

The Global Economy of Music in the Ancient Near East

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The present exhibit at the Bible Lands Museum bears eloquent witness to the rich body of archeological evidence for music and musicians in the ancient Near East. The inherent artistic value of such material, which includes not only representations but the remains of actual instruments, is often very high in its own right. Yet it is equally precious as a supplement to—and sometimes corrective of—textual evidence, extending the limits of knowledge into areas not well illuminated by scribal tradition. For ancient Israel, where the written sources relating to musical practice in the Bronze and Early Iron ages are relatively meager in comparison to Mesopotamia or even Hittite Anatolia, the archeological finds are especially important. At the same time they do not enjoy the same degree of contextual illumination that comes from contemporary records. In this essay I shall borrow light from the wider ‘Bible Lands’ to help bring aspects of early Jewish music into sharper focus. I hope that this will enhance the reader’s perception of some of the relics on display.

Allusions to music-making in the Bible, of which there are indeed many, are usually all too passing. The magnificent exception relates to the official organization of sacred music-making during the United Monarchy, for which we have abundant detail by any standard, even if its absolute historical accuracy is open to question (1 Chron. 6:1–32, and 25:1–31; Josephus *AJ* 8.94, 176). Yet it is in precisely this period that early Jewish society—at least the higher tier which is most visible from the biblical narrative—reveals some of its clearest cultural sympathies with other Near Eastern states. Indeed the matter is put expressly thus when the Israelites are made to importune Samuel for a king, ‘That we also may be like all the nations’ (1 Sam. 8:20, cf. 5). A king who aspired to be a respected player in the international scene required a royal apparatus equal to that of his rivals, complete with palace, temple and all the specialized artisans and functionaries needed to build and staff them. It is of first importance that this debut was managed in collaboration with Hiram of Tyre (1 Kings 5), who gave both materials and labor for construction of the First Temple. The musical dimension of this project emerges most vividly from Josephus, according to whom Solomon commissioned forty thousands lyres (*knr*) and harps (*nbl*) made of precious woods, stones and electrum, so the Levites could sing the Lord’s praises (*AJ* 8.94, 176, cf. 7.305). All of this makes it imperative to consider the music of early royal Israel and Judah within a more global economy, since already for two millennia musicians had ranked among the most skilled workers of Near Eastern society, serving in both sacred and secular contexts as one of the most powerful currencies of cultural exchange.

To what degree one feels justified in applying an equally wide lens to the earlier centuries depends partly on one’s view of pre-Davidic social history and its relationship to a larger ‘Canaanite’ milieu. It is of course certain that the states of North Syria and the Levant were important interstices in the elite international networks of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. Certain too that greater West Semitic deities like ‘Baal’ and Astarte

(Astaroth) enjoyed considerable currency in Israel and Judah well into the first millennium (e.g. 1 Sam. 7:3–4). It is not surprising then to find musical sympathies between the Pentateuch and documents from other Near Eastern centers; most notable perhaps is the *kinnôr*, discussed below. Such facts urge one to view Jewish musical tradition, from the earliest times, within a larger musical environment characterized by regular exchange and mutual influence. This need not negate the axiom that all ‘local’ traditions are basically unique and independently priceless. Indeed it will enhance our appreciation of the tradition by revealing greater historical depth and cultural breadth than even the Bible would lead us to believe.

The cosmopolitan standards of royal ideology and cultural attainment which David, Solomon and their successors strove to emulate can be traced back in part ultimately to the Middle Bronze Age in Mesopotamia when, in the last centuries of the third millennium, the dynasties of Akkad and Ur III established perennial models of kingship and empire. These powers in their turn stood at the pinnacle of an ancient cultural tradition whose magnificence is clear from the Royal Cemetery of Ur and its finds (c.2600). It is very telling that Hebrew borrowed words for both ‘palace’ and ‘throne’ from Mesopotamia. As regards music, all of these states, and their contemporaries and successors of any standing, had sophisticated systems for the training and management of palace and temple musicians. Here as in other areas the Sumerians long maintained a prestigious cultural edge. Most revealing is the adoption of *gala* and *nar*—respectively ‘lamentation priest’ and the more versatile ‘singer-musician’ or ‘singer-priest’—into Akkadian as *kalû* and *nâru*; these persisted throughout second and first millennium Mesopotamia, in both Babylonia and Assyria, as standard professional titles. One may conclude that, despite considerable differences of pantheon and liturgy, by the late third millennium the offices of ritual-music came to be executed and managed bureaucratically in a very similar manner among both Sumerian- and Akkadian-speaking populations.

The early sophistication of Sumerian art-music is evident from the remains of richly-decorated lyres and harps with up to fourteen strings from the graves of Ur, as well as a number of Early Dynastic musical representations which show the same instruments in various royal and sacral contexts (cf. cat. nos. 127–8). That the tonal conceptions of this tradition eventually crystallized into a Sumero-Akkadian *Idealklassik* is clear from the small corpus of cuneiform musical tablets which have permitted the reconstruction of a system of diatonic tuning whose form of expression is distinctively Mesopotamian—even if the underlying acoustical facts are those with which we still work in our own music (see the essay by A. Kilmer). It was a complete and abstract schema to which any tone-producing instrument could be referred, and so could uphold and unify the music of the great temple orchestras with their very diverse instrumentarium. By the Old Babylonian period (c.2000–1600), the date of the earliest tablets, this system could be expressed and deployed in both the Sumerian and Akkadian languages. But already c.2100 the Sumerian terminology is attested in one of the royal praise-hymns of Shulgi, the great light of the Ur III dynasty who, as a living god, was presented by the court poets, and doubtless himself—these songs are in the first-person—as the embodiment of all civilizing arts. More than this, he was the self-proclaimed custodian of ancient musical tradition, for the preservation and revitalization of which he vigorously campaigned:

I am no fool as regards the knowledge acquired since the time that mankind was, from heaven above, set on its path: when I have discovered tigi-lyre and zamzam hymns from past days, old ones from ancient times, I have never declared them to be false, and have never contradicted their contents. I have conserved these antiquities, never abandoning them to oblivion. Wherever the tigi-lyre and the zamzam sounded, I have recovered all that knowledge, and I have had those šir-gida songs brilliantly performed in my own good house. So that they should never fall into disuse, I have added them to the singers' repertoire, and thereby I have set the heart of the Land on fire and aflame. (*Shulgi* B.270–80, translation after *Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* 2.4.2.02).

This portrait is probably accurate: the Neo-Sumerian period was a classicizing revival in which poets elaborated the Early Dynastic religious and artistic heritage, sometimes into novel forms, like the royal praise hymn itself. An active cultural program along the lines trumpeted here helps explain the mass of literary documents produced at this time, the fruit of an official antiquarian initiative carried out within the corps of state scribes, for whose training *Shulgi* apparently established royal schools. The museological requirements of this movement may well have seen the development of a system of harmonic transcription for religious songs—a Sumerian archetype for the Akkadian ‘notation’ that is attested for the second millennium (see especially *Shulgi* E 240–57).

This leads to the matter of the Mesopotamian system’s diffusion beyond the two rivers. I have argued elsewhere that the Tuning Cycle, much like equal temperament in modern times, came to serve as a sort of international standard, or musical metric system, providing raw tonal material for the creation of local, syncretic—as it were ‘tempered’—art-forms. This is the natural inference from the famous Hurrian hymns found at Late Bronze Age Ugarit, in which some of the system’s harmonic intervals—under their Akkadian names—are used to map the essential tonal progression of each song. That these texts are relatively late (c.1400) and come from a complex Hurro-Canaanite linguistic and cultural environment, and as far west as the Mediterranean coast, is in itself strong evidence for the exportability and universality of the system.

At the same time it leaves unanswered the question of how early the process of diffusion began, and where else it was operative. An instructive parallel should be the spread of the Mesopotamian scribal education, which is attested in the Levant by c.2100, and three centuries earlier in North Syria. Yet the range of scribal learning need not have been strictly coterminous with that of the diatonic tuning cycle itself. For while the former included training in the terminology and procedures by which the cycle is expressed in the cuneiform tablets, song traditions themselves—and hence knowledge of the tonal/harmonic conceptions on which they were built—must have remained largely oral and aural in most environments. In other words, musical literacy was not a prerequisite for knowledge and use of the tuning system. It was rather symptomatic of certain cultural settings in which the tuning tradition was current, a function of the scribal apparatus in those temples and palaces that were concerned to archive their sacred repertoire. This can represent only a fraction of ancient Near Eastern musical life, though admittedly an important one.

These distinctions are crucial for understanding how Mesopotamian musical conceptions may have been transmitted in time to the Aegean, despite the fact that in

later Greek sources there are no traces of the elaborate Akkadian terminology for intervals and tunings. This thesis should not seem especially radical given the well-known phenomenon of ‘East-West culture drift’, which took place within a *koinê* of palatial culture. I have argued elsewhere that music-technical vestiges of a non-linguistic nature, deriving from the oral/aural rather than scribal register, may indeed be detected in the earliest layers of the Greek musicographical material. The very fact that diatonic tuning was known at all to the Greeks is more remarkable than it may seem at first, steeped as we are in diatony ourselves. Decisive for ruling out independent development is the system’s conceptual and practical emphasis on a central string. Both characteristics are attested for the early Greek tradition. Evidence for such ‘epicentric tonality’ is restricted to the conceptual level in the cuneiform tablets, which give us no information about the system’s practical applications. But in the one complete Hurrian hymn, the system’s central string, and the intervals to which it belongs, do indeed feature prominently. Diatony and ‘epicentric tonality’ are in the Greek tradition closely bound to the seven-stringed lyres which were standard equipment for the aristocratic song-dance culture of the Archaic period. But such instruments were already known in the Minoan and Mycenaean palaces, which I now see as the most likely environment, both culturally and temporally, for the adoption of a Mesopotamian, or rather pan-Near Eastern, musical *tekhnhê*. It probably survived the Dark Age in certain areas of Mycenaean continuity and diaspora. Important for instance is that the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*, which recounts the seven-stringed lyre’s invention, is set in Arcadia, that stronghold of ‘Achaean’ culture. Lesbos, epicenter of Aeolic migration from Boeotia, was home to Terpander and an ancient ‘tribe’ (*genos*) of citharodes who, with pan-Hellenization in the seventh and sixth centuries, came to symbolize the norms of Archaic Greek art music (it is worth noting that lyre-players are now attested in the administrative records of Mycenaean Thebes). The large-scale arrival of migrants to Cyprus, Cilicia and Philistia is echoed in the material record of the Early Iron Age by the appearance of lyres with round bases—a conspicuous sign of Aegean tradition (cf. cat. nos. 114, 133, 135).

Returning to the Near Eastern Bronze Age, less technical evidence may be adduced to strengthen this picture of Sumero-Akkadian musical knowledge in diffusion. Late Early Dynastic Mari, a (then) largely Akkadian-speaking city on the middle Euphrates, has produced the famous statue of Ur-Nanshe who bore, in addition to the title *na r*, both a Sumerian professional name and priestly garb very much like that worn by singers on the ‘Standard of Ur’ and elsewhere. Sumerian musical terminology was also current at this time (c.2400) in the important North Syrian site of Ebla (Tell Mardikh), a city whose wide-ranging political and commercial interests extended into both the Levant and Mesopotamia, and which housed shrines to Akkadian and even Sumerian gods alongside those of West Semitic powers. Publication of the many thousand tablets from a royal archive, spanning forty years and three kings, is far from complete. But already we glimpse a vibrant, cosmopolitan musical world, subject of a recent stimulating survey by M. G. Biga. Numerous singer-musicians (*na r*), dancers (*ne di*) and acrobats or ‘cult-dancers’ (*hu b*)—even performing dwarfs and animals—came from palaces and temples near and far to perform for royal occasions and religious festivals. Nirar, Mari, Kish, Emar, Nagar, and Aleppo are all attested as sources of musical exchange, and others may be assumed. It is here that the *kinnarum*, ancestor to the *kinnôr*, is first attested—fifteen hundred years before David (see below).

Local Eblaite musicians are revealed by repeated appearances in the distribution lists. That they are named individually shows the relative prestige that members of this profession might achieve when steadily visible to the world of kings and notables. Some of these must have traveled in their turn to foreign centers, but such movements remain invisible, not involving palace disbursements on the home end. Indeed the apparent absence of *regular* monthly distributions to male Eblaite singers has suggested to Biga that most were not directly supported by, and did not reside in, the palace. Some may have been maintained by local temples, a custom well documented in Sumer where the management of music may be reconstructed in considerable detail, as H. Hartmann showed in 1960. There may also have been independent houses and neighborhoods of musicians like those are attested for Mesopotamia and later in post-exile Israel (Nehem. 12:28–9). Clearly the international musical network was variously articulated by the autonomous economies of palace and temple, which however did not prevent free circulation within the whole system. It is also evidence for some specialization of sacred and secular music, though it would be rash to suppose any complete segregation.

How much all of this reflects the influence of Sumerian music *per se* is uncertain, since those trained in the Mesopotamian scribal art used Sumerian terms as a matter of orthographic convention. In particular the absence of the title *gala* in practical (vs. lexical) application suggests that we are in a distinct musical universe, even if lamentation singing itself was practiced there (see below). Yet while the Sumerian words for ‘singer’, ‘dancer’, and ‘acrobat’ are too general to prove any musical influence, the regular distinction in the palace archives between senior and junior singers (*nar-mah* and *nar-tur* respectively) reveals a stratified and regulated professional environment very similar to that of Mari and the Mesopotamian centers. To be sure, the terminology used in Ebla and Mari was not identical to that of the documented Sumerian institutions. Yet it is obviously cognate: an important missing piece here is Ebla’s known connections with the scribal school of Kish, the internal development of which is obscure compared to that of Nippur, which dominates in the extant Mesopotamian records. It seems clear at least that a sort of internationally recognized system of ‘accreditation’ was operative across all these areas, with clearly defined transitions from Junior to Senior to Chief Singer, would have been very useful in a world where regular allocations had to be made to visiting artists, and there was frequent relocation and integration of ‘harem’ *musiciennes* through conquest or gift-exchange. Indeed it is sometimes possible in the records of Ebla, and still more at Old Babylonian Mari (see below), to follow the promotions, demotions, re-promotions, arrivals, departures, transfers and deaths of various singers over many years. In a few cases these processes seem sufficiently independent of palace politics, with singers maintaining their careers in the face of dynastic changes, to suggest a stable and at least partially self-sustaining system—even if its individual members were ever vulnerable to royal whim.

It is not surprising to find equally far-flung musical transactions in the Neo-Sumerian texts. A ‘Mari-lyre’ (*miritum*) was known to Sumerian poets no later than c.2175, when it appears in one of the temple-hymns, inscribed on monumental cylinders, dedicated by Gudea of Lagash. Of the many instrument names which still resist translation or identification, some were probably of exotic origin. One lexical list itemizes a ‘lyre from Marhashi’, an area of the Iranian plateau; this type was still known at Mari three centuries later. No fewer than four instruments of foreign provenance or associations are

found in the same royal hymn in which Shulgi boasts his mastery of musical arts (*Shulgi* B 154–74): these are the Mari-lyre, the Sabu-lyre (sabitum), the ‘king-of-Kish instrument’ (urzababitum), and the ‘Anatolian lyre’ (zanaru). Clearly, as Th. Krispijn has observed, the whole passage reflects the range of professional singer-musicians, especially the nar. Elsewhere in Neo-Sumerian hymns the Sabu-lyre and Mari-lyre occur side-by-side within the larger instrumentarium, suggesting that the contemporary temple orchestra was a deliberately cosmopolitan body. Shulgi’s words here read like a state of the union address by an arts minister, with the inclusion of foreign instruments drawing the musical horizons of the Third Dynasty of Ur. Indeed all boundaries dissolve when the king extends his claim of mastery to any other type ‘I have not heard before’. One imagines exotic instruments sent as gift or tribute, or carried by visiting musicians, from various parts of Ur’s wide periphery.

The richest evidence now available for a global economy of music comes from the archives of two eighteenth-century kings of Mari, the interloper Yasmah-Addu (crowned c.1790) and the restored Zimri-Lim (c.1775). This material has recently been surveyed by N. Ziegler, drawing especially on the administrative records of Zimri-Lim’s ‘harem’ (her more detailed monograph on music is eagerly awaited). This was the so-called Amorite age, when dynasts of West Semitic extraction held power in many Mesopotamian cities, where however Sumero-Akkadian cultural traditions continued unbroken. Mari’s known international connections at this time were as far-reaching as those of Ebla, and the abundant evidence for artisan mobility includes many cases of musical contact and exchange with such other states as Carchemish, Babylon, Aleppo, Qatna and Hazor. The texts are equally valuable, however, for illuminating the official management of musical affairs, often firmly embedded in the palace economy. These were under the management of a chief musician, whose duties included sensitive diplomatic missions like the arrangement of royal marriages; the recruitment of harem *musiciennes* from among war captives and their subsequent training; and supervising the construction and repair of sacred instruments (compare the musical provisioning of the temple in Jerusalem). The chief musician was typically a foremost confidant of the king (recall young David’s position in the court of Saul; his musical catharses of the ‘evil spirit’ which regularly beset Saul have a distinctly Mesopotamian flavor).

It is clear that an ‘international style’ of music was deliberately cultivated at Mari. In an age without sound-recording, a craving for musical variety was satisfied through the familiar mechanism of royal gift exchange—in practice the buying, selling and trading of players. As Ziegler points out, it was precisely the need to have a ready stockpile of ‘musical commodities’ which accounts for the surprisingly large numbers of *musiciennes* who received formal training and maintenance by the palace. Music emerges as another of the household industries which justify our thinking of Bronze Age palace society as an international economy (< Greek *oikonomia*, ‘household management’). The harem’s fluid internal organization and the hierarchical movements of its musical members may be deduced from a series of distribution and other lists which, though not completely continuous, span many years. Here, as at Ebla, anything foreign or exotic is carefully recorded as though essential to an accurate inventory. A number of Elamite and Amorite *musiciennes* are attested; the latter suggest that an ancestral West Semitic repertoire was probably cultivated alongside Sumero-Akkadian ‘cult classics’. Interestingly, Amorite musicians were *imported* to Mari from the west, as though well-qualified singers were not

abundant in the ‘colonies’. One tablet relates the arrival of a caravan from Hazor which included three Amorite musicians, in exchange for whom Zimri-Lim gave three of his own *musciennes*. This datum is of especial importance for our purposes, because it offers proof that early Levantine centers were well integrated into the larger Near Eastern scene. Girls might also be trained locally in a specific foreign style; Zimri-Lim committed captives from Ashlakka to a ‘Subarian’ (probably Hurrian) musical education. Here the ‘international style’ reveals a further dimension—the circulation of ethnic repertoire not only beyond its native context, but independently of native performers (except perhaps a trainer). Local *musciennes* might take on an exotic character of their own when entertaining foreign guests, another important service that was expected of them.

While Mari is of crucial importance for the many texts it has produced, its complex political and economic situation is entirely typical of the period. Without insisting that its musical workings were identical to those of other states, they were certainly comparable, and for all practical purposes compatible. Mari can therefore help clarify e.g. the situation at Hurrian Nuzi, where the importation of Kassite musicians is attested c.1400. Startlingly large numbers of female singers, appearing in distribution lists there, have been branded by G. Wilhelm as ‘slaves’—doing perhaps insufficient justice to the complexity and richness of female palatial society. We might well infer a similar situation for the vast harem attributed to Solomon (1 Kings 11:3), the numbers of which—seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines—if somewhat exaggerated, are not unthinkable so. Some of these women apparently exerted considerable cultural influence, for instance in the worship of their own ancestral deities: one recalls the famous controversy of Solomon’s involvement in the cult of Astarte (1 Kings 11:5). This accords entirely with the cosmopolitanism of the harem that emerges from the Mari texts, and with the wholesale adoption by the Hittite kings of Hurrian and other gods, whether adopted from foreign wives or conquered peoples, *en bloc* with the appropriate ritual repertory.

We may bring this survey to a close by briefly examining the linguistic evidence for the early and wide distribution of lyre-names built on the West Semitic radical *knr*, for these are obviously ancestors of the Hebrew *kinnôr*, the most esteemed instrument of the Bible. We may begin from an outer extreme, the *zanaru* which is listed among the instruments mastered by Shulgi. Sumerian lexical texts define this instrument as ‘the lyre of divine Inanna’; this in turn lets it be connected with the *zinar* of Hittite texts, which is frequently rendered in Sumerograms as ‘the instrument of the goddess Inanna’ (g i š. ^dInanna). It is certain that the Hittite word was borrowed from Hattic, one of the pre-Hittite Anatolian languages which, though extinct by the second millennium, survived in liturgical fragments in certain religious contexts. The Hattic legacy is especially clear from the Hittite use of *zinar* to mean ‘music’ generally, and the ritual preeminence of the lyre which this implies is confirmed by the Hittite musical representations, most obviously the famous Inandik vase. But behind this fossilized Hattic cult music a still earlier phase of development may be inferred from the phonology of *zinar*. The form is attractively explained as a derivative of West Semitic *knr* via a language in which initial *k-* was palatalized before the front vowel *i*. Whether this was Hattic itself or some intermediary remains open. But the change must have occurred very early on: related forms occur in several northwestern Caucasian languages, a family with which Hattic has certain affinities, so that the word’s transmission should go back to an

early stage of the language ('proto-Hattic')—i.e. comfortably deep in the third millennium if not before. One might also allow time for the form *zanaru*, which could be a secondary development (*ki-* > *zi-* > *za-*), if not simply a Sumerized version of *zinar*.

The wide chronological and geographical spread indicated by these facts is paralleled, indeed extended, by the antiquity and range of the original West Semitic word. It is first attested at Ebla c.2400 in the form *kinnarum*, followed by examples from Old Babylonian Mari and Late Bronze Age Alalakh, Hattusha, Ugarit, Emar and Egypt. In the Iron Age the instrument is best represented by the *kinnôr* of the Bible and the Phoenician *knr*, but later Arabic and Pahlavi forms are also attested. B. Lawergren has convincingly correlated this lexical distribution with a family of mostly asymmetrical lyres types which occur within roughly the same international ambitus. In the Levant itself these lyres are the only chordophone known from the Bronze Age, with more than thirty representations collected by J. Braun (cf. cat. nos. 112, 121, 123).

Most of the linguistic examples exhibit interesting cross-cultural dimensions. One text from Mari records the commission of five such instruments for use in the court of Zimri-Lim; another shows that they could be played by the music-girls of the harem. Here then is a West Semitic instrument cultivated in a city which was ruled by an Amorite dynasty in the eighteenth century, yet still maintained its heritage of Sumerian ritual music. At Alalakh, where roughly half of the population bore Hurrian names at the time, the form is ^{1ú}*kinnaruhuli*, with the Hurrian agent suffix *-huli*—a 'kinyrist', a player (or perhaps maker) of the *kinnarum*. Hurrian mediation probably also underlies the suffix in ^{1ú}*kinirtalla*, a Hittite *hapax* whose scribal collocation with Sumerian ^{1ú}*nar* shows that its effective meaning is 'lyre-singer'. Both forms, taken in their geographical contexts, are 'material' reflections of the hybrid ritual music traditions which are known from other indications: such a West Semitic-Hurrian fusion is exemplified for instance by the hymns from Ugarit (see above), while numerous ritual texts from Hattusha reveal a flourishing Hurro-Hittite amalgam there. The Egyptian version of the *kinnarum* occurs alongside two other instruments known only from the same text, a satirical portrait of a scribe given to wild women and song. This vignette, dated to c.1200, reflects the exotic influences to which Egypt was exposed under the imperial endeavors of the New Kingdom, especially in the Levant. It recalls an equally cosmopolitan music-making scene in a grave-painting from the reign of Amenophis II (c.1438–1412), which further includes an angle-harp of Mesopotamian type, also current in Cyprus and Alalakh at roughly this time (cf. cat. no. 130).

Material from Cyprus and the Mycenaean world, usually overlooked, opens important theatres to the west. Kinyras, priest-king of Aphrodite and mythological eponym of the Kinyradai, officiants at her temple in Paphos during the Classical period, again recalls the sacred marriage ritual: in a revealing variant Kinyras was the lover of Aphrodite and father of Adonis. Even in the Classical period Aphrodite Ourania was still correctly known by the Greeks to be a hypostasis of Phoenician Astarte. This goddess is, of course, closely linked to Mesopotamia via Babylonian Ishtar and Sumerian Inanna. Several Phoenician kings are known to have doubled as priests of Astarte, and the same is likely to have been true in Ugarit. Kinyras is of considerable further importance as a probable descendant of the deified lyre (*knr*) of the West Semitic world, attested in the famous Ugaritic pantheon text. The deification of harps and lyres, along with other ritual apparatus, may well have originated in Sumer, where the *balag* was commonly so treated during the Ur III period.

Sumerian records attest further that in contemporary Anatolia the *zinar* could be treated as an hypostasis of Inanna/Ishtar.

More remarkable still, 'Kinyras' is twice attested as a personal name in Linear B tablets from the Mycenaean palace of Pylos. It is a long-standing conundrum that the heroes of Greek mythology often bear names which were commonplace in Mycenaean society: there is no general agreement as to whether these were ordinary names that survived in heroic contexts, or whether Mycenaeans tended to take names that were already established in a still older heroic tradition—thereby further eroding any putative historical dimension of the Homeric poems. In the case of 'Kinyras', however, we have an unusual advantage. Both examples are found in contexts—ship-building and priesthood—relevant to the dossier of *the* Kinyras, whose profile emerges not only from Greco-Cypriote sources but is further accessible through comparison with Phoenician tradition (as represented by Philo of Byblos *et alii*), since there is considerable mythological overlap between Kinyras and Kothar, the West Semitic craftsman-god. One edges towards the remarkable conclusion that already in the Late Bronze Age Kinyras was an established mythological figure on Cyprus, and not unknown even in the Aegean, with his *attributa* substantially in place. Yet this does not seem so improbable after all if one considers the antiquity of the *knr* itself; its divinization at Ugarit; the probable role of Kothar as the patron of musical arts (he was equated by native scribes with Babylonian Ea and Sumerian Enki); and the divinization of the Hattic *zinar* in connection with the cult of Inanna and/or some local avatar. Kinyras emerges as an important reservoir of Bronze Age royal ideology, a distant echo of such rites as hierogamy and divine-ancestor veneration, executed by the king himself to the accompaniment of sacred music for which chordophones like the *kinnarum* were indispensable ritual instruments—hence their divinization. Here the idealized portrait of Shulgi is crucial; as the perfect exponent of all the arts, he is both master lamenter (*ga la*) and the master royal-singer (*na r*). In effect he is the self-sufficient executant of all kingship rites, the most conspicuous of which for the Ur III kings was the sacred marriage to Inanna.

If a *kinura* was familiar to the Mycenaeans, as Kinyras might imply, it did not survive into the Aegean mainstream of later Greek vocabulary (it reappears only in connection with the Septuagint). The case was otherwise on Cyprus, however, judging from a local cult title of Apollo, *kenuristês*, which appears in an oath-text found in the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Paphos (from the time of Tiberius, but showing a traditional formulation). This *epiklêsis* presupposes the verbal form *kinurizein* ('lament'), a word known to Zenodotus, the Hellenistic critic of Homer, who read it for the common and synonymous *akheuein* in one passage of the *Iliad* (schol. Hom. *Il.* 9.612). The sense of lamentation also appears in the related forms *kinuresthai* (= *kinurizein*) and *kinuros* ('plaintive'), found in fifth century drama and learned Alexandrian poetry. It is not clear whether these forms were borrowed from the Cypriot branch of epic or descended directly from Mycenaean usage independently of a *kinura* (I suspect the latter). The dominant note of lamentation is remarkable, however, and may be readily connected with the ritual lamentations performed by Near Eastern temple singers. Apollo as a lamenting god, while not his most familiar role, is known also from the cult of Hyacinthus in Archaic Sparta, which has roots in the Bronze Age. At the same time *kenuristês* and its association with Apollo surely puts as much emphasis on 'lyre' (*knr*) as 'lament'. It seems to mark the same syncretism of Hellenic and Cypriote-West Semitic musical form that underlies e.g. two

Samaritan coins of the Hellenistic period, on which Apollo is depicted playing a lyre of the *kinnôr* type (cat. no. 86).

The Kinyradai as lamentation singers, at least in due season, would accord well with the status and function of chordophones in Near Eastern temple music. The Sumerian *gala* sang his lamentations to the *balag*, and while the identity of this instrument has long been controversial, it now seems firmly established as a form of stringed instrument, at least for the third millennium, by a lexical text from Ebla which equates it with the *kinnarum*. Though the title *gala* was not used at Ebla, one still finds lamentation singers; the scribes called these by the Sumerian *balag.d i*, which they defined in their own tongue as 'he who makes lament'. There was for instance a grand royal ritual enacted by king and queen to secure the prosperity of the realm; a difficult text mentions a group of lamentation singers who were to soothe the divine heart. This seems not altogether dissimilar, at least in socio-cosmological function, to the Sumerian sacred marriage ritual. At any rate it is clear that this lamentation singing could involve the *kinnarum*. Important confirmation comes from an isolated passage of the Bible in which the *kinnôr* appears, alongside pipes, as an instrument of lamentation (Job 30:31). The divine *knr* is attested in an Ugaritic ritual related to the royal ancestor cult, for which there is an antecedent a millennium earlier at Ebla.

Lucian describes the mourning of women for Adonis in Byblos, where Kinyras was said to have founded a temple of Aphrodite. This connection with Adonis, which was particularly fruitful in later Greek and Latin accounts of Kinyras (most memorably in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*), is readily explained as a syncretism of distinct, but in some sense cognate, traditions of royal lamentation. A third exemplar is the figure of Linus. Herodotus has a brief digression on the so-called Linus song which, he reports, was sung in Cyprus, Phoenicia, Egypt and elsewhere; he describes it as very ancient, and explicitly states that it followed the 'dying god' pattern. Homer specifies that the Linus song was accompanied by the lyre (on the shield of Achilles), and in mythology Linus himself is portrayed as a lyrist. Euripides adds the extraordinary detail that Linus was lamented by barbarians, 'in Asian voice . . . when the blood of kings is poured over the ground by the iron swords of Hades' (*Orestes* 1395–9). One recalls the myth that Linus was killed by his lyre-pupil Heracles, who brained him with the instrument. One need not try to connect these disparate sources too closely; H. Frankfort rightly insisted about the various forms of near Eastern hierogamy that the 'specifically different' is as striking as the 'generically alike'. And yet a comparative approach is already validated by Herodotus himself. The cumulative weight of the material strongly suggests that Kinyras reflects a regal tradition of temple music on Bronze Age Cyprus (i.e. Alashia), closely allied to those of the West Semitic and larger Near Eastern worlds.

The *kinnarum* and its relations constitute a lyre-macrofamily of astonishing geographical and chronological dimensions. Linguistic considerations require the instrument's morphological history to stretch back well beyond the iconographical record, which for the third millennium is quite meager. It is tempting draw into the discussion the famous etching from Megiddo, dated to c. 3200–3000, which shows a musician with a somewhat amorphous chordophone. J. Braun has made a strong case for calling this a harp rather than a lyre. But whatever its intended shape, it is not impossible that this was a contemporary *kinnarum*, and that the instrument underwent considerable later evolution. At any rate it is not surprising to find the *kinnôr* retrojected to the remote

legendary past of Genesis, where Jubal is the ‘father of all such as handle the lyre (*knr*) and pipes’ (4.20–2). This passage evokes the existence of ancient professional societies like the cymbalist- and singer-guilds known from Bronze Age Ugarit (cf. catalogue nos. 26–30, 32–4), the Kinyradai of Paphos, and of course the Levites.

I hope to have made clear that important elements of David and Solomon’s musical program accord with a conscious emulation of royal standards traditional in the Near East. Yet while an enduring Mesopotamian influence on music-making institutions is evident throughout the region, it is equally clear that a strong multilateralism was always operative, with more or less continuous exchange of musicians, instruments and repertoire within a network of palaces and temples which, by at least the mid-third millennium, constituted a single if multi-faceted community. The *knr* and its relations have proved an especially striking symbol of this. But many other musical details of the Bible deserve to be reconsidered in the same light.

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