

first 65 percent of this period was a stretch of lean years (yielding tinkling pebble bracelets, etc.), but after 3000 B.C.E. the land began to see more complex instruments (lyres, harps, lutes, flutes, pipes, drums, cymbals, and sistra). These are well illustrated in black-and-white photos and some are brought together for the first time.

About two centuries ago archaeologists discovered Egyptian and Mesopotamian instruments contemporary with the Bible, and these soon began to appear in illustrated Bibles. In 1963 the focus shifted directly to the biblical region itself when Bathyah Bayer published a small, but meticulous, catalog of musical artifacts excavated in the region (Bayer 1963). It listed 280 objects, some extant (clappers, bells, sistra, rattles, conch-horns, bone whistles), some on representations. Her commentary was concise (55 pages), yet provided full data on each object (provenance, stratum, date, dimension, and publication). In the 40 years since Bayer's catalog, much material has accumulated and most now appears in Braun's book. He tabulates twice as many objects, has better photos, and seven times more pages. Unfortunately, his table only counts objects in categories (strings, winds, percussions) but lacks references and cannot be verified. True, objects shown in photos usually have museum inventory numbers, but they only amount to about 160 pieces, less than Bayer's compilation. Since Braun does not give information on strata, his absolute dates may need checking. For example, we are not told that the "Orpheus vase" belongs to Stratum VIA at Megiddo, a level variously dated, e.g., as 1050–1000 B.C.E. (Mazar 1990: 301) and 900–850 B.C.E. (Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 342–44). Braun simply chose the earliest date (1150–1000 B.C.E.) (p. 147).

Whereas Bayer carefully excluded unexcavated objects, Braun is less cautious and gives the same attention to any seal, regardless of the circumstances of its discovery. In view of recent problems with unexcavated material in the region, his attitude may make some readers nervous. However, in one case, the "Ma'adanah seal," he lists six reasons for doubting its authenticity (pp. 162–63). These were first advanced by Bayer at a conference at Saint-Germain-en-Laye in October 1990. She never published them, so Braun is technically correct in not acknowledging her contribution.

It is not easy to deal with the ancient music of a small region squeezed between powerful neighbors. Not only were these neighbors politically powerful, but their music was well developed and is now well studied. The first Near Eastern harps, lyres, lutes, winds, and percussion emerged there, and texts demonstrate the vast role of music in these neighboring societies. One would expect huge musical influences on Palestine. Laboring against the odds, Braun works hard to find the uniqueness of music in Palestine but often overstates his case. Indeed, many claims fail to convince. Space allows only a dozen to be discussed here.

***Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine: Archaeological, Written, and Comparative Sources*, by Joachim Braun. Translated by Douglas W. Stott, from German. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002. xxxvi + 368 pp., 177 figures, 2 tables, 3 maps. Cloth. \$30.00.**

This book deals with musical artifacts dated between the 12th millennium B.C.E. and the fourth century C.E. The

1. The front cover shows a reconstructed lyre based on an Assyrian wall relief dated 700 B.C.E. On the relief the lyre yoke terminates in duck heads at either end. But on the reconstruction the detail is misunderstood and is substituted with a squiggle in the shape of a half-pretzel. Duck heads were common on thick Egyptian lyres, and the presence on the reliefs signals a clear Egyptian trait. Assyriologists agree that the musicians on the relief came from the Levant, but few would be as specific as Braun who labels them “Jewish” (p. 149).³

2. Braun sees these and other lyres as the end products of a local development “that actually began with Canaanite-Phoenician instruments” (p. 149). As has been shown earlier, lyres began in North Syria two millennia earlier (Lawergren 1998: 44–47).

3. “The lyre . . . is attested only in Canaan as a solo instrument” (p. 69). In truth, lyres were shown as solo instruments throughout the whole of the Near East before 1000 B.C.E. (Lawergren 1998: figs. 1a–1w, 5a–5l). There is no more validity to another claim of uniqueness: “It is played in Canaan in a new position” (p. 70). Figures 1 and 5 in the reference just mentioned show lyres in just about any conceivable position before they entered Canaan. The author continues: “Prior to this period [Bronze Age], the double pipe was never portrayed as a solo instrument” (p. 70). To back the assertion Braun points to a scene on an ivory tablet—but it is broken and one cannot know how many instruments are missing. We know for sure, however, that many Old Babylonian terra-cottas show single pipers (Rashid 1984: 95). Moreover, single pairs of pipes were found at Sumerian Ur (Lawergren 2000).

4. “The small, round frame drum appears quite early, at the beginning of the second millennium B.C., on rock drawings in the Negev” (p. 70). But the dating of rock art is controversial, and one might well heed Philip Mayeron’s (personal communication) caution: “Anati’s attempt to date scratches on flint or stone can only be taken with question marks. In general, Anati has been very imaginative.” When claiming precedence, it seems prudent to avoid arguments based on rock art, but the author shows little hesitation and writes, “the duo represents a very early stage of ensemble playing” (p. 157), a claim based on the scratches, the date of a seal without provenance, and Gen 31:27. The rock drawings lead him to speculate about a Dumuzi cult in the Negev (pp. 71–76). In one spot an animal stands next to a lyre player, and Braun asserts “face-to-face juxtaposition of human beings and animals found in the drawing is otherwise virtually unknown.” But

there are several such juxtapositions realistically drawn on Indus seals, from 2500–1900 B.C.E. (Lawergren 2003: fig. 30).

5. A lute player from Tel Dan (equated to Lachish on p. 81) is “one of the most remarkable representations of lute players we have” (p. 82). But many second-millennium terra-cottas from Susa and Mesopotamia, and wall paintings in Egypt, are no less remarkable. The body of the Dan lute is “almost rectangular” and played in “upright position,” but the picture in the book (fig. iii.5) shows a drop-shaped body on a nearly horizontal lute.

6. An ivory plaque from Megiddo shows a presentation scene with three birds and a lyre player. According to Braun, they are “part of some symbolism involving the ruler, birds, and music . . . the scene does clearly underscore the enormous significance music had in Canaanite cultural life” (p. 97). Further comments on animals are given on pp. 147–49: “Although Egyptian and Mesopotamian sources offer many examples portraying animals as musicians or incorporating animal shapes into the parts of the instruments themselves, they virtually never portray animals, . . . birds, together with human musicians in the same scene.” First, birds are often shown in ancient Near Eastern lyre scenes (10 examples in Lawergren 1998: figs. 1 and 5); thus the scene is not unusual. There is no need to see them as symbols. Birds sing, and that circumstance gives them a straightforward reason to seek musical company. Second, musical instruments are often shown at presentation scenes in the ancient Near East and Egypt. Music was highly valued in the whole region, and Palestine was no exception. Continuing his discussion of the ivory plaque, Braun claims that “up to this time [1200–1150 B.C.E.] in Egypt and even later in Assyria, the lyre was used only within the context of an instrumental ensemble” (p. 98). In fact, the exact opposite was true in Mesopotamia. Lyres were usually played solo there. For visual evidence, see Lawergren 1998: figs. 1 and 5.

7. “Although Egyptian ensembles did sometimes mix strings and wind instruments, none included the lyre” (p. 215). There is abundant proof of the opposite; see Hickmann 1956: pls. 31 (C), 42 (A), 44 (A), 46 (C), and 49 (B).

8. According to Braun, the lyre depicted on a cultstand from Ashdod (1000–900 B.C.E.) is the first round-bottomed lyre to have arms extending above the yoke (pp. 166, 175). However, there is a nearly identical lyre on a Cypriote plate from 1100 B.C.E. (Lawergren 1998: fig. 5k). It was discovered after Aign (1963) made his compilation, cited by Braun. An even earlier round-bottomed lyre from Crete (1400–1300 B.C.E.) has a similar yoke position and may, in fact, have started the trend. A few pages later the author announces another first: “they [cult stands with dancers and musicians dated 1000–900 B.C.E.] probably represent prototypes of the later music and dance scenes attested within the Cypriot-Aegean cultural sphere” (p. 176). But ring-dancers accompanied by musicians have a

³On ancient Israel and associated concepts Braun’s terminology is unconventional. Throughout the book he refers to the region as “Israel/Palestine,” a concept particularly inappropriate in 700,000 B.C.E. (p. 47). Contemplating a group of nomads depicted in 1900 B.C.E. in Egypt, he speculates about “the group’s possible relationship with Israelites” (p. 78), 700 years before the first hint of such an ethnic entity.

long history in the Aegean. The earliest is a terra-cotta stand from Crete dated 1400–1300 B.C.E., on which dancers surround a lyre player and a bird. Its design closely resembles the later Cypriote-Aegean objects Braun alludes to.

9. A Palestine lute (fourth–third century B.C.E.) has an elongated and pear-shaped resonator that runs smoothly into the neck. Braun claims: “The Mareshah illustration is the earliest witness of this lute form . . . this peculiar variant . . . actually originated in Israel/Palestine” (p. 244). But many identical lutes, dated between 330 and 300 B.C.E., come from Cyprus and Greece (Higgins and Winnington-Ingram 1965: pl. 16). The type existed across a wide area in the eastern Mediterranean, and one cannot establish an “origin.”

10. Ensembles of string and wind instruments were common in the ancient Near East and Egypt. Braun thinks those in Palestine (11th century B.C.E.; p. 164) led to ensembles shown on Phoenician ivories (900–700 B.C.E.); they “began . . . within the earlier sphere of ancient Israel/Palestine.” But such ensembles flourished already in New Kingdom tombs at Thebes (e.g., Hickmann 1956: pl. 49). Unsurprisingly, Palestine eventually adopted ensembles.

11. Braun lumps categories that are differentiated—e.g., he coins the expression “a Canaanite-Philistine-Israelite tradition” (p. 183). But these are several traditions, easily distinguished by the shape of their lyres (Lawergren 1998).

12. Steatite men from northeastern Iran who hold vase-like objects under their arms are “prisoners who must beat their drums in honor of their conqueror” (p. 57). This speculation, cited from a 1968 source, is unverifiable since the reference is missing. Current scholars may have split opinions about the nature of these *Narbenmenschen*, but I doubt anyone would consider the men worshipful prisoners (cf. Lawergren 2003: fig. 24).

Bo Lawergren

Hunter College

bo.lawergren@hunter.cuny.edu

REFERENCES

- Aign, B.
1963 *Die Geschichte der Musikinstrumente des ägäischen Raumes bis um 700 vor Christus; Ein Beitrag zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte der griechischen Musik.* Frankfurt am Main: Universität.
- Bayer, B.
1963 *The Material Relics of Music in Ancient Palestine and Its Environs: An Archaeological Inventory.* Tel Aviv: Israel Music Institute.
- Finkelstein, I., and Silberman, N. A.
2001 *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts.* New York: Free.
- Hickmann, H.
1956 *45 siècles de musique dans l'Égypte ancienne à travers la sculpture, la peinture, l'instrument.* Paris: La revue musicale, Richard-Masse.
- Higgins, R. A., and Winnington-Ingram, R. P.
1965 Lute Players in Greek Art. *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 85: 62–71.
- Lawergren, B.
1998 Distinctions among Canaanite, Philistine, and Israelite Lyres, and Their Global Lyrical Contexts. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 309: 41–68.
2000 Extant Silver Pipes from Ur, 2450 BC. Pp. 121–32 in *Studien zur Musikarchäologie*, Vol. 2: *Musikarchäologie früher Metallzeiten*, eds. E. Hickmann, I. Laufs, and R. Eichmann. *Orient-Archäologie* 7. Rahden/Westf.: Leidorf.
2003 Oxus Trumpets, ca. 2200–1800 BCE: Material Overview, Usage, Societal Role, and Catalog. *Iranica Antiqua* 38: 41–118.
- Mazar, A.
1990 *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000–586 B.C.E.* New York: Doubleday.
- Rashid, S. A.
1984 *Mesopotamien. Musikgeschichte in Bildern* 2:2. Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik.