional artists under the aegis of god, as Dionysus and Apollo or deified persons as the Delpheus and some Roman Emperors. The papyri revealed the names of some of these musical *synodos* as that of *Aurelios* and *Diokletios Maximos*. They occupied a very important position in society since the reign of King Ptolemy II who was in charge of some of the *synodos*. The most important one is the brotherhood of Dionysian *Technite* which included different kinds of professional artists, poets, actors, trumpet players and other types of musicians, especially the *Kitharist* (cithara player) and *Kithardos* (who play cithara and sing in the same time). The *Technite* of Dionysus started to appear in Egypt since the third century B.C as indicated by two documents from Ptolemaios, dating back to 269 and 246 B.C., and continued into the Roman Period as indicated by a number of papyri. The previous documents affirmed that the artist of Dionysus is highly ranked in Egyptian society. In the Ptolemaic period, they even gained an exemption of some kind of taxes, for example, the salt tax. These advantages increased during the Roman Period: a decree that dates back to Emperor August stated that the musicians of the *synodos* had the right to sit in the front row of theaters and auditoriums, of immunity for (the data does not clarify from what exactly) the members and of exemption of income tax and mandatory services.

The two main activities of the professional musicians of the *synodos* are:

- 1-Participation in musical competitions
- 2-Apprenticeship of music for selected disciples

The musical competitions in Greco-Roman Egypt were mainly divided into two types: the competition of *periodos* and competitions outside of the *periodos*. The first kind was supposed to be held every four years in some religious festivals similar to that of some Greek cities. The main competition of *periodos* in the Ptolemaic Period is that of *Ptolemaea* which was held every four years in honor of Soter's cult and it resembled the Olympic Games. Another musical competition in Alexandria was *Olympiokos agon* which was held since the third



century B.C. In the *Chora*, a papyrus dating back to the third century A.D., mentioned the name of some musicians as the *kitharist* Marcos Aurelios Agathakles, citizen of Alexandria, Antinoopolis and Lecko polis who won the competition of *Capitolia* and *Pythia* and some of competitions that aren't of *periodos*.

The second kind of musical competition is considered as less important than the first due to the fact that it is related to some events that happen only once or annually such as the *Naukratis* competition since the third century B.C. It seems that only trumpet-players could participate in this competition as there is no reference to other musicians in the papyri. Whatever the kind of the competition, the winner is always awarded with a crown of a laurel wreath: there no mention to any other kind of value prizes.

Apprenticeship music for some selected disciples was the second activity of the professional musicians of the *synodos*. Alexandria, the house of culture and arts in the Hellenistic era, is purported to have had musical institutions for the apprenticeship of music as some other cities which have the corporation of *Technites* of Dionysus, Chios, Teaos and Magnesia, but there is no trace about these institutions because of the lack of sources about the *Technites* of Dionysus. However, there are a few papyri that give some indications about apprenticeship music in Egypt. The professional musicians especially the *kitharist* and aulos-players devoted a part of their life to transmit their skills to their sons or in their houses. The papyri indicate that the father and the sons are recorded as competitors in musical competitions in different years. Not only the sons but the musician could teach some disciples as in the case of Demas who was in charge of apprenticeship the playing cithara to Heracleatos. The musical teacher, Demas, died suddenly before completing the musical education of his protégé Heracleatos but he bequeathed what could meet his needs and also his cithara, remained missing during the inventory of assets of the deceased. For that Heracleatos addressed four letters to his guardian Zeno asking him to look for his musical instrument to be able to participate in the musical competition of *Ptolemaea*.

The relationship between the apprentice and the teacher is subject to a contract which specified the responsibilities, duties and rights of each party. In general, the apprenticeship contracts were rare; very few have been found and they date back to the Roman Period. The one contract regarding music that was found was between a banker called Gaios Ioulios Philios and a professor of the aulos called Gaios Ioulios Eros to whom the banker gave the responsibility of teaching music to his slave Narcissos. The contract of the apprentice Narcissos covers many items such as: the duration and number of free days; salary of the



professor and the stage of payment; duties and obligations of the professor; responsibilities of the employer towards the professor and the apprentice; educational content and model of the final exam and the exam committee. This contract shed light on various aspects of musical apprenticeship in the Greco-Roman period. It seems that the age that musical learning began was between 13 and 15 years of age, an ideal age as Plato affirmed. The apprenticeship of music takes a minimum one year, as was the case with Narcissos, and could last several years, as was the case with Heracleaotos.

The second category of the musician is those who join the corporations of the *symphōniai*, a term mentioned frequently in contracts hiring musical bands that consisted of musicians, artist and dancers. The corporations of the *symphōniai* are different from that of the *synodos*. The former is a secular association and was not placed under the aegis of a god. The director, known as the *prestos*, was responsible for managing the band and the contracts that preserved the rights of the musicians. The *prestos* was not considered a priest as was the chief of the *synodos*. The musicians of the *symphōniai* occupied a social rank that was less than that of the the *synodos*. They lived in grand cities such as Arsinoe, Oxyrhynchus and Hermopolis. There were musicians among them, especially the aulos-players that had a bad reputation due to their engagement in scandalous activities.

The main source of information on the musicians of the *symphōniai* is literary evidence found in contracts, and some statutes in terracotta. These contracts date back to the end of the Ptolemaic Period until the end of the third century A.D. In order to guarantee the rights of the band members, they included the following points:

- The number of working days specified in the contract was usually less than one week. There were only two exceptions:
- It was possible for the duration to be ten days long.
- Another possible work schedule was two days per month plus two days in the feast of Isis and three days in the feast of Hera; a total of twenty-nine days for the whole year.
- The payment for services rendered was paid either monetarily or in kind. The latter method of payment guaranteed food supplies for the band in the form of bread, dates, oil and jars of wine.
- The means of transportation which was always provided by donkeys, was enumerated.
- Additional conditions, such as, the guarantee of guarding the garments and ornaments of musicians and dancers was included.



The main activity of the musicians of the *symphōniai* was to provide musical performances in private banquets and dinners, as well as familial and local festivities, both secular and religious. Another example of the activities of the musicians was indicated by a contract hiring an aulos-player to play music during harvest. The duration stipulated in the contract was to be "throughout the period of harvest ... they will not leave before the end of harvest". The aulos-player would make a rhythm to the gesture of the harvester during the grape squeezing process which we still find today in Egyptian villages.

Musical instruments in Greco-Roman Egypt had many varieties according to the papyri and terracotta statuettes. The Egyptian instruments continued to be used alongside the Greeks ones and at the same time, there were additional musical instruments that appeared during that period. These instruments could be divided into three categories or types:

The chordophone instruments included both Greek and Egyptian instruments. The most important among this category was the cithara and the lyre. The former was considered to be an elaborated form of the second instrument and was reserved for the male professional musicians of the *synodos*, especially the Dionysian *Technites*. The lyre was known in Classical Greece and in Ancient Egypt, and continued to be a significant instrument until the end of the Greco-Roman period. The triangular harp which was popular since the time of the New Kingdom was widely used in Greco-Roman Egypt while the curved harp almost disappeared in the Roman Period. There is also mention of the *pandoura*, an Egyptian instrument with two or three strings which was used from the Ptolemaic period and became very widely used during the Roman Period, mostly by female musicians. There is only one mention for a string instrument called *sambukos* in the papyri.

The aerophone instruments included the simple or double aulos, and the flute of Pan instruments. The aulos, generally reserved for male musicians (rarely do we find examples of female aulos players) was the instrument most featured in literary evidence and terracotta statuettes. There are many variations of this instrument mentioned in apprentice contracts such as, the Egyptian, the Carian and the Phrygian auloi. Despite the fact that the flutists of Alexandria were widely admired in the Roman Empire and even Kings including Ptolemy XII, took the title of *auletis*, their social rank was less than that of cithara and lyre musicians. In this period, the scientist Ctesibius of Alexandria invented the hydraulic organ or water aulos in the third century B.C. which was a great success in the Roman Period (fig. 1g).

The idiophone instruments included the crotallos, cymbals, castanets, sistrum, tambourine and bells. The most commonly used instrument in this



category was the crotallos which was used by dancers in secular and religious festivals. This instrument was reserved for female musicians to the extent that the male musicians who played it were considered effeminate, for example, Zenobios was asked to come with his tambourine, his cymbals and his crotallos. **There is no specified costume or poses for the musicians of Greco-Roman Egypt; they were depicted wearing the Greek style clothing that the ordinary populace wore.** It is not possible to distinguish between the musicians of the *synodos* and those of *symphōnia* through their garments. The *kitharist* who belonged to the *synodos* could be represented semi-naked, e.g., Theophilos (fig. 2g); he wore a garment that covers only the lower half of his body while he sat in a backless chair resting his cithara on his left knee. A terracotta statuette represented another *kitharist* in a standing position wearing a long garment with a geometric pattern and a short cloak fastened over his chest. He held his cithara in his left hand. Male musicians were at times portrayed completely naked using their phallus to strike the strings of their musical instrument (fig 3g). Female musicians wore many different kinds of clothes and ornaments. In some instances, they were almost naked or semi naked. In others, female musicians were depicted in a standing position while playing the triangular harp wearing only a cloak flowing behind her back. She held the harp in her right hand and used her left fingers to frappe the strings. Another female musician with the same instruments was represented in a sitting position on a stool with animal feet; she is wearing a long tunic and a cloak (fig 4g). Another musician with a tambourine is portrayed wearing a tunic that falls on her thigh; she is frapping on her tambourine which is based on a pitcher. The tambourine itself was carved with female musician in a standing position, wearing a pleated tunic and a cloak tied on her chest (fig. 5g). The head dress was always a crown of flowers in the Greek style. There are group of terracotta statutes that depicted two musicians, male and female, playing the double flute and lyre (fig. 6g).

3-Musicians in Byzantine Period

Introduction

Egypt in the early Byzantine period was a cosmopolitan society where people of different ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, languages and religions coexisted. Like any other social class, musicians were affected by social, economic and ideological influences. **Three major factors affected this class:** Hellenistic culture, Christian teachings and ancient heritage. Each one of these factors pushed the lives of musicians in a different direction. As for the latter, Musicians in Egypt inherited the fondness of celebrating from their ancient Egyptian ancestors. Some festivals which were celebrated in Byzantine period, had their



represented wearing a shirt and a kilt of a conical shape. It seems that pipers, whose work environment was often simple and folk, were dressed in simple non-formal clothes. The previously mentioned wall hanging (fig. 3b) represents the flute player dressed in a shirt with one shoulder strap decorated with dots and a short pantaloon decorated in the same way as the shirt. Female dancers who were playing with crotollas were represented naked or partially naked.

As for the poses, it is hard to determine the pose of the musicians due to the rarity of the evidence, however, through previous sources, one may conclude that the pipers, flute players and cymbals players were usually represented playing their instrument while they are standing. A fragment of textile – mostly a wall hanging – depicts a flute player while performing in the presence of male and female dancer. It seems that the lute, lyre or harp were played while the musician was sitting. A wooden panel representing King David playing cithara (fig.4b) portrays him seated upon an elevated throne with his head turned in a frontal pose looking to the spectator. He had his lyre on his thigh. This iconography was repeated in many contexts including caskets, splendid plates, vestments, small ivory panels, terracotta lamps, and mural paintings of monasteries.

The social status of musicians in the Byzantine period is not clear as there is no direct source of information relating to that topic. Our information can be only collected from fragments of facts revealed by textual and pictorial evidence. Living in a cosmopolitan community open to absorb different cultures permitted people of different ethnical groups to work as musicians. Both males and females could work as musicians however, it seems that women were mostly idiophone players. Apparently, musicians were perceived by the community as artists and were associated with joy, celebrations, welfare and victory. Their representations covered wall linings and curtains found in the home of an aristocratic couple who were fond of having celebration scenes in their home. All this denotes that musicians were loved by community members however, church fathers exerted great effort to denounce music and other entertainment features. Therefore, the social status of musicians can be phrased as follows. They were loved by urban and rural communities, hated by orthodox Christians, favoured by textile makers and accompanied by professional dancers. They were well paid and economically independent.



Conclusion

The positive and negative relationships between religion and music had a direct impact over the appreciation, or lack thereof, of musicians through the ages. In the times of ancient Egypt and Greco-Roman Egypt, musicians were encouraged and worked under the patronage and appreciation of rulers and religion. It follows that music and musicians flourished and were very active at that time. On the contrary, in the time of Byzantine Egypt, there was opposition and disapproval of musicians by the church as music was considered a sin and the sound of music played very low at that time. Nevertheless, in the eyes of the Egyptian public, musicians were very much appreciated and the world of musicians and music continued to be an essential part of life from the time of ancient Egypt until the end of the Byzantine period.

Popular and famous musicians and singers were known to us by name, e.g., Iiti and Hekenu from the time of the Old Kingdom, and Glauce of Chios, from the Ptolemaic period. There were no such celebrated musicians in the Byzantine period.

Music classes were found at the time of the ancient Egyptian which is represented in scenes from the Middle Kingdom as well as honorary titles given to music teachers and instructors during the Old Kingdom. Literary evidence regarding music teachers in Greco-Roman Egypt show us that music was considered a science at that time. There is no evidence concerning the existence of such classes in Byzantine Egypt, however, one may conclude the existence of musical teachings on account of the presence of professional musicians.

-Blind musicians were depicted both at the time of ancient Egypt and Greco-Roman Egypt. They were always shown with stringed instruments. A fact that is common place even today (the late blind Egyptian composer and singer Sayed Mekawy, among others). Blind musicians may be frequently related to this type of instrument due to the fact that it demands a great sensitivity of the sense of touch which is usually highly developed in blind people.

The social status of musicians considered to be very respectable during the Old and Middle Kingdoms specially the harpists. Certain musicians in the New Kingdom were highly appreciated, e.g., the musicians who were employed in temples, the royal court and the synodos, especially the *technite* of Dionysus. Conversely, others were of a low social regard, especially those who engaged in scandalous activities. The religious outlook regarding the musical profession changed during the Byzantine Period. Nevertheless, musicians continued playing an important role in urban life, especially during pagan festivals.



Many of the musical instruments of ancient Egypt continued to be used until the end of Late Antiquities. The sistrum, castanets, drums, flute, lyre and harp as examples of such instruments. The triangular harp appeared during the New Kingdom and was widely used in the Greco-Roman period. The double flute was a popular instrument in Classical Greece and it found grand success in Egypt due to its similarity to the double oboe of the New Kingdom. The trumpet was known for both Greek and Egyptian and it continued to be used by male musicians only. Certain Greek musical instruments were popular in Greco-Roman Egypt, including the cithara, phrygian aulos and flute of Pan. While in ancient Egypt the double oboe was restricted to female musicians, the aulos and the double aulos were reserved for male musicians following the Greek tradition that regarded women who play wind instruments as unrespectable.

The clothes of musicians had no specific restriction or type; in other words, there was no special garment or uniform for musicians. They wore what was fashionable at the time. According to terracotta statuettes, wooden panels, and textile, the clothes of musicians completely changed during the Greco-Roman period in accordance with the popular changes in fashion. No longer did female musicians wear the long and tight, white dresses nor did the males wear the short kilt. Greek clothes were predominantly made up of a tunic and a cloak for both female and male musicians. The hair style was purely Greek; surmounted by a crown of flower and parted in the centre, falling in corkscrew curls on the shoulders. The disappearance of the Egyptian style is due to the permanent desire of the musicians to follow the fashion of the elite. In the Roman period, many female musicians have the hair style of the empresses, the melon-coiffure of Julia Domna.

The most important finding of this study is that *Symphōnia* had no equivalent association in Greece. The orchestra was depicted in tombs of ancient Egypt. Many of the members had the title of overseer and directors of the signers. It follows that the orchestra was an organized company that had a chief that was responsible for directing it. In fact, these orchestras were the origin of the *symphōnia* of the Greco-Roman period. Thus, the associations of the *symphōnia* were an Egyptian phenomenon that found a fertile land in the cosmopolitan society found in Greco-Roman Egypt.

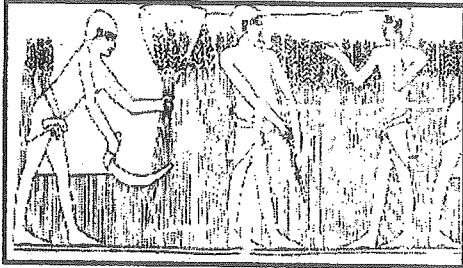


Fig.1

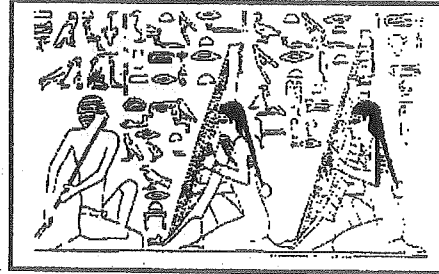


Fig.2



Fig.3

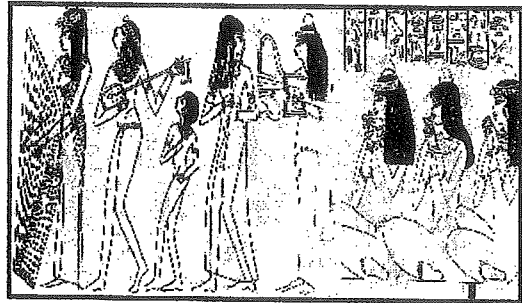


Fig.4



Fig.5

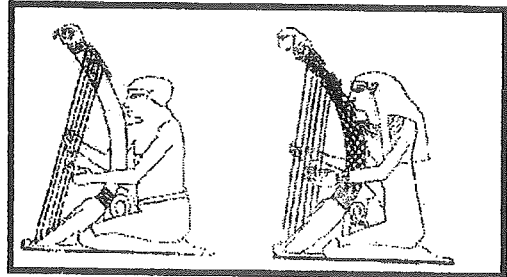


Fig.7

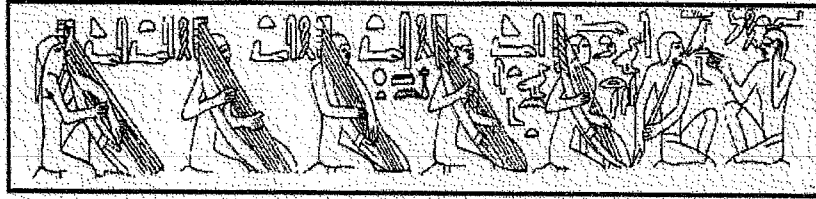


Fig.6



Fig.8

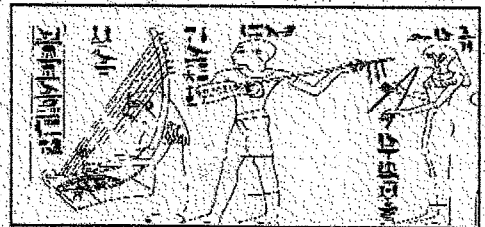


Fig.9



Fig. 1 G

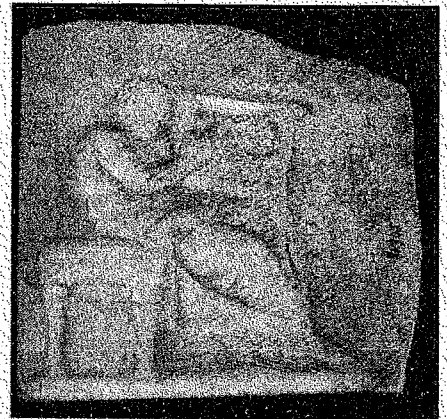


Fig.2 G



Fig.3 G

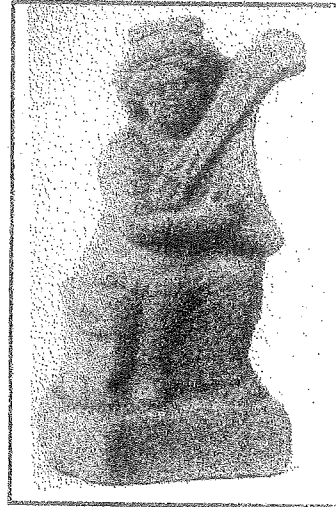


Fig.4 G



Fig 5 G

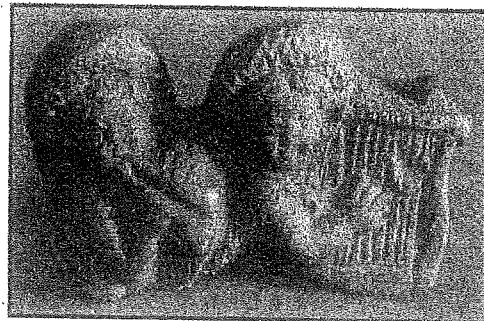


Fig.6 G

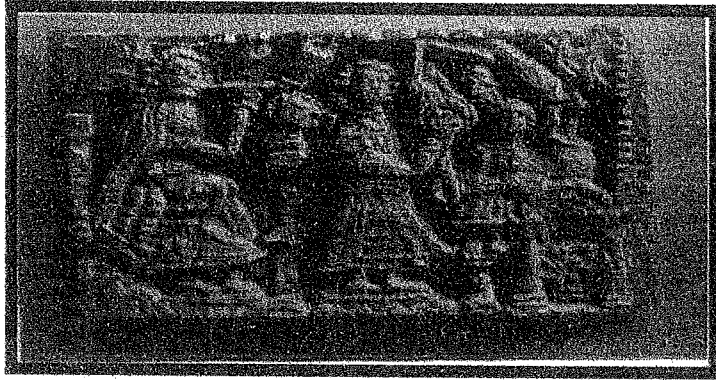


Fig.1 B

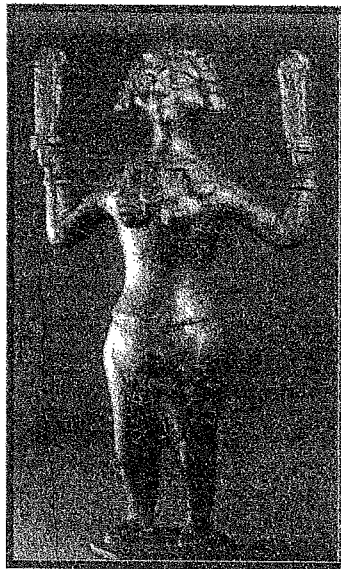


Fig. 2B

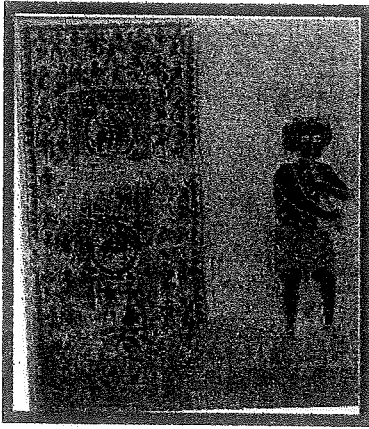


Fig. 3 B



Fig.4 B



List of Figures

- 1- Flut player and singer at the field, after Kanawati, tomb and beyond,
- 2- Father and daughters (flutist and harpist) (tomb of Pepy-ankh-hry-ib, 6th Dynasty, Meir after, Blackman
- 3- Musical class of clapping and sistrum playing, tomb of Khesw wer, 11th Dynasty, Kom El Hisn after Mannich)
- 4- Female instrumentalists, dancer and clappers, tomb of Djoserkarasoneb, 18th Dynasty, Thebes after Munnich
- 5- The first female musician and singer Hknu & Iti, tomb of Nikaure, 5th Dynasty, Saqqara, after Mannich
- 6- Band of male flutist and singer and Female harpists, tomb of Idu, 6th Dynasty, Giza, after Simpson
- 7- Dui of male and harpists, tomb of Antifoker, Thebes, after Davis
- 8- Quartet of musical band from Female and male singers and harpists, tomb of Kheti, 11th Dynasty, B.H, after Newberry
- 9- Female and male musicians (tomb of Amenemhat, 18th Dynasty, Thebes, after Davies)
- 1 G- Players of a water organ and trumpet in amphitheatre, Iled A.D. A Roman in Villa in Nanning. (Belis A., *Les musiciens dans l'Antiquité*, Paris 1990, p.146)
- 2 G- Stela represented a blind musician with cithara, Greco-Roman of Alexandria, GRM 21705 (*Alexandria Graeco-Roman Museum*, p.147)
- 3 G- Terracotta statutte of mela musicien with a stinged instrument, Bruxelles Musuem MRAH E 3921 (Willems H. and Clarysse W., *Les Emperures du Nil*, 2000, p.315 n.257.)
- 4 G- Terracotta statuette of a female muscians with a harp, Musee du Louvre (*L'Egypte romaine*, Musee de Marseille, p. 110, n.116)
- 5 G Terracotta statuette of a female muscians with a tambourine, Musee du Louvre (*L'Egypte romaine*, Musee de Marseille, p. 110, n.115)
- 6 G Terracotta statutte of mela and female musiciens with a double flute and a lyre, London University Collège 33398 (Willems H. and Clarysse W., *Les Emperures du Nil*, 2000, p.315 n.256.)
- 1 B A Decorated Relief, Wood, represented musician bands, Coptic Meuseum, L'art copt en Egypt, 2000, p.277.
- 2 B A Female Statuette, Bronz, Louvre Museum, Paris, no. 2539, egypt, 4th-7th century, after Benzazeth, D., p.47.
- 3 B A Part of a Curtain, Linen, Coptic Musume, Cairo, no. 7948, Egypt, after Bourguet S.J, Iconography of Coptic Textile, Coptic Encyclopedia, p.2223
- 4 B A Decorative Relief, Painted Wood, The National Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Egypt, 6th after L'arts, copteen Egypt, 2000, p.227



Bibliography

- Bélis A. and Delattre D., "A propos d'un contrat d'apprentissage d'aulete (Alexandre; an 17 d'Auguste = 13 a", *Papiri documentary greci*, 1993, p. 103-162.
- Belis A., *Les musiciens dans l'antiquité*, Paris, 1999.
- Benazeth, D., "Joueuse de crotales", *Musiques au Louvre*, Paris, 1994
- Bourguet S. J., "Iconography of Coptic Textiles", *Coptic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 7
- Blackman , *The Rock Tomb of Meir*. vi, London, 1935
- Blackman, *The Rock Tombs Of Meir*. vol.IV , London, 1924
- Casiday, A., Norris, F. W., *The Cambridge History of Christianity* , Vol. 2, Cambridge university press, 2008
- Collart P., "Réjouissances, divertissements, et artistes de province dans l'Égypte romaine" *RPh* 18, 1944.
- Davis, N. D. G., *The Rock Tombs of El-Amarna*, part I, 1903
- Davies, N. D. G., *The Tomb of Amenemhet*. London, 1915
- Erman, A., *Life in Ancient Egypt*, New York, 1971
- Fischer, Henry, G. *Egyptian Studies I*. New York, 1976
- Fjeldhagen M., *Catalogue Graeco-Roman. Terracottas from Egypt*, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1995.
- Habib, R., *The Coptic Museum " A General Guide" , General Organization for Government Printing Offices, Cairo, 1967*
- Hickmann, H., "Quelques nouveaux aspects du rôle de la musique copte dans l'histoire de la musique en Égypte", (BSAC), Tome 15, Le Caire, 1958 : 1960
- Hikman, H., *Dieux et deesses de la musique*, Cahiers d'Histoire Egyptienne 6,
- Hoenes, S.H., *Life and Death in Ancient Egypt ., Scenes from the Private tombs in New Kingdom, Thebes*, translated from German by David Werburton, Cornell University, London, 2000
- Kanawati, N. Beni Hassan, *Art and daily Life in an Egyptian Province*, Cairo, 2010
- Kanawati, N., *The Tomb and Beyond*, Warminster-England, 2001
- L'art copte en Égypte, 2000 ans de Christianisme, Institute de Monde Arabe, Paris, 2000,
- Lindsay, J., *Daily Life in Roman Egypt*, Frederick Muller LTD, London, 1963
- Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, *The Early Church Fathers*,



- M oftah R., Robertson M., Roy M., Toth M., "Coptic Music", Coptic Encyclopedia, vol.6
- M oftah, R., Robertson,M., Roy,M., "Musical Instruments", Coptic Encyclopedia, vol. 6
- Munnich,L., *Music and Musiciens in ancient Egypt*, British Musum Press,1991
- Munnich,L.*Sexual life in ancient Egypt*, London, 1997
- Newberry, Beni Hassan,II, London, 1893.
- Perdrizet P., *Les terres cuites grecques d'Egypte de la collection du Fouquet*, 1921.
- Perez-Die,Maria del Carmen,*The Ancient Necropolis at Ehnasy a el-Madonna*. in *Egyptian Archaeology*, no.24, 2004,
- Perpillou-Thomsd F., "Artistes et Athlètes dans les papyrus grecs d'Egypte" *ZPE* 108, 1995
- Redford, D.B. "Banquets", *Oxford Encyclopedia I*,2001
- Redford, D.B. "Music", *Oxford Encyclopedia II*,2001
- Rowlandson, J., *Women and Society in Greek and Roman Egypt*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1998,
- sables, *la vie en Egypte sous la domination romaine*, Paris, 1988.
- Schaff, Ph., *History of the Christian Church, Ante –Nicene Christianity, A.D. 100-325* , Christian Classics Etherea Library, 1882
- Shaw I. and Nicholson P., "Music", BM, 1995
- Strouhal, *Ancient Egyptians*, Cairo,1992
- Teeter, E., *Female Musicians in Pharaonic Egypt*, in *Women's Musical Traditions*, edited by Marshall,.Boston,1993
- Thompson D.J., "Economic reforms in the mid- reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus" in McKenchnie P., and Guillaum P., (ed.) *Philadelphus and his world*, Leiden 2008, p. 27-38.Vendries C., "Luthistes et Citharode es dans l'Egypte romaine. Remarque sur certaines singularités musicales " *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 80, 2002,
- Tyldesley, J. *Daughters of Isis*. Viking, 1994



ملخص البحث

تعتبر الموسيقى هي اللغة العالمية الأولى ومقياس للتقدم الحضارى للدول وقد احتلت أهمية كبرى في حياة كل شعوب الحضارات القديمة منذ أقدم العصور. ويهدف هذا البحث إلى إلقاء الضوء على الموسيقين في مصر القديمة في مختلف العصور وذلك من خلال دراسة مقارنة لأوضاعهم الاجتماعية وملابسهم وآلاتهم وكذلك الألقاب التي حملوها. ولهذا فقد قسم البحث إلى ثلاث محاور للدراسة: الموسيقون بمصر القديمة، الموسيقون بمصر اليونانية الرومانية، والموسيقون بمصر في العصر البيزنطى. وتبرز الدراسة نقاط التشابه والاختلاف في تلك العصور من خلال أثر الديانات على الموسيقين، والمسابقات الموسيقية والمؤسسات التي كان ينتمى لها الموسيقون. وكان من أهم نتائج البحث إثبات أن السيمفونيا التي كانت تضم معظم الموسيقين في العصر اليونانى الرومانى لها أصول مصرية وهي الأوركسترا التي صورت على المقابر منذ الدولة القديمة ويدل على ذلك أيضا أنه لا توجد أى مؤسسات مشابه لها في بلاد اليونان.